# PESTERING PARENTS THROUGH SOCIALIZING AGENTS: A CASE OF FMCG PRODUCTS

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*Abstract : In today's transforming scenario, an emergent phenomena of Pester power is to empower children to have primary power in purchasing decision making across the world. This paper attempts to bring receptive issue of growing consumerism in children in India. In today's developing era, the urban children's are relatively pro active, conversant, and are more receptive to influence their parent's decision. With the amplification of Media, Internet, shopping and Television advertising, children are bloated full of information that lead to have a strong impact on their parents. This paper accomplish the dimensions of child socializing agents and different child request strategies used to pester parent's to influence their decision. Descriptive and exploratory research design is used for the study and convenience sampling technique is used to collect the data. A sample of 200 parent child dyad (200 child and 200 Parents) was interviewed with a close ended structured questionnaire. The effort has also been made through this paper to find out whether there are any significant differences in relationship between child socializing agents and child request strategies.*

*IndexTerms: Pester Power, Family Purchase Decision, Child influence, Child Socialization, Child Request Strategy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Pester Power

**According to Mc Millan Dictionary,** Pester power, is the children's ability to make their parents buy something or do something for them by continual asking until the parents agree to do it. In marketing, family act as a central part of consumer decision making  (Tufte B.1999). Each member plays different and imperative role in decision making process. Some act as an initiator to initiate what product need to buy, some act as influencer who influences decision making at each stage. Segmentation is one of the most decisive strategy in STP strategy (Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning). Segmentation is basically a process of segregating the total market into various groups of customers who share similar set of needs and wants. Based on this, marketers target smaller and better-defined customer groups with specific needs and develop distinctive product offerings to satisfy those using different positioning strategies (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Marketer should be clear regarding what segment to target. Children are observed to be an attractive segment by marketer (MartensenA. and Gronholdt L, 2008). Today's Kids are not only an influencer but a customer as well as a better consumer (Tufte B., 1999).  This consumer movement in India has become trade and commerce. They start indulging and influencing at early stage of their life. As a result, today's children make constant demand from their parents to fulfill their requests. Previous researchers have pointed that as children grow from their childhood stage to adolescence stage, they acquire more knowledge on consumer behavior, their values and skills increases (MartensenA. and Gronholdt L, 2008).

Children not only influence family purchase decision but they also insist their parents to purchase the products they desire (Ward S., Klees D.M. and Wackman D.B., 1990). Moreover, today's kids are living in such environment provides in depth information and varieties of alternative products. Thus, kids have ample opportunity to exercise range of consumer decisions. Such inferences bring lots of sociological changes and transformed available market environment  They get knowledge from various Marketing campaign, advertising, and while communicating with their friends, family etc.  As a result Children's aspired to get products seen on television leads to 'pester power', which means that children pester their parents to buy things for them (Proctor, J., & Richards, M. , 2002)

To impart better consumer habits and to take better consumer oriented decision at younger age, gradually parents start involving their children in purchase decision making. Parents are showing more interest towards children demand by fulfilling it. (McNeal J., 1992) mentioned that number of parents asking for children's opinion for family purchase has increased over the years. Gradually children start understanding market scenario that will help when they become consumer at younger age leads to consumerism. Various studies (Marshall, D., 2010), (Albert C, Rosella V, 2003),  (Blades, M. and Gunter, B., 2002), have interrogated the rise of consumerism of children impacting family purchasing decision. In India, children raise demand on special occasion like their birthdays or festivals like Diwali, Rakshabandhan and Christmas. It becomes ritual in Indian societies to give gifts to children during such occasion. If they won't receive gifts, it creates a strong desire among children to pester their parents.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past there have been profuse studies exploring the notion of socializing agents that pester power and impact parent's buying behavior. Pestering scenario is not only prominent outside India but in India too. Children are raising their voice louder to get the product. Pestering behavior of children activates marketer to target them as per the trend goes. Children and marketers go hand in hand by learning from one another and make future strategies accordingly.  Pester power is a weapon used by children on their parents or elders like grandparents to buy

things they want. They watch TV commercials, get information regarding featured brand and want to buy them. Since, in India, children do not have the liberty to make purchase decisions on their own, they need to ask for the permission of their parents. Permission is not always easily approved by the parent thus, child pester the parent to buy the same Marketer understand children requirement and project it indirectly through media in market to make them socialized. According to Seth G. et. al. (2008), Children possess some power as nagging ability to influence parents to buy things they want. Lots of components are responsible for the growth of pester power but emergence of TV and up hilling of economic shift play major role in India. Due to emergence of TV advertisements and TV cartoon channel network across country given a big thrust to the children's acquaintance about the products available in the market (Soni S., Upadhyaya M. 2007).   In 2005, out of around 120 million tweens in India, 45 million live in urban areas and have the power of influencing Rs. 20,000 crore worth purchasing decisions on food, mobile phones, apparel, cars and FMCG and FMEGs. Indian teens alone buy nearly 60% of the carbonated drinks, ice creams, chocolates and jeans sold in India (Quart, A. 2004). According to Bartholomew and O'Donohoe, (2003), peer group has more impact over television as television  socialize to obtain information for further discussions with their peers to get the confirmation. After getting confirmation from their peer group children get interested to purchase or pester their parents to purchase it further. Ina study conducted by Kaur and Singh(2006), implied that a decreased size in families will lead to acceptance of children''s preferences by the parents that leads to the concept of pester power. They also mentioned that children whose both parents work can effectively put pressure on their children. The study mentions that children either from working or not working mothers have the same influence and responsibility in the family decision making. they also found that in Jakarta daughters commonly had more influence.  Indian families are shifted away from traditional extended families to more nuclear families. It has changed patriarchal power of control from elder to younger family members. Young people in Asia have greater autonomy today than did previous generations of youth, particularly with regard to choosing a partner. These changes in the family structure have contributed to the erosion of many of the traditional constraints imposed on young people with mixed repercussions. In a study conducted by Lenhart, A., Rainie, L. and Lewis, O. (2001), revealed that are children more rapidly using internet and have more knowledge than their parents as they could easily access the market information and had greater impact on family decision making. Mishra (2011) explored that children spend more time on internet. They access social networking sites to build association, spending time, self-image formation and to acquire information.

### III. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

1.  To analyze dimensions of child Socializing agents.

2.  To analyze different child request strategies used to persuade their parents

3.  To analyze whether there is any significant difference in relationship between socializing agents and child request strategies.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study being undertaken is descriptive and exploratory in nature. 200 Parent-Child dyad from different households of Delhi was selected as it represents characteristics of our country as people from all parts of India are settled here. The present study concerned with the children between the age of 8-16 years. The convenience sampling technique has been adopted to collect the data. . The study was undertaken by considering different product categories of FMCG products like Bakery products, Chocolates, Ice cream, soft drinks, toothpaste, hair oil and shampoo.

### V. DATA ANALYSIS:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Children (N=200)

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age Group | 8-10 | 74 | 37 |
| | 11-13 | 46 | 23 |
| | 14-16 | 80 | 40 |
| Gender | Male | 98 | 49 |
| | Female | 102 | 51 |
| Birth Order | First (Eldest) | 84 | 42 |
| | Second (Middle one) | 66 | 33 |
| | Third (Youngest) | 23 | 11.5 |
| | Single Child | 27 | 13.5 |

| No. of Working Parents | Only Father Working | 131 | 65.5 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Only Mother Working | 6 | 3.0 |
| | Both are Working | 63 | 31.5 |

Source: Primary Survey

Primary data was collected through field survey thus, two separate questionnaires (for child and parents) were prepared. The questionnaires were sent to more than 420 parent child dyad. Out of which 400 completely filled questionnaires were considered for further analysis. The responses were entered, coded and analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 Version.

Table 2 : Demographic Profile of Parents (N=200)

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age Group | <30 yrs | 16 | 8 |
| | 31-40 yrs | 77 | 38 |
| | 41-50 yrs | 107 | 53 |
| Gender | Male | 72 | 36 |
| | Female | 128 | 64 |
| Qualification | Graduation | 82 | 41 |
| | Post Graduation | 97 | 48.5 |
| | PhD | 21 | 10.5 |
| Family Style | Nuclear Family | 83 | 41.5 |
| | Joint Family | 117 | 58.5 |
| Monthly Family Income | < Rs50,000 | 47 | 23.5 |
| | Rs 50,001- Rs 100,000 | 119 | 59.5 |
| | > Rs 100,000 | 34 | 17 |

Source: Primary Survey

Initially Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, a statistic that is a measure of the proportion of variance among variables that might be common variance. It is applied to check how suited data is for Factor Analysis. KMO value varies between 0 to 1and value closer to 1 showcase better results. However, the KMO Value for child socializing agents is 0.72 which is acceptable as middling value according to Kaiser.

Table 3: Factor analysis and reliability results related to Child Socializing Agents

| FACTOR | FACTOR LOADINGS | EIGEN VALUE | %VARIANCE | CRONBACH |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHILD SOCIALIZATION (17 STATEMENTS) | | | | 0.721 |
| TV | | 4.18 | 20.90 | 0.863 |
| TV ads tell the truth about products | 0.935 | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I want to buy the products advertised on television | 0.925 | | | |
| I force my parents to buy if I like the products I see in the ads | 0.636 | | | |
| **FRIENDS** | | 3.53 | 16.64 | **0.815** |
| I feel it's important to have the same products that my friends have | 0.876 | | | |
| It bothers me when my friends have something I don't have | 0.819 | | | |
| What my friends think is more important than what my parents think | 0.808 | | | |
| **PARENTS** | | 3.30 | 16.50 | **0.799** |
| I accompany my parents when they go out for shopping. | 0.836 | | | |
| My parents ask for my opinion before buying a product | 0.780 | | | |
| I come to know about the new products from parents | 0.672 | | | |
| What my parents think is more important than what my friends think | 0.835 | | | |
| **INTERNET** | | 3.23 | 16.12 | **0.957** |
| I use internet to get more information about the product before my family purchases it. | 0.972 | | | |
| I consider myself more knowledgeable about the internet than parents | 0.943 | | | |
| I come to know about the new products from Internet | 0.946 | | | |
| **SHOPPING** | | 2.21 | 11.04 | **0.824** |
| I get the information of latest product from the shop | 0.831 | | | |
| I like to shop in a store that's not crowded | 0.713 | | | |
| I prefer to go shop with my parents than my friends | 0.612 | | | |
| I enjoy malls more than smaller shops and convenience stores. | 0.827 | | | |
| Cumulative % of variance | **82.231** | | | |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0 .72<br>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity    Approx. Chi-Square = 5334.801<br>Df = 136<br>Significance = 0.000 | | | | |

To check further sampling adequacy Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is evaluated that test hypothesis that the correlation matrix has an identity matrix that point out variables are not related. The approximate chi-square statistic was 5334.801with 136 degrees of freedom, found significant. Considering a 95% level of Significance, α = 0.05 The p-value (Sig.) of .000 < 0.05 (given in table 3) The Bartlett's Test showed a significance level.

To extract different socializing agents, factor analysis was applied on a data set of 17 variables. Principal component factor analysis was the method of extraction with varimax as rotation method that follow the criterion that factors with eigen value greater than 1.00 will be retained (Kaiser, 1960). On the basis of varimax rotation, 17 variables are grouped into 5 factors. The Eigen values shown in the above table are the variances of the factors where the very first factor always describe the most variance and therefore always have the highest Eigen values. The percentage of variance represents the percent of total variance accounted by each factor and the cumulative percentage gives the cumulative percentage of variance. Extracted five factors explain 82.23% of variance. The extracted factor named as Child Socialization agents.

**Analyzing different Child Request Strategies**

Child in order to fulfill their demands apply different tantrums and tactics on their parents. To identify different child request strategy extensive literature review and discussion among focus group of parents have been done. A list of twenty statements were prepared on grounds of 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Most of the Time and 5-Always). After conducting pilot study which is important to identify deficiencies in the research instrument, few statements were dropped and at the end 16 variables were selected to do the final analysis.

Initially Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, a statistic that is a measure of the proportion of variance among variables that might be common variance. It is applied to check how suited data is for Factor Analysis. KMO value varies between 0 to 1and value closer to 1 showcase better results. However, the KMO Value for child request strategy is 0.696 which is acceptable as middling value. To check further sampling adequacy Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is evaluated that test hypothesis that the correlation matrix has an identity matrix that point out variables are not related. The approximate chi-square statistic was 5588.221with 120 degrees of freedom, found significant. Considering a 95% level of Significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ The p-value (Sig.) of .000 < 0.05 (given in table 4) The Bartlett's Test showed a significance level.

Table 4: Factor Analysis and Reliability results related to Child Request Strategy

| FACTOR | FACTOR LOADINGS | EIGEN VALUE | %VARIANCE | CRONBACH |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CHILD REQUEST (16 STATEMENTS)** | | | | **0.696** |
| **BARGAINING STRATEGY** | | 3.07 | 19.23 | **0.808** |
| I promise exchange offer deal to my parents (like washing car, cleaning room to get product ) | 0.887 | | | |
| I offer in exchange of product, will not to repeat some mistake | 0.708 | | | |
| I offer to purchase less price product | 0.935 | | | |
| **PERSUASION STRATEGY** | | 2.619 | 16.37 | **0.864** |
| I try to convince my parents by telling that my friends/siblings have it. | 0.892 | | | |
| I remind about the TV advertisement about product | 0.730 | | | |
| I Insist on this is what I want | 0.897 | | | |
| **EMOTIONAL STRATEGY** | | 2.601 | 16.26 | **0.875** |
| I talk nicely and show extra care to my parents | 0.701 | | | |
| I beg my parents to get the product | 0.873 | | | |
| I pretend illness to gain parents sympathy | 0.884 | | | |
| I demand product on some special occasion | 0.875 | | | |
| **AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY** | | 2.232 | 13.95 | **0.755** |
| I don't eat until I get the product | 0.769 | | | |
| I express anger | 0.727 | | | |
| I stop talking to my parents | 0.852 | | | |
| **UPWARD APPEAL STRATEGY** | | 2.007 | 12.54 | **0.844** |
| I try to convince parents by saying that the request was approved or supported by an older member of the family | 0.844 | | | |
| I try to convince parents by saying that the request was approved or supported by a teacher | 0.898 | | | |
| I try to convince parents by saying that the request was approved by my friend parents | 0.859 | | | |
| Cumulative % of variance | **78.36** | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | | = | 0 .671 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | = | 5588.221 |
| | Df | = | 120 |
| | Significance | = | 0.000 |

To extract different socializing agents, factor analysis was applied on a data set of 16 variables. Principal component factor analysis was the method of extraction with varimax as rotation method that follow the criterion that factors with eigen value greater than 1.00 will be retained (Kaiser, 1960). On the basis of varimax rotation, 17 variables are grouped into 5 factors. The Eigen values shown in the above table are the variances of the factors where the very first factor always describe the most variance and therefore always have the highest Eigen values. The percentage of variance represents the percent of total variance accounted by each factor and the cumulative percentage gives the cumulative percentage of variance. Extracted five factors explain 78.36% of variance. The extracted factor named as Child Request Strategy.

**RELATIONSHIP (CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS) BETWEEN SOCIALIZATION AGENTS AND CHILD REQUEST STRATEGIES (n=400)**

In the previous section factors of child socializing agents and child request strategy are already determined by applying factor analysis technique. Correlation is an important statistical technique for understanding relationship between variables. In this section, size and direction of relationship between five factors of child socializing agents and five different child request strategies are found. According to table 5, all the factors are positively correlated as it have positive coefficients. Almost all the factors are significant, displaying child acquire different knowledge regarding product from different socializing agents that leads to selection of different request strategy to influence their parents to get the required product.

Table5: Correlation Coefficients between Socialization agents and Child request Strategy

| Influence Strategies | Child Socialization | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TV | Friends | Parents | Internet | Shopping |
| **Bargaining Strategy** | 0.152** | 0.166*** | 0.114* | 0.040 | 0.033 |
| **Persuasion Strategy** | 0.471*** | 0.523*** | 0.93 | 0.152** | 0.415*** |
| **Emotional Strategy** | 0.352*** | 0.327*** | 0.78 | 0.027 | 0.438*** |
| **Aggressive Strategy** | 0.058 | 0.398*** | 0.130** | 0.243*** | 0.123* |
| **Upward Appeal Strategy** | 0.178*** | 0.529*** | 0.111* | 0.236*** | 0.352*** |
| **Pester Power** | 0.447*** | 0.241*** | 0.211*** | 0.055 | 0.599*** |

*** $p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$, df= 398

After getting correlation among child socialization and child request strategy. Socializing agents were positioned as independent variables whereas child request strategies were positioned as dependent variable while computing regression analysis. To test the relationship among factors following hypothesis are formulated:

*H1: Socializing agents affect child to use Bargaining Strategy.*

*H2: Socializing agents affect child to use Persuasion Strategy*

*H3: Socializing agents affect child to use Emotional Strategy*

*H4: Socializing agents affect child to use Aggressive Strategy*

*H5: Socializing agents affect child to use Upward Appeal Strategy*

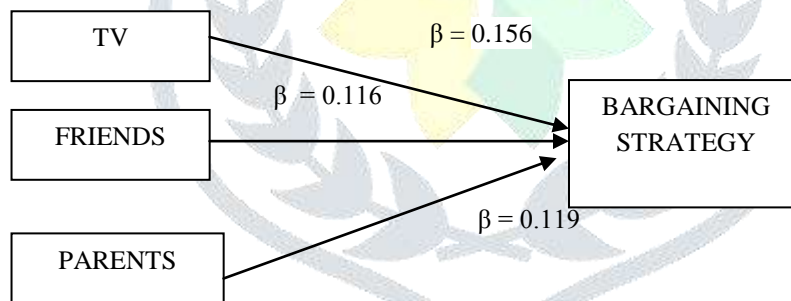**H1: Socializing agents affect child to use Bargaining Strategy**

A regression analysis was done to figure out the impact of five socializing agents on bargaining strategy to request their parents. According to table 6, TV, Friends and parents are significant with the strategy. The value of R square is 0.056 depicts 5.6% explains the child use of Bargaining strategy.

Table 6: Socializing Agents Affecting Bargaining Strategy

| SOCIALIZING AGENTS | BARGAINING STRATEGY |
|---|---|
| TV | 0.156* |
| FRIENDS | 0.116* |
| PARENTS | 0.119* |
| INTERNET | 0.018 |
| SHOPPING | 0.029 |
| R SQUARE | .056 |
| t - VALUE | 9.665*** |
| F STASTICS | 4.697*** |

*** $p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$, df= 398

p value for the F statistics of overall significance test is less than significance level, therefore null-hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted and conclude that TV, Friends and Parents affect child to use bargaining strategy.



**H2: Socializing agents affect child to use Persuasion Strategy**
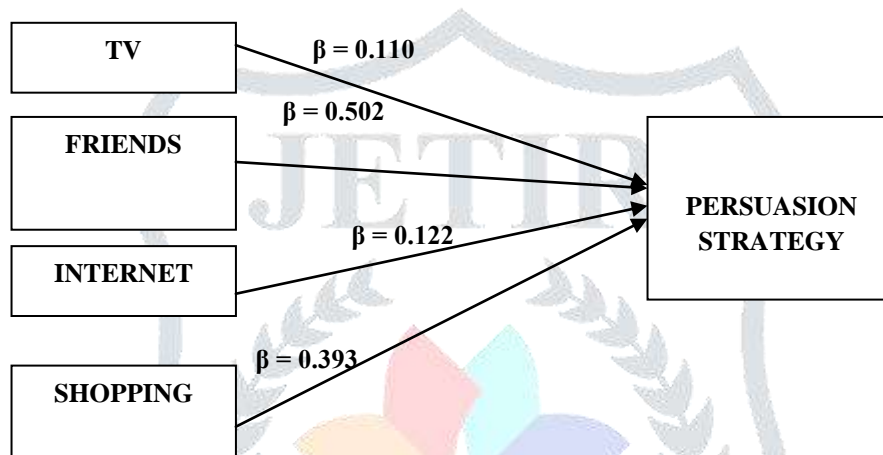
Regression analysis was done to figure out the impact of five socializing agents on persuasion strategy to request their parents. According to table 6, TV, Friends, Internet and Shopping are significant with the strategy. Child gathers lot of information and learns tactics from these agents to persuade their parents. The value of R square is 0.50 depicts 50% explains the child use of Persuasion Strategy.

Table 6: Socializing Agents Affecting Persuasion Strategy

| SOCIALIZING AGENTS | PERSUASION STRATEGY |
|---|---|
| TV | 0.110* |
| FRIENDS | 0.502* |
| PARENTS | 0.034 |

| | |
|---|---|
| INTERNET | 0.122** |
| SHOPPING | 0.393*** |
| R SQUARE | 0.50 |
| t-VALUE | 0.2863* |
| F STASTICS | 78.798*** |

p value for the F statistics of overall significance test is less than significance level, therefore null-hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted and conclude that TV, Friends, Internet and Shopping affect child to use persuasion strategy.



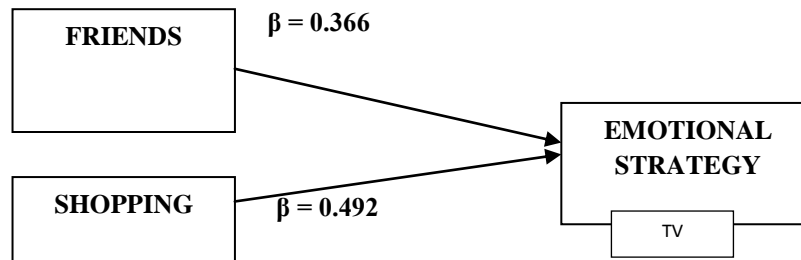**H3: Socializing agents affect child to use Emotional Strategy**

Regression analysis was done to figure out the impact of five socializing agents on emotional strategy to request their parents. According to table 7, Friends and Shopping are significant with the strategy. The value of R square is 0.32 depicts 32% explains the child use of emotional strategy.

**Table 7: Socializing Agents Affecting Emotional Strategy**

| SOCIALIZING AGENTS | EMOTIONAL STRATEGY |
|---|---|
| TV | 0.040 |
| FRIENDS | 0.366*** |
| PARENTS | 0.005 |
| INTERNET | 0.028 |
| SHOPPING | .492*** |
| R SQUARE | 0.323 |
| t-VALUE | 0.230 |
| F STASTICS | 37.52*** |

p value for the F statistics of overall significance test is less than significance level, therefore null-hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted and conclude that Friends and Shopping affect child to use emotional strategy.
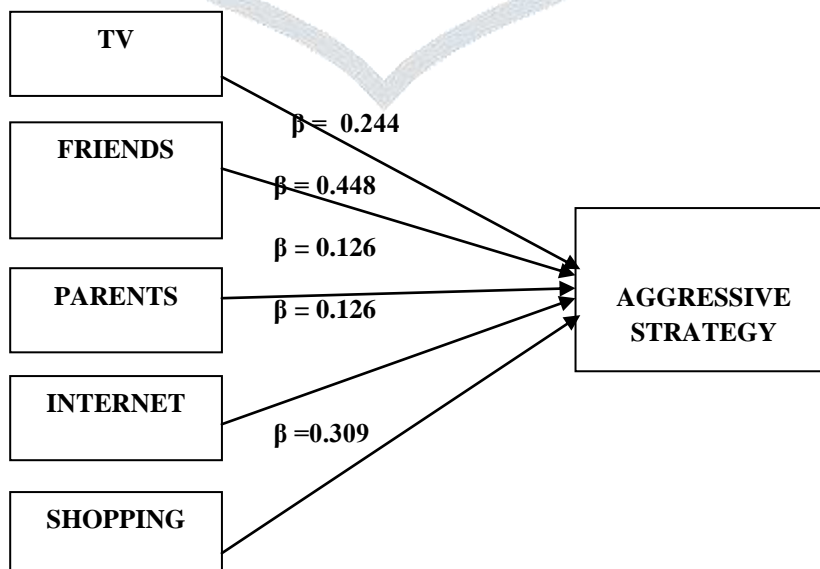
## H4: Socializing agents affect child to use Aggressive Strategy

Regression analysis was done to figure out the impact of five socializing agents on aggressive strategy to influence their parents. According to table 8, all socializing agents are significant with the strategy. The value of R square is 0.265 depicts 26.52% explains the child use of aggressive strategy.

**Table 8 : Socializing Agents Affecting Agressive  Strategy**

| SOCIALIZING AGENTS | AGRESSIVE  STRATEGY |
| --- | --- |
| TV | 0.244*** |
| FRIENDS | 0.448*** |
| PARENTS | 0.126** |
| INTERNET | 0.192*** |
| SHOPPING | 0.309*** |
| R SQUARE | 0.265 |
| t-VALUE | 3.044* |
| F STASTICS | 28.437*** |

p value for the F statistics of overall significance test is less than significance level, therefore null-hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted and conclude that all socializing agents affect child to use aggressive strategy.



## H5: Socializing agents affect child to use Upward Appeal Strategy

Regression analysis was done to figure out the impact of five socializing agents on aggressive strategy to influence their parents. According to table **9**, all socializing agents are significant with the strategy except parents. The value of R square is 0.408 depicts 40.8% explains the child use of upward appeal strategy.

**Table 9: SOCIALIZING AGENTS AFFECTING UPWARD APPEAL  STRATEGY**

| SOCIALIZING AGENTS | UPWARD APPEAL  STRATEGY |
|---|---|
| TV | 0.191*** |
| FRIENDS | 0.544*** |
| PARENTS | 0.022 |
| INTERNET | 0.091* |
| SHOPPING | 0.177*** |
| R SQUARE | 0.408 |
| t-VALUE | 6.553*** |
| F STASTICS | 54.395*** |

p value for the F statistics of overall significance test is less than significance level, therefore null-hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted and conclude that all socializing agents except parents affect child to use aggressive strategy.
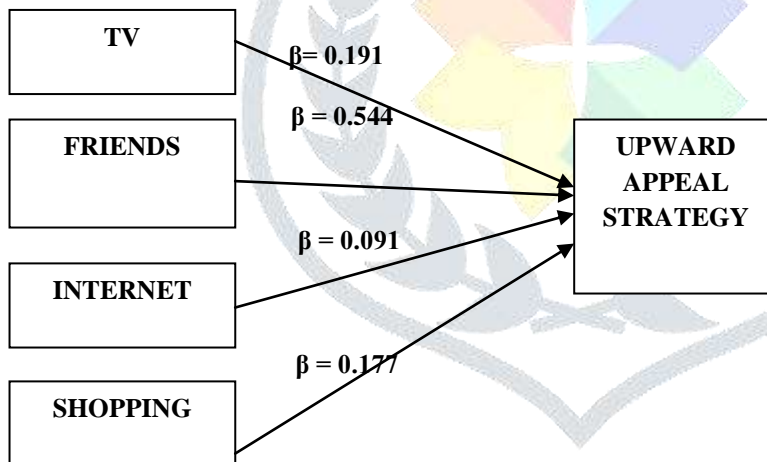


**SUMMARY OF RESULT**

**Table 9 : Summary of Results**

| Hypothesis | Accepted/Rejected |
|---|---|
| H1 | Accepted |
| H2 | Accepted |
| H3 | Accepted |

| H4 | Accepted |
|----|----------|
| H5 | Accepted |

After testing, we can infer that all hypothesis are accepted that means we can conclude that socializing agents affect child to use different request strategies

**Conclusion**

To conclude, this study diffuses the impact of socializing agents on parent-child relationship. Due to different child socialization agents, children take interest to influence parents buying decisions. They get information from about products from friends, parents, television and shopping. After analysis we move to a conclusion that parents agree that their child nag them to fulfill their demands. In today's techno oriented vibrant environment, technology is growing and children want to learn and use them. As India is generation Y dominated country, children participate more in family decision making. Parents have explored that their child gets information about products from socializing agents and pester them. Although whether demand is fulfilled entirely depends on Parent's purchasing ability which grounds children to nag them. Research also proved that age and pester power of the child are independent. Indian children culture is subjugated by technology sloping entertainment initiatives such as internet provoking more use of social media and advertising as a result Children's as influencer in decision making is mushrooming worldwide. Thus, it would give a clearer understanding that why marketers are targeting children either as active purchasers or as passive influencers to sell consumer products.

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