Role of Source of Information, Peer Imitation and Shopping Experience of Kids on Pester Behaviour, Parent-child conflict and purchase decision making while buying toys: Empirical Evidence

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Abstract: *Information is knowledge and power to take any decision within the predefined set of demographic attributes of individuals. Today electronic information gives further aid to kids to gain knowledge on various aspects of life and entertainment. In this way, manufacturers of toy making companies are adopting various types of advertisements to attract kids and to buy the variety of toys from time to time. Another important and most influencing source of information to kids is a peer group. Peer group imitation is the strong source for child pesters among the nuclear families and urban environment. The third influencing factor could be shopping experience of kids in shopping malls along with parents can help the kids to gain more knowledge and collect information on availability, price, features of a toy etc. in this parlance, the current paper is focused on finding out the relationship between the source of information, peer imitation, shopping experience and child pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and purchase decision making. The study is descriptive in nature. For the purpose of the study, Hyderabad city is selected as sample area. Data required for the study is collected through a questionnaire. The simple random sample is used to collect the information from the customers visiting shopping malls in the city. The sample size is fixed at 600, however, personal scrutiny rejects the defective questionnaires and data analysis is carried out with 480 responses. The study results indicate that source of information and peer imitation behaviour of kids has a close relationship with the child pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and purchase decision making of toys in shopping malls and the coefficient values are highly significant at 1% level of significance. Similarly, shopping experience of kids has a moderate level of relationship with the child pestered behaviour, parent-child conflict, and the p-value is significant at 5% level of significance. This indicates that the source of information and peer group and reference group imitation behaviour has a greater role in child pester behaviour towards toys.*

Keywords: *Information-Peer Groups-Parent Child Conflict-Imitating Behaviour-Purchase Decision*

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I.   Introduction

Some may say that children are just children- laughing, crying, playing, juggling between home, school, classes, tuition etc. They are now viewed as three markets in one: they are a current market that spends money on their desires, they are a future market for most goods and services, they are also a market of influential who cause many billions of dollars of purchases among their parents (Mc Neal, 1987). India has witnessed social, cultural and economic changes in the last decade. The personal disposable income has risen by 6.57% between 1993-94 and 2003-04 (Annualized growth rate between 1993-94 and 2003-04) (Laveesh Bhandari, 2009). The compound annual growth rate of 5.3% is predicted for average Household disposable income between 2005-2025 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2007). As per Census of India, 2010, children under 15 years of age constitute 30% of our population. Not only that the large base of its age pyramid shows that for many years Indian population will continue to have a large number of young population. Children are influential buyers who are socialized into this role from an early age. Though research has been done in the West on the socialization of children, the research in India is still lacking on the topic (Kaur and Singh, 2006). McKinsey Global Institute (2007) has predicted that India will become the World's 5th largest Consumer Market by 2025.This study intends to investigate how the Indian child influences the purchase decision making of the family and its relation specifically to family communication and family demographics. Based on these reviews, it is concluded that the role of advertisements, peer group influence and shopping mall visits and experience influences the kids pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and influencing the parental decision making while buying toys. Hence, the present study is titled as Role of Source of Information, Peer Imitation and Shopping Experience of Kids on Pester Behaviour, Parent-child conflict and purchase decision making while buying toys: An Empirical Evidence.

II. Review Of Literature

Kapoor and Verma (2005) investigated children's understanding of television advertising in a comprehensive study in Delhi. Their findings revealed those children as young as six years could understand the purpose of television ads and distinguish between a commercial and a television programme. With an increase in the age of the child, cognitive understanding of the ads increased and children above the age of eight years was able to respond to television ads in a mature and informed manner.

Bansal (2004) opines that „It's all a kid's play anyway". Today's youngsters have a profound influence over purchases in all kinds of product categories via advertisements and media. They are the center of the aspirations of the family. The findings of a survey named as New Generations 2001, conducted on Indian kids by Cartoon Network, reconfirm the power of the kids to make their parents dance to their tune when it comes to purchasing a product by influencing the information got through media, and peer group.

Lee and Collins (1999) proposed that when more than two family members are in conflict with the purchase decision processes the third parties (children) may form an alliance to aid one side against the other. They investigated patterns of influence and coalition patterns across three stages of the decision-making process, namely Configuration (synonymous with problem recognition and search for information), Negotiation (Synonymous with evaluation of alternatives) and Outcome (final decision) stage. It was found that children tend to use emotive strategies to gain influence. At the same time, the influence of family members varies in response to the gender mix of the children. The influence of a mother in the family was the strongest during the Negotiation and Outcome stage when both her children were male. Her influence was also strong if her first child was male and the second child was a female.

Mallalieu and Palan (2006) in order to identify the extent, to which shopping competence is developed in teenage girls, developed a model of adolescent shopping competence in a shopping mall context. The results of discussions with teenage girls indicated that they exhibited competence in using environmental and knowledge-based resources „Partially". This implies that if they revealed competency in some aspects of shopping, they came up short in other aspects they themselves perceived as being associated with shopping competence.

Parents are considered as the primary socialization agents for children, and most aspects of parental influence continue well into adulthood (Ying Fan and Yixuan Li, 2010). Among all the social entities from which children might learn, parents appear to be the most instrumental in teaching their children consumer behaviour (Moore and Moschis, 1981; Mascarenhas and Higby, 1993). The influence of family on consumer socialization appears to produce effects more through the subtle social interactions between parents and their children than purposive education efforts carried out by parents (Moore et al., 2003).

III. Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature. For the purpose of the study, Hyderabad city is selected as sample area. Data required for the study is collected through a questionnaire. The simple random sample is used to collect the information from the customers visiting shopping malls in the city. The sample size is fixed at 600, however, personal scrutiny rejects the defective questionnaires and data analysis is carried out with 480 responses. The data collection tool is pre-tested with pilot study and found the reliability alpha at 0.8623 and found as reliable. The for the purpose of data analysis SPSS 23.0 version is used. The customers visiting shopping malls were chosen at relaxation points and food courts after dining to collect the opinions on the child pester behaviour and the related information.

Objectives of the study:
The current paper is focused on the following objectives.
1. To find out the relationship between the source of information and the child pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision.
2. To analyze the relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the child pester behaviour, parent -child conflict and parental purchase decision.
3. To assess the relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the child pester behaviour, parent -child conflict and parental purchase decision.

Sample area: Hyderabad city is considered as a sample unit, including greater Hyderabad and the familiar shopping malls located at Banjara Hills, Panjagutta, Kukatpally and Hi-Tech city.
Sample method: simple random sampling method is observed for selecting the customers in shopping malls.
Sample size: Initially planned for 600 samples and collected the information, but the physical verification shows errors of omission, duplication, and partially filled questionnaires. Those are removed and the remaining 480 sample are taken up for study.
Sources of information and data collection: Both primary and secondary data is used in the present study.

IV. Data Analysis And Discussion

The data collected through questionnaire is classified and tabulated and analyzed using SPSS and the results of the same are presented in the following lines.

Table 1: Distribution of sample on the basis of source of information to buy toys

Source of information	Frequency	Percentage
Advertisements	224	46.7
Peer and reference groups	155	32.3
Shopping mall display	101	21.0
Total	480	100.0

Source: Primary data/Questionnaire.

It is noted from the table 1, that, 46.7 percent of the sample respondents view the primary source of information to kids about toys is advertisements in media, especially electronic media, it is followed by 32.3 percent perceived peer group and reference groups as a source of information and finally 21 percent of the sample feels that shopping malls display as a source of information to the kids. This indicates that the advertisements in the media are the primary source of information and influencing the kids to a greater extent and reason for pester behaviour and the secondary influencer will be the peer and reference groups.

Hypothesis-I: There is no relationship between the source of information and the children pester behaviour, parent -child conflict and parental purchase decision.

Table: 2: ANOVA results showing relationship between the source of information and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision

Dimensions of study		Source of information			F value	P value
		Advertisements	Peer group	Shopping mall display		
Kids pester behaviour for toys	Mean	77.58	**86.13**	81.93	12.896	0.000**
	SD	(15.56)	(14.18)	(12.70)		
Parent child conflict reaction	Mean	47.64	**52.42**	47.95	6.843	0.001**
	SD	(11.41)	(11.89)	(10.95)		
Impact on parents purchase decision making	Mean	43.75	**50.87**	45.58	9.459	0.000**
	SD	(13.65)	(13.70)	(13.60)		

**- highly significant at 1% level of significance; *-indicates significant at 5% level of significance.
No indication- denotes not significant at 5% level of significance.

Since the p-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis, There is no relationship between the source of information and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, statistically, it is inferred that there is a highly significant relationship between the source of information and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision. Based on the mean value, it is noted that peer and reference group is the powerful source of information and influencing the pester behaviour and also causes parent-child conflict while buying toys in the shopping malls when compared to advertisements and shopping mall experience and window displays.

Table 3: Distribution of sample on the basis of perceptions on degree of influence of peer group on the pester behaviour of kids

Degree of peer group influence	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	49	10.2
High	173	36.0
Fair	76	15.8
Considerable	116	24.2
Nominal	66	13.8
Total	480	100.0

Source: Primary data/Questionnaire.

It is observed from the table 3, that 10.2 percent of the sample perceived very high degree of influence of peer group on the pester behaviour of kids, 36 percent views high level of influence, 15.8 percent feels fair level of influence, 24.2 percent views considerable degree of influence, and 13.8 percent feels nominal degree of influence of peer group on the pester behaviour of kids respectively. This indicates that peer group has a higher degree of influence on the behaviour of the kids and also on pesters behaviour development in the sample. This can be resolved through explaining to the kids about the toys and why we can buy and why we should not buy and the importance of money and the productive uses of money along with the importance of savings. This can help the kids to understand and improve the savings habit from the child hood.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the children pester behaviour, parent child conflict and parental purchase decision.

Table: 4: ANOVA results showing relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the children pester behaviour, parent child conflict and parental purchase decision

Dimensions of study		Peer imitation bahaviour Degree of influence					F value	P value
		VH	H	Fair	Considerable	Nominal		
Kids pester behaviour for toys	Mean	79.07	81.76	**84.03**	83.51	72.69	8.746	0.001**
	SD	(13.98)	(12.76)	(12.69)	(14.02)	(18.38)		
Parent child conflict reaction	Mean	46.37	47.82	51.54	**51.83**	43.61	8.520	0.001**
	SD	(10.69)	(10.50)	(11.41)	(11.64)	(11.46)		
Impact on parents purchase decision making	Mean	46.49	44.70	46.33	**50.31**	40.47	6.625	0.001**
	SD	(14.60)	(13.59)	(13.72)	(13.15)	(13.42)		

**- highly significant at 1% level of significance; *-indicates significant at 5% level of significance. No indication- denotes not significant at 5% level of significance.

Since the p-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis, There is no relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is a highly significant relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision. Based on the mean value, it is noticed that peer imitation behaviour fairly affects the children pester behaviour while buying toys in the shopping malls. On the other hand, peer imitation behaviour considerably influenced the parent-child conflicts while buying toys and finally peer imitation behaviour considerable influences the parental purchase decision of toys in the sample area.

Table 5: Distribution of sample on the basis of frequency of visiting shopping malls

Frequency of visiting malls	Frequency	Percentage
Weekly	146	30.4
Biweekly	160	33.3
Monthly	87	18.1
Bimonthly	87	18.1
Total	480	100.0

Source: Primary data/Questionnaire.

It is noted from the table 5, that, 30.4 percent of the respondents visiting the shopping malls weekly, 33.3 percent of the sample visiting at a frequency of bi-weekly, 18.1 percent of the sample at a frequency of monthly and another 18.1 percent is with the frequency of bi-monthly indicates the fair level of shopping mall visiting practices among the sample. This indicates that, shopping malls are attractive sources of purchase for both kids and parents. This may be due to a lot of discount offers along with comfortable shopping with all the required items availability under the single roof. This also helps the parents to complete multiple tasks in a single visit. Hence, shopping malls have very good potential to grow further in the years to come.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the children pester behaviour, parent -child conflict and parental purchase decision.

Table: 6: ANOVA results showing relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the children pester behaviour, parent- child conflict and parental purchase decision

Dimensions of study		Frequency of visiting malls				F value	P value
		Weekly	Biweekly	Monthly	Bimonthly		
Kids pester behaviour for toys	Mean	80.11	79.56	79.68	**85.23**	3.944	0.008*
	SD	(15.13)	(13.50)	(13.76)	(15.57)		
Parent child conflict reaction	Mean	48.62	47.79	47.04	**51.79**	3.522	0.015*
	SD	(11.30)	(10.65)	(11.15)	(12.68)		
Impact on parents purchase decision making	Mean	46.17	45.30	43.99	**48.12**	1.559	0.199
	SD	(13.70)	(13.98)	(13.74)	(13.96)		

**- highly significant at 1% level of significance; *-indicates significant at 5% level of significance. No indication- denotes not significant at 5% level of significance.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis, There is no relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the children pester behaviour and parent-child conflict is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, it is inferred that there is a significant relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the children pester behaviour and parent-child conflict. Based on the mean value, it is noticed that customers visiting bi-monthly to shopping malls has faced a higher level of kids pester behaviour, and parent-child conflict when compared to others in the sample. This clarifies that the frequency of visit has a moderate level of relationship with kids pester behaviour and parent-child conflict while buying toys in the shopping malls.

V. Findings And Observations

1. The primary source of information to kids about toys is advertisements in media, especially electronic media; it is followed by 32.3 percent perceived peer group and reference groups as a source of information. This indicates that the advertisements in the media are the primary source of information and influencing the kids to a greater extent and reason for pester behaviour and the secondary influencer will be the peer and reference groups.
2. There is a highly significant relationship (at 1% level of significance) between the source of information and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision. Based on the mean value, it is noted that peer and reference group is the powerful source of information and influencing the pester behaviour and also causes parent- child conflict while buying toys in the shopping malls when compared to advertisements and shopping mall experience and window displays.
3. 10.2 percent of the sample perceived very high degree of influence of peer group on the pester behaviour of kids, 36 percent views high level of influence, 15.8 percent feels fair level of influence, 24.2 percent views considerable degree of influence, and 13.8 percent feels nominal degree of influence of peer group on the pester behaviour of kids respectively. This indicates that peer group has a higher degree of influence on the behaviour of the kids and also on pesters behaviour development in the sample.
4. There is a highly significant relationship between peer imitation behaviour and the children pester behaviour, parent-child conflict and parental purchase decision. Based on the mean value, it is noticed that peer imitation behaviour fairly affects the children pester behaviour while buying toys in the shopping malls.
5. 30.4 percent of the respondents visiting the shopping malls weekly, 33.3 percent of the sample visiting at a frequency of bi-weekly, 18.1 percent of the sample at a frequency of monthly and another 18.1 percent is with the frequency of bi-monthly indicates the fair level of shopping mall visiting practices among the sample. This indicates that shopping malls are attractive sources of purchase for both kids and parents.
6. There is a significant relationship between the frequency of visiting malls and the children pester behaviour and parent-child conflict. Based on the mean value, it is noticed that customers visiting bi-monthly to shopping malls has faced a higher level of kids pester behaviour, and parent-child conflict when compared to others in the sample. This clarifies that the frequency of visit has a moderate level of relationship with kids pester behaviour and parent- child conflict while buying toys in the shopping malls.

VI. Summary And Conclusion

Pester behaviour is a result of many individuals, family and reference group imitations. The parental support in this at different points of time is obvious. Nuclear family set ups and parental working conditions make the kids stay alone and attached to electronic gadgets for a long period of time has a two-fold increase of information and physical detachment with parents. This has become a habit of having toys of self-play or operated ones for time pass becomes regular. This leads to higher levels of pester among kids. Advertisements, peer group and shopping visits and experience add the fuel to the existing information and knowledge and improves the adamant behaviour towards buying toys by expressing pester behaviour. A parental touch and feel to a kid along with simplified child counseling can help in resolving the issue at ease. Another strategy could be not comparing the social status of us in front of the kids and also explaining the value of money and need for savings to the future along with creating a saving bank practice among kids can help to have a different kind of attitude of kids towards spending. The third could be parent-child relationships and the value system at home is directly influencing factors of kids. The honest and cordial relationships, communication and behaviour at home environment can help to improve the cordial behaviour of kids and it can help to a greater extent in controlling the child pester behaviour. A right mix and match of social, cultural and behaviour aspects of counseling to kids can help to resolve the problem of pester behaviour, parent-child conflicts and children influence in parental purchase decision making.

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