

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS PESTER POWER: ITS IMPACT ON THEIR BUYING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

In today's world Kids are considered as savvier of the environment surrounding them than the children say, 10 years back. The grasping power is remarkable due to the repeated exposure given to them by ways of different broad casting and electronic mediums. The result is they ask for more. With the increase in number of working couples, the child's nagging becomes inversely proportional to the time available with parents. These facts are very much known to Marketers and as consequence they have shifted their marketing campaigns from adults (parents) to children. This paper tries to give an insight of parent's retort towards such nagging called as pester power because if children are pesky for their recommendations of purchase, the reason however could be they are very well-versed with the products information, sometimes times better informed than their parents, and they want nothing but the best.

Keywords: Parents, kids, Pester Power, positive effect.

Introduction

Children's products market became very large market. Spending by children aged 4 to 12 was estimated to be over \$24 billion in 1997 to an increase of almost 300 percent. McNeal's research reflects that the children learn to shop, at least in part, by going shopping. Retailers are developing programs based on these learning patterns. For most marketers, achieving a high involvement relationship with both parents and the kid is a priority. Parents react hysterically to brands that try to hook their little ones. They know that kids pay attention to the advertising when they watch TV. A marketer tries to develop a strategy, which targets the kids and influences them totally, so that next time they are out with their parents, they get what they want i.e. what they see in ads. Impulse purchases due to POP promotions also play an important role, too. One advertising company that uses this strategy has found that between 20 and 40 per cent of purchases of food, movies and games wouldn't have occurred unless a child pestered an adult. Children being vulnerable are easily influenced by ads on television and this activates "pester power", i.e., where the children stalk their parents to purchase products they want. With the increase in number of working couples, the child's pester power becomes inversely proportional to the time available with parents. A parent buys the product if it quiets the children temporarily.

Objective of the study

- To study the reasons why parents buy products as per their child's recommendations.
- To what extent kids can persuade the buying decision of their parents for the products of their direct and indirect use.

- To know the opinion of parents on the marketer's effort on targeting their children.

Literature review

It was observed that children had different impact on purchase of their choice products. Women perceived that their children had more impact on the selection of Wafer's (Lays). The influence of child on parents buying decisions is dependent on some demographic characteristics of children mothers and families. Girls have significantly more impact on parent's decision making related to chocolates and branded juice. As the children grow older, their impact on parent's buying behavior on various items increases. At last the families' monthly income was also seen to have an impact on parent's product selection. It was seen that mother belonging to families with higher income pay a lesser extent of attention to the price of the products and involve the children on such type of product (Akhter Ali and Batra, 2011).

In this research four types of parents have been identified through research

- 1) First one are "Bare necessities" who are with no inclination to buy
- 2) Second one are "Kid's friends" who are influenced by kid's friends
- 3) Third one are "Indulgers" who are often working mothers and separated fathers; and
- 4) Fourth category are "Conflicted", who don't want to buy but will. Advertisers know that different buttons impact on the different groups however it seems that children nag the first group with the importance of the product and the power of persistence works with the last three groups.

Marketers have always appealed to children to persuade their parents to loosen their purse strings. Putting toys in cereal packs, giving away toys with fast food and using sports heroes to promote anything from breakfast cereal to clothing are all tactics that were used in a less complicated age. However advertising to children and young people is changing as kids become more cynical and also they begin to use a greater variety of media. Nevertheless, when you hear the same constant message continuously from a child or young person then that message often creates a perception, which makes pester power so powerful and difficult to resist.

Reasons by which "Pester power is successful in present era"?

Pester power means children's ability to influence parents to purchase food or other items they might not otherwise buy. The factors which are prevailing the pester power in the kids could be:

- Marketing to children is all about creating pester power as marketers are aware that how powerful a force it can be.
- Parents are having fewer children and in such a case spending on them is more on each child.
- Parents are having children later at maturity stage of life when they are beyond the struggle phase in their career.

- Young professionals give gifts to children as to compensate for lack of time they are able to spend with them.
- Children are known to have strong tastes and preferences on which advertising surely has an impact on them.

Marketers intentionally plant the seeds of brand recognition in very young children in the hopes of cementing a lifetime relationship. As adults many of us have fond memories of favorite cookies, candy, and burger restaurants we visited as children. Companies market nostalgic candy brands to adults who long for childhood treats. But the difference between our childhoods and those of children today is the ubiquitous presence of food advertising – TV, internet, social networking, cell phones, school events, and vending machines. Many companies employ “buzz marketing.” They get the coolest kids to wear their clothes or sip their drinks so other kids will elevate the product to trendy and cool. Fast food and cereal companies have been cultivating brand recognition with children for decades. Cracker Jacks was one of the first companies to capitalize on children’s love of collecting things by hiding a toy at the bottom of each box.

Restaurant chains often pack movie or cartoon characters in kid’s meals setting up parents for return visits to accumulate the entire collection. Ad agencies are eyeing kids as young as 3 years old as potential customers of the future. Young children cannot distinguish between commercials and regular programming. It isn’t until about age 8 that a child understands advertisements are separate from programs and that they may not always be truthful. When it comes to food, few commercials, less than 5%, are for wholesome unprocessed foods like apples, cherries or milk.

The vast majority of ads are for restaurants, candy, soda and presweetened cereals. Children see these ads and when they go with their parents to the supermarket or mall, pester power kicks into overdrive.

Parents are often unaware of the tremendous influence all this media coverage has on forming children’s opinions and brand recognition. Sometimes it is cute when a toddler recognizes a logo or any product. But, this recognition comes with a price, opinions which are being formed and desires channeled that parents may find difficult to change.

Research methodology

Hypotheses For this research are:

H₀: No significant relationship between purchasing a product influenced by children’s recommendation.

H₁: Significant relationship between purchasing a product influenced by children’s recommendation

H₀: No Significant relation between Television advertisement on persuading the buying decision of their parents

H₁: Significant relation between Television advertisement on persuading the buying decision of their parents

- To attain the identified objectives of this research work following methods are used
 - ✓ Questionnaire and interview methods which were used to generate data from parents falling in the family life cycle stage –Full nest I and Full nest II. They were contacted to find the effect of advertising on them and targeting children for the purpose of marketing.
 - ✓ The primary and secondary research designs have been adopted.
 - ✓ To find the influence of children in purchase decision of products for their direct or indirect use.
 - ✓ Opinion of parents on the marketer’s effort on targeting children was also studied.
- The universe was selected from NCR, sample size was 120 couples are interviewed in full nest I &II – family life cycle stage.
- The questionnaire was filled by parents along with their children, found shopping in both organized and unorganized markets.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Age of the Respondents: Age of the respondents was collected as a part of the demographic component to understand the age brackets of our target audience.

Table 1.1: Age of the Respondent

| Age of Respondents (In Years) | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Under 30 | 48 | 30.8 |
| 30 to 40 | 71 | 45.5 |
| 40 to 50 | 32 | 20.5 |
| Above 50 | 5 | 3.2 |
| Total | 156 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data –SPSS

The above frequency table indicates that the age of the respondents for our study most of them are of the age bracket of 30 to 40 years 45.5% of respondents falling under this category, followed by respondents under 30 years of age, with 30.8%. There are 20.5% respondents between the age group of 40 to 50 years and rest are 3.2 % above 50 years. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the respondents in the sample are either young or middle aged.

Number of Kids:

Number of the kids of the respondent was interviewed who were along with their parent and their demographic component are noted to better understand the influence of number of kids on the parents buying behavior.

Table 1.2: Number of Kids the Respondent has

| Number of Kids | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 95 | 60.9 |
| 2 | 56 | 35.9 |
| 3 | 5 | 3.2 |
| 4 or more | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 156 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data -SPSS

The above frequency table no 1.2 shows that majority of the respondents (about 61%) have only one child, while about 35.9% of the respondents have two children. 3.2% of the respondents have three children and none of the respondent had four or more children.

Frequency of Shopping:

Next Researcher study the frequency of shopping at physical store by the parents. This is an important factor because in the emerging trend of E-commerce and lack of time with parents, the children's pester power would be most prominently exhibited inside the store.

Table No 1.3. This table representing the frequency of the parents goes shopping along with children

| Frequency of shopping | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Once in a week | 35 | 22.4 |
| Once in a fortnight | 43 | 27.6 |
| Once in a month | 73 | 46.8 |
| Rarely | 5 | 3.2 |
| Total | 156 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data -SPSS

The above frequency table clearly reflects that majority of the parents with a percentage of 46.8%, go out shopping along with children once in a month most probably because they want to buy monthly grocery items in one go. 27.6% of the Parents go out once in a fortnight. There are others who go out once in a week, who account of a little less than a quarter. And then only 3.2% of the parents said that they rarely go on shopping with their kids. Therefore, it is a favorable situation for marketers who are targeting kids to influence their parent's purchase decision, as the kids are quite frequent in accompanying their parents for shopping.

Hours Spent with Child:

Hours spent by children with his/her parents in a day was captured to know how much time do children spend with their parents in a day

Table No 1.4: Frequency Table representing the frequency of hours spent by the parents with their children in a day

| Hours spent with child | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 4 | 78 | 50.0 |
| 4 to 8 | 53 | 34.0 |
| 8 to 12 | 10 | 6.4 |
| More than 12 | 15 | 9.6 |
| Total | 156 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data –SPSS

The above frequency table exactly shows that half of the respondents parents spend less than 4 hours in a day with their kids. Hence, it shows that the parents have lesser time with kids and therefore parents like to take their children for shopping to make up for the time lost and may be prone to agreeing to the kid’s wishes. About one third of the parents spend 4 to 8 hours in a day with their children. 6.4% of the parents spend 8 to 12 hours in a day with their children while 9.6% of the parents spend more than 12 hours in a day with their children. And the latter two being a majority of homemakers who tend to spend most of time with their children while the former two categories majorly include working class and business professionals

Findings

Findings of this study are based upon the response towards the questionnaire and interview focused on the parents falling in the family life cycle stage –Full nest I and Full nest II.

1. Outcomes of Television and other impact on buying behavior are briefed below:

| S. No. | Category | Details | Impact ratio |
|--------|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Watches Television | 1. Whenever free 2. 2-3 times / week 3. 4-5 times / week 4. Once/week | 80% 17% 03% 00% |
| 2 | Duration allowed to watch | 1. Every time 2. One hours 3. Two Hours 4. Three Hours 5. Four Hours 6. More than four hours | 00% 40% 45% 13% 02% 00% |
| 3 | Programme | 1. News 2. Sports | 00% 35% |

| | | | |
|----|---|---|---------------------------------|
| | | 3. Cartoon 4. Daily Soaps 5. Any other | 55% 10% 00% |
| 4 | Interest in Advertisements | 1. Very Much Interested 2. Interested 3. Neither interested nor disinterested 4. Little bit interested 5. Not at all interested | 75% 20% 02% 03% 00% |
| 5. | Pull Strategies | 1. Product Attributes 2. Brand endorser 3. Presentation of Ads 4. Claim of ads 5. Sales promotion | 05% 25% 15% 15% 40% |
| 6 | Stubborn behavior | 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | 30% 20% 05% 00% 45% |
| 7 | Recall of TV ads (reason of Stubborn behavior) | 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | 35% 07% 02% 00% 56% |
| 8 | Accompanying of child while shopping | 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | 60% 13% 10% 01% 15% |
| 9 | Impact of children on selection of products | 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | 40% 30% 10% 00% 20% |
| 10 | Reason of Accompanying children | 1. Awareness of Fraud 2. Better Knowledge of product 3. Other | 42% 30% 28% |
| 11 | Preferred list of products for children | 1. Food Items 2. Toys and games 3. Clothes 4. Electronic items 5. Any other | 30% 40% 05% 20% 05% |
| 12 | Level of acquaintance | 1. Most of the times | 35% |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|--|
| | provided by parents towards their children recommendations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | <p>40%</p> <p>25%</p> <p>00%</p> <p>00%</p> |
| 13 | Parent's valuing their children suggestion | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have better knowledge 2. They have more brand awareness 3. Child nagging for a product 4. Don't want to disappoint them 5. Any other | <p>15%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>35%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>00%</p> |
| 14 | Parents convinced due to better exposure of brand | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | <p>42%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>08%</p> <p>00%</p> |
| 15 | Purchased a product recommend ate by children | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most of the times 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Every time | <p>40%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>00%</p> <p>20%</p> |
| 16 | Food purchased on their recommendation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food & Beverages 2. Consumer durables 3. FMCG 4. Gadgets 5. Personal Care | <p>60%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>14%</p> <p>01%</p> |
| 17 | Expenditure level based on their insists(weekly) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100-200 2. 200-300 3. 300-400 4. 400-500 5. 500 & above | <p>05%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>40%</p> <p>30%</p> |

Conclusion

As a conclusion of the above study we come across the following points which are collected through information from the parents:

As both Parents are earning now and could not manage enough time for their kids every day. To pacify this lacuna of time, they take their children along with where ever they go after their job timing. These places are several times lends up to a shopping place. However besides this, the study reveals that parents accompany their kids for shopping because of their extended exposure towards the marketer's offerings, sales promotion activities and brand awareness, which many helps them in selecting a suitable product (attribute-wise and price-wise) in lesser time for the

family, which is a recommendation of their kids. Mostly, parents get perused by their kid's suggestions when the product is not very costly and generally of the daily usage irrespective of fact that the goods purchased are of their direct or indirect use. The recommendations made are purely based on the best deals, as in the maximum the pull (strategy) by the marketer the maximum the purchase, which is inversely proportional to brand loyalty also a characteristic of pestering depicted by children and observed by parents.

However, parents agree that children nag a lot while making a purchase decision, and behave abruptly if the purchase decision is against their recommendation, however they agree that the reason for such pestering is the varied exposure of offerings through various sources facilitated by marketer through an effective promotion mix, which thereby allows the kids to get informed well, can make a comparative analysis of products and can choose nothing but the best. Now this facilitates the parents to buy a finest products based on the updated and reliable information and provided by their own kids which is the positive effect of pester power, however cannot be ignored.

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