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# Profiling Children as Consumers: An Indian Study

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## ABSTRACT

The empirical paper entitled "Profiling Children as Consumers: An Indian Study" is focused on the varied aspects that characterize a young consumer's role in family decision-making process. Through different variables: child's involvement at various buying stages, product type and various tactics used by children, distinct consumer profiling of young children is attempted. Survey data collected from 10 schools in India were examined with a series of factor analysis and mean scores. In this scope it is important to draw the commercial profile of young kids. Detailed analysis included principal component factor analysis, ranking through descriptive analysis and with the help of radar diagram; children's consumer profiles are identified. Using these profiles, the firms can develop insights about their target markets and formulate effective marketing strategies. The implications are very insightful. The developmental stages of children and their distinct characteristics (as a very active participant and influencer in family buying) will enable researchers to inquire them more thoroughly. From an academic perspective, a latest field of research is unwrapped to be explored.

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## INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is getting increasingly complex. In order to deal with the new market environment, companies no longer aim solely to maximize profits. Instead, they are managing their relationships with their customers to generate benefits for both customer and company. Understanding

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one's consumers / customers is the secret of successful marketing. Firms find it easier to provide effective marketing when they know more about their existing or prospective consumers. With this aim, the study attempts to successfully profile young children based on child's socialization, involvement at various buying stages, product type and how children influence parents.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As the world is changing into a more informed, overloaded with information and capable of doing things at a click of mouse, the behavioral changes, and societal changes are also providing researchers a new platform to study. The changes in the pattern of family; growing single parent and extended families (same sex marriages), higher per capita income, reducing birth rates makes the case of studying young kids very important. Children's direct and indirect market is growing very fast. With huge amount of money at stake, there is a need to study children's consumer behavior. Children are considered to be powerful influencers of their parents' consumption as well as consumers with a considerable direct consumption of their own (Andersen, Tufte, Rasamussen, & Chan, 2008; Chaudhary, 2015). According to Caruana and Vassallo, (2003), 43 % of the total family buying is influenced by children.

### Children's Consumer Socialization

Children's influence on family purchase is directly dependent on the cultural environment of the family and the individual (Guneri, Yurt, Kaplan, & Delen, 2009). According to Haynes, Burts, Dukes and Cloud (1993), the socialization agents for children can be attributed to the cognitive factors and the environmental factors (Haynes et al., 1993). Cognitive factors are age and gender related. Environmental factors: family, media and peers. Parents have been identified as a primary source of socialization (Chaudhary & Gupta, 2014; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Sharma, 2017; Szybillo & Sosanie, 1977; Thaichon, 2017). Parents' influence the consumer socialization process of their children in several ways (Ward, 1974). Like parents, friends and peer group also impacts child's consumer socialization (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Television and internet are other important source of consumer socialization for kids. Socialization is more when child's media interaction is high (Chaudhary, Ghouse, & Durrah, 2018; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997). Television for example is not an interactive agent but is greatly significant to the development of young children. It satisfies social needs to some extent, but does not give children the social skills. Children learn through watching television. Some of the things they learn are beneficial; they learn about the world and the ways of the society. Children also learn about current themes and issues, learn more than facts from television; they also get a good daily dose of stereotypes and a lot of misleading information about their world.

## Role of Social Media

At this point it is very imperative to understand the role of internet in young child's consumer perception. The internet has formed a new learning culture, which allows children to share, discuss, influence and learn interactively from each other (Lee, Conroy, & Hii, 2003). Using social media Web sites is among the most common activity of today's children and adolescents. Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter offer these kids a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years. But with this comes the intense need to protect young children from ill effects of unhealthy online environment. Parents as well as practioners and industries need to understand and solve the problems like cyber bullying, "Facebook depression," sexting, and exposure to inappropriate marketing content.

## Influence Strategies

To influence their parents, kids use different influence tactics and strategies. As children do not have direct control over their parents, children of all ages (and cultures) use various tactics to influence their parents (Wimalasiri, 2004). Wood, Weinstein, and Roland (1967) in their study categorized children's manipulation tactics in five dimensions: norm invocation (appeals to rules, fair play, and reason.), positive sanctions (gifts, favors, bargaining, and politeness), negative sanctions (physical aggression, nagging, begging, and crying), ask, and do not know or other. Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) also identified the influencing strategies as bargaining, persuasion, competition, emotional and aggressive strategies.

## Children's Influence

Researchers have studied that for almost all product categories, children have an important role (Akter, 2017; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008). Children have high influence in purchase of product for which they will be the primary consumer, like breakfast cereals, snack foods, toys, children's clothes and school supplies (Mangleburg, 1990). Children may have less influence on the products which require large money transactions like television, refrigerator, car (Mangleburg, 1990).

Children's influence in the family buying process also varies across decision stages. Buying process has three stages: problem recognition, search for internal and external information and final decision (Davis & Rigaux, 1974). Problem recognition is the stage of need identification. Needs usually arise because of some problem, for example, your new water bottle is lost and you need to buy a new one. Second stage is search for internal and external information. In this stage, you start to search and gather information about potential product choices. And the last stage you decide to but or not to buy the product you evaluated.

## Profiling Young Consumers

Market segmentation plays essential role on understanding the behavior of people's interests in purchasing various products and services through various channels (Afjeh

& Darvishi, 2014). A number of researches have sought to segment consumers using their motivations for shopping.Such consumer profiling provides deep insights into the consumer psyche and subsequently into retail strategy formulation (Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994; Reynolds & Beatty, 1999).

Dolničar (2004), conclude that there is no single best way to segment markets. Much research indicates that there are different people within the segmented groups (Rotfeld, 2007). In another exhaustive study by Dolničar (2004), different market segmentation approaches are discussed using the building blocks of data-based and common sense segmentation. Traditionally organizations used socioeconomic and demographic variables to segment markets. Some researchers segment the market on gender, (Baloglu & Shoemaker, 2001; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2000), income, (Kozak, 2002), region (Yuan & McDonald, 1990), motives, (Baloglu & Shoemaker, 2001). Being within the same age group does not mean that they are homogeneous who have the same preferences.

Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994) in their research had segmented consumers on the basis of their perceived personal shopping value. Some others have investigated the varied reasons people go shopping and focused on developing some taxonomy of shoppers based on their hedonic shopping motivations (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Few researchers have attempted to segment consumers on the basis of their decision-making styles (Lysonski, Durvasula, & Zotos, 1996; Sproles & Sproles 1990; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). The most identified decision-making styles in which consumers engage in shopping are rational, brand conscious, quality conscious and impulsive shopping.

Regarding children market which is getting bigger and influential, it is traditionally classified according to age. With age "children develop abilities to go beyond perceptual appearances to think more abstractly about their environment and acquire information processing skills (John, 1999). Familiar groupings have been 7-10 years "tweens", 11-13 years "young teenagers", 14-16 years "teenagers" and 16+ years "young adults" (Spero & Stone, 2004). Tween aged children are some where in between childhood and adulthood and the transition is not very simple to understand. As child moves away from childhood he/she will experience more emotional, economic and residential freedom (Jekielek & Brown, 2005).

According to Shim and Koh (2004) in their study of profiling adolescent consumer decision-making styles based on their socialization divides young consumers as value-maximizing recreational shoppers, brand-maximizing non-utilitarian shoppers and apathetic shoppers. A very interesting study by Mees (2006) suggested that "experts and adolescents distinguish adolescent segments which are based on practical experiences not mentioned in earlier research". Then the adolescents were categorized into six Adolescent Types;

"Posh, Eco-warriors, Nerds, Chavs, Goths and Skaters" .

India has a very huge young population. India is home to the largest number of children in the world (UNICEF, 2011). In developing countries, the corporations are experiencing the influence of children in family purchases. India particularly has seen a rapid shift in the international marketplace with increasing disposable incomes, changing living standards and very active traditional and new media revolution. Practioners may feel the need to be more creative (Wimalasiri, 2004). Marketers need an extensive analysis of a child's psychology and especially to categorize children into more relevant categories. Yet, there is hardly any empirical exploration into profiling children. This study aims to profile children according to their influence, the product in question and their consumer socialization. The main objective of the present study is to define the profiles of young children as consumers.

## METHODOLOGY

A systematic and descriptive approach was adopted for this empirical study. Based on the research objectives, few in-depth discussions were conducted with children as well as the parents. Then, a questionnaire was prepared as the research instrument. Before the main study, a pilot study was conducted to ensure reliability and validity. Preliminary draft of different sections was pre-tested on 40 children which helped in improving upon the questions and then final questionnaires were framed. The children of age group 8-12 years were chosen for the study. The reasons of choosing this age group is the fact that children of these ages were expected to be mature enough and have been found to be active and independent shoppers (McNeal, 1992), highly cognitive in consumption choices and knowledgeable about products and brands (Ward, 1974). The questionnaire was tested for reliability with calculating cronbach's alpha. For all the sections, cronbach's alpha was more than 0.6 and hence the research instrument is considered reliable for study (Konecny & Thun, 2011). The result and items under each section is displayed in Table 1.

The original field survey was then conducted with young children who provided greater insight into all possible practical aspects of family decision making.

The final questionnaire had four parts:

Part 1:Questions regarding child's demographics

Part 2:Questions measuring child's consumer socialization

Part 3: Questions regarding child's influence levels for various products

Part 4: Questions regarding child's influence levels for buying process stages

Part 5: Questions regarding child's use of influence strategies

The study is conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. With the help of cluster sampling, data was collected from child clusters from 10 different schools. A total of 200 questionnaires are sent to these 10 schools and appointment took to get these filled from children studying in grades III to VIII. Each cluster contained around 10

Table 1

*Reliability check for instrument*

| Sections | No. of items | Cronbach alpha | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | Bartlett's test of sphericity | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child's Consumer Socialization | 11 | 0.606 | 0.653 | Approx. Chi Square | 192.093 |
| | | | | Df | 55.000 |
| | | | | Sig. | 0.000 |
| Child's Influence for different products | 15 | 0.863 | 0.840 | Approx. Chi Square | 881.157 |
| | | | | Df | 105.000 |
| | | | | Sig. | 0.000 |
| Child's Influence at various stages | 45 | 0.924 | 0.791 | Approx. Chi Square | 5655.084 |
| | | | | Df | 990.00 |
| | | | | Sig. | 0.000 |
| Child's use of influence strategies | 16 | 0.790 | 0.783 | Approx. Chi Square | 586.471 |
| | | | | Df | 120.000 |
| | | | | Sig. | 0.000 |

students. Children were asked to complete the questionnaire in their class itself in the presence of the researcher but with the absence of the teacher. Out of the 187 responses received, only 175 questionnaires are found to be complete. The collected data is saved and coded in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 18.0 (SPSS).

## RESULTS

The collected data is fed in the Microsoft Excel sheets and used as database for SPSS version 18. The analysis is done in a very structured manner, firstly the principal component factor analysis is conducted for various sections and then mean scores on these factors were calculated for further analysis.

### Demographics of respondents

The first section of questionnaire gathered information about child's profile which included age, gender, number of siblings, birth-order and education. Of 175, 92 child respondents (52.57%) fell in the younger age-group i.e. between 8 and 10. These characteristics are shown in Table 2.

### Socialization

For analyzing child's consumer socialization, the young respondents were to state their degree of agreement or disagreement with different statements on a 3 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 3. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.653) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Chi-Square = 192.093) showed good results. Then Principal Component

Table 2

*Demographics of children*

| Characteristics | n (frequency) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Age-group** | | |
| 8 – 10 | 92 | 52.57 |
| 11 – 12 | 83 | 47.42 |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 116 | 66.28 |
| Female | 59 | 33.71 |
| **No. of siblings** | | |
| Single child | 36 | 20.57 |
| With siblings | 139 | 79.40 |
| **Birth Order** | | |
| Youngest | 61 | 34.86 |
| Eldest | 66 | 37.71 |
| Middle-one | 12 | 06.85 |
| Single Child | 36 | 20.57 |
| **Grade** | | |
| III | 12 | 06.85 |
| IV | 34 | 19.42 |
| V | 39 | 22.29 |
| VI | 35 | 20.00 |
| VII | 29 | 16.57 |
| VIII | 26 | 14.86 |

factor Analysis was done to extract the socialization agents for the child's consumer knowledge. The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.606 at the significance level of 0.000.

Factor analysis as explained resulted in four consumer socialization agents namely: Friends and Television, Internet, Parents and Shopping. As seen from Table 3, the first agent, Friends and Television has four items with all the factor loading above 5.00. Second agent is Internet which has three items, third agent is Parents with three items. And last agent is Shopping. The ranking using the mean scores and standard deviation are given in Table 4. It is clear from Table 4 that the shopping exposure is the most prominent agent for the child's consumer socialization with the highest mean of 2.05, stating that young Indian children get lot of information through shopping trips with their parents. Kids may not be shopping themselves but they are very much present and they acquire their consumer skills when they get live shopping experience. It is followed by parents as a socialization agent (mean = 2.00, sd = .434), then friends and television (mean = 1.838, sd = .437). The fourth agent is internet with mean value of 1.737 (sd = .55).

## Product Type

Similarly, for analyzing child's influence for various products another factor analysis was done. In total fifteen products and services (including variety of household and child related products are taken) were taken on a 5 point likert scale and factor analysis was conducted as shown in Table 5. Reliability check was good (Cronbach's alpha = 0.863), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.840 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity: Approx. (Chi-Square) = 881.157.

This factor analysis resulted into three product categories. These Product categories are as follows:

Table 3
*Factor analysis for socialization agents*

| Factor | Item | Factor Loading | Factor Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | You watch lot of television programs in a day. | 0.57 | Friends and TV |
| | You want to buy the products advertized on television. | 0.44 | |
| | You usually buy the same stuff as your friends. | 0.78 | |
| | You discuss with your friends about the things you want to buy. | 0.67 | |
| 2 | You surf lot of internet in a day. | 0.76 | Internet |
| | You use internet to find information about products from internet. | 0.70 | |
| | You use internet for school assignments. | 0.70 | |
| 3. | Your parents discuss with you about the things they want to buy. | 0.69 | Parents |
| | You came to know about the new products from your parents. | 0.52 | |
| | Your parents ask for your opinion before buying a product. | 0.80 | |
| 4. | You go out for shopping. | 0.906 | Shopping |

Table 4
*Mean and standard deviations of socialization agents*

| **Socialization Agents** | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| Internet | 1.737143 | .55431 |
| FTV | 1.838571 | .43798 |
| Parents | 2.00381 | .43474 |
| Shopping | 2.051429 | .58984 |

**Family Products: Family product** is the name given to the first product category identified through factor analysis. This category is made up of six products/items: vacation, computer, mobile phone, car, television and washing machine as shown in Table 5. These products are expensive products and their purchase takes most of time and discussion of parents and kids together.

**Child Products: Child product** is the second product category comprises of six products: stationery, books, food and beverages, clothes, movie tickets, dining

Table 5
*Factor analysis of product categories*

| Factor | Item | Factor Loading | Factor Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vacation | 0.55 | Family Products |
| | Computer | 0.54 | |
| | Mobile Phone | 0.79 | |
| | Car | 0.74 | |
| | Television | 0.80 | |
| | Washing Machine | 0.59 | |
| 2 | Stationary Books | 0.67 | Child Products |
| | Food and Beverages | 0.63 | |
| | Clothes and Shoes | 0.48 | |
| | Movie Ticket | 0.49 | |
| | Dining out | 0.67 | |
| | Video game | 0.55 | |
| 3. | Shampoo | 0.80 | Household Products |
| | Toothpaste | 0.74 | |
| | Grocery | 0.66 | |

Table 6
*Means and standard deviation of the product categories*

| S. No. | Factor Name | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Loud Goods | 3.09 | .63 |
| 2 | Noisy Goods | 3.09 | .98 |
| 3 | Quiet Goods | 2.99 | .68 |

out and video games. These are the products of high child involvement and are directly used by children.

**Household Products:** The third category is of household products which includes three products; shampoo, toothpaste and grocery items. These products are regular household products for which usually not much discussion happens in family.

As seen from Table 6, out of all the product categories, children have higher influence for loud and noisy goods and relatively less for quiet goods. The reason is child's level of involvement. Quiet goods are usual house-hold items for which parents usually take the decision. On the other hand noisy goods are child centric goods and they are bound to have more influence. Children's influence on loud goods is interesting as

loud goods are expensive but still children feel they influence those decisions as well.

**Buying Stages**

Initiation Stage: Initiation Stage is the first and most important stage in there three stage buying process. In this stage, problems or needs are recognized. The buying process is triggered by internal stimuli or external stimuli. So in this stage, a prospective consumer identifies that there is a need or want to buy a product / service.

Search and Evaluation Stage: The next stage is to search for the products which can solve the problem (or satisfy the need) one identified in the first stage. The buyer will make effort to search information related to the products/services. One may also seek the opinions of friends, family and colleagues. The buyer then evaluates and compares each product against each other and may also rank the choices.

Final Decision Stage: After the Search and Evaluation stage, the consumer who has evaluated the different products and services to satisfy his need, will be making the final decision to buy or not to buy. His decision will depend on the information and the selection made in the previous stages which help him decide the brand, store and other specifics of his future purchase.

The means and standard deviations (Table 7) were used to rank the child's influence across the buying process stages and sub-decisions. As seen, Children feel they have highest influence in the final decision stage and least influence in the Initiation stage.

**Influence Strategies**

For analyzing the various influence tactics used by children to persuade their parents, another factor analysis was done. A list of sixteen different influence tactics was prepared. The respondents were asked to rate how often the child use these influence tactics on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 being never used and 5 being used every time. Factor analysis resulted in these five strategies (Table 8).

Table 7
*Mean and standard deviations for buying process stages*

| Buying Process Stages | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Initiation Stage | 1.886 | .376 |
| Search and Evaluation Stage | 1.753 | .401 |
| Final decision Stage | 1.833 | .416 |

**Aggressive Influence Strategies**: These are the influence tactics where children use aggression to pester their parents. In such cases, a child thrust his demand by expressing rage, by showing annoyance and by acting obstinately.

**Persuasion Influence Strategies**: At times children use variety of opinions and beliefs to influence parents. These are persuasion tactics. For example a child may nag his/her parents constantly to demand something. Tricks like begging, arguing, whining are often used by young kids.

**Rational Influence Strategies:** When the young child provides logic in his pestering, it falls under rational tactics. Children play smart by negotiating with parents for example doing homework in exchange of an ice cream.

**Knowledge Influence Strategies:** Children also use their knowledge to influence their parents. Many times, children know about the product or brand though different media and advertisements and they use this knowledge to have their way with their parents.

**Emotional Influence Strategies**: Emotional tactics like being too nice and obedient to parents also works for children to influence parents. Children acts affectionately and soft in their behavior to get what they want.

The strategies are then ranked. The ranking using the mean scores and standard deviation are given in Table 9. It is clear that the emotional strategies had the highest mean of 2.80, stating that according to young Indian children, they use emotional strategies most often to influence their parents to purchase any product.

Table 8
*Factor analysis of influence strategies*

| Factor | Item | Factor Loading | Factor Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Express Anger | 0.70 | Aggressive Strategies |
| | Not Eating | 0.79 | |
| | Stubbornly acting | 0.76 | |
| 2. | Express opinion on product | 0.43 | Persuasive Strategies |
| | Insisting that this is what he/she want | 0.61 | |
| | Use begging strategies | 0.78 | |
| | Nagging and Whining | 0.53 | |
| | Pretending illness to make parents sympathize | 0.46 | |

Table 8 *(Continue)*

| Factor | Item | Factor Loading | Factor Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Offer Deals | 0.64 | Rational Strategies |
| | Bringing an external reason | 0.46 | |
| | Propose fair competition | 0.75 | |
| | Hide things in the shopping trolley | 0.39 | |
| 4. | Tell about the TV ad he/she saw about product | 0.70 | Knowledge Strategies |
| | Tell that the brand is famous | 0.68 | |
| 5. | Tell that all friends have it | 0.52 | Emotional Strategies |
| | Be unnaturally nice to parents | 0.79 | |

Table 9
*Mean and standard deviations for influence strategies*

| **Influence Strategies** | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| Aggressive Strategies | 2.2610 | .99094 |
| Persuasion strategies | 2.5646 | .72580 |
| Rational Strategies | 2.1200 | .82865 |
| Knowledge Strategies | 2.5914 | 1.00154 |
| Emotional Strategies | 2.8029 | .90162 |

## Children Consumer Profiling

The critical findings provided us with three different consumer profiles for children. Based on children's socialization, influence strategies and their influence in the various buying stages, their distinct consumer profile can be identified and used for various business and marketing decision making.

Children who had highest influence on the loud goods have some distinct characteristics; similarly children who had highest influence on the noisy and quiet goods also have some specific characteristics. Using the radar diagram, the mean scores of four child's socialization factors, five influence strategies and child's influence level for three different buying stages, three consumer profiles for young children has been created.

Figure 1 graphically shows the three distinct consumer profiles of young children. This figure was constructed using the mean scores of Socialization agents, Influence strategies and Product categories on radar in Microsoft Excel.

### Quiet Shoppers

Quiet Shoppers are children who are more socialized by their parents, friends and television and have relatively high influence in the buying of household products like shampoo, toothpaste and grocery. Quiet shoppers usually do not initiate the buying process but they do have their say in the final buying decision or sub decisions like color, variant, etc. These children usually use emotional strategies to influence parents.

### Loud Shoppers

Loud shoppers are very loud in ascertaining their influence over parent's decision for buying expensive family products like car, television, computer or mobile phone. Such young shoppers are largely influenced by shopping with their parents and through friends and TV. As far as the buying stage is concerned, loud shoppers are most influential in the first and final buying stage.

### Noisy Shoppers

Noisy shoppers are very involved with the products of their involvement like stationary, clothes, food and beverages, movie tickets, dining out and video games. These noisy shoppers largely influenced from friends and TV. Noisy shoppers create lot of noise to initiate the buying process as well as other stages also.

Figure 1 graphically shows the three distinct consumer profiles of young children.

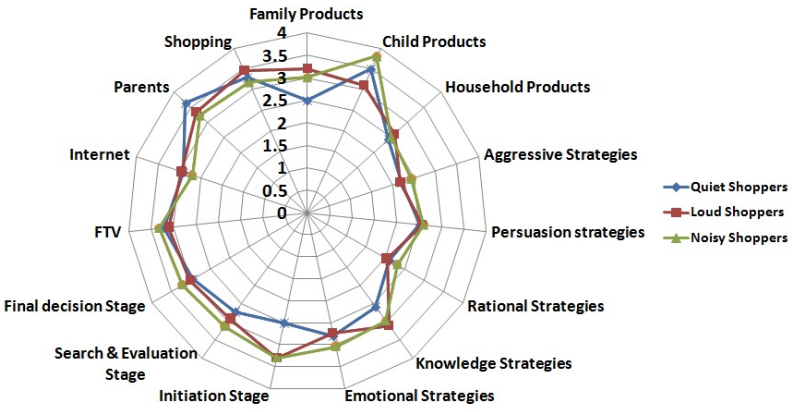


*Figure 1*. Children's consumer profiling

## DISCUSSION

For marketers' consumer profiling is very useful marketing tool. The main objective behind consumer profiling is to break your consumer base into distinct target groups that share specific characteristics. These distinct characteristics can be based on demographics (age, and gender), geographical (local, global), behavioral (attitude, usage, response) or psychographic (lifestyle, interest, opinion). Profiling allows organizations to enhance consumer segmentation with more insight of the target consumers which allows them to make more effective and efficient business decisions.

This study was aimed at the development of commercially interesting children market segments and has been successful in identifying the different consumer profiles for children based on children socialisation, the strategies they use to pester and their relative influence in different stages of consumer buying. The three profiles identified are: Quiet shoppers, Loud shoppers and Noisy shoppers. These children profiles give insight about the role these young consumers have in their family groups. The identified children profiles can provide today's marketer an edge by strategically develop strategies to target this commercially interesting market segment. Using these profiles, the firms can develop insights about their target markets and formulate effective marketing strategies. For marketers who are aiming Noisy Shoppers have to be very cautious about how they are placing their product. Any marketing communications to this group may be more effective if the product or brand is associated with fun and happiness, rather than talking about actual product facts. On the other hand for the Loud Shoppers, the advertisement should aim at creating awareness of the product, the factual details, features and benefits, and portray uniqueness of the product and excitement in usage. But marketers need to be very careful dealing with children. They partially understand the intent of advertising and they tend to take advertised claims about a product literally. Also since the research and impact would be on young children, it is our responsibility to apply responsible marketing towards them.

The developmental stages of children and their distinct characteristics (as a very active participant and influencer in family buying) will enable researchers to inquire them more thoroughly. From an academic perspective, a latest field of research is unwrapped to be explored.

So far very few studies were conducted at this detailed level on very kids.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study can be limited in terms of geographical extent as data from ten schools in the NCR region in India is taken. So the scope of the study is limited to the sample size and to the metro cities. Future research can be more elaborate with more schools and geographical reach. Also, future researches could also include a broad range of factors that determine family decision making, including the effect of demographic factors.

## CONCLUSION

The empirical study conceptualized and discussed the distinct factors that characterize a young consumer's role in family decision-making process. Through different variables: child's involvement at various buying stages, product type and various tactics used by children, distinct consumer profiling of young children is attempted. Detailed analysis included principal component factor analysis, ranking through descriptive analysis and with the help of radar diagram; children's consumer profiles are identified. Three distinct profiles identified are "Quiet Shoppers", "Loud Shoppers" and "Noisy Shoppers".

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