

**A STUDY ON THE DETERMINANTS OF PESTER POWER AND THEIR
IMPACT ON FAMILY BUYING DECISION**

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to identify factors which affect the influence of pester power and their impact on family buying decisions. Major factors considered into study are Peer pressure, parental style, Communication Pattern, TV and Hyper parenting. Total of 150 parents were taken as respondents. This research was carried out by designing a questionnaire which was filled by both mother and father. Findings of this study shows that Peer pressure has most influential factors to intensify the pester power. Among the different parental style Authoritativeness leads to increase the influence of kids and Consensual parents are least influenced by kids. This study will help marketers to understand the factor which determine the kids 'force on parents .

Keywords: Pestering or Nagging factor, Parental Style, Peer Pressure, Hyper Parenting, Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, Rigid controlling.

Introduction

India is a place where still close knitted families are existing which comprise of nuclear & joint families. Family is a key driver for everyone in India from business to enjoyment. This family has kids as most prized possessions for parents & even grandparents. Earlier parents didn't have much resource to appease them but they would try hard to get that smile. Now they work day in day out to get all the luxuries & desires of their child. This shift in parenting has resulted into a slow but drastic change of Pester Power as termed in marketing parlance.

Pester power is very unbeatable strategy or tool adopted by marketers to capture the attention of parent. Pester power is kids 'power to nag their parents for buying advertised products or fashion

items. Today kids are the dominating force which can go to any extent to make their wish come true. Kids have become so vocal about their choices that they don't care how parents are going to make it possible. This craziness is understood by marketers well that these tiny tots are their ticket to big market share and profit share. They can bold their competitors through this innocent but determined force of kids. Years ago parents taught children about the market. Now there is role reversal, kids show parents what has to purchase and what it means buying it.

In his book "Kids as Customers," James U. McNeal divides these pestering/influencing methods into seven categories i.e. demonstrative nag, forceful nag, persistent nag, pleading nag, pity nag, sugar-coated nag and threatening nag. Shubhranshu Das, executive director-Ipsos Advertising Research business for India stated that new age and dual family income make parents more reliant on their children. Therefore this brings children into purchase process directly. McNeal (1992) identified three different markets to which children belong. Firstly, they can be seen as a market in their own right; secondly, as an influencer market; and thirdly as a future market. As influencers, children constitute a huge secondary market by influencing family purchases. Rossiter (1978) broke the definition of influence into active and passive influence. Moreover Mikkelsen (2006) defines influence as "Children's active and passive attempts to achieve parents' permission to participate in family decision-making thereby achieving specific results." Active influence is also called direct influence where child exert direct interference in family purchasing by adopting various strategies such as request for specific products, recommendations, suggestions about available alternatives and discussion about benefits associated with products. Passive influence is indirect influence where parents are aware of what the child wants and try to comply without direct interaction with the child and it occurs when parents buy products and brands that they know their children prefer, without being asked or told to make that specific purchase (Blackwell 2006). Rachagan (2004) discovered that Children play an important role in the consumer market by influencing their parents' purchases either for the house hold product or for themselves. More than 50% of parents in some Asian countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, and South Korea) declared that their children are the important factor when it comes to purchase decisions and mentioned that "a child's demand" is the primary reason for purchasing. There are many factors that strengthen the effect of pester power. Ward (1974) and Moschis and Moore, (1979) identified parents, peers, and mass media –

primarily television as dominance factors in kids' consumer behavior.. Schulman and Clancy(1992), Shimp(2000) observed that watching television is most favorite activity school which is followed by shopping. Dotson(2005) also identified five major factors i.e.Peer,TV,Parents ,Shop and Brand which affect the consumer socialization of kid. First Becker (1964),Carlson and Grossbert (1988) and Baumrind (1971) studied the parental style which control the kids involvement of kids in purchase decisions.McLeod and Chaffee (1972) developed the topology of communication patterns between child and parents and followed by Moschis et al.(1986), Foxman, Tansuhaj,and Ekstrom (1989),Palan (1998) and Chan and McNeal (2003) .

Peer pressure is described as the pressure exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitude, behavior and/or morals, to conform to, for example, the group's actions, fashion-sense, taste in music and television, or outlook on life. Moschis and Churchill, (1978) found in their study that Peers are the most influential agents for learning consumption habits amongst children right from early childhood through adolescence. Santrock (2007) proposed that peer pressure is omnipresent force whose can be observed in almost every dimensions of adolescents 'behavior. Peer Pressure play a vital role to develop child's social and emotional aspects. This influence starts with early stage of life and continues with teenage. Peer Pressure has the both negative and positive effect on child's behavior. Positive pressure help them to develop their on own behavior, attitude and preferences for consumption. Television is most influential medium among various available media. Kids are the pulse of family. So it is very easy for marketers to penetrate the family through kids. Television has come up in a huge way and advertising is a huge multimillion dollar industry that has an enormous impact on the development of a child (Clay, 2000).Today's' advertisers are targeting child through various attractive advertisements. Advertisements comprise with their favorites celebrities,super heroes and cartoon characters. Advertisers who target children have three main objectives: to directly seek children as customers, to work indirectly on parents through children's "pester power", and/or to imprint the younger generation with positive brand associations (Paul, 2002). Parenting is about to nurture kids and make them competent to be fitted in the society. Parents cultivate skills and knowledge into kids about world. Kids were the followers of their parents in every

decision regarding their consumption, But today's kids are full of knowledge and have the great exposure of information about products. They are a barometer of their parents success in the world. Partha Sinha, managing partner, BBH India said that Indian children have the highest display value and 'performing' kids are always a source of pride for the parents. Everything is related with parents not with child. So it breed the concept of hyper parenting among modern parents. Hyper parenting is an anxious success program by parents that asserts that childhood must be carefully crafted and managed. The right childhood activities, combined with regular practice, near fanatical devotion, and intense parental guidance will enable every "good, devoted" parent to raise a perfect kid, a winner who will get into renowned university (Rosenfeld et al. 2001). Sometimes, hyper parenting makes children's life over scheduling with a heavy dose of academics and extra-curricular activities (sports, hobbies etc.), forcing them to excel in different fields for all-round development. This state is described as 'hurried child syndrome'.

A Parental style can be described as psychological construct representing standard strategies which are used by parents to bring up their child. Every parents create their own style for the development of their child which are the combination various factors like time investment, efforts made by parents etc. It helps child to frame their personalities, attitude, beliefs and preferences. Parenting style is affected by the temperament of both (parents and child) and their culture. Most of the parents follow the same style adopted by their own parents and some discard. First study about parental style was done by Becker in 1964.

Baumrind (1971) developed the three types of parental styles i.e. Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Permissive. Authoritarian parents practice high level of control over children with egoistic and impulsive forces and believe that parents is omnipotent and children should be in subordinates role. They want children socially obedient and dissuade their autonomy. Authoritarian believe that children should have few rights with some adult responsibilities. Neglecting parents maintain distance from their children. They neither seek or exercise high level of control over children perhaps because they are self involved and wish or try to avoid parental guidance for kids. They have limited restrictiveness and less warmth or anxious towards the child's development and believe that children should have few rights or responsibilities. Hence neglecting parents indirectly encourage their autonomy. Rigid Controlling parents are

similar to Authoritarians, except that calm aloofness limits their emotional participation in children's socialization. Authoritative parents maintain balance between parents' and child ' rights and make changes as the child grow up. They believe that rights and responsibilities should be complementary for children. They encourage eloquence, willfulness and autonomy of children but along with expectation of compliance. They are warm, supportive and painstaking attempt to enrich the child's environment with cultural and educational activities (Gardner 1978). Permissive parents try to remove restraint over children as much as possible without endangering them. They allow children freedom with some what warmth and protection. They think children should have adult rights with few responsibilities. They interact with children in affirmative, acceptant and compassionate way. They view themselves as resources, not active shapers of children, (Baumrind 1968, 1978). These above parental style varies according to socio and cultural environment, parents' background and parent-child relationship.

kids' knowledge about market place mostly depend on parent-child communication. For understanding communication pattern Newcomb(1953) developed A-B-X paradigm. The Newcomb co-orientation model assumes that two persons, A and B, who are attracted to one another positively or negatively, are co-oriented to an object of communication, X. Newcomb's co orientation model has been particularly useful in the study of interpersonal communications. Following Newcomb Model McLeod and Chaffee (1972) developed a typology of parent-child communication structures and patterns. They divided family structure in three categories i.e. autocratic-democratic, "controlling-permissive," and "traditional-modern". On the basis of this classification they found two dimensions of communication pattern. The first is socio-oriented which is designed to produce respect and to foster harmonious and pleasant social relationships at home. In such communication structure children may be taught to avoid controversy and repress his/her feelings on extra personal topics, for example, by not arguing with adults and giving in on arguments rather than risking offending others. The second is concept oriented is a pattern that focuses on positive constraints that help the child to develop his/her own views about the world,. The parents may, for example, encourage the child to weigh all alternatives before making a decision, or they may expose him/her to controversy, either by differing openly on an issue or by discussing it with guests at home (McLeod and Chaffee 1972). These dimensions

help to form the four parent communication patterns i.e. Laissez-faire, Protective, Pluralistic, and Consensual. Laissez-faire parent are neither socio- nor concept-oriented and hence little parent-child communication of either type occurs in these families. Protectives emphasize deference to parent, control and mediation of children's consumer socialization at the expense of building consumer competence and skills in the child. Pluralistics encourage the development of consumer skills without promoting acquiescence to themselves or controlling children's exposure to the marketplace. Finally, Consensuals stress both orientations. Their children are encouraged to take interest in ideas outside the scope of family beliefs and traditions, yet simultaneously are expected to learn and conform to parental consumer behaviors, values and ideas.

In this study the above determinants of pester power will be observed and analyzed then their role on family buying decisions will be examined.

Review of Literature

The concept of 'pester power' is arguably one of the most sensitive, emotive, and controversial aspects in current marketing practice. It has been broadly defined as children's influence on family consumption patterns (Shoham & Dalakas, 2005), or more specifically in terms of children asking their parents to buy products for them (Gunter & Furnham, 1998). Other authors use more loaded terminology to describe such purchase request behavior. For example, Bridges and Briesch (2006) refer to the "nag factor". Elsewhere, McDermott, O'Sullivan, Stead, and Hastings (2006) espouse the use of the term 'pester', acknowledging the emotive connotations of such a word, whilst Marshall, O'Donohoe, and Kline (2007) refer to the practices of denigration and denial by critics and advertisers respectively towards pester power. Marquis, (2004) to expensive items such as choice of family car (Dotson & Hyatt 2005). Datta D. (2010) marked that "the biggest change within Great Indian Family is not women's liberation and all that. It's the way parents treat children- "like an equal", "like a friend". 'No' is no longer a household word." Belch et al., 1985; Darley and Lim, 1986 found that Children, however have expressive decisions on features such as color, model, brand, shape and time of purchase. Grønholdt (2008) discovered that children exercise quite strong influence on family decision making processes in connection with purchases, particularly in the case of products relevant to them (like cereal, juice, soft

drinks, and mobile phones) and during the initiation stage. Children's influence also varies with sub decision stages. Chundawat D.S., Gupta Seema (2003) observed that a large number of purchase decisions are influenced by a person's interaction with his family, friends and relatives. This study is an attempt at understanding the roles played by family members and the social influences in purchase of consumer durables viz., television, refrigerator and washing machine. It was found that for television, the demand was initiated and influenced mostly by children and for refrigerator and washing machine, done mostly by females and the final decision and payment was done mostly by male members.. Gram, M. (2010) observed family decision-making about food shopping. Findings showed that both parents and children are juggling a number of roles and apply a range of negotiation strategies which can explain why it is hard to account for who decided what afterwards. Guneri B., Yurt O., Kaplan M.D. and Delen M. (2010) conducted a research focused on the influence of children on family purchasing decision- making in Turkey. This study suggested that the children's influence on family decision-making is limited to products of direct use to children. Findings also revealed that the children are more influential on need recognition, where to buy, when to buy and which to buy sub-decisions. Parents perceive children to have very little influence on family decision making, and considered them the most influential units of family decision making. Norgaard Maria Kumpel, Bruns Karen, Christensen Pia Haudrup, Mikkelsen Miguel Romero (2007) explored to know children's influence and participation in family decision making during food buying. Wut Tai Ming, Chou Ting-Jui (2009) investigated children's influences on Chinese family decision making in Hong Kong. Children were found to have more influence in the choice-making stage of decision making and parents still control the final decision.

Parsons et al., (1953), David and Roseboroug (1955), Moschis and Moore (1982) have described the impact of peer pressure in two ways, expressive consumption and effective consumption. By expressive consumption they mean the social motivations and the materialistic values that are associated with the purchases while on the other hand purchase styles and modes of consumptions were categorized as effective consumption influence. Bachmann, et al (1993) stated that consumption learning of consumption are from peers effect child consumer socialization directly or indirectly. Godhani et.al. (2012) explored that Friends and peers are

most widely used information sources followed by ads, family members and internet. Singh (1998) in India, like Jensen (1995) in the U.S., also found that purchase requests by children are strongly stimulated by commercials or by a friend who has recently purchased a product.

Rosenfeld & Wise(2001) depicted that "Hyper-parenting" is the phrase we coined to describe a child-rearing style now prevalent in middle and upper-middle class homes. In these families, parents become over-involved in every detail of their children's academic, athletic and social lives. Belsky (1991) points out that an optimal level of gratification is best for child development. Bredehoft et al (1998) points out that overindulgent parents inundate their children with family resources such as material wealth, time, experiences, and lack of responsibility. They give children too much of what looks good, too soon, too long and at developmentally inappropriate times. Singh and Khatri(2008) found out in study that the level of overindulgence practiced by parents was found to be responsible for 30.3% of variance in actual buying behaviour of parents in packaged food products.

Carlson and Grossbart (1988) measure parent-child communication about consumption as a broad, parsimonious dimension that includes both verbal communication and reciprocal patterns of purchase-oriented behavior. Palan and Wilkes (1997) observed adolescent-parent interaction in decision making and reported that besides direct requests, adolescents are likely to use bargaining (money deals, other deals, and reasoning) and persuasion (opinions, begging) as strategies to influence decision outcomes. Family communication patterns depend upon parental control of consumption and media usage (Carlson and Grossbart, 1988; Chan and McNeal, 2003), parental style (Carlson et al., 1992), and advertising practices (Carlson et al., 1990). Another researcher Moschis (1985, 1987) has concluded that interaction of children with all other entities is majorly influenced by their parents, when they are in direct or indirect contact with each other.

Darling and Steinberg, (1993) defined that Parental style is a “constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviors are expressed.” Becker (1964) took a dimensional approach in which parental style was assumed to consist of different dimensions that are orthogonal to each

other. He suggested a three-dimensional model to conceptualize family socialization—warmth vs. hostility, restrictiveness vs. permissiveness, and calm detachment vs. anxious emotional involvement. On those dimensions, parents were categorized as Rigid Controlling, Authoritarian, Organized Effective, Overprotective, Democratic, Indulgent, Anxious Neurotic, and Neglecting (c f. Carlson and Grossbart, 1988). Baumrind (1971) further developed a three-fold typology of parental styles and classified parents as—Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Permissive. These two approaches were merged further by Macoby and Martin (1983) so that the parenting classification could be generalized to most families. The parents were then classified as Indulgent, Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Neglecting. Carlson, Grossbart (1988) studied mothers and their parental style. They come across that Authoritatives and Permissives interact more with children, by co shopping. Asking children's opinions, and so forth, than do Authoritarian and Neglecting mothers. Their communication scores are also higher than those of Rigid Controlling mothers, but differences are not significant. Indulgent and less positive attitudes toward ads in general than Authoritarian and Neglecting mothers do. They are also more concerned than Permissives. Rigid Controlling mothers have less positive attitudes toward ads than Neglecting mothers do.

George (2003) and Kunkel et al. (2004) found that advertisement is major source of information for young children and they view thousands of advertisements every year in India as well as western. A Study done by Fan Y. and Li Y. (2010) in China illustrates that TV advertisements and in-store experiences were the primary sources of information and desire for advertised food products was related to children's level of exposure to the media. Kapoor and Verma (2005) investigated children's understanding of TV advertising in a comprehensive study in Delhi. Their findings revealed that children as young as six years could understand the purpose of TV ads and distinguish between a commercial and a TV program. They also found out in their study that with increase in the age of children their interest in TV ads decreased.

Research Methodology

I. Objective of the study

The objectives of study are

- i) To identify the determinants of the pester power
- ii) To measure the impact of pester power on family buying decisions subsequently.

II. Research Design

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative part is based on standardized questionnaire and qualitative part includes direct observation and unstructured interviews. The quantitative methods involved 150 participants i.e. parents whereas 10 families were observed in qualitative methods. Questionnaires were designed for both father and mother. Questionnaire comprised information regarding factors which influence family buying decisions. Five point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used to measure the responses.

III. Data Analysis

The study population is parents of Indore city, India. A convenience sampling was used in the study. Total 200 questionnaire was distributed in which 50 were invalid and excluded from study. Therefore a total of 150 valid questionnaires were eventually entered into the analysis. Factor analysis was used to identify the factors which influence the pester power.

Results and Discussion

Reliability Analysis

This study has included 35 items for which the value of Cronbach's Alpha is .755. Alpha Cronbach's Coefficient have exceeded the minimum accepted benchmark value of .60 (Malhotra 2007).

Results for Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Varimax with Kaiser normalization rotation method. Total 65.304 percentage of variance were explained by ten factors. These extracted ten factors were named as: Peer Pressure (10.529) is most influential

factor, followed by Authoritative style(7.797), Rigid controlling(7.490), Socio-oriented communication(6.300), TV(6.292), Concept-oriented-communication(5.520), Hyperparenting (5.488), Permissiveness(5.469), Authoritarianism(5.399), Consensual(5.019). These factors are described as follow

Peer Pressure:

Peer Pressure is most influential factors that generate pester power among the kids. Parents admitted that kids prefer those products which are advised by their peers. It bothers kids when they do not have those things that peers possess. Kids want to adopt those products because they want to be fitted into the peer group. They like to follow peers' style, attitude and behavior. Consequently it aggravate their nagging for their desired products. Fan and Li(2009) also revealed in their study that friends and classmates were viewed as the most useful information sources for kids. Television -commercials with their favorite celebrities or stars also influence their purchases.

Authoritative style:

Authoritativeness is the parents' approaches towards kids. They foster balance between rights and responsibilities into kids. They value their kids' opinion about purchasing because they want to develop consumer socialization into their kids. They do not exercise power and control until intervention is required. They make their kids involved in extra-curricular activities. Carlson and Grossbart (1988) found in their study that authoritative are most active in sharpening learning experience and discussing kids' opinion about consumerism. They are most concerned about how children are exposed to world. Therefore this style is second most influential factor to intensify pester power.

Rigid Controlling style:

Rigid controlling parents believe that child should be in subordinate role and do not express their views about consumerism. They maintain calm detachment with kids and limit their emotional attachment. They force kid about purchase i.e. kids have to obey their choices. They compare kids with other so that Carlson and Grossbart (1988) revealed same view about rigid controlling.

They restrict kids 'request and relatively insensitive to kids developments. So these type of parents have negative impact on pester power it means they put control on nagging.

Socio-oriented Communication :

Socio-oriented Communication emphasis on parental control on kids. They try to monitor and control the kid's consumption activities. Parents impose their decisions on kid and expect from kid he should not argue and try to avoid controversy. They restrict them for not buying certain things. They dominate kids on the topic of suitability of the products and look forward the acceptance of their decisions regarding this without any divergence. Mostly they deter kids 'participation. This type of communication determine the strength of kid's pestering on family buying decisions.

Television:

Television is most popular medium among kids. The advent of kids' channels increase the craziness towards TV. Channels exploits the kids innocence through commercials .These commercial provide information's regarding product and make them emotionally involved with the product which subsequently affect their purchase behavior .The influence can be directly or indirectly on the purchase. Kids believe that commercial are providing true information regarding product, it makes their favorable attitude towards the product, and then they started to like & request the particular product. Now this will create the pester effect on buying the desired product. Heavy viewing of TV makes the positive & favorable attitude towards the commercials which declined with the age. Therefore TV serves as source of consumer socialization for children & important factor for determining pester power.

Concept oriented communication:

Concept oriented communication stress on cultivation of children's independency in decision making & develops autonomy in consumptions activities. This communication encourage kids to develop their own ides & express their views more openly. Parents prefer child participation in family buying decision. They ask for their opinion about the product while buying things for them selves. They eager to know the Childs thoughts regarding purchased product and try to

make such family environment in which child can cultivate consumer skills by himself . This process strengthen the pester effects.

Hyper parenting :

Nowadays parents are overindulged in kids ‘development. They try to keep on eye on every activity of kids. They provide every facilities for making kid super-child. So they direct kids and become obsessive about their performance . Performing kids have become the source of pride for the parents. Hyper parenting boost the pester effect on the buying decisions because parents see their fundamental job as designing a perfect upbringing for their kids, from conception to college. A child's success—quantified by "achievements" like speaking early, qualifying for the gifted and talented program or earning admission to an elite university—has become the measure of parental accomplishment.

Permissive style:

Permissive parents seek to remove all the possible restraints on kids. They allow substantial freedom for kids .They communicate more about the consumption to the kids & try to promote consumer learning without control or intervention. They intend to serve child desires .They regard themselves as resource for kids & want more exposure of world of kids. They think that Childs liking are more important even others don’t like. They believe that child should be controlled by their own egoistic & impulsive forces. These tendencies create refreshing & natural development of kids. So parents’ this attitude makes pester power noticeable.

Authoritarian Style :

Authoritarian parents impose restriction on kid’s decision making. They expect obedience & compliance behavior from kids. They keep Childs as subordinate role and avoid verbal communication with the kids .They complain when child do not ask for their views or suggestions. Parents feel that coaching classes are necessary for kids’ development. Parents have made their mind about the kids limitations related with buying. Authoritarian controls the nagging factor of kids.

Consensual style:

This factor has least impact on determining the pester power. Consensual parents promote both forms of communication and encourage their children to develop autonomous views (concept) as long as parents maintain overall control they think that some time should be spent with children in a day necessarily.

Conclusion

Kids are very important part of the family. They can catch the attention of every member of the family. Their influencing power can not be underestimated. This power is fortified by various factors. Many researchers have been contributed for the same. This study has identified ten factors i.e. peer pressure, authoritative, rigid controlling, socio-oriented communication, TV, concept-oriented communication, hyper parenting, permissiveness, authoritarianism and consensual. These factors generate the kid's power that is called Pester power in terms of marketing terminology. Peer pressure has come out as the most influential factor with max loading. Previous studies also support this factor. So under the pressure of peer kids nag their parents most of the time for getting desired products. Authoritativeness of the parents makes kids to frame their own opinion or views and turn them into individual decision maker. This tendency build up the nagging part of kids. This is the second influential factor to determine pester power. Rigid controlling, socio oriented communication and authoritarianism have the negatively related pester power which implies that these factors enforce control on kid's nagging. TV, concept oriented communication, hyper parenting, permissiveness and consensual have positively associated with pester power and force parents to accept kids' power.

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