AN ANALYTICAL DEDUCTION OF AN OUTPUT DRIVEN FRAMEWORK BETWEEN MARKETING AND TWEENS

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Abstract

One revolutionary recent development in advertising to kids has been the defining of a "tween" market (ages 8 to 12). No longer little children, and not yet teens, tweens are starting to develop their sense of identity and are anxious to cultivate a sophisticated self-image. And marketers are discovering there's lots of money to be made by treating tweens like teenagers. The marketing industry is forcing tweens to grow up quickly. Industry research reveals that children 11 and older don't consider themselves children anymore. A 2000 report from the Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. revealed how Hollywood routinely recruits tweens (some as young as nine) to evaluate its story concepts, commercials, theatrical trailers and rough cuts for R-rated movies. By treating pre-adolescents as independent, mature consumers, marketers have been very successful in removing the gatekeepers (parents) from the picture—leaving tweens vulnerable to potentially unhealthy messages about body image, sexuality, relationships and violence. Corporations capitalize on the age-old insecurities and self-doubts of teens by making them believe that to be truly cool, you need their product. Some companies hire "cool hunters" or "cultural spies" to infiltrate the world of teens and bring back the latest trends.

Trying to stay ahead of the next trend can be a tricky business however, as cultural critic Douglas Rushkoff explains. "The minute a cool trend is discovered, repackaged, and sold to kids at the mall—it's no longer cool. So the kids turn to something else, and the whole process starts all over again." Teen anger, activism and attitude have become commodities that marketers co-opt, package and then sell back to teens. It's getting harder to tell what came first: youth culture, or the marketed version of youth culture. Does the media reflect today's teens, or are today's teens influenced by media portrayals of young people? It's important that parents discuss these issues with their teens, and challenge the materialistic values promoted in the media. It's difficult for teens to develop healthy attitudes towards sexuality and body image when much of the advertising aimed at them is filled with images of impossibly thin, fit,
beautiful and highly sexualized young people. The underlying marketing message is that there is a link between physical beauty and sex appeal—and popularity success, and happiness. Fashion marketers such as Calvin Klein, & Fitch and Guess use provocative marketing campaigns featuring young models. These ads are selling more than clothing to teens—they're also selling adult sexuality. Studies show that while teens received most of their information about sex from the media: magazines, TV, the Web, radio and movies, the majority say their parents shape their sexual decisions most, so it's important that parents talk to their kids about healthy sexuality, and about exploitive media images. Media images can contribute to feelings of body-hatred and self-loathing that can fuel eating problems. While body image has long been considered a female issue, an increasing number of boys now also suffer from eating disorders. A 1998 Health Canada survey on the health of Canadian youth noted that by grade ten, over three-quarters of the girls and one half of the boys surveyed said there they weren't happy with their bodies. Studies have also found that boys, like girls, may turn to smoking to help them lose weight. Tobacco and alcohol companies have long targeted young people, hoping to develop brand loyalties that will last a lifetime. It's crucial for the tobacco industry to continually cultivate new and younger smokers to replace the thousands who quit each year—and those who die of tobacco-related diseases. The alcohol and beer industries were quick to recognize the value of the Internet as an effective tool for reaching young people. The Web offers marketers a medium that is a huge part of youth culture—with the added bonus that it's unregulated, with very little parental supervision. In 1999, the U.S. Center for Media Education found that 62 per cent of beer and alcohol Web sites displayed what they call "youth-oriented features"—that is, activities that appeal to the adolescent and pre-adolescent set. A whopping 12000 Cr is the Indian tween market size across the categories is always on the zoom side where technology adoption and diffusion is the key innovator and success factor. This paper is an honest endeavour to understand the purchase behaviour of tween customer segment, impact of media on their decision making construct and finally the factors that creates brand awareness among these groups.

**Introduction**

Next to China, India is the most populous country in the world, with a 1995 population of 950 million. India’s urban population accounts for 28 percent of the country’s total population. In 1991, one third of the 12.6 million inhabitants of Bombay were homeless, living on the streets or in squatters’ camps built on putrid landfills. Bombay, India’s most populous city, has 100,000 people per square kilometer. The 1995 age distribution showed that 36.8 percent of the populations were under 15 years of age; the working age group (15 to 64) was 69 percent; and the aged population (65 and over) was about 4 percent. The 1995 life expectancy at birth for males was 58 years and for females 60 years. The birthrate was twenty-eight per 1,000 populations and the death rate ten per 1,000 popu- lation, giving a natural annual growth rate of
1.8 percent. The 1995 infant mortality rate was 76 per 1,000 live births. The sex ratio showed 929 females to 1,000 males. India has one hospital bed per 1,357 persons, and one physician per 2,189 persons. The 1993 literacy level was estimated at about 50 percent, with schooling compulsory to age 14; the literacy rate is significantly lower for females than males. It is not uncommon to see a tween customer spending money to buy the latest album of Sonu Nigam, to play on his MP3 compatible play-station, browsing through the latest magazines on fashion before entering the lee’s showroom, to buy a pair of low cut jeans and a matching bottle red top and then using the latest model of a Motorola cell-Phone to send pictures of himself to some close friends. Tween consumers have now become a growing force in almost all global markets, increasing not only in number, but more importantly also in spending power.

Most companies have tried to harness this power of the tween market- very few have succeeded in reaping the rewards of tween brand loyalty. The immense potential of this segment has made it even more important for marketers to arrive at the correct methodology at the earliest. Since there are not many tween- specific brands in India, most strategies have been adopted from foreign countries, to address the burgeoning Indian tween customers. Since the Indian tweens has always been different from their counterparts abroad, branding to Indian tween customers is easier said than done. Globally their total purchase influence is an astounding $188 trillion.” “In 2000 their purchase power had reached a whopping $290 billion in the United States. In Indian market the current tween market stands at whooping Rs.12000 Crore.

Objective

Today’s tweens are not only a more powerful segment but probably one of the most profitable. This paper is an honest endeavor to gain an insight into the decision making process and the driving factors that influence tween buying behavior, there by helping a marketer to take advantage of long term payoffs in brand loyalty, as tweens today become the buyers of tomorrow. It is a global phenomenon that the three very important socializing modes are family, peers and media. This paper tries to find out which one out of these three agents influence the most for a tween to make a choice purchase.
The following are the objectives of the research study:

- To examine the perspectives that influence the brand cognitive level of the tweens.
- To estimate the factors that play the key role in finalizing the purchase behavior of the tweens and also to analyze the shopping and spending patterns of tween customers.

The marketers are interested in the tween segment due to their sheer population size and segment attractiveness. The data regarding their population are as follows:

**Tween Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 years &amp; above</td>
<td>150,421,175</td>
<td>77,322,151</td>
<td>73,099,024</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17.94</td>
<td>17.77</td>
<td>18.12</td>
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<td>7 to 14 years</td>
<td>161,943,487</td>
<td>84,405,295</td>
<td>77,538,192</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19.31</td>
<td>19.39</td>
<td>19.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 to 59 years</td>
<td>464,826,476</td>
<td>241,411,392</td>
<td>27,317,915</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.43</td>
<td>55.47</td>
<td>55.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years &amp; above</td>
<td>56,681,640</td>
<td>29,363,725</td>
<td>27,317,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>6.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age not Stated</td>
<td>4,695,158</td>
<td>2,705,595</td>
<td>1,989,563</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1991 Census of India
### Distribution of Population by Age and Sex 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Groups</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
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### Materialistic Values

- Tweens spent time and money collecting brand names.
- Well known brands last longer, match what one’s friends are wearing, look modern, Affluent.
- Today tweens dress up more, try to follow fashions closely, and dare to express themselves.

### Paradigm shift

During these two decades there is lot of changes which has attracted the attention of marketers as well as the marketing researchers. The paradigm shift has been represented as under:

### Influences

- Fashion center – US.
- Influenced by TV, actresses, pop singers.
- A lot of people study abroad, and bring back influences.
Changes

- Higher standard of living.
- More educational options available with private colleges.
- New techniques in education. Scientific approach/beliefs more effective
- Don’t just believe what you are told, but value the truth. Believe what we see and hear.
- Housework easier - more facilities, washing machine, micro-wave, can buy readymade Food.

Changing Attitudes

- Problems, concerns, worries shared with friends, not family
- People more ambitious now.
- Both parents work, less time spent with kids, more tension at home
- Mothers compensate by giving their children money or buy them things
- Material things substitute for love.
- Kids don’t know the concept of saving.
- Parents blame themselves, can’t scold children, and want to avoid conflict.
- Children hide things from their parents - pack clothes and change after tuition class.
- Influence of Mall culture.
- Children less confident now, closer to friends
- They copy friends, can’t live without the acceptance of friends
- Talk for a long time on the telephone, even after midnight
- Dress in a certain way looking into the acceptance of the group.

The issue has been addressed by the marketers and advertisers in the form of employing a persuasive medium of communication. The objective was to create a positive feeling and attitude towards their brand. This group is particularly targeted because the ability to distinguish between the good and bad, biased, deceptive ads is not present and they have a very wavering vision for identifying the real life and a simulated life. Hence, they become the soft targets for all the subtle tactics of the marketers or the advertisers or sometimes both virtually everywhere be it in classroom or textbooks or internet or rather any identifiable place of the tweens. Media plays a very important role in the cognitive shaping. Celebrities are normally used for the
association and brand recall. Though tween group does not influence much as compared to teens but still due to their pester power they are always the choice of the marketers.

**Methodology**

- Survey method is used for collecting the primary data and the data was collected using a pre-tested questionnaire.
- The questionnaire is a combination of structured as well as unstructured questions.
- In depth interview technique was employed for a sample of 120 respondents.
- The respondents were in the age group of 8 – 14 years of age..
- Convenient sampling technique was used for the research.
- An exploratory research study has been conducted to get a clarity of the research problem. The secondary data has been collected through internet, journals, magazines and the e-news papers.
- A formal study has also been used by formulating the hypothesis and testing it by using Pearson’s Chi-square test to solve the research questions.

**Literature Review**

It is an established fact that adolescence is a time of growth, maturity, socialization, and reanalyzing of one’s self (Peterson, 1987). It is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood, which also means a period of redefining of perceived expectations. This development of a new understanding of one’s identity comes from several cues, such as family, peers, work, and society (Peterson, 1987; Jones, Vigfusdottir & Lee, 2004; Reiss & Youniss, 2004). The process is sparked by social interaction and the cues are then internalized and evaluated before a decision as to whether or not to identify with the action is made. Pressures laid on adolescents from peers include rigidity in what each role or influencer place upon adolescents the flexibility remains in the overall choices finally reached in each arena of life. The invention of self-identity is an ever changing and continuous discovery (Reiss & Youniss, 2004). By listening to their friends they are able show independence from their parents while maintaining a feeling of conformity and solidarity within their peer groups (Wilson, MacGillivray, 1998). It is often with friends that adolescents feel most comfortable expressing their ideas as well as exploring new options (Akers & Jones & Coyl, 1998). Akers et al., conducted a study that found that “best friends” are similar in issues such as dating and friendships.

**Analysis**
In order to answer the research problem, we have to search the factors and the construct between them in the context of brand awareness levels, influencers and the purchasing power. It is concluded that parents, peers and advertisements were the main influencing factors. The research findings were analyzed by making use of the chi-square test and the test results are noted down in the table 1.

I. Brand Awareness Level:

Hypothesis: I

Relationship between the Advertisements and Brand Awareness levels

Ho : There is no significant relationship between the advertisements and brand awareness levels among tweens.

H1 : There is a significant relationship between the advertisements and brand awareness levels among tweens.

Pearson’s Chi-square test clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between the advertisements and the brand awareness levels. Hence the null hypothesis Ho is rejected.

Hypothesis: II

Relationship between peer influence and brand awareness levels

Ho : There is no significant relationship between peer influence and brand awareness levels among tweens.

H1 : There is a significant relationship between the peer influence and brand awareness levels among tweens.

Hypothesis: III

Relationship between family and brand awareness levels

Ho : There is no significant relationship between the influence by the family and the brand awareness levels.

H1 : There is a definite relationship between the influence by the family and the brand awareness levels.

As the chi square test has shown there is no clear associative relationship between parental income and this segments decision making we have not included in the further analysis.

II. Purchasing Power of the Tweens:
Hypothesis : I

Relationship between advertisements and the choice purchase behaviour.

H0 : There is no significant relationship between the advertisements and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

H1 : There is a significant relationship between the advertisements and the purchase behaviour among the tweens. The test clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between the advertisements and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

Hence the null hypothesis H0 is rejected.

Tweens are quite well versed with the brand communication nomenclature and they also take media into consideration before taking the final decision.

Hypothesis : II

Relationship between peer influence and the choice purchase behaviour.

H0 : There is no significant relationship between the peer influence and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

H1 : There is a significant relationship between the peer influence and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

Pearson’s Chi-square test clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between the advertisements and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens. Hence the null hypothesis H0 is rejected.

From the above analysis it was found that the tweens take lot of care to consult their friends and counterparts before purchasing a brand. It has been also observed that they almost purchase those brands which are very similar to their friend’s brands.

Hypothesis : III

Relationship between family and the choice purchase behaviour

H0 : There is no significant relationship between the family and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

H1 : There is a definite relationship between the family and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens.

Pearson’s Chi-square test clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between the family and the choice purchase behaviour among the tweens. Hence the null hypothesis H0 is rejected.
These segment act as a major influencer in the form of pester power in the family decision making process. Whether a single or double income family this vulnerable group plays a deciding role in the final outcome of the purchase decision.

**Consolidated Test Results**

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Test used</th>
<th>Chi Square Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Brand Awareness Level</td>
<td>Chi Square</td>
<td>3.3076*</td>
<td>There is a significant relationship between media and brand awareness level among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Brand Awareness Level</td>
<td>Chi Square</td>
<td>38.643**</td>
<td>There is a significant relationship between peer influence and brand awareness level among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Brand Awareness Level</td>
<td>Chi Square</td>
<td>25.2806**</td>
<td>There is a significant relationship between family and brand awareness level among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Purchasing Power</td>
<td>Chi Square</td>
<td>20.72**</td>
<td>There is a significant relationship between media and the purchasing power among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Purchasing Power</td>
<td>Chi Square</td>
<td>2.565*</td>
<td>There is a significant relationship between peer influence and the purchasing power among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Purchasing Power Chi Square 1.897* There is a significant relationship between family and the purchasing power among the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Purchasing Power</th>
<th>Chi Square</th>
<th>1.897*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Critical values at 4 degrees of freedom at 90% level of significance is 1.064 and at 10% level of significance is 7.779.

* indicates significance of the calculated value at 90%.
** indicates significance of the calculated value at 10%.

The research findings were further analyzed using Pearson’s method of correlation and it was found out that there was a very high degree of correlation between the factors - media & peers (whose correlation co-efficient was around r = 0.9702). A similar result was also obtained with factors - media & family (whose correlation co-efficient was around r = 0.9048). Therefore, in the context of this research study the main determinants of the purchasing power of tweens and their brand awareness are media (advertisements), peer influence and family.

**III. Sources of Brand Awareness:**
- Audio and visual Media – Radio and Television.
- Print Media – Newspapers, Popular Magazines, Hoardings.
- Word of Mouth Communication – Family/Friends.
- Retail Store outlets – Interactive Brand Experiences.

The respondents are having a positive view towards the advertising message and they also follow their role model while making their purchase decision. However they are not impulsive customers as they also take lot of other factors into rationale of buying. Therefore the marketers should be careful while strategizing their market operations. These customers are also very brand conscious.

**Limitations**

◊ The questionnaire for the research study has been designed only with variables like media (advertisements), peers & family as the main criteria for determining the brand awareness levels & the choice purchase behavior of the tweens.

◊ Ignorance on the part of the respondent and time-constraint are some of the limitations of this study.
The research study is confined to only a selected fraction of the population of the tweens in the city of Bhubaneswar with the sample size of 90 respondents. This is not a true representation of the tween population as a whole.

CONCLUSION

With the explosion in the technology and in an era where consumers are ever demanding marketers are expected to be highly consumer focused and innovate their product offerings so as to fit in into the ever dynamic consumer choice and preferences. Innovation and continuous adoptability to these dynamic and upwardly mobile customers will be the key mantra for success in the market place. So in this highly advanced technological era the marketers should take care about their communication strategy, use of celebrities and the product and service offerings so as not to disturb the minds of these customers rather it should work in a positive way to ignite their decision making cognitive process. Referring one recent article in Sunday times (Dt.12.10.08/TOI) where the author claims the quick demolition of the gap between tween and teen customers, the marketers need to be proactive than reactive to woo this segment.

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