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PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF ADOLESCENTS - IMPACT OF VARIABLES

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Abstract:

Consumers are users of goods and services for the production of their wants. They want to know where to buy, when to buy, how much to buy, how to pay, how to recognize and they also compare qualities of products. They are the keystone and play an important part of our economic structure. Production and marketing exist only for consumers. He is the focal point of all economic and social activities. In fact, he is the very basis who supports the society. His interests, therefore, should receive the first priority. As population grows, adolescent consumers become a very attractive market. They are better-off financially in the modern era. They have been the target of the marketers of cosmetics, health care products, fashionable clothing, etc. This young attractive target cannot be taken for granted and hence all efforts are tailored to meet their needs. Identifying this target's needs and directing all marketing efforts at delivering customers value is the motto of most of the companies. Inter-personal and mass media communication play a major role in purchasing. Children have important impact on household decision-making by attempting to influence their parent's acquisition, usage and disposition of products. Effective buying can find ways of reaching the objective regardless of the limitations of our resources. Therefore it is important that adolescents should be brought up in an environment which is stimulating and sufficiently challenging for them to explore their potentialities and build up a satisfying future.

KEY WORDS:

Behavior, Adolescents, Variables, economic structure.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers play a very important role in the economy. They are the largest economic group in any country. All our present day activities are carried on because of consumers only. They are the pillars of the economy. The philosophy of marketing is based on consumers. They are not only the heart of marketing but also the controllers of marketing functions. But in today's marketing system, consumer sovereignty is a myth, due to a variety of problems in the process of production and distribution.

Persistent infringement of consumer rights led them to unite together to defend their interest and as a result unscrupulous business firms become the target of these consumer interest groups. The rise of the consumer groups has been the most remarkable development in the recent history of mankind. This phenomenon of group awakening ushered in a social movement to fight injustice and seek a fair deal in the exchange process. Thus, the organised movement of consumers known as 'Consumerism' emerged as a counter veiling defensive force to safeguard the interest of consumers from the abuses of economically

powerful sellers. Trying to define consumer is really a hard task, because everyone is a consumer. Even a news paper reader is a consumer as he chooses what to read and what not to read.

According to Devadas (2001) consumers are users of goods and services for the production of their wants. They want to know where to buy, when to buy, how much to buy, how to pay, how to recognize and they also compare qualities of products. They are the keystone and play an important part of our economic structure. Production and marketing exist only for consumers. Nair (1999) refers a consumer as one who buys goods and services for his own consumption, and not for sale. He is the sovereign of the market (Nair and Paul, 1999). He may be an individual, a household unit, an organization, or a government agency that uses goods and services. Thus it is apparent that everyone is a consumer whether he/she is young or old, rich or poor, male or female, employed or unemployed.

Based on extensive literature review, Moschis (1986) proposes a number of ways in which family communication imparts the economic socialization of young people. Family is the most important group that shapes a buyer's behavior. The influence of parents would be more when the factors of age, marital status and presence of child in the family can together play a major role in shaping the individual and joint purchase behavior (Gordon and Ronald, 1997).

Influence of parents declines as children get older. Family links adolescents with a wider society and it is through this they learn the values, roles, norms, skills, knowledge and practices that are appropriate to their adult life. These young targets of purchasers rely on more information sources and peer groups become increasingly influential in purchase decisions (Mitra, 1995). They provide potential information as required by the potential buyers (Naik, et al., 1999). Fashion is one of the most influencing factors for adolescents' purchase behavior. It repeats itself and comes a full circle. Adolescents want to look different every time. They change their fashion every time in dressing and in buying accessories, cosmetics, etc.

Children have important impact on household decision-making by attempting to influence their parent's acquisition, usage and disposition of products. The most common stereotype is that children nag their parents until they finally give in. Although children often make these attempts, their success depends on the type of product, characteristics of the parents, age of the child and stage of the decision process. Working parents are more likely to give in because they are more time pressed – Sadhu and Depali (1998).

Nair (1999) considers that apart from interpersonal communication, mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines and films play a considerable part in aiding directly or indirectly in the purchase of commodities like cosmetics, clothing, etc. They set out to appeal much more to the emotions than to the reason, more to the deeper laid sources of motivation than to the intellect, Sontakki (1996). Advertisement enables the consumers to know which type of products are available and when and where to buy them (Nair and Paul, 1999). Knowledge and care in shopping helps to select the best items at reasonable prices.

Effective buying can find ways of reaching the objective regardless of the limitations of our resources. The emphasis on present day purchasing is on decision making which is a mental process. Young consumers sometimes make decisions based on emotional factors that are the result of their innate desires or fantasies. An adolescent may buy a chudidhar because she feels that the dress may enhance her self-image, rather than looking for durability. When the product is purchased for its symbolic significance rather than utilization value, then it is known as symbolic buying behavior. 'The product is purchased not for what it is but for what it means' – Tamber (1981). Adolescents are crazy for jeans just to identify themselves with the 20th century fashion and not for anything else. An adolescent cares much for her self-image and so she may look for a dress to enhance her appearance, rather than its quality.

1. Frequency of Purchase of cosmetics as per number of daughters

TABLE I
FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE OF COSMETICS AS PER NUMBER OF DAUGHTERS

S.No	Items	Frequency of purchase as per number of daughters								Chi-square value
		Only daughter (N=288)				To or more daughters (N=112)				
		Monthly		Once in three months		Monthly		Once in three months		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Soap	199	69	89	31	92	82	20	18	6.28*
2	Powder	207	72	81	28	93	83	19	17	4.78*
3	Cream	224	78	64	22	93	83	19	17	1.05 ^{NS}
4	Eyeliners	207	72	81	28	90	80	22	20	2.61 ^{NS}
5	Lipstick	262	91	26	9	81	72	31	28	21.45**
6	Perfume	210	73	78	27	90	80	22	20	2.00 ^{NS}
7	Nail polish	230	80	58	20	90	80	22	20	.001 ^{NS}

* Significant at five percent level (N=400)

** Significant at one percent level

NS Not Significant

Irrespective of the number of daughters, adolescents (around 70 percent) purchased soap, powder, cream, eyeliner, perfume and nailpolish every month. Nearly 30 percent from both the groups bought cosmetics once in 3 months.

Statistical inference: There is no significant difference in the frequency of purchase of soap, powder, lipstick between only daughters and two or more daughters at one percent level on lipstick and at five percent level on soap and powder. There is no significant difference in the frequency of purchase of cream, eyeliner, perfume and nailpolish.

1. Money spent on cream as per number of daughters

TABLE II
MONEY SPENT ON CREAM AS PER NUMBER OF DAUGHTERS

S.No	Amount spent (in Rs./month)	No. of purchasers				Chi-square value
		Only daughter (N=288)		More than one daughter (N=112)		
		N	%	N	%	
1	Below Rs.100/-	242	84	104	93	5.37**
2	Over Rs.100/-	46	16	8	7	
Total		288	100	112	100	

* Significant at five percent level (N = 400)

It is interesting to note that irrespective of the number of daughters in the family, a majority of the adolescents spent below Rs.100 on the purchase of cream. Sixteen percent sample of only daughters spent over Rs.100 for the purchase of the same. Only seven percent of the respondents in families having more than one daughter spent over Rs.100.

Statistical inference: There is a significant difference in the money spent on cream between one daughter and two or more daughters at five percent level.

1. Expenditure on clothing as per employment status of mothers

TABLE III
EXPENDITURE ON CLOTHING AS PER EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS

S.No	Money spent (in Rs)	Expenditure on clothing				Chi-square value
		Employed mothers (N=95)		Full-time home makers (N=305)		
		N	%	N	%	
1	Below Rs.300	15	16	95	31	17.80**
2	Rs.301 - 500	45	47	155	21	
3	Rs.501 - 700	25	26	40	13	
4	Above Rs.701	10	11	15	5	

** Significant at one percent level (N=400)

It is interesting to note that irrespective of mother's employment, a higher percentage of adolescents (more than 47 percent) from both the groups incurred an expenditure between Rs.301/- to 500/- per month on the purchase of clothing items which shows their keen interest in clothing.

Nearly 3 percentage of the sample of fulltime homemakers and 26 percent of employed mothers spent below Rs.300 and Rs.501 – Rs.700 respectively for clothing. Eleven percent sample of the employed mothers spent above Rs.700/- per month on clothing.

Statistical inference: There is a significant difference in the expenditure on clothing between the adolescents of employed mothers and full-time homemakers at one percent level.

1. Mode of purchase of clothing as per employment status of mothers

TABLE IV
MODE OF PURCHASE OF CLOTHING AS PER EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS

S.No	Items	Mode of Purchase								Chi-square value
		Employed Mothers (N=95)				Full-time homemakers (N=305)				
		Cash		Credit		Cash		Credit		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Chudidar	80	84	15	16	207	68	98	32	8.75**
2	Medi	91	96	4	4	274	90	31	10	2.51 ^{NS}
3	Frocks	91	96	4	4	281	92	24	8	0.98 ^{NS}
4	Pants and Skirts	95	100	-	-	305	100	-	-	-
5	Sari	75	79	20	21	220	72	85	28	1.4 ^{NS}
6	T-Shirt	95	100	-	-	296	97	9	3	1.68 ^{NS}
7	Undergarments	95	100	-	-	284	93	21	7	5.59*

** Significant at one percent level (N=400)

NS - Not Significant

Irrespective of the employment status of mothers, pants and shirts, medis, frocks, T-Shirts and undergarments were purchased on cash by a vast majority of adolescents (more than 90 percent). Saris and Chudidars were bought by 28 and 32 percent of the sample with full-time home-maker mothers on credit basis so as to enable them to repay easily and at the same time to make purchases.

Statistical Inference: There is a significant difference in the mode of purchase of clothing between adolescents of employed mothers and full-time home makers at one percent level on Chudidars and at five percent level on undergarments. There is no significant difference in the purchase of medis, frocks, saris and T-Shirts.

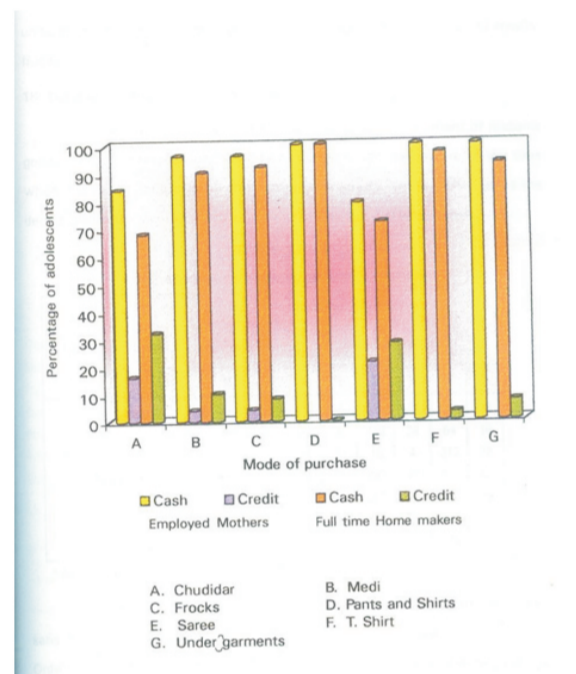


FIG 1. MODE OF PURCHASE OF CLOTHING AS PER EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS

1. Mode of purchase of accessories as per family income

TABLE V
MODE OF PURCHASE OF ACCESSORIES AS PER FAMILY INCOME

S.No	Items	Mode of Purchase												Chi-square value
		Low (N=132)				Middle (N=135)				High (N=133)				
		Cash		Credit		Cash		Credit		Cash		Credit		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Bangles	90	68	42	32	122	90	13	10	133	100	-	-	59.47**
2	Beads	92	70	40	30	119	88	12	12	133	100	-	-	51.31**
3	Rings	92	70	40	30	135	100	-	-	133	100	-	-	90.20-
4	Anklets	116	88	16	12	131	97	3	3	133	100	-	-	22.27**
5	Clips	92	70	40	30	135	100	-	-	133	100	-	-	90.24**
6	Bindi	128	97	4	3	135	100	-	-	133	100	-	-	8.20*
7	Footwear	132	100	-	-	135	100	-	-	133	100	-	-	-

* Significant at five percent level

(N = 400)

** Significant at one percent level

The data regarding the mode of purchase of accessories as per family income revealed that hundred percent adolescents belonging to high income families purchased the various accessories used by them on cash payment revealing the greater availability of funds in their hands for the expenditure. Above 88 percent of the respondents of the middle income families purchased the aesthetic items paying ready cash. Only 30 percent of the sample from low income families bought bangles, beads, rings and clips by credit. Irrespective of the family income all respondents acquired footwear by cash.

Statistical Inference: There is a significant difference in the mode of purchase of accessories from bangles to clips as per family income at one percent level and for bindi at five percent level.

1.Reasons for satisfaction

High satisfaction or delight creates an emotional affinity with the brand, not just a rational preference. The result is high customer loyalty (Kotler, 1998).

Out of total 400 selected adolescents, 70 percent of them mentioned the following reasons for their satisfaction as discussed in table VI.

**TABLE VI
REASONS FOR SATISFACTION**

S.No	Reasons	Reasons for satisfaction					
		Cosmetics		Clothing		Accessories	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Expectation met	238	85	249	89	224	80
2	Good performance	224	80	193	69	224	80
3	Liked by all	210	75	224	80	238	85
4	Economical to buy	196	70	196	70	252	90
5	Safe to use	241	86	196	70	221	79

(N =

* Multiple response

280)

Eighty six percent of the respondents found that the creams, lipsticks, soaps and eyeliners purchased by them were safe to use from the health point of view whereas eighty five percent of them felt that powder and nailpolish met their needs of enhancing their beauty and complexion. As the clothing was durable and longlasting, they met the expectation of 89 percent sample and were liked by 80 percent of them. The items of aesthetic value were found to be within easy reach for 90 percent of the adolescents and 85 percent sample expressed that they were satisfied on the purchase of accessories as these were liked by their friends and siblings. Good performance of the product appealed to nearly 80 percent sample.

1.Reasons for dissatisfaction

Table VII reveals the reasons as to why adolescents were dissatisfied with the purchase of cosmetics, clothing and accessories.

TABLE VII
REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION TOWARDS PRODUCTS*

S.No	Reasons	N	%
1	Poor quality	41	34
2	High price	51	42
3	Duplicate products	42	35
4	Not meeting the expectations	29	24
5	Disliked by parents	46	38

* Multiple response (N=120)

Among the 400 respondents chosen, 120 samples (30 percent) were dissatisfied with their purchases. Forty two percent respondents were affected by the high cost of face creams, lipsticks, perfumes, pants and footwear. Thirty eight percent sample expressed that their parents did not duplicate product, not meeting the expectations and poor quality were also stated by the adolescents as reasons for dissatisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consumer education should be considered as an integral part of the syllabi of schools, colleges and universities so that adolescents will realize the importance of being a wise consumer.
2. Quality advertisements should be telecast to enhance the purchasing pattern of the adolescents in the right perspective.
3. The Government should have a check on the quality by insisting on ISI and Agmark certificate on all products.
4. Consumer clubs should be organized and strengthened in educational institutions to enable the adolescents to get consumer awareness.
5. The manufacturers of cosmetics should give thrust to use herbs and medicinal plants in the manufacture of cosmetics.

It is undeniable that youth have a vital role to play in consumer movement. It is but true that when the youth are satisfied, the society lives happily and harmoniously. Thus, if more and more youth are involved in the consumer movement, it will give a pragmatic – base to the consumer movement in India.

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