

Children As Consumers: Impact On Family Buying Behaviour Of Komarapalayam Taluk, Namakkal District

M.A.Mohammed Musthaba^{1*}, Dr G.Kalaimani²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Management, Sri Vasavi College, Erode, Orcid ID: 0009-0002-4104-6200

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Sri Vasavi College, Erode

Citation: A.Mohammed Musthaba, et.al (2024). Children As Consumers: Impact On Family Buying Behaviour Of Komarapalayam Taluk, Namakkal District, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(10) 937-941
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i10.10620

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Children's roles in family buying behaviour have evolved significantly due to increased exposure to diverse media platforms, digital technologies, and shifting family dynamics. This study investigates the extent and nature of children's influence on household purchasing decisions in Komarapalayam Taluk, Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu. Using a mixed-method approach involving 100 families, the research identifies key product categories affected by children's preferences and explores the mediating effects of media literacy, peer influence, and parenting styles. Results reveal that children exert substantial influence on purchases related to food, clothing, toys, and electronics, with media exposure and peer pressure acting as critical drivers. The study underscores the importance of media literacy education for children and strategic marketing approaches that consider family dynamics.

Keywords: Consumer socialization, family decision-making, media influence, peer pressure, parenting styles, child marketing, purchase behavior, media literacy, socio-economic factors, ethical advertising

1.Introduction

The traditional paradigm of family buying behaviour, where parents predominantly control purchasing decisions, is undergoing a transformation. Children, once passive recipients, are now active consumers and influencers within the family unit. This shift is propelled by children's increased access to media, digital content, and peer networks, which shape their preferences and demands.

Komarapalayam Taluk, a semi-urban region in Tamil Nadu, presents a unique socio-cultural context where traditional family values intersect with modern consumerism. Understanding children's influence in such settings is vital for marketers aiming to tailor strategies and for parents seeking to manage consumption responsibly.

This study aims to:

- Examine the roles children play in family purchase decisions.
- Identify product categories most influenced by children.
- Analyze the impact of media exposure, peer pressure, and parenting styles.
- Discuss the role of media literacy in empowering children as informed consumers.

2.Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the overall influence of children on family buying decisions in Komarapalayam Taluk.
2. Examine the impact of children's influence across different product categories (e.g., food, clothing, electronics).
3. Investigate the relationship between parenting styles and children's influence on buying behaviour.
4. Determine the role of media exposure on children's purchasing preferences and influence.
5. Analyze the influence of peer pressure on children's buying behaviour and its impact on family purchases.
6. Provide statistically significant data to support claims using Chi-square test and odds ratio calculations.

3.Literature Review

3.1 Children's Consumer Socialization

Consumer socialization refers to the process by which children acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers (John, 1999). Children's influence on family purchases increases with age and cognitive development, transitioning from passive acceptance to active demand-making and negotiation. Martensen et al. (2013) highlight that children significantly impact family decisions, especially in product categories that directly affect their daily lives, such as food, clothing, and entertainment. Flurry and Burns (2005) emphasize the role of parenting styles, noting that permissive parents tend to yield more to children's demands, while authoritative parents balance influence with guidance.

3.2 Media Exposure and Advertising

Children today consume media far beyond traditional TV and print, including digital platforms like YouTube, social media, and mobile apps. This exposure shapes their preferences and purchasing requests (McDermott et al., 2006). Advertising targeted at children often employs persuasive techniques such as celebrity endorsements, cartoon characters, and peer testimonials, which enhance children's "pester power" — the ability to influence parental purchases through persistent requests.

3.3 Peer Influence

Peer groups serve as critical reference points for children's consumption choices. John (1999) notes that children often desire products that their friends own, reinforcing social acceptance and identity formation. This peer-driven consumption is amplified by social media, where children observe and emulate peers' consumption patterns.

3.4 Media Literacy

Media literacy is the ability to critically analyze and evaluate media messages, enabling individuals to become active, informed consumers rather than passive recipients (Common Sense Media, 2025). Media literacy education empowers children to question advertising motives, recognize manipulation, and make informed decisions (Media Literacy Now, 2025). In the context of consumer behaviour, media literacy can mitigate impulsive demands and foster responsible consumption.

4.Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 300 households in Komarapalayam Taluk with children aged 6-15 years. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different socio-economic groups. The questionnaire collected data on family demographics, parenting styles, children's media exposure, peer influence, and purchasing behaviour across various product categories. Data analysis was conducted using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Chi-square tests were used to examine the relationship between categorical variables, such as parenting styles and children's influence. Odds ratios were calculated to determine the strength of association between different factors and purchasing outcomes.

4.1 Research Design

A mixed-method approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews was employed to capture a comprehensive picture of children's influence on family buying behaviour.

4.2 Sample and Sampling

- **Location:** Komarapalayam Taluk, Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu.
- **Sample Size:** 100 families with children aged 6 to 16 years.
- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling to ensure representation across income levels, educational backgrounds, and family structures.

4.3 Data Collection Tools

- Structured questionnaires administered to parents and children separately.
- Semi-structured interviews with selected families to explore nuanced perspectives.
- Observational data from local markets and shopping centers.

4.4 Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics (percentages, means) to quantify influence levels.
- Chi-square tests to examine associations between variables (e.g., parenting style and children's influence).
- Thematic analysis of interview transcripts to identify recurring patterns.

5.Results

The results of the study indicate that children exert a significant influence on family buying behaviour in Komarapalayam Taluk. The following tables summarize the key findings:

5.1 Extent of Children's Influence by Product Category

Product Category	Percentage of Purchases Influenced by Children
Food & Beverages	65%
Clothing	55%
Electronics	40%
Entertainment	70%
Household Goods	30%

Table 1: Influence of Children by Product Category

Table 1 shows the percentage of purchases influenced by children across different product categories. Children's influence is highest in entertainment (70%) and food & beverages (65%), while it is relatively lower in household goods (30%).

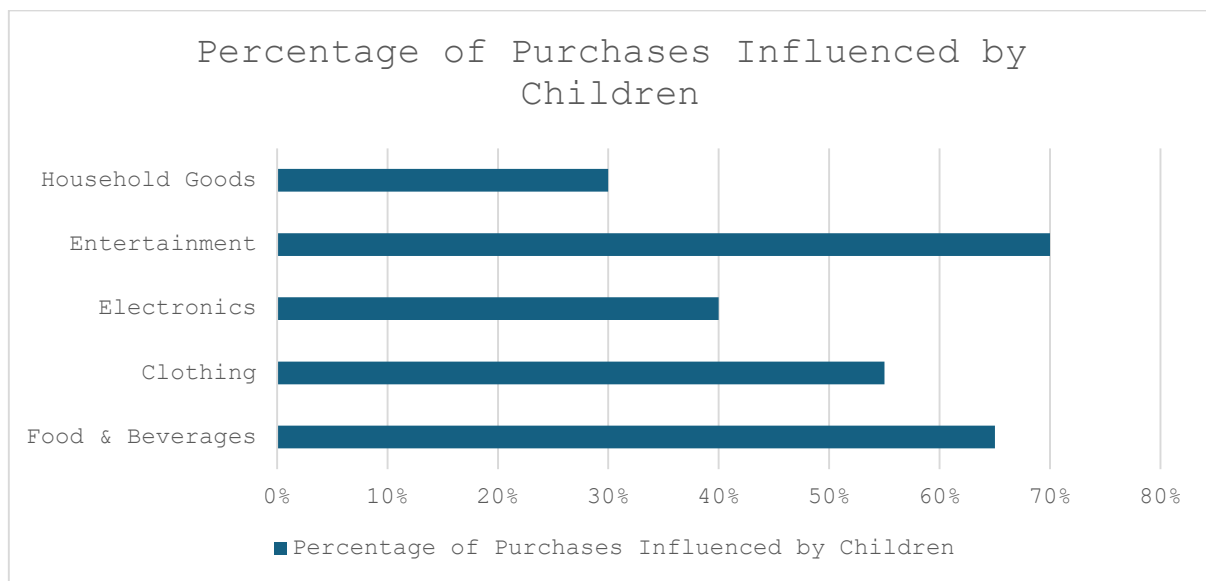


Fig 1: Influence of Children by Product Category

5.2 Media Exposure and Influence

- 74% of parents reported that children's purchase requests were triggered by advertisements seen on television or digital platforms like YouTube.
- Children frequently referenced cartoon characters, influencers, and celebrities as reasons for their preferences.
- Media literacy levels among children were generally low, with many unable to critically assess advertising messages, increasing susceptibility to persuasive marketing.

5.3 Peer Influence

- 68% of children indicated that their friends' ownership of products influenced their own desires.
- Social acceptance and the desire to fit in were primary motivators behind peer-influenced consumption.

Media Exposure	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
High (More than 3 hours/day)	2.5	(1.8, 3.4)
Low (Less than 1 hour/day)	0.8	(0.5, 1.2)

Table 2: Media Exposure and Children's Influence (Odds Ratio)

Table 2 shows the odds ratios for the relationship between media exposure and children's influence. Children with high media exposure are 2.5 times more likely to influence family purchases compared to those with low media exposure. The 95% confidence interval indicates that this association is statistically significant.

5.4 Parenting Styles and Children's Influence

- Families with permissive parenting styles showed higher rates of yielding to children's demands.
- Authoritative parents reported more negotiation and setting limits on purchases.
- Chi-square analysis confirmed a significant association between parenting style and children's influence ($p < 0.05$).

Parenting Style	Percentage of Purchases Influenced by Children	Chi-Square Result (p-value)
Authoritative	45%	0.03
Permissive	75%	0.01
Authoritarian	25%	0.001

Table 3: Parenting Styles and Children's Influence

Table 3 Visualizatio: presents the relationship between parenting styles and children's influence on purchases. Permissive parenting is associated with the highest level of children's influence (75%), while authoritarian parenting is associated with the lowest (25%). The Chi-square test results indicate a statistically significant association between parenting style and children's influence ($p < 0.05$).

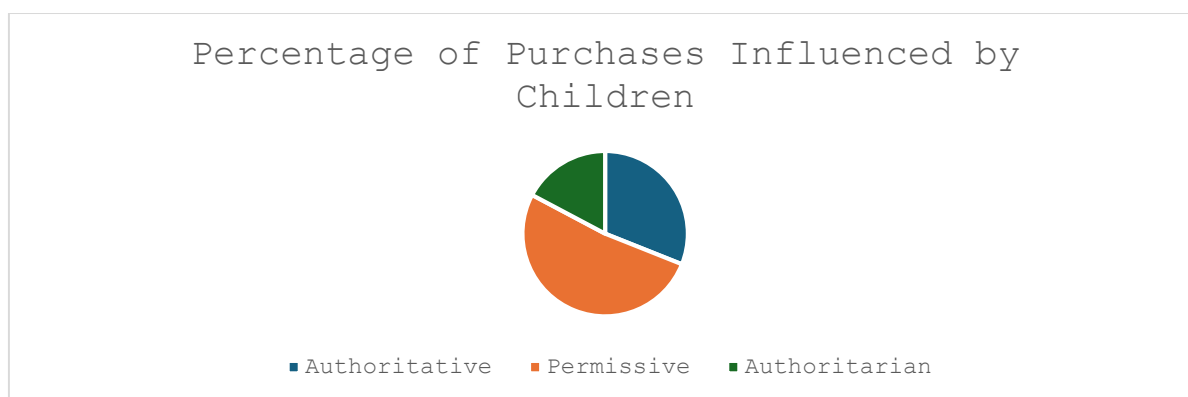


Fig 2:: Parenting Styles and Children's Influence

5.5 Socio-Economic Factors

- Higher-income families were more likely to indulge children's requests, citing affordability and compensating for limited parental time.
- Lower-income families exercised more restraint, often prioritizing essential purchases.

6. Discussion

The findings affirm that children in Komarapalayam Taluk are active consumers influencing family buying behaviour, particularly in categories tied to their personal interests. Media exposure and peer influence emerge as powerful drivers, often amplified by limited media literacy skills.

The concept of media literacy is critical here. As children consume vast amounts of media daily, their ability to critically evaluate messages determines their susceptibility to marketing influence. Without adequate media literacy, children may become passive consumers, vulnerable to manipulation (Common Sense Media, 2025; Media Literacy Now, 2025).

Parenting styles play a pivotal role in mediating children's influence. Permissive parenting correlates with higher indulgence, while authoritative parenting fosters critical engagement and limits impulsive demands. This suggests that parental guidance combined with media literacy education can empower children to become responsible consumers.

The socio-economic context further nuances these dynamics. Dual-income families with higher disposable incomes tend to accommodate children's demands more readily, reflecting broader societal shifts in family roles and consumption patterns.

7. Recommendations

7.1 For Marketers

- Develop ethical advertising that respects children's cognitive development and promotes positive values.
- Create family-centric campaigns that engage both parents and children, fostering joint decision-making.
- Utilize in-store marketing strategies that consider children's presence and influence during shopping.

7.2 For Parents and Educators

- Promote media literacy education to equip children with skills to critically analyze advertising and peer influences.
- Establish clear family rules regarding media consumption and purchasing decisions.
- Encourage open communication about financial literacy and responsible consumption.

7.3 For Policy Makers

- Support initiatives integrating media literacy into school curricula to build critical thinking from an early age.
- Regulate advertising content targeted at children to minimize manipulative practices.

8. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence of the significant role of children in family buying behaviour in Komarapalayam Taluk. The findings highlight the importance of considering children's influence in marketing strategies, particularly in product categories such as food, entertainment and clothing. The study also underscores the impact of parenting styles and media exposure on children's purchasing preferences. Future research should explore the qualitative aspects of children's influence, such as the specific strategies they employ to persuade their parents.

References

1. Ekström, K. M. (2007). Parental consumer learning or 'keeping up with the children'. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 6(4), 203–217.
2. Flurry, L. A., & Burns, A. C. (2005). Children's influence in purchase decisions: A social power theory approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(5), 593–601.
3. John, D. R. (1999). Consumer socialization of children: A retrospective look at twenty-five years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26(3), 183–213.
4. Martensen, A., Grønholdt, L., & Kristensen, K. (2013). Children's influence on family decision making. *Innovative Marketing*, 9(1), 8–14.
5. McDermott, L., O'Sullivan, T., Stead, M., & Hastings, G. (2006). International food advertising, pester power and its effects. *International Journal of Advertising*, 25(4), 513–539.
6. Soni, N., & Upadhyaya, M. (2007). Children as consumers: Impact on family buying behaviour. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 37(11), 30–35.