

Growing Concerns About the Effects of Advertising on Children: A Study on Working Parents

*Anadi Trikha

**Dr. Kavya Saini

ABSTRACT: *Marketers attention towards children have emerged as a segment in the present scenario. Focus on children as a consumer, has given new dimensions to the marketers in social and business perspective. The power the child consumer holds currently is celebrated in the market space.*

The ads persuade the kids to nag their parents to buy them the things they see in other kids' hands. Children try to compete with their friends & relatives of same age they see at home, school or in neighborhood, by following the latest trends of buying trending Toys, Games, Electronic Games Etc. and working parents on the other hand bow down to their kids demand as a compensation of not spending enough time with their kids.

This study has undertaken several aspects of working parents and their growing concerns over such commercialization of their kids by these marketers for profits. This paper also highlights when pester power becomes the most powerful among kids and how they comply their parents to buy them the desired product. Study also threw light on how buying gifts, sweets, toys, vacations abroad etc. for children, parents try to compensate the lost time during work which they should have spent with their kids.

KEYWORDS – *Advertisements, Child Consumer, Child Influence, Commercialization, Pester Power*

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive Study of literature & Books related to the topic of study “Pester Power” were referred. In general, when a decision of buying a large range of products and services, everybody in the family including grandparents, Siblings, Parents are consulted about their views on the product or service to be purchased. At the very same time Marketers use strategies to misuse the innocence of children in pestering their parents to buy them products of their choices under the influence of Ads shown on television, internet etc. Focus on children as consumer, has given new dimensions to the marketers in social and business perspective. The power the child consumer holds currently is celebrated in the market space. A child is not just a spectator but also becomes an influencer and buyer when he grows.^[1]

Advertisers believe that elderly people get more influenced by the kids as they believe they have sources of more information about the products. As a child grows up and becomes an adolescent, his or her role in "re-socializing" parents appears to become greater. A paper by Harrison laid emphasis on Food associated Characters aired during the television programs viewed by children and how they sought and evaluate the nutritional content of advertised food in terms of the nutrition facts label.^[2]

A paper by J S Panwar, it was found that children are unable to decode and process advertised messages to them and are unable to understand the hidden motives of advertisers which not only affect their cognitive abilities but also their special and personal environment.^[3]

2. INTRODUCTION

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persuade the kids to nag their parents to buy them the things they see in other kids' hands. ^[4]Children try to compete with their friends & relatives of same age they see at home, school or in neighborhood, by following the latest trends of buying trending Toys, Games, Electronic Games etc. and working parents on the other hand bow down to their kids demand as a compensation of not spending enough time with their kids.

The trend of growing percentage in Nuclear families and both parents working with dual income at disposal, parents wish to give the best education, well-being & luxury to their children has set a new phase for kids growing in such brand conscious background. Marketers take advantage of this position of parents and mold it for their profits and create ads which highlight such weaknesses in advertisements and influence parents' decisions to buy the same product.

Whether a Luxury Car Ad or Buying a Dream House Ad feature how kids feel happy when they sit in such comfortable & luxurious car and feel proud in front of their friends at school or kids entering in a beautiful home with parents and saying 'this is my dream' house connects the buying behavior of adults with the happiness of their children & at the same time creates an everlasting impression on vulnerable minds of kids that only this would make them happy.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to understand:

- 3.1 How children overpower their parents' decisions?
- 3.2 To know what today's working parents', feel about their kids getting commercialized by watching TV, Print Ads or Internet.
- 3.3 Research on children's commercial recall and product preferences
- 3.4 Is nagging being a result of undue pampering of children by their parents?
- 3.5 What power games kids play to get their ways?
- 3.6 What convenient foods products children prefer?
- 3.7 What is the time kids mostly put their demands?

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Primary Data & Secondary Data

Primary data for the study was collected through survey method (questionnaire observation and semi-interview) from parents. Internet, Magazines and Journal on the related to the topic of study.

4.2 Sample Size

A total of 50 respondents were taken as sample size

4.3 Sample Categories

The respondents were divided further into following categories of sample units:

- 4.3.1 Where both working in private jobs
- 4.3.2 Where one spouse is in government and other is in private job.
- 4.3.3 Parents with one child
- 4.3.4 Parents with two children
- 4.3.5 Parents of Children Below 10 Years
- 4.3.6 Parents of Children below 15 Years

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5. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

It can be clearly seen that children belonging to the age group of 10-15 Years exert pester power in comparison with the other age groups.

Figure (1) shows that age-group of 10-15 years exert maximum pressure on parents to buy them their desired products. This age group is the most exposed to media and the marketing tactics of the marketers as they have the maximum access to TV, Internet etc. The kids belonged to the other groups are less exposed and are more influenced by the wishes of their parents.

Figure (2) shows that 72% of the parents said that they themselves and their kids are brand conscious. Rest of the parents said as long as they like the product and its quality they buy the product by its features.

Figure (3) shows maximum parents say that their kids watch 5-6 Hours of Television daily. Kids tend to follow the trends they see on Television.

Most of the parents were against the nutritional claims the food advertisements show in their ads. According to study, 58% of the respondents say that nagging of children is always an effect of over-pampering them by fulfilling they're not so important demands. Parents argued about the usage of the internet that though they observe their kids but mostly said that their kids used it for educational purposes. The convenience foods which came across during the studies which kids are addicted to are Maggie Masala, Maggie Pasta, McCann French Fries, Chocos, Lays Chips, Dr. Oatkars Mayonnaise, Lehar Puffcorns etc.

Parents agreed that they try to over-buy things, gift etc. for their kids to compensate the time lost while working, which they should have spent with their kids. Parents pamper their children a lot because of the very same reason. Parents with one child were purely focused on the overall development of their child. The child is over pampered as being the only child as well as the limits of nagging is reached to its peak at the age group of 10-15 years. Parents with 2 kids were mostly involved in solving conflicts between the wills of their children. There were no cases of parents with 3 kids and above. Most of the parents try to spend quality time together with their kids but the pressure at work place especially where both parents are working in private sector is too much to handle. Late nights at work, overload, stress etc. keeps them busy and they are unable to focus on the development of their children.

Whereas the parents where one is working in government sector were found much happier than the former. They have much more time to spend with their children. Weekends and long holidays are given much importance. Parents feel that today world is no simpler as it was when they were small. There were like 2-3 cartoons at that time. Now there are like 9-10 channels of cartoons. Earlier there were no internet connections and interactions being more personal. Now, creating social profiles on Google play, social media seems to be the trend. Parents say they value the choices of their kids in buying cars, houses, and other important products for household consumption. The parents were heavily relied on preferences of kids especially buying apparels. Mostly gifts and desires of kids are fulfilled on children' birthdays or they achieve greater performances as promised earlier in academics.

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6. Figures

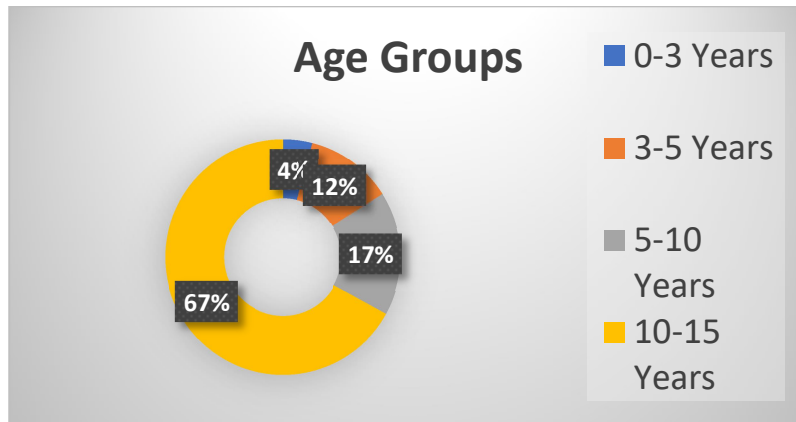


Fig 1

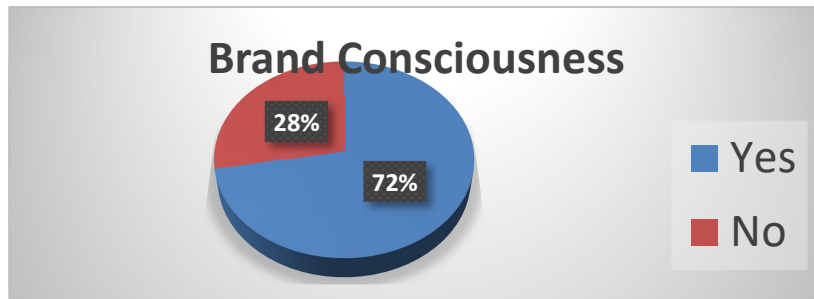


Fig 2

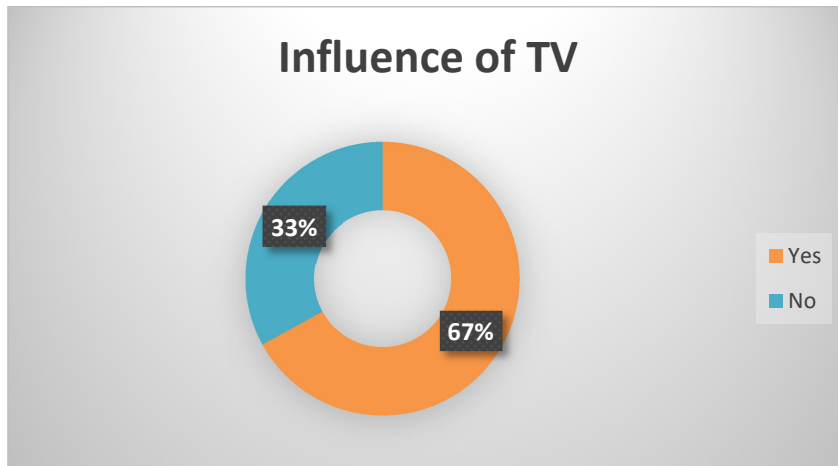


Fig 3

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7. FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

As the scenario of pester power is gaining pace visible changes in purchase behavior and preferences of kids is easily seen. With dual incomes, the growth of nuclear families, exposure of kids to more and more media and peer group pressure, not just parents feel pressurized but now even kids want to enhance their worth among their friends. Parents bow down to the kids demand out of guilt. They try harder and harder to compensate the time lost by buying expensive gifts, sports equipment, gizmos etc. Age-group 10-15 kids exert most pressure on parents to fulfil the wants. Thus, advertiser mostly focus their strategies to make an impression on the minds of this group. They air ads at the prime time. Provide giveaways, coupons, discounts etc., on heavy purchasing.^[5]

Children are highly receptive to the colors, characters, cartoons, etc associated with products and their attention is divided into these. They seem to follow the trend and do whatever the mascots try to do in ads. Working parents try hard to make their kids understand the difference between reality and marketing world shown in the advertisements. Parents must provide enough time to their kids from their busy schedule. They must take them to picnics, social gatherings etc. to make them more eventful than sitting in front of the TV or surfing internet.^[6]

Due to work overload of work, stress, role ambiguity the working parents in private sector suffer the most and are unable help their kids who are influenced badly by advertisements. Parents with 1 child and living in the joint family say though they keep a check on their spending on their child over shower of love and pocket money from other family members has led their kids to exert pester power. Parents with 1 or more children say that they are always facing conflicting views from their children as they always try to do a comparison between the kids and pester parents to buy them similar products as the siblings have.^[7]

Parents of kids above 10 years of age commented that though they feel their kids are mature enough to demand sensible, if these demands are not fulfilled they become impossible to handle. Recommendations are for the parents who think it is not necessary to spend quality time with their kids but in reality, spending quality time with kids is necessary for their overall development. It also helps in making the kids understand the good and bad effects of various products. It is also recommended to parents to help their kids in knowing that whatever is shown in advertisements is not always true. [8]

***Research Scholar/ Rajasthan Technical University, India)**

**** (Associate Professor, International School of Informatics & Management/ Rajasthan Technical University, India)**

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