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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON TEENAGERS' INFLUENCE ON THEIR PARENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF IPOD

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Abstract

The focus of this research is influence of teenagers in the purchase of products used by teenagers and the product-related factors that affect their relative influence in those decisions.

The research has been carried out under two headings:

- Analysis of influence strategy adopted by teenagers
- Analysis of Product related characteristics

Teenagers are influenced by peers compulsion and proximity, updated information of the product, product price while taking purchase decision of iPod. Also the teenagers are highly energetic and enthusiastic in searching the information while purchasing a product like iPod. They also focus on product quality, image and lifestyle of the product before purchase. The teenagers are well aware the utility of the product and its impact in the society. The teenagers are profoundly employ two type of strategies in the purchase decision process namely emotional and logical approaches. They keenly observe the origin of responses from their product's characteristics and product performance. They are rational on the basis of product related characteristics and also aware of product attributes, product performance while purchasing the product.

Key Words

Influence strategy, Product performance, Information search, emotional or logical approach, Product quality, evaluation process

INTRODUCTION

Researching the teenage group would be a challenge in any country, but particularly so in India. This life stage is characterized by change, and an age when they are most uncertain about identity.

The rapid transition of India to a market economy has increased the choices of products and services available to consumers and corporate in a global economy need to know more about consumer behaviour particularly the teenagers in order to effectively market their products and services. A better understanding of Indian teenager for education and marketing purposes would contribute to meeting the needs of Indian teenagers. Also, with media explosion, suddenly this homogeneous group became vibrant heterogeneous group, with their own distinct set of attitudes values, beliefs and icons. They became influencers, early adopters of brands and were suddenly deemed to be responsible. This group then became the prime target for marketers.

BACK GROUND OF THE RESEARCH

A majority of the studies in the area of teenager influence on decision making have examined the relative influence of husbands, wives, and children on several product categories in terms of decision stages and sub decisions. [Berey and Pollay 1968; Atkin 1978; Nelson 1979; Filiatraut and Ritchie 1980; and Roberts, Wortzel and Berkeley 1981] A few recent studies have focused more on teenagers:

Belch, Belch, and Ceresino 1985; Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom 1989a and 1989b, and on resolving some of the conceptual and methodological problems present in this area of research: Talpade, Beatty, and Talpade 1993a and 1993b; and Talpade and Talpade 1995.

The conclusions reached by studies to date indicate that children's influence varies by the type of purchase decision, as well as by decision stages and sub decisions. Children have a higher influence on purchase decisions affecting them, but their influence is lower on issues involving how much to spend, where to buy, and at the final decision stage. [Szybillo and Sosanie 1977; Nelson 1979; Beatty and Talpade 1994] Their influence on major purchase decisions increases with age. [Szybillo and Sosanie 1977; Filiatraut and Ritchie 1980; Jenkins 1979; and Darley and Lim 1986] and with perceived product importance. [Talpade, Beatty, and Talpade 1993] Children's perceptions of their influence usually do not match their parents' perceptions of their influence, with children seeing their role as more important than parents do. [Talpade, Beatty, and Talpade 1993; Beatty and Talpade 1994]

The focus of this research is parent and child decisions about the purchase of products for use by children and the product-related factors that affect their relative influence in those decisions. Coffman and Lehman (1987)

This study examines consumer behaviour of teenagers from the perspective of "influential role" a concept which includes what Ward (1974) describes as the set of physical and mental activities specially involved in purchase

decisions" also Brim's (1966) broad conception of person's "role" in society and includes a wide variety of consumer related thoughts and actions (skills, knowledge, attitude, predispositions, and behaviour).

In the study done by Kim and Lee (1997) indicated that product categorization to measure children's influence provides high reliability and validity. However, they did not compare children's relative influence in each product category. Kim and Lee (1997) found that children's perceived influence was highest for child-minor products, followed by child-major, major-family, and minor-family products. They concluded that children have greater extent of influence for products for their own use than for family use "however, no such generalization can be made between those decisions involving major and minor items (Kim, Lee et al and Hall 1997 p. 40)." The authors did not report statistics regarding whether the differences were significant, rather they only presented the rank orderings. Nevertheless, Kim and associates' typology is more systematic than prior examinations of product-type effects. They have also indicated that future research should apply this typology and explicitly test the relationship between product-type and children's relative influence.

The focus of this research is parent and child decisions about the purchase of products for use by children and the

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:

The present study is exploring in nature, attempting to evaluate the factors influencing teenagers in forming purchase decision in respect of iPod. The design of the study concerning the nature of problem and solving techniques within the purview of main objectives specified. The research design also provides a scope for drawing logical conclusions. The study relies mainly on primary data collected through Questionnaires supplemented by personal interview. Teenager's influence in the purchase of consumer durables is the focus of the study. This study discusses the product related characteristics and the strategy adopted by teenagers to influence their parents while taking decision.

Consumer purchase behaviour for durable goods, especially the teenagers' influence in the decision making is more complex. Academics have directed children have greater extent of influence for products for their own use than for family use. This research explicitly tested the relationship between product-type and children's relative influence hence the relevance of this study.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the factors affecting teenager's influence in the purchase of iPod and the strategy adopted by teenagers.
2. To study how for teenager' go for information search and evaluation process.
3. To study product related characteristics and their influence while taking purchase decision

4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

product-related factors that affect their relative influence in those decisions. Coffman and Lehman (1987) provide a useful framework for understanding the differing roles of factors that affect relative influence in joint decision-making. Influence attempts result from a process in which the individual assesses the expected value of influence options available to him or her.

PRODUCT SELECTION

This section deals with briefly the pilot study-Cum- Pre test conducted for finalizing the research design. In the first stage pre-test was conducted for product selection. As classified by Stephen (1979) 10 consumers' durable product items normally used by the teenager were identified by he researcher. A pilot study was conducted among 50 teenagers in different school and colleges in the city of Chennai. Single page questionnaires containing of age, gender, education, number of members in the family, family income and the most preference list of products for purchase by the teenager were designed and the respondents were asked to give their preference. This enable the respondents to determined three products for the present study based on their rankings. A non-parametric chi-square test was administered to find the teenagers deep association with the products.

containing 10 durable items used by the teenagers on their purchase frequency as indicated above.

In this study quota sampling technique was applied and for this purpose Chennai is divided into four areas, as

Table 2

Serial Number	Preferred Consumer durables le	Chi-square value	df	Product value significance
1	Stereo	24.401	2	0.054
2	Ipod	9.989	2	0.004
3	Cycle	5.217	2	0.616
4	Watch	5.5557	2	0.062
5	Two wheeler	33.345	2	0.000
6	Camera	0.272	2	0.965
7	Computer	9.989	2	0.041
8	Cooling glass	4.940	2	0.382
9	Iron box	9.006	2	0.412
10	Calculator	1.281	2	0.442

From the above table it was found the three products namely Stereo, ipod. Two wheeler and Computer are deeply associated with the teenagers. For the purpose of this study only ipod has been taken.

SAMPLE DESIGN

A literature search is first conducted in order to specify the domains of the constraint and to generalize the items. The next step involves the administration of the Questionnaire to

50 teenagers involving, to get the required data through a free flow of the questionnaire. These data are then analyzed with exploratory factor analysis and other reliability assessments to refine the questionnaire. The pilot study also allows a refinement in the factors

North, East, South and West Chennai. Teenagers who were at different educational stages, viz., school, polytechnic, arts and science colleges and engineering colleges were identified. Further, under quota sampling method two higher secondary schools, two polytechnics, two Arts and Science colleges and two professional colleges in each area were identified and data was collected accordingly. Hence, the survey covered, teenagers in the age group of 13-19, studying in schools, polytechnics, first year students of arts and science colleges and professional colleges in Chennai. Students who actually volunteered to participate in this exercise were chosen for the study. After explaining the purpose and content of the tool 50 questionnaires were distributed in each area. Teens are in three different life stages, 9/10 standard, junior college and college going were identified. The survey covers teenagers from 13-19, studying in school, Arts and Science College, Professional Colleges in Chennai Metropolitan city. Out of the 200 questionnaire distributed only 100 questionnaire was found fit for the study.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

Factor analysis is used for most of the statements in the questionnaire to reduce the variables into well-defined factors

Purchase decision making is a dependent variable and product related characteristics, is an independent variable in this study.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the year 2009-2010 many changes have taken place in the environment. As such the dataset collected in 2008, may not be relevant today.

The influences of teenagers are measured on the basis of various factors like product related factors, product evaluation process and Marketing mix of the aforesaid three products only. There are other factors like perception against each member in the family, personality and values that also play a significant role in the influence of teenagers purchase decision. However the study has not considered those variables. The limited number of 100 samples obtained does not generalize the teenagers" population in general.

6. ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE STRATEGY

The factor analysis by the principle component analysis is carried out over 12 variables of Influence strategy aimed at the reduction of the variables into profound explanatory factors. In this factor analysis 2 factors are identified comprising the following variables and they are named as emotional approach and logical approach.

The variables under the emotional approach are:

Factor 1: Emotional approach.

1. I simply ask my parent to agree with me.
2. I tell them that I would do some special things if they agree with me.
3. I made jokes trying to get my way.
4. I pleaded or begged them to agree with me.
8. I made them feel guilty if they do not agree with me.

11. I appealed and asked them to demonstrate their love and affection to me.

And the factors of logical approach are

Factor 2: Logical approach.

6. I convinced my parents trying to argue my request logically.
7. I tell them what I wanted. I just stated my needs.
9. I tried to negotiate something agreeable to both of us.
10. I repeatedly reminded them of what I wanted.
12. I asked for the product in a way that sounded reasonable to them.

Table 3
Percentage of Variance of Influence strategy

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.341	36.179	36.179	3.346	27.884	27.884
2	1.329	11.073	47.252	2.324	19.368	47.252

Table 4
Rotated component matrix Factors

Influencing Strategy statements	Emotional	Logical
I I simply ask my father/mother to agree with me	0.780	
I I tell them I would do some special things if they agree with me	0.743	
I made jokes trying to get my way	0.703	
I pleaded or begged them to agree with me	0.691	
I made them feel guilty if they do not agree with me	0.638	
I appealed and asked them to demonstrate their love and affection to me	0.538	
I indicated the fact that my other friend's have it	0.479	
I convinced them trying to argue my requests logically		0.747
I I tell them what I wanted I just stated my needs		0.713
I tried to negotiate something agreeable to us		0.586
I repeatedly reminded them of what I wanted		0.573
I I asked a product in a way that sounded reasonable to them		0.480

In the above analysis, 12 statements were listed to identify teenagers influence strategy, Factor analysis was then carried out. The total variation explained by the variables of influencing strategy is 47.252 percent. The teenagers are employing two types of strategies to convince their parents when they decided to buy the iPod

1. Logically convincing the parents.
2. Emotionally convincing the parents.

These factors obtained explain 47.252 percent of the total variation of the variables of influencing strategy of

teenagers. In the total variation, the first factor “Emotional Approach” exhibits very high variance of 27.884 percent followed by 19.36 percent variance of the logical approach of teenagers. (Table 4.4)

Therefore, it is inferred that the teenagers use various emotional approach by applying various emotional factors like simply asking, tell their parents that they will do special things, cutting jokes, pleading and begging, make their parents feel guilty appealing their parents to demonstrate their love and affection to them and telling their parents that their friends are having it. The factor loading registered for these statements were 0.780, 0.743, 0.703, 0.691, 0.638, 0.538 and 0.479 respectively. (Table 4.5)

Teenagers also apply “Logical Approach” like try to argue with their parents logically, simply stating their wants and needs, try to negotiate something agreeable of both them, repeatedly reminding their parents and appealing to their parents that sounded reasonable to them. The factor loading registered for these statements are 0.747, 0.713, 0.586, 0.573 and 0.480 respectively (table 4.5)

INFERENCE: It is inferred from the above analysis that teenagers are highly successful in their influencing strategy with the help of emotional approaches than logical approach .It is also inferred that if the product is indispensable to the teenager they also use logical strategy to convince their parents purchase the product. This reflects the understanding of parent’s attachment to their children, in the joint family set up in India.

PRODUCT RELATED CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCE STRATEGY-IPOD

The factors for the product related characteristics evaluated by the teenagers and purchase decision process are achieved by the principle component analysis with Kaiser varimax rotation method on the 12 variables of product related characteristics. Croanbach alpha analysis assed reliability for each factor.

Table 5
Percentage of variance of Product related characteristics

Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
5.050	42.085	42.085	3.253	27.110	27.110
1.367	11.388	53.473	3.164	26.363	53.473

Table 6
Rotated Component Matrix

	Factors
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Product related characteristics	Product performance	Product image
Quality of the product	0.757	
Durability of the product	0.740	
Long term benefits of the product	0.731	
Utility of the product	0.663	
Features of the product	0.654	
Service and warranty of the product	0.628	
Price of the product	0.617	
Popularity of the product		0.799
Colour of the product		0.754
Physical appearance of the product		0.728
Brand name of the product		0.697
Social status of the product		0.680

The 12 variables reduced in to two factors. They are:

FACTOR 1: PRODUCT PERFORMANCE.

The variables present in this factor are

- 1.Utility of the product.
- 2.Quality of the product
- 4.Features of the product.
- 5.Durability of the product.
- 6.Long term benefits of the product.
12. Service and warranty of the product.

FACTOR 2: PRODUCT IMAGE.

The variables present in this factor are

7. Physical appearance of the product.
8. Color of the product.
9. Brand name of the product.
10. Popularity of the product.
11. Social status of the product.

The total variance explained by the variables is 53.473%.

This analysis clearly exhibits 53.473% of the total variation explained by the above 2 factors namely Product Performance, Product Image. These two factors almost have equal variance of the total variations as 27.11% and 26.36% respectively. The factor product performance is having important variable „Quality of the Product” with high factor loading 0.757 followed by „Durability of the product” 0.740, „Long term benefit of the product ” with 0.731 „Utility of the product” with 0.663 , „Feature of the product” 0.654, and finally „service and warranty of the product” with the factor loading 0.628. In the case of the product image the „popularity of the product” has high factor loading 0.799 followed by „color of the product” with 0.754 , „physical appearance of the product” with 0.728 , „Brand name of the product” 0.697 and finally „ social status of the product with 0.680. So it is inferred that both these factors namely Product performance and Product Image are equally popular among the teenagers. Hence teenagers concentrate all the characteristics of the product before

taking the purchase decision. However they also look for high quality products with high features because teenagers are generally develop and see among themselves a social meaning and prestige associated with certain durables with high entertainment product like walkman, confers status and begins to symbolize a good identity and self belonging with their peers.

8.CONCLUSION

Teenagers are highly energetic and enthusiastic in searching the information for iPod focusing on product quality, image and lifestyle of the product before purchase. They are well aware the utility of the product and its impact on the image in the society.

The teenagers profoundly employ two types of strategies in their purchase decision namely emotional and logical approaches. Teenagers are highly successful in their influencing strategy with these two strategies. If the product is indispensable to the teenager they use logical strategy to convince their parents to purchase the product otherwise they use emotional approach.

They also keenly observe the origin of responses from their product's characteristics and product performance.

Product performance and Product Image are equally popular among the teenagers. Hence teenagers concentrate all the characteristics of the product before taking the purchase decision. However they also look for high quality products with high features because teenagers are generally develop and see among themselves a social meaning and prestige associated with those products.

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