



International Journal Of Scientific And University Research Publication

ISSN No **2017/2364**

Listed & Index with
ISSN Directory, Paris



Multi-Subject Journal



ENTERTAINMENT AREA AND ITS RELEVANCE IN INDUCING PESTER POWER A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO CHIC KING OUTLET

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ABSTRACT

Kids mean business to marketers. Children have a big say in family decision to purchase many products. Marketers are trying to encash on the children's ability to nag their parents to induce purchase. A lot of marketing and advertising activity is aimed at children. Kids are increasingly influenced by commercialisations that often go against what parents are trying to do. The average family size in India is on a decline coming in now at almost 4. Rapid economic growth has resulted in greater incomes for the booming middle class. The eating out fast food culture which was predominantly a western lifestyle is fast catching up in India especially in the state of Kerala. A growing NRI population, high brand awareness among adults and children has led to a mushrooming of several Domestic, National and International eateries. Eating out being basically a family impulse decision, kids have major say in it. Fast food outlets are targeting kids by kids meal promos, toy promos, gifts, events and entertainment areas to draw their attention. Pester power is all the more relevant now. The study investigates the use of entertainment area at ChicKing outlets to induce pester power.

KEYWORDS : Pester power, Entertainment area, Fast food outlets, Sales promotion,

INTRODUCTION

Pester power is a Child's ability to affect their parents marketing decision, often through the use of nagging or pestering. (Wiki-pedia). Sheth G. et.al.(2008) defined pester power as "the nagging ability of children to purchase the product they desire due to some reason". Pester Power is a term used to define a child's influence over the parent in the buying process (Turner et al,2006).

With the advent of nuclear families and family planning efforts of the government the power of pester is all the more relevant today. A child is pampered usually by father, mother, grand- parents (4), uncles, aunts etc. With both parents working the lack of quality time to spend with children is usually replaced by showering gifts and also giving in to their demands. Internet and television have loaded the children with information from marketers on what they want. This coupled with the habit of taking out children for family shopping directly puts the kids at the mercy of the marketers advertising strategies. Information gained from advertisements has made kids more knowledgeable than parents on product features and hence, their pester or nagging cannot be simply put away. With high levels of disposable income parents give in to the demands of their children, since the process of finding of demand is time consuming. Also the guilt factor of not able to spend quality time with kids adds fuel to the power of pester.

ChicKing offers the complete dinein experience offering crumb fried chicken, the showrooms usually spread over 800 to 2000sq ft has a considerable area marked as Play area with toys for kids' entertainment. They claim to offer a complete experience full of fun, food and relaxation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) The current research is focussed on studying whether the presence of entertainment area helps in inducing pester power to draw kids and their family to fast food outlets (Pester power on adult decision making)
- 2) It focuses on whether pester power increases repeat customer walk-ins
- 3) The study would enable marketers to decide on whether to provide price discounts, freebies or kids entertainment in planning marketing activities.
- 4) It would help fast food outlets in identifying their retail target audience.

- 5) The researcher also tries to examine the sensitive issue of rising consumerism in children

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been done across the world to demonstrate how pester power is a major decision maker.

In their study Mark.D.Jekanowski, James.K. Binkly and James Eales., (2001) states the demand for fast foods depends heavily on the demand for convenience. An increase in the number of fast food outlets in a market directly increases quantity consumed by decreasing the cost of obtaining a fast food meal. Thus it is observed that a number of look-alike fast food outlets with similar names have mushroomed.

Blattberg and Neslin (1990) defines sales promotions as an "action-oriented marketing event whose purpose is to have a direct impact on the behaviour of the firm's customers". From the definition, it would be reasonable to conclude that fast food companies employ strategies other than food marketing to create consumer reaction to purchase their brand. Furthermore, the central role of marketing is to create value for its chosen customer (Silk, 2009). In the case of entertainment or play area for kids, ChicKing offers the customer added value by providing children with fun and an enjoyable experience.

Robert Mayer (1994) has stated that children not only attempt to influence their parents to make purchases of products of special interest to them, but also products of remote interest. Thus it may some time be that though the kid's do not want the fried chicken they may sometime lead the parents to the store for the entertainment area alone.

Fischer et.al. (1991) had found that children as young as three recognised brand logos. According to Horgan Sheena (2005)

- Children at 18 months can recognise corporate labels
- Children as young as two years make consumer choices
- By two to three years can draw brands
- By four years have developed consumer preferences and use information from advertisements to develop these
- five years actually purchased brands

From Fischer et.al. (1991) and Horgan Sheena (2005) it is evident

that kids preference or pester for fast food outlets is not any look-alike one but particular and specific choice.

Claire Lambert and Richard Mizerski(2011) found that toy premiums tended to reinforce loyalty to restaurants.

Swathi Soni & Markarand Upadahaya(2007) have found that top five products for which kids have pestered their parents include Fast food restaurants, Own clothing, Chips , Chocolates and Games & toys. ChicKing Outlets having four of the five top pestered products gives it a visible advantage to attract kids.

Margaret, Anne Lawlor and Andrea Prothera(2010) suggested that children understand the various responses that parents make to purchase requests , for example, agreement, refusal , procrastination and negotiation and their parents nature of such responses. They thus suggest that pester power has a healthy effect on child parent relation.

Dammler (2005) has found that a brand with which a child gets influenced with improves his position in the peer group and the child's esteem substantially.

Kaur et.al, (2006) found that for some of the products the kids are active initiators, information seekers and buyers, whereas for some other products, they are influencers who lure their parents into becoming buyers. In the case of eating out at fast food outlets the kids serve the dual roles.

Deval Godhani, Divyesh Khant and Ashwin Jadeja(2012) state that parents found the practices adopted by marketers as unethical.

Kadambini Katke(2007) states television pumps in lot of junk food and snack advertisements. Indian child on an average get exposed to not less than 20 attractive messages of these product. More time spent with television viewing more exposure to these messages (repeat advertisements message result into placing the brand on top of the mind) will result into buying the brand illustrated in the advertisements.

Her study also reveals that most of the time children determine the family budget. There is greater influence on food items and toys.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research was carried out to find out the pestering effects of children to induce purchase. The research survey was conducted at 3 major outlets of ChicKing located at Ernakulam district. A sample size of 45 respondents who were accompanied with children in the age group of 3 to 6 years was surveyed.

Children in this age group were selected because the entertainment area at ChicKing consisted of toys for children in this age profile. The respondents were personally interviewed with a structured questionnaire. Since a personal interview technique was used only instore traffic was sampled. Due to the constraints of time convenience sampling technique was used 15 people accompanied by children in the age bracket of approx 3 to 7, at each outlet that consented to the survey were interviewed. Respondents were interviewed over the weekend at evenings to get a proper representative sample.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Various hypotheses were assumed to carry out analysis of the data. The set of hypothesis was then checked using statistical tests.

1) **H0:** The presence of a play area will have no influence on the child accompanying the meal buyer

2) **Ha:** The presence of a play area will be positively associated with the child accompanying the meal buyer

		Implications
Healthy	Pearson Correlation	-.634**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	45	

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

This means that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. This means that changes in one variable is strongly correlated with changes in the second variable. Pearson's r is 0.831. This number is very close to 1. For this reason, we can conclude that there is a strong relationship between play-area and the child accompanying the meal buyer

1) **H0:** The presence of children accompanying adults will make no difference in their purchase

2) **Ha:** Respondents with children accompanying them will re- port higher purchase

	Spend more	Implications
Play- area	Pearson Correlation	.885**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	45	

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

Pearson's r is 0.885. This number is very close to 1. For this reason, we can conclude that there is a strong relationship between the child's time spent at playarea and the adult waiting for the child making higher spends.

1) **H0:** Presence of play area does not make children frequent the same outlet

2) **Ha:** Presence of play area makes children insist on the same outlet

	Insist	Implications
Play- area	Pearson Correlation	.815**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	45	

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

Pearson's r is 0.815. This number is very close to 1. For this reason, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between Play area and kids insisting on the same fastfood outlet. Thus the child is brand conscious.

1) **H0:** There is no significant relationship between entertainment area and pester power at fastfood outlets

2) **Ha:** There is a significant relationship between entertainment area and pester power at fastfood outlets

	Insist	Implications
Play area	Pearson Correlation	.776**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	45	

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

Pearson's r is 0.776. This number is very close to 1. For this reason, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between entertainment area for kids and pester power at fastfood outlets.

Healthy vs Junk	Spend more	Implications
Healthy	Person Correlation	-.634**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	45	

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

This is a negative correlation. This means that as one variable increases in value, the second variable decreases in value. We could conclude that since people tend to perceive crumbed chicken as unhealthy they tend to spend less. But the power of pester still makes purchase inevitable.

	Mean
convenience	4.96
me	1.84
say	5.56
playarea	5.69
Spend more	5.40
insist	5.29
healthy	1.87
reward	5.18
unaccompanied	2.78
tantrum	4.78
Valid N (listwise)	45

From the mean study it is evident that playarea has the highest mean followed by insisting of kids which has the highest influence on pester power and purchase pattern of adults with kids.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of data the following results and suggestions can be summed up

- Convenience of location of and the mushrooming of outlets has created a fast food culture in the state which has made kids susceptible
- Children have a considerable say in making eating out decisions for the family and also are very brand loyal. Kids

recognise brands and insist on ChicKing outlets. They also are seen rushing to the play area as soon as they enter the store. Hence marketers of fast food should increase the overall ambience to make the outlets catchy to the child.

- Kids do not give much importance to the food that is served and are keener on the entertainment provided. They are solely attracted by the play area and consider the eating out only as an excuse to draw the parent to the outlet. Marketers can design outlets based on cartoon characters and should organise theme parties for kids on weekends and holidays to draw them. Price discounts do not make any change in purchase of fast-food for parents with kids.

- The parent usually tends to order or eat more to give the child ample time to play. Also the guilt of the kid spending more time at the play area makes the parent increase the bill size. Thus the advertising and marketing of fast food outlets can be kid oriented. All promo activities should be designed to want the kid to stay for longer at the outlets which in turn increases bill size.

- Though the parents are aware that the food at ChicKing is unhealthy they are drawn to the outlet because of pester. They also tend to reward the kid for doing well by promising visits to the outlet. However health conscious parents tend to spend less. Marketers should introduce healthy alternative snacks to tap on the increasing health aware consumer.

- Pester power is a very important tool and plays a considerable role in creating purchase.

- It is also observed from the analysis of the questionnaire and personal interview that there is a growing trend in child consumerism. Advertisements targeting kids, single kid double income families, lack of quality time of parents, sentimental spends etc are raising child consumerism which seems to be a dangerous trend in child upbringing.

- Parents offer a visit to fastfood outlets as a reward for doing good. This concept can be capitalised by marketers in offer to arranging birthday parties and other incentive linked programs.

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