JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Influence of College Students in Family Purchase Decision Making: An Empirical Study Across Buying Stages and Product Categories

Irin. R. N
[Visiting Faculty (Commerce), Pondicherry University Community College, Mahe Centre]
[irinrn@gmail.com]

Abstract

Nowadays, involvement of college students in their family purchase decision making is inevitable. This study examines whether the influence of college students in family purchase decision making varies across buying stages and product categories. The study follows a descriptive, single cross-sectional design based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. For the study, a sample of 50 respondents were selected through non-probability judgemental sampling and a two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to examine the changes. The analysis considers durable and non-durable products across three buying stages: initiation, information search and evaluation of alternatives, and final decision. Even though the observed variations are not statistically significant, the study indicates differences in students' involvement across product categories and buying stages.

Keywords: College students, family purchase decision making, buying stages, product categories, student influence

1. Introduction

Family purchase decisions are not necessarily made by a single household member. Younger family members, including college students, may contribute by expressing preferences, initiating purchase requests, searching for information, comparing alternatives and influencing the final choice. Their market awareness, education and exposure to advertising and digital information from various platforms can increase their participation in purchase decisions.

The influence of students may not remain constant throughout the buying process. A student may play a stronger role in information search for a durable product but have a different degree of influence on the final decision for a non-durable product. Understanding this difference is therefore important for the marketers.

The present study focuses specifically on the relative influence of college students across three stages of family purchase decision making i.e., initiation, information search and evaluation of alternatives, and final decision and across durable and non-durable product categories.

2. Literature Review

Nandita, Arya and Jyoti (2025) used a mixed method approach in the Indian context and found noticeable child influence across family purchase categories while also examining demographic factors as possible moderators.

Qi (2025) found that college students' purchase behaviour is influenced by emotions, personal interests, lifestyle values and social influences, particularly within digital shopping environments. The study highlights the diverse motivations underlying young consumers' purchasing decisions.

Palikhe and Magar Lungeli (2024) reported significant child influence in family purchase decisions in Pokhara, particularly for categories such as durables, vacations, movies and eating, with product type and peer influence also emerging as relevant factors.

Aggarwal (2023) examined children's influence across durable, non-durable and child-related products and reported differences in influence across product categories and buying stages.

Senevirathna, et al. (2022) examined children's influence on family purchasing decisions from the parents' perspective. The study found that children's influence varies according to age, gender, family income and family structure. The study also found that children's preferences receive considerable importance in family purchases, particularly for products such as sweets, toys, stationery and instant products.

Hong Jin and Haiyan Wang (2017). Their study highlights the need for businesses to consider young consumers not only as direct consumers but also as influencers of family purchases.

3. Research Problem

Although family purchase decisions have been widely studied, College students' influence may differ across buying stages and product categories. Therefore, this study examines whether college students' influence remains the same or varies during purchase initiation, information search and evaluation, and final decision making for durable and non-durable products.

4. Research Objective

- To examine whether students' influence in family purchase decision making varies across buying stages and product categories.

5. Hypothesis

H_0: Students' influence in family purchase decision making does not significantly vary across the different buying stages and product categories.

H_1: Students' influence in family purchase decision making significantly varies across the different buying stages and product categories.

6. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research design with a single cross-sectional approach. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, while secondary information was collected from published literature. The sampling unit is the family involving college students and their parents. The non-probability judgemental sampling technique was adopted, and data were collected from a sample of 50 respondents. The analysis covers two product categories: durables and non-durables and three buying stages: initiation, information search and evaluation of alternatives, and final decision.

For testing variation across the two dimensions, a two-way ANOVA was reported. The level of significance was 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$).

7. Results and Analysis

The reported mean scores provide an initial indication of students' involvement at different stages of the family purchase decision process. For durable products, the highest mean involvement score is recorded at the information search and evaluation stage (2.52). For non-durable products, the highest mean is recorded at the final-decision stage (2.24).

Table 1. Students' Involvement Across Buying Stages and Product Categories

Product Category	Initiation	Information Search & Evaluation	Final Decision
Durables	1.44	2.52	1.54
Non-durables	2.10	1.60	2.24

Source: Primary data

To test whether the observed differences are statistically significant, the reported two-way ANOVA results were examined. The calculated F-value for buying stages is 0.106, while the calculated F-value for product categories is 0.071.

Table 2. Two-Way ANOVA Results

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value
Between buying stages (columns)	0.09	2	0.045	0.106
Between product categories (rows)	0.03	1	0.030	0.071
Within sample	0.85	2	0.425	—

Testing of Hypothesis:

Level of significance= 5%

Degree of freedom

Fc = (2,2)

Fr = (1,2)

Table value

Fc = 19

Fr = 18.51

The calculated value (Fc = 0.106) is less than the table value (19), so accept null hypothesis.

The calculated value (Fc = 0.071) is less than the table value (18.51), so accept null hypothesis.

8. Interpretation

The results show that the college students' involvement across buying stages and product categories are not statistically significant. Therefore, no significant variation in students' influence was found between the buying stages or between durable and non-durable products.

Although previous studies show that young consumers can influence family purchases, this finding should be viewed in light of the small sample size and judgemental sampling used in the study. Therefore, the present finding does not mean that students have no influence, it only shows that no significant variation was found in the sample studied.

9. Conclusion

The study examined whether college students' influence in family purchase decision making varies across three buying stages and two product categories. The reported descriptive scores show differences in the pattern of involvement, but the two-way ANOVA does not indicate statistically significant variation at 5% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

10. References

Aggarwal, V. S. (2023). Influence of children in family buying process.

Palikhe, A., & Magar Lungeli, M. (2024). Children's influence on family purchase decision in Pokhara. Journal of Nepalese Business Studies.

Nandita, N. A., Arya, A., & Jyoti, G. (2025). Exploring dimensions of children influence in family purchase decision making: A mixed-method approach. International Journal of Business Excellence.

Hong Jin and Haiyan Wang (2017). A Study on the Influence of Teenagers' Personal Characteristics in Family Purchase Decision. International Conference on Management, Education and Social Science (ICMESS 2017)

Qi, Y. (2025). "You Only Buy What You Love": Understanding Impulse Buying Among College Students Through Values, Emotion, and Digital Immersion. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research, 20(4), 271.

Senevirathna, S. D., Wachissara Thero, P., & De. Silva, P. O. (2022). A study of children's influence in family purchasing decisions: Parents' perspective. Asian Journal of Marketing Management, 1(1), 47–65.

Guneri, B., Yurt, O., Kaplan, M. D., & Delen, M. (2009). The influence of children on family purchasing decisions in Turkey. Asian Journal of Marketing, 3(1), 20–32.

Kaur, P., & Singh, R. (2006). Children family decision making in India and West: A review. Marketing Science Review.

Shoham, A., & Dalakas, V. (2003). Family consumer decision making in Israel: The role of teens & parents. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 20(3), 238–251.

Beatty, S. E., & Talpade, S. (1994). Adolescent influence in family decision making: A replication with extension. Journal of Consumer Research, 21(2), 332–341.