

# **Factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents: special reference to working and non-working parents**

**Ms Debjani Chakraborty**

**Research Scholar (Commerce)**

**Meerut College, CCS University**

**Dr A.K.Agarwal**

**Associate Professor**

**Meerut College, CCS University**

## **Abstract:**

Children as consumer has been extensively becoming a much sought after topic of research lately. With the change in the socio economic scenario, the role of children as a consumer and influencer is getting much importance. The study focuses on understanding the factors that affects the influential behavior of children on parents buying decision. It reports a finding of parents both working and non working on their perception towards the most relevant factor that act as the root in forming the influential behaviour of children. Children are continuously becoming influencers of consumption; it tries to analyze what factors leads to making them the influencers and how parents succumb to the continuous pester power of the children which mould their buying behaviour. The focal point of the paper is to identify these factors, taking into consideration three major aspect, i.e personal source, celebrity endorsements and below the line advertising media that would play the most significant role in establishing certain influential behaviour in children.

**Keywords:** Children, Influencer, Consumerism, Celebrity endorsement, Peer group, opinion leaders, Parents Buying Behaviour, Relevance.

## **Introduction:**

India is a young country and children constitute a major part of its population. With easy access to mobile phones, televisions and many other forms of ATL and BTL marketing efforts each one of us are bombarded with promotional messages of various companies. Children are not an exception too. The change in the family structure also played a major role in the importance of children in family buying behavior as most of the families are turning nuclear with only one or

two kids and their importance in the family is eventually rising. Another factor that has probable impact on children's influence on parents buying behavior is the rise of consumerism. Parents with greater disposable income are prone to spend more on things which are not necessities. Availability of a variety of products, brands and their luring advertisements also influences the parents buying behavior. They also associate the showcase of love and affection when they purchase a product of their child's choice. This study tries to find out the extent to which the parents buying behavior are influenced by their children in NCR area.

Understanding the growing importance of children in family buying process, the marketers of various companies have also started focusing on directing their advertisements messages towards attracting the children. Be it a biscuit or chocolate advertisement, or a soft drink or fruit juice, the marketers are trying to attract children. Not only it's easy to convince and lure this audience but also they can help them to get spurt in sales by irrational purchases. This approach (although mentioned unethical by intellectuals and management gurus) have helped companies to achieve higher sales. Be it a Kinder Joy which is exorbitantly priced at Rs.45 a piece or companies selling chips and *namkeen* giving small toys as freebies, all are trying to tap the importance of children in buying behavior of their parents. With the growth of communication media, children are no longer untouched with the information overload due to advertisements directed towards them in various mode of communication. Now a days children are accessing mobile phones, spending a lot of time in watching televisions and also exposed to hoardings, billboards and pamphlets when they are visiting malls, markets etc. This has led to a greater level of awareness level among children about various products, brands available in the market.

### **Review of Literature**

- A study on understanding the influence of peer given by Bristol and Mangleburg, (2005) states that an individual's attitude, thoughts and action depends on the influence of the peers.
- Another study on the peer pressure and its influence on teenagers and youngsters given by Kao & Zhang, (2000) stated that teenagers and youngsters are usually exposed to peer pressure and have high inclination to make decisions and develop behaviours which positively conform with the peer's expectations. The young customer behaviours are

deployed by peer pressure as they feel it as an indispensable aspect to fit in their social group is aligned with the acceptability level and cope with the trends and life of their peers.

- Farrell, (2000) said that in order to increase the attractiveness of an advertisement one need to endorse celebrity. It also stated that the expertise opinion of celebrity on the product, number of celebrity's exposure helps in increasing the reliability of the advertisement.
- Ross (1984) exhibited how using celebrities to endorse a product could rise children's preference for that product and also believed that the celebrity was an professional on its subject.
- Bandyopadhyay, Kindra and Sharp (2001) in their study showed how children feel more confident in buying any product when it is endorsed by any celebrity of their choice.
- Lindstrom, (2003) opened up that children today, are seen as different from the past generation; particularly the 8-14 years old. In today's situation, a 5 years lap leads to generation gap. Digitalization of education and innovative techniques of teaching are making children much smarter than their earlier generation. They are rising faster, are more well-connected, straighter and well- informed. They have enough personal power, huge pocket money, more influence and attention of parents than any others generation before them.
- Thomson et al, (2007) investigated that the role children play in parents purchase decision, included children as research respondents directly. They interviewed both parents and children one by one. And it was followed by a family interview with completion of a decision mapping tool. The result showed the children's direct influence in parents purchase decisions.
- According to Noergaard et al. (2007) discussed the studies on family decision making during food buying. Family food decision making is often a joint activity and children's active participation among other things determines the influence they wield. Parents and children do not always agree on how much influence children have in the various stages of the process, indicating the importance of listening to both parties for an understanding of the family dynamics and processes involved in everyday food buying. The study

emphasized the importance of looking at food decision making as a joint activity where children participate actively and wield influence.

- Datta (2008) clarified that earlier generation few Indian parents use to govern their children with a stick and expected obedience and discipline which was a common household word. With the changing scenario most of the families spend the “Quality Time” in shopping malls or in exhibition or watching the latest movie together. Regardless of income group, parents these days are breaking the limit to please their children by offering them to get whatever parents had not got when they were kids.
- Anju Gulla & Dr. Harsh, (2013) in their paper “Children’s Attitude Towards Television Advertisements and Influence on The Buying Behavior of Parents” anticipated to understand the attitude of children towards Television advertisements and how this impacts the buying behaviour of parents. A detailed study in Delhi and NCR was conducted using the survey method. A questionnaire assessing attitudes of children towards TV advertisements and purchasing behavior of parents was circulated among parents of children between 8-14 years of age. A structural study was conducted using questionnaire and detailed analysis was done which showcased that advertisements on television have significant impact upon the attitude building of teenagers towards any product.

## Research Gap

Several studies have established the fact that children do influence the purchase behavior of the parents not just in the product category relevant for children but across board even for the product category not relevant to them. It was identified that there is a research gap as to what factors affect this behavior and what is the most relevant factor in parent’s perception affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents .

This paper attempts to identify those factors and rank them in the perception of the parents as the most relevant to least relevant.

## Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents
2. To identify the relevance of various factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents

### **Statement of Hypothesis:**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the opinions of two working status groups of respondents on the most influential factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant difference between the opinions of two working status groups of respondents on the most influential factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents

### **Research Methodology**

**Sample Type:** An empirical study among the parents with kids was conducted. 250 parents were studied. They were asked about their perception on various identified factors affecting influential behavior of children. They were also asked to rank the factors as most influencing to the least.

#### **Profile of the Sample:**

The sample of 250 educated females both working and nonworking, were selected on their readiness to share information.

The statistical tools used were mean and standard deviation, t-test. The mean and standard deviation of each factor considered were calculated, to understand the average as well as variance of each factor.

The identified factors were analyzed using t-test. The t-test depicts the difference between two independent sample groups related to the demographic variable of working status.

#### **Sampling Technique:**

Data was collected by interacting with the parents with the help of structured questionnaires using non-probability sampling technique. Only one parent was chosen from a family for the study. The responses had been collected separately for working and non working parent.

### **Variables in the Study:**

The variables that were considered along this study were

- i) Personal Source as an influencer which includes friend, opinion leaders, peer, family etc
- ii) Celebrity endorsement as the factor that influence children
- iii) Below the Line advertising media which includes internet marketing, social media, sales promotions.

### **Reliability of the Study**

Reliability measures the similarity or constancy of results provided by equal events of the same object or construct. It means the consistency of the objects of the scale and the whole scale that has been taken for measurement. Cronbach Alpha was calculated to check the reliability of each scale. For applying the test of reliability the value of Cronbach Alpha has been calculated which is above the accepted value of 0.70 at 0.721.

### **Analysis and Result**

Various techniques are there that creates the influencing attitude among children, which have impact on parents buying decision. Analysis of most influential factor that affects the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents is being carried out keeping in mind three main dimensions viz., Personal sources, Celebrity Endorsement and below the line media. The questionnaire contained statements as to which of the three is most influential source of awareness. The respondents were asked to rate these items on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5; 1 denoting strong disagreement, 2 disagreement, 3 neither disagreement nor agreement, 4 agreement and 5 denoting strong agreement.

Table: Comparison of factors affecting the Influential behavior of Children on buying behavior of Parents between two working status groups of respondents (Nonworking, working)

FACTORS	Nonworking (N=74)		Working (N=176)		t-value	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
PERSONAL SOURCE	4.00	0.99	3.93	0.96	0.77NS	0.83
CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT	2.18	0.96	2.16	0.88	0.25*	0.04
BELOW THE LINE ADVERTISING MEDIA	1.39	0.67	1.45	0.65	0.91NS	0.60

*NS – Not significant*

*\* Significant at .05 level*

From the above Table, it can be concluded that Celebrity Endorsement is the only factor affecting children according to parent's perception which has significant difference between the means of Non-working and working groups ( $t=0.25$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), although both groups do not consider it to be an influential factor (Mean=2.18 and 2.16). Personal Source (friends, peers) strongly emerges as most influential factor in both the categories (Mean=4.00 and 3.93), whereas below the line advertising media is considered non-significant.

### **Conclusion:**

The study establishes that children play an important role in influencing the buying behavior of their parents. Based on the results of the study it is observed that majority of the parents whether working or non-working perceives that personal source which includes friends, peers, family emerges as creating direct significant effect on attitude of children leading to buying behavior. It also directs that celebrity endorsement has to play massive important role in establishing an approach towards certain product line which affects the young minds in forming certain attitude towards that product. The companies also have understood it and started directing their advertisement messages towards this segment of little influencers. For example in the latest ICC world cup, we have seen the approach of the marketers aiming at the children as influencers in various product lines. The parents are knowingly or unknowingly respecting their child's wish

while selecting products or services for the family. Although a very responsible attitude is expected from the marketers and advertisers as the customer segment they are targeting is vulnerable and can increase consumerism in the society. Parents are also required to abstain themselves from being too much emotional and take logical decisions when purchasing products.

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