

# MARKETING TO CHILDREN: DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING A SCALE TO MEASURE ASSOCIATED PARENTAL CONCERNS

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## ABSTRACT

*Parents are increasingly concerned about the unintended consequences resulting from marketing to children. Previous attempts to develop a scale for measuring parental concerns were limited to a few generalized concerns or restricted to a specific product, industry, method, media, or concern. The study aimed at developing and validating the Parental Concerns Measurement Questionnaire (PCMQ) for assessing parental concerns arising out of marketing to children. Initially, the English version of the instrument was developed and was later translated to Telugu. The bilingual questionnaire was administered to 400 parents of school-going children in the age group of 6-12 years for testing its validity and reliability. Based on the initial analysis, the 38-item scale was pruned to 29-items, and analysis was repeated. Results demonstrated adequate validity and reliability for the bilingual version of the PCMQ (29-item scale). The study resulted in the development of a valid, reliable, and comprehensive instrument for measuring parental concerns associated with marketing to children.*

**Key words:** Marketing, Marketing to children, Parental concerns, PCMQ, Validity, Reliability.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children have long been viewed as a lucrative segment by the marketers, for they purchased and consumed a range of products, influenced parental purchases, and held immense potential as future consumers [53, 56]. The 'Little Emperors and Empresses' exerted more power, had more money, and attracted more attention than ever before, resulting in their increased market participation and ability to influence family purchases [14, 39, 44, 47]. With nearly 2 billion children under the age of 15 worldwide, of which children in the United States alone accounted for close to a trillion dollars in purchases (this does not include their potential to influence parental purchases or potential future purchases), the children's market became an attractive proposition for the interested marketers [50, 55]. Driven by such potential profitability, the marketers are making all-out efforts to capture this segment, and retain them for the rest of their lives, which is clearly evident from the fact that they spend nearly \$15 billion every year in advertising efforts targeted at children [45]. Children are exposed to more than forty-thousand television commercials in a year, and this does not include their exposure to other and newer forms of marketing directed at children [40]. Borrowing insights from the field of psychology and sociology, the marketers employed sophisticated tools, techniques, and processes, to attract the children at an early age and retain them for the rest of their lives. The market defined postmodern childhood has become an important driver of the market economy. Brands have become an integral part of the child's consciousness and vocabulary [15].

However, questions were raised about the callous and relentless onslaught of the marketers', targeting children, and the unintended consequences associated with the same [48]. Marketing critics have coined/used caustic terms and phrases to describe the marketing efforts directed at children, terming the actions of marketers as 'toxic', 'unfair', 'inherently deceptive', 'hostile takeover of childhood', resulting in 'marketing-related illnesses', and some even categorizing marketers as 'child molesters' (Linn, 2004; Moore, 2004; Nader, 1999; Palmer, 2007; Schor, 2004). They argued that children were uniquely vulnerable and defenseless against the might of the marketers, and emphasized the need to protect the child [20, 28, 40, 46]. However, marketers thought otherwise. They countered the argument saying that children need to be educated and that marketing exposure provides the children with requisite education for developing them into 'competent' consumers [17, 19, 37]. Marketers also emphasized the rights of the children to live a complete and fulfilling life [17]. Rather than attempting to reach any consensus, the industry and civil society are engaged in a cycle of non-ending accusations and counter-accusations, relating to the ethics of marketing to children [29]. The consensus on the issues concerning marketing aimed at children can only be attempted by considering the viewpoints of all those who are involved or affected by it.

Parents play a pivotal role in the process of consumer and economic socialization of their children. They share a reciprocal relationship with their children, affecting each other's outlook, inclinations, and decisions [31]. Children start their journey to the marketplace accompanied by their parents and learn elementary consumer skills co-shopping with them [8]. They also seek guidance, assistance, and approval from their parents in making purchase decisions [54]. The shift in the socio-economic landscape, including higher income levels, dual-income families, better education, planned parenthood, and newer family structures, has made parents more indulgent, resulting in the increased influence of children on family

purchases [54]. However, the parents are increasingly concerned about the effects of marketing on their children [21, 27].

## **2. PARENTAL CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH MARKETING TO CHILDREN**

There are widespread concerns and negative feelings towards marketing to children (Oates, Newman, & Tziortzi, 2014; Watkins, Aitken, Robertson, & Thyne, 2016). The feeling of helplessness experienced by the parents when trying to protect their children from the onslaught of marketers, who constantly undermine the parental authority to instill values and beliefs in their children, makes them anxious and worried [1, 27]. Further, the concerns also stem from the values propagated by the marketers, which are contrary to those expected by parents [21]. Parents consider their children to be ‘uniquely vulnerable’, and the inexorable exploitation of these vulnerabilities by the marketers in their insatiable hunger for profits seemingly bothers them [5, 22]. Previous studies indicated that the ‘unique vulnerabilities’ of children made them extremely susceptible to marketing messages, thus confirming the apprehensions of the parents [46]. Marketers use children as instruments to nag/pester their parents to purchase products/services, resulting in increased parent-child conflict [11]. Parents are also concerned about the harmful or hazardous products marketed to the children, which negatively affect their health and well-being [27]. The excessive depiction of nudity and sexually suggestive content in marketing promotions are unnerving the parents [3]. Parents are troubled by the increased exposure of their children to violence and aggression portrayed in marketing communications and the impending consequences associated with it [12]. The attempts of the previous researchers towards developing a scale for measuring parental concerns were limited to a few generalized concerns or limited to a specific product, industry, method, media, or concern [18, 21, 25, 27]. This study is aimed at developing a Parental Concerns Measurement Questionnaire (PCMQ) for assessing the parental concerns associated with marketing to children. PCMQ is required for providing a comprehensive understanding of various aspects relating to ethical and moral concerns in marketing to children from the viewpoint of those who actually matter, are the most affected and are expressive about their concerns – the parents. Further, the instrument is tested among the sample population for its validity and reliability.

## **3. MEASUREMENT OF PARENTAL CONCERNS**

Seven frequently voiced criticisms associated with marketing to children, including the exploitation of vulnerabilities of children (John, 1999; Kline, 1993; Kunkel et al., 2004; Macklin, 2003; Oates, Blades, & Gunter, 2002), commodification of childhood [41, 45, 76], fostering materialistic values [11, 26, 64], resulting in parent-child conflict [11, 25, 59], promoting unhealthy products [7, 30, 49, 67, 79, 89], sexualization of childhood [3, 68], and promoting violence and aggression [12, 42, 74] were identified after extensive literature review and grouped under parental concerns.

### **3.1. Exploitation of Vulnerabilities (EV)**

Children are considered ‘uniquely vulnerable’ by their parents, an understanding which stems out of their perception and observation of children’s lack of required cognitive and developmental abilities to decipher the persuasive intent of marketing communications. Without the necessary competencies required for market participation and engagement, all the marketing efforts directed at the children are deemed to be exploitative in nature. Six key elements indicating the child’s understanding of the ‘intent’ behind marketing communications are included in the sub-dimension for measuring concerns related to the

exploitative nature of marketing communications. They include the ability to discriminate between commercial and non-commercial content, recognize the source (company/brand) of marketing communications, recognize that marketing communications are aimed at specific audiences [69], discern the selling intent [71]; discern the persuasive intent [43], and employ cognitive defenses [62].

### **3.2. Commodification of Childhood (CC)**

Schor (2004) defined commodification of childhood as the process of producing carefully constructed childhood for the purpose of being sold. The concerns of the parents related to the commodification of childhood were measured by adapting abridged version (9-items) of the Consumer Involvement Scale (CIS) recommended by Bottomley, Nairn, Kasser, Ferguson, & Ormrod (2010), which was derived from the 16-item scale initially developed by Schor (2004). The CIS measured three dimensions: consumer dissatisfaction (perpetual dissatisfaction leading to a never-ending cycle of purchase and repurchase), consumer orientation (importance attached to material possessions), and brand awareness (brand consciousness) [9, 33]. Since the concerns related to fostering materialism were distinctly grouped under a specific sub-dimension, the abridged version of CIS was shortened further to steer clear of multidimensionality, which might result from the inclusion of the items related to the measurement of materialism. Considering the results published by Bottomley et al (2010) and Sweeting, Bhaskar, & Hunt (2012), two items from each of the three dimensions (total 6 items) with the highest factor loadings were selected. Despite the higher factor loading, one item each from the dissatisfaction and brand awareness dimensions were dropped to avoid multidimensionality and replaced with the next ranked item in the respective dimension.

### **3.3. Fostering of Materialistic Values (FM)**

Belk (1984) defined materialism as the significance a person attaches to material possessions. Marketers are often criticized by the parents for promoting materialistic orientation among the children, which is associated with a host of undesirable outcomes [78, 83, 91]. In this study, fostering materialism is distinctly identified as a concern, and measured by adapting the 3-item material value scale developed by Oprea, Buijzen, van Reijmersdal, and Valkenburg (2011) to reflect the parental concerns. The 3-item scale had one item from each of the three dimensions of material centrality, happiness, and success [63].

### **3.4. Parent-Child Conflict (PC)**

For this study, parent-child conflict was defined as the parent's acknowledgment of conflict with the child, resulting from the denial of purchase requests induced by marketers [4, 25, 85]. Robertson, Ward, Gatignon, & Klees (1989) developed a 3-dimensional scale, consisting of demanding (children's assertion of themselves), communicating (children sharing thoughts and feelings), and independence (children deciding and acting independently) dimensions. Prior research has indicated that parent-child conflict is accentuated by demanding children [70]. Further, out of the two sub-dimensions of the demanding dimension, demanding things and demanding his or her way, the sub-dimension of the demanding things dealt with the attempts of children at forcing their parents to accede to their marketing-induced purchase requests, resulting in potential parent-child conflict. Hence, all the 5-items in the demanding things sub-dimension were adapted to reflect parental concerns related to the marketing-authored parent-child conflict.

### **3.5. Promotion of Unhealthy Products and Lifestyles (UH)**

Food items high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS), tobacco, and alcohol are considered unhealthy and/or hazardous for its consumers. Marketers' promotion of a distorted image of the body and self among young boys and girls were resulting in the practice of unhealthy lifestyles. The 7-item sub-dimension measuring parental concerns related to the promotion of unhealthy products and lifestyles included 4-items from the scale used by Grossbart & Crosby (1984), 2-items related to the promotion of alcohol and tobacco [51, 52, 87, 88], and 1-item related to the promotion of wrong notions of body and self [7, 35]. All the items in the sub-dimension were adapted to reflect parental concerns.

### **3.6. Sexualization of Childhood (SE)**

For this study, sexualization of childhood was defined as the use of sex appeal, reference to sexual practices and contexts, display of nudity, adultification of children (children playing the roles of adults), youthification of adults (adults playing the roles of children), and assignment of stereotypical roles in marketing communications targeted at children or generally seen by them [3, 10]. 6-items are included in the sub-dimension measuring the concerns of parents related to the sexualization of childhood, including the portrayal of excessive nudity, use of sex appeal, use of sexually indicative language, actions, symbols or imagery, adultification of children, youthification of adults, and gender-stereotyping in marketing communications.

### **3.7. Promotion of Violence and Aggression (VA)**

For this study, the promotion of violence and aggression is defined as the use of any form of aggression, including the violence portrayed in cartoons or any other humorous contexts, in marketing communications targeted at the children or generally viewed by the children. 5-items are included in the sub-dimension, including exposure to an excessive number of violent promotions, the degree of violence depicted in the promotions, developing an affinity towards violence, getting used to violence and wanting more of it, and mimicking violence [23].

All the 38-items in the PCMQ (Parental Concerns Measurement Questionnaire) were presented as statements with the response options ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree, on a 5-point Likert type scale.

## **4. RESEARCH METHOD**

The study was conducted in Rayalaseema Region, Andhra Pradesh, India, consisting of four districts (Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, and Kurnool). All the schools in the four district headquarters were divided into two broad categories, government schools, and private schools, basing on the ownership structure and management control of the schools. The schools located in the four district headquarters were divided into 8-strata: Anantapur-Private Schools(ATP-PS), Anantapur-Government Schools (ATP-GS), Chittoor-Private Schools (CTR-PS), Chittoor-Government Schools (CTR-GS), Kadapa-Private Schools (KDP-PS), Kadapa-Government Schools (KDP-GS), Kurnool-Private Schools (KNL-PS), and Kurnool-Government Schools (KNL-GS). Further, one school was selected at random from each stratum, and all the students between classes I to VII in the school were distributed questionnaires with an instruction to get it filled by their parent (mother/father). In case sufficient responses were not received from a selected school, one more school was selected from the same stratum and a similar process was repeated. The reference table published by Krejcie & Morgan [38] was used to arrive at a sample size of 400, which was equally distributed among all the strata.

## 5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The self-reported questionnaire (PCMQ) administered to the parents consisted of two distinct sections. Section-I consisted of items related to the socio-demographic information of the sample population. The socio-demographic summary of the sample population is presented in Table 1. Section-II consisted of a 38-item PCMQ, with each item presented as a statement to measure the extent of agreement or disagreement of the parents on a 5-point Likert type scale.

**Table 1** Socio-demographic summary of the respondents

Description	N	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male (Father)	206	51.5
Female (Mother)	194	48.5
<b>Age</b>		
<20	0	0
21-25	9	2.3
26-30	60	15.0
31-35	143	35.8
36-40	109	27.3
41-45	59	14.8
46-50	14	3.5
51-55	5	1.3
56 <	1	0.3
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	29	7.3
Secondary	163	40.8
Higher Secondary	96	24.0
Graduate	70	17.5
Post Graduate	40	10.0
PhD	2	0.5
<b>Monthly Income (In Indian Rupees)</b>		
<10000	244	61.0
10001-25000	112	28.0
25001-50000	32	8.0
50001-100000	12	3.0
<b>Occupation (Respondent)</b>		
Businessman	18	4.5
Agriculture	76	19.0
Service (Govt)	16	4.0
Pvt Employment	82	20.5
Self-employed	82	20.5
Wage worker	53	13.3
Homemaker	73	18.2
<b>Family Type</b>		
Joint	131	32.8
Nuclear	269	67.2
<b>Family Size</b>		
Up to 4 members	237	59.3
5 or more members	163	40.7
<b>No of children</b>		
One	49	12.3
Two	255	63.7
Three	87	21.8
More than 3	9	2.2
<b>Age of the Child*</b>		
6 - 7 Years	153	38.2
8 - 9 Years	147	36.8
10 - 12 Years	100	25.0

*Note:* For this study, the children between the age group of six to twelve years (both six and twelve included) were only considered. If there was more than one child in the age group of six to twelve years, the age of the youngest child within the age group was considered.

**Table 2** Structural Components of the PCMQ – Initial proposition (38-Item Scale)

S.No	Sub-dimension	Item Nos	Number of Items
1	Exploitation of vulnerabilities	1 to 6	6
2	Commodification of childhood	7 to 12	6
3	Fostering materialistic values	13 to 15	3
4	Parent-child conflict	16 to 20	5
5	Promoting unhealthy products and lifestyles	21 to 27	7
6	Sexualization of childhood	28 to 33	6
7	Promoting aggression and violence	34 to 38	5

The structural summary of various items included in the PCMQ is presented in Table 2. Further, the mean score for all the items in the scale is calculated. The higher mean score (more than 3) on the scale indicates that parents are more concerned about the marketing efforts directed at their children. Similarly, the smaller mean score (less than 3) indicates that the parents are less concerned about the marketing efforts directed at their children. Further, the process of computing the mean scores is repeated for all the sub-dimensions to measure the degree of parental concerns associated with specific concerns.

The study was conducted in a predominantly Telugu-speaking region of South-India. Hence, a bilingual questionnaire (in English and Telugu) was developed. The PCMQ was initially developed in English and was later translated to Telugu with the help of a professional translator. The translated version was again re-translated into English by a colleague (unrelated to the study) with proficiency in both the languages [84]. Further, the original version and re-translated version were compared by an educationist to identify any discrepancies, resulting from the loss of information during the translation process. After the educationist expressed his satisfaction with the congruency of the items in the original version and translated version, the questionnaire was tested on 30 parents selected through a convenience sample for assessing its face validity. Further, the questionnaire was submitted to 8 experts for ranking each item in the scale for its appropriateness and representativeness.

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS

The 38-item PCMQ, consisting of 7 sub-dimensions, was developed after an extensive review of the existing literature related to the study. The data collected from 400 parents through the self-reporting questionnaire (PCMQ) were digitized for subsequent analysis using SPSS (Version 19). Face validity (validity of the items in the instrument as judged by the respondents from a commonsense perspective) was assessed by administering the questionnaire to a convenience sample of 30-parents who evaluated the questionnaire based on the clarity of the language and expression, the structure and style of the presentation, and the likelihood of registering a response [66, 73]. The content validity (the appropriateness and representativeness of the items to the targeted construct) was assessed by generating item-level content validity index (I-CVI) and scale-level content validity index/universal agreement method (S-CVI/UA) [2, 72]. The construct validity (instrument measures what it intends to measure) was inferred from the examination of convergent validity (convergence of related items to map a trait/style) and discriminant validity (existence of meaningful differentiation between dissimilar constructs), using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and examining correlation values between the various sub-dimensions [24, 32]. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the items in each of the sub-dimension. In order to make adequately informed inferences, the Cronbach's alpha values were read along with the correlation values between the mean scores of each subscale [75].

## 7. RESULTS

Face validity was assessed by analyzing the responses of the 30 parents selected through a convenience sample, who were asked to rate each item in the instrument on three parameters, clarity of expression, simplicity of style and structure, and the likelihood of registering a response, on a 4-point Likert type scale. The response options for assessing clarity and simplicity ranged from 1-very poor to 4-very good, while the response options for assessing the likelihood of registering a response ranged from 1-not likely to 4-extremely likely. All the parents rated the items with a score of 3 or 4 on all the three parameters, indicating adequate face validity. The instrument was reviewed by eight purposefully selected experts from the field of marketing, ethics, and psychology, who rated each item in the scale on a 4-point Likert scale (1-not relevant to 4-extremely relevant). I-CVI was calculated as the number of experts rating the item 'relevant' (3 or 4) and then dividing it with the total number of the experts [72, 92]. Further, S-CVI/UA was computed as the proportion of items that were rated highly in terms of their relevance by all the experts [77]. The I-CVI values for the individual items in the scale except for item numbers 8 and 17 were found to 1.00 (Refer Table 3 for the item description). With two experts differing in their views about the relevance of item numbers 8 and 17 in the measurement of the construct, the I-CVI value for each of these items was found to be 0.75. Further, the S-CVI/UA value for the scale was found to be 0.95.

**Table 3** Items dropped due to insignificant factor loading or significant cross-loading

Item No	Item Description	Sub-Dimension	Reason for Dropping
8	Wanting more money	Commodification of Childhood	Insignificant factor loading
17	Insisting for his/her wants over the suggestion of his/her parents	Parent-Child Conflict	Significant Cross-loading
21	Too much exposure to ads promoting unhealthy products.	Promoting Unhealthy Products and Lifestyles	Significant Cross-loading
22	Using tricks and gimmicks	Promoting Unhealthy Products and Lifestyles	Significant Cross-loading
23	Promoting HFSS products	Promoting Unhealthy Products and Lifestyles	Significant Cross-loading
27	Promoting wrong ideals of beauty and body	Promoting Unhealthy Products and Lifestyles	Significant Cross-loading
33	Assigning stereotypical roles	Sexualization of Childhood	Significant Cross-loading
37	Getting used to excessive violence	Promoting Violence and Aggression	Significant Cross-loading
38	Mimicking violent and aggressive behavior	Promoting Violence and Aggression	Significant Cross-loading

EFA was carried out to observe the shared variance among the items in the scale from the data collected by administering the PCMQ to 400 parents [13]. The fitness of factor analysis was measured using Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO value of 0.943 indicated the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. The appropriateness of factor analysis was indicated by the significance of an approximate Chi-square value of 8456.064 at 703 degrees of freedom [81]. Principal axis factoring (PAF) method of extraction employing promax rotation with Kaiser normalization (set to 25 iterations) was used for performing EFA [13, 82]. The 7-factor structure was selected to project the 7 sub-dimensions initially identified in the scale development process. The seven factors accounted for 65.47% of the total variance. The existence of statistically significant factor loading (greater than or equal to 0.32) on any one factor and no significant cross-loading on any of the other factors was determined as the criterion for the inclusion of the item in the final instrument [81, 90]. Further, factors ascribing to theoretical constructs, with at least three items significantly loaded on to it, were retained [13, 16]. Item-8 did not

load significantly on to any of the factors and was dropped from the final instrument. Further, problematic cross-loadings were observed with 8 items in the scale (item numbers: 17,21,22,23,27,33,37, and 38), which were also dropped from the final instrument. The items dropped from the initial scale are presented in Table 3.

The 38-item scale was pruned to a 29-item scale based on the pre-established criterion for retaining an item after factor analysis, and factor analysis was re-run. The resulting 7-factor solution had all the items significantly loaded on to at least one of the factors without any significant cross-loadings. The factor loadings of the 29-item scale are presented in Table 4. Further, the items in the extracted factors were theoretically consistent with at least three items loaded on to each of the factors.

**Table 4** 29-items retained after factor analysis

Item No	Item Description	Factor / Sub-dimension						
		I - EV	II - CC	III - FM	IV - PC	V - UH	VI - SE	VII - VA
1	Differentiating between programming and non-programming content	.547						
2	Identifying the source of marketing communications	.667						
3	Recognizing that marketing promotions are aimed at a specific audience	.673						
4	Understanding selling intent	.746						
5	Understanding persuasive intent	.725						
6	Employing skepticism	.423						
7	Wanting families to buy more of what they want		.417					
9	Buying an item wherever they go		.554					
10	Encouraging shopping and store visits		.695					
11	Liking popular labels.		.807					
12	Increasing brand consciousness		.661					
13	Increasing importance attached to ownership of things			.687				
14	Linking happiness with buying expensive stuff			.741				
15	Equating fun with ownership			.518				
16	Pestering for purchase in spite of the resistance from the parents				.382			
18	Expressing dissatisfaction or anger resulting from purchase denial				.651			
19	Pestering their parents until they buy them whatever they want				.763			
20	Pestering parents even after they say no				.664			
24	Promoting bad habits					.747		
25	Making smoking and drinking socially desirable					.748		
26	Try smoking and drinking					.700		
28	Portrayal of excessive nudity						.629	
29	Using sexual appeal						.719	
30	Using sexually suggestive actions and contexts						.754	
31	Adultification of children						.590	
32	Youthification of adults						.561	
34	Increased exposure to violent promotions							.857
35	Degree of violence depicted in marketing promotions							.739
36	Developing an appreciative attitude towards violence							.488

The internal consistency of the items was assessed by calculating the Cronbach's alpha values for the various sub-dimensions in the 29-item scale extracted after factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha value for the various sub-dimensions is presented in Table 5. The Cronbach's alpha values for the sub-dimensions ranged from 0.805 to 0.848, indicating adequate reliability of the instrument in the selected sample. Further, to draw adequately informed inferences, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed between the mean scores of the sub-dimensions in the 29-item scale. The correlation coefficient values are presented in Table 6. The mean scores of the 7 sub-dimensions were moderately correlated with each other, indicating that the sub-dimensions were measuring different aspects related to parental concerns.

**Table 5** Cronbach's alpha values for the various sub-dimensions in the 29-item scale

S.No	Sub-dimension	No of Items	Cronbach's alpha value
1	Exploitation of vulnerabilities (EV)	6	0.816
2	Commodification of childhood (CC)	5	0.819
3	Fostering materialistic values (FM)	3	0.835
4	Parent-child conflict (PC)	4	0.805
5	Promoting unhealthy products and lifestyles (UH)	3	0.848
6	Sexualization of childhood (SE)	5	0.840
7	Promoting aggression and violence (VA)	3	0.807

**Table 6** Correlation between the mean scores of the sub-dimensions

Correlation between the mean scores							
	EV	CC	FM	PC	UH	SE	VA
EV	1	.599**	.573**	.521**	.483**	.503**	.491**
CC	.599**	1	.635**	.604**	.436**	.498**	.439**
FM	.573**	.635**	1	.583**	.560**	.537**	.526**
PC	.521**	.604**	.583**	1	.468**	.547**	.458**
UH	.483**	.436**	.560**	.468**	1	.617**	.592**
SE	.503**	.498**	.537**	.547**	.617**	1	.591**
VA	.491**	.439**	.526**	.458**	.592**	.591**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## 8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study was aimed at developing a valid and reliable instrument to measure the parental concerns associated with marketing activities directed at children. Seven frequently stated unintended consequences of marketing to children were included as sub-dimensions to comprehensively assess the parental concerns from a broader perspective without limiting it to a specific product, industry, method, tool, or concern. The study identified the frameworks provided by the previous researchers in various contexts to develop a theoretically sound construct and adapted them to reflect parental concerns. Initially, a 38-item scale, representing 7 sub-dimensions, was developed in English and translated to Telugu using an established procedure. The bilingual questionnaire was administered among a convenience sample of 30-parents who rated the scale on the parameters of clarity, simplicity, and likelihood of achieving a response. All the items in the scale were assigned a rating of 3 or 4 by all the respondents, indicating adequate face validity. The scale was also administered to 8 chosen experts who rated all the items based on its appropriateness and representativeness to the targeted construct. Only 2-items registered an I-CVI slightly lower than 0.8, while all the other items registered an I-CVI of 1.00. The items with slightly lower I-CVI were not dropped

immediately from the instrument and were revisited after obtaining the results for factor analysis. The S-CVI for the 38-item scale was found to be 0.95, indicating that the items in the scale are appropriate and representative of the construct studied (content validity).

EFA was used to explore the data collected by administering the bilingual self-reporting questionnaire among 400 parents from a predominantly Telugu-speaking region in South-India. The 7-factor solution extracted by the PAF method using promax rotation resulted in an unclear pattern matrix with 1- item not loading significantly on to any of the factors, and 8-items loading significantly on to more than one factor. All the 9-items were dropped from the instrument, and factor analysis was performed once again. The 9-items dropped from the instrument also included the 2-items with lower I-CVI. The re-run of factorial analysis after eliminating 9-items resulted in a factorial structure similar to the one envisaged in the theoretical framework. All the factors had at least 3-items significantly loaded on to it. The convergence of the related items on 7-factors, significant factor loading on all the 29-items, and absence of significant cross-loadings, implies the convergent validity of the instrument. The examination of pattern matrix reveals that all the items loaded significantly on to any one of the 7-factors, without any significant cross-loading, indicating discriminant validity. Further, the discriminant validity is substantiated by the moderate intercorrelation (ranging from 0.436 and 0.635) observed between the scales, indicating that the sub-dimensions were meaningfully differentiated. The existence of the construct validity in the 29-item instrument is confirmed from the demonstration of convergent and discriminant validity. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha values (ranging from 0.805 to 0.848) for the 7 sub-dimensions indicate adequate reliability of the instrument for measuring parental concerns. This is also substantiated by the moderate intercorrelations between the mean scores of the sub-dimensions, indicating the existence of a theoretically useful distinction between them. The study resulted in the development and validation of the bilingual (English and Telugu) instrument to assess the parental concerns associated with marketing activities targeted at children for use among English and/or Telugu speaking parents in India. Further studies are required to understand the roots and consequences of these parental concerns.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The study has significantly contributed to the existing body of knowledge by developing a tool for understanding and measuring parental concerns associated with marketing to children. Further, it paves the way for the future researchers to understand the roots of the parental concerns, and examine the impact of parental concerns on attitudes, behaviors, and preferences of the parents. However, there are certain limitations associated with the study. First, the study was restricted to a specific geographical region. Second, the lack of balance in the sample demographics (with respect to education/income) makes it difficult to generalize the findings. Third, the sample includes a small number of illiterate parents who have supposedly registered their responses by taking the help of a friend or a family member (third party). The responses of these parents might carry the weight of the inclinations and choices of the third party. Despite the limitations of the study, the author recommends the use of PCMQ for assessing the parental concerns arising out of marketing to children and exploring the antecedents and consequences of such concerns.

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