CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section deals with the discussions of the analysis of the data, which is presented in the previous chapter.

6.2 FINDINGS

Kids have become a major force in the market. Studies show a direct link between household spending and commercials targeted for kids. It is more lucrative to market certain products to kids than parents, in fact. Marketers call it the "nag factor" or "pester power." Kids recall the content of ads, which leads to brand preferences. Then the kid puts pressure on parents to buy, which parents do about half of the time.

Kids are an enormously powerful medium for relationship building in India. They not only influence markets in terms of the parental decision-making to buy certain kinds of products, they are also future consumers. They are neither direct buyers nor do they hold the purse strings. Yet every big name in the food industry is trying to woo the new age kids with special promos and innovative selling schemes.

Generally speaking, kids have most influence on the purchase of products consumed primarily by them. Their influence usually will be less for products for the family, and even less for products specifically for adult members of the family. India, both as direct and indirect consumers in the Indian market, kids exercise a major influencing power, or alternatively
termed as “pester power”, on parents in buy them all they demand for. The current study was aimed to analyze Pester power consumer behaviour in kids and its impact on family buying preferences. The study was carried with references to packaged convenience foods in Kerala.

The major objectives framed by the researcher were to measure the role of kids in nuclear and joint family system, to study the level of awareness about packaged convenience food items among the kids and their parents, to study the kids decision making abilities and purchase behavior towards convenience food items, to examine purchase behaviour of parents towards the convenience food items and to measure the level of satisfaction derived by the parents towards the factors that had influenced the kid’s buying behaviours.

70.3 percent of the parents surveyed belonged to nuclear while the rest 29.7 percent belonged to joint family. This shows a trend of nuclear families are on the rise in the city limits.

The decision taking pattern revealed that 15 percent of the interviewed respondents make buying decisions regarding packaged convenience food items by self while for 13 percent of the respondents the spouse makes the decisions. A 6 percent of parents allowed kids to make their decisions and 66 percent take joint decision regarding purchase of packaged convenient food items. Thus, it was found that kids do have a role in majority of the families for taking decisions regarding packaged convenient food items. This provides leverage for the marketers to tap the kids market through appropriate marketing strategies.

The top reasons expressed by parents for yielding to pester power of kids was to make them happy (42 percent) and to motivate the kids to listen to them (22 percent). 18 percent of parents also liked the products while 18
percent yielded just to avoid embarrassment at the store while making a purchase. Most of the parents want their kids to be happy and motivated. Thus, the marketers can make the product more attractive and drag the attention of kids towards their product.

Parents have involvement in making decisions for kids regarding packaged convenience food items. 54.07 percent involve only occasionally and 39.96 percent involve most of the time or always only 5.97 percent allow kids to take their own decisions. The marketers, thus, in addition to making products more attractive for kids, have also to target the parents so that their products get across to the consumers.

6.2.1 Kids Decision Making Abilities and Purchase Behavior

The highest no. of kids (410 out of 553) are seen to have active involvement in decision making regarding packaged convenience food items, especially those in nuclear family (279). Chi-Square test showed an association between the decision making style of kids and their family status. The researcher feels, on the basis of interaction with parents that ready to eat packaged convenience foods are readily consumed by the kids without having to persuade them into eating. The marketing efforts can thus be pointed at this aspect so as to target those parents who cannot otherwise persuade their kids into having food.

Results of test of association between family style and purchase decision at the point of purchase showed that there was no association between these variables.

Different types of promotional media have different appeal to kids and do not influence kids in the same way. Putting together the figures of respondents who chose ‘Very High’ and ‘High’, it can be seen that the
strongest influencers are the information on internet with 514 respondents choosing very high and high. Next to internet was the peer group with 505 respondents choosing high and very high. Advertisements through hoardings and TV commercials are not seen to influence as high as internet and peer group. This can be attributed to the fact that kids are more internet savvy. Interaction with parents and kids also revealed that they exchange information of products with friends through social media in addition to seeing user reviews and direct discussion with friends. Marketers can leverage on this finding by concentrating more on marketing through internet in the various social media used by kids.

An increasingly nagging habit existed among kids with 540 respondents agreeing that kids have nagging behaviour which increases the pester power of kids. The other factors inducing pester power are kids’ knowledge about the products (510), kids getting addicted to certain foods (497), TV commercials (321). Advertisements however, do not always result in immediate purchase of the product. Marketers can thus take efforts to create awareness about their products, which is likely to result in the purchase of products by inducing pester power among kids.

6.2.2 Level of Awareness about Convenient Food Items

It was observed that the kids were aware of the label marking and specifications of food grade as their parents have instructed their kids to use those products with an average mean of 86.65. The customers have long existence of branded products and customer loyalty factor has bagged the second rank with an average mean of 83.33. Among the parent customers, 82.46 per cent of the customers prefer the packaged and convenience food items as it provides Eco friendliness and health aspects .The factors of Brand name reputation, Periodical offers and discounts, Advertisements and other promotional measures and the long existence of branded products and
customer loyalty has secured second rank with an average mean of 79.60 percent.

The study did not give any evidence of the influence of family status on the monthly amount spent on kids for packaged convenience food items. Parents were keen on satisfying their kids’ needs irrespective of family status.

It was found that Milk and milk products have the highest frequency of daily purchase, ready to eat food items have highest weekly and fortnightly frequency, health drinks have highest monthly frequency and biscuits/ confectionary are procured only on demand. Marketers can try to increase the awareness and induce the kids to demand more of the products since items that are purchased more frequently are on demand from kids.

While there was improvement in decision making in respect of product selection, brand identification and discretionary spending power, no improvement was seen in the point/ time of purchase and the desired autonomy in purchase. Thus, the marketers can take steps to increase the brand identity which can help in better product selection.

As the parents perceived it, kids seemed to have improved buying behaviour with respect to comparison of brands, comparison of products, influencing others to buy a product and comparison of price. However, there was no improvement in better usage of promotional factors provided to them. The marketers can take steps to give information regarding promotional factors through different media like internet, TV, etc.

The analysis of the proposed model showed that External influences like advertisements, internet, friends, etc. induce pester power among kids. The other factors contributing to pester power are the perceived use of the product and level of awareness that the kid have about the product.
External influencers has the highest influence with $\beta=0.28$ and is significant at 1 percent level of confidence. The other constructs, level of awareness and perceived use of the product have $\beta$-values of 0.21 and 0.16 respectively, both significant at 1 percent level of confidence, showing that these significantly contribute to pester power.

Pester power contributes to purchase intention in parents with $\beta=0.43$ being significant at 1 percent level of significance. Purchase intention is also influenced by financial constraints, situational influences and awareness about the products with the respective $\beta$-values 0.30, 0.34, 0.29, all significant at 1 percent level of significance. Pester power, however is the highest contributor. Interaction with parents showed that even if they had financial constraints, they would postpone their other priorities in order to fulfill the food needs of their kids.

The product is purchased following purchase intention of parents and this leads to satisfaction of purchase among kids and adults. The $\beta$-value is 0.56 and is significant at 1 percent level of significance. Unethical aspects, though assumed to have an impact on purchase intentions was found to be insignificant in this study. This is in agreement with the findings of Keyur Purani et al. (2004) wherein he stated that unethical considerations were not an influential factor in buying decisions among kids.

The significant observations from analysis of model developed for the study were:

There is influence of kids while taking decisions on purchasing convenience food items.

The two latent factors that influence buying behaviour were identified as quality and the product related aspects.
The two latent factors that lead to satisfaction in the kids’ buying behaviour were identified as product specific factors such as brands available, product segmentation, product innovation, dietary notes on the package, affordability price and selling strategies and quality specific factors such as food safety and nutritional values, freshness and hygiene, quality seal and food grade labels and point of purchase.

The model can be used as a guideline to understand the factors that lead to pester power in kids and purchase intentions in adults and the satisfaction among adults and kids on purchase of the product. Marketers can use these influencers to tap the kids market for increasing their profitability.

6.3 DISCUSSIONS

The research works on family decision making has been largely confined to spouses, who have been considered as the relevant decision making unit in a family. However, the role of third party influences, such as kids, on decision making strategies and negotiations is essential to taking a broader view of the relevant unit of analysis. Traditionally, women were seen to be the purchasing agents for the family. Nonetheless, increasing participation of women in the workforce has prompted a shift in this role as kids are increasingly the "buyers" for the entire family. Even in families where women do not work, kids are observed to share this role with their mothers. Kids enjoy greater discretion not only in making routine consumption decisions for the family but also in pestering their parents to buy other products desired by them.

Pester power among kids have just got more savvy, more smart - and more informed. Rather than nagging their parents to unleash their rising disposable incomes at random and flashy products and services that catch
their eye, more and more of India's close to 400 million kids below the age of 15 are becoming connoisseurs and specialists that their parents lean on.

Today, one is tempted to rewrite the poet's ode to: "The consumption driven kid is the father of man." The current study was aimed to analyze the pester power consumer behaviour in kids and its impact on family buying preferences - a study with references to packaged convenience foods in Kerala. On the basis of the study carried out in three districts in Kerala, the following results were brought out.

**Figure 6.1 Relationship between purchase intention and pester power**

From the non-linear relationship between purchase intention and pester power as seen in the plot above, depicting an inverted U curve, it is concluded that beyond a certain level, pester power would not result in
purchase intention among parents. This clearly shows that though parents are influenced by the pester power of the kid to a great extent with the basic idea of satisfying the kid, the parents would not yield to pester power if it is a frequent one and tends to be a continuously nagging affair.

Kids are seen as a primary market, a market of influences, and a future market. Kids have a distinct niche with money, wants and needs. They are considered a primary market with many products created for them and targeted at them by numerous businesses. The advertising and television industries view kids as a potentially profitable market with ever-changing trends, remaining perpetually unpredictable.

It is a widely accepted fact that kids with poorly developed consumer decision-making skills are unprepared to make wise purchases as adults, a situation that has serious implications for the consumer habits and nutritional health of future generations. Kids constitute three different markets: the primary, the influencer, and the future market. Certain products are simply kids products for which they are the primary users/buyers. They sometimes either purchase a product themselves or select the product before the parents purchase it. For other products which are used by the entire family unit, they may influence purchase decision of the parents. There are some products where kids wield direct influence by overtly specifying their preferences and voicing them aloud. Decision-making in households is seen to change with the mere presence of kids. Based on the discussion made in the review of literature, the current section of the study focuses on the kids’ decision marking abilities and purchase behavior of parents.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The study has tried to examine the context in which pester power of the kid operates, throwing light on the importance of not only the
socialization agents (family, friends and media) but also commercial environment. The effect of kids’ influence in food categories helps marketers to understand the overall marketing scenario and hence devise more responsible marketing strategies targeting kids.

The next chapter discusses the implications of the study for various parties who are directly or indirectly related with pester power and gives important suggestions to them. It further shows the limitations of the study and also gives directions for future researchers to bridge these gaps.