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### The Impeccable Potential with kids: Pester power: The study of Expatriates children in Saudi Arabia

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#### **Abstract**

*Children are an important consumer market. They have very strong power to influence purchasing decisions and have played an important role in the family purchasing process with direct and indirect purchasing power to influence while buying of ordinary as well as expensive items. They gain instant knowledge through available socialization agents and create great pressure on parents to purchase the desired products. This study is based on expatriate families as a major part of the population of Saudi Arabia. This research attempts to raise a concern about the growing consumerism as an influence of socialization in Expatriate's children in Saudi Arabia and how the parents deal with the Impeccable Potential with kids better known as pester power. This paper attempts to highlight the different strategies children use today to influence their parents and the impact of these strategies on parents purchasing decisions. A descriptive and exploratory research design and a convenient sampling technique to collect the data are used for the study. A sample of 314 parents was interviewed with a structured closed questionnaire.*

**Keywords:** 1 Pester power, 2 Parents, 3 Children, 4 Purchase decisions, 5 Strategies

## Introduction

Materialism has become a major concern for researchers due to its impacts on children's development. The work culture of dual-income families has changed the process of socializing children as consumers from parents to the media. The media warn children about new and innovative products available on the market. The vigilance of these children is not a problem until the children begin to link their happiness to the things of the world, which is a sign of materialism. Due to the change in the culture of society, parents have become committed to their careers, with the result of making children willing to the things of the world and dependent on the media. Parents make up for their time by providing material goods to their children. Knowing this fact, marketers promote their products such as chocolates, pizzas, motorcycles, cars, laptops, and Christmas tours as a prerequisite for celebrating festivals and successes. (Lati, Hamid, Abrar, & Ali, 2017)

A change wave and knowledge shape the consumer behavior of young consumers around the world. During the 1940s and 1950s, children were not considered consumers but a part of parents purchasing power. (Chaudhary, Medury, & Gupta, 2012) Children are becoming smarter and relatively active in daily decision making. But with the dawn of the sources such as the Internet, media, television, shopping experience, and friends for children to be interactive and connected in society thus children have become consumers in all respects and become a part of the marketer's target. The demands of children are increasing these days and they are not happy with what their parents give them, so they use different "scoldings" or "hassles" to buy the product they like or want to buy. (Chauhan, 2019).

Today's children no longer worry. Rather, their informed voice guides their parents with branding options, too when it comes to big money decisions. (Mishra & Goel, 2010)

## Literature Review

Growing importance (Kasser & Kanner, 2004) of children play an important role in the consumer market by influencing their parents' purchasing decisions, both for products for family use and personal use, (Ali, Mustafa, Batra, Ravichandran, & Rehman, 2012) (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003). The role of influencers that children show on purchasing decisions in the family and the nagging effect they have on parents have increased significantly today (Kaur & Singh, 2006).

Current studies provide evidence for the shelf in parenting shopping (Kornrich & Furstenberg, 2013) for children initially in countries like the US More money was spent on boys than girls (Kornrich & Furstenberg, 2013), but by the end of 2020, girls started enjoying higher status than boys. The research also found that most of the parental spending occurred when children were under the age of six and in their twenties as followers of parents' choice to make decisions (Kornrich & Furstenberg, 2013). When purchasing, the influence of children in purchasing decisions has been of great interest to marketers (Anitha & Mohan, 2016). Around the world, it appears that children of different cultures tend to have a greater influence on products due to their greater involvement in family shopping: India and Turkey (Chaudhary M., 2015); Holland and the USA (Foxman, Tansuhaj, & Ekstrom, 1989); Singapore (Swinyard & Sim, 1987); Israel (Shoham & Dalakas, 2003); Malta (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003); Scotland (Thomson E., 2003); Turkey (Guner, Delen, Kaplan, & Yurt, 2009); China (Veeck & Flurry, 2009); India (Chaudhary & Gupta, Children's influence in the family buying process in India, 2012); Czech Republic (Balcarova', Pokorna', & Pilar, 2014); Egypt and U.S.A (Ramzy, Ogden, Ogden, & Zakaria, 2012); and in Lebanon (Beyrouti & Houssami, 2013). Similar studies have been conducted in several countries such as Denmark (Nørgaard, Bruns, Christensen, & Mikkelsen, 2007); Germany (Gram, 2007), and Brazil (Dallazen, Giovanna, & Rataichesk).

According to the family purchase decision theory, the influence of the annoyance in parents' purchasing decisions was influenced by the pester power of their children. Several surveys showed the way children use to convince their parents to buy options. (Sheth, 1974). Personal consumption and home consumption also explained whether the father initiates a purchase decision or has more dominance in the selection of items, then the children will have more convincing power. If purchasing power is not centralized, children will have a direct or indirect influence on the purchase of different product categories towards their parents, particularly when buying products from home, children are more engaged and act as influencers (Sheth, 1974). (Furnham, Gunter, & Walsh, 1998) Claimed that communication media is an important catalyst that prevails over pestering power in children. The power to badger builds up when parents take their children shopping ask their opinion and encourage them to ask questions and this factor costs children to ask or worrying about things from an early age instead of picking them up where they see them start when parents and children visit some relatives and the child wants to play with the toys or games of the children of the host family. The latest technical developments and the evolving global

demographic profile meant that the consumer evolved a lot and was dynamic, for example, family communication has become more open and democratic as parents pay more attention to their children and their opinions, which in turn exert a strong influence on family decision making (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003) (McNeal, 1999). Family decision making is a type of consumer decision making that involves multiple people as potential decision-makers and influencers, especially children (Nørgaard, Bruns, Christensen, & Mikkelsen, 2007) (Sheth, 1974). Marketers add a new element called pester, however, it primarily focuses on children as potential buying hubs (Wilson, 2000). Stages of Family Decision Making (Jensen, 1990), norms traditions and parenting rules in the Family slowly slow down eroding and communication is becoming more difficult (Bhavsar & Maheshkar, 2016) open and democratic.

According to (Thomson, Laing, & McKee, 2007) a 2-year-old your request and when he turned 4 he can drink his preferences show his tastes and dislikes when he turns 5 years accept the influence of your friends as well as relative to visit the specific place/shop to shop.

They gather information about their favorite brands and pester parents to buy their specific products. Arabs use social media sites as their primary form of communication, considering that media technologies are the reason behind the outbreak and spread of revolutions called Facebook revolutions. Others believe that social media has been a key player in the dissemination of information and the mobilization of people.

The influence of peers on purchasing decisions could be dictated by culture. According to most parents, (Opoku, 2012) TV commercials are the most important source of product information and the child's family is the most important driving force of children's consumer socialization in which children have gained more meaningful and active participation in making purchasing decisions. With increasing power in decision making children are aware of the dark side of online shopping, making them more responsive to online retailers. Traditional outlets are more popular with young children, they consider offline shopping a pleasant and fun activity (Veloso & Hildebrand, 2013).

A Part of the demographics and another important element is the role culture. Cultural studies show that cultural factors have a great influence, both positive and negative, on the effectiveness of advertising, for example, it was observed that Arab countries score higher on power distance that people accept hierarchal order where everyone has a place and that they need no further justification (At-Twajiri & Al-Muhaiza, 1996). It also implies that Arab culture is such in which children have a religious obligation to obey parents. Arab culture is a collective culture, (Bjerk & Al-Meer, 1993) this leads to the implication that the Arab consumer should indicate an influence of the target group. In the young adult study from Saudi Arabia, the results were very surprising (Al-Habeeb & Qureshi, 2000), children here were more likely to seek information from other sources than just from their peers. The fact that kids pay attention to the media and love to watch advertisements should appeal to a good for advertisers targeting this segment of expanding market in Saudi Arabia (Yavas & Abdul-Gader, 1993). According to (Saleh & El-Rawas, 2015) "In one of the very interesting studies in Oman, researchers found that young children are also influenced by new media, such as satellite channels and social media". The only study related to the effect of television advertising on Oman kids (Nassar & Abdulaziz, 2012) highlights the negative impact of advertising leading to significant social and behavioral problems in children, such as physical and verbal violence. Other problems identified by the parents are health problems such as poor nutrition and obesity. (Nassar & Abdulaziz, 2012)

Companies understand the annoying power of children to influence children in family purchasing decisions. The main goal of pestering promoting marketing is to exert direct pressure from children on their families for different products. (Arul & Vasudevan, 2016) stated that children use various strategies to annoy their parents who don't care about the price, performance, durability, attributes, and more; instead focus on the visibility and packaging of product strategies. (Ogba & Johnson, 2010) analyzed different factors such as 'age, the gender of the child, product packaging the growth strategy of the child, parents purchasing power, family size the appropriate use of the product, and the price of the products that influence the desired amount of children who wish to purchase. (Nicholls & Cullen, 2004) summarize that regardless of society or culture, children are the most important part of the family and have a significant influence on parents' purchasing decisions with the growing number of superstores. In the words of (Ramzy, Ogden, Ogden, & Zakaria, 2012) shopping is considered a fun outing and familiar day trip. (McNeal, 1999) Inferred that children under 12 make more family purchase requests and when combined with the request they made to the family, they become about 30,000 lawsuits each year. (Thomson, Laing, & McKee, 2007) Inferred that marketers are placing children to force their parents to buy products that are not their choice or do not have the purchasing power to do so

### Research Methodology

The study was conducted through a primary survey (questionnaire) on parents of age group 25 and above having one or more children.. It was sent to more than 400 parents to fill and only 314 filled the questionnaire which was further considered for the analysis. Respondents constitute the expatriate citizens of Saudi Arabia including Jordanian, Sudanese, Tunisian, Pakistani, Egyptian, and Indian.The data were summarized, coded, and manipulated using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists 25.0 (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. This research is divided into three sections. The first section comprises demographic profiles of data defining age, gender, no of children, working of parents, and nationality of the respondents. The second section of the data comprises the analysis of the different ways used as pester power by children as a tool to persuade their parents and grouping them into different strategies. The third section of the study comprises the parameter under study.

### Objectives of the Study

- To study the different strategies by which the parents are persuaded by their children.
- To study the relationship between the socialization of children's daily time and the Pester power.
- To study the relationship between pester power strategies and the source of information.
- To study the impact of the relation between the working of parents and exert pester power strategies.
- To study the relation between pester power strategies and Frequency of Shopping.

### Hypothesis

- H1: To analyze child request strategies.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between socialization daily time of children through Television and Internet and Pester power
- H3: There is a significant relation between pester power strategies and source of information.
- H4: There is a significant relationship between the working of parents and exert pester power strategies.
- H5: There is a significant relation between pester power strategies and Frequency of Shopping.

### Results and Discussions

Data analysis is an important part of any research. This research is divided into three sections. The first section comprises a demographic profile of data defining age, gender, no of children, working of parents, and nationality of the respondents. Responses are summed up in the table no 1. The expatriate data of Saudi Arabia comprises Jordanian (19.1%), Sudanese (11.8%), Tunisian (18.2%), Pakistani (12.1%), Egyptian (11.5%), and Indian (27.4%). Out of this data, there were 58% males and 42% of females who were the respondents under study. 54% of respondents were having 2 children and 57% belongs to the age group 30-40. Among the respondents, 66% was single working parents. 46% of parents inferred that their kids always accompany them while shopping.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile			
Factors	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	182	58
	Female	132	42
Nationality of the Respondents	Jordanian	60	19.1
	Sudanese	37	11.8
	Tunisian	57	18.2
	Pakistan	38	12.1
	Egyptian	36	11.5
	Indian	86	27.4
Number of the Children	1	25	8
	2	170	54.1
	3	94	29.9

	more than three	25	8
<b>Age of the Respondent</b>	25-30	80	25.5
	30-40	179	57
	more than 40	55	17.5
<b>Occupation of the Parents</b>	Single parent working	206	65.6
	Both working	108	34.4
<b>Frequency of Children Accompany</b>	Always, they accompany us wherever we go	147	46.8
	Once in awhile, only when the place interests them	49	15.6
	Never	26	8.3
	No fixed pattern	92	29.3

**H1: To analyze child request strategies:**

The second section of the data comprises of different ways used as pester power by children as a tool to persuade their parents. Thirteen statements were prepared based on the discussion among the focus group of parents and children. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0 version on the **strategies adopted by children as pester power** collected from 314 respondents using 5 points Likert scale. Bartlett's test of Sphericity is a statistical test for the presence of correlations among the variables and it assesses the overall significance of the correlation matrix. In this study, the correlations, when taken overall, are significant at the .01 level (see table 2). Another measure to quantify the degree of intercorrelations among the variables and the appropriateness of factor analysis is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). This index ranges from 0 to 1 and the value above 0.50 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2005).

**Table 2 Strategies Adopted by Children as Pester Power**

<b>Factor Analysis and Reliability Results</b>				
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Factor loadings &gt;.05</b>	<b>Variance &gt;.05</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
<b>Pester Power Strategies Used by Child</b>				0.76
<b>F1 Emotional Strategy</b>	Exemplifying friends and peer	0.752	20.955	0.751
	Blackmailing	0.76		0.729
	Nagging and crying	0.671		0.722
	Angry behavior	0.693		0.716
<b>F2 Persuasion Strategy</b>	Unusual nice behavior towards parents	0.706	15.814	0.739
	Pretending sick	0.773		0.735
	Remaining hungry	0.801		0.755
<b>F3 Bargaining Strategy</b>	Offer something in return	0.53	13.059	0.738
	Expressing fame of the Brand	0.624		0.77
	Opining about the product	0.792		0.753
	Insisting to purchase the product	0.511		0.734
<b>F4 Aggressive strategy</b>	Displaying anger	0.595	9.6	0.759
	Acting stubborn	0.816		0.769
<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				0.759
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square			1012.651
	df			78
	Sig.			0

Results indicate that the 13 variables collectively meet the necessary threshold of sampling adequacy meritoriously with an MSA value of 0.759. These measures that the variable set is appropriate for factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha for the scale items is calculated to ensure that they exhibit satisfactory levels of internal consistency. The above table shows the calculated values of Cronbach's alpha for all the 13 items together as well as for each one of the characteristics extracted in the EFA. All of them are above the cut-off point (0.5) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

Here it is evident from the above table that only four factors having eigenvalues greater than 0.5 are explaining 59.428% of variance therefore these factors are considered more important. After arriving at the satisfactory factor solution, next is to name each of the factors. These factors were grouped into four strategies viz. F1(Emotional strategy), F2 (Persuasion strategy), F3(Bargaining Strategy), and F4 (Aggressive strategy). These strategies consist of different factors. F1(Emotional strategy) consists of Exemplifying friends and peer, Blackmailing, Nagging and crying and Angry behavior, F2 (Persuasion strategy) consists of Unusual nice behavior towards parents, Pretending sick and Remaining hungry, F3(Bargaining Strategy) consists of Offer something in return, Expressing fame of the Brand, Insisting to purchase the product and Opining about the product and F4 (Aggressive strategy) consists of Displaying anger and Acting stubborn.

All the four strategies consisting of different factors were inferred to be significant (since p values are less than 0.05) when tested through chi-square test of goodness of fit for data as revealed in the table no 3.

Table 3 Goodness of Fit for Strategy Inferred

The goodness of Fit for Strategy			
Strategy	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Emotional Strategy	512.854a	5	0.00
persuasion Strategy	380.682b	4	0.00
Bargaining strategy	340.803a	5	0.00
Aggressive strategy	112.669c	2	0.00

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 52.3.
- b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 62.8.
- c. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 104.7.

The third section of the study comprises the parameter under study summing up the responses understudy in the table no 4. There were four parameters considered for the study viz. socialization time, source of information, frequency of shopping and working of Parents.46% of parents revealed that their kids daily socialization time is 2-3 hrs during which they get information through different sources and out of which 35 % parents confirmed that TV advertisement appears to be an important source of information and 34% inferred that stores itself appear to be an important source of information as to their kids always accompany them during shopping.18% of the respondents confirmed internet as the other source of information. 51% of parents revealed that they use to shop whenever they get time during the week days as they do not want to spoil the weekends.

Table 4 Parameters understudy

Variables	Options	Responses	%
Socialization Daily Time	1hrs	52	16.6
	2-3 hrs	144	45.9
	4-5 hrs	98	31.2
	more than 5 hrs	20	6.4
Source of Information for the Children	TV advertisements	110	35
	Visit the store	109	34.7
	Weekly brochures of supermarkets	35	11.1
	Friends	42	13.4
	Others Plz specify	18	5.7
Frequency of Shopping	Every day	28	8.9
	Anytime during week	159	50.6
	During weekend only (Fri & Sat)	84	26.8
	No Fixed pattern	43	13.7

H2: There is a significant relationship between socialization daily time of children through Television and Internet and Pester power

H3: There is a significant relation between pester power strategies and source of information.

H4: There is a significant relation between the working of parents and exert pester power strategies.

H5: There is a significant relation between pester power strategies and Frequency of Shopping.

Since the researcher intends to find the relationship between different variables under study therefore correlation coefficient appears to be the best suitable measure to be carried out for analysis. If p values are less than 0.05 then we reject null hypothesis and accept alternate one. Since all the p values are greater than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is therefore inferred that the relation between different variables (Socialization daily time, Source of Information for the Children and Occupation of the Parents )and pester power strategies are significant accepting the Null hypothesis. In the case of frequency of shopping emotional strategy and Aggressive strategy p-value of both strategies adopted by kids is less than 0.05. In this case, it could be inferred that emotional strategy has an insignificant impact and others have a significant impact.

Table 5 Relationship between different strategies and Parameters

Correlations		Emotional strategy	Persuasion strategy	Bargaining strategy	Aggressive strategy
<b>Socialization Daily Time</b>	Pearson Correlation	-0.096	0.071	-0.039	-0.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.089	0.209	0.488	0.359
<b>Source of Information for the Children</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.029	-0.105	-0.095	-0.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.611	0.062	0.094	0.799
<b>Occupation of the Parents</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.08	0.025	-0.04	0.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.157	0.654	0.481	0.553
<b>Frequency of Shopping</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.127*	0.026	-0.050	-.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.025	0.641	0.377	0.005
	N	314	314	314	314
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

**Conclusion**

Children these days are emerging as one of the homogeneous groups with their own identity as consumers. Children's participation in total household spending is increasing. Children are more knowledgeable and informative these days due to increased exposure to television and advertising, and they are well aware of the items available in the market. The research revealed that parents also agreed and supported their children's annoying behavior due to a lack of involvement with children. Parents also agreed that the reward and gifts associated with the child-focused products were one of the primary factors influencing the child's decision for product selection. They often go shopping with their parents, and parents also consult with the child before buying products. Children use various tactics to fulfill your request. They pressure their parents to comply with their request. Parents have more disposable income (especially when both parents work) and less free time for their children. They tend to compensate their children by fulfilling their requests rather than giving them time. When it comes to marketing professionals, they are well aware of the role of the child and how important children are to parents.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Some limitations of this study should be noted along with questions for future research. Since this is the first study of its kind in Saudi Arabia therefore, it is clear that few gaps will be recognized in this research. For example, more research is needed in Saudi Arabia, especially with parents of different social status, like them, Buying behavior should be different. Although the "socioeconomic status of the family" appears to be an important factor that the research community needs to analyze children's influence within the family. Furthermore, this analysis is based

on the perception of the child, the parent's Opinions should also be analyzed for best results. Future studies can be done to know the joint decision-making process. This will equip both organizations as well as policymakers to target children more successfully.

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