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## Children and Advertising- An Advertising Literacy Program for School Children

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CHILDREN AND ADVERTISING- AN ADVERTISING LITERACY PROGRAM FOR  
SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

Brey'onna J. Mong-Delane

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2017

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communications & Media Arts  
in the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
May 2020

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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

CHILDREN AND ADVERTISING- AN ADVERTISING LITERACY PROGRAM FOR  
SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

Brey'onna J. Mong-Delane

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the field of Professional Media & Media Management

Approved by:

Dr. Kavita Karan, Chair

Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
March 23, 2020

## **AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF**

Brey'onna J. Mong-Delane, for the Master of Science degree in Professional Media and Media Management Studies, presented on March 23, 2020, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

**TITLE: CHILDREN AND ADVERTISING- AN ADVERTISING LITERACY PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN**

**MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Kavita Karan**

This research paper is a case study that focuses on the creation of a three-dimensional advertising literacy program for school children to teach and protect them from becoming susceptible to advertising messages. The research shows how children are affected by advertising messages, its many consequences and how the U.S. and other countries are protecting children from advertising today. It evaluates the effectiveness of three-dimensional advertising literacy programs in comparisons to two-dimensional advertising literacy programs and uses its framework to create the modules for educating children. Though, two-dimensional advertising literacy programs are currently the dominant way to educate children, this case study through a proposal of an eight-module three dimensional Advertising literacy program aims to shows how these literacy programs with extensive examples and interactive tactics can better equip school children with the proper awareness, knowledge and skills to critically evaluate, analyze and decode advertising messages and help them in being better informed and creating critical attitudes towards advertising as they move towards adult life.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of media has become one of the most important tools in the lives of American citizens and our lives are deeply rooted around the usage of social media sites, television programs, movies, video games among many other mobile applications. It is uncommon today that a child or adult is seen without an iPhone, computer or tablet and with the constant development of mass media, children and adults now have the capability of using handheld video games, smartwatches, and wireless headphones, allowing them to stay connected to their devices at all times.

With the increase of media, comes the increase in advertising and its messages across the globe. On all platforms of media, advertising messages are increasing and are directly and indirectly addressed to children resulting in effects on their cognitive spheres and their interpersonal and social relations (Hoffman, 2019). Together mass media and advertisements push a “consumer society” that is seen within Americans. A consumer society is a society that places the buying and selling of goods and services as the most important social and economic activity (Lexico Dictionary powered by Oxford, 1995).

Advertising messages are constantly telling consumers that the satisfaction of their needs can be met through buying and in-turn teaches American society that consumption is necessary and important to be satisfied, saying you are what you buy, and your worth is based on what you have and can afford. Although the original goal of advertising is to inform consumers of the advantages, benefits and elements of a product, advertisers use values, emotions and attitudes that have an influence over consumers and play into their cognitive, emotional and behavioral spheres. Moreover, by drawing in attention and relating a product to life and reality, they are

causing many unintended consequences for consumers and particularly for children who are vulnerable to such messages. Because of this, there is an increasing need for educating children and the need for advertising literacy programs for children.

Children are the main target for advertisers as they are the future of consumer markets and it is easier to shape the mind and attitudes of children as they do not possess the knowledge of products and there is a high level of believability. Along with this, advertisers have three main reasons for attracting children; they are the primary market, they are the influencing market and they are the future market (Hoffman, 2019). Children are the primary market because they are capable of doing their own shopping, they are also the influencing market because they hold the power to influence what household products are bought by their parents. Lastly, and most importantly, children are the future market because their purchasing pattern today effects how and what they purchase when they are older (Bruce, 2019).

Advertising literacy is the process of understanding the persuasive and selling intent of advertising and using this understanding to analyze an advertised product. Literacy programs aim to strengthen a child's knowledge of persuasion and the purpose of advertising by providing methods of critical thinking and coping mechanisms (Nelson 2016, p. 172, as cited in Hwang, Yum & Jeong, 2018). Children are the most vulnerable group among us and to help combat the consequences of advertising, a three-dimensional advertising literacy program is necessary. This study through a review of literature and evaluation of the areas of impact of advertising on children proposes an interactive advertising literacy program that can be adopted by the American School systems, particularly among the middle and high school levels.

The objectives of this study are; to review and re-evaluate the impact that advertising has on children at various levels relating to materialism, health, social and psychological factors, to

review the current (two-dimensional) advertising literacy programs and their effectiveness, to compare the advertising regulations in different countries in contrast to the regulations that are in the United States, and determine what U.S. regulations should include to protect children from advertising messages, to examine what three-dimensional factors and strategies are necessary to educate children so they can grasp the concept of advertising literacy and how advertising literacy should be administered to children, to clear a few misconceptions of advertising particularly deception, puffery and believability in responding to advertisements and finally, to create/develop a three dimensional eight module Advertising Literacy Program for children at primary, middle and high school levels. The following sections detail the research questions and the framework for the study.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. First, review and re-evaluate the impact that advertising has on children at various levels relating to materialism, health, social and psychological factors.
2. To review the current (two-dimensional) advertising literacy programs and their effectiveness.
3. To compare the advertising regulations in different countries in contrast to the regulations that are in the United States and determine what U.S. regulations should include to protect children from advertising messages.
4. To examine what three-dimensional factors and strategies are necessary to educate children so they can grasp the concept of advertising literacy and how advertising literacy should be administered to children.
5. To clear a few misconceptions of advertising particularly deception, puffery and believability in responding to advertisements.

6. Finally, to create/develop a three dimensional eight module Advertising Literacy Program for children at primary, middle and high school levels

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THERORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Children are the most vulnerable group for advertisers and as time goes, advertisements targeted for children increase every day. Because children are still in the process of developing makes them easily influenced by advertising, thereby bringing in changes in their attitude, values, and behaviors. In today's media, advertising contains a plethora of diverse messages and images to persuade emotions towards products. To advertisers, children are seen as independent consumers because they are influential and have the ability to influence their parents to purchase products and household items, as well as when they are older, they themselves become the adult consumers (Solomon, 2014). Children under the age of 12 have not yet developed their critical thinking skills and are more susceptible to the messages of advertising. Previous studies done by Sirgy et al. (2012) and Roach, Goodwin & Nelson (2019) have proven that advertising to children causes materialism leading to excessive consumption, decreased life satisfaction and focuses on the cognitive, affective and behavior effects. Cognitive focuses on a child's ability to be able to differentiate between an advertising commercial and a television program as well as the process of understanding advertising intent of selling. Affective focuses on a child's response to advertisements such as their liking and trust. Lastly, behavioral focuses on the degree in which a child is persuaded by the advertisement (Valkenburg, 2000). These three factors make up a child's full understanding of advertisements and without all three working together, misunderstanding can take place, leading to the various effects of advertising.

The goal of advertising is to provide consumers with information about a product, its benefits and advantages. However, the elements within advertising is meant to influence and make the product more favorable than others by association with values and feelings, effecting

children from the beginning of their lives. Since children are the future of the consumer market, advertisers' direct messages towards them, to influence their psyche and their behavior (Hoffman, 2019). Due to their age and process of still developing, children do not have the full ability to critically analyze and determine fact from fiction in the messages advertised to them. This is due to the lack of cognitive skills which can be used against the produced advertising messages. Piaget's (1936) theory of cognitive development is often used to explain a child's cognitive development from ages 2 until the age of 12. Children ages 2 to 7 respond differently to advertising commercials than children ages 7 to 12. Children in the later stages, known as the concrete operational stage, "are progressively more able to distinguish commercials from television programs and show a better understanding of the persuasive intent of commercials (Valkenburg, 2000, p. 52)". Children ages 2 to 7, known as the preoperational stage, are yet unable to recognize that advertisements are convincing and persuasive, and do not have the ability to tell the difference between their television program content and advertising (Lawlor and Prothero, 2007). Even children who can understand the difference in advertising messages and television programs are still susceptible and leading to materialism, excessive consumption and decreased life satisfaction.

### **Impact of Advertising on Children: Materialism and Life Satisfaction**

Advertising is often linked to materialism and life satisfaction due to the influence that advertised products have over children and this relates to the influence that children have on their parents. Materialism is defined as "the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions...and are believed to provide the greatest source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life (Sirgy et al., 2011, p.82)". It is the belief that more products will lead to greater happiness and lack of, will lead to unhappiness. When products are advertised on television, 80 percent of

children want the product and 68 percent of these children encourage their parents to purchase the product for them (Hoffman, 2019). Advertising commercials correlates to life satisfaction when an advertised product seen on television is not purchased.

Materialism leads to a lower life satisfaction because advertising turns our focus on material possessions, the things we have or don't have, instead of what we are or what we already have. Advertisements teach us that we aren't cool enough, beautiful enough or just generally lacking qualities until we have purchased a certain product; "consumers are motivationally empty until injected by marketers with wants created by advertisements (Sirgy et al., 2011)". Often relating the need of advertised products to quality of life. Materialism starts to develop in the middle of childhood, ages 8 to 11 and children are still in the stages of cognitive, affective and behavioral development, they are more likely to associate materialism with their life satisfaction due to the thought that advertised products bring happiness (Oprea, 2013). Materialism teaches a certain mindset towards products, saying they will provide happiness, success and fulfillment (Richins, 2004). Therefore, creating a desire for advertised products increases a focus and need for products to feel positive emotions. A study shows that children who are exposed to certain product advertising have a higher preference for that product than children who were not exposed to the advertised product (Auty & Lewis, 2004 as cited in Oprea, 2013). Materialism is not something that happens from one single advertisement but is the result of repetitive exposure. Previous studies done by Kunkel et al. (2004) and Piachaud (2007) estimate that children are annually exposed to a range of advertisements totaling from 10,000 in Britain to 40,000 in the United States (Oprea, 2013). Considering this, this study aims to create an advertising literacy program course proposal with a module educating childing on the impact of advertising on materialism, self -image and self- esteem.

## **Impact of Advertising on Children: Health Effects and Behaviors-Food, Tobacco Alcohol, Drugs and Sex**

Materialism and low life-satisfaction are not the only effects that children endure when they are constantly exposed to advertising. Advertisements market unhealthy products such as unhealthy foods, tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs and sex (Lapierre, 2017). Although advertisements are the products represented for-profit by the mainstream businesses in society, their message has an impact on the children viewing them and can lead to consequences not often stated in the advertisements.

In food advertising, healthy foods are advertised less than 3% of the time, however, fast food commercials dominate persuading children to eat with them using a toy, or some incentives for attraction. A study done by Ray and Klesges (1993) showed that children request more junk food after viewing commercials (Pediatrics, 2006). Food advertising increases a child's good consumption and want for specific food brands and without moderation, can lead to child obesity.

Like food advertisements, tobacco and alcohol advertisements also promote unhealthy products leading to consequences. Despite tobacco advertisements being banned for more than 40 years, children are still exposed to e-cigarettes and alcohol advertisements due to their lenient regulations, which permit children age 12-20 to be exposed to these types of advertisements (Jernigan, Ostroff & Ross, 2005). This causes an overexposure to a high-risk and underaged groups (Ross, Spark & Jernigan, 2016), and children who are exposed are more likely to become smokers or drink alcohol at an early age, which increases the risk of alcohol dependency in the future (Pediatrics, 2006). There is a similar effect with prescription drug companies, as physicians reported 92 percent of patients requested an advertised drug. Drug commercials send



the message to children that there is an available drug to heal all different types of pain and although this may carry some truth, the side effects and consequences are not immediately known or shown in the advertisements (Pediatrics, 2006).

Lastly, sex in advertising is unhealthily promoted in commercials for products that have nothing to do with the product, such as for commercials relating to cars or food. Children exposed to sexual content experience sexual intercourse or other sexual experiences earlier than those who are not exposed (Strasburger, 2006). The use of female and male models who are the representations of what is considered “sexy”, often appearing thin-like or slender, promotes an unhealthy body-image leading to issues of self-esteem, abnormal eating behaviors and overall relate to a negative body image for young girls and women (Pediatrics, 2006; Lapierre, 2007). The course proposal for the advertising literacy program will have a module educating children on how to positively view advertisements and helping them to understand the positive and negative consequences of food advertising, tobacco and alcohol usage and sex in advertising.

### **Advertising: How and Why It Attracts Children**

Television advertising is the most popular form of advertising because 95% of children watch TV almost every day, according to the Interactive Research Center (Hoffman, 2019). In addition, children hold buying power and influence spending over billions of dollars each year because parents provide 87 percent of their children’s income, children are the ones that are determining the buying patterns for their family and influencing the purchasing decisions (Calvert, 2008). Television is an easy target for advertising because it has the ability to attract the attention of viewers because of the combination of images, sound effects and word messages. These elements within television advertising make children the perfect prey because they are easily impressed by bright colors, animations and sounds. Images are known to carry the greatest

impact on emotions on its viewers as sounds, melodies or songs in television advertising, increases its effectiveness because these simple tunes are easily remembered but often contains an advertising slogan or message (Hoffman, 2019). Other marketing patterns often found within advertising is message repetition, branded characters, celebrity endorsements and product placement (Calvert, 2008).

Advertisements use attention grabbing and persuasion tactics to entice consumers. This is often done through verbal and non-verbal symbols and representations meant to appeal, hold and control their attention. As children have a shorter attention span, there are many techniques advertisers can use to grab their attention, however, the easiest way is by using promotional characters. Advertisers use attractive visual techniques such as bright colors, animations and sounds to grab children's attention, distracting them from the intended persuasion of the advertisement. When children focus on the attention-grabbing tactics, the advertising message is more exposed and notable (Tarabashkina & Quester, 2018). Children are persuaded of many things and it is because they do not understand that they are being persuaded. Advertisements are able to take advantage of their vulnerability when consumers continue to buy the same brand of goods rather than purchase goods from a different competitor (Lexico Dictionary powered by Oxford). Brand loyalty is built when consumers form a relationship with a brand from an early age, it is similar to children begin to form relationships with people, pets and inanimate objects. Because brands are associated with human characteristics and can be animated, children can easily develop an attachment to certain brands (Ji, 2008). A study done by Guest (1964) found that childhood experiences influenced brand purchasing behavior later in life and the preference of brand was formed during the ages of seven through 18 years. Another study conducted on three children ages seven, nine and 13 by Ji (2002), showed that children were able to store and

retrieve information about their interactions with certain brands thus proving a relationship bond between the two. Brand loyalty is built based on a child's motivation, opportunity and ability. These three dimensions and the ability to become loyal to a brand are based on the age and gender of the children and the category of the brand. Other factors of social environment also carry an impact on if brand loyalty is built (Ji, 2008). Children are most attracted to a brand when it matches their personality and relates to their self-image (Haryanto & Moutinho, 2013).

In a similar study conducted by Guest (Guest, 1964 as cited in Haryanto & Moutinho, 2013) found that 23 percent of brands used in childhood will continue to be used in adulthood and that childhood experiences with brands shape their influences later in life. Once brand loyalty is formed within children, it becomes habitual and stored as autobiographical memory. Once children have a habitual buying pattern, they will continue to repeat the pattern (Haryanto & Moutinho, 2013), thus creating a long-lasting relationship that will influence and persuade how they shop when they are adults.

As children grow older, they are more critical about advertising, making them also less susceptible to the intended message (Buijzen, 2007). However, advertisers are always coming up with new ways to market to children, not only through television via online media and wireless devices using new techniques such as stealth advertising. Stealth advertising is a way for advertisers to disguise the purpose of the advertising assuming that when consumers do not recognize the message as an advertisement, they will be more open to the persuasive arguments. Although this cannot be done in advertising to children, advertisers still use stealth advertising by encouraging children to interact online with brand characters disguised as video advertisements containing news releases (Calvert, 2008).

## **Summary**

Overall, Advertisements carry many different effects on consumers, especially on children who are still in the early stages of cognitive, affective and behavior development. Advertisers are able to attract the attention of children by attaching a product to values, beliefs and feelings by using product placement, brand loyalty and brand characters in a bright, animated commercial to distract from the true intent of the persuasive message. However, the issue in this is that many advertisements promote unhealthy behaviors such as unhealthy eating, tobacco and alcohol usage, sex and unhealthy body image, materialism and low life-satisfaction which carry a negative impact on children leading to many consequences that need to be addressed. That is why there is a need for more advertising literacy programs to educate children and allow them a chance to understand the influence of advertising, helping them to understand the purpose and be able to respond critically thereby reducing the effects and consequences of advertisements. We will look at the Advertising Literacy programs that will help form a framework for planning and implementing it in Schools across America. Literacy programs aim to strengthen a child's knowledge of persuasion and the purpose of advertising by providing methods of critical thinking and coping mechanisms (Nelson 2016, p. 172, as cited in Hwang, Yum & Jeong, 2018).

## **Advertising Literacy and Two-Dimension Learning Style**

Advertising literacy is “an individual's knowledge of and abilities to cope with different types of advertising techniques (Hudders, Cauberghe & Panic, 2016, p. 211, as cited in Hwang, Yum & Jeong, 2018)”. Advertising literacy is the process of understanding the persuasive and selling intent of advertising and using this understanding to analyze an advertised product. Literacy programs aim to strengthen a child's knowledge of persuasion and the purpose of

advertising by providing methods of critical thinking and coping mechanisms (Nelson 2016, p. 172, as cited in Hwang, Yum & Jeong, 2018). The performance of advertising literacy is when a child accesses what they have learned and apply that knowledge when they are being exposed to advertising, making children less vulnerable to the effects of advertising.

There is an urgency for advertising literacy programs because with the increase of digital technology, comes an increase in advertising being targeted to children on these platforms. Children under the age of seven still have difficulty differentiating between television programs and advertising commercials and view advertising as entertainment because it is more interesting and attractive than it is for older children (Buijzen, 2007). It is not until a child reaches around the age of eight, they are able to differentiate between the two (Rozendaal & Lapierre, 2011), making them more susceptible and exposed to the messages of advertising. Advertising literacy can help to better educate children about intent and nature of advertisements and participating in advertising literacy activities allows them a chance to activate their knowledge and become more conscious (Pamies, Ryan & Valverde, 2016).

### **The *Five Key Questions* of Media Literacy published by The Center of Media Literacy**

Advertising literacy is an effective process that allows critical thinking regarding media and can help to disrupt its negative influences by teaching children evaluation, analyzing and decoding skills and to communicate messages in a variety of forms (Sekarasih et al., 2018; Aufderheide 1993; Jeong, Cho & Hwang, 2012). Thoman and Jolls (2004) created the *Five Key Questions* of media literacy that should be focused on for children:

- (1) Who created this message?
- (2) What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
- (3) How might different people understand this message differently from me?

- (4) What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in- or omitted from- this message?
- (5) Why is this message being sent? (Sekarasih et al., 2018; Thoman & Jolls, 2004, p. 27-27).

*The Five Key Questions* is meant to provide an entry point for the five fundamental aspects of messages and was published in *CML MediaLit Kit* by the Center of Media Literacy (2003). CML is known as a pioneering organization for media literacy and provides a framework for learning and teaching in today's age of media. Once learned, the *Five Key Questions* can serve as an automatic routine in analyzing and critically thinking about media messages (Thoman & Jolls, 2004), creating critical attitudes towards advertising. However, there are many studies that provide mixed reviews whether media literacy is actually effective. This is possibly due to advertising literacy programs sole focus on cognitive critical thinking, activating fact-based beliefs. Children may not be able to grasp the full concept because they are not placed in real-time situations with their cognitive knowledge therefore eliminating affective critical thought which relates to how they emotionally react to an advertisement (Sekarashih, 2018).

Current advertising literacy programs supply cognitive thinking in a two-dimensional learning strategy, which focuses on building facts and skills and assumes deeper thinking (Stieff, Bateman & Uttal, 2005). The knowledge learned in two-dimensional advertising literacy programs are not being applied to the real-life concepts in which the knowledge and skills should be applied. A three-dimensional learning strategy approach in advertising literacy creates deeper knowledge by taking topics, facts and skills and applying them to real life concepts and situations creating a visual and demonstrative aspect on learning (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p. 22-27). An example of two-dimensional learning strategy would be knowledge and skills being followed-up with photographs, worksheets, charts or other forms of images which are flat and can only provide width and length and offers no thickness, which is the assumed need for deeper

thinking. An example of three-dimensional learning strategy refers to knowledge and skills being applied to materials that have width, length and thickness, such as a using live materials like popular advertisements, visual representation of a real-life situations or a diorama (Zainuddin, 2014). The present advertising literacy program will incorporate the best practices from both the two-dimension and three-dimensional learning strategies.

### **Advertising Literacy and Three-Dimensional Learning Style**

Advertising literacy programs should be based around a three-dimensional learning style. Three-dimensional learning is a hands-on learning experience that uses facts and skills added with an extra layer of visual and demonstration that creates deeper thinking and awareness (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p. 22-23). To ensure the success of advertising literacy, programs should begin by reinforcing advertising literacy knowledge while being exposed to advertising. Three-dimensional advertising literacy programs must distinguish from children just having advertising knowledge and place more emphasis on children being able to retrieve and applying the advertising knowledge in real-time situations. This will help children differentiate different types of advertising and the techniques they use. Children may possess advertising literacy knowledge but that does not ensure they know how or even when to apply this knowledge to advertising commercials (Rozendaal & Lapierre, 2011). This is possibly due to the fact that maturing children lack the ability to retrieve and apply their advertising knowledge while viewing an advertisement, making them unable to stop and think (Rozendaal, 2011). By teaching children to have critical attitudes towards advertising, a three-dimensional advertising literacy program will help children to understand the consequences of advertising, why advertisers target children, recognize advertising messages and persuasion cues, such as bright colors and animations or the use of brand characters, understand the selling intent of advertising, and how to

appropriately respond to advertising messages using the *Five Key Questions* as a guide.

Advertising literacy programs also should begin by helping children understand the consequences of advertising and why advertisers target children. These components will help children to understand why there is a need for advertising literacy programs. Next, children need to be taught how to differentiate advertising from television programs and other sources of information ensuring that children are understanding the content they see, after this comes the component of understanding the intention of advertising, which allows children to be able to evaluate an advertisement (Moses & Baldwin, 2005, as cited in Tarabashkina & Quester, 2018). Next, advertising literacy programs should focus on children recognizing persuasion tactics and marketing patterns in an advertisement and they will be prompted to reinterpret it using the *Five Key Questions* to critically interpret advertising (Tarabashkina & Quester, 2018)

A three-dimensional advertising literacy program should administer advertising knowledge to children through project-based learning, putting practices to work. Projects should be designed so that children can access the learned knowledge and core ideas and apply them through experience (Owens, 2017). Children are better able to learn and grasp concepts when they are actively engaging in practices, sharing ideas with others and evaluating the representations of said knowledge (Houseal, 2016). For the advertising literacy program to be effective, it must contain a learning objective and a learning lesson. A learning objective refers to the knowledge and understanding of a concept and the learning lesson refers to a set of activities that reinforce and teach the complete concept (Houseal, 2015).

### **Advertising Regulations and Federal Trade Commission Laws in the U.S.**

Advertising rules and regulations in the United States are enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC.gov, 2004) to protect consumers from deceptive and unfair marketplace and



business practices and prevent unfair methods of competition in commerce (FTC.gov, 2004). The FTC's policy for Advertising and Marketing states that "claims in advertisements must be truthful, cannot be deceptive or unfair and must be evidence based." For children, the FTC states that when advertisements are directed towards children, they must comply with "truth-in-advertising standards", which is The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA); containing a six-step compliance plan for businesses with websites aimed at children. COPPA allows parents to be in control of what information commercial websites are wanting to collect from children under the age of 13. This protection act provides parents with a direct notice of their information practices and must get a verifiable consent from parents before they are allowed to collect the personal information of children (FTC.gov, 2004).

The FTC's statutory authority, which can be found in Section 5 of the FCT Act, prohibits unfair or deceptive acts and practices. The Commission uses three elements to find deception within advertising: "(1) the representation, omission, or practice must be likely to mislead the consumer; (2) the act or practice must be considered from the perspective of the reasonable consumer; and (3) the representation, omission, or practice must be material, that is, likely to affect a consumer's choice or conduct, thereby leading to injury. When a representation or sales practice is targeted to a specific audience, such as children, the FTC evaluates the representation from the standpoint of an ordinary child (FTC.gov, 2004).

Another advertising regulation in the U.S. is the "Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children Advertising" by The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. This regulation states that advertisers must ensure that advertising for children is not deceptive, unfair or inappropriate for its intended audience. CARU evaluates the maturity, experience as well as considers the possible limitations of their ability of child age

group being targeted (Lubben, 2016). CARU enforces its regulations by monitoring advertisements, websites and online services that are directed at children and reviews complaints about advertising and online practices to determine if they are in violation of the regulations (CARU Pdf). The regulations are directed at children under the age of twelve.

The last regulation that the U.S. has in place for children and advertising is the Children's Television Act (CTA) (1990). The CTA was created to limit the number of entertainment-based programs and provide children with educational and information based programming. Television stations were required to show at least three hours of educational programming and also limited the allowed run-time for commercials to 10.5 minutes per hour during the weekdays and 12 minutes per hour during weekends. In 1996, they strengthened the CTA regulations requiring that all educational programming to be labeled and must be shown within a certain day and time period (Sheehen, 2004).

### **Children Advertising Regulations Across Counties**

#### **India**

The children advertising regulations in other countries vary from the regulations that are based in the U.S. India, Sweden and Quebec are known for their strong advertising regulations and what can be advertised to children. In India, advertising is regulated and controlled by the Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI 1985) and is known as a self-regulatory council to promote responsible advertising. The ASCI generally ensure that advertisements are truthful in their claims, non-offensive and follow the standards of public decency, ensure advertised products are not harmful to society and manage fairness in competition. The ASCI carry a different set of guidelines when it comes to advertising to children known as the Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act (1956). This regulation does not allow any advertisements targeted to

children to contain anything that can cause physical, mental or moral harm or exploits their vulnerability (Global Jurix, Advocates & Solicitors, 2012). In 2018, India's food regulators, the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) placed a ban on all child advertising containing food products that are processed and containing a high level of fat, sugar and salt (Rana & Co. Advocates, 2018). This regulation ensures that food advertisement claims are consistent with their label and does not undermine the importance of a healthy and balanced diet (Ray, 2018).

### **Sweden**

Sweden is another country that enforces strict laws against advertising to children. Sweden's Radio and Television Act (1996) prohibits television advertisements aimed at children under the age of twelve, prohibits characters who play in programs aimed at children under twelve to appear in advertising commercials, and advertisements may not appear before or after programs intended for children under the age of twelve (Aqil & Nilsson, 2011). It is also against the law for advertising to be sent via direct mail addressed to children under the age of sixteen (Swedish Consumers Association, 2001). The law restricts advertisements containing pornographic material, alcohol and tobacco, foods and drinks known to cause obesity to protect children as well as help adults make healthier decisions (Browne et al., 2018).

### **Quebec**

Like India and Sweden, Quebec also has very strict laws pertaining to children and advertising. The Consumer Protection Act prohibits advertising to children under the age of thirteen. This has three determinations on if an advertisement is directed at children under thirteen: (a) the nature and intended purpose of the goods advertised (b) the manner of presenting such advertisements (c) the time and place it is shown. These three criteria relate to advertised

products that appeal to children, contain language commonly used by children or characters seen on children's programming and songs, animations and colors that are appealing to children (Consumer Protection Act, 2012, p. 4). However, unlike India and Sweden, Quebec does allow educational advertising under certain conditions. Educational advertising "seeks to bring about changes in attitude or behavior in the interest of the person for whom the ad is intended or for the benefit of society (Consumer Protection Act, 2012, p. 12). Educational advertisements must promote a healthy lifestyle and responsible behavior, encouraging caution or safety and may not encourage children to buy a product or specific brand, contain commercial messaging and may not include a logo of a sponsor whose products appeal to children.

### **Summary**

The advertising laws for protecting children were put into place to prevent advertisers from promoting unhealthy food choices and lifestyle choices to children. Unlike the U.S. regulations, India, Sweden and Quebec's regulations restrict children generally under the age of thirteen from being exposed to television advertising, especially advertising that promotes unhealthy foods known to cause obesity as well as tobacco and alcohol that may lead to addiction. This differs from the U.S. regulations as advertisements tend to be deceptive, unfair or inappropriate. India, Sweden and Quebec take the appropriate measures to ensure that children are protected from the possible consequences caused by the over-exposure to advertising and Quebec takes it one step further to implement educational advertisements.

The U.S. regulations are very lax in comparison and should take the extra measures to protect children from the consequences of advertising. The U.S. regulations should strive to ban advertisements targeted to children under the age of twelve, work to prevent child obesity by restricting advertisements containing foods that are high in fats and salts and have more

educational advertisements. These are the measures that other countries have taken to protect their children and in doing so, promote a healthier lifestyle without the influence and pressure of “glamour appearing” products, which often times have consequences that are not shown or presented in the advertisement. Therefore, the present study through an understanding of the literature on the consequences of advertising and the regulations enforced by countries across the world answers the first three research questions and proposes need for a literacy program for children and moves towards creating the advertising literacy program.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY FOR THE ADVERTISING LITERACY PROGRAM

A case study method was used to collect information on the literacy programs through secondary sources. Following the review on the two-dimensional and a framework of the three-dimensional literacy programs, a course proposal was created for an In-class or an Online Advertising Literacy Program for children. The advertising literacy course proposal framework was created from Media Smarts, a non-profit Canadian organization for digital and media literacy and the lesson plans from Admongo.gov, powered by the Federal Trade Commission. This three-dimensional advertising literacy program proposal will aim to teach children how to critically view and think about advertisements and understand the positive and negative consequences of food advertising, tobacco and alcohol usage and sex in advertising. The modules will be educating children on the impact of advertising on materialism, self-image and self-esteem and educate children on the use of visual and verbal strategies in the use of animations, brand characters and bright colors in advertising. The learning objective of a three-dimensional advertising literacy program would contain the cognitive knowledge and understanding of what advertising is, understanding the consequences of advertising and why advertisers target children, the differentiation between advertising and television programs, understanding of the intention of advertising and the recognition of persuasion tactics and marketing patterns. As each lesson would include activities and quizzes to test learning outcomes, they will reinforce cognitive knowledge using current advertisements, pictorials of concepts and examples of relevant advertisements will help children to recognize and differentiate advertising tactics. Further, examples of advertisements containing popular brand characters and celebrities and discussions with fellow children will be using the Five Key

Questions to deepen knowledge, express opinions and strengthen critical attitudes, allowing children to retrieve and apply their advertising knowledge while viewing advertisements.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS- AN ADVERTISING LITERACY COURSE PROPOSAL**

This course proposal for an advertising literacy program consists of 8 different modules for school children in grades 5 through 12, teaching them different concepts to analyze, evaluate and critically respond to advertising, in addition to teaching students the meaning of advertising, its consequences and how the Federal Trade Commission protects children from advertising messages. Each module contains a set of objectives, a teaching brief, a list of example advertisements, a discussion and lastly a quiz, to test the learning outcomes. This course proposal should be used to help students learn about and become more aware of advertising messages.

The 8 modules included are

1. Understanding Advertising and Selling Intent of Advertising
2. Evaluating, Analyzing and Decoding Ads/ Understanding the Five Key Questions
3. Difference Between Content and Advertising
4. Why/How Ads Attract Children
5. Consequences of Food and Beverage Advertising
6. Consequences of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Advertising
7. Consequences of Beauty and Sex Advertising
- 7a. Social and Economic Consequences of Advertising (Materialism and Life-Satisfaction)
8. Viewer protection laws for Advertising- Federal Trade Commission, Laws and Regulations

#### **Course Proposal for An Advertising Literacy Program for School Children**

##### **Module 1: Understanding Advertising and Selling Intent of Advertising**

###### **Objectives:**

1. Students will learn the definition and concept of advertising,



2. The different types of product advertisements.
3. The selling intent and the impact that advertising has on children – A fun way.
4. Students learn the difference between content and advertising

### **Overview: Teaching Brief**

Explain to students that advertising is a tool of communication in the media to promote and sell a product or service to viewers. There are many different forms of advertisements and they appear on television, in magazines, newspapers and online. The goal of advertising is to provide viewers with information and details about a product, its benefits and advantages. However, advertising attempts to make one product more favorable than others through persuasion tactics and associating the product with values and feelings to convince people to think their way and persuade them to buy. Many advertisements tend to make us happy and we want them all. Advertisements are created to sell products, but they also make us buy things we don't need.

Advertisements are different from programs and most media have many advertisements. Advertisements are inserted/included in the programs for young children to see and ask their parents to buy them. A comic cartoon makes us laugh and enjoy and when we see ads in the program, we tend to believe them to be true and want them.

Tell students with examples that they have to be careful in what they need and not buy everything that they see in the media and outdoors. Ex. If we eat too much of this food, then we become fat and unhealthy, more examples can be added. We should not spend our money just because we see the advertisements on television and games.

## List of Advertisements:



**Figure 1 - Toys R Us, Fashion Girl Toy Advertisement**

1. This advertisement is a catalogue ad from Toys R Us advertising toy hair products for children and their dolls. This ad is showing the different uses of their toys such as a blow-dryer, a styling belt and various hair clips and make up products intended for Fashion Girl Hair Model.

Indirectly, it is selling beauty products to kids as they are getting familiar with the use of the products that they will be using in the future.



**Figure 2 - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Half Shell Heroes Toy Advertisement**

2. This advertisement is a toy ad for the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles “Half-Shell Heroes”. The ad clearly shows the product they are advertising as well as the characters that are included with the product. This ad also contains product details such as the 20 phrases and sound effects, a disc shooter and a trash cannon, letting consumers know what are the uses of the product and the multiple ways of playing.



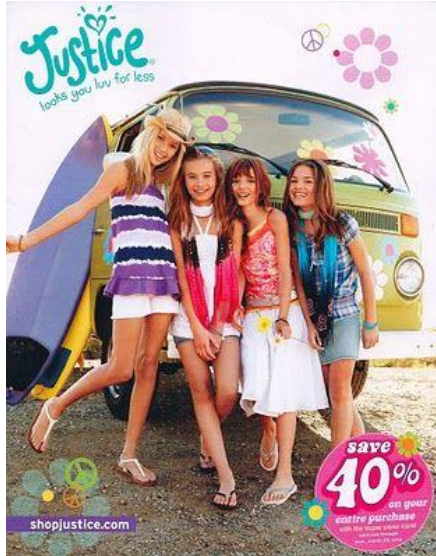
**Figure 3 - Despicable ME 2- McDonalds Happy Meal Toy Advertisement**

3. This advertisement is a brand character advertisement for McDonalds Happy Meal toys promoting the Despicable Me 2 movie. McDonalds has used this technique over decades offering toys with their Happy meals that have been attracting kids. This ad states that the toy comes free with a purchase of a Happy Meal with new designs that are available every Thursday. Each Happy Meal comes with a choice of 1 of the 9 different style of Despicable Me 2 toys.



**Figure 4 - Brand Character Shrek Twinkies**

4. This advertisement is a brand character food ad for Shrek Twinkies. This ad is promoting Shrek and his movies with an ogre green creamy filling. This ad also mentions that it includes a twinkies coupon inside. This ad is attractive to children who like Shrek as well as those that like twinkies and thereby promoting junk food through the use of comic characters that kids love.



**Figure 5 - Justice Clothing Advertisement**

5. This advertisement is a catalogue advertising for Justice: Girls' Clothing & Fashion for Tweens. The ad is promoting hippie style clothing for girls, showing them happy and fashionable together. This ad also contains a coupon for 40% off your entire purchase.

**Commercial Ads:**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKXZGJdyJzs&t=19s>

**Figure 6 - Top 20 most popular Toys for Kids and Teenagers 2018-2019**

**Activity:**

Show students 5 print ads and 5 commercials with the explanations and encourage them to comment and describe them using the discussion questions. Ask students to point out what they notice in each picture in the advertisements.

**Discussion:**

Encourage students to discuss and talk with the following lead questions.

1. Do we all like to watch advertisements?
2. What kind of ads do you like to see?

3. Who created this message?
4. Why is this message being sent?
5. What is the product being sold?
6. What does the advertisement make you feel?
7. From the ads that you saw, which one do you want to purchase the product?

Why or Why not?

### **Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What is advertising?
2. Can you recall a few advertisements?
3. Where do advertisements appear?
4. Why do they have so many advertisements?
5. Did you want to buy any products, (toys, games, clothes) after seeing the advertisement?

## **Module 2: Evaluating, Analyzing and Decoding Advertising/ Understanding Five Key**

### **Questions**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will learn the *Five Key Questions*,
2. Students will learn how to evaluate, analyze and decode advertising.

#### **Overview:**

Educate students on the *Five Key Questions* as a guide to evaluating, analyzing, decoding advertising and a way to help communicate messages. Students should use the *Five Key Questions* to deepen knowledge, express opinions and strengthen critical attitudes, allowing them to access and apply their advertising knowledge while viewing an advertisement. When looking at and understanding an advertisement, student will discuss the following questions:

- (1) Who created this message?
- (2) What creative/visual and verbal techniques were used to attract my attention?
- (3) How might different people understand this message differently from me?
- (4) What kind of lifestyles are represented in- or not shown in this message?
- (5) Why is this message being sent?

### **List of Advertisements**

1. <https://youtu.be/O7o1qgS91d4?t=9>

### **Figure 7 - 2000's Children Advertisements**

#### **Activity:**

Show students a wide variety of advertisements. Encourage critical thinking by asking students to use the *Five Key Questions* on an advertisement of their choice.

#### **Discussion:**

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative ways are used to attract my attention?
3. How will me and different people understand this message?
4. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in- or omitted from- this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?
6. What did I understand about the advertisement?

#### **Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What are the *Five Key Questions* used for?
2. How did the *Five Key Questions* help you to better understand an advertisement?
3. When should you use the *Five Key Questions*?

4. Did the *Five Key Questions* help you to understand the advertisement more? Why or Why not?

5. Did you get a better understanding of what the ad's message was?

### **Module 3: The Difference Between Television Content and Advertising**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will learn the difference between TV/ film programming and Advertising
2. Students will learn the time difference between TV programming and Advertising

#### **Overview:**

Some children might not be able to tell the difference between television entertainment and advertising messages and do not understand the advertising in-between the programs.

Explain the differences between television program and advertising. Advertising is to sell a product or service. Advertisements can easily be mistaken as entertainment or announcements, making children more susceptible to believing the advertising message. Make sure that children understand the content they see will and be able to evaluate and be more critical of an advertisement.

A television program is a segment of content created for entertainment or for enjoyment. An advertisement is content used for promotion and selling a product or service to viewers. Television programs usually last 30 or more minutes with 3-5 minutes advertising commercials during the TV programming.

#### **List of program Clips with Advertisements:**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g7FWfYCyT0>

#### **Figure 8 - American Girl Doll Hospital Stop Motion Advertisement**

Vs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3C7wbfjvjI>

**Figure 9 - An American Girl Doll Tv Programming Clip**

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1dXUttTCJc>

**Figure 10 - SpongeBob SquarePants Cereal Advertisement Commercial**

Vs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOcYRh6cvqk>

**Figure 11 - SpongeBob SquarePants TV programming Clip**

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pzA-mUIV8g>

**Figure 12 - Frozen Dolls Toy Advertisement Clip**

Vs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgaTy0CKDQw>

**Figure 13 - Frozen Movie Beginning Programming Clip**

4. [https://youtu.be/1Jc\\_d2dM8rk](https://youtu.be/1Jc_d2dM8rk)

**Figure 14 - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Advertisement Commercial**

Vs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOuSCfJgpd8>

**Figure 15 - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles TV programming Clip**

**Activity:**

Show students a wide range of different type of advertisements for children including short clips from popular children television shows.

Eg- Sponge Bob Square Pants and the cereal for Sponge Bob Square Pants. Each student should pick an advertisement that resonates with them to review and critically think about.



**Discussion:**

Encourage students to consider

1. How does this advertisement differ from a popular television program?
2. What is the product in the advertisement, what is it for and who is it for?
3. Is there a message being sent? Why or Why not?
4. Were you able to tell the difference between the TV program and the advertisement?

How?

5. Which do you prefer to watch? Why?

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What is the difference between advertisements and TV programs?
2. What is the purpose of a TV program?
3. About how long do advertisements last?
4. How long is a TV program?
5. What is an advertisement?

**Module 4: How Advertising Attracts Children****Objectives:**

1. Students will learn why and how advertisers attract children.
2. How cartoon characters, celebrities, sports personalities, and toys are used to attract children.
3. How does the use of color, music, design and fun times attract children.

**Overview:**

Educate students on the three main ways that advertisers use to attract children. These are: children are the primary market, they are the influencing market, and they are the future market.

Children hold buying power over their parents and influence over billions of spending dollars each year, and they influence household purchasing decisions. Teach students that their childhood experiences, the characters, shows and movies they enjoy and like the most, influence their brand purchasing behavior. The brands they use in childhood will continue to be used in adulthood. Advertisers know that children will pester their parents and advertisers want to have a long-lasting relationship that will influence and persuade how they shop once they are adults.

The attention-grabbing techniques that are used in advertising besides brand characters and placement include bright colors, animations, sound effects and songs. These techniques are purposely placed in advertisements to attract their attention and make them fond of the product or service being offered.

**List of Advertisements with celebrities, cartoon characters, catchy jingles, toys etc.**

1. [https://youtu.be/x6VqpE5\\_nRM](https://youtu.be/x6VqpE5_nRM)

**Figure 16 - Diet Dr Pepper Advertisement- Santa, Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny**

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oInqvBgU0xg>

**Figure 17 - Kidz BOP Advertisement**

3. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF6OYq\\_2Ooc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF6OYq_2Ooc)

**Figure 18 - Cookie Monster Siri Advertisement Commercial**

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8wIoMHotyE>

**Figure 19 - Colgate - Brush Brush Song Advertisement**

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNdZAgij-K0>

**Figure 20 - Echo Dot Kids Edition Advertisement**

**Activity:**

Show students a wide range of different advertisements that contain branded characters, celebrity

endorsements and products placed in between programs. Ask children to identify the visuals used in each ad (branded characters, celebrity endorsements, catchy songs and animations).

**Discussion:**

Encourage students to learn and understand the use of pictures, color, music, cartoons and celebrities in advertising.

1. What kind of pictures are being used to attract your attention?
2. What lifestyles, and points of view are represented in the advertisements?
3. How does the advertainment make you feel?
4. Which advertisement did you like the most? Why?
5. Which items were you more likely to buy? Why?
6. Why did you want to buy the products in the ads containing the brand/comic characters or celebrity endorsements?

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. Why do advertisers use brand/comic characters, celebrity endorsements and visual techniques?
2. Why do advertisers target children?
3. Do you tell your parents to buy things for you after seeing the ads?
4. How much spending a year do children influence their parents to buy?
5. What influences your purchasing pattern?

**Module 5: Consequences of Food and Beverage Advertising**

**Overview:**

Advertisements market unhealthy products such as unhealthy foods, refined foods and others that can lead children into health problems as evidenced in the literature review. Food

advertising increases food consumption and want for specific food brands, and without moderation, these have led to childhood obesity and this is a precursor to other diseases among children

This module with examples of advertisements teach children that unhealthy products are “cool and fun to use” and can “fix a problem in an instant” but they actually are unhealthy foods and drinks that are likely to cause obesity and health problems.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will learn the consequences of food and beverage as the consumption of these has had a major impact on kids.
2. Learn the types of food advertising that attracts kids and how they should learn to differentiate between the healthy and unhealthy foods.
3. The beverages – how to avoid the cool/unhealthy drinks and the colas.
4. Learn the importance of good healthy foods and vegetables in their diets- In a fun way

**List of Advertisements:**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6K1QBdE1Xyk>

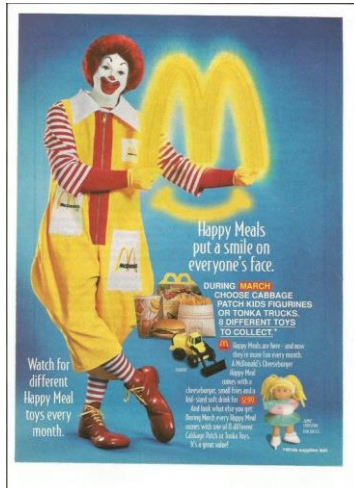
**Figure 21 - Lay's "Mrs. Potato Head" Chip Advertisement**

2. <https://youtu.be/8fapTgMckT8?t=29>

**Figure 22 - Reese's Puff Cereal Advertisement**

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXvhw4nRHIQ>

**Figure 23 - Sour Patch Kids Candy Advertisement**



**Figure 24 - McDonalds Print Advertisement**

4. This advertisement is a McDonalds print ad about Happy Meals. This ad tells consumers that Happy Meals put a smile on everyone's faces. The ad states the price of a Happy Meal as well as what comes inside the bag. Each Happy Meal comes with a toy and each month there is a different toy that kids look forward to and come back for the meal to get the toy.



**Figure 25 - Pop Tarts Barbie Print Advertisement**

5. This advertisement is a brand ad promoting Barbie as The Island Princess. The Pop tart flavor is Islandberry with wild berry filling and contains printed images such as a peacock and an elephant. This ad is attractive to children that like Barbie as well as for children that enjoy pop tarts and is the promotion of junk food.

**Activity:**

Show students' popular food advertisements and using the discussion questions, teach them how advertisers use good fun life and happiness among the people to persuade them to purchase the products. Students will be encouraged to notice how the foods that are being advertised are sugary and some of fast foods containing do not have healthy ingredients like fruits and vegetables.

**Discussion:**

1. Did you like the advertisements shown?
2. Which one of these foods have you had?
3. Do you know the food and the people in the ads?
4. Why did you think you wanted to buy some of them?
5. What makes you want to purchase the product?
6. Do you eat fast foods? Which ones have you had ( from the ads shown)?
7. Who encourages you to eat healthy foods? Have you seen these foods shown in the advertisements before at home?
8. Tell how advertisers hide the true consequences of the products they advertise?
9. Discuss how children get misled by advertising and how it impacts health.

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What can be the consequences/of food advertising? What can happen when you eat so much of these foods.
2. Why do advertisements promote unhealthy products?
3. Of the advertisements shown, which ones do you remember the most? Why do you think you remembered it?

4. What products do you ask your parents for? ( Check which ones are healthy or unhealthy)
5. Why do you think advertisers promote unhealthy products?

## **Module 6: Consequences of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Advertising**

### **Overview:**

Educate students about how alcohol and tobacco are addictive substances and creates dependency, not to mention causes side effects when you try to stop using and that drugs can fix your health problems without mentioning the other health issues and they can cause habits in the process.

Exposure to alcohol and tobacco advertisements are more likely to become smokers or drink alcohol at an early age, which increases the risk of alcohol and tobacco dependency in the future. There is a similar effect with prescription drug advertisements as they send the message to children that there is an available drug to heal all different types of pain and although this may carry some truth, the side effects and consequences are not immediately known or shown in the advertisements.

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will learn about tobacco, alcohol and drug advertising and the consequences of usage of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco.

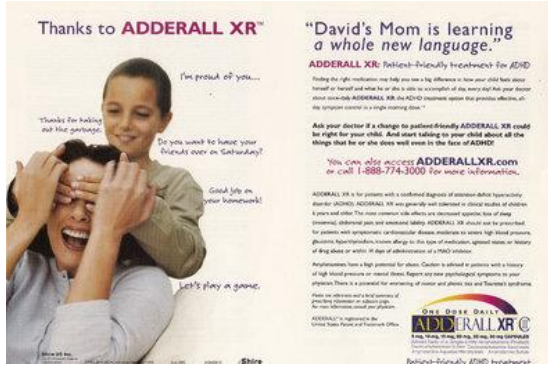
### **List of Advertisements:**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agPinYFD6UE>

### **Figure 26 - Mike's Hard Lemonade uses Deadpool Character**

2. <https://youtu.be/WzGX13YI6P8>

### **Figure 27 - Juul Tobacco Advertisement**



**Figure 28 - Adderall Prescription Drug Print Advertisement**

3. This advertisement is a prescription drug ad for Adderall XR. This ad is promoting the drug used to help children with ADHD. The ad is showing a mother and son appearing to have fun, next to different captions praising the son.



**Figure 29 - Tobacco Print Advertisement**

4. This advertisement is promoting a flavored popcorn tobacco vape pen. Although the ad states that it's not popcorn and it is flavored tobacco, it contains imagery that could attract the attention of tweens and teens, allowing them to misunderstand the message intended.





**Figure 30 - GameCube/Heineken Advertisement**

5. This advertisement is an ad for Heineken Beer and Nintendo GameCube. This ad is implying that beer and a gaming system, makes for a great game day, as you can see the game is duck taped around the two beer bottles. This ad connects a game system intended for children and teens to a beer brand, which is intended for adults.

**Activity:**

Show students advertising containing alcohol, drugs and tobacco products. Have students point out how advertisers make these unhealthy products seem cool and popular using the discussion questions.

**Discussion:**

1. What do you notice first about the alcohol, drugs and tobacco commercials?
2. Do these advertisements make the product more favorable to you? Why or Why not?
3. Why do you think these advertisements fail to mention the health-related consequences?
4. Did you like the advertisements shown?
5. Have your parents talked to you about alcohol, drugs and tobacco? What did they say?
6. Have you seen or heard of the advertised product before? Where?

### **Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What are some consequences/impact of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco usage?
2. How often do you see alcohol, drugs and tobacco commercials?
3. Why do advertisers promote these unhealthy products?
4. How do you feel about the advertisements shown to you, after learning about its consequences?

### **Module 7: Consequences of Beauty and Sex Advertising**

#### **Objective:**

1. Students will learn the use of beauty products, consequences of use of sexual images and unrealistic body images shown in advertising

#### **Overview:**

Teach students that beauty products, body image and sex in advertising is unhealthily promoted and they should see these ads carefully. Sometimes ads use kids when they have nothing to do with the products. Many beauty products; make up, clothes and accessories are sold to the kids. The models are also very sexily clad with sexual poses.

When children are constantly exposed to sexual content in media or advertising, they are likely to experience sexual intercourse or other sexual experiences earlier than those who are not exposed to such content. This teaches children to sexualize products and people without understanding the consequences on health and personal lives.

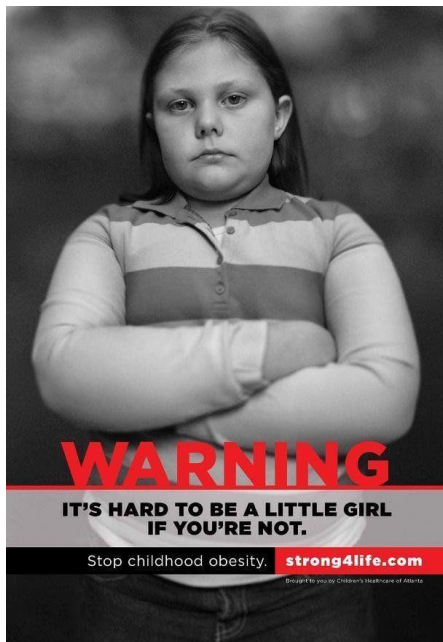
The portrayal of 'sexy' female often appearing thin-like or slender, promotes an unhealthy body-image leading to issues of self-esteem, abnormal eating behaviors and overall relate to a negative body image for young girls and women. Children are unable to understand that many of the images they see are manipulated or photoshopped and what they are seeing is

not a reflection of how people actually are. This sends the message to be appealing, wanted or liked to look like the girl in the commercial not knowing that many of these standards are impossible to achieve.

**Activity:**

Show students' advertisements of beauty products sexual images, nude or a distorted body images of women or men to promote a product or service. Using the discussion questions, encourage students to point how these ads are not reflective of real life.

**List of Advertisements:**



**Figure 31 - Harsh Stop Childhood Obesity Advertisement for Girls**

1. This advertisement is a harsh ad from Strong4Life shaming little girls from being obese. The ad states that “It’s hard to be a little girl if you’re not”, implying that little girls cannot be the typical “little girl” if they are overweight.



**Figure 32 - Harsh Stop Childhood Obesity Advertisement for Boys**

2. This advertisement is a harsh ad from Strong4Life shaming young boys and parents in the household. The ad states that “Fat prevention begins at home and the buffet line”, implying that obesity starts at home with the parents and that these obese children are overweight because of how much time they spend at the buffet.



**Figure 33 - Fair & Lovely- Lightening Cream Advertisement**

3. This advertisement is a color correcting cream from Fair & Lovely. This ad only contains two shades of skin color, where there is a range of skin colors from dark to light. This ad is implying that “You are perfected” when you correct your tone, which is targeted to the lighter skin colors to keep their skin light and you need to be fair to be lovely as the name implies.



**Figure 34 - Make- Up Girls App Store Game Advertisement**

4. This advertisement is for a make-up girls' game on the iPhone/Android app store. In this advertisement, children can do 'make up' for dolls to make them appear as glamorous as they like. This ad teaches young girls that make-up is necessary to feel and look beautiful and that only beautiful women appear on magazine covers.



**Figure 35 - Maxi-Milk, Milk for Real Men Advertisement**

5. This advertisement is for Maxi-Milk, is an ad for a milk for real men. This ad contains a man with a work-out body, hanging over the edge of a cliff drinking the drink that “helps build lean muscles”. This ad is implying that real men have toned and worked-out bodies and do extreme sports and that if you drink this, you could become fine and athletic.

**Discussion:**

1. How early should children be using beauty products?
2. What are the different types of products do children use?
3. What are some of the unrealistic body-images in the advertisement?
4. How did you feel about this advertisement?
5. Did you want to be like the models in the advertisement? Why or why not?
6. Did the advertisements make you want to purchase the product? Why?
7. Understand the use of unrealistic sexual images used and be careful not to get influenced by them

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What kind of beauty products do you know of ?
2. Do you like to use make up, lipstick, hair accessories?
3. Do you want to look like the models in the advertisements?
4. Do you compare yourself with the persons in the advertisements?
5. Can you be careful when you look at ads that show sexual pictures/images of women and men?
6. Do you understand that there are some unrealistic body images being promoted in advertisements and it is difficult to achieve them?
7. Can you see the difference between natural look of people in some ads and the

‘unrealistic images? (Based on some of the Dove, Always ads and the other Beauty product ads)

## **Module 7a: Social and Economic Consequences of Advertising (Materialism and Life-Satisfaction)**

### **Objective:**

1. Students will learn about advertising leading to materialism and life satisfaction

### **Overview:**

Explain to the students that excessive exposure to advertising can lead to materialism and low-life satisfaction. Teach students the importance of good life projected in advertising and to get things that are needed. Dispense the ideas of ‘we want everything’ and “we are what we have”, Teach the children the importance of money and how parents work hard to earn.

Materialism is the belief that more products will lead to greater happiness and lack of, will lead to unhappiness and life satisfaction is how people show their emotions, feelings and how they personally feel (positively or negatively) about their life. Materialism teaches that products will provide happiness, success and fulfillment, thereby creating a desire for advertised to feel positive emotions.

Advertising makes us focus on material possessions, and teaches us that we aren’t cool enough, beautiful enough or just generally lacking qualities until we have purchased a certain product or service. When children do not receive an advertised product, they are likely to become unhappy affecting their emotional life and overall life-satisfaction.

### **List of Advertisements:**

#### **Nintendo SWITCH Advertisements**

The Nintendo SWITCH advertisements show various young children playing the game with their

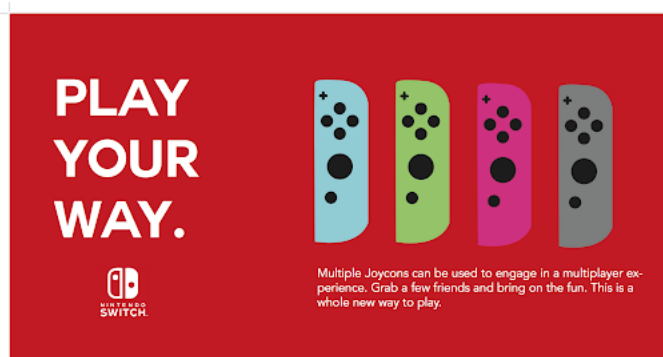
friends, in different locations while smiling using the different types of Nintendo SWITCH colors that the game can come in. These ads could persuade children that they must have this gaming system and that without it, they are missing out on all the fun.

1.



**Figure 36 - Nintendo SWITCH Advertisement 1**

2.



**Figure 37 - Nintendo SWITCH Advertisement 2**

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIX1VdvYaWc>

**Figure 38 - Nintendo SWITCH Commercial Advertisement**



**Activity:**

Show them three different ads of the same product and tell kids that they should not want everything they see in the ads. Enjoying what they have and what we can do are more important. Tell them that 'how money is wasted, and parents find it difficult to buy them. Have a fun activity of asking children to tell stories of how they got some toys or gifts by crying, pestering or nagging their parents.

**Discussion:**

1. How do you feel when your parents do not purchase a product you want?
2. Do you feel like you need products/toys to be happy?
3. Name a time when your parents wouldn't purchase a product you wanted. How did you feel?
4. Do you think you are materialistic?
5. Is there any product you think you couldn't live without? Why?

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. Do you want to buy too many things? (Like many dolls or Lego sets)
2. Do products make you feel happy? Are you happy if you get everything you want- (life-satisfaction?)
3. Do you/we become greedy when you/we want all that we see in ads and if our friends are having them (materialism is a difficult word for the kids)
4. Do you want to pester your parents to buy you many things that you see?
5. Will you cry or be unhappy if you don't get what you want?

**Module 8: Protection of Children from Advertising- Federal Trade Commission, Laws and Regulations**

**Objectives:**

1. This module will reinforce the positive and negative effects of advertising to children
2. Students learn the difference between advertising and deception
3. Students will learn the Federal Trade Commission’s laws against deception in advertising.

**Overview: Teaching Brief**

Explain to the students the positive and negative effects of advertising and the differences between advertising and deception through a few ads.

Teach students that the U.S. Government has laws in place to protect viewers from deception in advertisements. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) monitors U.S. advertisements and protects its viewers from deception, making sure the advertisements are being truthful.

The FTC uses three elements to determine deception in advertisements: (1) what is being said or not said about the advertised product or service is likely to mislead the viewer; (2) the product or service must be looked at from the perspective of the viewer; (3) the product or service is likely affect the viewers conduct or choice, leading to injury.

**List of Advertisements:**

**Figure 39 - Red Bull “Gives you wings” Advertisement**

1. This advertisement is an ad for Red Bull that implies that drinking this energy drink will “give

you wings”. This is false advertisement because Red Bull does not enhance athletic abilities or intellectual performance.



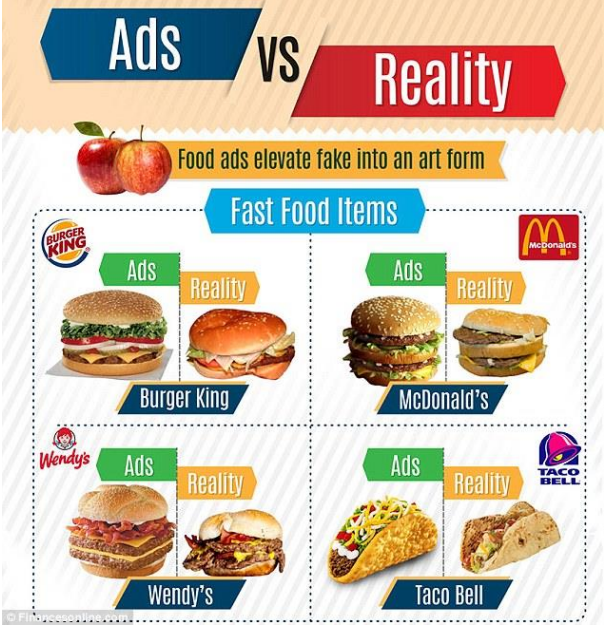
**Figure 40 - Pop Tarts, Misleading Frosting**

2. This is an advertisement for Pop Tarts, which contains a full bed of icing on the food packaging. However, a consumer received a Pop Tart that hardly contains any icing at all. This is a form of misleading advertising because the icing layer is not always as perfect as the product that the advertisement claims.



**Figure 41 - Maybelline- Misleading product, The Eraser Advertisement**

3. This advertisement is for Maybelline, The Eraser, which claims to rid women of aging lines and wrinkles. This is a form of misleading ad as the women in the advertisements are shown without the aging lines and wrinkles, however, in real life, she appears to have the aging lines and wrinkles the advertisement did not include.



**Figure 42 - Ads vs Reality Food False Advertisements**

4. This is a chart containing the different fast food burgers that are advertised on television. The fast food burger is usually made up to look more appetizing, perfect and larger in size. This is a form of false or misleading advertising because the real burgers do not look as appetizing, are sloppier and are smaller in reality.



**Figure 43 - Dove Body Wash- False Advertisement**

5. This advertisement for Dove Body Wash is false advertisement as well as racist. This ad is implying that Dove's Body Wash can "wash away the dirt" implying that the "dirty" and having

a darker skin tone and was made "clean" with dove and now appearing to have a lighter skin tone. This is false advertisement because the ad uses two different women with contrasting skin tones to imply Dove's cleaning mechanisms, however, this product cannot lighten or make your skin change to lighter skin tones. This is racist because it is implied the darker skin women are considered to have a "dirty" tone and the lighter colored women are "clean".

**Activity:**

Show students' popular advertisements that were known for deception. Encourage them to understand and describe the deceptive ads using the discussion questions.

Ask students to point out what they notice in each picture and explain how they interpret deception.

**Discussion:**

Encourage students to consider

1. There is a difference between advertising and deception, (simpler terms, do not understand, cheat, fool people, misinform)
2. In what ways are the ads making the young ones like and want to buy the products in the advertisement?
3. What differences in advertising and advertising deception do you see?
4. Teach them to discuss with their parents and teachers and understand advertising.
5. What are the harmful effects of such ads on them- examples of spending too much money, getting health problems, eating those products, using cosmetics at a young age on skin, etc.
6. Talk about the FTC and other regulations and how they take measures to control advertising that may have harmful effects

**Quiz: Testing Learning Outcomes**

1. What is the difference between advertising and deception?
2. How do you watch advertisements carefully?
3. Will you talk to parents and teachers about ads?
4. Which U.S. agency monitors advertisements?
5. What are the three elements used to determine deception in advertisements?
6. What did you understand/learn from this module?

**Course Evaluation**

To pre-test the content of the eight modules of the advertising literacy program, three schoolteachers were approached to give their opinions and also provide a few suggestions on the feasibility of the course modules. The first teachers were Tasha Rhymes, ABD, and Shamyra Brown, B.A, both middle school educators located in Cobb County Schools, Atlanta, Ga. and thirdly by Denise Delane, who is a retired grade school educator located in Cook County Schools, Chicago, Il. Mrs. Rhymes stated that “this information is relevant and accurate for grades 5-12 due to the major impact the media and social media has on this young generation. Advertising has a direct effect on spending and the younger generation needs financial awareness. These will be effective lessons that will bring awareness to fiscal responsibility”. Mrs. Rhymes suggestions for enhancing the advertising literacy program would be to incorporate lessons about YouTube shows and online Apps such as Tik Tok and Triller advertisements because she noticed her students are very attracted to those outlets as well. Overall, Mrs. Rhymes feels “this information is useful and can be made understandable for younger or older audiences with some adjustments and be just as useful.”

Ms. Brown stated “I think this program would undoubtedly be great for high schoolers. I

think as the curriculum presented in the program; nothing would have to be changed for their age level of students. Just make sure that you have consent from parents when talking about sex.” However, she suggests that the information in the program might be a little advanced for fifth and sixth graders because “we live in an age where we don’t even have to watch them anymore on certain devices, we are able to fast forward through them”, so her concern is that this age group might not even pay attention to commercials. Ms. Brown suggests that if this program is going to be used for younger audiences, it should be modified for their level of development and understanding. She continues to stress the importance of speaking with the students’ parents about the modules related to sex or that it should be omitted for the younger age groups as “parents are very touchy about who, when, and how sex is introduced to them in the school setting”.

Ms. Delane only left behind a few suggestions in regard to the advertising literacy program. She states that the overall concept and structure of the literacy program was well created. However, she suggests that program embraces age appropriate advertising examples for school age children. For example, “Happy meals are usually designed to target ages 2 through 7 years. Those age group were not mentioned in your paper”. Another suggestion she had was to be creative in demonstrating what you consider important in advertising literacy” and suggests studying what really sells in today’s market to each age group, so that the program can better relate to what children are currently being exposed to on the market. Given the evaluation from the teachers, who are the potential teachers to administer the courses, a few changes were made to a few course modules. The program advertisements will be revised regularly to keep up with new advertisements that they can identify with, include the Tik Tok and You Tube and if any new issues in advertising that would arise and impact children.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The extensive increase of advertising and its messages delivered through multiple channels that are impacting children necessitates the need for a comprehensive advertising literacy program. Given the urgent need for a three-dimensional Advertising Literacy Program, this study through an extensive review of literature on the consequences of advertising on children, proposed an eight (8) module Advertising Literacy Program. The modules comprised of a rationale for the module, a few relevant advertisements, learning outcomes and testing mechanism through short discussions and quizzes.

As evidenced from the literature review, the resulting effects of advertising relates to the cognitive and affective spheres of children and impacts interpersonal and social relations, bringing about changes in their attitudes, values, and behaviors. Advertisers use attractive visual techniques such as bright colors, animations and sounds to attract the children's attention, and motivating them towards the intended persuasion of the advertisement. When children focus on the attention-grabbing tactics, the advertising message is more exposed and easily comprehended by the children with a higher recall for wanting the advertised products. Children are persuaded to acquire many things and this is because they do not understand the tactics being used or that they are being targeted. Advertising is often linked to materialism and life satisfaction because of the influence that advertised products have over children as well as the influence that children have on their parents purchase decisions. Other consequences of advertising include the influence to want and purchase unhealthy products such as unhealthy foods, tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs and indulgence in sex. As a result, these consequences, such as food advertising increases a child's food consumption and want for specific food brands and many



times without moderation leading to childhood obesity and thereby other physical and mental health issues. Tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs and sex are often overexposed to children, and the children who are consistently exposed, are more likely to become smokers or drink alcohol at an early age, which increases the risk of alcohol or tobacco dependency in the future. The drug commercials send messages to children that there is an available drug to heal all different types of pain without stating the side effects and consequences. Children exposed to sexual content experience sexual intercourse and other sexual experiences earlier than those who are not exposed and these advertising commercials teach children that appearing thin-like or slender is considered “sexy”, which promotes an unhealthy body-image leading to issues of self-esteem, abnormal eating behaviors, and overall relate to negative body images for young girls and women.

Advertising messages are constantly telling consumers that the satisfaction of their needs can be met through buying, and teaches American society that consumption is necessary to be satisfied and ‘you are what you buy’ and ‘your worth is based off what you have’ and ‘can afford’. To combat these consequences of advertising, there is an urgent need for comprehensive advertising literacy programs that educates the children particularly between the ages of 5-15 when they are most vulnerable to advertising messages. These programs as based on past literature on the need for educating children on advertising and the consequences of advertising. Literacy programs aim to strengthen a child’s knowledge of persuasion and the purpose of advertising by providing methods of critical thinking and coping mechanisms. Current advertising literacy programs supply cognitive thinking in a two-dimensional learning strategy, which focuses on building facts and skills and assumes deeper thinking. The knowledge learned in two-dimensional advertising literacy programs are not being applied to the real-life concepts

in which the knowledge and skills should be applied.

To ensure success of the media literacy programs a three-dimensional learning style, which is a hands-on learning experience that uses facts and skills added with an extra layer of visual and practical discussions were created. These learning strategies help to create deeper thinking and awareness, and focuses on reinforcing advertising literacy knowledge to apply when children are being exposed to advertising.

With a three-dimensional advertising literacy program of eight modules, children can learn to understand that excessive exposure to advertising can lead to materialism, low-life satisfaction, health issues such as obesity, alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse as well as distorted body images. These programs will equip children with the right tools to be able to critically evaluate, analyze and decode advertising messages while creating critical attitudes towards advertising. The eight modules were pretested with two schoolteachers to get a better understanding of its acceptability among the students. The teachers gave a very positive feedback on the modules and also on its importance in educating students on the issues included in advertising literacy program. A few changes were made based on the feedback given by the teachers to make it more comprehensive.

The limitations of the study were the ability of the researcher to actually pretest a few modules with the students, however a proposal like this would need a prior approval of the school authorities before it can be administered. However, the researcher plans to put the proposal for review by the relevant school system to review and implement it for educating young school children who are at a vulnerable age for increasing awareness and knowledge to raise a generation of better informed children as they move towards adult life. Another limitation to the study is the researcher being unable to interview students about what current advertisement

they see and experience in their daily lives. These interviews would make the modules and their advertising examples more relevant to what children are seeing and wanting to buy from television today.

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