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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior tells us what a consumer’s needs. Family as a consuming and decision making unit is a central phenomenon in marketing and consumer behavior. Earlier studies had only focused on husband & wife’s role where child’s role was ignored. However, kids today are customers, buyers, spenders, shoppers and consumers. Moreover, Indian society vastly differs from the West in terms of family composition, family type and structure, norms, values, and behavior. It is important to understand children’s influence on the purchase decision making in families in the Indian context.

A systematic and organized methodology was obtained for the research study. Based on an in-depth discussion and exhaustive literature review, the objectives of study were chalked out. Two questionnaires (one for child and one for parents) were intricately designed to tap the information about the family buying process. The study is done in six sections. First is exploring child’s consumer socialization agent. Second is exploring various influence strategies used by children to persuade parents. That section also examined the impact of different socialization agents on the child’s use of strategies through step-wise regression analysis. Third section is about exploring new product categorization based on child's influence level. It also examined the impact of different influence strategies on different product categories. The fourth component deals with exploring children’s influence in family buying process stages and sub-decisions. It also explored the relationship between buying stages and product categories. Fifth section provides an interesting consumer profiling based on child’s socialization, influence strategies, child’s influence in buying stages and product categories. The last section proposes and verifies a structural equation model identifying relationships between socialization agents, influence strategies, buying stages and product categories.

This is not only significant to academicians as it adds to the existing body of consumer behaviour knowledge but also for the organizations which are battling to effectively communicate with today’s young and growing consumers.