Impact of Influencing Strategy Across Product Categories in Family Decision Making

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Abstract

Understanding decision - making within families has gained a lot of interest in behavioral studies. The involvement of various participants in family decision-making environment has been a focus for researchers to know their degree of influence in family decision making. Children are emerging as an important entity in the modern family structure capable of taking buying decisions or influencing it. The role children play in family as deciders and the strategies they adopt to persuade family members is vital to focus and determine the marketing strategies companies could adopt to influence them. In the context of marketing, children socialize to become consumers and their evolution as customers can be captured very well by analyzing the interplay of socialization process and the respective agents like parents, friends, etc. that influence their attitudes and market related behavior. This paper focused on Indian children and their purchase behavior with respect to the influencing strategies they adopted to convince parents in family shopping behaviour. The paper found that children used different influencing strategies across different product categories.

Keywords : children, consumer behaviour, influencing strategies, socialization agents

A dynamic shift in purchase decisions within families has been an important topic of research for marketers and consumer researchers for a long time. In consumer behavior studies, the members within a family change the perspective of family consumption practices by acting as independent units of decision makers who shape and influence each other's opinions and attitudes. According to Kumar and Sethi (2005), various cultures around the world have been shaping Indian culture over the years. In India, there is a strong inclination towards patriarchal culture, which demonstrates the decision-making authority and influence exercised by the patriarch (male or female). The consumer culture has experienced an assimilation of various cultures in India due to globalization (Gupta, 2011). In behavioural studies, the socialization process and its agents impact consumer knowledge to varying degrees and influence their product/brand choices. Emergence of youth segment as a powerful purchase unit backed by smart markets' skill set (market knowledge, familiarity in modern media and technology, adequate purchasing power) leads to purchase decision making. The growing influence of children as a key decision - making unit cannot be ignored anymore. Marketers regard children as primary,

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secondary, and future market for their offerings. Various influencing tactics children employ to convince family in purchase decisions must be understood to find out the strategies marketers must design and implement in their businesses.

Literature Review

(1) Children as Consumers : India in recent years has witnessed a change in focus by marketers and consumer researchers towards children, which are perceived to be an increasingly significant link in the family purchase decision - making process. One of the reasons for this changing perception is the population explosion in the world with young consumer segments taking center-stage in all activities in life. Kline (1995) pointed out that children have become highly influential because of the status they enjoy in the family purchase atmosphere. The ever - changing role of children from passive perceivers to active participants in family shopping decisions, techno-friendly behavior, freedom in financial decisions, and all types of purchase activities has garnered a lot of interest across researcher communities (Bush & Martin 2000 ; Su, 2011 ; Zollo, 1995).

(2) Socialization Process and Agents of Socialization : Socialization shapes consumer knowledge to varying degrees and influences their purchase decisions. Piaget's theory of intellectual development (1970) has been instrumental in various research studies on socialization and its impact on consumer behavior. Many researchers have concluded that children's social behavior and social competence is the outcome of the socialization process. Children acquire consumer related skills through the socialization process. Ekstrom (2007) explained socialization as a subtle process adopted by parents to teach consumption - related skills to children by involving them in family purchase activities. Establishing Piaget's theory of intellectual development (1970), John (1999) developed three socialization developmental stages like perceptual stage (3–7 years), analytical stage (7–11 years), and reflective stage (11–16 years) that explain consumption orientation skills children learn as they grow and mature into responsible and sensible consumers. Tripathi and Sengupta (2011) explored the roles of socialization agents like family, peers, and media and how these affected children's consumption behavior. Co-shopping as a favorite joint shopping activity was initiated by parents for teaching marketing to children. Moschis (1987) pointed out that no other agent of consumer socialization has received more attention than the mass media. Television and the Internet exert tremendous influence on children's product and brand knowledge & choices (Montgomery, 2000).

(3) Children as Influencers : Children are considered to play a very strong role as influencers in the decision-making process within families (Isler, Popper, & Ward 1987; Labrecque & Ricard, 2001). The increasing role they exhibit in family buying decisions and various influence mechanisms they use to sway parent's purchase decisions is an area which can be explored to understand children's influence strategies. Various research studies acknowledged that *c*hildren demonstrate various levels of influence which have been studied for all product categories (Almedia, 2012 ; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008 ; Shoham & Dalakas, 2003). According to Sharma and Sonwaney (2015), various family communication types adopted by families influence children's buying behavior. Sibling coalitions were also considered an effective influencing tactic used by children to extract a positive response from parents, which showcases an environment of caring, sharing, and grouping activity (Kerrane, Hogg, & Bettany, 2012 ; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Children play a vital role in decisions regarding food category and influence family's product/brand choices in family buying situations (Sivathanu, 2017).Often, it is found that the influencing strategies used by children are creative owing to their knowledge about products and markets (Ebster, Wagner, & Neumueller, 2009 ; John, 1999 ; Othman, Boo, & Wan Rusni, 2013). Isler et al. (1987) explored influence strategies in terms of children's purchase request or direct strategy like, by just asking, bargaining ;

demanding strategy like pleading ; or simply putting the product in the shopping basket, and concluded that out of all direct strategies used, "just asking" was the most - used request strategy. The emergence of children as influencers has presented a great challenge to researchers and academicians to understand complex buying behaviour and its impact on markets.

Research Methodology

The research aims to study the process of decision making in families and the subsequent role of children in each of the purchase activities. The study is carried out in the Indian context. Some major towns in Eastern India were taken for the study. Based on the analysis of past research studies undertaken in the area of children's purchase behavior, children and parents were identified as the focus groups with support and suggestion by experts. The questionnaire developed was broadly divided into two sections – one for children and the other for parents – as it is important to capture both children's and parents' perceptions. Since consumer behavior is highly dynamic and unpredictable, and the degree of influence exerted by children within households varies considerably, therefore, the constructs were selected carefully.

The questionnaire was developed by taking into consideration factors like demographic variables – age, gender, and number of siblings. Factors like shopping habits, socialization agents, influencing strategies, and buying behavior processes were explored while considering purchasing different product categories. A pilot study was carried out to know the reliability of the questionnaire and the same was found to be satisfactory. The data for the study were collected from seven major towns of Eastern India namely, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Jamshedpur, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Bondamunda, and Rajgangpur. Mainly, random sampling and cluster sampling is used for the study. A total of 780 responses were collected. Initial scrutiny found 711 of them to be valid ; 69 responses were rejected due to incomplete information. The data analysis is carried out using MS Excel 2010 and SPSS version 20.0. The brief profile of the respondents is depicted in Table 1. The time period of the study was from 2015 – 2018.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents (*N* = 711)

Category	*N*(Frequency)	(%)
	Child	
Age Group		
8-10	133	18.71
11- 13	257	36.15
14-16	321	45.15
Class		
3-5	149	20.96
6-8	289	40.65
9-12	273	38.40
Gender		
Male	319	44.87
Female	392	55.13
Birth Order		
Youngest	317	44.59
Eldest	298	41.91
Middle One	96	13.50
Number of Siblings		
Single Child	406	57.10
With Siblings	305	42.90

Analysis and Results

(1) Identification of Children's Influencing Strategy : Factor analysis is done to examine the use of influencing strategies among children for various product categories like – groceries, educational support products, and medium and high range products. A list of 15 statements as shown in Table 2 was designed on a 5– point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The respondents were asked to specify the level of agreement on each of the dimensions mentioned. The influencing strategies are as mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2. Statements for Consumer Influencing Strategies for Each Product Category

| V	Statements
1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.
2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.
3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.
4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.
5	I inform my parents of the fact that my other friends have "it."
6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.
7	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.
8	I nag them until they agree.
9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.
10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.
11	I explain the reason and insist for my choice.
12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.
13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.
14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.
15	I explain that the brand is famous.

(i) Groceries/Personal Care Products/School Supplies : Factor analysis is conducted for identifying the influencing strategy for groceries.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics and KMO Value (Groceries and Others)

No. of Items	15
Cronbach's Alpha	0.908
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.926
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	3935.003
Degrees of freedom	105
Sig.	0.000

Table 3 shows the value of KMO, which is 0.926 ; hence, it can be concluded that the matrix did not suffer from multicollinearity or singularity. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity shows that it is highly significant (sig. = 0.000), which indicates that the factor analysis is correct and suitable for testing multidimensionality (Othman & Owen, 2001). Therefore, the statistical tests show that the dimensions of instruments are likely to factor well and the questionnaire is multidimensional.

The variance explained in Table 4 shows that there are two factors contributing to the total of 48.986% of variance explained. Factor 1 explains the highest (41.757%) variance and Factor 2 explains the least (7.229%) variance. The scree plot drawn and shown in Figure 1 validates the existence of the two factors.

Figure 1. Scree Plot of the Components Extracted for Groceries
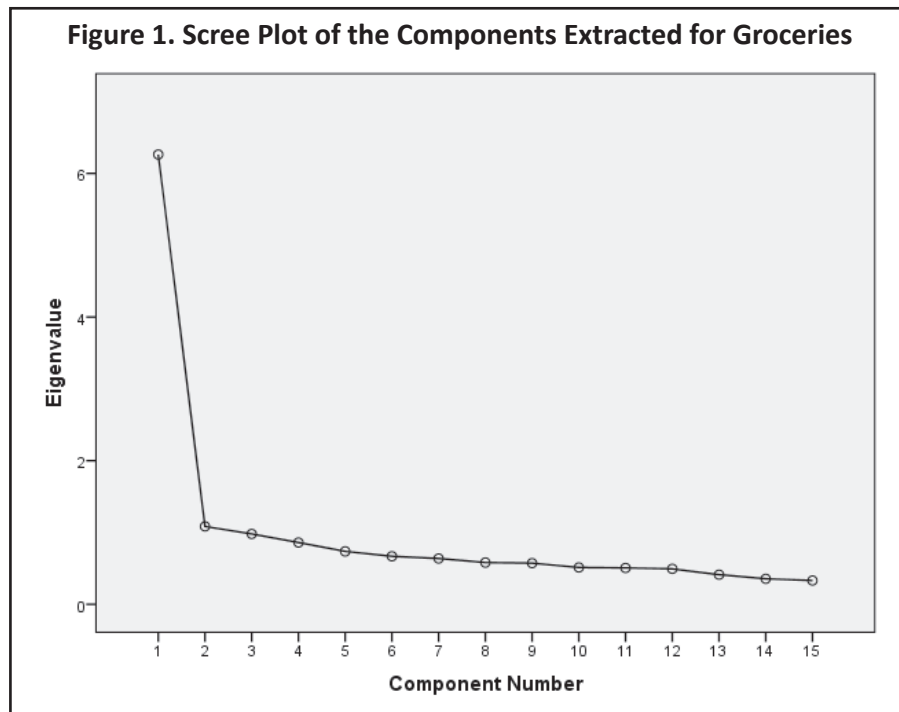
The two factors extracted for the study, known as the influencing agents, are shown in Table 4. The variables whose factor loading is more than 0.5 are considered for factor analysis. During the analysis, one variable, that is, *V11* is dropped from further analysis due to lack of loading.

Table 4. Factor Loadings of the Influencing Strategy for Groceries

Var No.	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	% Variance Explained
	Factor 1 : Rational Negotiation			
V5	I inform my parents of the fact that my other friends have "it."	0.522	0.864	41.757
V6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.	0.610		
V8	I nag them until they agree.	0.685		
V9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.	0.560		
V10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.	0.555		
V12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.	0.715		
V13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.	0.602		
V14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.	0.745		
V15	I explain that the brand is famous.	0.665		
	Factor 2 : Emotive Persuasion			
V1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.	0.822	0.773	7.229
V2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.	0.714		
V3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.	0.627		
V4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.	0.550		
V7	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.	0.508		

The factor analysis results in identifying two influencing strategies namely, Rational Negotiation and Emotive Persuasion used by children for purchase decision of groceries. The strategies are explained in detail as follows:

✣ **Rational Negotiation :** It can be defined as the influencing strategy adopted by the child to persuade the decision maker by adopting a negotiating approach (Marshall, 2014). This strategy employs use of factual evidence, bargaining, expressing anger, and other tactics to drive the parents to purchase.

✣ **Emotive Persuasion :** This influencing strategy is one of the most frequent types of influencing tactics used by children. This strategy can be defined as techniques which take the form of begging, persistently requesting, and expressing of opinions (Palan & Wilkes, 1997).

(ii) Educational Support Products : The factor analysis is conducted for identifying the influencing strategy for educational support products.

Table 5. Reliability Statistics and KMO Test Value (Educational Support Products)

No. of Items	15
Cronbach's Alpha	0.891
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.914
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	3772.875
Df	105
Sig.	0.000

Table 5 shows the value of KMO as 0.914, which is acceptable. The results of Bartlett's test of sphericity show that it is highly significant (sig. = 0.000), which indicates that the factor analysis is correct and suitable for testing multidimensionality (Othman & Owen, 2001). Therefore, the statistical tests show that the dimensions of instruments are likely to factor well and the questionnaire is multidimensional.

Figure 2. Scree Plot of the Components Extracted for Educational Support Products
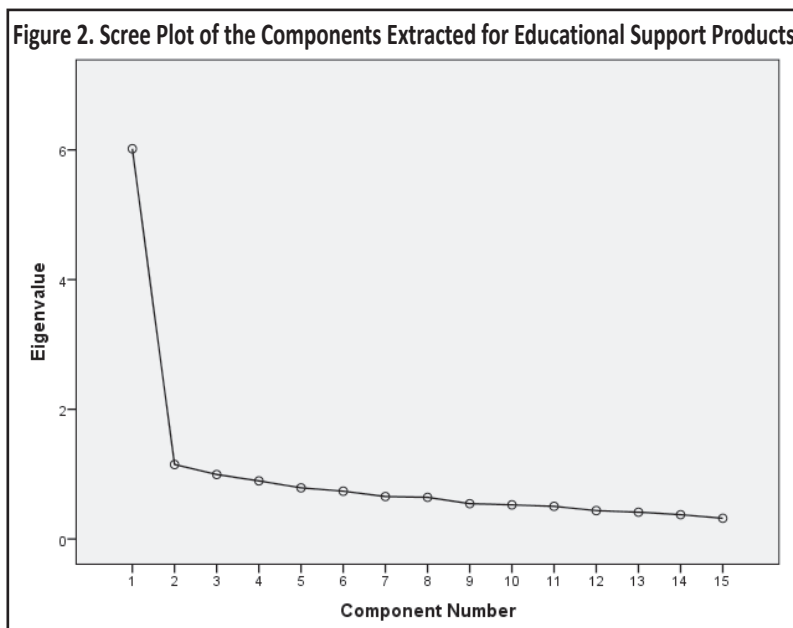
The variance explained (Table 6) shows there are two factors contributing to a total of 47.776% of the variance explained. Factor 1 explains the highest variance (40.117%) and Factor 2 explains the least (7.659%) variance. The scree plot drawn and shown in Figure 2 validates the existence of two factors.

The two factors extracted for the study, known as the influencing agents, are shown in Table 6. During the analysis, one variable, that is, *V11* was dropped from further analysis due to lack of loading.

Table 6. Factor Loadings of the Influencing Strategy for Educational Support Products

Var No.	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	% Variance Explained
	Factor 1 : Emotive Negotiation			
V7	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.	0.541	0.852	40.117
V8	I nag them until they agree.	0.558		
V9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.	0.549		
V10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.	0.601		
V12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.	0.672		
V13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.	0.717		
V14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.	0.749		
V15	I explain that the brand is famous.	0.705		
	Factor 2 : Rational Persuasion			
V1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.	0.773	0.767	7.659
V2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.	0.715		
V3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.	0.630		
V4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.	0.500		
V5	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.	0.500		
V6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.	0.500		

The factor analysis results in identifying two influencing strategies namely, Emotive Negotiation and Rational Persuasion used by children for purchase decision of educational support products. The strategies are explained in detail as follows :

✋ **Emotive Negotiation :** This type of strategy employs use of anger, love, and affection (Lee & Collins, 2000). The child may become especially affectionate to the decision maker to get his/her own way out and also give judgmental reasons to persuade the family member in family purchase situations.

✋ **Rational Persuasion :** It can be defined as an influencing strategy adopted by an individual by using logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade the decision maker that purchase proposal or request is viable and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives (Yukl & Falbe, 1990) in purchase decisions.

(iii) Medium Products and Personal Wear : The factor analysis is conducted for identifying the influencing strategy for medium products and personal wear products.

Table 7 shows the value of KMO (0.915), which is acceptable. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity shows that it is highly significant (sig. = 0.000), which indicates that the factor analysis is correct and suitable for testing multidimensionality (Othman & Owen, 2001).

Table 8 shows that there are two factors contributing to a total of 56.182% of the variance explained. Factor 1

Table 7. Reliability Statistics and KMO Test Value (Medium and Personal Wear Products)

No. of Items	15
Cronbach's Alpha	0.895
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.915
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	3989.273
Df	105
Sig.	0.000

Figure 3. Scree Plot of the Components Extracted for Medium and Personal Wear Products
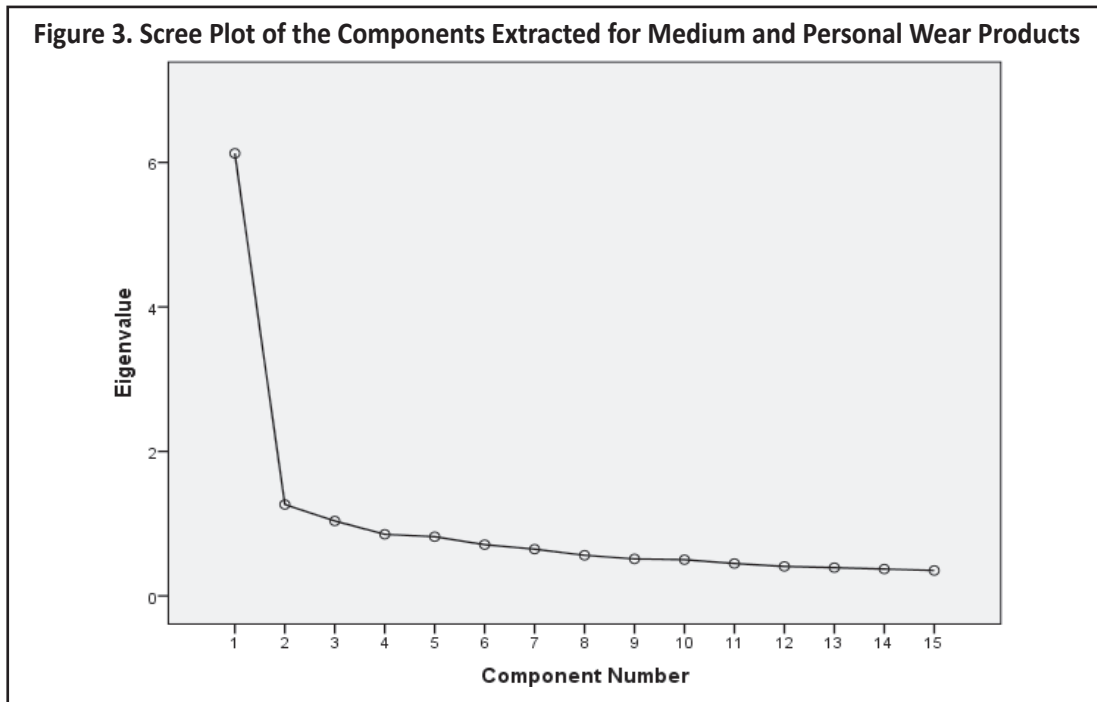
explains the highest variance of 40.834% and Factor 2 explains the least (6.915%) variance. The scree plot is drawn and shown in Figure 3, which validates the existence of two factors.

The two factors extracted for the study, known as the influencing agents, are shown in Table 8. During the analysis, two variables, that is, *V5* and *V7* were dropped from further analysis due to the lack of loading. The factor analysis results in identifying three influencing strategies namely, Rational Persuasion, Emotive Negotiation, and

Table 8. Factor Loadings of the Influencing Strategy for Medium and Personal Wear Products

Var No.	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	% Variance Explained
	Factor 1 : Rational Persuasion			
V1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.	0.645	**0.796**	**40.834**
V2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.	0.726		
V3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.	0.733		
V4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.	0.664		
V6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.	0.589		

	Factor 2 : Emotive Negotiation			
V8	I nag them until they agree.	0.746	**0.788**	**8.433**
V9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.	0.692		
V12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.	0.691		
V14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.	0.695		
	Factor 3 : Direct Request			
V10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.	0.609	**0.722**	**6.915**
V11	I explain the reason and insist for my choice.	0.749		
V13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.	0.572		
V15	I explain that the brand is famous.	0.615		

Direct Request used by children for purchase decision of personal wear products. The strategies are explained in detail as follows :

✤ **Rational Persuasion :** It is an influencing strategy which uses factual evidence and logical arguments as a mean to influence the decision maker (Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

✤ **Emotive Negotiation :** This type of strategy employs tactics like deal making, making offers, showing love and affection, and reasoning (Cowan & Kelly, 1988 ; Lee & Collins, 2000 ; Lawlor & Prothero, 2011 ; Palan & Wilkes, 1997). Children strike deals and negotiate to take the burden off the decision maker to get their way out and also give judgmental reasons to persuade him/her.

✤ **Direct Request :** In this type of influencing strategy, children express their desire directly to the decision maker by providing adequate reasoning to influence his/her's purchase choice (Atkin, 1978 ; Cowan & Kelly, 1988).

(iv) High Range Products : The factor analysis was conducted for identifying the influencing strategy for high range products.

Table 9 shows the value of KMO, which is 0.930; hence, it is acceptable. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity shows that it is highly significant (sig. = 0.000), which indicates that the factor analysis is correct and suitable for testing multidimensionality.

Table 10 shows there are two factors contributing to a total of 55.833% of variance explained. Factor 1 explains the highest variance (47.050%) and Factor 2 explains the least (8.784%) variance. The scree plot drawn and shown

Table 9. Reliability Statistics and KMO Test Value (High Range Products)

No. of Items	15
Cronbach's Alpha	0.919
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	5186.929
Degrees of freedom	105
Sig.	0.000

Figure 4. Scree Plot of the Components Extracted for High Range Products
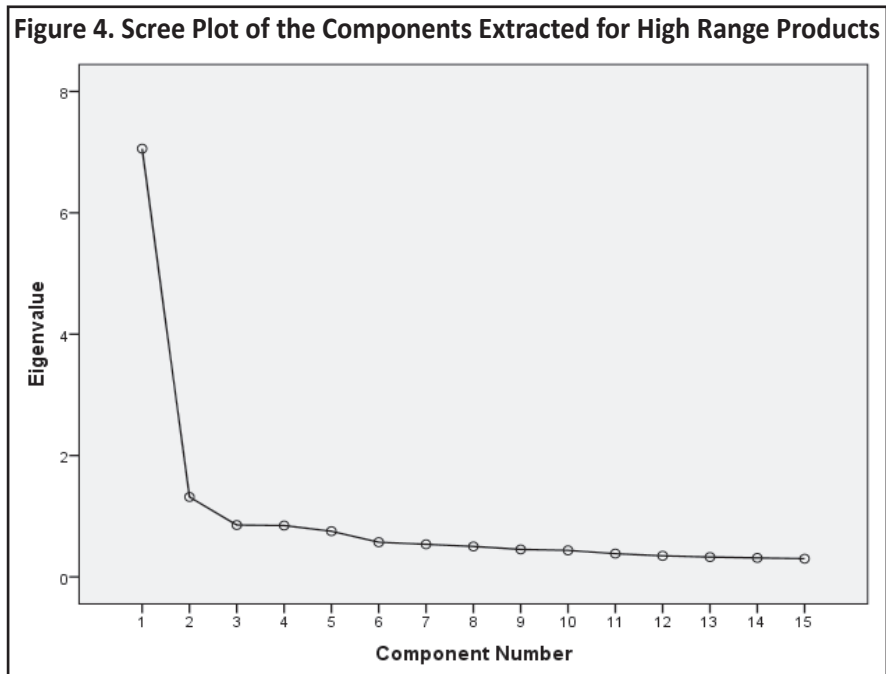
in Figure 4 validates the existence of two factors.

The two factors extracted for the study, known as the influencing strategy, are shown in Table 10. The variables whose factor loading is more than 0.5 are considered for factor analysis. During the analysis, no variable is dropped from the analysis.

The factor analysis results in identifying two influencing strategies namely, Emotive Negotiation and Rational

Table 10. Factor Loadings of the Influencing Strategy for High Range products

Var No.	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	% Variance Explained
	Factor 1 : Emotive Negotiation			
V1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.	0.685	**0.884**	**47.050**
V2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.	0.738		
V3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.	0.724		
V4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.	0.710		
V7	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.	0.616		
V8	I nag them until they agree.	0.707		
V9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.	0.690		
V12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.	0.608		
	Factor 2 : Rational Pestering			
V5	I inform my parents the fact that my other friends have "it."	0.600	**0.821**	**8.784**
V6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.	0.628		
V10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.	0.728		
V11	I explain the reason and insist for my choice.	0.649		
V13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.	0.685		
V14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.	0.741		
V15	I explain that the brand is famous.	0.769		

Pestering used by children for purchase decision of high range products. The strategies are explained in detail as follows :

✤ **Emotive Negotiation:** This type of strategy employs offers to strike a deal, alternative propositions, being affectionate, and doing chores (Palan & Wilkes, 1997 ; Lee & Collins, 2000 ; Marquis, 2004). The child bargains emotionally to the decision maker to get his/her own way in product/brand preference.

✤ **Rational Pestering :** In this strategy, children persistently reason with the decision makers for their final product choice (Cowan & Kelly, 1988 ; Lawlor & Prothero, 2011).

(2) Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influencing Strategies for Various Product Categories : In this section, the mean and standard deviation are calculated for the derived factors and the list of statements proposed by the literature for factor analysis. Tables 11 and 12 show the same.

(i) List of Derived Factors : The factor analysis, as discussed in the previous section, results in six influencing strategies namely, Rational Negotiation, Emotive Persuasion, Emotive Negotiation, Rational Persuasion, Rational Pestering, and Direct Request for various product categories namely, groceries, educational support products, medium products and personal wear products, and high range products. The ranking using the mean scores and standard deviation is shown in Table 11 and the subsequent Figure 5 shows the graphical representation of mean and standard deviation of influencing strategy.

Table 11. Mean and Standard Deviation of Influencing Strategy for Product Categories

Product Categories	Influencing Strategies	Mean	Standard Deviation
Groceries/ Personal Care Products/ School Products	Rational Negotiation	3.254258	1.112556
	Emotive Persuasion	3.199719	1.067792
Educational Support/Assistance Products	Emotive Negotiation	3.202532	1.07044
	Rational Persuasion	3.228551	1.126973
Medium Products and Personal Wear Products	Rational Persuasion	3.191052	1.090253
	Emotive Negotiation	3.052743	1.182307
	Direct Request	3.38045	1.066279
High Range Products	Emotive Negotiation	2.894796	1.180008
	Rational Pestering	3.201527	1.162869

Figure 5. Graphical Representation of Mean and Standard Deviation of Influencing Strategy
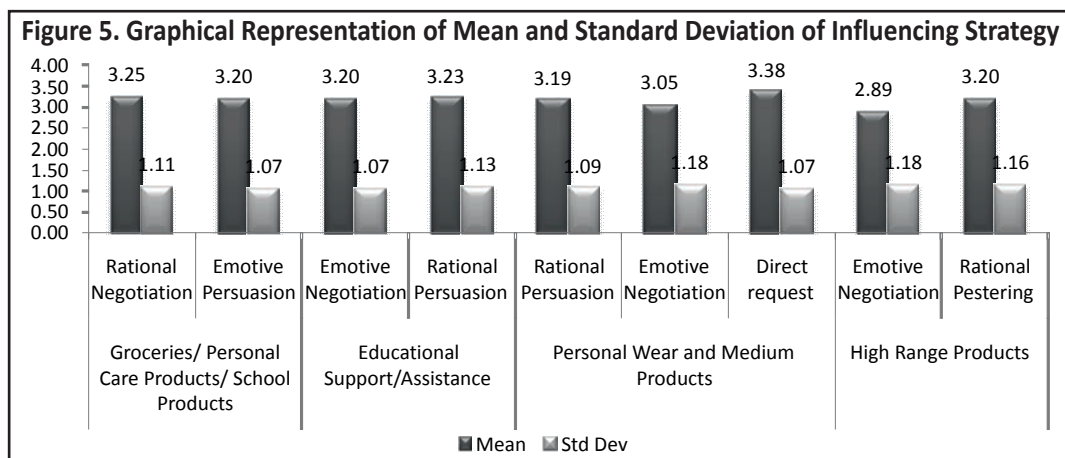
Table 12. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influencing Strategy for Product Categories

Var No.	Statements	Groceries		Ed. Support		Medium Products		High Range Products	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	I simply ask my parents to agree with me.	3.05	1.041	3.16	1.061	3.21	1.081	2.77	1.125
2	I joke with my parents trying to get my way.	3.04	1.061	2.99	1.071	3.08	1.104	2.68	1.113
3	I plead or beg them to agree with me.	3.2	1.088	3.17	1.064	3.17	1.099	2.56	1.112
4	I tell my parents that I will do special things if they agree with me.	3.31	1.071	3.21	1.106	3.21	1.086	2.86	1.104
5	I inform my parents of the fact that my other friends have "it."	3.42	1.1	3.35	1.027	3.32	1.107	3.08	1.168
6	I reason with my parents, trying to argue my request logically.	3.23	1.089	3.34	1.053	3.29	1.071	3.08	1.139
7	I become especially affectionate to my mom in hopes to get my way.	3.41	1.031	3.41	1.071	3.35	1.075	3.07	1.180
8	I nag them until they agree.	3.01	1.144	3.02	1.129	2.99	1.168	2.79	1.221
9	I try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.	3.21	1.04	3.29	1.048	3.16	1.097	3.02	1.182
10	I repeatedly remind them of what I want.	3.38	0.996	3.46	.979	3.43	1.055	3.20	1.149
11	I explain the reason and insist for my choice.	3.59	0.968	3.50	.981	3.44	1.017	3.32	1.072
12	I express anger trying to get their agreement.	2.97	1.134	2.98	1.190	2.97	1.219	2.74	1.179
13	I appeal to my mother's love and affection for me.	3.46	1.057	3.27	1.124	3.30	1.063	3.23	1.126
14	I tell that a famous celebrity is using the product.	3.14	1.197	3.08	1.215	3.09	1.234	3.14	1.261
15	I explain that the brand is famous.	3.47	1.118	3.31	1.143	3.35	1.123	3.38	1.186

(ii) List of Influencing Strategies : Table 12 shows the mean and standard deviation of 15 statements which have been derived through extensive literature survey for various product categories, that is, groceries, educational support products, medium products, and high range products. Table 12 shows that in case of all the four product categories, the children agreed with mostly all the influencing variables mentioned.

In case of groceries, the highest mean score is 3.59, which proposes that children *strongly agreed* with the statement, 'I explain the reason and insist for my choice.' The children explaining that the brand is famous has the next highest mean score of 3.47. The least mean score is 2.97, which reveals that children were *neutral* with the statement, 'I express anger trying to get their agreement.'

For educational support products, the highest mean score is 3.50. Children *agreed* that they would explain the reason and insist for their choice. The next highest mean score is 3.46 for item number 10. Children, therefore, repeatedly reminded their parents about the products to convince them. The least mean score is 2.99, which states that children were *neutral* with the fact that they used jokes with parents to get their own way.

The highest mean score for medium products is 3.44 for item number 11. Children *agreed* that they explained the reasons and insisted for the choices. Children repeatedly reminded their parents of what they wanted in case of medium products, and thus, this has the next highest mean score of 3.43. Children thus *agreed* with the statement. The least score is 2.97 for the statement, 'I express anger trying to get their agreement,' which justifies their *neutrality* with the statement.

In case of high range products, children either bore *agreeability or neutrality* of opinion for the statements. The highest score is 3.38, in which children stated that the 'brand is famous' to influence parents for purchase of high range products. The least mean score is 2.56, which demonstrates their *neutrality* with the statement, 'I plead or beg them to agree with me.'

Research Findings

To study the influencing strategy, four product categories were considered namely, groceries/ personal care products/ school supplies, educational support/ assistance, personal wear/ medium products, and high range products. The detailed findings for each product category are further explained. The factor analysis shows that in case of grocery/ personal care/ school supplies, Rational Negotiation (RN) and Emotive Persuasion (EP) are the two influencing strategies children used to persuade parents. In case of educational support products/assistance, Emotive Negotiation (EN) and Rational Persuasion (RP) are the strategies children chose to convince their parents. For medium products/ personal wear products, children used Rational Persuasion (RP), Emotive Negotiation (EN), and Direct Request (DR) as influence strategies ; whereas, in case of high range products, Emotive Negotiation (EN) and Rational Pestering (RPTG) are the influencing strategies children employed to persuade parental decisions in family buying behavior.

Conclusion

The ever - changing family dynamics offer a lot of opportunities for marketers to understand and explore decision making environments within families, factors influencing decision making behaviour, and most importantly, the influencers and final decision makers. Recent times have seen changing role of children — they are becoming more and more assertive in decision making and are creating innovative buying patterns within families. Socialization of children has a great impact on their social interactions which, in turn, evolves their buying roles as "influencers" in purchase decision making. The influencing strategies used by children are the outcome of their continuous efforts from a young age, which helps them to fine-tune their strategies effectively. India, with traditional roots and modern socio - cultural prospects, poses a lot of challenges to marketers to serve such diverse, dynamic, and young markets, which dictate and dominate the market.

Managerial Implications

Modern socio-cultural outlook, globalization, and technological revolution have paved the way for an egalitarian decision - making environment. Emergence of new demographics give rise to new purchase behavior with 'children' as major influencers in household purchase activities. In today's corporate environment, it is of great interest for marketers and advertisers to understand the influence exerted by children in the family decision-making process. This understanding will give a good foundation for marketing strategy formulation, keeping children at the center stage. This study can be of great help to managers as it gives a direction towards which type of influencing strategy will work better for different product categories. The strategy which may work for low involved products may not work effectively for high range products.

Limitations of the Study

The number of socialization agents were limited to broadly eight categories, including the Internet, television, friend's involvement, parent's involvement, friend's influence, parent's influence, shopping experience, and media access. It does not investigate the influence of other socialization agents, such as other family members like mother, grandfather, grandmother, relatives, older siblings, peer groups (except friends), celebrities, and schools of young children. The research sample focused on young children of age ranging from 8 – 16 years ; neither young children of ages under 8 years old nor adolescents of ages above 16 years old were investigated. The study is restricted to the children from Eastern India. It does not comprise of children from other parts of the country.

Hence, the research results can be generalized to the young children of other cities, but may not represent the villages and the tribal areas of India. The specific demographic stratum from which the sample was drawn is another limitation concerning the study. A study across more diverse demographic segments would be more desirable. The product categories were limited to groceries, medium products, high range products, and so on. A wider representation would be helpful in future studies.

Scope for Further Research

The study was carried out in the Eastern part of the country, but it will be interesting to see the results for the entire country. A comparison among different parts of the country will add more depth to the social and cultural impact on family buying behaviour as there is a huge cultural difference between South India, North India, Western part of the country, and Eastern part of the country. The study also shows family socialization, group socialization, and media socialization as important elements in family purchase situations and their impact and influence on children as decision making units, but from a managerial point of view, it will be very useful to know which socialization agent will dominate and shape children's consumer characteristics in future buying situations. Future studies may be carried out to have better insight into children's spending behavior and shopping habits, which impacts their rise as the most important consumer market.

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