

Efforts Made by Children to Influence their Parents' to Accede Purchase Requests

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This study is done to examine the efforts made by children to influence their parents to accede to their purchase request. From a consumer socialization perspective it is highly significant to know how children learn ways to become successful influence agents through the use of increasingly sophisticated influence efforts. Toddlers and preschoolers exert their influence in a very direct way often pointing to products and occasionally grabbing them off the store shelves for deposit inside their parent's shopping bag. With the increase in age, they become more verbal in their request and ask for the products by name.

The study attempts to provide the comprehensive identification of influence efforts used by the child to affect the outcome of family's purchase decision and in this process learning the buying behavior. Thus focus would be on identifying the influence efforts that children of different age groups, sexes and family income in urban and rural area of Madhya Pradesh employ in the context of the purchasing or getting things.

Keywords: Children, Parents, Influence Efforts, Impact, T.V Advertisements, Urban, Rural.

Introduction

In modern times, advertising is playing significant role in our socio-economic life. In this era of globalization and deregulation, advertising has acquired a new status. Advertising being an art is to create in an attractive manner by using attractive words, symbols etc. In spite of the fact advertising performs vital functions for the society. Because the major chunk of the population and among all consumption of household a considerable portion is of children products. So marketers are focusing and trying to attract and influence the children by designing ads that are considerably attractive for children and persuasive enough for their emotional attachment with the product.

Television is a permanent fixture in children's lives. The television set is as familiar to children as the faces of family members. Television set is always there, to entertain and to give company to children, especially when no one else in the mood to play, chat or interact with them. Many television advertisements are catchy jingles or catch-phrases that generate sustained appeal, which may remain in the minds of television viewers long after the span of the advertising campaign. Nowadays advertising spread in our entire culture influences in society and our fundamental patterns of life. Every product you

buy, children have their own opinion and choice.

Today's children are our future and unique in many ways from previous generation. But perhaps the most influencing factor on children's health is television advertisements. There are general concerns of parents that television advertising has negative influence intended or unintended on children's health. As the world has global village so now through our electronic media, access to all international channels is also easy.

In an attempt to get their parent's meet their purchase request and play a significant role in the family's purchase decision children make use of a number of influence efforts. Children start defining themselves around the age of eight. They do this in terms of their parents, friends (gang and peer pressure plays a part in their consumption habits), school, activities, and the like. They also become aware of brands at this age. Advertising is a feature of the world in which our children live. Through advertising children are able to gain the skills and knowledge that they will need as consumers the majority of children believe television advertisements to be informative & most children respond to them favorably. They also make various efforts to influence their parents to accede to their purchase requests (Palan and Wilkes, 1997) requesting, demanding, begging, sweet talk, negotiation (alternate purchase choices), manipulation, reasoning, bargaining, pleading, nagging or screaming to get what they want.

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Literature Review

The impact of advertising to children warrants deeper understanding. "Children wishing to influence purchase often resort to what is called the "nag factor" in which promotional activities influence children, who request that their parents buy the product. The parent then makes the decision and/or purchase". The 'nag factor' is effective & frequent brand switching is common for households with children. The nag factor works & makes people variety seek that product which is last advertised. And through the child's influence, the household will be less likely to purchase what was last purchased. It is also observed that, younger children pay greater attention & do more requesting of products, while older children have greater memory for commercial messages (Dennison and B.R, 2004).

The highest advertising to program ratios are found in Malaysia & the Philippines, where for every 30-minutes program, 10-minutes are spent on advertisements, which works out to a little more than 30% of the program time. The 30% of Malaysian children watching over 8-hours of television a day during vacations would therefore be exposed to over two & a half hours of advertising (Robinson and T.N. 1999). In India, 40-50% of advertisements during children's programming were for food. 73% of Pakistani children claim to love advertisements, as do 68% of Filipino children. For Pakistan, the Philippines & Malaysia the percentage of food advertisements varied between 50% & 75%. In the Philippines, program to advertisement ratios during children's programming go up to 50%.

More than 50% of parents in all countries surveyed say that their children are an important factor in influencing their purchasing decisions. Indian, Malaysian & Pakistani parents cited "Childs Demand" as the primary reason for buying a product. There's the things about pester power, tweens driving purchase decisions even in categories such as TVs and Cars. This is particularly relevant to a country such as India where parents may not have been exposed to things as much as their kids (Mehta, 2006). Tweens are the biggest influencers of what to eat or which mall to visit and it's the same across the top 50-cities in India. In Hi-Tech products such as Computers, Video Games & Electronic items, it is observed that, today, a teen is likely to be far more excited by a gaming console than new kid-friendly toothpaste.

There is great concern about children as viewers of advertisements primarily because young children are exposed to thousands of commercials each year in India as well as in the West use television as a medium of communication since it affords access to children at much earlier ages than print media can accomplish, largely because textual literacy does not develop until many years after children have become regular television viewers. Approximately, 80% of all advertising targeted to children falls within four product categories: toys, cereals, candies, and fast-food restaurants. Young children are able to differentiate between a TV program and a commercial but are unable to understand the intent of an advertisement until they are 8-10 years of age (Goldberg et. al, 1978). According to Seiter (2004) advertising to children avoids any appeal to the rational, emphasizing instead that ads are for entertainment and "enjoyable for their own sake" as opposed to providing any real consumer information. The most common persuasive strategy employed in advertising to children is to associate the product with fun and happiness, rather than to provide any factual product-related information. Hence, children in the age category 8-10 years have a positive attitude towards advertisements. Knowledge of advertising tactics and appeals emerges only in early adolescence and develops thereafter (Boush et. al. 1994).

Objectives

This research is conducted with a view to study the efforts made by children to influence their parents to accede to their purchase request. To achieve this objective, the following hypotheses were framed:

- H01** There is no significant difference in the opinion of the children belonging to different segments of the society including the Urban and Rural regarding the interest in TV advertisements
- H02** There is no significant difference in the opinion of urban and rural parents having different education level and making the intents of TV Ads clear to their children.
- H03** There is no significant difference in the urban and rural children's age, sex & family income and their influence efforts.

Research Methodology

The study was confined to Bhopal region and Sagar region which is heterogeneous comprising

people of various socio-economic classes. While choosing the sample, every care was taken to ensure that it should reflect the general characteristics of Madhya Pradesh. The sampling technique in selecting respondents for the study was convenient multi-stage sampling. From the urban segment two cities of the state namely Bhopal and Sagar were selected. In these two cities again data has been drawn from different income group. For studying the impact on the children of rural area two tehsil places- Gairatganj from Bhopal division and Deori Kalan from Sagar division were selected on the basis of the size of the population, location and economic considerations.

These regions were stratified into two segments- the urban and rural segments, two schools were selected, one run by the government and another school runs by private group in the urban and rural segment. The study covers children between the age group of:-

- ❖ Above 5 up to 8 years (early to late childhood).
- ❖ Above 8 up to 11 years (late childhood to early adolescence) and
- ❖ Above 11 up to 14 years (early adolescence) from each segment.

50% in both the segments were female students.

From these schools, list of students between 5-8 years, 8-11 years and 11-14 years have been obtained and from the list a 10% sample respondents were randomly selected.

For selection of parents, the parents of the children studied were covered. The presence of a television set at home was one of the preconditions for the selection of the respondents.

Sample Profile

The accuracy of the sample is more important than its size. An appropriately drawn sample gives

more reliable estimates on a universe.

The sample consisted of 200 children and their parents, as follows:-

Child Respondents: Selected on the basis of demographic segmentation like age, sex & family income.

- Above 5 up to 8 years (early to late childhood),
- Above 8 up to 11 years (late childhood to early adolescence) and
- Above 11 up to 14 years (early adolescence)

Children below 5 years were too young and no significant information could be collected from them and hence they were not included. The study focused on the perception of the children above 5 up to 14 years. Thus the children over 14 years of age are considered mature and independent enough to share the responsibilities of the family and earn their livelihood.

Distribution of Child-Respondents by Age.

Out of 100 children from each segment-urban and rural area, 21 respondents from urban area and 24 respondents from rural area belonged to the age group 5 up to 8 year, 49 respondents from urban area and 37 respondents from rural area belonged to the age group above 8 up to 11 year, 30 respondents from urban area and 39 respondents from rural area belonged to the age group above 11 up to 14 year age group.

Family Income. Household income, for the purpose of the study, includes the income of all the members of the family and from all the sources. The use of the term, Low, Middle, High Middle and High income group was made to differentiate broadly between the different families to which the children belonged. The income-groups were defined on the basis of the total annual household income based on the personal income tax slabs for general tax payers for the year 2010-11. They were as follows:-Slabs for

Table No. 1 Distribution of Sample

Place Selected From Different Region of Madhya Pradesh			
Bhopal Division		Sagar Division	
Urban Area	Rural Area	Urban Area	Rural Area
Bhopal City	Gairatganj Tehsil	Sagar City	Deori Kalan
Sample Size :	Sample Size :	Sample Size :	Sample Size :
• 50 Children,	• 50 Children,	• 50 Children,	• 50 Children,
• 50 Parents	• 50 Parents	• 50 Parents	• 50 Parents

Income : up to Rs.1.6 lakhs	Low Income Group
Income : Above Rs.1.6 lakhs up to Rs.5 lakhs	Middle Income Group
Income : Above Rs. 5 lakhs up to Rs. 8 lakhs	High-Middle Income Group
Income : Above Rs. 8 lakhs	High Income Group

The distribution of child-respondents by family income. Out 100 children from each segment- urban & rural area, 42 children respondents from urban and 70 respondents from rural area belonged to lower income group, 34 children respondents from urban and 48 respondents from rural area belonged to middle income group, 16 children respondents from urban and 2 respondents from rural area belonged to high-middle income group, 8 children respondents from urban and none of the respondent from rural area belonged to high income group.

Parents Respondents: The parents of the children studied were covered.

Educational Qualifications of Parents. Out of total 200 respondents (100 from urban & 100 from rural), 9-respondents from urban and 11-respondents from rural were low educated, 11-respondents from urban and 55- respondents from rural were higher secondary passed, 19-respondents from urban and 21- respondents from rural were graduates and 61-respondents from urban and 13-respondents from rural were post graduates.

Questionnaire Design

A well-designed questionnaire should find the most complete and accurate information possible to meet the research objectives. The researcher is looking to test and quantify hypotheses and the data is to be analyzed statistically, formal standardized questionnaires were designed. The questionnaire designer (researcher) had ensured that respondents

fully understand the questions and are not likely to refuse to answer, lie to the interviewer or try to conceal their attitudes.

Questionnaires designed were clearly laid out and easy to read and understand. While drafting the questions, simple language was used to facilitate the respondents understanding. Multiple-choice statements and dichotomous questions were made. Respondents were explained in local (regional) language as to how and where to place a mark to indicate their opinion.

Tools of Analysis

The nature of the study is such that besides the quantitative statistical and mathematical tools where scaling technique was used. The data so collected have been tabulated, analyzed and then the findings & inferences were drawn.

For the analysis of data the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) was used. Percentage analysis was done to analyze the demographic variables and the present satisfaction level of viewers on each factors of ad effectiveness.

The Chi-Square analysis was conducted between various sets of variable, in order to find out the relationship and significance of association of those variables. The relationship of demographic variables (age, sex and family income) was worked out with influence of TV Ads.

Pearson's coefficient of correlation (r) was used to identify the degree of association between various sets of response in order to ascertain whether they were positively or negatively related to each other. In correlation analysis, two types of variables were considered. One was the dependent variable and other was independent variable. The independent variable had their own identity and contributed significantly towards the dependent variable.

Table No. 2 Children Watching TV Ads

Interest of Children in TV Ads	Children Watching TV Ads	
	Number of Children Watching TV Ads (Urban)	Number of Children Watching TV Ads (Rural)
Great Interest	32	27
Some Interest	61	58
No Interest	7	15
Total	100	100

Source : Primary Data

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Based on above the methodology in-depth analyses of primary data have been done. This part of the study seeks to identify the impact of the background factors (age & sex of the child, family income, and socio-economic status), the study also focuses on the influencing efforts of urban and rural segments children resulting from TV Ads.

This is an attempt at understanding how children are making efforts to get things from their parents.

The interest of children in TV Ads is quite significant in determining the communication effects of such ads on them. As shown in Table No. 2, 32% & 27 % of children belonging to urban and rural area respectively, have great interest in the ads appearing on TV. More than half (61% in urban & 58% in rural area) children have some interest in the ads coming on TV. It was also discovered that, 7% of children belonging to urban area and 15% children belonging to rural area have no interest in the TV Ads.

One of the interesting findings is that, children in the different age groups in urban and rural area had no significant difference in the interest in TV Ads as depicted in Table No.3 Part-A. The finding suggested that with the increase in the age of child his interest in TV Ads increases

Relationship between sex of the child and their interest in TV Ads was also found interesting, as depicted in the Table No. 3 Part-B. During survey, it was observed that girls are more interested in the

ads of food items while the boys were found to be more interested in watching TV Ads of electronic items. An effort was made to ascertain whether the family income played any important role in determining the extent of parents' interest in TV Ads. Chi Square analysis was performed and the results were obtained.

The Table No. 3 Part-C, suggested that, the relationship between the family income and the extent of parents' interest in TV Ads was not found significant at 0.05 level in both urban and rural area. This indicated that no relationship exist between parents' interest in TV Ads to their income groups. Thus it was interpreted that no significant relationship existed between the two. The parents of every income group watched TV Ads with more or little interest. During data collection it was observed that parents' from lower income group and high income in urban and high middle income group in rural watched TV Ads with less interest and its because they hardly had time to sit and watch TV Ads. Moreover, in lower income group most of them knew that they could not afford to buy the majority of the products advertised. However most of them also admitted that TV Ads sometimes become the source of useful information/knowledge regarding offers, attributes and benefits associated with the products.

As shown in Table No. 4, it was observed that (47% in urban & 54% in rural) parents' reported co-viewing of TV Ads occasionally while the lesser number (29% in urban & 37% in rural) parents' resorted to it more often and (24% in urban & 9% in rural) parents' never view TV Ads with their children.

Table No. 3 Children interest in TV Ads

Interest in TV Ads related	Children interest in TV Ads					
	Part-A		Part-B		Part-C	
	Children Age		Children Sex		Children' Family Income	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	0.99 NS	6.30 NS	2.013NS	5.623NS	9.90 NS	8.86 NS

NS: Not Significant

Source : Primary Data

Table No. 4 Parent-Child Co-Viewing of TV Ads Related

Parent-Child Co-Viewing of TV Ads related		
Parent-child co-viewing	Number of Parents(Urban)	Number of Parents(Rural)
Often	29	37
Occasionally	47	54
Never	24	9
Total	100	100

Source : Primary Data

Table No. 5 Parents Education Level and making the intents of TV Ads clear to child

Parents Education Level and making the intents of TV Ads clear to child		
Parents Interest in TV Ads	Parents Education Level	
	Urban	Rural
	0.134 **	0.051 **

** Significant at 0.01 level

Source : Primary Data

Table No. 6 Influence Efforts made by Children More Often

Influence Efforts made by Children More Often (Always + Very Often)		
Influence Efforts	No. of Children Using them (Urban)	No. of Children Using them (Rural)
Requesting purchase	73	78
Sweet-talk	69	71
Reasoning	52	57
Pleading	43	52
Negotiation	41	46
Nagging	38	43
Demand	36	42
Bargaining	36	39
Manipulation	29	37
Screaming	27	31
Humour	21	19

Source : Primary Data

Table No. 7 Influence Efforts Made By Children

Influence Efforts Made By Children	Children's Age, Sex & Family Income and their Influence Efforts					
	Part-A		Part-B		Part-C	
	Children's Age		Children's Sex		Children's Family Income	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Requesting purchase	12.08 NS	12.35NS	1.02NS	2.48NS	16.16*	15.85*
Sweet-talk	5.13NS	8.14NS	4.1NS	1.73NS	19.62*	8.24NS
Reasoning	1.03NS	0.59NS	1.18NS	0.57NS	1.79NS	5.38NS
Demand	3.53NS	11.46 NS	1.92NS	7.68NS	1.60NS	2.25NS
Negotiation	0.22NS	0.84NS	1.8NS	5.26NS	7.37NS	3.62NS
Nagging	0.51NS	0.39NS	2.30NS	9.24*	1.70NS	1.27NS
Pleading	0.908NS	0.26NS	1.79NS	0.12NS	3.62NS	2.17NS
Bargaining	0.87NS	0.49NS	0.69NS	0.29NS	2.29NS	3.64NS
Manipulation	0.851NS	0.145NS	0.044NS	1.65NS	1.31NS	3.31NS
Screaming	4.54NS	1.04NS	3.77NS	1.96NS	1.02NS	3.42NS
Humour	0.68NS	0.54NS	1.58NS	8.40*	3.24NS	2.35NS

*Significant at 0.05 level
NS: Not Significant

Source : Primary Data

An attempt was made to study the relationship between Parents' educational level and their co-viewing of TV Ads to make the intents of TV Ads clear. A relationship was worked out between the

two with the help of Correlation Coefficient. Results are shown in Table No. 5. It was observed that parents' educational level, their co-viewing of TV Ads and making the intents of ads clear to their child

were found significantly related (0.134 in urban and 0.051 in rural) at 0.01 level. It indicated that with the increase in the education of the parents, their level of co-viewing and explaining children about TV Ads also increased.

Children played different role by making different kind of influence effort not only fulfilling their own demand but also in the family's purchase decision making. The Table No. 6, summarized the information about the effective efforts made by children to influence buying decision of their parents'.

As presented in above tables, (73% in urban & 78% in rural) children were making purchase request and to get their fulfilled, (69% in urban & 71% in rural) of the children resorting to sweet-talk followed by more than half (52% in urban & 57% in rural) of the children used reasoning for getting their work done. Pleading being done by (43% in urban & 52% in rural) children, whereas children also made request for another product and (41% in urban & 43% in rural) of the children negotiate, (38% in urban & 46% in rural) were irritating their parents by nagging, while (36% in urban & 39% in rural) children were demanding directly. Around (36% in urban & 37% in rural) children did bargaining. So far as manipulation is concerned, about (29% in urban & 42% in rural) children reported. Screaming and humour were not used very often by children as only (27% in urban & 31% in rural) and (21% in urban & 19% in rural) made these efforts.

An effort was made to identify the impact of age on the influence efforts made by children. Chi Square analysis was performed. The results are presented in Table No.7 Part-A.

As depicted in above tables, all the above influence efforts made by children in both urban and rural area were not found to be significantly related with the age of the child, as the Chi Square value was not coming significant. It indicates that, more or less children of all the age group, made all the above mentioned efforts, to get what they want from their parents.

However, during the data collection, it was noticed that, younger children were more insisting on parents for meeting their purchase request as compared to the older children who enjoyed more purchasing power and independence.

Efforts were made to find out the relationship between the sex of child and influence efforts made by them to meet their purchase request. Chi Square

analysis was performed. The results are presented in Table No.7 Part-B.

As shown in above table, the relationship between the sex of the child and most of the influencing efforts used by children (in urban & rural area) to get what they want from their parents was not found significant except in the case of nagging and the humour in rural area as the Chi Square value was coming significant at 0.05 level. Thus the results suggested that the both the sexes of children were trying influencing efforts for getting their demand fulfilled.

An effort was also made to identify the role of family income and influencing the children's choice of influence efforts. Chi Square analysis was performed between the two variables.

As shown in Table No. 7 Part-C, family income played a significant role only in case of two influence efforts namely requesting purchase and sweet talk in urban area and only one case namely requesting purchase in rural area where the chi square value was found significant at 0.05 level. Children from all the income groups were found influencing almost in a similar manner as the chi square value was not found significant.

However, during data collection it was observed that the children belonging to high middle and high income group were making influencing efforts less as compared to other income group reason being that, high-middle and high income group children got sufficient pocket allowance and hence they enjoy purchasing power and independence more. They used these influencing efforts only for the purchase of expensive items.

Conclusion

Children acquire different kinds of understanding of advertising at different ages. Advertisements appeared on different TV channels were concerned, no significant relationship was found between the children watching TV ads and their age in both urban and rural area. However, it was observed that in urban and rural area, the boys have shown more interest in watching TV ads as compared to girls. In urban area and rural area, majority of children who were watching TV up to two hours have shown great interest and some interest respectively in watching TV ads.

In urban and rural area, a dramatic shift has been noticed in children's perception of TV ads as

they moved from early childhood to early adolescence.

The study further revealed that, amount of interest the parents corroborate in TV ads was also found to contribute significantly towards the interest children took in such ads. It was observed that in urban and rural area, mothers were found more interested than fathers in watching TV ads. Also, parents of all income group watches TV ads as no significant difference was found between the family income and the parents interest in viewing TV ads in both the area. Parents were even found watching TV ads with children and making the intents clear to them. However, in urban area, there exist a significant relationship between the parents' interest in TV ads and co-viewing & making the intents of ads clear to child whereas in rural area, the relationship was not found significant.

So far as, parents' education and their co-viewing are concerned, a significant relation between the two variables exists in both urban and rural area. Thus, the parents' education level resorted to the level of co-viewing and explaining their children about TV ads. It was discovered that, parents who are interested in TV ads helped in building their children's interest in a positive manner by teaching about those ads.

Teaching about these ads increases with the level of parents' education. Highly educated parents always take care of their children and taught them about the reality and artificiality shown in TV ads. The study also revealed that, in urban area, there was a significant difference in the family income and parents teaching about TV ads. Thus, parents' of higher income group often teaching about TV ads to their children while parents of lower income group reported that they never taught their children about TV ads as they were busy in earning their bread and butter.

Whereas in rural area, no significant difference was found in the family income and parents' teaching about TV ads. The parents' of all income groups were found to teach about TV ads to their children. After being exposed to TV ads related to food and electronic items, as compared to the older age children the young age children do not enjoy much of purchasing power and independence and they were usually required to resort certain efforts like sweet talk, nagging, screaming, demanding and manipulating to get things from their parents. The young age children do not understand the TV ads

properly and were not much aware about the product attribute thus they find difficulty in getting things from their parents. They try to convince and influence their parents by making these efforts. While the children above age of eight years influences their parents by sweet talk, bargaining, negotiation, reasoning, requesting and pleading. They put forward their views in more proper way and try to convince their parents. However, it was observed that no significant relationship was found between the age, sex and influence efforts made by children in both the urban and the rural area except nagging and humour in rural area.

Thus the children of all the age group and both the sexes were using the influencing efforts to get what they want from their parents. In rural area, boys were found to nag and humour relatively more than girls to convince their parents. In case of family income in urban area, children of lower income group and high-middle income group were found to make purchase request quite often and always respectively. Similarly, middle income group and high-middle income group children in urban area were doing sweet talk quite often and always. In rural area, all the influencing efforts were not found significant except purchase request. Thus, children of lower income group request for the purchase quite often. It was observed that in lower income group except most of the children above 11 year, do not get enjoy purchasing power and independence and unable to understand the financial constraints of their family. Thus they use these influencing efforts to get things from their parents. In case of high-middle income group children, they use the influencing efforts to get expensive items from their parents.

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