

## PESTER POWER- THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON OF KIDS

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### ABSTRACT

*The internets have taken up the majority of children's leisure time, drastically altering their media habits. Even the dinner table, where parents used to instill many positive values and wholesome ideas in their children, has been supplanted with watching television. Children today are so technologically aware that they practically know how everything works on the internet, and their browsing habits expose them to more of these sites and products around the world that they may then demand from their parents. Children's growing consumerism is blamed for the emergence of Pester Power. Due to the deluge of new TV (television) content, this trend has emerged. Nowadays, almost all marketers seek to promote their goods directly to the young target audience. The composition of Indian families has shifted from joint families to nuclear or extended families as a result of influences from the west. Indian consumerism has been greatly influenced by exposure to the globalised world and changing family dynamics. Kids are ruling the consumer market as three distinct segments are represented by them. The research aims to study the influence of cartoon character, celebrity endorsement on child's pester power. The study also proves that there is positive relationship between humour in advertisements with child buying behaviour.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Child As Consumer, Cartoon Character, Celebrity Endorsements, Humour In Advertisements.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has undergone enormous change. With a growing tendency toward small, nuclear families, families' structure are transforming across the globe. These developments have also affected India. The composition of Indian families has shifted from joint families to nuclear or extended families as a result of influences from the west. Indian

consumerism has been greatly influenced by exposure to the globalised world and changing family dynamics, and as a result, the current generation of Indian consumers is very different from those of the past. Marketers are concentrating on New Consumers - The Children.

Families' spending habits are influenced by the kids these days. They have a lot of control over the family budget when it comes to decisions like vacation destinations, car purchases, and restaurant choices. Therefore, influencing kids also means influencing the whole family's purchasing decisions.

Due to the massive increase in the number of available television channels, OTT platforms and usage of digital media, marketers are increasingly focusing on kids as their target market. This is due to two key factors: first, children now have more discretionary income and more influence over parent purchasing decisions than ever before; and furthermore, there is an expanding market niche dedicated exclusively to kids and kid's product lines as a result.

Kids are ruling the consumer market as three distinct segments are represented by them: kids are receptive to marketing campaigns aimed at influencing household purchases (the influence market), having their own money to spend (the present market), and becoming future customers (Future market)

Impact of young kids varies depending on the good or service, product sub-decision, phase of the decision process, type of socialization of children, sex roles orientation of families, demographic characteristics like age and gender, as well as the interviewee chosen for research of relative influence (Belch et al., 1985). This effect is mostly being driven by the media, which offers many different informational channels. These many channels are increasing children's exposure. Winick and Winick (1979) believe that TV is an essential part of a child's development by referring to it as a family member. With the introduction of specialty channels like Cartoon Network, Hungama, and Pogo, among others, marketers now have a way to draw in children's attention and offer goods that are created just for them. They link famous people and cartoon characters to their products, making it simple for their young customers to remember and retain knowledge about them. The practice is mostly seen in establishments like McDonald's that give children tiny toys as a sign of appreciation (Williams and Veeck, 1998) or pair a cartoon figure with a junk food product.

Marketing professionals agree that digital (internet and mobile) is the best way to connect with this group of consumers, especially in urban areas. According to a recent study by Cartoon Network called New Generations 2011, 79% of kids between the ages of 7 and 14 now own a mobile phone, and their disposable income has increased significantly over the past 10 and five years, by over 200% and 59%, respectively. The age group's access to the internet has increased fourfold over the last ten years. Kids and youngsters access to the internet has increased fourfold over the last ten years. The top internet activities for kids are gaming, listening to or downloading music, using social media, and searching.

Thus, the digital media is proving to be a wonderful platform for advertisers to generate buzz about goods ranging from clothing to entertainment through newsgroups, chat rooms, and blogs. The peer group, which puts pressure on them, is another source of information for children. Peer pressure is therefore the influence that a peer group, observers, or an individual uses to persuade others to alter their attitudes or behaviors in order to fit in with social norms. Since young people

spend a lot of time in schools and other set groupings, peer pressure is most frequently linked to young people. Therefore, this strategy is used by marketers to identify role models for young people and get them to use or wear their product in order to generate buzz. Research has consistently demonstrated, according to Goldstein (1998), that peer influences have a greater impact on children than media.

### **PESTER POWER**

Every parent wants the best for their child, and they will do whatever it takes to make that happen. As a result, it is becoming clearer that advertising nowadays primarily targets kids because they have the most impact over family decisions. The child has a significant influence over the purchases that are made at home, even if most of the time the parent is the customer because he pays the bill. The term "Pester Power" or "Nag Factor" refers to a child's capacity to procure goods or perform services by pestering their parents until they give in.

Children's growing consumerism is blamed for the emergence of Pester Power. Due to the deluge of new TV (television) content, this trend has emerged. Nowadays, almost all marketers seek to promote their goods directly to the young target audience. The objective of advertising to children is to captivate them and excite them about the company's product line so that, in the end, both kids and parents will choose the company's product first. The goal of today's advertisers is to develop devoted customers at a very young age. This promotes the growth of a solid consumer base and brand education, both of which are crucial for future brand choice. Parents seek advice from their kids before making any significant purchase decisions because they want to receive their child's approval on the topic, whether they are selecting the colour of a car, a mobile phone, or just regular toothpaste for the house. In addition, they understand that refusing their kid's demands could have negative consequences. This dread causes parents to typically give in to most of their children's demands, frequently at the expense of their own preferences. The youngster will never lose in a fight, even though they might not always win!

### **Why Pester Power is increasing?**

Television and, more lately, the internet have taken up the majority of children's leisure time, drastically altering their media habits. Even the dinner table, where parents used to instill many positive values and wholesome ideas in their children, has been supplanted with watching television. Children today are so technologically aware that they practically know how everything works on the internet, and their browsing habits expose them to more of these sites and products around the world that they may then demand from their parents.

Another significant factor in the increase of pestering power is the alteration of family structure. The lack of parental involvement in children's lives and the presence of working parents are indicators of this. To make up for their lack of quality time with their kids, parents who are driven by guilt lavish them with a variety of ostentatious gifts. Additionally, as parents get more wealthy, they give in to their kids' demands rather than going through the time-consuming process of resisting them.

Also, emergence of the so-called "Six-pocket syndrome," in which a child is spoilt by almost six persons, including the mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, uncle and aunt. As evidenced by current demographic trends, parents are choosing to have fewer children, which results in the

single kid of this family receiving an excessive amount of affection and attention, making the child resistant to hear "no" in response to a request.

Schools provide a large audience of young people and convey the support of the educational system and teachers. Marketers are eagerly utilizing this platform to promote their goods in a variety of ways, such as through exclusive agreements with fast food or soft drink companies to offer their product in a school, posting advertisements on computers, buses, and other places in exchange for money, and financially supporting school events.

Parents are very motivated to get their kids ready for adulthood, or at the very least for self sufficiency. This ambition manifests itself in the form of teaching children life skills so they can function independently of their parents. One of these skills is knowing how to shop. It is evident that parents' desires and encouragement, along with the fact that they give their children pocket money, cause children to become consumers in our culture at a very young age. The majority of kids have pocket money, which has the effect of making them a relatively large market for goods like candy, soft drinks, and toys because they buy them for their own satisfaction and self-sufficiency.

Because adults have a greater understanding of brands, models, and the most recent trends, they are the direct predecessors of children's purchasing behavior, which shows that parents consulted them even when making purchases of goods unrelated to the children, such cars. Additionally, youngsters claimed their parents purchased them things that made them happy.

Another major development is the introduction of mobile advertising to kids. Young people can now be contacted by advertisements at any time of the day, not only when they are sat in front of a television or computer. The information is interactive, just like online marketing. Compared to other online advertising, mobile advertising can more specifically target youngsters. Since it can monitor where they are in proximity to particular fast food or retail locations. Two out of three people between the ages of 12 and 27 had a mobile device that could connect to the internet in 2012, such as a tablet or an ipad Touch. Of all people between those ages, 41% owned a smart phone.

All of these marketing techniques entice kids, and they persuade parents to buy the product that catches their attention the best.

## **Pester Power- in Indian Context**

Thanks to the rapid spread of information around the globe, we are living in a time of rising consumerism, and India is no exception. Free market competition is also strengthening. Children have become one of the most influential groups that have recently arisen. The spread of digital media and the economic prosperity of the family appear to be the most important contributors to the increase of pester power besides all other elements. As a result, numerous channels are now swamped with advertisements for goods from companies like Parle, Nestle, Britannia, Kellogg's, ITC, Hotwheels.com. Soni and Upadhyaya (2007) came to the conclusion that the five best items for which children bug their parents are fast food restaurants, fashionable apparel, chips, chocolates, games, and toys. Children can pest their parents in a variety of ways. Soni and Upadhyaya (2007) reported that girls spend significantly on clothing and footwear (58%) as well as hair accessories (12%) and makeup (22%). Boys spend a significant amount of money on video games, toys, games, apparel, and other items.

Restrictions are already in place in Sweden, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Denmark, and Belgium. They have also been recommended in the majority of other EU nations including the USA. In India, self-regulatory organisations like ASCI are in operation, defining the rules and criteria for advertising. "To safeguard against the indiscriminate use of Advertising in situations or of the promotion of products which are regarded as hazardous or harmful to society or to individuals, particularly minors, to a degree or of a type which is unacceptable to society at large," is one of ASCI's stated objectives under Chapter III.

Research investigations in India have shown that television is increasingly becoming a major source of knowledge and enjoyment for millions of Indian families. It is obvious that a rising amount of advertising are now targeted at this prospective target group due to the growing influence of media on youngsters. Television advertisements that are aimed at children are quite effective at achieving their intended purpose of encouraging product sales, despite the fact that the method is indirect.

According to a study by Kaur P. and Singh R. (2006), although Indian youngsters don't have the same level of purchasing power as their Western counterparts, they are nevertheless the centre of attention in their families and have the ability to persuade them to travel frequently. They simply don't need much else, according to Swain and Sahu's (2007) observation that "The wireless Internet is their primary nervous system."

### **Literature Review**

According to Moore and Lutz (2000), perceptions toward a brand were influenced by how well-liked an advertisement was by young children (aged seven to eight). Additionally, they discovered that older kids' (10 to 11 year olds) enjoyment of an advertisement affected their attitudes toward the brand through a variety of persuasive channels, which is similar with the literature regarding adults' sentiments toward the brand. Similar findings were made by Phelps and Hoy (1996), who discovered that third- and sixth-graders' perception regarding the advertisement affected their attitudes toward both known and unknown brands as well as their purchase intentions. Children's reactions to advertisements are referred to as their attitudinal impact (Rossiter, 1977).

Children enjoy amusing advertising, particularly those with upbeat music, humour, and cartoon characters, according to the literature that has been published to date (Goldberg and Gorn, 1978). Children have been seen to be drawn to catchy jingles and catchphrases (Bartholomew and O'Donohoe's, 2003). Today, television and advertising have an impact on everyone's life. It's a big business to market to kids, who may be exposed to both conventional products (like toys and cereal) and nonconventional ones (like video games).

The best strategies for using advertising to target youngsters have been sought for by marketers for decades. In order to target youngsters, marketers have employed a variety of advertising techniques. These involve techniques such as the portrayal of humour, action, emotion, product look, or the highlighting of new product features (Barcus 1980; Kunkel 1992). Additionally, research has shown that kids don't pay much attention to information about a product, such as its price, performance, or features (Van Evra 1998). To target children, advertisers instead use compelling visuals that combine live action and animation (Edell 1988). Because tweenagers are thought of as the new teenagers in terms of thinking, the youth market has changed (aspirations,



values and experience). Furthermore, according to McNeal (1999), the ratio of parents who consult their kids about purchases they are making for the entire family has been progressively rising over time. As a result, kids are increasingly being asked to be involved in making purchases as they get more educated and clever about buying ("shopping savvy") (as suggested by Kuhn and Eischen, 1997). Parent-child relationships become increasingly important as time goes on in stressed homes (Sabino, 2002).

According to research, parents can directly influence their children's purchasing decisions by conversing with them about their wants and needs, providing them pocket money, and accompanying them on shopping outings (Ward et al 1977). This encourages consumer socialization in kids from an early age.

Researchers and marketers have begun to place a lot of emphasis on the effects that TV shows and commercials have on youngsters. Because of their cognitive immaturity, according to Berns (2004), children are now frequently utilized as promotional tools. He further on this idea by claiming that kids are more prone to accept the veracity of TV characters and pictures than adults. Advertising and programming content are the two routes of communication that educate kids and teens about items and persuade them to buy them, according to Woodward et al. (1997) and O'Guinn and Shrum (1997). Another result made by O' Guinn and Shrum (1997) is that youngsters are more likely to pick up on consumer behaviour if it is targeted at them through persuasion in advertisements and other TV shows.

The study by Schulman and Clancy (1992) on the most popular after-school pastimes with kids shows that watching TV had the most appealing scores, while shopping came in second. Children's purchasing habits are also somewhat influenced by cartoon character and celebrity endorsements. According to a recent study by Dotson and Hyatt (2005), businesses' associations with particular mainstream sports, music, and celebrities have increased their level of impact on kids. The vast majority of kids watch cartoons and other kid-friendly TV programs like quiz shows, sports shows, etc. Superman, Spider-Man, and other celebrities are used in advertisements to entice children to purchase the product due to their emotional connection to these figures. Kid's magazines have exploded in popularity. These magazines often have children's editions of the adult counterparts.

Rajput, Jawaid, and Naqvi (2013) An investigation was conducted to determine the effect of celebrity endorsement on Pakistani youths' impulsive purchasing habits. Non-probability convenience sampling was used for the statistics, and survey research methodology was used. A sample of 150 young people from Islamabad city, both male and female, was used. Results indicate that impulsive buying style is significantly impacted by star support. It also highlights the effect of celebrity endorsement on the impulsive shopping habits of young people in Pakistan. As a result, the advertisement used celebrity endorsements to encourage teens' impulsive purchasing behavior.

To determine the effect of television advertising on 100 adolescent girls in classes 9th through 12th, Kotwal, Gupta, and Devi (2008) conducted a study. They saw the girls were interested in and considered the TV commercials to be both entertaining and educational. The main justifications for enjoying an advertisement were the details it offered regarding the discount, unique presents included, brands, and product quality. In order of importance, loving advertising

was also influenced by non-informative elements including celebrities, catchy slogans, humourous visual effects, good music, and action.

According to Chitralkha (2012), 75% of kids preferred animated commercials. Cartoons and other forms of animation are popular among kids. This explains why over time, there has been an increase in the number of shows featuring animated cartoons. Children were also influenced by advertising that highlighted their favorites. Kids appear to follow their favorite athletes or movie stars in close to 70% of cases. 42% of children indicated they preferred ads with plenty of color, while 50% of children said they preferred ads that are hilarious.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the impact of cartoon characters on pester power
2. To study the impact of celebrity endorsements on pester power
3. To study the influence of Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior.

### **Research Methodology**

The current study's design is primarily descriptive in nature. There has been usage of both primary and secondary data. The primary information was gathered using questionnaires that were distributed to parents living in Noida, Uttar Pradesh through Google form and some of them handed over personally and others very filled by personal interview with the respondents. Kids of different age group were targeted. Random and Convenient sampling method was used. So out of 300 respondents, 134 kids were boys and 166 kids were girls. Age group targeted were 9-15 years old. Only those parents whose kids were in this age bracket were approached to fill the questionnaire.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted on 300 children in Noida region, Uttar Pradesh, India. If the same research is carried out elsewhere in the nation, the results might be different. The conclusions cannot be generalized due to the small sample size. Secondly these questionnaires are filled by parents, keeping in view their kids and their buying behavior and pester power strategies. This data lacks kid's own perception and view.

### **Analysis of Results**

The research aims to study the influence of cartoon character, celebrity endorsement on child's pester power. The study also proves that there is positive relationship between humour in advertisements with child buying behaviour.

### **Hypothesis 1**

**H01: There is no relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and pester power**

**AH: There is significant relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and pester power**

**TABLE 1 DEPICTING CORRELATION BETWEEN CARTOON CHARACTERS AND PESTER POWER**

		Pester power	Cartoon Character
Pester power	Pearson Correlation	1	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Cartoon Character	Pearson Correlation	.306**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that there is a significant positive relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and use of pester power by kids to buy those products, **where  $r = 0.306$** .

The null hypothesis argues that there exists no significant relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and pester power whereas Alternate hypothesis suggests that there exist significant relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and pester power. So the above table supports the alternate hypothesis, there exist significant relationship between advertisements with cartoon character and pester power

**H02: There is no relationship between celebrity endorsements and pester power**

**AH: There is significant relationship between celebrity endorsements and pester power**

**TABLE 2 DEPICTING CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS AND PESTER POWER**

		Celebrity endorsements	Pester power
Celebrity endorsements	Pearson Correlation	1	-.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Pester power	Pearson Correlation	-.159**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that there is a significant negative relationship between celebrity endorsements and use of pester power by kids to buy those products, **where  $r = -0.159$**

The null hypothesis argues that there exists no significant relationship between celebrity endorsements and pester power whereas Alternate hypothesis suggests that there exist significant



relationship between celebrity endorsements and pester power. So the above table supports the alternate hypothesis, there exist significant negative relationship between celebrity endorsements and pester power

**H03: There is no relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior.**

**AH: There is significant relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior.**

**TABLE 3 DEPICTING CORRELATION BETWEEN HUMOUR IN ADVERTISEMENTS AND CHILD BUYING BEHAVIOR**

	Child buying behavior	Humour in advertisements
Child buying behavior	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .214** .000 300
Humour in advertisements	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.214** 1 .000 300

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that there is a significant positive relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior, **where  $r = 0.214$**

The null hypothesis argues that there exists no significant relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior whereas Alternate hypothesis suggests that there exist significant relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior. So the above table supports the alternate hypothesis, there exist significant relationship between Humour in advertisements on child buying behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Today's parents have a lot of concerns about pester power, despite the fact that it is viewed as a very effective advertising technique. Along with the benefits it brings to the table for the advertisers, Pester Power also has a lot of negative impacts. First, it was shown that, in many circumstances, it exacerbates the child-parent conflict. Not every parent has the resources to satisfy every request made by their kids. After being affected by commercials, kids annoy their parents a lot and not all of their demands can be met. This could potentially lead to health problems. As a result, parents may be compelled to purchase non-nutritional food items for their children, which could pose a serious health risk. This could result in bad eating patterns. Another important worry is that the child might process information incorrectly, which could hurt their ability to learn. Children frequently accept what they perceive. Their capacity for reasoning is lower than adults. Instead than treating advertising as a means of promotion, they view them as entertainment. Additionally, kids appear to mimic the actions of their role models. Most kids

look up to and emulate athletes and movie stars as role models which may result in dangerous or unsafe act. Marketers should act ethically while making advertisements for the kids and promoting products to kids. Also government should take strict actions against marketers who promote products to kids which are not appropriate for them.

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