

Spousal Role in Buying Decision making of Automobiles and its Impact on Marketing Strategies

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ABSTRACT

In a family Husband and wife are two major pillars, and when it comes to make a buying decision for the house which involves money, the contribution of each one of them matters while making a final decision. Since long the researchers have contributed a lot to study the contribution of spouse in buying decisions. Depending upon the type and class of product, which is planned for purchase, the contribution of individual may vary while making the decisions. In this paper we tried to investigate the decision making process and contribution of spouse while making decision. The study could help out the seller to make his or her strategies accordingly.

Keywords: *Mean, Standard Deviation, t-Test, Significance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers have been studying family decision-making almost since the late 1950s. Since then family is considered as a single consumption unit by the researchers and it encompasses primarily mother, father and children, however this perception can be extended to other members such as grandparents too. However most of these studies emphasize only on first three members i.e. parents and children only. Early marketers were of the view that most family related decisions were taken either by the husband or the wife. Challenged the above theory showed that spousal roles differed by product category. Thus, the husband could be dominant in one product while the wife in another. Some researchers went a step further and showed that roles differed not only by product category but by sub-decisions (e.g. when to buy, where to buy, how much to pay etc.) as well. Despite salient changes, there is a paucity of studies looking at the extent to how decision-making processes of consumers in India have changed over the years. The processes concerning how consumers make decisions are pivotal to the study of consumer behavior. Infact, the lack of research in this area limits our understanding of how consumer decision-making processes may change as globalization transforms a country's macroeconomic environment. While research has found differences amongst countries, no research could be found which examines how globalization may have an impact on consumers' decision making styles as a less developed country becomes more developed. Furthermore, no study has examined what psychological dimensions are associated with the various decision making styles.

Substantial research has sought to conceptualize the meaning of consumer decision making styles. *Sproles and Kendall (1986)* were the first to establish the core concept of consumer decision making styles by defining it as "a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices". These authors established the concept as a construct which they described as a "basic consumer personality" dimension not unlike the way

the term “personality” is used in the discipline of psychology. Specifically, research traditions investigating consumer typologies (*Darden and Ashton, 1974; Moschis, 1976*) and psychographics /lifestyle categories (*Lastovicka, 1982; Wells, 1975*) were the earlier methods aimed at describing profiles of consumers. The commonality amongst these methods is the assumption that consumers have varying mindsets or personalities that condition how they engage in decision making or make choices. In essence, consumers can be described by identifiable and fundamental decision-making modes or style; these include rational or impulsive shopping, consciousness in terms of brand, price and quality, among others. Among the many ways to understand such decision making, the consumer characteristics approach *Sproles (1985)* and *Sproles and Kendal (1986)* provide arguably the most robust explanatory method. Its explanatory power is based on the mental or psychological orientation that consumers exhibit in making decisions. In psychological terms, the *Sproles and Kendal (1986)* method delves into consumers’ cognitive and affective orientations in their process of decision making in a shopping context. Their method posits that decision-making styles can be used to profile consumers into discrete groups of shoppers by identifying general orientations towards shopping and buying. As such, retailers and marketers can use this method as an analytic procedure to break down seemingly heterogeneous decision-making styles with enormous variation and sort them into homogeneous groups or segments of consumers with identifiable decision making orientations. In essence, the consumer characteristics approach can be used as a segmentation technique in target marketing.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC OF THE STUDY AND BUYING DECISION PROCESS FOR BUYING AN AUTOMOBILE

All The study focuses on decision making process of such urban living families and their approach while making decisions for various products. The purpose of this study is to examine joint vs. autonomous decision making in household buying behavior with respect to relevantly involved products.

Table- 1 Demographic variables and their frequency

Characteristic	N (Frequency)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	160	54
Female	140	46
Age		
21-40yrs	178	59
41-60yrs	119	41
Above 61yrs	3	01
Occupation		
Business/Self Employed	16	05
Services	211	70
Housewife	73	25
Qualification		

Graduate	62	21
Post Graduate	195	65
Vocational Certificate Or Associate's Degree	43	14
Family Monthly Income		
30001-45k	21	07
45001-60k	76	26
60001-75k	59	20
750001-11lac	73	24
Above 1 Lac	71	23
Family Structure		
Nuclear	253	84
Joint	47	16

The entire buying process is subdivided in to following sublevels:

- Initiator
- Information seeker
- Time of purchase
- Specific store selection
- Specific brand selection
- Design selection
- Size selection
- Budget planning
- Actual purchaser

Based on the above sublevels of decision making process a questionnaire is prepared and almost 300 responses were recorded. The response recorded for buying the automobile is as follows:

Table- 2 Response Recorded as per the Decision Making Process Level

Frequency		Initiator			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	77	3	80	160
	Female	69	1	70	140
	Total	146	4	150	300

Frequency		Information Seeker			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	103	12	45	160
	Female	92	15	33	140
	Total	195	27	78	300

Frequency		Time of Purchase			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	43	8	109	160
	Female	46	5	89	140
	Total	89	13	198	300

Frequency		Specific Store Selection			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	48	12	100	160
	Female	42	15	83	140
	Total	90	27	183	300

Frequency		Brand Selection			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	72	21	67	160
	Female	54	20	66	140
	Total	126	41	133	300

Frequency		Design Selection			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	44	49	67	160
	Female	40	33	67	140
	Total	84	82	134	300

Frequency		Size Selection Decision			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	38	18	104	160
	Female	34	9	97	140
	Total	72	27	201	300

Frequency		Budget Planner			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	42	9	109	160
	Female	42	8	90	140
	Total	84	17	199	300

Frequency		Actual Purchaser			
		Husband	Wife	Joint Decision	Total
Sex	Male	104	10	46	160
	Female	87	4	49	140
	Total	191	14	95	300

III. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Gender Vs. Buying Decision

As per usual beliefs in India, in a family most of the buying decisions are taken by the Husbands. We make our hypothesis as follows:

H₀: Indian families are prone to husband dominated consumer decision making.

Then we have applied various demographic factor against the decision making process and the results are tabulated as follows

To find effect of the gender on decision making process we have applied t-test and the result is tabulated in Table 3. As per Table 3, *t*-test failed to reveal a statistically reliable difference between the mean number of HUSBAND and WIFE in relation to automobile buying decisions stages, for $df=297$, $\alpha=.05$. Therefore as per the decision rule is given by: *If $p \leq \alpha$, then reject H₀. That implies that we failed to observe a difference in the husband and wife's data i.e Gender has no significant role across various buying decision stages and in different products.*

Table 3. Gender effect on buying decision of an Automobile

Buying Stages and decisions	Mean scores and standard deviation 1= husband (n=160) 2 = wife (n=140)			t-test for equality of means	
	Sex	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initiator	1	2.02	.994	.038	.970
	2	2.01	1.000		
Information seeker	1	1.64	.894	.541	.589
	2	1.58	.850		
Time of purchase	1	2.41	.886	.911	.363
	2	2.32	.933		
Specific store selection	1	2.32	.908	.355	.723
	2	2.29	.903		
Specific brand selection	1	1.97	.934	-1.158	.248
	2	2.09	.924		
Design selection	1	2.14	.823	-.594	.553
	2	2.20	.853		
Size selection	1	2.41	.850	-.338	.735
	2	2.45	.861		
Budget planning	1	2.42	.879	.777	.438
	2	2.34	.880		
Actual purchaser	1	1.64	.913	-.898	.370
	2	2.01	.901		

3.2 Age Vs. Buying Decision

The Next Hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Age influence the buying behavior of spouses.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied in order to compare influence strategies across three age groups A1 (21-40), A2 (41-60) and A3 (61 & above) on buying decision. The result is tabulated in Table 4. Table 4 shows that there were no significant differences in the buying stages and age group categories while taking decision for buying Automobiles. Finding shows that no *F*-Values is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ or 0.05 . Table 4.9 also shows the pair wise significant differences among different categories for set of influence strategies and it is found that there are no significant differences between means of: A1 Vs A2, A2 Vs A3 and A1 Vs A3.

Table 4. Age effect on buying decision of an Automobile

Buying Stages and decisions	21-40 A1 (n=178)		41-60 A2 (n=119)		61 and above A3 (n=3)		Mean diff.	Mean diff.	Mean diff.	F
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	A1 v/sA2	A2 v/sA3	A1 v/sA3	
Initiator	1.91	.999	2.18	.971	1.67	1.155	-.266	.243	.510	2.773
Information seeker	1.57	.856	1.66	.895	1.67	1.155	-.091	-.094	-.003	.392
Time of purchase	2.36	.911	2.37	.910	2.33	1.155	-.010	.026	.036	.006
Store selection	2.22	.930	2.44	.850	2.33	1.155	-.212	-.109	.104	1.981
Brand selection	1.95	.934	2.14	.914	1.67	1.155	-.193	.283	.476	1.773
Design selection	2.19	.855	2.13	.812	2.00	1.000	-.057	.134	-.191	.222
Size selection	2.47	.838	2.37	.872	2.33	1.155	.102	.139	.036	.529
Budget planning	2.43	.875	2.30	.926	3.00	.000	.124	-.573	-.697	1.416
Actual purchase	1.69	.934	1.69	.918	1.00	.000	-.004	.684	.689	.820

3.3 Occupation Vs. Buying Decision

To see the effect of occupation of spouse on buying decision we have taken following hypothesis

H2: There will be significant differences in spousal decision making between service and business class across product as well as across stages in decision making process.

The results are tabulated in Table-5, Table 5 shows that there were no significant differences in the buying decision stages and occupations of spouse while buying Automobiles. Finding shows that no *F*-Values is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ or 0.05 . Table also shows that there are no significant differences between means of: O1 Vs O2, O1 Vs O3 and O2 Vs O3.

Table 5: Effect of Occupation on Buying Automobile

Influence Strategies	Business O1 (n=16)		Service O2 (n=211)		Housewife O3 (n=73)		Mean diff. O1 Vs O2	Mean diff. O1 Vs O3	Mean diff. O2 Vs O3	F
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D				
Initiator	2.38	.957	1.96	.995	2.08	.997	.413	.293	-.120	1.517
Information seeker	1.69	.946	1.64	.885	1.51	.819	.048	.181	.133	.696
Time of purchase	2.00	1.033	2.42	.877	2.27	.961	-.422	-.274	.148	2.079
Store selection	2.31	.946	2.31	.903	2.31	.908	.000	.011	.011	.004
Brand selection	2.19	.981	1.95	.925	2.19	.923	.235	-.004	-.239	2.070
Design selection	2.44	.892	2.12	.828	2.25	.846	.319	.191	-.128	1.524
Size selection	2.38	.957	2.41	.853	2.51	.835	-.033	-.132	-.099	.401
Budget planning	2.38	.957	2.38	.883	2.38	.922	-.009	-.009	.000	.001
Actual purchase	1.62	.957	1.66	.914	1.75	.954	-.034	-.128	-.095	.313

3.4 Qualification Vs. Buying Decisions

To see the effect of qualification of spouse on buying decision we have taken following hypothesis:

H3: Better educated couples exert more influence in family decision making than their less educated counterparts.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is further applied in order to compare influence strategies across qualification of the respondents, three groups are formed as Q1 (Graduation), Q2 (Vocational certificate) and Q3 (Post graduation). The results are tabulated in Table 6. Table 6 shows analysis for comparison in the influence strategies used and qualification while taking decision for buying an automobile. *Significant differences were found in the mean values of influence strategy namely: size selection. Findings showed significant differences at $\alpha=.05$ levels in mean and standard deviation values, with (F value = 3.390; $\alpha=.035$). It shows that Q2 (vocational certificate) is more influential in deciding the size of automobile than Q1 (graduation) and Q3(post graduation).*

Table 6 Effect of Qualification on Buying Automobile

Influence Strategies	Graduation Q1 (n=62)		Vocational Certificate Q2 (n=43)		Post graduation Q3 (n=195)		Mean diff. Q1 Vs Q2	Mean diff. Q1 Vs Q3	Mean diff. Q2 Vs Q3	F
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D				
Initiator	2.03	1.008	2.02	1.012	2.01	.992	.009	.027	.018	.020
Information seeker	1.65	.907	1.58	.879	1.61	.863	.064	.040	-.024	.076
Time of purchase	2.24	.970	2.49	.856	2.37	.902	-.246	-.132	.114	.973
Store selection	2.48	.844	2.37	.900	2.24	.919	.112	.243	.131	1.827
Brand selection	1.89	.960	2.19	.932	2.03	.919	-.299	-.144	.155	1.331
Design selection	2.10	.882	2.30	.803	2.16	.831	-.206	-.062	.143	.787
Size selection	2.19	.938	2.40	.877	2.51	.808	-.202	-.319	-.117	3.390*
Budget planning	2.34	.940	2.40	.903	2.39	.881	-.057	-.056	.000	.097
Actual purchase	1.76	.935	1.79	.965	1.63	.912	-.033	.127	.160	.806

3.5 Income Vs. Buying Decisions

To see the effect of income of spouse on buying decision we have taken following hypothesis:

H4: Spousal buying tendency is directly proportional to their income.

The result is tabulated in Table 7. Table shows Significant differences in the mean values of decision namely: *specific store* and *specific brand*, while finding shows significant differences at $\alpha=.05$ levels in mean of and standard deviation values, with (F value = 2.582; $\alpha=.037$) and (F value=2.877; $\alpha=.023$) respectively. Table also shows that there are significant differences between means of: I1, I2, I3, I4 and I5.

Table 7 : Effect of Income on Buying Automobiles

Influence Strategies	30001-45K (I1) (n=21)		45001-61K (I2) (n=76)		60,001-75K (I3) (n=59)		75001-1Lakh (I4) (n=73)		1 Lakh above (I5) (n=71)		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Initiator	2.14	1.014	2.03	1.006	2.08	.988	2.04	1.006	1.87	.985	.531
Information seeker	1.62	.921	1.67	.929	1.64	.866	1.67	.898	1.45	.771	.796
Time of purchase	2.24	.995	2.42	.913	2.41	.873	2.36	.918	2.31	.919	.269
Store selection	2.57	.811	2.30	.938	2.53	.774	2.30	.908	2.07	.946	2.582*
Brand selection	2.00	1.000	1.93	.971	2.20	.867	2.22	.932	1.77	.865	2.877*
Design selection	2.00	.949	2.18	.828	2.29	.767	2.27	.854	1.99	.837	1.668
Size selection	2.10	.995	2.46	.840	2.53	.774	2.53	.801	2.31	.919	1.657
Budget planning	2.24	.995	2.42	.913	2.46	.837	2.41	.895	2.30	.901	.459
Actual purchase	1.52	.873	1.62	.879	1.69	.933	1.67	.929	1.79	.984	.482

3.6 Family structure vs Buying Decisions

To analyze the effect of family structure on buying decision following hypothesis is assumed

H5: Indian spouses with nuclear families exert more influence in joint family decision making than those with extended families.

The result of t-test is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Effect of family structure on Automobile

Influence Strategies	Mean scores and standard deviation			t-test for equality of means	
		Mean	S.D	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initiator	1	2.02	.994	.259	.796
	2	1.98	1.011		
Information seeker	1	1.59	.857	-.971	.332
	2	1.72	.949		
Time of purchase	1	2.34	.915	-1.034	.302
	2	2.49	.882		
Specific store selection	1	2.32	.897	.276	.783
	2	2.28	.949		
Specific brand selection	1	2.00	.924	-.837	.403
	2	2.13	.969		
Design selection	1	2.15	.836	-.790	.430
	2	2.26	.846		
Size selection	1	2.42	.854	-.333	.739
	2	2.47	.856		
Budget planning	1	2.37	.898	-.529	.597
	2	2.45	.880		
Actual purchaser	1	1.64	.910	-1.966	.050*
	2	1.91	.974		

*significant at .05

Table 8 shows that t-test revealed a statistically reliable difference in actual purchaser of and between the mean number of Nuclear family and joint family structure? Where number of Nuclear family =253 has ($M = 1.64$, $SD = .910$) and joint family=47($M= 1.91$, $SD = .974$), $t = -1.966$, $p \leq .05$, $\alpha = .050$. Therefore as per the decision rule accept the hypothesis.

IV. CONCLUSION

As per the study we have found that now a day's gender, age and occupation do not effect the buying decision of an automobile, due to progressive nature of Indian families and individuals. Global exposure from

television, print or social media and internet plays a key role in it. However following few points were observed which can be considered while making a marketing strategy for selling automobiles.

- Education of spouse influenced the size selection of automobile
- Family monthly income influences the specific brand selection for automobile.
- Family structure of spouse influences the actual purchaser decision of automobile \

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