

## **“BUY... BUY... CHILDREN...!”- A STUDY ON TV ADVERTISEMENTS TARGETING CHILDREN'S PESTER POWER**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*In the past, role of children in buying decision of families had been bare minimal. They used to know very less about products available in the markets than their elders. Due to the advent of new technological developments in digital media, children are at the fore front to know about products when they are being launched in the market even before their parents. Nowadays, children act as passive participants in families buying decision. Children not only choose the products they want but, also have upper hand in deciding products to be used by almost every other family member. The influence of children on family buying decision based on various variables that have direct relationship has been discussed on this study. This research study is initiated to investigate how TV Advertisements contribute to Children's Pester Power. The study has been carried out using sequential exploratory design based on mixed methods. Required data was collected by administering a questionnaire and responses were analyzed with the help of statistical tools like SPSS.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In recent years, number of Television Advertisements directed towards children has increased tremendously. Kids now watch an average of 40,000 television commercials yearly (Bigda, 2005). In turn, they influence psychological factors and behavior of Kids. Children represent an important demographic to marketers because they have their own purchasing power, they influence their parents buying decisions and they are the adult consumers of tomorrow. This offers big temptation to the marketers to treat the children as mature and independent customers. By implementing a strategy called creating 'Pester Power' marketers are successful in making parents almost redundant in purchase decisions. Hence, this study has been undertaken to understand the impact and implications of Television ads on children and also to understand the influence of TV adverts on children's 'Pester Power'.

### **PESTER POWER:**

Sheth G. et. al. (2008) defines Pester Power as "the nagging ability of children to purchase the product they desire due to some reason." It is also described as the technique of selling to adults by appealing to children and relying on them to pester their parents into buying the item for them.

'Pester Power' refers to children's ability to nag their parents into purchasing items they may not otherwise buy. Marketing to children is all about creating pester power. According to the Marketing Industry Book 'Kidfluence', pestering or nagging can be divided into two categories; 'Persistence' and 'Importance'. Persistence nagging (a plea that is repeated over and over again) is not as effective as the more sophisticated 'Importance nagging'. This latter method appeals to parents' desire to provide the best for their children, and plays on any guilt they may have about not having enough time for their kids. Marketers plant the seeds of brand recognition in very young children, in the hopes that the seeds will grow into lifetime relationships. There are different tactics used by children to 'nag' or 'pester' their parents. They are classified into following 8 categories:

- 1. Pressure** (Using demanding threats, and persistent reminders to influence).

2. **Upward Appeal** (Saying that the request is approved or supported by an older of the family, teacher or even a family friend).
3. **Exchange** (Offering an exchange of favors with a target).
4. **Coalition** (Seeking the aid of others to persuade a target).
5. **Ingratiation** (Seeking to get a target in a good mood or to think favorably before asking the target to do something).
6. **Rational Persuasion** (Using logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade a target that a request will result in something beneficial).
7. **Inspirational Appeal** (Arousing a target's enthusiasm by appealing to values, ideals, and aspirations).
8. **Consultation** (Seeking a target's participation in planning and evaluation of purchase).

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

There are many studies done on the subject worldwide till now which demonstrated that how 'Pester Power' has emerged as a major force in the new era.

Unnikrishnan and Bajpai (1996) conducted a research to study on the impact of television advertising on 730 children who represented a cross section of Delhi's population. The TV ads that the children (age band 8 to 15 years) in the sample responded to were those that were broadcast via Doordarshan (India's National Network). Around half of the children said they watched TV with their family. Meals like dinner were had while watching TV. Majority (80%) of the respondents told that they watch more TV than all the adults in the family. Total 40 per cent of the children claimed that they talked to their peers or family, repeated things in their conversation that they saw on TV. Majority (70-60%) of the children and especially children from affluent homes indicated that they were much more in control of their TV sets and they often decided when and what they wanted to view. Majority (60%) of the 8 to 15 year olds said they were encouraged by their parents to watch TV. More than 30 per cent of the children said they were under no parental guidance whatsoever with regard to programme selection. However, it was also evident that most of the children resent parental guidance.

Agrawal, Tripathi & Aditya, (2008), has analyzed the Impact of Television Advertising on Children's food preference with special reference to Delhi NCR collected data from 300 respondents in the age group of 6-16 years, Convenience based sampling was adopted and the major findings were that in India, TV ads are still the most popular media to reach kids but online ads have also created buzz, at least it come out that TV ads have positive influence on the food preference of kids in Indian prospective.

Pandey & Singh, (2010), has analyzed the Response to advertisement, General Media habits of the Consumers, factors of maximum impact on purchase decision, the relationship between watching TV and likelihood of advertisement. Sample has been drawn from a metro city of U P that is Meerut, Respondents from only middle class families were selected, the sample was 125 coming from different occupations and education levels, income and age groups. The findings show that there is significant relationship between watching television and liking of advertisement seen on the T.V. About 92% respondents agreed that they watch television one to two hours every day.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The research is carried out to study the following:

1. To examine and measure the impact of TV Advertisements on Children
2. To understand Drivers of Pester Power
3. To explore products which attract children to use their Pester Power
4. To assess 'Pester Power Effect' occurring on account of exposure to TV ads

## HYPOTHESIS:

Following hypotheses have been framed for carrying out the research study:

**Ho1:** Kids usually get more attracted towards products shown in Television Commercials and they pester their parents to purchase the products shown whether useful or not.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in drivers of pester power for the different products.

**Ho3:** Pester Power is independent of exposure to the Television advertisements.

**Ho4:** There is no significant difference in the impact of TV advertisements on children

## Sources of Data

Keeping in view the objectives of the study and the hypotheses that have been framed for carrying out the research study, data has been collected from both 'Primary' as well as 'Secondary' sources. For collection of Primary Data, a questionnaire has been administered, to the children with diverse demographic profiles and studied. Secondary Data has been obtained from several reports of the commissions and committees appointed by government and other statutory bodies and the same was analyzed. The general information utilized in this research study includes case studies, seminar proceedings, printed textbooks, reports, conference proceedings, and authoritative articles published in professional journals, magazines, and newspapers.

## Sample Size and Design

Sample Size for the Study is 140 High School Students (VII, VIII, IX & X Classes) studying in co-education school in twin cities of Hyderabad. The school has been selected using Simple Random Sampling Method.

**Motivation through TV Ads:** Respondents are asked about latest products which are motivated by TV Ads. The responses are as follows in the following table:

**Table-1**  
**Motivation through TV Ads**

Statement	Gender	Age	Class Studying	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Television advertisements create desire in me to buy products	Boys	Twelve	Seventh	2.71	.849	17
			Total	2.71	.849	17
		Thirteen	Eighth	1.56	.512	16
			Ninth	2.33	.577	3
			Total	1.68	.582	19
		Fourteen	Ninth	2.08	.776	24
			Tenth	2.00	.000	2
			Total	2.08	.744	26
		Fifteen	Ninth	3.00	.	1
			Tenth	2.00	.775	21
			Total	2.05	.785	22
		Total	Seventh	2.71	.849	17
			Eighth	1.56	.512	16
			Ninth	2.14	.756	28

			Tenth	2.00	.739	23
			Total	2.11	.807	84
	Girls	Twelve	Seventh	1.88	.991	8
			Total	1.88	.991	8
		Thirteen	Seventh	1.00	.	1
			Eighth	1.85	.899	13
			Total	1.79	.893	14
		Fourteen	Eighth	1.00	.	1
			Ninth	2.06	.827	17
			Tenth	1.67	.577	3
			Total	1.95	.805	21
		Fifteen	Ninth	2.00	.	1
			Tenth	2.25	.754	12
			Total	2.23	.725	13
		Total	Seventh	1.78	.972	9
			Eighth	1.79	.893	14
			Ninth	2.06	.802	18
			Tenth	2.13	.743	15
			Total	1.96	.830	56
	Total	Twelve	Seventh	2.44	.961	25
			Total	2.44	.961	25
		Thirteen	Seventh	1.00	.	1
			Eighth	1.69	.712	29
			Ninth	2.33	.577	3
			Total	1.73	.719	33
		Fourteen	Eighth	1.00	.	1
			Ninth	2.07	.787	41
			Tenth	1.80	.447	5
			Total	2.02	.766	47
		Fifteen	Ninth	2.50	.707	2
			Tenth	2.09	.765	33
			Total	2.11	.758	35
		Total	Seventh	2.38	.983	26
			Eighth	1.67	.711	30
			Ninth	2.11	.767	46
			Tenth	2.05	.733	38
			Total	2.05	.816	140

The Mean and Standard Deviation for boys and girls for the study Age group and for the study classes of the sample, with regard to motivation through TV ads, are with Mean values 2.38, 1.67, 2.11, 2.05, and standard deviations 0.983, 0.711, 0.767, 0.733 respectively.

**Persuasion of Parents:** Respondents are asked about the persuasion of parents. The responses are as follows in the following table:

**Table-2**  
**Persuasion of Parents**

Statement	Gender	Age	Class Studying	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I persuade my parents to buy the products I see in Television Advertisements	Boys	Twelve	Seventh	2.29	.686	17
			Total	2.29	.686	17
		Thirteen	Eighth	1.50	.516	16
			Ninth	1.67	.577	3
			Total	1.53	.513	19
		Fourteen	Ninth	1.83	.761	24
			Tenth	1.00	.000	2
			Total	1.77	.765	26
		Fifteen	Ninth	1.00	.	1
			Tenth	1.76	.889	21
			Total	1.73	.883	22
		Total	Seventh	2.29	.686	17
			Eighth	1.50	.516	16
			Ninth	1.79	.738	28
			Tenth	1.70	.876	23

	Girls	Twelve	Total	1.81	.768	84
			Seventh	1.50	1.069	8
			Total	1.50	1.069	8
		Thirteen	Seventh	1.00	.	1
			Eighth	1.62	.506	13
			Total	1.57	.514	14
		Fourteen	Eighth	1.00	.	1
			Ninth	1.94	.659	17
			Tenth	1.67	.577	3
		Fifteen	Total	1.86	.655	21
			Ninth	1.00	.	1
			Tenth	1.58	.793	12
	Total	Total	Total	1.54	.776	13
			Seventh	1.44	1.014	9
			Eighth	1.57	.514	14
		Twelve	Ninth	1.89	.676	18
			Tenth	1.60	.737	15
			Total	1.66	.721	56
		Thirteen	Seventh	2.04	.889	25
			Total	2.04	.889	25
			Seventh	1.00	.	1
		Fourteen	Eighth	1.55	.506	29
			Ninth	1.67	.577	3
			Total	1.55	.506	33
		Fifteen	Eighth	1.00	.	1
			Ninth	1.88	.714	41
			Tenth	1.40	.548	5
		Total	Total	1.81	.711	47
			Ninth	1.00	.000	2
			Tenth	1.70	.847	33
			Total	1.66	.838	35
		Total	Seventh	2.00	.894	26
			Eighth	1.53	.507	30
			Ninth	1.83	.709	46
			Tenth	1.66	.815	38
			Total	1.75	.750	140

The Mean and Standard Deviation for Boys and Girls for the Study Age Groups and for the Study Classes of the sample, with regards to persuasion of parents are with Mean values 2.00, 1.53, 1.83, 1.66 and Standard Deviations 0.894, 0.507, 0.709, 0.815 respectively.

### Factor Analysis:

In order to understand the importance of different demographic variables that influence 'Pester Power' of the children, Factor Analysis is conducted and the results are given here under:

**Table-3**  
**Descriptive Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Gender	1.46	.509	24
Age	3.58	.830	24
Birth Order	2.13	.947	24
Number of Siblings	1.88	.947	24
Living with	1.71	.859	24
Class Studying	3.54	.833	24

- a. Only cases for which How many hours you watch Television in Weekdays = 1-2 hours are used in the analysis phase

The above table furnishes the information related to Mean and Standard Deviation for the listed demographic variables. Highest Mean is noticed for Age, followed by Class Studying, and the lowest is noticed for Gender with 1.46.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The study is carried out to understand opinions, views and experiences pertaining to Pester Power on select FMCG Products in Hyderabad region.
2. However, the results may differ for other child-centric products and services like certain electronic and digital items, sports and hobby related items and other additives.
3. The sample is drawn from twin cities of Hyderabad, therefore, may not represent the whole population. Hence, the limitation of generalization will be there.
4. Students and Parents may fail to articulate their opinion; therefore, the in-articulation error may creep in to the study, despite the care taken.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the discussion above, following are partial findings, conclusions and suggestions emerged out of research study:

1. Children find TV Ads amusing and exciting. They don't find ads are boring but what they find annoying and dreadful is that, TV channels showing them over and over.
2. Most of the children cited that, life styles shown in ads are ideal and charming. It seems that ads did not really make children want to try the products they were showing. But the individuals at those ages are inclined to notice funny and clever ads.
3. The ads not only sell products but they also sell life styles and status in the community. Children can be easily attracted by ads and the world surrounded with brands presents them promises in consideration of consumption.
4. Another noteworthy result is that majority of the children said they have seen the ads so many times before and they are tired of them.
5. Product knowledge acquired by Television Advertisements is not positively correlated to age and gender of the children.
6. The method followed by the children i.e. nagging and pleading is influenced by the age and gender of children.
7. The nagging nature of children till their parents accepts is positively correlated.
8. Request made by children to their parents is positively related to their age and gender.

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