

Role of family members in purchase decision making

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Family members tend to attribute more influence to parents than the better half. No doubt fathers and mothers clearly dominate the decision process. But family members attribute more influence to father or mother than the better half. In general, it is believed that adolescents tended to have more influence in the purchase of products that were less expensive and for their own use. Mothers and adolescents perceive their role similarly, but fathers feel that the adolescents have less influence than the adolescents think they have (Beatty and Talpade, 1994). Family members are exposed to technologies and so they are found to have the greatest relative influence across two areas: suggesting price and learning the best way to buy. The responses for these are of two measures, which harmonized for parents as well as family members. Presently, parents are encouraging children to participate in decision-making process. It may be that the age of the parents, fewer children, and working mother are the situations reporting greater influence.

Product type and family members' influence:

In reviewing the past research on family members' relative influence in family consumption decisions, the literature shows that children's relative influence varied with product type. Overall, family members appear to have significant influence in product decisions, as they are the primary consumer of products. This is particularly true when the product involves low financial costs. Specifically, family members are found to have substantial impact in decisions regarding snack foods, clothing, records or tapes, school supplies and stereo (Ahuja *et al.*, 1993).

From the teenager's point of view, when the product is for their primary use, their involvement in the product is

high. They might be motivated to spend more efforts in requesting and persuading and leading to a greater relative influence in purchasing the product. Otherwise, if the product is irrelevant, teenager's motivation to influence would be low, resulting in little or no influence in the purchase decisions.

Carlson and Sanford (1988) found that the more family members used durable family products, the greater was their relative influence, since product usage and product importance were important components of product involvement (Falbo and Peplau, 1980 and Foxman *et al.*, 1989b) results supported that teenager's product involvement affected their relative influence in family consumable decisions for that product stand proved.

From the parents' standpoint, if the product was relatively low priced or buying it did not affect much of the family's financial situation, then they were likely to yield to teenager's requests. Otherwise, even when the product was for teenager's primary use, if it involved relatively high financial cost, parents would not let family members have much influence in the purchase decisions e.g., home computers for child (Foxman *et al.*, 1989a).

The products can be classified along with two dimensions, major-minor reflecting large and small expenditures, respectively and family teenager being the primary user, resulting in a four-fold product categorization. Major products for family included car, house and TV. Minor products for family consisted of toothpaste, shampoo and ketchup. Major products for family members contained walk-man and bicycle. Finally, minor products for children involved clothes, records and shoes.

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Statement of the problem:

The influence of family members on family purchase decision has been increasing at a rapid pace in recent years. This increase could be attributed to changing demographics and socio-economic pattern in Indian society. With the tremendous increase in family income, parents have less time to spend on decision making in the purchase of products required by the family. This has resulted in participation by the teenaged children in the purchase of household products besides decision-making. Moreover, these family members not only buy more products for family consumption but also receive higher allowances because of fewer siblings in the family. As such, spending pattern on personal consumption items has increased tremendously. Family members, therefore not only have increasing amount of consumer information but also in some cases have more knowledge than their parents have about certain consumer durable product like computers.

In India, 22 million of teenage population belong to the urban middle class. Besides, the young being in net generation enjoys enormous discretionary purchasing power. Family members, segment is highly market perceptive. Many initial purchases made by family members can be identified and so this age group offers an ideal target market for promoting products. An attempt is made in this paper to review briefly the studies relating to family members' influence on the family consumption decision. While numerous studies are available on children, only a few studies have been done on family members' influence on the decision of purchase.

The primary objectives of the study are: to find out the demographic variable contributing to the influence of the family members in influencing strategy, to investigate parents' response to family members and to study family members' information search and product evaluation process.

Influencing strategy and the responses of parents are considered as dependant variables and purchase behaviour, product related characteristics, product evaluation process and promotion mix are the variables considered in this study.

Influencing strategy:

Influencing strategy is a dependent variable consisting of twelve statements relating to various means by which children try to influence their parents towards their preferences. The respondents are asked to mark their answers on a five point Likert Scale.

Parents' response:

The second dependent variable response of the family

members' parents show various ways of their response to influence children towards their preferences. This consists of seven statements drafted in a five point Likert scale with scores from one to five from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Product characteristics:

Product related characteristics such as utility, brand image, etc constitute independent variables. To identify the level of influence on the purchase decision, the family members were asked to respond on a five point scale ranging from very high to very low.

Influencing strategy-durable products:

The Varimax factor analysis with Kaiser Rotation was carried out over twelve statements of influencing strategy aimed at the reduction of these statements into profound explanatory factors. In this factor analysis, two factors were identified comprising of the following statements named as emotional approach and logical approach.

The factor analysis reduces the twelve statements into two factors as given below:

Factor 1 emotional approach:

The related statements are:

- I crack jokes trying to get my way.
- I tell him/her that I would do some special things if he/she agrees with me.
- I plead or beg him/her to agree with me.
- I simply ask my father/mother to agree with me.
- I appeal and ask them to demonstrate their love and affection to me.
- I make him/her feel guilty if they do not agree with me.
- I indicate to him/her the fact that my other friends have 'it'.

Factor 2 logical approach:

The related statements are:

- I tell him/her what I wanted, I just stated my needs.
- I convince my father/mother, trying to argue my request logically.
- I ask for the product in a way that sound reasonable to him/her.
- I repeatedly remind him/her of what I want.
- I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.

From Table 1A the total variation explained by the variables of influencing strategy is 50.718%. In the total variation, the first factor emotional approach exhibits a

Table 1 A : Percentage of variance of influencing strategy

Extraction sums of squared loadings			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
4.814	40.120	40.120	4.814	40.120	40.120
1.272	10.598	50.718	1.272	10.598	50.718

Source: Primary data

Table 1 B : Factor loading of influencing strategy

Influencing strategy statements	Factors	
	Emotional approach	Logical approach
I crack jokes trying to get my way	0.773	
I tell him/her that I would do some special things if he/she agrees with me	0.747	
I plead or beg him/her to agree with me	0.706	
I simply ask my parents to agree with me	0.672	
I appeal and ask them to demonstrate their love and affection to me	0.672	
I make them feel guilty if they do not agree with me	0.647	
I indicate him/her the fact that my other friends have `it`	0.579	
I tell them what I want, I just state my needs		0.739
I convince my father/mother, trying to argue my request logically		0.672
I ask for the product in a way that sounded reasonable to him/her		0.638
I made him/her feel guilty if they do not agree with me		0.600
I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us		0.582

Source: Primary data

very high variance of 40.120% followed by 10.598% variance of the logical approach.

The family members apply two types of strategies to convince their parents when they decide to buy durable products:

- Emotionally convincing the parents
- Logically convincing the parents

Therefore, it is inferred that the family members apply emotional approach by using various emotional strategies like cutting jokes, telling them to do special things, pleading and begging, simply asking them to agree with them, appealing to their parents to demonstrate their love and affection to them, and making their parents feel guilty. Further, they also equate them with their friends that others are having the product. The factor loading registered for these statements are 0.773, 0.747, 0.706, 0.672, 0.672, 0.647, and 0.579, respectively (Table 1B).

Family members also apply "Logical Approach" like they try to argue with their parents logically, ask for the product in a way that sounds reasonable repeatedly reminding and finally try to negotiate something agreeable to both of them. The factor loading registered are 0.739, 0.672, 0.638, 0.600 and 0.582, respectively.

It is inferred from the above analysis that family members predominantly apply emotional approach and use less logical approach to convince their parents to get the desired product.

Parents' response strategy:

The Varimax analysis with Kaiser Rotation was carried out over seven statements of parents' response strategy against family members' influencing strategy aimed at the reduction of the variables into profound explanatory factors. In this factor analysis, two factors are identified. They were consultative response and authoritative response.

The factor analysis reduces the seven variables into two factors as given below:

Factor 1 : Consultative response:

The related statements are:

- He/she discusses the product with me
- He/she teaches me how to select the best alternative.
- He/she expresses his/her opinion towards each product.
- My father/mother tries to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.
- He/she reasons with me, trying to argue his/her choice logically.

Factor 2 : Authoritative response:

The related statements are:

- He/she indicates his/her choices without giving reasons.

– He/she simply gives me what I wanted.

From Table 2A, it is clear that total variation explained by these variables was 64.125 per cent. This analysis identified two categories of parents based on their responses. The first factor consultative response has a contribution of 37.367 per cent followed by authoritative response of 26.758 per cent. Hence two types of parents are identified.

- Consultative parents
- Authoritative parents

In the “Consultative Response”, (Table 2B) the highest supporting factor is they discuss the product, which has a factor loading of 0.812, followed by parent teach how to select the best product with a factor loading of 0.780, expressing their opinion towards each product which has a factor loading 0.749, tries to negotiate to arrive something agreeable to both of us has the factor loading of 0.723, and finally reasoning and argue their choice logically with a factor loading 0.549 also supports this factor. This is because consultative parents are more responding to children’s need, listen to their opinion, and respond to satisfy their need. This demonstrates that the parents try to consult each aspect with their family members before allowing them to take decisions.

However, in the case of “Authoritative Response”, (Table 2B) the first highest contributing factor is indicating the choices without giving reasons that has a factor loading of 0.870 followed by simply give what is wanted with a factor loading of 0.792, exhibited that authoritative parents too positively responded to family members’ request.

From the analysis of Table 2A, it is inferred that majority of the parents interact with their young ones before

taking some decision in respect of the product they purchase. They also demonstrate their love and support, through consultative response because it is an educational product. Authoritative parents also positively respond to family members’ request.

Impact of demographic variables on the influencing strategy of teengeers:

An attempt has been made to identify whether there is a difference in the level of emotional and logical approach based on various demographic variables. To test this, ANOVA was used and the results are shown in Table 3A.

From Table 3A, it is found that logical approach varied based on gender, family members educational level, pocket money and monthly family income significantly. Rest of the demographic variables did not influence.

Family members’ education level and influencing strategy:

It was found that logical approach varied significantly based on family members’ educational level. The difference exhibited in the influencing strategy which can be further explained with the mean values in table. Table 4 represents family members’ educational level and influencing strategy.

The mean value for logical reasoning in respect of family members’ education varied from ‘Schooling to Professional education’. The mean values are 3.287, 3.348, 3.436 and 3.489, respectively. Comparing the mean values of emotional approach based on family members’ education it was found that when the family members’

Table 2 A : Percentage of variance of influencing strategy and parents’ response

Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
3.475	49.645	49.645	2.616	37.367	37.367
1.014	14.479	64.125	1.873	26.758	64.125

Source: Primary data

Table 2 B : Factor loading of parents’ response

Parents response statements	Factors	
	Consultative response	Authoritative response
He/she discusses the product with me	0.812	
He/she teaches me how to select the best alternative	0.780	
He/she expresses his/her opinion towards each product	0.749	
My father/mother tries to negotiate something agreeable to both	0.723	
He/she reasons with me, trying to argue his/her choice logically	0.549	
He/she indicates his/her choices without giving reasons		0.870
He/she simply gives me what I wanted		0.792

Source: Primary data

Table 3 : A demographic variables and influencing strategy

Source	Dependent variable	Mean square	F	Sig.
Age	Emotional	1.503	1.958	0.162
	Logical	0.495	0.806	0.370
Gender	Emotional	8.606	0.354	0.555
	Logical	0.235	12.944	0.001**
Fathers' education	Emotional	2.417	3.148	0.077
	Logical	0.146	0.238	0.626
Mothers' education	Emotional	0.544	0.708	0.400
	Logical	0.590	0.961	0.328
Number of members in the family	Emotional	0.921	1.200	0.274
	Logical	0.176	0.287	0.592
Number of children in the family	Emotional	0.004	0.006	0.939
	Logical	0.326	0.531	0.467
Birth order of the child	Emotional	0.020	0.026	0.873
	Logical	0.078	0.127	0.722
Family members' educational level	Emotional	0.067	0.0109	0.741
	Logical	4.988	6.496	0.011*
Pocket money received per month	Emotional	1.961	2.554	0.196
	Logical	0.742	2.530	0.040*
Monthly family income	Emotional	0.204	0.265	0.607
	Logical	2.645	4.310	0.038*

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01,
Source: Primary data

Table 4 : Family members' education level and influencing strategy

Family members' educational level	Logical approach		Emotional approach	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
8-12 th std	3.287	0.9706	2.655	0.8388
Polytechnic (Diploma)	3.348	0.7365	2.627	0.9222
First year Arts/Science graduate degree	3.436	0.8308	2.692	0.8272
First year Professional degree	3.489	0.6905	2.822	0.9259

Source: Primary data

education is higher, they become more logical and apply logical approach towards their parents. This can be substantiated by a mean value, which is the highest (mean=3.489) for family members who are in the first year professional education and the least (mean=3.287) for the family members' education upto schooling. Logical approach is less (Table 4).

Monthly family income level and influencing strategy:

It was found that logical approach vary significantly based on teenaged parents monthly income level. The difference exhibited in the influencing strategy can be further explained with the mean values in Table 5.

It is evident from Table 5 that the mean value for logical reasoning in respect of monthly family income varied from income up to Rs.10000 to above Rs.30000. The mean values were 3.287, 3.347, 3.605 and 3.428,

respectively. Comparing the mean values of logical approach based on monthly family income, it was found that when the family income is higher, family members applying logical approach towards their parents also increases except to monthly income group of above Rs.30000. This can be substantiated by mean value, which was highest (mean=3.605) for teenaged monthly family income between Rs. 20001-30000 least (mean=3.287) in respect of monthly family income up to Rs.10000. It is presumed that when the family income starts increasing, family members think logically and try to convince their parents and get the product. It is inferred that teenaged parents having high income (above Rs.30000) try to satisfy their children's demands without any difficulty or these category of family members should be having all the products including durable products in their home as such there may not be the necessity for the family members to emotionally convince their parents to get the product.

Table 5 : Monthly family income level and influencing strategy

Monthly family income (in rupees)	Emotional approach		Logical approach	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Up to 10000	2.651	0.8682	3.287	0.7614
10001-20000	2.695	0.9356	3.347	0.8768
20001-30000	2.741	0.8817	3.605	0.7149
Above 30000	2.673	0.8722	3.428	0.6735

Source: Primary data

Table 6 : Relationship between parents’ response and influencing strategy

Strategy	Type of tests	Consultative parent	Authoritative parent
Emotional	Pearson correlation	0.161**	0.152**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.001
	N	100	100
Logical	Pearson Correlation	1	0.136**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.003
	N	100	100

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively (2-tailed)

Source: Primary data

Parents response and influencing strategy:

Parents’ response consists of two factors, namely, consultative parents and authoritative parents. Family members influencing strategy are divided into two factors, namely, emotional approach and logical approach.

In order to find out of relationship between the influencing strategy and the parents response, Karl Pearson’s co efficient of correlation was applied and the details are given in Table 6.

From Table 6, it is found that there is a significant positive correlation between parents’ response and influencing strategy. While emotional approach has a significant positive correlation with both consultative response parents ($r = 0.161$) and authoritative response parents ($r = 0.152$). The logical approach also has positive correlation ($r = 0.136$) with family members’ authoritative response parents. As such, it is inferred that parents’ responses are both consultative and authoritative towards emotional family members and authoritative towards logical family members. Durable products being a high value product, the parents would try to convince their children and dictates them about the purchase of durable products to suit the environment.

Suggestions:

- Even family members approach emotionally with the influence of external source, that they are quality oriented, utility, value for money and maintaining standard are the basis for buying a product.

- Apart from advertisement, the company must give importance to retail outlets. Family members are particular

in trial, salesman information, display, etc. Store image is important to attract family members.

- It is better to make children to understand how to select the best alternative, exchange opinion or logically present the idea. This will enable the teens to make better purchase.

- Majority of the family members were found to approach emotionally. Emotional advertisements will be more effective in this segment. They would like to possess products if their friends own them. This situation could be encashed by marketers.

- Emotional family members are concerned with popularity, brand image and appearance of the product. But logical people are value oriented. Hence, the manufacturer must concentrate on quality as a base and try to build image to attract family members.

- Advertisement in television, and dealer’s opinions are more impressive for family members than sales promotion. This must be kept in mind while targeting this segment.

- Influence of demographic factor is mainly found in the logical approach. Hence, the marketers must present the product with high logical utility to induce the purchase of the family members. This will satisfy even the lower level people.

- Parents respond positively to educational supportive products. So, if possible, the projection of products could be on this dimension to get the concurrence of parents.

- For high value products, the focus can be on utility of the product because, family members attach more

importance for value than image.

– Making family members as customer is a very important step. Presently, they may be influencers but they are the future deciders of their family's products.

Conclusion:

For purchase behaviour, family members are not uniform. Even in the case of durable products, there is difference based on the value of the product, purpose of the product etc. Family members approach to their parents and parents' response also differs. Education levels of family members, parents' education, income, gender are the factors influencing changes in their approach. Family members are more concerned with the value of the product than the social image. Studying and bringing family members in the fold of a marketer will really help their business in long run.

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