

A STUDY ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS MEDIATION ON CHILDREN'S PURCHASE REQUESTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the parental perceptions related to the demographic factors mediation on children's purchase requests. Parent's age, type of family structure, parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, child's age group, child's gender, and number of siblings were included as demographic factors in the study. A survey had been conducted on 3600 parents from 6 selected cities with the aid of structured questionnaire to find their children's purchase requests. Children age group was 7 to 11 years. ANOVA statistical technique was applied to find the relationship between the demographic factors and children's purchase requests. Using the frequency of the children purchase request reported by the parents as the dependent variable, the possible relationships with diverse demographic variables of the families were investigated. Except father's education and child's gender all other demographic variables included in the study parent's age, type of family structure, mother's education, parent's employment status, family income, child age group, and number of siblings shown significant differences among the groups against children purchase requests. The results of the study suggest the need to develop consumer segmentation profiles based on the diverse demographic factors which helps the marketers in designing effective marketing communications targeted towards children.

Keywords: *Children's purchase requests, Demographic factors mediation, Marketing communications, Consumer segmentation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is a process intervened with diverse cultural, social, personal, psychological, and behavioral factors. Social factors refer to forces that other people exert and which affect consumers purchase behavior. Social factors are reference groups, membership groups, peers, family, social role and status (Belk, 1988). Cultural factors are culture and societal environment, sub cultures, social classes and societal trends. Personal factors are age, purchasing power and revenue, lifestyle, personality and self-concept which are unique to a person (Bloch et al., 2003). Psychological factors are motivation, perception, learning, belief, attitudes and personality. Psychological factors are internal to an individual (DeBono, 2000). Behavioral factors are brand loyalty, the extent of usage, usage situation and benefits desired.

Understanding the factors that influence the consumer behavior will help the advertisers to plan and enhance the effect of advertisements towards the consumers. Instead of simple stimulus-response perspectives, it is important to gain insight into the different antecedents of children's exposure to different media to understand the media effects on children (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000). Demographic variables play an important role in shaping the consumer behavior. Growing number of exclusive kids channels in India indicating the enhanced marketing communication efforts targeted towards children. Marketers are giving importance to the children in family purchase decision making product categories related to the children as well as family like automobiles, televisions etc.,.

Present paper provides insights about how the demographic factors parent's age, type of family structure, parent's education, parent's occupation, family income, age of child, gender of child, and number of siblings mediate the children purchase requests. Results of the study will help the marketers for effective segmentation of the products based on the demographic profiles pertinent to children.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parents' age: In a research study Ali & Batra (2011) identified that older mothers involved their children in decision making for the selection of domestic products where as younger mothers involved their children only in the products related to the children. Children influence in family purchase decisions will be more in the families having older parents (Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom, 1989; Jenkins, 1979).

Type of family structure: Due to the interactions among the family members, the family can be defined as a system in which all parts need to be interrelated and interdependent to maintain the balance (Galvin & Brommel, 1999; Yingling, 1995; Manoharan & Vijayalakshmi, 2012) identified

that increased role of children involvement in consumer decision making was due to nuclear family structure in India.

Parent's education: Children who belong to the highly educated parents shown more influence in family purchase decision making than the children belonging to less educated parents (Slama & Tahchian; 1985). Kaur & Singh (2006) identified the increased role of children in purchase decision making in India was due to the parents dual careers leading to more disposable income.

Parent's occupation: The change in the family structure like dual earning households has increased the workload of parents resulting into more involvement of children family purchase decision making process (Merckx et al., 1997). Children shown more influence in decision making where the parents are more career oriented (McNeal, 1992). Guilt is the main reason in the families where both parents are working which aggravates children influence in family purchase decision making (Beatty, & Talpade, 1994; Lee & Beatty, 2002).

Family income: Children from higher socio-economic background possess more opportunities about consumer knowledge and consumption (Bian, 2002; Jenkins, 1979; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Moschis & Moore, 1979; Ward, 1974) and parents have enough money to fulfill their children preferences (Williams & Veeck, 1998). It is concluded that there is a positive relation between the children influence on consumer decisions and family income (McNeal & Mindy, 1996; Singh, 1992).

Age of child: Child age has a positive relationship with their influence in family decision making (Ali & Batra, 2011; Atkin, 1978; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008; McNeal & Yeh, 2003; Moschis & Mitchell, 1986; Popper & Ward, 1980; Shoham & Dalakas, 2003; Swinyard & Sim, 1987). Negative relation is identified between the child age and number of purchase requests with the parents (Adler, 1980; Atkin, 1975; Isler, Popper, & Ward, 1987; Kapoor & Verma, 2005). Darley, W. K., & Lim, J. S. (1986) studied family decision making in leisure-time activities and found that higher age group children shown more influence than lower age group children.

Gender of child: Past studies revealed boys shown more persistence than girls in parental requests for the advertised products (McNeal, 1999; Sheikh & Moleski, 1977). Girls involvement was higher in consumer decision making than male adolescents (Ali & Batra, 2011; Moschis & Mitchell, 1986). Kwai-Choi Lee, C., & Collins, B. A. (2000) found that influence of female children was stronger than male children due to the identifiable coalitions between parent-child dyads.

Number of siblings: Filiatrault & Ritchie (1980) conducted a study to find how perceived influence structure varies in consumer decision making processes among different family members. The study suggested that children may form alliance with parent or sibling to increase their influence on purchase decision making. Cotte & Wood (2004) investigated triadic analysis among parent and two siblings about the influence of family influence in consumer behavior innovativeness. The study suggested siblings may be role model for each other in consumer decisions.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey had been conducted on parents from 6 selected cities with the aid of structured questionnaire with a sample size of 3600 to find the children's purchase request. Children age group was 7 to 11 years. From each city total of ten schools were selected through convenience sampling. Internal consistency of the constructs were measured through the Cronbach's alpha value and found acceptable with a value greater than 0.7. ANOVA statistical technique was applied to find the relationship between the demographic factors and children's purchase requests. Using the frequency of the children purchase request reported by the parents as the dependent variable, the possible relationships with diverse demographic variables of the families were investigated.

Total sample size = 6 (cities) X 10 (Number of schools) X 5 (Number of classes) X 12 (Parent's of the students) = 3600 parents

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Out of 3600 distributed questionnaires, 3108 questionnaires were found to be fully filled, and the rest 492 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete information. Demographic profile of parents and children is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Demographic profile of parents and children

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Parent's age	26-32 years	824	26.52
	33-39 years	1495	48.10
	40 years or more	789	25.38
Type of family structure	Nuclear family	2241	72.10
	Joint family	867	27.90
Education – Mother	SSC/Intermediate	761	24.48
	Graduate	1722	55.41
	Post Graduate	625	20.11
Education – Father	SSC/Intermediate	584	18.78
	Graduate	1212	39.00
	Post Graduate	1312	42.22
Parent's employment status	Both employed	1371	44.12
	Only father employed	1737	55.88
Total family monthly income	Less than Rs.20,000	613	19.73
	Rs.20,001 to 40,000	1682	54.13

	Rs. 40,001 or higher	813	26.14
Child age group	7-9 years	1884	60.63
	10-11 years	1224	39.37
Child's gender	Boy	1682	54.13
	Girl	1426	45.87
Number of siblings	Single child	1340	43.12
	With siblings	1768	56.88

Through Table 2 it is concluded that except father's education and gender of the child all other demographic factors shown significant differences with respect to the children's purchase requests.

Table 2: Relationship between the demographic factors and children's purchase requests using ANOVA statistical technique.

Variable Name	Variable group	Group mean	F value	df	p-value
Parent's age	26-32 years	3.35	12.767	3	0.001*
	33-39 years	3.71			
	40 years or more	3.79			
Type of family structure	Nuclear family	3.81	7.414	2	0.003*
	Joint family	3.24			
Education – Mother	SSC/Intermediate	3.41	10.477	3	0.001*
	Graduate	3.43			
	Post Graduate	3.51			
Education – Father	SSC/Intermediate	3.11	6.360	3	0.089**
	Graduate	3.66			
	Post Graduate	3.98			
Parents employment status	Both employed	3.23	2.224	2	0.002*
	Only father employed	2.61			
Total family monthly income	Less than Rs.20,000	3.64	3.181	3	0.004*
	Rs.20,001 to 40,000	3.41			
	Rs. 40,001 or higher	3.71			
Child age group	7-9 years	3.81	2.421	2	0.003*
	10-11 years	3.26			
Gender of the child	Boy	3.89	7.125	2	0.095**
	Girl	3.43			

Number of siblings	Single child	2.91	4.232	2	0.001*
	With siblings	2.79			

* The mean difference was significant at $p < 0.05$

** The mean difference was not significant at $p < 0.05$

V. DISCUSSION

Demographic variables play important role in deciding the consumer behavior towards the advertised products or services. Children have their own choice and mindset. Diverse demographic factors like where the children are living, their culture, social class, and income levels influence the children consumer behavior. Marketers need to understand about the demographic factors that influence the consumer behavior for developing effective marketing strategies.

Except father's education and child's gender all other demographic variables included in the study parent's age, type of family structure, mother's education, parent's employment status, family income, child age group, and number of siblings shown significant differences among the groups against children purchase requests.

Parent's age: Children of older age parents group shown more purchase requests than the children of younger age group parents. Majority of the parent's from older age group who settled in the careers fulfill the children's purchase requests.

Type of family structure: Children made more purchase requests with the parents who belong to the nuclear family structure than the children from the joint families. This is due to the more individuality character nurtured among the children by the parents who belong to nuclear family structure.

Mother education: It is found a variation between the children purchase requests with respect to the mother's education category. Children having higher educated mothers made more purchase requests. This could be due to the mother's belonging to higher education group were able to explain about the advertised products leading to amicable scenarios with their children in purchase requests.

Father education: Children did not shown any differences in purchase requests based on the father's education. The probable reasons might be lack of time to spend with children leading to less family interactions leading to similar purchase requests by the children.

Parent's employment: Children belong to the both parents employed category made more purchase requests than the children's belong to the parents who employed either of them. The higher income status as well as guilty feeling of lack of spending time with the children by the parents could be the reasons for fulfilling the children requests.

Total family monthly income: Children belong to the higher income group families made more purchase requests than the children who belong to the low income group due to the inequalities with respect to income earning levels.

Child age group: Children from 7-9 years of age groups made more purchase requests since they are in transformation stage from perceptual stage to the analytical stage. Children in the age group of 7-9 years possess belief about advertisements are truthful, funny, and interesting and possess positive attitudes towards advertisements.

Child's gender: There was no difference between the male and female children in purchase requests made to the parents. This was due to the equal importance towards the children by the parents irrespective of their gender.

Number of siblings: Single children made more purchase requests with their parents than the children having siblings. Parents possessing single child exhibits possessiveness leading to fulfill the purchase requests made by their child resulting into differences among the children quantum purchase requests made by the children.

Significant differences existing among the groups based on demographic factors with respect to children's purchase requests. Hence there is a need to develop consumer segmentation and profiling based on the demographic variables which help in designing effective marketing communications. Only demographic factors were included in the present study. Future studies can be conducted by including the factors from cultural, personal, psychological, and behavioral segments to gain more insights about the children's consumer behavior.

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