

**PESTER POWER & FAMILY DYNAMICS IN CHILDREN ADVERTISEMENTS-
AN EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Considering the growing children consumerism, the advertisers of Electronics, Automobiles and Tourism have started shifting the focus to a child. Children Advertisements aired in Indian television are developed in order to build pester power which in return can initiate a purchase decision. Also, the effectiveness of pester power depends on Family Dynamics. Hence, the researcher following a descriptive research design firstly makes an attempt to frame the level of pester power for children advertisements for the select product categories as per the age groups. Secondly, family dynamics was studied using the three prime factors from the Bowen's Family Systems Theory in order to understand the working and effectiveness of pester power. This study concluded with the level of pester power as per the age followed by a distinct picture of Family Dynamics of the children respondents.

Keywords: *Pester Power, Children Advertisements, Family Dynamics*

INTRODUCTION

Children advertising can be referred to as one dynamic chapter. Frequent changes takes place as the growth of children's cognition takes a turn. Also, the growing children consumerism has forced the advertisers consider a child's role of participating in purchase decision in a precise way. Initially children advertisements were only limited to FMCG and children products but the contemporary markets demands inclusion of few more product categories under the same arena. The three main product categories which have recently considered children advertising in order to instigate purchase decisions and actions are -Electronics, Automobile and Tourism products. A child gets attracted to an advertisement when another child of his/her age is promoting a product. This arouses interest over the advertised product which in turn provokes them to learn more about it. Later this learning is demonstrated by the children while pestering power on their parents to make them understand the need of using that product. Understanding the significance of Pester Power, the advertisers have utilised children advertising for these select product categories as well. However, the advertisers also need to comprehend the verity that a child never works in isolation; there exists a family in his/her background. This opens up the need of mastery on family dynamics of a child in order to conclude the existing level of Pester Power for the select advertisements. The

study draws a picture on the level of pester power as per the age for the select children advertisements. Further, considering the need of understanding the play of Family Dynamics, the researcher has taken three concepts from the Bowen's Family Systems Theory and made an attempt to understand the workings of modern families. These three concepts become the prime factors for the study on Family dynamics of the respondents. The concepts are: viz.-Emotional Cut-Off, Sibling Position and Nuclear Family Emotional Process. These responses generated from the children against these factors gives an idea regarding the strength of the individual sub-factors and also about its role in shaping Pester Power in case of Children advertisements for the select category of products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The previous literature talks about children responses to advertisements as per their age groups as the experience counts in this. Articles published by an Australian parenting site (2019) highlights their rationale and concern about the bold strategies utilised by the advertisers to lure children and the success of advertisers. The product categories for children advertisements have changed with time and it was justified by Agarwal S (2017) who considered Automobile advertisements for understanding level of pester power of the teenagers to find its impact on Generation X buying decision. A family exists in the background of a child hence the effect of pester power will be determined by Family Dynamics of a family. This is rightly identified by Dr. Malik.G, et.al(2016) in their study as they conclude stating how sibling relationship and occupation of parents play a big role in defining the aftermath of pester power. Also, Mackay R(2005) in a study highlighted about the existence of pervasive associations between family change and child outcomes. The children outcomes were a result of the family structure and culture.

RESEARCH GAP

Literature within the proximity of the researcher marked the working of new children advertisements for product categories like Automobiles. Formation of pester power via these advertisements aired on television was firmly emphasized by the studies. This proves children advertisements to be the chief propagator of Pester Power. Researcher's observation spots Tourism and electronic products too adopting children advertising. Also, articles on children growth stress on the verity –These advertisements will work mostly on children aged 8 years to 12 years. Hence, 1st objective was - ***To frame the Level of Pester Power for children aged 8years-12 years by considering the Children advertisements aired on Indian Television.***

Further, the working and importance of family dynamics in case of children has also been underlined by a few researches frames the 2nd objective as : ***To analyse the prime factors of Family Dynamics, responsible for shaping Pester Power in children advertisements for the study area.***

Scope & Research Methodology

Considering the popularity of the product categories, the researcher has focused on Children Advertisements aired in Indian television. In order to understand the level of pester power the children aged eight(8) years to twelve(12) years has been considered. The study area selected by the researcher was Dibrugarh district of Assam.

Research Design: The study was an attempt to mark the level of pester power and family dynamics. Hence, a descriptive research design has been followed by the researchers.

Population of the study-All the children from Dibrugarh District were considered as the population by the researchers for the study.

Sampling frame- Children within the age group of 8years to 12 years from Dibrugarh District form the sampling frame of the study.

Sample Size- Cochran's formula for calculation of sample size under finite population was employed by the researcher. The sample size calculated at 5% confidence level was 184 for the select study area. However, the researchers have considered this as 200 for the study.

Sampling Technique- The researchers has used Simple Random Sampling for the selection of the schools from Dibrugarh District, with the help of Random Number Table with replacement. Lottery Method without replacement was used by the researchers for the selection of children from the schools.

Data Collection-The Researchers have taken the help of a Structured Schedule for collecting the responses from children.

Analysis Technique

Analysis Technique

1) In order to achieve the 1st Objective, the researcher have taken the help of Z scores. A modified scale was prepared considering the Manual for Professional Commitment Scale for Teacher Education. On the basis of the scale the level of pester power for children aged 8years-12 years was identified.

2) In order to achieve the 2nd objective Factor Analysis was considered. With the help of factor loading the researcher has analysed the data and presented the interpretations.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

Analysis -1 Pester Power Level of Children

With the help of the calculated z scores the Pester Power Level was measured. Further, the modified score range was utilised for placing the individual scores. The Pester Power level was thus calculated as per the select age groups of children for Children advertisements.

Table 1.1 showing Age wise Pester Power Level of Children

Level of Pester Power	Age(in years)											
	8		9		10		11		12		Total	
	Coun t	%	Coun t	%	Coun t	%	Coun t	%	Coun t	%	Coun t	%
Very high	1	2.5	1	2.5	1	2.5	0	.0	0	.0	3	1.5
High	3	7.5	1	2.5	8	20.0	0	.0	1	2.5	13	6.5
Above average	19	47.5	11	27.5	12	30.0	1	2.5	6	15.0	49	24.5
Average/Moderate	10	25.0	22	55.0	17	42.5	9	22.5	10	25.0	68	34.0
Below average	5	12.5	5	12.5	2	5.0	22	55.0	10	25.0	44	22.0
Low	2	5.0	0	.0	0	.0	6	15.0	12	30.0	20	10.0
Very low	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	2	5.0	1	2.5	3	1.5
Total	40	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	200	100.0

On the basis of Table 1.1 the researchers have prepared an Exhibit titled 1.2 reflecting the Pester Power Level of children as per their age for the select product category.

Exhibit 1.2 Showing Level of Pester Power

<i>Age of children</i>	<i>Level of Pester Power</i>
8 years	Above Average
9 years	Average
10 years	Below Average
11 years	Below Average
12 years	Low

Interpretation: With reference to table 1.1 & Exhibit 1.2 the pester power level can be ascertained as per the age. The eight(8) year-ten(10) year olds generally doesn't possess much knowhow on the products advertised. However if the pester power level calculated is observed it can be interpreted as a strong potential for pestering. The Eight(8) years, Nine (9) years and Ten(10) year olds depict an Above Average level, Average and Below Average Pester power level respectively. This can be thus interpreted as children are attracted towards the advertisements designed considering them. Also, they have the potential to pester their parents for such products. A family purchase decision can be expected from such level of pestering.

The eleven (11) year and twelve (12) year olds however is more rational than the eight (8)-ten (10) year olds. Therefore, the pestering power ranges from Below Average to Low level. This can be interpreted as they don't find a need of to pester until they recognises a necessity behind.

To fulfil the 2nd objective, the researchers have used Factor Analysis for analysing the data collected from the respondents.

1. **'Emotional Cut-off':** This factor refers to the strength of emotions in a family. If there is no emotional cut-off, pester power will be shaped effectively.

Table 1.3 showing Component Matrix for Emotional Cut-Off

	Component	
	1	2
Concern		.789
Cognition	-.910	
Hesitancy		.642
Absence of Care	.955	
Affection	.931	
Refusal		-.885

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Interpretation: Table 1.3 shows the correlations between the sub factors of Emotional Cut-Off. The highest Factor Loading here is in the 4th Variable named 'Lack of Care' i.e. .955. The first Component shows the association of Cognition, Absence of Care and Affection. The loadings are -.910, .955 and .931. The interpretations are: children's say on the existence of cognition regarding the products they nag for. Secondly they experience the absence of care from their parents' end. However, they share about the affection they hold for their parents while justifying their pestering habits for the select product categories.

The second Factor reflects the close association of the variables viz. Concern, Hesitancy and Refusal. The loadings of these three variables are 0.789, 0.642 and -.855. These was interpreted as –Firstly children firmly reveals about the concern they have for their parents, hence they nag for such products which they feel will be beneficial for their parents. Secondly, they also witness the hesitation of their parents in going by the children picked choices for the said product categories. The last score reveals that parents' never display a refusing attitude towards their children, despite of their nagging process.

As per the children responses, presence of Hesitancy and Absence of Care marks the existence of Emotional Cut-Off in the families to a small extent.

Table 1.4 Showing Component Matrix for Sibling Position

	Component	
	1	2
Affection	.842	
Preference	-.842	
Shared Cognition	.879	
Prejudice		.989

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Interpretation: Table 1.4 shows the correlations between the variables and the component. The highest Factor Loading here is in the 4th Variable placed under 2nd Component i.e. 'Prejudice' with a score of .989.

The 1st Component reveals the association of variables viz. Affection, Preference and Shared cognition. The loadings are .842, -.842 and .879 which was interpreted as – The first score speaks about child and his/her siblings' affection for their parents as they nag for products. They also state that their product choices are never preferred by their parents. This was taken up from the 2nd score. Lastly, the loading for Shared Cognition brought in the picture of children's belief of sharing knowledge on products after watching an advertisement.

The variable listed in the second component is Prejudice. The positive and highest factor loading score of this variable can be interpreted as the existence of Prejudice in families. Prejudice is witnessed when the parents like to prefer the choices of one child, ignoring the other.

Table 1.5 Showing Component Matrix for Nuclear Family Emotional Process

	Component		
	1	2	3
Choice		.856	
Concern		.700	
Understanding			.844
Family Time	.633		
Fellowship	-.870		
Desertion	.785		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Interpretation: Table 1.5 shows the correlations between the variables listed under **Nuclear Family Emotional Process**. The highest Factor Loading here is in the 1st Variable placed under 2nd Component i.e. 'Choice' with a score of .856.

In the 1st Component shows the association of variables like- Family Time, Fellowship and Desertion. The loadings are .633, -.870 and .785. The interpretations can be lined up as-As per the first score, children crave for family time hence they are attracted towards tourism advertisements and also they nag for going to the places advertised. Secondly, the negative loading can be explained as children's unwillingness for togetherness. Also, the children expresses their feelings of desertion after pestering for an of the products. This is revealed by the third score.

In the 3rd component, the listed variable is 'Level of Understanding'. The factor loading of this variable is .844. This can be interpreted as the existence of required level of Understanding among the family members is pertinent.

The individual scores of the sub-factors depict a good nuclear Family Emotional Process.

DISCUSSION:

The study forwards a distinct picture on Family Dynamics of modern families. The close associations of the sub-factors grouped under each of the prime factors chosen for studying the family dynamics lay out a specific conclusion. The modern families are experiencing an Emotional Cut-Off to a small extent which lowers the potential to make the pester power effective. Further, the sibling position of the respondents is also good which speak about the coordination between two kids and their synchronization while pestering for a product. This can be treated as a well performed factor which contributes in the shaping of effective pester power. The nuclear family process too shares about its good working in modern families. This can also be interpreted as a firm base for the shaping and functioning of effective pester power. After the study of the family dynamics, the level of pester power was framed for the individual age groups of children for the select children advertisements .The pester power ranges from Above Average to Low. The level of pester power varies with age as per the data.

CONCLUSION

Advertisers of the contemporary era will have to consider the Family Dynamics in order to build the right level of pester power. Children advertisements of product categories like Automobiles, Electronics and Tourism have rightly used different tactics to attract children. However, the purchase action still rests in the hands of their parents. If pester power doesn't shape up in an effective way the advertisers strategies and tactics can never earn returns. Also, the study reveals about the existing state of family dynamics in modern families and the level of pester power as per age for the select categories of products. Thus, because of the necessity of a child's background the advertisers should make an effort to know the family dynamics so as to determine the effect of such advertisements. The interrelationship between family dynamics and pester power should be duly recognised and utilised.

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