

## CHILDREN INFLUENCE ON PURCHASE OF SELECTED CHILD-CENTRIC PRODUCTS

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### ABSTRACT

*The children plays an important role in the family purchase process. They influence the purchase decision of the family for the product they use and also for the products for family use. This study attempts to understand the influence of children across six categories of child- centric products. The products taken into consideration for study include toys/games, eating out, beverages, clothes, confectionery and stationery. The study was conducted in Metro City Delhi. The study was conducted on 510 parents having children in the age group of 6-12 years.*

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**Keywords:** *Children, Influence, Child-Centric, Products.*

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### Introduction

For marketers, the family constitutes one among the highly important decision making and consumption units. This turned the attention of marketers toward the family for their campaigns for more than a decade (Calvert, 2008). Children are known to play a very important role in the purchase decisions made by the family, thus becoming an attractive target for marketers. The trend of marketers focusing on children is not new. Studies done in the past suggest that the children have been the target of marketers since the concept of modern mass marketing came into the picture (Calder, Robertson & Rossiter, 1975; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Churchill & Moschis, 1979; Cook, 2004; John, 1999; McNeal & Yeh, 1990; Moschis, Lawton, & Stampfl, 1980; Ward, 1974; Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977). Children are known to influence their parents' purchase decision in four different ways (Wang, Wut, & Chou, 2009). First, children buy products according to their individual preferences. Second, children buy products directly by using their pocket money. Third, they influence the choice of parents for products used by the family or used for joint consumption. Lastly, they influence parents' own preferences (McNeal, 1992). Children have been found to contribute to primary, influencer, and future market (Kaur & Singh, 2006).

There was not much research to understand children as consumers till the early 1950s. One of the studies done in 1942 focused on brand awareness among children (Guest, 1942). In 1957, Eugene Gilbert, in his book *Advertising and Marketing to Young People*, discussed the relationship between children and the consumer marketplace. In the 1960s, children were directly interviewed by researchers to understand their preference about goods. Since then children have been the focus of research. Then, marketers started targeting children and have been devising strategies to reach out to them. Children's impact on family decision making has kept increasing over time. Studies have shown that children have become a highly important consumer group influencing family purchase decision of different products in various ways (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003).

### Consumer Spending in India

The average spending by consumer in India was Rs.11694.51 billion which increased to Rs.21662.35 billion in fourth quarter of 2019 as shown in the Figure 1.

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Source: Tradingeconomics.com/Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

**Figure 1: Consumer Spending in India**

### Review of Literature

The children influence vary across various product categories. In some of the studies done in past the influence of children was found to be more in case of products that are not very expensive (Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom, 1989) The influence was also found to be more in case the product is one which is to be used by the children themselves (Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom, 1989; Mangleburg, 1990; Polya 2012). This was not true in case of another studies done where the children were found to be playing important influencer role in case of purchase of products like house (Levy & Kwai, 2004); car and planning vacation (Kaur & Medury, 2011). The influence of children was studied for various categories of child-centric products. In one of the study done the influence of children was found to be most in case of bicycle (Jeevananda & Kumar, 2012). In another study the influence was found to be most in case of clothes (Foxman & Tansuhaj, 1989). The influence was found to be most on FMCG's like chocolates, sweets etc. (O'Neill, Vigar & Paterson, 2015). In yet another study the children were found to have influence on products like lays. Chocolates and shoes. But the children were not found to have any influence on products like cars and home appliances (Ali & Batra, 2011).

The age of the child also plays an important role in the level of influence on the purchase decision. The influence of children was found to be most by the children in age group of 5-11 years (Bennett, 1991). Age was also found to be an important factor in another study (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008; Ali & Batra, 2011). The gender of the child has also been studied in the past to understand if the level of the influence vary by the gender of the child. The studies shows that the gender of the child does not play an important role in the level of influence (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008; Isin & Alkibay, 2011). However other studies proved that the level of influence of children vary significantly by the gender of the child (Tomko, 2012; Ali, Mustafa, Batra, Ravich & Rehman, 2012). The level of influence was found to vary by gender of the child for products like clothes where girls were found to have more influence as compared to boys (Haynes, Burts, Dukes & Cloud, 1993; Ishaque & Tufail, 2014); cosmetics and confectionery (Ishaque & Tufail, 2014); chocolates and juice (Ali & Batra, 2011). The gender of the second child i.e. whether the second child is male or female was found to be one factors contributing to the amount spent by parents on purchase (Tomko, 2012).

### Research Objectives

- To analyse the level of influence across six categories of child centric products.
- To find out whether the level of influence vary by the age of the child.
- To find out whether the level of influence vary by the gender of the child.

### Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Delhi. The sample were parents having children in the age group of 6-12 years. The sample size of the study was 510. Out of 510, 433 were mother and 77 fathers. The data was collected by mean of structured questionnaire.

### Findings of the Study

#### • The Influence of Children in Selecting Child-Centric Products

To analyse the influence of children on selecting and purchasing child-centric products, six products were considered in our study: (i) Toys/Games, (ii) Eating Out, (iii) Beverages, (iv) Clothes, (v) Confectionery, and (vi) Stationery. All these products were directly used by the children. The respondents were asked about the product demanded most by the child. They were given a choice to select more than one product.

**Table 1: Product Demanded by the Child**

Product	Frequency	Percentage
Toys/Games	365	71.6
Eating Out	187	36.7
Beverages	275	53.9
Clothes	163	32.0
Confectionery	298	58.4
Stationery	348	68.2

Table 1 shows that toys/games were the most demanded product by the child (71.6%) followed by stationery (68.2%). Clothes were the least demanded product by the children (32%).

• **Gender of the Child and Product Demanded**

Girls (74.7%) as well as boys (67.1%) demanded toys/games the most. Boys demanded confectionery (60.5%) and beverages (59.0%) more than girls. More boys also wanted to eat out (45.2%) than girls (30.7%). But girls (37.3%) demanded clothes more than boys (24.3%). Table 2 provides the preference of boys and girls for various products.

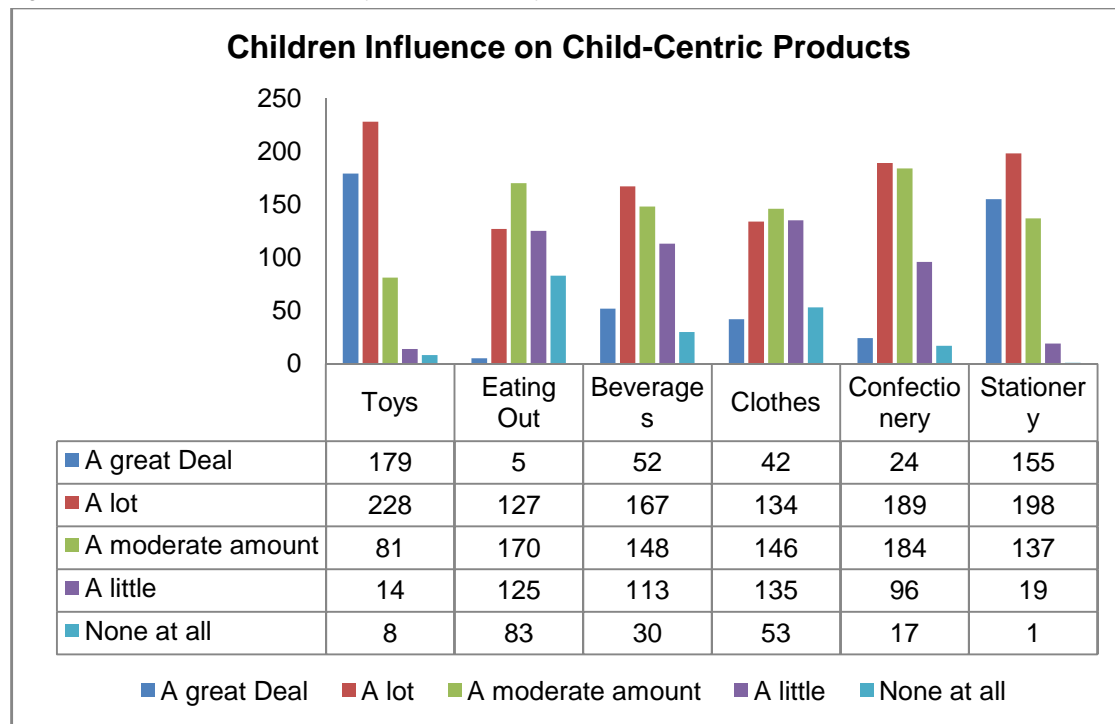
**Table 2: Product Demanded by Girls and Boys**

Product	Girls	Boys
Toys/games	224 (74.7)	141 (67.1)
Eating out	92 (30.7)	95 (45.2)
Beverages	151 (50.3)	53.9 (59.0)
Clothes	112 (37.3)	51 (24.3)
Confectionery	171 (57.0)	127 (60.5)
Stationery	208 (69.3)	140 (66.7)

Note: The data is represented in form of frequency and percentage in parentheses.

• **Children Influence on Child-Centric Products**

The children’s influence on six categories of child-centric products is displayed in Figure2. The highest influence was found for toys and stationery.



**Figure 2: Level of influence.**

- **Level of Influence and Age of the Child**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant difference between the age of the child and level of influence.

This hypothesis was set to see whether there is any significant difference between the age of the child and the level of influence in the purchase of six categories of child-centric products. The level of influence was measured using 5-point Likert Scale where 5=A great deal, 4=A lot, 3=A moderate amount, 2=A little and 1=None at all. The hypothesis was tested using One-Way ANOVA. The result of ANOVA is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: ANOVA-Age of the Child and Level of Influence on Purchasing Child-Centric Products**

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Child's influence on purchasing toys/games	Between Groups	76.894	6	12.816	21.001	.000
	Within Groups	306.957	503	.610		
	Total	383.851	509			
Child's influence on eating out	Between Groups	156.753	6	26.125	32.792	.000
	Within Groups	400.745	503	.797		
	Total	557.498	509			
Child's influence on buying beverages	Between Groups	80.838	6	13.473	13.332	.000
	Within Groups	508.331	503	1.011		
	Total	589.169	509			
Child's influence on purchasing clothes	Between Groups	131.421	6	21.903	21.329	.000
	Within Groups	516.542	503	1.027		
	Total	647.963	509			
Child's influence on buying confectionery	Between Groups	25.140	6	4.190	5.250	.000
	Within Groups	401.411	503	.798		
	Total	426.551	509			
Child's influence for purchasing stationery	Between Groups	23.218	6	3.870	5.518	.000
	Within Groups	352.745	503	.701		
	Total	375.963	509			

The p value was less than 0.05 for all the six categories of child-centric products so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. In case of toys/games  $F(6,503)=21.001$ ,  $p<.001$  indicating that there is significant difference between the age of the child and the level of influence on purchase of toys and games. The value in case of eating out  $F(6,503)=32.792$ ,  $p<.001$ ; beverages  $F(6,503)=13.332$ ,  $p<.001$ ; clothes  $F(6, 503)=21.329$ ,  $p<.001$ ; confectionery  $F(6,503)=5.250$ ,  $p<.001$ ; stationery  $F(6,503)=5.518$ ,  $p<.001$  indicates significant difference between the age of the child and level of influence.

**Level of Influence and Gender of the Child**

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is significant difference between the gender of the child and level of influence.

To test whether there is significant difference in the level of influence and the gender of the child One-way ANOVA was used. The level of influence was found to be significant for the products like eating out ( $p<.001$ ), beverages ( $p=0.001$ ) and clothes ( $p<.001$ ). However there was no significant difference between the gender of the child and level of influence in case of toys/games ( $p=.096$ ), confectionery ( $p=.380$ ) and stationery ( $p=.796$ ). The same has been shown in table 4.

**Table 4: ANOVA- Gender of the Child and Level of Influence on Purchasing Child-Centric Products**

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Child's influence on purchasing toys/games	Between Groups	2.088	1	2.088	2.778	.096
	Within Groups	381.763	508	.752		
	Total	383.851	509			
Child's influence on eating out	Between Groups	27.620	1	27.620	26.480	.000
	Within Groups	529.878	508	1.043		
	Total	557.498	509			
Child's influence on buying beverages	Between Groups	12.091	1	12.091	10.644	.001
	Within Groups	577.078	508	1.136		
	Total	589.169	509			

Child's influence on purchasing clothes	Between Groups	17.526	1	17.526	14.122	.000
	Within Groups	630.437	508	1.241		
	Total	647.963	509			
Child's influence on buying confectionery	Between Groups	.647	1	.647	.772	.380
	Within Groups	425.904	508	.838		
	Total	426.551	509			
Child's influence for purchasing stationery	Between Groups	.049	1	.049	.067	.796
	Within Groups	375.913	508	.740		
	Total	375.963	509			

## Discussion

For our study six categories of child-centric products were considered. These products were toys/games, eating out, beverages, clothes, confectionery and stationery. Toys/games was found to be the most demanded product by the children followed by stationery, confectionery, beverages, eating out and clothes. The toys/games were demanded more by girls than by boys. Eating out request was made more by boys as compared to girls as also seen in study done by Godhani, Khant & Jadeja (2012). Beverages was demanded more by boys than girls. Clothes was demanded more by girls as compared to boys as also proved in study done by Soni and Upadhyaya (2007), Oyewole, Peng, & Choudhury (2010), Godhani, Khant & Jadeja (2012). Confectionery was demanded more by boys than girls. Stationery items were demanded by girls more than boys. This is in line with the earlier study done by Oyewole, Peng, & Choudhury (2010) where stationery items was least requested by the boys. The influence of the child on the purchase of these six categories of product was evaluated. The age of the child was found to have significant influence on the level of influence in case of all the six categories of child centric products as seen in study done by Martensen & Gronholdt (2008) and Ali& Batra (2011).

The gender of a child also is significant in the purchase decisions of the products considered. In case of eating out and buying beverages and clothes, the influence of gender was quite prominent. However, for the purchase of toys/games, confectionery, and stationery, gender of the child didn't matter. These products were demanded by both boys and girls. Also in previous studies done by Martensen and Gronholdt (2008) and Isinand Alkibay (2011), gender was not found to play a significant role in deciding the level of influence for the purchase of products. But boys had more say in the purchase of toys compared to girls, but the difference was not found to be significant. In the case of eating out, boys wanted it more than girls. For buying beverages, boys had a significantly more influence than girls. In the purchase of clothes too, gender distinction on its influence was significant. Girls liked to buy more clothes than boys.

The marketers treat children as a separate segment. This study would help marketers to understand the role the child plays in purchase of child-centric products. Previous studies have shown that children exercise influence on the purchase of products they use. We chose six products that the children demanded most: toys/games, eating out, beverages, clothes, confectionery, and stationery. Children are more interested in the purchase of these products than the products for family use. Our study helps marketers gain an insight into the influence the child have on their parents in the purchase of these six categories of products.

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