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## **CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE ON FAMILY PURCHASE DECISIONS IN KENYA**

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**Abstract:** Successful marketing requires that companies fully connect with their customers. Adopting a holistic marketing orientation means understanding customers, gaining a 360 degree view of both their daily lives that occur during their lifetimes so that the right products are marketed to the right customers in the right way. This study was conducted with the objective of investigating children's influence on family purchase decisions in Kenya. To achieve the objectives of the study, Nairobi County was purposefully chosen to represent Kenya. Nairobi was chosen because it is cosmopolitan and therefore would conveniently be a true mirror of Kenya for ease of generalization. Primary data was collected from two hundred (200) respondents selected at random from four (4) county districts of Nairobi. As a way of pre-selection, only one (1) parent/respondent of children aged 8 – 12 years, from each household was surveyed. A pilot test was carried out on 10 households to obtain some assessment of the question's validity and the likely reliability. This was tested using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. A threshold of 0.7 Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered through a personal interview and responses analyzed using SPSS for Windows. To test the hypotheses developed for the study, appropriate statistical tests such as the F test was used. The study found out that children influences (parent-child relationship and peer group) as moderated by culture, have a positive and significant influence on family purchase decisions in Kenya.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Consumer buying behavior refers to the buying behavior of final consumers i.e. individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption. All of these final consumers combined make up the consumer market. Consumers around the world vary tremendously in age, income, education level, and tastes. They also buy an incredible variety of goods and services. How these diverse consumers connect with each other and with other elements of the world around them impact their choices among various products, services, and companies (Kotler, 2008).

Consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics. For the most part, marketers cannot control such factors, but they must take them into account. Family members can strongly influence buyer behavior. The family is the most important consumer buying organization in society. Marketers are interested in the roles and influence of the husband, wife, and children on the purchase of different products and services (Norgaard, 2007).

Ekstrom (1995) defines the concept of influence in family decision-making as “a change in a person's dispositions, as a result of interaction between parents and children”. In her definition of influence, Gronhoj (2002) talks about a competence enabling the achievement of specific results. What is interesting in these definitions is that influence means making a person change his or her decisions via, for example, interaction or direct confrontation. Interaction is part of the active or direct influence, where for instance the child interacts with his/her parents by using various influence techniques to achieve what he or she wants. Influence can also be more passive or indirect, where parents are aware of the child's preferences and try to comply without direct interaction with the child (Belch *et al.*, 1985; Grønhøj, 2002; Jensen, 1990). In general many studies on consumer behavior focus on the individual consumer's decision making, and only sometimes include the influence from other relevant persons through factors such as the “subjective norm” (the theory of reasoned action – Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). As a result, such factors only take indirect influence into account, for example when parents know what their children want and they are willing to comply with these wants. Another aspect is that the individual buying agent is not always able to predict precisely what other family members want him or her to buy



(Grønhøj, 1998). A successful choice may also require direct interaction, for example where parents can ask their children what they want.

This study picked children as a study group because children are a very important target market for marketers worldwide. Children have come to constitute a very important consumer group (Norgaard, 2007) that influences family purchases of various products in many ways (Belch *et al.*, 1985; Foxman *et al.*, 1989; Caruana and Vassallo, 2003). During the 1940-1950s, kids were not considered consumers in their own right but only an extension of their parents' purchasing power. But with the dawn of extensive media especially the TV and internet, children have become full-fledged consumers. Research shows that children have influencing power for almost all product categories. Whether the product is for a child's own use or the product is for family use, a child has very strong influencing power (Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012). Children not only want things, but have acquired the socially sanctioned right to want; a right which parents are loath to violate. Layered onto direct child enticement and the supposed autonomy of the child-consumer are the day-to-day circumstances of overworked parents: a daily barrage of requests, tricky financial status, and that nagging, unspoken desire to build the lifestyle they have learned to want during their childhoods (Cook, 2001). Thus, recognizing children as a primary market, an influencing market, and a future market (Norgaard, 2007), children today are seen as different from past generations; especially the 8-12 year-olds (called "tweens", as they are neither children nor teens but something between). "They've grown up faster, are more connected, more direct and more informed.

The reasons of choosing the 8-12 year-old age band is that children at this age are expected to be mature enough and have been found to be active and independent shoppers (McNeal, 1999), highly cognitive in consumption choices (Belk *et al.*, 1982) and knowledgeable about products and brands (Ward *et al.*, 1977). On the other hand, children of less than seven years of age have limited cognitive abilities (Caruana and Vassallo, 2003). However, children of 8-12 years have more personal power, more money, influence and attention than any other generation before them" (Lindstrom, 2003). Family structures are changing and this influences family decision-making (Belch and Willis, 2001). Their communication has become more open and democratic, one consequence being that, today parents pay more attention to their children and their opinions (Tufte, 1999). These changes in family



communication have made it possible for children to exert influence on family decision-making (Caruana and Vassallo, 2003; Chan and McNeal, 2003; Le Bigot, 2000; Moschis, 1985; Rose *et al.*, 2002), a phenomenon called reciprocal socialization, suggesting that children influence parents, just as parents influence children (Moore *et al.*, 2003).

Caruana and Vassallo (2003) identified that, ever since the early 1990s, marketers have targeted children since they not only are consumers but also influence family purchasing. Children influence family buying decisions in four different ways according to Wut and Chou (2009). First, children influence their parents to buy products for their own use according to their personal preferences. Second, older children generally get pocket money and buy the products of their choice directly. Third, children influence their parents' choice for products for joint consumption by the family. Lastly, children influence their parents' own preferences.

### **1.2 Categories of Consumers**

Customers play the most significant part in business. In fact the customer is the actual boss in a deal and is responsible for the actual profit for the organization (Kotler, 2008). A customer is the one who uses the products and services and judges the quality of those products and services. Hence it's important for an organization to retain customers or make new customers and flourish business. To manage customers, organizations should follow some sort of approaches like segmentation or division of customers into groups because each customer has to be considered valuable and profitable (Kotler, 2008).

Customers can either be; buyers only, users only or buyers and users. Sometimes the customer who chooses a product or service is not the end-user or the person who uses it. For example, one might create a computer game for children. But children are not the ones who actually buy the game. The child is the user, but the decision maker is probably the child's parents. The buyer may be the parents or the adult who picks the game up at the store.

Family decision making is different from individual decision making and is more complex because of the likelihood of joint decisions and different role specifications for members (Assael, 1987). To understand how consumers actually make buying decisions, there is need to identify who makes and has input into the buying decision; people can be initiators, influencers, deciders, buyers, or users (Kotler, 2008). Children may combine the roles of



initiators-those who request that something be bought, influencers-those who influence the buying decision, or users-those who use the product. These roles carried on to the family decision making process, places children as being equal participants in the buying process just as parents. This study considers children as having direct influence in the family purchase decisions through being; initiators, influencers and users.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Purchasing decisions are results of many influences including buying habits, peers, and family structure. Children are important family members and have considerable influence in determining what their family purchases (Kotler, 2008). For many reasons, children are exerting a greater and greater influence on family buying decisions (Wimalasiri, 2004). Pursuance of this research was precipitated by my personal experience where our 9 year old son pushed and influenced us to purchase a Nissan Tiida Latio similar to his friend's family car, instead of my choice for a Toyota Fielder. When I shared this experience with my Professor, he also shared how his 8 year old daughter influenced them to have a choice of Blue Band Margarine instead of Butter, after watching the Blue Band advert whose user became the winner in a race. The child wanted to take part and win during their school's athletic competition. Children influence to family purchase decision is also getting much recognition in Kenyan businesses. We encountered a supermarket in Kakamega town by the name "Mama Watoto Supermarket" (see appendix IV). Marketers now know that money is in the hands of children. As their economic muscle grows, so does a marketer's focus.

Understanding how and why a child influences purchasing decisions is important to marketing and business today. If marketers want to be successful they need to look to the children. Children have a world of power in their small hands. During the 1940-1950s, kids were not considered consumers in their own right but only an extension of their parents' purchasing power. But with the dawn of extensive media especially the TV and internet, children have become full-fledged consumers. Research shows that children have influencing power for almost all product categories. Whether the product is for a child's own use or the product is for family use, a child has very strong influencing power (Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012). Other writers had also recognized this and have come up with various literatures in support of Children's influence on buying decisions. The issue of children's influence in family purchase decisions is beginning to attract the attention of researchers of



family buying processes. Earlier, research on family decision-making tended to concentrate on examining variations in spousal influence; the role of the child was often overlooked (Davis 1976; Ferber 1973; McDonald 1980; Miller et al. 1982; Scanzoni 1980). However, there has recently been an increasing recognition of the child's importance in family purchase decisions. Specifically, a number of studies have found children to have at least some influence in decisions for a wide array of products (Isin and Alkibay, 2011).

Norgaard (2007), in her study done in Denmark on children's influence on and participation in the family decision process during food buying, found out that children have the most influence on decisions regarding easily prepared meals. Her study emphasized on the importance of looking at food decision making as a joint activity where children participated and gained influence. Chaudhary and Gupta (2012), in their study on children's influence on family buying process in India, ranked products based on children's influence and compared their influence on the different stages of the family buying process. They found out that children's influence on family buying is not limited to any product cluster though it varies according to product clusters.

In Kenya, the wife traditionally has been the main purchasing agent for the family, especially in the areas of food, household products, and clothing. But with most urban women holding jobs outside the home and the willingness of husbands to do more of the family's purchasing, all this is inevitably going to change (Kibera and Waruingi, 1998). Children's influence on family purchases continues to grow, both within the West and elsewhere. Yet, with a few exceptions, most empirical studies were conducted in the West and less is known about children's influence elsewhere (Showham and Dalakas, 2006).

One of the major conclusions that can be drawn from the many studies reviewed is that they are based in the Western context and that, there are very few studies focusing on Asia or Africa, and particularly Kenya. Family structures are undergoing a transformation and the Kenyan society is also witnessing a major economic and societal change. It is in this view that this study focuses on finding out children's influence on family purchase decisions in Kenya.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To find out whether parent-child relationship determine children influence to family purchase decisions (FPD) in Kenya.



2) To make recommendations to marketers for effective audience targeting

### **1.5 Hypothesis**

$H_{01}$ : Parent-child relationships have no significant effects on FPD in Kenya.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Consumer Purchase Decisions**

Consumers make many buying decisions every day. Most large companies research on consumer buying decisions in great detail to answer questions about what consumers buy, where they buy, how and how much they buy, when they buy, and why they buy (Perner, 2010). Marketers can study actual consumer purchases to find out what they buy, where, and how much. But learning about the whys of consumer buying behavior is not so easy; the answers are often locked deep within the consumer's head. The process of consumer decision making can be viewed as having three distinct but interlocking stages: input stage, the process stage, and the output stage.

Input stage: The input stage influences the consumer's recognition of a product need and consists of two major sources of information; the firm's marketing efforts i.e. the product itself, its price, its promotion, where it is sold and the external and non commercial sources, the consumer (family, friends, neighbours, other informal and non commercial sources, social class, cultural and sub cultural memberships) (Schiffman, 2007). The cumulative impact of each firm's marketing efforts, the influence of family, friends and neighbours and society's existing code of behavior are all inputs that are likely to affect what consumers purchase and how they use what they buy.

The process stage: The process stage focuses on how consumers make decisions. The psychological factors inherent in each individual (motivation, perception, learning, personality and attitudes) affect how the external inputs from the input stage influence the consumer's recognition of a need, pre purchase search for information and evaluation of alternatives (Schiffman, 2007). The experience gained through evaluation of alternatives, in turn affects the consumer's existing psychological attributes.

The output stage: The output stage of the consumer decision making consists of two closely related post decision activities; purchase behavior and post purchase evaluation. Purchase behavior for a low cost, non durable product (e.g. a new shampoo) may be influenced by a manufacturer's coupon and can actually result into a trial purchase if the customer is



satisfied. The trial is the exploratory phase of purchase behavior in which the consumer evaluates the product through direct use (Schiffman, 2007).

## **2.2 The Buyer Decision Process**

The buyer decision process consists of five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior. The buying process starts long before actual purchase and continues long after. Consumers pass through all five stages with every purchase. But in more routine purchases, consumers often skip or reverse some of these stages. For example a lady buying her regular brand of toothpaste would recognize the need and go right straight to the purchase decision, skipping information search and evaluation. Need Recognition: The buying process starts with need recognition; the buyer recognizes a problem or need. The buyer senses a difference between his or her actual state and some desired state. The need can be triggered by internal stimuli when one of the person's normal needs, e.g. hunger, thirst or sex raises to a level high enough to become a drive. A need can also be triggered by external stimuli. By gathering such information, the marketer can identify the factors that most often trigger interest in the product and can develop marketing programs that involve these factors (Kibera and Waruingi, 1998)

Information Search: An aroused consumer may or may not search for more information. If the consumer's drive is strong and a satisfying product is near at hand, the consumer is likely to buy it then. If not, the consumer may store the need in memory or undertake an information search related to the need. At one level, the consumer may simply enter heightened attention. Here one becomes more receptive to information about products. He/she pays attention to the product ads, those used by friends, and product conversations. Or they may go into active information search, in which he/she looks for reading material, phones friends, and gathers information in other ways. The amount of searching he/she does will depend on the strength of their drive, the amount of information they start with, the ease of obtaining more information, the value they place on additional information, and the satisfaction they will get from searching (Kibera and Waruingi, 1998).

The consumer can obtain information from any of several sources. These include personal sources (family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances), commercial sources (advertising, salespeople, dealers, packaging, displays, Web sites), public sources (mass media,



consumer-rating organizations), and experiential sources (handling, examining, using the product). The relative influence of these information sources varies with the product and the buyer. Generally, the consumer receives the most information about a product from commercial sources, i.e. those controlled by the marketer (Kardes, 2002). The most effective sources, however, tend to be personal. Commercial sources normally inform the buyer, but personal sources legitimize or evaluate products for the buyer. People often ask others e.g. friends, relatives, acquaintances and professionals for recommendations concerning a product or service. Thus, companies have a strong interest in building such word-of-mouth sources. These sources have two chief advantages. First, they are convincing: Word of mouth is the only promotion method that is of consumers, by consumers, and for consumers. Having loyal, satisfied customers that brag about doing business with you is the dream of every business owner. Not only are satisfied customers repeat buyers, but they are also walking, talking billboards for your business. Second, the costs are low. Keeping in touch with satisfied customers and turning them into word-of-mouth advocates, costs the business relatively little (Kardes, 2002).

**Evaluation of Alternatives:** We have seen how the consumer uses information to arrive at a set of final brand choices. How does the consumer choose among the alternative brands? The marketer needs to know about alternative evaluation that is, how the consumer processes information to arrive at brand choices. Unfortunately, consumers do not use a simple and single evaluation process in all buying situations. Instead, several evaluation processes are at work. The consumer arrives at attitudes toward different brands through some evaluation procedure. How consumers go about evaluating purchase alternatives depends on the individual consumer and the specific buying situation. In some cases, consumers use careful calculations and logical thinking. At other times, the same consumers do little or no evaluating; instead they buy on impulse and rely on intuition. Sometimes consumers make buying decisions on their own; sometimes they turn to friends, consumer guides, or salespeople for buying advice (Assael, 1998). Marketers should study buyers to find out how they actually evaluate brand alternatives. If they know what evaluative processes go on, marketers can take steps to influence the buyer's decision.

**Purchase Decision:** In the evaluation stage, the consumer ranks brands and forms some purchase intentions. Generally, the consumer's purchase decision will be to buy the most



preferred brand, but two factors can come between the purchase intention and the purchase decision. The first factor is the attitudes of others. The second factor is unexpected situational factors. The consumer may form a purchase intention based on factors such as expected income, expected price, and expected product benefits. However, unexpected events may change the purchase intention. Preferences and purchase intentions do not always result in actual purchase choice (schiffman, 2007).

Post purchase Behavior: The marketer's job does not end when the product is bought. After purchasing the product, the consumer will be satisfied or dissatisfied and will engage in post purchase behavior of interest to the marketer. What determines whether the buyer is satisfied or dissatisfied with a purchase? The answer lies in the relationship between the consumer's expectations and the product's perceived performance. If the product falls short of expectations, the consumer is disappointed; if it meets expectations, the consumer is satisfied; if it exceeds expectations, the consumer is delighted. The larger the gap between expectations and performance, the greater the consumer's dissatisfaction (Kotler, 2008). This suggests that sellers should make product claims that faithfully represent the product's performance so that buyers are satisfied. Some sellers might even understate performance levels to boost consumer satisfaction with the product. Customers are delighted with better than expected performance; they will buy again and tell other potential customers that a product lives up to its promises.

Almost all major purchases result in cognitive dissonance, or discomfort caused by post purchase conflict. After the purchase, consumers are satisfied with the benefits of the chosen brand and are glad to avoid the drawbacks of the brands not bought. However, every purchase involves compromise. Consumers feel uneasy about acquiring the drawbacks of the chosen brand and about losing the benefits of the brands not purchased. Thus, consumers feel at least some post purchase dissonance for every purchase.

Why is it so important to satisfy the customer? Such satisfaction is important because a company's sales come from two basic groups; new customers and retained customers. It usually costs more to attract new customers than to retain current ones, and the best way to retain current customers is to keep them satisfied (schiffman, 2007). Customer satisfaction is a key to making lasting connections with consumer's i.e. keeping and growing consumers and reaping their customer lifetime value. Satisfied customers buy a product



again, talk favorably to others about the product, pay less attention to competing brands and advertising, and buy other products from the company. Many marketers go beyond merely meeting the expectations of customers; they aim to delight the customer. A delighted customer is even more likely to purchase again and to talk favorably about the product and company (Kotler, 2008).

A dissatisfied consumer responds differently. Whereas, on average, a satisfied customer tells 3 people about a good product experience, a dissatisfied customer gripes to 11 people (Kardes, 2010). Clearly, bad word of mouth travels farther and faster than good word of mouth and can quickly damage consumer attitudes about a company and its products. Therefore, a company would be wise to measure customer satisfaction regularly. It cannot simply rely on dissatisfied customers to volunteer their complaints when they are dissatisfied. Companies should set up systems that encourage customers to complain. In this way, the company can learn how well it is doing and how it can improve. But listening is not enough; the company also must respond constructively to the complaints it receives.

### **2.3 Parent – Child Relationship**

Parents are considered as the primary socialization agents for children, and most aspects of parental influence continue well into adulthood (Ying Fan and Yixuan Li, 2010). Among all the social entities from which children might learn, parents appear to be the most instrumental in teaching their children consumer behaviour (Moore and Moschis, 1981; Mascarenhas and Higby, 1993). The influence of family on consumer socialization appears to produce effects more through the subtle social interactions between parents and their children than purposive education efforts carried out by parents (Moore *et al.*, 2003).

During the processes of direct communication between parents and children, parents influence their children's interactions with other consumer influence sources, and play a role to modify the effects of other socialization agents upon their children, such as mass media and peers groups (Moschis, 1985, 1987).

Ekstrom (1995) defines the concept of influence in family decision-making as “a change in a person's dispositions, as a result of interaction between parents and children. The response of parents to children's attempts at influencing family purchases, acts as reinforcements to children's future behavior as consumers. Parents who satisfy children's requests encourage children to be attentive to advertising and to ask for things more frequently; while parents,



who discuss children's requests, encourage them to develop skills in selecting and interpreting product information (Ward *et al.*, 1986). Since parents are considered to be the most important socialization agents, understanding the nature of parent-child communication can help provide an explanation for differences in child behavior and skills. Family structures have changed, which influences family decision-making (Belch and Willis, 2001), and, as some authors argue, family communication has become more open and democratic, one consequence being that today parents pay more attention to their children and their opinions (Tufté, 1999). These changes in family communication have made it possible for children to exert influence on family decision-making (Caruana and Vassallo, 2003; Chan and McNeal, 2003; Le Bigot, 2000; Moschis, 1985; Rose *et al.*, 2002), a phenomenon called reciprocal socialization, suggesting that children influence parents, just as parents influence children (Moore *et al.*, 2003).

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2008). Both quantitative and qualitative research designs will be adopted for this study. This study took the form of a descriptive survey as well as a qualitative study. A descriptive survey results in the collection of quantitative data appropriate to test the independent variables; parent- child relationship, peer group, advertising and product types on children influence on FPD in Kenya. According to Zikmund, (2010), a descriptive research design includes a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects under study.

#### **3.2 Target Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures**

A population is the whole group that the research focuses on (Jacobsen, 2002). This study target parents of 8 – 12 year old children in Kenya. This is because of ethical considerations, processes and dilemmas that are frequently encountered in doing research with children; which is more the case than when doing with adults, due to issues of minority status, informed consent, and anxiety about the cognitive competencies of children (Marshal, 2010). Christensen and Prout (2002) suggest that social researchers who work with children have their 'ethical view' of children formed by social theory. That is to say, their



paradigmatic perspective tends to shape not only their research questions, methods and theoretical perspectives, but also their ethical view of children as individuals. This study therefore used parents and saw children as objects of research as underlined by Christensen and Prout (2002). Their consumer experiences are studied from the outside as parents take a paternalistic view. According to 2009 census, Nairobi has 985,016 households with the age distribution: 0-14 years (30.3 %), 15-64 years (68.5 %), 65+ years (1.2 %). The study estimated the age bracket of 8-12 year old to constitute 10% of Nairobi households. Nairobi is cosmopolitan and therefore was the most appropriate to generalize. A sampling frame is the list of elements from which the sample may be drawn (Zikmund, 2010). Zikmund also calls it a working population because it provides the list that can be worked with operationally. This study's sampling frame included households which had 8-12 year old children in Nairobi County. Sampling refers to the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. If the appropriate sampling design is not used, a large sample size will not in itself, allow the findings to be generalized to the population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Cluster sampling based on counties was used on the larger Kenya and Nairobi County was purposively chosen to represent the Kenyan population. This is because Nairobi is cosmopolitan and therefore was the most appropriate to generalize. Nairobi was divided into four (4) strata as shown on Table 3.5. The strata bear proportionate percentages which correspond to the representation of children in the households. The strata were drawn such that they might have similar characteristics for homogeneity. Roscoe (1975; as quoted by Sekaran and Bougie, 2010), proposes the following rule of thumb for determining sample sizes; sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. It is also on Roscoe's preposition that this study proposed to use a sample size of 200 parents/guardians of children aged 8-12 years. Purposive sampling was used so as to have only households that had children aged 8-12 years.

### **3.3 Research Instruments and Data Collection and Analysis**

The study collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which was interviewer administered. A structured questionnaire presents the respondents with a fixed set of choices, often called closed questions. According to Krishnaswamy, Sivakumar and Mathirajan, M (2006), a



questionnaire is good because, a standardized and impersonal formats of a questionnaire have uniformity and help in getting data objectively, information on facts, attitudes, motivation and knowledge can be obtained easily. Prior to actual collection of data, a pilot test was done on 10 households to obtain some assessment of the question's validity and the likely reliability. Before the actual data analysis, gathered data was cleaned, edited and then coded. Once this was done, the analysis of the data was carried out using the proposed models in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. This study used multiple regression and multiple correlation models to determine the interdependence between children influences in parent-child relationship and family purchase decisions.

#### **4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data obtained from the field survey was analyzed in several steps. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's coefficient Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha measures how well a set of items or variables, measure a single uni-dimensional latent construct that is a coefficient of reliability or consistency. Reliability is expressed as a coefficient between 0 and 1.00. The higher the coefficient, the more reliable is the test. A threshold of a Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 and above is acceptable (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the proposed constructs. The findings indicated that parent-child relationship had a coefficient of 0.7135 and family purchase decisions had a coefficient of 0.8058. All constructs depicted that the value of Cronbach's Alpha were greater to 0.7 and thus, the study constructs were reliable. Further a test of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), which measure sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity was applied to test whether there was a relationship among the variables. A sample size is considered to be adequate if KMO is greater than 0.5. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy shows the value of test statistic as 0.743 which is greater than 0.5. With the value of test statistic and the associated significance level, it shows that there exists a high relationship among variables. The stated null hypothesis in this study was;  $H_0$ : Parent-child relationships have no significant effects on FPD in Kenya. To test the null hypothesis that there was no linear relationship between parent-child relationship and family purchase decisions, a linear regression F-test was carried out using ANOVA to determine whether there was a regression relationship between parent-child relationship and family purchase decisions.



The results of the linear regression indicated that  $R^2$  is equal to 0.165 and  $R$  is 0.406. This is an indication that there is a moderate relationship between parent-child relationship and family purchase decisions. F-test results of 35.857 and the critical values of F-test (1,182 degrees of freedom) at 0.05 is  $3.84 < 35.857$ . Then we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a linear relationship between parent-child relationship and family purchase decisions in Kenya. 98% of the respondents did agree that they encouraged their children to develop skills in selecting products. This implied that children would get an early exposure into developing good consumer behaviors. The study confirmed a repertoire of strategies that children use to convince their parents on what they promise in return to a purchase request favor. This is in line with Marie Maquis (2004), who found out that; children have an expanded repertoire of strategies for influencing family purchase decisions (FPD). The study confirmed a preference for persuasive strategies used by children aged 8-14 years; namely, expressing their opinions, stating their preferences or begging and emotional strategies i.e. asking repetitively for a product or being nice and affectionate.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

This study sought to determine children's influence to family purchase decisions (FPD) in Kenya. The specific objectives were to establish whether parent-child relationship determine children influence to family purchase decisions in Kenya and to make recommendations for effective audience targeting. Among all the social entities from which children might learn, parents appear to be the most instrumental in teaching their children consumer behaviour (Moore and Moschis, 1981; Mascarenhas and Higby, 1993). The study sought an understanding to the nature of parent-child relationships which provide an explanation for differences in child behavior and skills as consumers. Parent-child relationships have made it possible for children to exert influence on family decision-making (Caruana and Vassallo, 2003; Chan and McNeal, 2003; Le Bigot, 2000; Moschis, 1985; Rose *et al.*, 2002), a phenomenon called reciprocal socialization, suggesting that children influence parents, just as parents influence children (Moore *et al.*, 2003). The findings of the study revealed that parent-child relationship positively influenced family purchase decisions in Kenya. Results of inferential statistics such as ANOVA show that parent-child relationship has a significant contribution to family purchase decisions in Kenya. The study found out



that family purchase decisions increased as parents allowed various tactics used by children to influence them. This enhances household participation and self-reliance.

Based on the results of this study, parent-child relationships of majority families in Kenya determine children influences on FPD. Parent-child relationship had a positive and significant linear relationship on various measures of FPD that were used in this study. The study has confirmed several strategies that children use to influence parental decisions. Overall, it confirms a preference for persuasive strategies: namely, expressing their opinions, stating their preferences or begging; and emotional strategies: namely asking repetitively for a product or being nice and affectionate. This could therefore be concluded that parents, who respect children's roles in family purchase decisions, involve them in the purchase decision process. This not only prepares children to become better and rational consumers, but also enhances household participation and self-reliance.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This study is a justification of the fact that children, who have some good parent-child relationships, have a positive significant influence on family purchase decisions. Marketers need to start seeing children as equal partners in family purchase decisions because children have participatory roles within the purchase decision process which necessitate them to be considered wholesomely as having control of family purchase decisions just as parents.

### 5.2.1 Suggestions for Further Research

This study is a millstone for future research in this area, particularly in Kenya. The study methodology has targeted parents/guardians who expressed their opinions on the extent to which their children actually influenced family purchase decisions. As a future avenue of research, there is need to carry out similar research on children's influence to family purchase decisions in Kenya while using both parents/guardians and children in order to establish whether the two findings would agree for generalization.

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