

## **Evaluating Parameters of Advertising Media Used by Marketers to Influence Adolescents' Buying-Decision Making**

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### **Abstract**

In present time, we see a drastic change, where adolescents are now viewed as customers for every type of product. Adolescents are now treated as a segment in the market which cannot be ignored. They are considered as a primary market of customers, who have their own money for their own needs and direct the use of their parents' money for their benefit, and a future market for all the goods and services will provide a steady stream of new customers when they reach the market. Thus, when considering these, marketers have understood the potential of this segment and thus, have started targeting it.

### **Key Words**

Adolescents', Buying Decision-Making, Consumer Socialization

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Our society, being patriarchal, adolescents play an important role in buying-decisions in the family, which may be due to the sociological changes taking place. Parents have the decisive vote, but in this "decisive vote" they take adolescents views and prior experiences with them into account. Adolescents vocalize their wishes, and parents are often co-operative and attentive. Parents understand that adolescents influence on what is bought but it was also found that they do not agree on influence adolescents have. Thus, there is a gap in the

knowledge about what is happening and seemingly cannot be solved through retrospective data collection.

With increasing competition and changing social and economic environment, it is essential for the marketers to be customer-oriented. Buying behaviour of customers plays an important role in the marketing planning. The awareness of customer behaviour has presented new dimensions in the marketing practices. It is important for every business enterprise to know its customers and their buying behaviour. As culture influences a family unit, it is quite likely that socialisation of the adolescents is influenced by these.

Adolescents, while buying, impose their demands on parents because they have many sources of information along with greater exposure. Somewhat they succeed in pressurizing their parents for desired products as parents value their views and nurture their self-expression but on the other hand, some demographic factors minimize this influence. With dual income, the purchasing power of family increases and a psychological aspect gets attached to it.

Members in a family influence the decision-making process for different products and to varying degrees, based on the kind of product and the way they intend to use the product. Thus, the marketer should not just target individual family members, but rather the entire family as a whole. Studies show that out of all the family members, adolescents have started to emerge as a growing influence on family buying-decision making in a variety of product ranges – not just products meant for them, but also those used by the entire family. Gone are the days when marketers would solely focus on the adults as targets to market their products.

Adolescents, then were not considered as an important section of the market that needed to be focused on. Today, females are in search of lucrative careers which make it easier for them to get a sound financial backup. Financial independence is something which every female aspires for. This makes them independent to take decisions of their life. Planning of career or rather stable career has resulted into late marriages which has further resulted into delayed parenthood. This delayed parenthood makes parents overemotional towards their young children. Increased income makes parents splurge over young children to make them glad. Due to working parents, families have been divided into nuclear and single parent families in India apart from joint families. Adolescents exert more influence in single parent and nuclear families. As family size increased, influence also increased. Adolescents get more options for fulfilling their demands in joint families and absence of parents makes them more powerful.

Parents' employment status also differentiates the impact of adolescents on buying-decisions. If parents are working, adolescents get more freedom to

discuss their choices and spending. Parents provide consumption autonomy, support their views and opinions and put restrictions if needed. In this way they try to compensate their unavailability for adolescents. Most of studies focused on mothers-adolescent relationship and very few on father-adolescent. Studies revealed that adolescents spend their most of the time with their mothers, so mothers are not convinced by the adolescents mostly while it is easy for adolescents to convince their fathers.

Family members play different roles in making decisions within the family. They may initiate demand for products and services, may decide on which brand to buy, where to buy, how to pay for products and services, how to consume them, what benefits to expect from such products and services and how to share their roles in maintaining the products and services. Role of father and mother may vary in the family depending upon the role played by them in their families. Adolescents play a very important role in family buying-decision making for their own products as well as products used or consumed by other family members.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Cakarnis and D'Alessandro (2015) conducted a comparative study among students and young professions to examine the impact of customer knowledge upon credit card selection. Two types of samples were selected from Australia. The first sample was of college students (aged 18-24 years) and another was of young professionals (aged 25-30 years). It was revealed that customer knowledge led to better selection of credit cards. It was observed that despite being more knowledgeable, young professionals were more likely to select a credit card based on impulse as compared to college students.

Alsmadi and Khizindar (2015) examined consumers' attitude towards marketing practices and consumer rights and suggested that there is a need to reconsider the way consumer rights were being targeted by marketers and public policy makers.

Fu *et al.* (2015) found that materialistic values are not endorsed by Chinese adolescents. Moreover, younger adolescents had lower level of materialistic values as compared to older ones. Parental rejection was found to be significantly affecting adolescents materialistic values.

Haq and Rahman (2015) examined the role of reality TV as a consumer socialisation agent. It was evident that adolescents involvement with reality TV resulted in consumer socialisation through values and attitudes related to consumption.

Sandhu (2015) conducted a study to examine the influence of boost in

materialism due to exposure to advertisements on the quality of life of the customers. Data was collected using questionnaires from 380 respondents. Convenient sampling technique was used to select sample. Regression analysis was used as a statistical technique. It was found that boost in materialism, due to exposure to advertising, significantly influenced the quality of life of customers. It was found that respondents felt that material possessions would enhance their social positions. They gave little time to their family and relationships. So, it was suggested that advertisers should give the message that joy of using the product lies in sharing that product with their family and friends.

#### **FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SOCIALIZATION OF ADOLESCENTS**

Chan and McNeal (2006) examined how rural adolescents in Mainland China learn about new products and services, interact with different types of retail shops and their attitudes toward different sources of product information were also examined. A survey of 1008 rural adolescents in four Chinese provinces, was conducted in March 2003. Results indicated that rural Chinese adolescents have limited access to various types of retail shops. Rural adolescents perceived personal sources more useful as well as more credible than commercial sources in obtaining information about new products and services. Older adolescents found parents and grandparents less useful and less credible than younger adolescents for new product information. However, older adolescents did not find peers more useful and credible than younger adolescents.

Giovanna *et al.* (2008) examined customer behaviour of a group of Brazilian adolescents using a qualitative approach. Twelve focus group interviews were conducted and results were processed through content analysis. Many but not all students received an allowance, mostly from parents and grandparents. Many students spent the money immediately or after just saving only enough to buy a desired item; others preferred to save their money for the sake of saving it or for a specific future endeavour. Money was spent mainly on food, toys and clothes; sometimes on the impulse of the moment and associated with later guilt. Television was considered a big source of information on new products, but regarded as untrustworthy. When they could not get what they wanted, most adolescents appealed to negotiation strategies; many also reported feeling sad or upset. Results showed a situation of late socialization as customers, suggesting that the adolescents could benefit from customer education strategies targeted at them.

Nibrass and Sabrina (2008) examined teenager-peer interaction and its contribution to a family purchase-decision. Data were collected from 1008 Tunisian teenagers at a secondary school and a college in Sfax in a region of Tunisia and

teens from only traditional family households were included. Peers are an important influence during adolescence and marketing action should reflect this influence. Promotions for products intended for the teenagers' use (e.g. clothing) may be more convincing, if the presentation shows a teenage accompanied by peers, because during adolescence, teenagers express a need to identify themselves with peers. The relevance of a product to a teenager may be strengthened or validated by communication and interaction with peers about that product. The study provided a more current and complex model of adolescent influence with one limitation that it focuses on 'teenager-peer interaction' on teenager's contribution to the purchase-decision, however, parent interaction, the interaction of the adolescent with brothers and sisters etc., may contribute to model improvement.

### **MEDIA EXPOSURE TO ADOLESCENTS**

Chan and Fang (2007), in their paper, examined the use of traditional media as well as internet among young people in Hong Kong. A survey of 405 Chinese persons, aged 15-24, in Hong Kong was conducted in February 2006 using a self-administered questionnaire. The study found that internet plays a prominent role among the young people in Hong Kong, a majority of respondents spent one to three hours per day in the internet. The main reason for internet usage was for listening to music and for fun. The internet was preferred media choice for information-driven activities. Magazines retained importance for entertainment and shopping activities while the television retained importance for new and current affairs. Most of the respondents found useful web sites through search engines, interpersonal information sources gave way to the internet for obtaining information about sensitive issues.

Gareth Davey (2008) examined adolescents' media usage in an urban and a rural area in China and the study investigated radio, internet, DVD and computer game usage among adolescents, aged between 13 and 15 years. T-tests were used to compare the periods of time when urban and rural adolescents used media, and multiple regression was used to measure the extent to which independent variables were related to and predicted media usage. The findings showed that a greater proportion of adolescents in the urban sample used media such as television, internet and computer games, and that rural-urban residency had the most significant craze for television viewing. Besides, more urban adolescents reported that their parents had concerns about media usage, whereas a greater proportion of adolescents in rural area had televisions in their bedrooms and ate meals while watching television and such behaviour comedown was associated from Western culture resulting into unhealthy lifestyle.

Reidulf *et al.* (2008) investigated gender profiles in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), primarily the internet and mobile phones, and problems encountered in the use of these technologies. The sample survey consisted of teenagers, 4294 of 15-16 years (2067 females and 2227 males) from two counties in Eastern Norway, who had participated in a nationwide survey administered by the National Institute of Public Health. The results showed that Norwegian girls used the internet far more often for social activities such as chatting and e-mail while boys preferred to use it for entertainment and computational activities, such as Gaming, E-commerce, viewing multimedia, and for programming. Girls used their mobile phones far more often for Text messaging (Short Message Service – SMS) than boys, who more frequently used their mobile phones for technical functions (alarm, gaming, internet, etc.) There was no gender gap in everyday phone usage.

Devis-Devis *et al.* (2009) examined Screen Media Time Usage (SMTU) and its association with personal and socio-economic factors, as well as the effect of season and type of day, in a Spanish sample of 12-16 years old school adolescents (N = 323) with Statistical Analysis of Covariance and Structural Equation models. Results showed an average of 2.52 h per day of total SMTU and partial times of 1.73 h per day in TV viewing, 0.27 h per day in computer/video games, and 0.52 per day in mobile use. Four significant predictors of SMTU emerged. Firstly, the type of school was associated with three media of our study, particularly students from state/public schools spent more time on them than their private schools counterparts. Secondly, older adolescents (14-16 years old) were more likely to use computer/video game and mobile phone. Boys spent significantly more time in mobile phone than girls. Additionally, results revealed that adolescents seemed to consume more TV and computer/video games in autumn than in winter and more TV and mobile phones on weekends than on weekdays.

#### **ADOLESCENTS' INFLUENCE IN FAMILY PURCHASE-DECISIONS**

Shoham and Dalakas(2003) examined the influence of Israel teenagers on family decisions as it is culturally different from the USA where many empirical studies have been carried out. Data was collected using a convenience sample of 128 triads (father, mother, and adolescents. 13-18 years old adolescents were included for the research. Respondents were asked to rate their influence in the family decision-making during their buying phases (initiating the purchase, information reach and evaluation of alternatives and final decision) for six products (TV, car, vacation, electrical appliances, furniture and cereals). The finding suggests that, the fathers had the highest influence for the final decision for TV and car, as

compared to vacations, appliances, furniture and cereal products, where the parents had higher influence than their teenage adolescents. However, product category, the decision phase and the decision aspects vary.

Shoham and Dalakas (2005) examined the impact of Israel adolescents on family decision-making. Two studies were used, replicating two different approaches that have been used to measure adolescents influence with 45 adolescents. In study one, a survey was given to each parent, whereas in study two, their survey was given to each parent and adolescent. The result showed that regarding adolescents influence on products, the relative influences of Israel adolescents in 8 of the 11 products. Adolescents in Israel and the 45 have similar level of influence over some products (e.g. family room furniture). The highest influence was for the adolescents magazines, adolescent dress clothes, and adolescents' records / CDs for Israel adolescents and clothes for 45 adolescents. Therefore, adolescents in both countries were very similar in regard to the product categories they had the highest influence. The two countries were also similar in regard to the product categories with the lowest influences on family car and living room furniture in both cases. The pattern of adolescents general influence on buying facets was also found consistent.

Chavda *et al.* (2005) conducted a research with an aim to get an understanding of the level of influence adolescents perceive they have compared to the view of their parents. 100 Adolescents in the age group 11-16 and 200 parents (Mother, Father Both) were selected from five schools within the areas of Birmingham, Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. All products fall under the following product categories: household products, toiletries, entertainment, adolescents' clothes, parent's clothes, large products, food products and technology. The result showed that there is no disagreement between the rating of adolescents and parents with regard to influence on product categories Pearson's Value which is a strength of association showed a perfect correlation between both sets of respondents. Even there was no significant difference found between the mean values of male adolescents perceived rating and female adolescents perceived rating, except for large purchases and food categories.

Tinson *et al.* (2008) explored in their paper the growing significance of different family types and explored the relationship between the compulsivity of family relationships typified in single parent, blended and intact families and the involvement of adolescents in purchase-decision A random sample of mothers with adolescents aged 10-16 was contacted from the TNS Postal Acers Panel Adolescents from intact family household reported more both for shopping and looking for information on internet about things they are thinking of buying, then

adolescents from single families chained more to go on for shopping trips for their computer games, CDs and DVDs than adolescents from blended and intact families. Adolescents from blended families have less say in family purchase-decisions as parents reported that they did not want to increase the compulsivity of purchase giving their adolescents a say in discussions and final outcome.

Sener (2011) conducted a study with Turkish families to discover the perception of adolescents and their parents regarding the influence of adolescents on purchasing, and compared the results with those of other countries to provide some generalization and identify differences. The study area comprised Ha Cettepe University Central and Bey Tape campuses. 250 parents with adolescents, aged from 13-19 years, were given questionnaires. Boys perceived their influence to be stronger than that of girls with regard to purchase-decisions about groceries ( $p > .05$ ), living room furniture ( $p > .05$ ), tooth paste for the family and the adolescents ( $p > 0.05$ ), clothes for parents ( $p < 0.05$ ) and bicycles for the adolescents ( $p > 0.05$ ). For general issues related to purchases, adolescents stated that the areas where they influenced most were in suggesting brands, shopping with parents, drawing attention to new products and suggesting stores. The area where they influenced the least was in suggesting price. On the contrary, parents considered that three areas where adolescents had the most influence were shopping with parents, suggesting a brand and drawing attention to new products. Parents perceived that the influence of boys was stronger than the influence of girls on decision-making of all specific products. The result suggested that there was agreement between parents and adolescents about the situation of decision-making.

### **ANALYTICAL HIERARCHY PROCESS (AHP)**

'AHP is a multi-criteria decision-making technique that organizes and analyses multiple criteria by structuring them into hierarchy and thus, assessing their relative importance. It also helps in comparison of alternatives for every criteria and defining ranks to the alternatives', as stated by DSS Resources. AHP is quite helpful in situations where the decision-set involves multiple criteria with rating according to multiple value choices. It is based on matrices and their corresponding eigen vector for generating approximate values (Saaty, 1980, 1994; Merkin, 1979).

It is a prescriptive and a descriptive model of decision-making. It is valid for thousands of applications and the results were used by and acceptable to the organisations (Saaty, 1994). Thus, presently, it is the mostly used multiple criteria decision-making (MCDM) technique (Singh and Ahuja, 2012). AHP makes comparison of criteria or alternatives in a pair-wise mode. For this, AHP uses



absolute numbers scale, validated by decision problem and physical experiments.

**Results of AHP for Advertising Media**

The comparison matrix for different attributes is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Pair-wise Comparison Matrix**

	TV Commer- cials	News- Adverti- sement	Adverti- sement on Vehicles	Magazine Adverti- sement	Billboard Adverti- sement	Radio Adverti- sement	Browser Adverti- sement
TV Commercials	1	3	5	4	3	5	4
Newspaper Advertisement	0.333333	1	4	3	0.25	3	2
Advertisements on Vehicles	0.2	0.25	1	0.5	0.333333	2	0.333333
Magazine Advertisement	0.25	0.333333	2	1	0.333333	3	0.5
Billboard Advertisement	0.333333	4	3	3	1	3	0.5
Radio Advertisement	0.2	0.333333	0.5	0.333333	0.333333	1	0.333333
Browser Advertisement	0.25	0.5	3	2	2	3	

The consistency test values are shown in Table 2. Number of Comparisons = 21, Consistency Ratio (CR) = 9.0% (should be less than 10%), Principal Eigen Value = 7.727

**Table 2**  
**Consistency Test Values**

Maximum Eigen Value	CI	RI	CR
7.727	0.1188	1.32	0.090

**Priorities**

The resulting weights for the criteria based on above pair-wise comparisons are given in Table 3. Thus, TV Commercials play a major role in

adolescents buying-decision making followed by Billboard advertisement and Newspaper advertisement.

**Table 3**  
**Priorities of Attributes**

Category	Priority	Rank
TV Commercials	35.0%	1
Newspaper Advertisement	14.9%	3
Advertisements on Vehicles	5.0%	6
Magazine Advertisement	7.4%	5
Billboard Advertisement	19.1%	2
Radio Advertisement	4.2%	7
Browser Advertisement	14.4%	4

**Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS)**

Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) was developed by Yoon (1980) and Hwang and Yoon (1981), for solving Multiple Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) problems. This method is based on the idea that the chosen alternative should be farthest from the Negative Ideal Solution (NIS) and nearest to the Positive Ideal Solution (PIS). This is a more realistic form of modeling as compared to non-compensatory methods, in which alternative solutions are included or excluded according to hard cut-offs. For instance, NIS maximizes the cost and minimizes the benefit whereas PIS maximizes the benefit and minimizes the cost. It assumes that each criterion requires to be maximized or minimized.

In this method, options are graded according to ideal solution similarity. Option has a higher grade, if the option is more similar to an ideal solution. Ideal solution is a solution that is the best from any aspect. It assumes that we have m alternatives (options) and n attributes/criteria and we have the score of each option with respect to each criterion.

**Results of TOPSIS for Advertising Media**

Table 4 shows the ranking from TOPSIS for the above parameters.  $C_i$ , a ratio of  $S_i^*$  and  $S_i'$  are separations from ideal and negative ideal solution, shows the relative closeness to ideal solution. Similarly, as obtained from AHP, TV commercials play a major role in adolescents buying-decision making followed by Billboard advertisement and Newspaper advertisement.

**Table 4**  
**Ranking from TOPSIS**

Category	$S_i^*$	$S_i'$	$S_i^* + S_i'$	$C_i = S_i'/S_i^* + S_i'$	Rank
TV Commercials	0.071633	0.085815	0.157448	0.545037092	1
Newspaper Advertisement	0.094622	0.057902	0.152524	0.379625502	3
Advertisements on Vehicles	0.067459	0.034597	0.102056	0.339000157	6
Magazine Advertisement	0.098658	0.042902	0.14156	0.303065838	5
Billboard Advertisement	0.074352	0.078052	0.152404	0.512138789	2
Radio Advertisement	0.071455	0.035549	0.107004	0.332221225	7
Browser Advertisement	0.088109	0.040103	0.128212	0.312786635	4

**VIKOR Method**

The compromise solution is a feasible solution that is the closest to the ideal solution, and a compromise means an agreement established by mutual concession. The compromise solution method, also known as (VIKOR) the *VlseKriterijumska Optimizacija I KOmpromisno Resenje* in Serbian, which means multi-criteria optimization (MCO) and compromise solution, introduced as one applicable technique to implement within MADM. It focuses on ranking and selecting from a set of alternatives in the presence of conflicting criteria. The compromise solution, whose foundation was established by (Yu, 1973; Zeleny, 1982) is a feasible solution, which is the closest to the ideal, and here "compromise" means an agreement established by mutual concessions. The VIKOR method determines the compromise ranking list and the compromise solution by introducing the multi-criteria ranking index based on the particular measure of "closeness" to the "ideal" solution.

**Results of VIKOR for Advertising Media**

**Table 5**  
**Weights Assigned to Criteria**

Category	$x_j$	$s_i g_j$	$CV_j$	$W_j$
TV Commercials	0.208333	0.329404	1.58114	0.208
Newspaper Advertisement	0.292063	0.375329	1.285094	0.169055
Advertisements on Vehicles	0.47619	0.32915	0.691215	0.09093
Magazine Advertisement	0.448553	0.357113	0.796145	0.104733
Billboard Advertisement	0.285714	0.360687	1.262404	0.16607
Radio Advertisement	0.464286	0.281215	0.605693	0.079679
Browser Advertisement	0.247437	0.341448	1.379937	0.181532

Table 5 provides the weights assigned to criteria. The results are shown in Table 6. By computing the value  $Q_i$ , based on  $S^*$ ,  $S_-$ ,  $R^*$ ,  $R_-$  and  $v$ , the introduced weight of the strategy of  $S_i$  and  $R_i$ . Then ranking the alternatives, sorting them by the  $S$ ,  $R$ , and  $Q$  values in decreasing order. Values closer to 0 are ranked 1. Similarly as obtained from AHP and TOPSIS, TV Commercials play a major role in adolescents buying-decision making followed by Billboard advertisement and Newspaper advertisement.

**Table 6**  
**Ranking List and Scores**

Category	$S_i$	$R_i$	$Q_i$	Rank
TV Commercials	0.093282	0.078473	0	1
Newspaper Advertisement	0.333548	0.09541	0.266811	3
Advertisements on Vehicles	0.659657	0.159017	0.809721	6
Magazine Advertisement	0.625485	0.138778	0.692423	5
Billboard Advertisement	0.292322	0.084809	0.186784	2
Radio Advertisement	0.720828	0.19082	1	7
Browser Advertisement	0.435333	0.134398	0.521425	4

**CONCLUSIONS**

For parameter selection from the questionnaire, after analysis has been made using Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). Consistency Ratio has

been computed as the ratio of Consistency Index and Random Consistency Index. For the study, the value of CR has been obtained as less than .1 (9%), which means the judgments considered for the study have been consistent and acceptable. Further, to validate the ranking as achieved from AHP, TOPSIS and VIKOR have been employed and similar results have been obtained.

The present research emphatically indicates that adult consumer behaviour is the direct antecedent of adolescent consumer behaviour which reflects that parents' adolescent-centeredness force them to accept the goods chosen by their adolescents in the household sector. Parents also seek their opinion even in making purchase of products not directly related to the adolescents such as cars, laptops, mobile phones etc. because they have higher knowledge of brands, models and latest trends. The study also lays stress on the fact that the adolescents no doubt, are emerging as major influencers in the household buying-decisions but still the final decision regarding the purchase of a product is in the hands of parents. The parents though have the final say while deciding to buy a product, yet they always keep in mind the recommendations made by their adolescents regarding the purchase of that product.

This research is a legitimate reaction to the developing needs of adolescents in Indian urban families. Adolescents are effectively fitting into the consumer role owing to time-pressures and income effects in dual career families. Moreover, exposure to mass media and discussions with parents ensure that adolescents are not only aware of the new brands available, but also know how to evaluate them on various parameters. An analysis of adolescents as consumers help in the formulation of marketing strategies by identifying the motivations, interests, and attitudes of adolescents who show the greatest involvement in making purchases in a specific product category. It has been seen that they act as purchasing agents for the family and are delegated the task of purchasing products which they themselves do not consume. Products for which adolescents act as purchasing agents should be identified to help marketers understand the features that are preferred by these purchasers and to help direct appropriate messages towards them.

The size of adolescents market is growing as results show that both parents and adolescents agree in majority that there is rapid growth of market for adolescents products over the past few years. The marketers are targeting the consumers by using adolescents not only in the case of products meant for

adolescents but also for the products used or purchased in the household sector. The adolescents are not only making their buying-decisions themselves but also play a vital role in other buying-decisions of the products to be used or purchased in the household sector. Media, in its various manifestations, has been able to carve out a niche for its advertisements in the heads and hearts of the adolescents. Adolescents with their instant grasping power give valuable suggestions to their parents when they intend buying a particular item. Parents rely more upon the information provided by them, as they feel that adolescents have the latest information regarding the product.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study has highlighted some important conclusions which emphasize the increasing role of adolescents in the household buying-decisions. The analysis also sets the stage for the following recommendations :

1. The first and the foremost job of the market researcher is to identify the role of each member of the household in the buying process and also, the influence of each individual on the final decisions. The right purchase agent as well as user has to be identified in the light of the role of each constituent of the household.
2. The target group, the adolescents, should be motivated by their parents so that they should be free to express themselves and give their suggestions freely in the decision-making process.
3. Marketers should make effective strategies by targeting not an individual member but each member of the household because each member of the household influences the decision-making process, in the purchase of different products, especially in case of costly household products.

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