



A STUDY ON BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG CHILDREN AND ITS EFFECT ON FAMILY BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN BANGALORE CITY

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ABSTRACT:

Children today are extremely aware of the various brands in the market and are conscious of the products they use or consume. They pick and choose carefully according to their needs, style preference etc. They also exercise a lot of independence in decision-making and influence the family buying behaviour.

This study is an attempt to examine the level of brand consciousness among Indian children. Few specific studies on brand consciousness among Indian children have been conducted so far. Further, this study also analyses the effect of such brand consciousness in children on the family buying behaviour.

This study is based on the findings of a survey of 222 children and 222 parents spread over the south of Bangalore City. The children were in the age group of 8 to 16 years, both boys and girls selected at random within the age group mentioned, using convenience sampling method without any stratification to obtain a uniform size of respondents in each age / sex category.

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Introduction

'Brand', 'Brand Name', 'Brand Equity', 'Brand Loyalty' are forces or terms that affects a business. Product features can be easily copied; therefore brands are considered a marketer's tool for creating product differentiation. Brands differentiate products and represent a promise of value.

People buy products, but which products they buy and how they make buying decision have a lot to do with how they feel about the brand. Products are what the company makes, what the customer buys is a brand. Brands work by facilitating and making more effective the consumer's choice process. Brands have social and emotional value to users. They have personality and speak for the user. They enhance the perceived utility and desirability of a product. Brands have the ability to add or subtract the perceived value of a product. Consumers expect to pay lower prices for unbranded products or for those with low brand equities. On the other hand, they are ready to pay a premium for their favorite or socially valued brands.

Importance of the Study

Children today are extremely aware of the various brands in the market and are conscious of the products they use or consume. They pick and choose carefully according to their needs, style preferences, etc. They also exercise a lot of independence in decision-making and influence the family buying behaviour. Today's kids are well informed, better than their parents. This is because virtually from birth today's children are exposed to TV commercials, banner ads, billboards, logos, and product promotions.

Through this study, the researcher wishes to provide valuable insights to the marketers on the level of brand consciousness among children and its influence on the family buying behaviour. Thus enable them to devise their marketing strategies based on the findings.

Further, the researcher also wishes to study what the consumer is actually looking for in a branded product, whether Indian consumers value only branded products or give equal value for unbranded quality products.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the studies conducted on brand consciousness among children were done in the U.S. or elsewhere outside India. Few specific studies on brand consciousness

among Indian children have been conducted so far. Similarly, though much research has been done into the husband-wife interaction and the family as a whole in the purchase-decision process, relatively few studies deal with the role of children in the family buying process. In order to bridge this gap in this important area of marketing the present study was undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To study the level of brand consciousness among children in the age group of 8 - 16 years, residing in south Bangalore City.
2. To analyse the effect of brand consciousness among children in the family buying behaviour.
3. To examine whether unbranded products provide same satisfaction as branded products and customers' preference for unbranded products.
4. To offer valuable suggestions to the marketer that would help in product planning, product promotion and product pricing.

Limitations of the Study

The universe being large, the study was restricted to children residing in south Bangalore.

- The sample size is only 222 children, so the sample may not be truly representative of the population.
- The questionnaires were to be filled independently by the children, only children from eight years upwards were included in the study. This is because, they need to read, comprehend and answer the questions.
- The maximum age limit considered is 16 years, otherwise the universe will be too large.
- Data collection was a difficult task. Many questionnaires were distributed, but all were not returned. Some came back with only either the child's part or the parent's part filled. Some had not filled all the answers.
- The above limitations serve as impediments for 100% accuracy in analysis.

Period of Study

The collection of data began from the month of October 2003 and was completed in February 2004. The research report pertains to the year April 2003 to June 2004.

Research Methodology

Collection of Data

The data has been collected from primary and secondary sources.

Primary data was collected using two sets of questionnaires with 21 questions in each. One administered to the child to study the level of brand consciousness, and the second administered to the parent to study the impact on the family buying behaviour. In order to have adequate representation of children of all ages and gender, the researcher approached a school in the area and collected data in a structured manner from third standard students up to tenth standard students.

Secondary data was collected from Previous Dissertations / Research Papers Marketing Journals/Magazines, Text Books & Websites

Sampling Technique

- **Universe:** Children in the age group of 8 years to 16 years.
- **Sampling unit:** The sampling unit was limited to the south of Bangalore City.
- **Sample size:** 222 children and 222 parents.
- **Sampling design:** Convenience sampling method without any stratification to obtain a uniform size of respondents in each age / sex category.

Profile of Geographical Area of Study

The study was conducted in the southern part of the city of Bangalore, Karnataka.

Bangalore is a cosmopolitan city with a population of 6.52 million and literacy level of 83.91%. The official language of the state is Kannada, though, being a cosmopolitan city many languages are spoken here. Bangalore is the IT hub of

India and is referred to as the 'Silicon Valley' of India. The city houses people of different culture, mostly serving the IT industry. A majority of them belong to the middle class and the upper middle class. The per capita income for the urban area only is Rs. 28,305 (as per 1998-99 index). Their life style exhibits high level of brand awareness / consciousness.

Profile of Respondents

This study is based on findings of a survey of 222 children and their parents spread over the south of Bangalore City. The children were in the age group of 8 to 16 years. Both boys and girls selected at random within the age group mentioned, using convenience-sampling method. The children are mostly from middle class and upper middle class strata of the society.

Further, the respondents being children, items / products used by children where they may have substantial degree of influence in the buying process, have been specifically referred to in the questionnaire, although, a few questions do ask about their influence in purchase decision process of other items used by the family.

Analysis and Interpretation

In this section some of the responses are presented in the form of statistical tables for clear and easy comprehension

Abbreviations used

CQ2 - Child questionnaire, second question.

PQ1 - Parent questionnaire, first question

3.1 - Analysis based on 'Child as respondent.'

Independence in purchase decision

In CQ4, a series of FMCG and durable items consumed / used by the children were listed and the child asked to name his / her favorite brand against each. Eg- chocolates, clothes, chips, shoes, bicycle, beverages/health drinks (Bournvita, Milo, Complan etc.), biscuits, soft drinks, pens, pencils, watches, bags.

In CQ6, children were asked whether they had the freedom to decide and buy of their own choice the above items

Table 3.1.1 Child's independence in making purchase decision.

Child decides		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	88	39.6
	no	7	3.2
	not for all	127	57.2
	Total	222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

The table shows that children do not enjoy independence in decision making for all the items listed as most of them (57.2%) have opted 'not for all'. But sizeable respondents (39.6%) have said 'yes' that they decide independently.

Parent's acceptance of child's decision

Table 3.1.2. Parents' agreement with child's decision.

Parents agree		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	83	37.4
	no	6	2.7
	not for all	129	58.1
	Total	218	98.2
not answered		4	1.8
Total		222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

Parents do not agree with all that the child buys (58.1%), but approve most of them (37.4 %). A very negligible percent (2.7%) do not approve of their child's choice.

Brand gives satisfaction

Table 3.1.3 shows if selecting a particular brand gives a sense of satisfaction.

Table 3.1.3

Brand gives satisfaction		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	172	77.5
	no	5	2.3
	not for all	44	19.8
	Total	221	99.5
not answered		1	.5
Total		222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

Most of the respondents (77.5 %) said that selecting a particular brand gives them a sense of satisfaction.

Reason for preferring a branded item

Table 3.1.4. Reason for preferring branded item

Parents agree		Frequency	Percent
Valid	prestige	11	5.0
	fashion	20	9.0
	brand name	18	8.1
	quality	130	58.6
	it attracts you	33	14.9
	all	8	3.6
	Total	220	99.1
not answered	2	.9	
Total		222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

The most important reason that respondents prefer buying branded products is for quality (58.6%). About 14.9% prefer because it attracts them and about 9% prefer because of fashion.

Unbranded products vs. branded products

CQ20: Do you feel that an unbranded product may also sometimes give you the same satisfaction as a branded product?

Table 3.1.5 depicts respondents' perception of unbranded products.

Table 3.1.5

Gives same satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
yes	150	67.6
no	71	32.0
Total	221	99.5
not answered	1	.5
Total	222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

67.6% have expressed that unbranded products provide same satisfaction as that of branded products. 32% indicated that they do not qualify the norms of branded products.

3.2 - Analysis based on 'Parent as respondent.'

Parents consider children's opinion

PQ19: Do you consider your children's opinion / suggestions when you buy other items for your family, Eg, Fridge, Washing Machine, T.V, Stove, Electrical/Electronic goods etc.

Table 3.2.1 shows whether parents consider children's opinion

Table 3.2.1

Consider children's opinion	Frequency	Percent
always	37	16.7
sometimes	146	65.8
never	37	16.7
Total	220	99.1
not answered	2	.9
Total	222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

According to the table 65.8% of the parents consider their children's opinion sometimes while purchasing durable goods mentioned in the table. About 16.7% always take into consideration their children's opinion while making such purchases. An equal percentage of parents (16.7%) have said that they never consider their children's opinion.

Value of children's suggestions to parents

Table 3.2.2 shows the extent parents value children's suggestions.

Table 3.2.2

How far valuable	Frequency	Percent
high level	28	12.6
moderate level	178	80.2
not at all	10	4.5
Total	216	97.3
not answered	6	2.7
Total	222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

According to the table, 80.2% parents have expressed that children's suggestions are valuable to them at a moderate level while making purchases for the family. 12.6% parents said that their children's suggestions are highly valuable to them during purchases. A very negligible number of respondents (4.5%) said their children's suggestion is not at all valuable to them.

Use of brand awareness among children to parents

Table 3.2.3 shows the extent brand awareness among children is helpful to parents.

Table 3.2.3

Level	Frequency	Percent
high level	42	18.9
to some extent	168	75.7
not at all	12	5.4
Total	222	100.0

Source – Primary Data

Inference

It is evident from the table given above that brand awareness amongst children is helpful to parents to some extent, as about 76% of respondents have opted for it. 19% of respondents said it is highly helpful. While only 5% of respondents feel it does not help at all.

3.3 - Hypothesis Testing

Chi-square Test-I: Children's Insistence and Parents Preference for Branded Products

H_0 : - Children's insistence and parent's preference for branded products are independent.

H_1 : - Children's insistence and parent's preference for branded products are dependent.

Table 3.3.1. Chi-square Table

Observed freq. 'O'	Expected freq. 'E'	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² / E
43	28	225	8.03
8	13	25	1.92
41	51	100	1.96
3	5	4	0.8
5	2	6	3.0
9	9	0	0
21	34	169	4.97
18	16	4	0.25
74	64	100	1.56
Chi - square value			22.49

Source – Primary Data

Inference

The calculated value of Chi-square is **22.49**.

The table value is found to be **9.488** which is established by taking Alpha = 0.05 (i.e. 5% level of significance) and degree of freedom d.o.f. = 4

Since the table value is less than the calculated value, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H_1) as true.

It is concluded that Children's insistence and parents' preference for branded products are dependent.

TEST - II: Branded Vs. Unbranded Products

ANOVA (Single Factor)

This test is done to verify whether there is a significant difference in the levels of satisfaction of respondents between branded and unbranded products. (PQ7 & PQ18]

¹ d.o.f = (r-1) x (c-1)

H_0 : - There is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of branded and unbranded products.

H_1 : - There is a significant difference between the satisfaction levels of branded and unbranded products.

Table 3.3.2

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Branded	222	672	3.027	87.302
Unbranded	222	378	1.7027	43.223

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	194.68	1	194.68	2.9829	0.0848	3.8626]
Within Groups	28846	42	65.263			
Total	29041	443				

Source – Primary Data

Inference

In the above table the value of $F=2.9829$ and $F_{crit}=3.8626$ that is, $F < F_{crit}$.

Hence the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is rejected.

It is concluded that there is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of branded and unbranded products. That is, unbranded products give same satisfaction as branded products according to respondents.

Findings

I - Child as respondent

- Children do not enjoy independence in decision making for all the items listed in the questionnaire, as most of them (57.2%) have ticked 'not for all'. But a sizeable respondents (39.6%) have said 'yes' that they decide independently
- **Good Quality** is the foremost reason for buying a branded item (45.5%), followed by reliability (15.8%). About 29.7% of respondents feel that all the aspects are important to them.
- 81.1% respondents said they don't mind paying more for a branded product as they get value for money.
- 67.6% have expressed that unbranded products provide same satisfaction as that of branded products. 32% indicated that they do not qualify the norms of branded products.

II - Parent as respondent

- 55.9% of the parents have said that their children insist for branded items 'sometimes', 29.7% of respondents said 'yes they insist' and 14% of respondents said 'no' they do not insist on branded items.
- 65.8% of the parents consider their children's opinion sometimes while purchasing durable goods mentioned in the table. About 16.7% always take into consideration their children's opinion while making such purchases. An equal percentage of parents (16.7%) have said that they never consider their children's opinion.
- 80.2% parents have expressed that children's suggestions are valuable to them at a moderate level while making purchases for the family. 12.6% parents said that their children's suggestions are highly valuable to them during purchases. A very negligible number of respondents (4.5%) said their children's suggestion is not at all valuable to them.
- Brand awareness amongst children is helpful to parents to some extent, as about 76% of respondents have opted for it. 19% of respondents said it is highly helpful. While only 5% of respondents feel it does not help at all.

III - Findings of Hypotheses Testing

- Children's insistence for branded products and parents' preference for branded products is dependent.
- There is a significant difference in the motivation for buying branded items between boys and girls. That is, boys and girls have different motivating factors for buying branded items.
- There is a significant difference in the reasons for buying branded items amongst the various income groups.
- Parent's acceptance of child's suggestions and the gender of child are independent.
- There is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of branded and unbranded products. That is, unbranded products give same satisfaction as branded products according to respondents.

Suggestions

- Companies need to allocate huge budgets for advertising, promotion and publicity in order to build brand image. In the minds of consumers a better known brand is considered to be a better brand.
- Studies show that children begin to recognize product brands at an early age. Hence, even if the child does not have use for the product immediately, the marketing must begin in childhood so as to build the brand image.
- Successful brand building among children can carry over into adulthood. It ensures brand loyalty.
- A child's insistence for branded products (clothes or shoes) is likely to have more effect on a parent than advertising. The study reveals that parents prefer branded products because child insists for them.
- Brand awareness among children is helpful to parents to a large extent. They consider their opinion / suggestions while making purchase decision of durable goods for the family.
- Boys and girls have different motivating factors for buying branded items. This necessitates that the marketer has to reach accordingly to the different

segments. Separate advertising campaign should be initiated for boys and girls.

- Customers associate a branded product with 'good quality'. To successfully promote a brand and to retain customer loyalty, the marketer must ensure that quality of the product is maintained at a high level.
- More than the brand name or company name, consumers primarily seek quality in products. They are satisfied with an unbranded product if it is of good quality.
- Marketers of unbranded products must strive to penetrate the market by improving quality of the product and give wide publicity.
- If local marketers deliver the promise of quality they can compete with top branded products.
- The promotion strategy adopted by marketers of unbranded products should strive to change the mind set about customers' perception of quality of unbranded products.

Conclusion

A brand aims to segment the market in order to differentiate supply and fulfill the expectations of specific groups of customers. Products cannot speak for themselves; the brand is what gives them meaning and speaks for them.

Today, brands are considered to be among the greatest strengths of a company and the brand image is very important. It is what people remember if they remember at all. Brand image is built with the logo, name, and slogan all consistently speaking about the USP of the brand. Strong brands command premium, they do well during economic slowdown and can be extended to new businesses with ease.

Based on the study the major conclusions drawn by the researcher are set out below:

- Quality is an important factor that draws consumers towards branded products. Branded products are accepted as good quality products.
- Children are highly aware and conscious of branded items.

- People don't mind paying extra for branded products, as they get value for money.
- Media is a key constituent in promoting and influencing a brand.
- Child's insistence affects family buying behaviour.
- Spending power among children has increased.
- Children have more say in the purchase of products that are less expensive and are intended for their own use.
- Boys have a slight edge over girls in getting parents agree with them.
- Peer pressure works more in boys.
- Girls are more conservative and buy mostly when in need of things.
- Both boys and girls invariably consult family members in purchase decisions.
- Children prefer branded products for items like watches, clothes and shoes.
- Although unbranded products sometimes give same satisfaction as branded products customers would still prefer to purchase a branded product.

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