

The Influencing Role of Children in Family Decision Making: A Study of Mothers Perception

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Abstract—Children constitute one of the most prominent and lucrative market segments that influence family decision making while purchasing various products. For some products, children are the active initiators, information seekers and buyers; whereas for other product categories, they merely influence the parents purchase. Hence, the role of children is of dynamic nature in family decision making. Growing involvement of children in family decision making can be attributed to factors such as: Parents tend to give each child more rights and possessions and more allowances in buying things. Secondly, there are an increasing number of nuclear families in which the children enjoy more freedom to interfere in family purchasing decisions and is expected to be more involved in the household decision making. Thirdly in most of the Indian households where both the parents are working, children enjoy more power and freedom to contribute more to purchase decisions. Children play very important role in family decision making regarding their own products as well as products used by family members. This research is an endeavor to analyse the perception that the mothers have regarding the influences that their children generate towards family decision making. Mothers of the children aged six to twelve years have been selected as sample because Indian mothers are actively, diligently and aggressively involved in bringing up the children as compared to male counterparts. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and appropriately analysed with statistical tools as Chi square followed by factor analysis using SPSS software.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children are one of the major consumer group that manufacturers cannot neglect. They are considered as a major segment that should be recognized and properly satisfied. As the current generation of young consumers makes more decisions than previous generations, they influence more family decisions, especially in terms of food buying. The role that children play in influencing the family's decisions has made researchers to think and to do research on this segment. For some products, children are the active initiators, information seekers and buyers; whereas for other product categories, they merely influence the parents' purchase. Hence, the role of children is of dynamic nature in family decision making. As per the literature available more than 50% of parents in Asian countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, and South Korea) agreed with the fact that their children are the important factor when it comes to purchase decisions. They even mentioned that "a child's

demand" is the primary reason for buying the products. There are several reasons of why children are becoming so important in parents purchase decisions. Firstly, parents are having fewer children, and for this reason, they tend to give each child more rights and possessions and more allowances in buying things. Secondly, with an increase in the number of nuclear families children enjoy more freedom to interfere in family purchasing. Thirdly in almost 70 percent of the households where both of the parents are working, children enjoy more power and freedom to contribute more to purchase decisions. Determining what is needed in the household becomes the children's responsibility. Therefore, the real customer for the marketers now a days is almost never the parent anymore. Children are the buyer, spender, and decision maker, not only for their own product categories but also influence the decisions regarding the purchasing for the household and their parents necessities. Children tend to have more influence in the products that are less expensive and for their own use.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the research regarding role of children in family decision making has been carried out in the developed countries. Brief account of all such related research is given the literature review

Mehrotra and Torges (1977) took mothers as their respondents and examined the various factors which determine children's influence on mother's buying behavior. This study revealed that there were no unique determinants of mother's yielding to children's influence attempts and also find out that yielding is product specific.

Atkin (1978) carried out research on cereals in which he took child's age and gender as independent variable and parent/child interaction as dependent variable. He found out that children play a important and dominant role in cereal selection and purchasing. And also, it was find out that older children's requests are less refused than that of younger children's requests.

Brody et al (1981) carried the research taking candy bars, chips, chocolate drink, jelly as products and exposure to TV ads as independent variable. Research revealed that children who saw more advertisements influences more than non-ad seekers.

Moschis and Mitchell (1986) studied children influence in decision stages by taking child age, money, gender, peer communication as independent variable and studied its effect on selection of products like soft drinks, child clothes car repair, appliance etc. Research revealed that children who communicated more with the peers about products have more influence in family decision making and females have more influences than males across all stages.

Lee (1994) carried out the research taking fathers, mothers, and children of high school as respondents of study and find out that children group themselves with member of family to enjoy the freedom to influence the decision making. Elder sons group themselves with their mothers while elder daughters groups with father and work together to gain influence in the family decisions.

Mikkelsen and Norgaard (2006) carried out reserach in Denmark taking Father, mothers and children as respondents and revealed that Children participation and gaining influence is based on several decision stages regarding family food decisions.

Gram, M. (2010), carried out research on family decision-making about food shopping. He found that Parents know that their children influence their decision making while buying food items in supermarkets but it was also found that parents and children do not agree on just how much influence children have

Akhter Ali, Zuhaib Mustafa, D. K. Batra, N RavichandranandShoib Ur Rehman (2012) observed, India in which they took parents and children as respondents find out that more the parental professional involvement, less the time for family purchase and hence more the involvement of children in family purchase decision.

3. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

Following are the objectives for the study:

- To identify the frequency and shopping preferences of mothers.
- To identify the perception of mothers regarding the role of children in family decision making in general.
- To identify the difference in perception of working and non-working mothers with reference to role of children in purchase decision regarding food stuff.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the research, population consists of working and non-working mothers having children of age group between 6 to 12 years were selected for study. Sample of 125 mothers is selected from which 110 mothers are taken for analysis purpose.

5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

It is a specific procedure used to draw a sample from the population. For this research, convenience sampling technique is used.

6. HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis states what we are looking for and it is a proposition which can be put to a test to determine its validity. For this research, Null Hypothesis,

$H_0 =$ There is no significant difference in the responses of working and non-working

Mothers with respect to various parameters under consideration.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

For the data analysis, statistical software(SPSS) has been used to arrive at the results. Chi- square test and Factor analysis have been applied to check the validity of hypothesis.

8. DISCUSSION

Working status of the mothers has been selected as a Variable for carrying out the analysis.

Table 1. 1

WORKING STATUS	%AGE OF MOTHERS	NO. OF MOTHERS
WORKING	50%	55
NON WORKING	50%	55
TOTAL	100%	110

From above data, it can be analyzed that 50% of mothers are working and 50% of mothers are non-working mothers. Hence sample consist equally of working mothers and non-working mothers. Preference of the mothers towards the place for doing shopping was analysed (Table 1. 2). Table 1. 2

FAMILY STRUCTURE	%AGE OF MOTHERS	NO. OF MOTHERS
GROCERY SHOP (1)	40%	44
SHOPPING MALLS (2)	54%	59
ANY OTHER (3)	6%	7
TOTAL	100%	110

Relationship between the working status of the mothers and their preference towards buying place was figured out Results have been given in the table. 1. 3

Relationship between the working status of the mothers and their preference towards buying		
Options	Working mothers	Non-working mothers
Grocery shop	16	28
Shopping mall	35	24
Any other	4	3
Total (N)	55	55
Chi square value 7. 466 significant differences exist		
Relationship between the working status of the mothers and their frequency of buying		
Options	Working mothers	Non-working mothers
Daily	3	4
Fortnightly	35	24
Weekly	14	13
Monthly	3	14
Total (N)	55	55
Chi square value 9. 4686 significant differences exist		
Relationship between the working status of the mothers and the decision to buy the products		
Options	Working mothers	Non-working mothers
Husband	12	9
Mothers	13	19
Children	20	3
All the above	10	24
Total(N)	55	55
Chi square value 8. 4686 significant differences exist		

Significant difference is observed in the responses of the working and non-working mothers with regards to their preference towards place of carrying out the shopping. Significant differences were observed in the responses of the working and the non-working mothers towards the frequency of buying, working mothers prefer buying on fortnightly basis whereas non-working mothers prefer buying monthly. Significant differences in the responses of the working and non-working was observed towards the decision maker in the family with working mothers agreeing that their children are the prime decision makers in the family as compared to the non-working mothers.

In order to check the mothers perception about role of children the family decision making Factor analysis was carried out on the set of fifteen statements formulated on the basis of previous research, Intuition and discussion with the experts . To check the authenticity of the data KMO values were calculated which came out to be . 886, which clearly shows that the data is suitable for Factor analysis. For extraction of factors, Principle component analysis method was used. Latent root criteria was used for selection of factors in which the factors that have the Eigen values greater than one were selected.

Factor structure and naming of the factors was carried out for working and non-working mothers. For working mothers four factors were extracted Table 1. 4

Factor Number	Name of Dimension (% of variance)	Label	Statements (Factor Loading)
Factor I	CONCEDED CHILD INVOLVEMENT IN BUYING (33. 24%)	A2	Children should be allowed to buy the food stuff of their own choice. (0. 893)
		A1	Children should be allowed to accompany parents while purchasing food items. (0. 838)
		A10	Encouraging children in helping parents to take decisions would make them mature consumers. (0. 790)
		A4	Children should be asked before buying any kind of food stuff. (0. 744)
		A3	I feel happy when children take decision of what food stuff to buy on my behalf. (0. 729)
		A7	Children have more exposure now days hence they are reliable sources of information for purchasing food stuff. (0. 719)
		A5	Children should not be involved in buying decision about food stuff as they are not mature. (0. 484)
		A8	As a parent, I am really concerned about nutritional value of food that we buy and eat. (0. 473)
		A6	Children prefer to buy junk food instead of healthy one . (0. 410)
		A9	Children get attracted towards those products which might be nutritionally deficient but have attractive packaging. (0. 330)
Factor II	PRESSURIZING TACTICS OF CHILDREN (20. 43%)	A12	Children sometimes pressurize parents to buy certain food items that are not required. (0. 863)
		A9	Children get attracted towards those products which might be nutritionally deficient but have attractive packaging. (0. 768)
		A14	Children sometimes buy that food stuff which they do not actually need. (0. 721)

		A11	Advertisements of food stuff on TV affects the purchase decision of my children. (0. 678)
		A13	Food standards that are followed in India are not as per international standards. (0. 336)
		A6	Children prefer to buy junk food instead of healthy one. (0. 445)
Factor III	SHOPPING MALL INCLINATION (8. 52%)	A15	Children prefer to buy food stuff from the shopping mall instead of retail shops. (0. 925)
		A13	Food standards that are followed in India are not as per international standards. (0. 742)
Factor IV	ADVERTISING AND HEALTH CONCERN OF PARENTS (6. 87%)	A5	Children should not be involved in buying decision about food stuff as they are not mature. (0. 621)
		A8	As a parent, I am really concerned about nutritional value of food that we buy and eat. (0. 514)
		A11	Advertisements of food stuff on TV affects the purchase decision of my children. (0. 509)
		A6	Children prefer to buy junk food instead of healthy one. (0. 480)
		A13	Food standards that are followed in India are not as per international standards. (0. 402)

FACTOR IV	ADVERTISING AND HEALTH CONCERN OF PARENTS(6. 87%)	CHILDREN AS RELIABLE INFORMATION SOURCES(8. 12%)
FACTOR V	-----	ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN (7. 11%)

9. FINDINGS

Working and non-working mothers do differ in their responses with regards to their preference towards place of carrying out the shopping. Significant differences were observed in the responses of the working and the non-working mothers towards the frequency of buying, working mothers prefer buying on fortnightly basis whereas non-working mothers prefer buying monthly. Significant differences in the responses of the working and non-working was observed towards the decision maker in the family with working mothers agreeing that their children are the prime decision makers in the family as compared to the non-working mothers. Factor structure for working mothers reveal that they agree to the fact that their children have forceful presence in the family decision making for which they use pressurizing tactics. Working mothers are inclined towards shopping malls for making purchases and are concerned with the health of their children. Contrary to this Non-working mothers agree that children play a blissful and an active role in family decision making. They consider children to be reliable source of information about the products and agree that children use pressurizing tactics for reinforcing their role in the family decision making.

10. FURTHER SCOPE

Age of parents might also be an interesting topic for research regarding purchase decision of food stuff in family. The study is based on the children of age group 6-12 years. If age bracket could have been extended, results would be different. The working status was taken as the basis of study, whereas other factors such as education level and income group can be important parameters. Hence the study can be extended in different domains.

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Similarly for Non-Working mothers five factors were extracted later on the comparative factor structure for working and nonworking mothers has been given in the table1. 5

S. NO.	FOR WORKING MOTHERS	FOR NON-WORKING MOTHERS
FACTOR I	CONCEDED CHILD INVOLVEMENT IN BUYING (33. 24%)	BLISFUL PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE ABOUT CHILD (25. 39%)
FAC TOR II	PRESSURIZING TACTICS OF CHILDREN(20. 43%)	PRESURRIZING TACTICS OF CHILDREN(16. 57%)
FACTOR III	SHOPPING MALL INCLINATION(8. 52%)	IMMATURE CHILD CONSUMERS (9. 31%)

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