Relationship between Socialisation Agents and Consumer Decision Making Styles: An Indian Teenage Perspective

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This paper explores the consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers studying in Central Board of Secondary Education schools in National Capital Region and provides empirical evidence that socialisation agents influence these styles. The consumer style inventory adapted from Sproles and Kendall's (1986) study was used to measure the consumer decision making styles (CDMS). Primary data (n=1216) was collected through questionnaire administered in schools. Analysis methods used in the study were: exploratory factor analysis, cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted and linear regression. The results indicated that eight consumer decision making styles (Brand Consciousness, Novelty Fashion Consciousness, Quality Conscious, Perfectionist, Price value consciousness, Recreational/Hedonistic, Habitual Brand loyal Consumer, and Confused by over choice) exist among teenagers. The Socialisation agents (father, mother, friends, athlete, celebrity, friends and internet) had an influence on the consumer decision making styles of teenagers as a whole with celebrity having the maximum influence, followed by Friends and Mother. However the intensity of influence exercised by these agents on the characteristics of CDMS varied. Celebrity had the highest influence on Brand consciousness, Novelty fashion consciousness, Habitual brand loyalty and confused by over choice; friend on Quality consciousness and Perfectionist characteristics; mother on Price value consciousness while athlete on Recreational/hedonistic style. The findings will help the marketers to communicate with teenage segment via the social agents' route.

Key words: Consumer decision making styles, Consumer Socialisation, Indian teenager, Regression, Socialisation agents

INTRODUCTION

Consumer socialisation has been defined by Ward (1974, p. 2) as a "process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitude relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place". These skills depend on the cognitive development stage occurring between infancy and adulthood. By the time adolescents become older (above 14) they acquire the cognitive skills (Piaget 1970) and start enacting the consumer role by involving themselves in purchase decisions (Ward 1974). The adolescents are at the reflective stage of the socialization process they develop a sense of identity, are reflective of others' opinions, begin to understand symbolic meanings of consumption and can deploy multiple attributes for decision making (Belk, Mayer and Driscoll 1984; John 1999).

The socialisation model is based on the cognitive development and social learning model. Piaget (1970) has described cognitive model as a psychological process of adjusting to environment and individual's interaction with this environment. Researchers have often utilised the social learning theory to examine the consumer behaviour of adolescents (Moschis and Churchill 1978). According to this theory individuals develop behaviours through learning experiences. These experiences take place as individuals come in contact with different influencers (King and Multon 1996).Thus the socialisation agents may act as influencers impacting the consumer behaviour of teenagers. Socialisation agents are sources from which norms, attitudes, motivations and behaviours are transferred to the learner (Chan and McNeal 2006). Some socialisation agents have been identified as parents, teachers, peers, role models, internet, celebrity and mass media (Fan and Li 2010; Clark, Martin and Bush 2001; Bush, Martin and Bush 2004; Kaur and Medury 2011).

The consumer decision making styles (CDMS) of teenagers takes shape as they start playing roles of consumers. CDMS determine the "mental orientation characterizing consumer's approach to making choices" (Sproles and Kendall 1986, p. 268). The study of CDMS is of interest because they determine consumer behavior; are stable over time; serve as a basis for segmentation and enable marketing strategies for teenage segment. This study attempts to fill the research gap in the area of CDMS of Indian teenagers and how they are influenced by socialisation agents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer decision making styles

Sproles and Kendall (1986) developed a consumer styles inventory (CSI) of eight dimensions and 48 items which characterised the consumers according to their styles:

1. Perfectionistic, High quality conscious consumer- who search for best quality products.

2. Brand conscious, price equals quality consumer- who buy well known and most expensive brands are measured in this construct.

3. Novelty and fashion conscious consumer- like to buy new and innovative products.

4. Recreational and shopping conscious consumer- who find shopping pleasant and fun.

5. Price conscious "value for money" consumer- who are highly conscious of prices and sale prices.

6. Impulsive, careless consumer- who buy on impulse and are not concerned by prices or sale prices.

7. Confused by over choice consumer- have too many brands and stores to choose from, due to excess information in the market place.

8. Habitual Brand loyalty consumer- has a habit of repeatedly buying their favourite brands and stores.

The consumer decision making styles were propagated as useful in educating the adolescents as consumer of different products and furthering consumer research for this segment (Sproles and Kendall 1986; Durvasula, Lysonski and Andrews 1993).Over the years different researchers had used the CSI to conduct cross country (Hafstrom, Chae and Chung 1992; Durvasula, Lysonski and Andrews 1993; Lysonski, Durvasula, and Zotos 1996; Fan and Xiao 1998; Leo, Bennett, and Hartel 2005; Mokhlis and Salleh 2009) and within a country (Kwan, Yeung and Au 2004; Mokhlis 2009) analysis to compare and establish the decision making styles of teenagers and young consumers. These studies tested the applicability of CSI and developed their own list of styles which were modified from the original work of Sproles and Kendall (1986). In the Indian context Canabal (2002) and Lysonski, Durvasula, and Zotos (1996) had identified factors for measuring the decision making styles of young consumers. However no such study was conducted in context of Indian teenagers.

Socialisation agents

Socialisation takes place when an individual interacts with the socialisation agents. Although many socialisation agents like parents, mass media, school, peers, internet, celebrity and athletes have been identified for adolescents (Ward, Wackman and Wartella 1977; Moschis and Churchill 1978; Palan 1998; Clark, Martin and Bush 2001; Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol 2004; Strong and Eftychia 2005; Makgosa 2010; Latif, Saleem and Abideen 2011; Kaur and Medury 2011) there is very lack of comprehensive study on such agents in India.

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This study focuses on some of the socialisation agents like father, mother, friends, athlete, celebrity, Friends and Internet.

Socialisation agents and consumer decision making styles

Some researchers had established linkages between consumer socialization and Consumer decision making styles in their studies. Parent versus peer influence showed that parents had a negative influence on the brand consciousness and price equals quality decision making styles of the adolescents while peer had a positive influence on the impulsive, careless, and confused by over choice (Shim 1996). Adolescents who were value maximizing recreational shoppers were influenced by parents and brand-maximising non-utilitarian shoppers by their peers (Shim and Koh 1997). Peers along with printed media and television commercials contributed to desirable and undesirable consumer decision styles of adolescents, but parent's contribution was insignificant. (Kamaruddin and Mokhlis 2003)

The above observations lead us to the question whether the Indian teenagers would be affected by the socialisation agents in their decision making styles?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS

The research objectives for this paper in the context of Indian teenagers are enumerated below:

- To establish the characteristics of consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers

- To estimate the influence of socialisation agents on the consumer decision making styles

The nested hypotheses that emerge from these research objectives are:

H1: The consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers will be different from the original Sporles and Kendall's styles.

H 2: a to f: Interaction with socialisation agents (father, mother, friends, athlete, celebrity and Internet) will influence the consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The study was conducted in six CBSE schools in NCR, India. The permission of the school authorities was obtained before conducting the survey. A sample size of 1216 teenagers studying in classes 8-12 completed the survey in the presence of the researcher and the teacher.

Sampling procedure

Data were collected by applying multi-stage cluster sampling method. Out of 100 odd Central Board Secondary Education affiliated schools in National Capital Region of India, 25 schools were shortlisted on basis of certain criteria: following English medium of instruction, have been in existence for more than 20 years, charging average annual fees of Indian Rs. 60,000 or more for standards eighth to twelve, and appears in top 20 ranks in surveys conducted by various external agencies. Among the schools that gave permission, a short list of 6 schools was prepared by draw of lots. In a particular school, at least one section each of classes eight to twelve was selected again by draw of lot. In a selected section, all students were administered the questionnaire in the presence of the teacher and the researcher.

Measurement Scales

The instrument used in the study was adopted and modified from various studies. CDMS was measured using scale of Sproles and Kendall (1986). The socialisation scale (26 items) was developed by selecting statements from four studies: Moschis and Moore (1979); O'Guinn and Shrum (1997); Rich (1997); Kasser, Ryan, Counchman, Sheldon (2004). Responses were captured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 5 ('strongly disagree') to 1 ('strongly agree'). The summary statistics on the sample is given in Table 1.

Annexes

Table 1: Summary Statistics on Sample		
Sample Characteristics	Number	Percentage
1. Gender		
Boys	698	57.4
Girls	518	42.6
2. Age		
13 years	241	19.8
14 years	271	22.3
15 years	246	20.2
16 years	195	16.0
17 years	201	16.5
18 years	62	5.1
3. Class in which the teenager is studying		
class 8	256	21.1
class 9	249	20.5
class 10	259	21.3
class 11	271	22.3
class 12	181	14.9
4. Father's education		
Undergraduate	76	6.3
Graduate	556	45.7
Post graduate	584	48.0
5. Mother's education		
Undergraduate	108	8.9
Graduate	660	54.3
Post graduate	448	36.8
6. Father's occupation		
Business	614	50.5
Service	442	36.3
Professional	160	13.2

Sample Characteristics	Number	Percentage
7. Siblings		
1 sibling	159	13.1
2 sibling	855	70.3
3 sibling	202	16.6
8. Family structure		
Nuclear family	690	56.7
living with grand parents	313	25.7
Joint family	213	17.5
9. Number of friends		
Few Friends	184	15.1
Many Friends	1032	84.9
10. Number of hours on T.V.		
less than 1 hr. T.V	334	27.5
1-2 hr. T.V.	625	51.4
More than 2 hr. T.V.	257	21.1
11. Number of hours on Internet		
less than 1 hr. Internet	580	47.7
1-2 hr. Internet	409	33.6
More than 2 hr. Internet	227	18.7

Research Methods

An Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted for determining the characteristics of consumer decision making styles. The reliability and validity of scales were tested by Cronbach's alpha, Average variance explained and Composite reliability. Similarly EFA was conducted for socialisation scale and reliability and validity were checked. To determine the influence of socialisation agents on the consumer decision making styles linear regression was conducted in two stages. In the first stage the influence of socialisation agents on the composite score of CDMS was measured. In the second stage the socialisation agents were regressed with the composite scores of different characteristics of CDMS to determine which agent influences a particular style in the teenagers.

RESULTS

Consumer decision making styles

A factor analysis of the consumer decision making styles using the varimax rotation was carried out. It resulted in eight characteristics with KMO of 0.794 and total variance extracted 57.081 %. All factors had Eigen values above 1. A different set of eight characteristics (Brand Consciousness, Novelty Fashion Consciousness, Quality Conscious, Perfectionist, Price value consciousness, Recreational/Hedonistic, Habitual Brand loyal Consumer, and Confused by over choice) emerged for the Indian teenagers. As compared to the original study of Sproles and Kendall (1986), 'Perfectionist, High quality conscious' factor was split into two while 'Impulsive, careless' was not found in case of Indian teenagers.

The Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency of the items in the scale. Most of the factors (Brand consciousness, Perfectionist, Price value consciousness, Recreational/ Hedonistic, and confused by over choice) were found to be in the minimum acceptable range of 0.6 and above (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson 2010) (Table 2). Since the value of Cronbach's alpha is dependent on the number of items in the scale, more stringent tests (Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability) of reliability and validity were carried out.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were calculated manually by formulas given by Fornell and Lackers (1981) using Microsoft excel. The AVE should be 0.5 and above for adequate convergent validity and CR should be above 0.6 for good construct reliability (Fornell and Lackers 1981). The convergent validity was found to be adequate for only two factors (Recreational/Hedonistic and Confused by over choice) while the construct reliability was above 0.6 for all factors except Novelty fashion consciousness. Thus, indicating that hypothesis H1 'The consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers will be different from the original Sporles and Kendall's styles' is partially acceptable.

Socialisation Agents

The exploratory factor analysis results had a KMO of 0.846 and total variance extracted was 68.259 %. The Cronbach's alpha, AVE and CR of all the socialisation agents were found to be within acceptable ranges (Table 3). Thus, indicating the reliability and validity of the scale.

Table 2: Validity and Reliability of the CDMS Scale						
	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained	*AVE	*CR
Factor 1: Brand Consciousness	0.652		1.393	4.096	0.446	0.762
1.1 The most advertised brands of product are usually very good choices.		0.632				
1.2 The most expensive brands of product usually are my choice.		0.697				
1.3 I prefer buying the best selling brands of product.		0.683				
1.4 The well known brands of product are best for me.		0.656				
Factor 2: Novelty Fashion Consciousness	0.419		2.165	6.369	0.334	0.457
2.1 I usually have one or more product of the very newest style .		0.608				
2.2 Fashionable, attractive styling of product is very important to me.		0.473				
2.3 I keep my wardrobe up to date with the changing fashions.		0.641				
2.4 To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands of product.		0.553				
6.4 I change brands of product I buy regularly.		-0.600				

Table 2: Validity and Reliability of the CDMS Scale						
	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained	*AVE	*CR
Factor 3: Quality Conscious	0.525		1.06	3.253	0.460	0.718
3.1 When it comes to purchase product, I try to get the best.		0.652				
3.2 In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality of product.		0.730				
3.6 I like to get good quality of product.		0.650				
Factor 4: Perfectionist	0.669		1.547	4.547	0.305	0.632
3.4 I make a special effort to choose the very best quality product.		0.448				
3.5 My standards and expectations for the product I buy are very high.		0.490				
3.7 I really don't give my purchases of product much thought or care.		0.646				
3.8 A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me.		0.602				
Factor 5: Price value consciousness	0.637		2.455	7.221	0.390	0.757
4.1 I carefully watch how much I spend.		0.703				
4.2 I consider price first.		0.715				
4.4 I usually compare at least three brands before choosing a product.		0.467				
4.7 I buy as much as possible at sale price.		0.556				
4.8 I look carefully to find the best value for the money.		0.645				
Factor 6: Recreational/Hedonistic	0.809		4.796	14.106	0.551	0.857
5.1 Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me.		0.800				
5.2 Shopping wastes my time.		0.833				
5.3 Shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.		0.848				
5.4 I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.		0.609				
5.5 Its fun to buy something new and exciting.		0.576				
Factor 7: Habitual Brand loyal Consumer	0.587		1.28	3.763	0.475	0.729
6.1 I have favourite brands of product I buy over and over.		0.595				
6.2 Once I find a product or brand I like I stick with it.		0.765				
6.3 I go to the same product store each time I shop.		0.698				
Factor 8: Confused by over choice	0.703		2.813	8.275	0.506	0.803
7.1 There are many brands of product to choose that often I feel confused.		0.710				
7.2 All the information I get on different product confuses me.		0.765				
7.3 The more I learn about product, the harder to choose the best.		0.736				
7.4 Sometimes it is hard to choose which store to shop.		0.627				

*AVE- Average Variance Explained;*CR- Composite reliability

Table 3: Validity and Reliability of the Socialisation Scale						
	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance explained	*AVE	*CR
Factor 1: Athlete	0.899		5.560	24.173	0.692	0.918
9.11. My Favourite athlete provides a good model for me to follow.		0.844				
9.12. My Favourite athlete sets an example for me.		0.869				
9.13. My Favourite athlete sets a positive example for others to follow.		0.791				
9.14. I try to follow the behaviour displayed by my Favourite athlete.		0.832				
9.15. My Favourite athlete acts as a role model for me.		0.822				
Factor 2: Father	0.884		3.319	14.431	0.631	0.895
9.6. My Father provides a good model for me to follow.		0.775				
9.7. My Father sets an example for me.		0.819				
9.8. My Father sets a positive example for others to follow.		0.797				
9.9. I try to follow the behaviour displayed by my Father.		0.810				
9.10. My Father acts as a role model for me.		0.768				
Factor 3: Mother	0.830		2.254	9.80	0.538	0.852
9.1. My mother provides a good model for me to follow.		0.796				
9.2. My mother sets an example for me.		0.819				
9.3. My mother sets a positive example for others to follow.		0.716				
9.4. I try to follow the behaviour displayed by my mother.		0.637				
9.5. My Mother acts as a role model for me.		0.683				
Factor 4: Celebrity	0.831		1.623	7.056	0.732	0.891
9.16. I want to be as smart as movie idols.		0.826				
9.17. I want to be as stylist as people appearing in ads.		0.900				
9.18. I want to be as trendy as models in magazines.		0.838				
Factor 5: Internet	0.668		1.576	6.854	0.592	0.813
9.20. I access Internet every day		0.805				
9.21. On holidays, I spend more time than usual surfing net.		0.757				
9.22. I find using internet more enjoyable than watching TV.		0.745				
Factor 6: Friend	0.722		1.367	5.945	0.750	0.857
9.25. My friend and I learn from each other about Sports Apparel.		0.871				
9.26. My friend and I trust each other about buying Sports Apparel.		0.861				

*AVE - Average Variance Explained; *CR- Composite reliability

The influence of socialisation agents on consumer decision making styles

The Linear regression results of socialisation agents with the composite score of consumer decision making styles indicated that the independent variables explained 96 % of the variation in CDMS (R2 = 0.962; Adjusted R2 = 0.962; F = 5166.377; Significance = 0.000). CDMS of Indian teenagers was positively and significantly influenced by: Celebrity beta= 0.250; significance = 0.000), Friends (beta= .208; significance = 0.000), Mother beta= 0.194; significance = 0.000), Internet (beta= .165; significance = 0.000), Athlete (beta= 0.136; significance = 0.000), Father (beta= 0.074; significance = 0.000). Multi collinearity was checked by computing values of tolerance and VIF (Variance inflation factor) and found to be within satisfactory limit (Tolerance more than 0.1 and VIF below 10).

The influence of socialisation agents on the characteristics of consumer decision making styles

It is interesting to note that there was difference in the intensity of influence generated by the socialisation agents on the characteristics of consumer decision making styles. Top three influencers of socialisation agents were found for each of the characteristics of consumer decision making styles (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Brand consciousness

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 89 % of the variation in Brand consciousness of teenagers (R2 = 0.898; Adjusted R2 = 0.897; F =1767.872; Significance = 0.000). Although, Brand consciousness of Indian teenagers was positively and significantly (P = 0.000) influenced by different socialisation agents i.e. Celebrity, Friends, Internet, Athlete and Mother.

Celebrity (Beta = 0.288), Friends (Beta =0.216) and Internet (Beta =0.170) had the highest influence on the brand consciousness. Father did not significantly influence the brand consciousness of teenagers (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Novelty Fashion Consciousness

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 90 % of the variation in Novelty Fashion Consciousness of teenagers (R2 = 0.903; Adjusted R2 = 0.903; F = 1885.414; Significance = 0.000). Novelty Fashion Consciousness of teenagers was positively influenced by celebrity, Internet, friend, athlete (p = 0.000) and mother (p = 0.01). Celebrity (Beta =0.268), Internet (Beta =0.249) and friend (Beta =0.227) influenced novelty fashion consciousness more than other agents. Father did not influence Novelty fashion consciousness of teenagers significantly (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Quality Consciousness

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 87 % of the variation in Quality Consciousness of teenagers (R2 = 0.876; Adjusted R2 = 0.875; F = 1425.732; Significance = 0.000). All socialisation agents (mother, father, celebrity, internet, friends, p=.000; athlete, p= .001) positively and significantly influenced the quality consciousness of teenagers. Quality consciousness characteristic of teenagers was influenced more by friend (Beta =0.241), celebrity (Beta =0.182) and Internet (Beta =0.165) (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Perfectionist

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 86 % of the

variation in Perfectionist characteristics of teenagers (R2 = 0.863; Adjusted R2 = 0.863; F = 1274.091; Significance = 0.000). All the socialisation agents (athlete, mother, celebrity, internet and friend, p=.000; father, p= .001) positively and significantly influenced the Perfectionist characteristic of teenagers. Friend (Beta =0.243), Internet (Beta =0.171) mother (Beta =0.157) were the highest influencers for perfectionist characteristics of teenagers (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Price value consciousness

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 86 % of the variation in the price value consciousness of teenagers (R2 = 0.861; Adjusted R2 = 0.860; F = 1245.729; Significance = 0.000). Price value consciousness of teenagers was positively and significantly influenced by all the socialisation agents (mother, father, athlete, celebrity and friend, p=.000; internet, p= .001). Price value consciousness was influenced most by mother (Beta =0.354) followed by friend (Beta =0.156) and athlete (Beta =0.142) (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Recreational/ Hedonistic

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 87 % of the variation in the recreational/ hedonistic characteristic of teenagers (R2 = 0.879; Adjusted R2 = 0.878; F = 1465.644; Significance = 0.000). Among the socialisation agents mother, celebrity, internet and friend positively and significantly (p=.000) influenced the recreational/ hedonistic characteristic of teenagers while father and athlete did not influence. Athlete (Beta =0.460) was the highest influencer in recreational / hedonistic characteristics of teenagers followed by

celebrity (Beta =0.354) and mother (Beta =0.217) (Table 4).

Socialisation agents and Habitual brand loyal

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 89 % of the variation in the Habitual brand loyal characteristic of teenagers (R2 = 0.899; Adjusted R2 = 0.899; F = 1801.532; Significance = 0.000). Habitual brand loyal characteristic of teenagers was positively and significantly influenced by all the socialisation agents mother, athlete, celebrity, internet, friend (p = 0.000) and father (p = 0.05) (Table 4). Celebrity (Beta =0.354), mother (Beta = 0.217) and friend (Beta =0.175) were the top three influencers for habitual brand loyal characteristics.

Socialisation agents and confused by over choice

The Linear regression results indicated that the independent variables explained 91 % of the variation in the recreational/ hedonistic characteristic of teenagers (R2 = 0.910; Adjusted R2 = 0.909; F = 2027.712; Significance = 0.000). Confused by over choice characteristic of teenagers was positively and significantly (p = 0.000) influenced by all the socialisation agents mother, athlete, celebrity, internet, friend and father (p = 0.01) (Table 4). The top three influencers of this characteristics were celebrity (Beta =0.250) mother (Beta =0.219) and friend (Beta =0.195).

As seen the different consumer decision making styles were significantly influenced by the socialisation agents. Based on the above findings H2: Interaction with socialisation agents (father, mother, friends, athlete, celebrity and Internet) will influence the consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers was confirmed.

Table 4: Relationship between Socialisation agents and CDMS							
	Brnd		NFC		QC		PC	
Socialisation Agents	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value
mother	0.111	3.773*	0.079	2.76 **	0.159	4.884 *	0.157	4.606 *
father	0.056	1.957	0.005	0.171	0.132	4.173 *	0.111	3.339 **
athlete	0.149	5.301*	0.164	5.982 *	0.102	3.296 **	0.144	4.425 *
celebrity	0.288	11.201*	0.268	10.727 *	0.182	6.430 *	0.147	4.948 *
Internet	0.170	6.959 *	0.249	10.531 *	0.165	6.149 *	0.171	6.086 *
friend	0.216	8.287 *	0.227	8.970*	0.241	8.418 *	0.243	8.071 *
Top three Influencers	celebrity		celebrity		friend		friend	
	friend		Internet		celebrity		Internet	
	Internet		friend		Internet		mother	
	PVC		Rec		Hbl		Cboc	
Socialisation Agents	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value	Beta	t- value
mother	0.354	10.282 *	0.217	6.769 *	0.217	6.769 *	0.219	7.905*
father	0.119	3.559 *	0.120	0.399	0.012	0.399 ***	0.072	2.651 **
athlete	0.142	4.316 *	0.460	1.486	0.046	1.486 *	0.165	6.231 *
celebrity	0.105	3.498 *	0.354	12.67 *	0.354	12.670*	0.250	10.357 *
Internet	0.092	3.242 **	0.174	6.587 *	0.174	6.587*	0.096	4.199 *
friend	0.156	5.123 *	0.175	6.183 *	0.175	6.183*	0.195	7.957 *
Top three Influencers	mother		athlete		celebrity		celebrity	
	friend		celebrity		mother		mother	
	athlete		mother		friend		friend	

* significant at .001, ** significant at .01, *** significant at .05, rest not significant

Abbreviations: CDMS - Consumer decision making styles; Brnd- Brand Consciousness;
NFC- Novelty Fashion Consciousness; QC- Quality Conscious; PC- Perfectionist;
PVC- Price value consciousness; REC- Recreational/Hedonistic; HBI- Habitual Brand
loyal Consumer; CBOC- Confused by over choice

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings imply that the Indian teenagers display eight characteristics of consumer decision making styles namely Brand consciousness, Novelty Fashion Consciousness, Quality Consciousness, Perfectionist, Price value consciousness, Recreational/ Hedonistic, Habitual brand loyal and confused by over choice. Some of the styles had (Recreational/ Hedonistic and confused by over choice) higher reliability and validity as compared to others. Each of the eight characteristics were influenced by socialisation agents (father, mother, friend, athlete, celebrity and Internet).

The consumer decision making styles of teenagers (as a whole) are most influenced by Celebrity followed by Friend and Mother. The advertisements featuring celebrities can convey the marketing message more emphatically to this segment because the teenagers idolise the movie stars, and want to be as stylist and trendy as models. Communications routed through friends and mother will also have substantial influence on the teenagers. Among the influence of socialisation agents on the characteristics of CDMS, celebrity had the highest influence on Brand consciousness; Novelty fashion consciousness; Habitual brand loyal and confused by over choice characteristics. The teenagers imitate the celebrities as they want to be as smart as movie idols; stylist and trendy as models. The celebrities influence the teenagers in a positive way by inculcating brand loyalty and making them aware of brands and fashion. But these celebrities negatively influence the teenagers by making them more confused by over choice (due to information overload). Friend has the highest influence on quality consciousness and perfectionist characteristics. Thus teenagers not only learn about best quality or perfect products from their friends but also trust each other on buying them. These findings are in line with Dotson and Hyatt (2005) which state that there is an increase in the influence of popular brands on children due to peer pressure and celebrity endorsements.

Mother teaches the teenager to be more price value conscious by becoming aware of prices and sale prices. Athlete on the other hand encourages the teenagers to have fun while shopping i.e. making them more recreation/ hedonistic. Thus as teenagers develop cognitive abilities their capacity to process information from their environment increases. This leads to sophisticated decision making skills (John 1999). The shopping behaviour of teenagers is also of interest to consumer educators which will enable them to educate teenagers on shopping strategies and making purchasing decisions. However, only a few studies have been done in a school environment relating to teenagers consumer behaviour and consumer socialisation. This study attempts to fill this gap.

Limitations of the study

The study was carried out in schools of National Capital Region. The students in these schools were coming from well to do families, with higher education level and had exposure of living in a metropolitan culture. Although the sample was a homogeneous one, the results of the study cannot be generalised for the whole teenage population of India.

Implications

Theoretical implications

The study findings show that the existing consumer decision making styles (Sporles and Kendall 1986) which describe the consumers approach to making choices provide only a partial picture of these orientations. It does not answer the question on who influences the teenagers in depicting certain characteristics of consumer decision making styles. The findings of the current study contribute towards forming an improved understanding of the CDMS. The improvement includes: providing a more comprehensive consumer style inventory for teenagers in general and Indian teenagers in particular; including the influence of socialisation agents on the consumer decision making styles. Moreover, the study proposes paying more attention to the role of socialisation agents especially celebrity, friends, mother and athlete in influencing the styles. As the influence of socialisation agents on the consumer decision making styles of Indian teenagers has been probed for the first time, this study contributes to the body of knowledge related to consumer behaviour of teenagers.

Practical Implications

The above findings have practical implications. The consumer decision making styles are important for further understanding the behaviour of teenage consumer. The recommendation is not to simply segment this young population but to understand the importance of socialisation agents in shaping these styles.

As regards the teenagers, marketing activity aimed at creating more brand consciousness, fashion consciousness and habitual brand loyal consumers can do so through celebrities. Advertisements can create a positive attitude of products through celebrity endorsements. Since the teenagers idolise celebrities, in store promotions of products by celebrities would help in attracting this segment. However, the marketer has to use caution as over use of celebrities by different brands is likely to cause confusion in the minds of the teenagers. Those Marketers who wish to position their products as best in quality or perfect products should try to create a reference group appeal through friends in their advertisements. Teenagers also see shopping as a recreation activity when they are under the influence of athletes. In store promotion of accessories and merchandise with pictures and logos of popular athletes would help in making shopping a fun activity for the teenagers. Since mothers directly influence the price value consciousness of teenagers, marketers of value based products should target special promotion schemes at them. The findings related to socialisation of teenagers and their effect on consumer decision making styles would enable marketers to keep a tap on the pulse of the market. Marketers should tailor their communication strategies to different socialisation agents to elicit a positive response from teenagers.

Future research

Future research is needed to examine other factors like culture and demographics which influence the consumer decision making styles of this segment. In addition, it is important to examine the implications of consumer decision making styles on the consumer behaviour of teenagers in market place like malls and other retail outlets. Further an interesting question which needs to be probed is how the online versus off line consumer decision making styles differ.

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