

CHILDREN IN FAMILY PURCHASE DECISION MAKING IN BANGLADESH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN AND RURAL

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ABSTRACT

Children constitute an important target market segment and merit attention from a marketing perspective. The role that children play in making decisions concerning the entire family unit has prompted researchers to direct attention to the study of influence of children. The amount of influence exerted by children varies by product category and stage of the decision making process. For some products, they are active initiators, information seekers, and buyers; whereas for other product categories, they influence purchases made by the parents. More so, changes taking place in the socio-cultural environment in Bangladesh (such as emergence of dual-career, single parent families) entail that dimensions of children's influence in family purchase decision making be investigated in a specific context. Village family vastly differs from the urban in terms of family composition and structure, values, norms, and behavior, which affect the role that children play in purchase decision making in families. Hence, the aim of this paper is to explore how rural children and urban children affect on family purchase decision.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has nine categories of social class as like upper upper class, upper middle class, upper lower class, middle upper class, middle middle class, middle lower, lower upper, lower middle and lower lower class. Family purchase decision making varies based on social class also

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categories of product. Research on family decision making has been largely confined to spouses, who have been considered as the relevant decision making unit in a family. However, the role of third party influences, such as children, on decision making strategies and negotiations is essential to taking a broader view of the relevant unit of analysis. Traditionally, women were seen to be the purchasing agents for the family. Nonetheless, increasing participation of women in the workforce has prompted a shift in this role as children are increasingly the "buyers" for the entire family. Even in families where women do not work, children are observed to share this role with their mothers. Children enjoy greater discretion not only in making routine consumption decisions for the family but also in pestering their parents to buy other products desired by them. Contemporary researchers express that children constitute a major consumer market, with direct purchasing power for snacks and sweets, and indirect purchase influence while shopping for big-ticket items.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to find out the role of children on family purchase decision in rural and urban area. This study also covers the following objectives:

1. To find out the position of a child in a family on purchase decision.
2. To find out the factors differ the family purchase decision in urban and rural area.
3. To provide recommendation for solving the gap between real situation and study findings.

3. METHODOLOGY

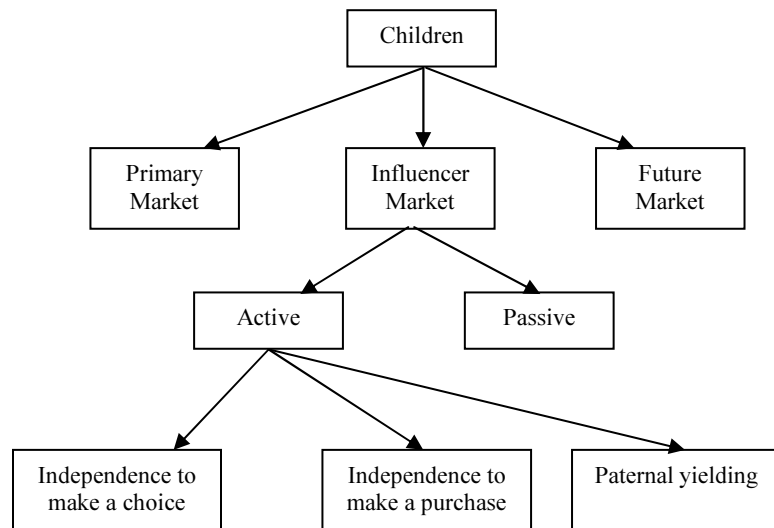
The study was limited in the area of Dhaka City and rural area of Gazipur district. Both primary and secondary data were used for the purpose of the study. Primary data were collected through personal interview. To satisfy the objectives the primary data were collected from 400 respondents. Among the respondents 200 were interviewed in Dhaka city and 200 were from different villages in Gazipur district. Secondary data have been collected from different journals, national dailies, books and internet.

4. ROLE OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY PURCHASE DECISION MAKING

Influence of children varies by product, product sub-decision, stage of the decision-making process, nature of socializing of children,

families' gender role orientation, demographic features such as age and gender, and also by respondent selected for investigation of relative influence (Belch et al., 1985). Beatty and Talpade (1994) suggested that teens' knowledge affects their perceived influence in the search for information in the decision process for some products such as the family stereo. The teens' financial clout seems to allow them greater say in initiating self-purchases, but not in family purchases. Parents' dual income status allows adolescents greater influence in some family durable purchases, but this does not affect self purchases where their influence is already substantial. These effects are pronounced for products that teens care for (e.g., stereo) and use often (e.g., telephone). The study highlighted that kids have a lot of information because of exposure to television, other media, and friends. They reflected that parents sought their opinion even in making purchase of products not directly related to the children, such as cars, because of their higher knowledge of brands, models, and the latest trends. Also, children stated that parents bought products that made the kids happy.

Figure-1

Children as Influencers

Source: Academy of Marketing Science Review-2006

The following sections contain a brief review of research carried out in this context.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**5.1 Family structure**

Table-1
Family structure

Family Structure	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Joint family	90	45	40	20
Single family	110	55	160	80
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

The above table 1 represents the family structure in Bangladesh where in rural area joint family 45% and single family 55%. On the other hand in urban area 20% family are joint and 80% family are single. Based on the structure of family, purchasing decision always differ from one to another.

5.2 Family Members

Table-2
Number of family members

Members	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
2-4	45	22.5	80	40
5-6	95	42.5	120	60
7-9	60	30.0	00	00
10 and above	00	00	00	00
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

From the above table 2 we find that in rural the number of family members 2-4 is 22.5%, 5-6 is 42.5%, 7-9 is 30% and 10 and above is none. On the other hand in urban area 2-4 is 40%, 5-6 is 60%, 7-9 and 10 and above is none. Demand depends upon family members; in that case the decision must differ from rural to urban.

5.3 Member involved in income

Table-3
Member involved in income

Member	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Father	175	87.5	165	82.5
Mother	10	5.0	25	12.5
Both (parents)	15	7.5	10	5.0
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

5.4 The above table 3 reveals that in rural area 87.5% income earners are father, mothers 5% and both mothers and fathers are 7.5%, whereas in urban area 82.5% income earners are father, mother 12.5% and both fathers and mothers are 5%. Purchasing power and role playing in decision making depends upon income earners. So, in rural area most of the family purchase decision taken by father. In contrast, in urban mothers also play a vital role in family purchase decision making.

5.5 Allow children in family purchase decision

Table-4

Allow children in family purchase decision

Particulars	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Yes	130	65	135	67.5
No	70	35	65	32.5
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

From the above table 4 we observe that in rural area 65% children are involved in family purchase decision making whereas 67.5% children are involved in family purchase decision making. So, the marketer should take promotional activities of product focusing the children.

5.6 Decision making for children's food items

Table-5

Decision making for children's food items

Person	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Father	65	32.5	40	20.0
Mother	130	65.0	135	67.5
Children	5	2.5	25	12.5
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

5.7 Above table 5 represents that in rural area 32.5% father, 65% mother and 2.5% children take decision regarding food items. On the other hand in urban area 20% father, 67.5% mother and 12.5% children take decision regarding food items. So, we can tell that fathers of urban area have less involvement for children's food items. In contrast, children in urban area have more involvement in choosing their food items.

5.8 Decision making for children's clothing

Table-6

Decision making for children's clothing

Person	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Father	125	62.5	60	30.0
Mother	65	32.5	115	57.5
Children	10	5.0	25	12.5
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

Above table 6 reveals that in rural area 62.5% father, 32.5% mother, and 5% children take decision for children's clothing. Alternatively, in urban areas 30% father, 57.5% mother and 12.5% children take decision for children's clothing. As father in rural area is the key person in his family we find that fathers are dominating in taking for clothing of children. On the other hand, in urban area mothers are dominating in this decision and children have a little bit option.

5.9 Decision making for children's schooling items

Table-7

Decision making for children's schooling items

Person	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Father	85	42.5	45	22.5
Mother	105	52.5	95	47.5
Children	10	5.0	60	30.0
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

The table 7 represents that decision of items for schooling is taken by father 42.5%, mother 52.5% and children 5% in rural areas. And in urban areas 22.5% father, 47.5% mother and 30% children take decision regarding schooling items. In both areas urban and rural mothers are playing key role to take decision regarding schooling items.

5.10 Decision making influencer for brand choice

Table-8

Decision making influencer for brand choice

Drivers	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Neighbors	10	5	25	12.5
Children's Friends	0	0	25	12.5
Media (TV, Magazine etc)	145	72.5	100	50.0
Salesmen	45	22.5	40	20.0
Relatives	0	0	10	5.0
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

The above table 8 represents that in rural area to choose a specific brand children are influenced by neighbors 5%, friend 0%, media (TV, Magazine etc) 72.5%, salesmen 22.5%, and relatives 0%. On the other hand in urban areas the figure is neighbors 12.5%, friend 12.5%, media (TV, Magazine etc) 50%, salesmen 20%, and relatives 5%. Here we see that in rural area media is the dominating factor in children's brand choice.

5.11 Actual buyer from the market

Table-9

Actual buyer from the market

Person	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Father	160	80	80	40
Mother	30	15	90	45
Children	10	5	30	15
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

Above table 9 reveals that in rural areas finally 80% father, 15% mother and 5% children physically buy products for children. On the other hand 40% father, 45% mother and 15% children buy products physically. So, in rural area father is the key person to buy physically and in urban both mother and father are playing vital role for buying physically.

5.12 Children's TV Channel preference

Table-10

Children's TV Channel preference

Channel	Rural		Urban	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
BTV	170	85	30	15
Cartoon Channels	20	10	110	55
Others	10	5	60	30
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Field survey

The table 10 represents that in rural area 85% children watch Bangladesh Television (BTV), cartoon channels 10%, and other 5%. On the other hand in urban area 15% children prefer BTV, 55% cartoon channels, and others 30%. As the cable connection has a limited access in village area, the rural children are bound to see the BTV. Alternatively, in urban area the children have the free access in cable connection.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Children are effectively fitting into the consumer role owing to time pressures and income effects in dual career families. Moreover, exposure to mass media and discussions with parents ensure that children are not only aware of the new brands available, but also know how to evaluate them on various parameters. While younger children clearly affect parental behavior and purchases, adolescents have full cognitive development and an understanding of the economic concepts required for processing information and selection. An analysis of children as consumers helps in the formulation of marketing strategies by identifying the motivations, interests, and attitudes of children who show the greatest involvement in making purchases in a specific product category. It has been seen that they act as purchasing agents for the family and are delegated the task of purchasing products which they themselves do not consume. Products for which children act as purchasing agents should be identified to help marketers understand the features that are preferred by these purchasers and to help direct appropriate messages towards them.

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