

Effects of mother characteristics on purchase process in toy stores due to preadolescent social power

A Latin American context study

Abstract

Purpose – This paper seeks to extend the initial study of the effect of social power of preadolescent children on influence in their mothers' purchasing behavior in Peruvian toy stores (Carrillo et al. 2018). This document studies the moderating effect that would cause variables as expenditure, purchase importance and marital status.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach – The methodology is a non-experimental transversal correlational-causal design; where target population are Peruvian mothers who buy with preadolescents in toy stores located in Lima.

Findings – The results show that there is a direct effect of the legitimate and expert passive social power on the initial and decision stage, respectively. Furthermore, the level of expenditure does not generate a moderating effect for both cases. While the variables of purchase importance and marital status present negative moderation.

Originality/ Value – The contribution indicates that the applied social powers did not act jointly on each stage of a family decision-making process. Rather, its effect occurs independently for each stage of the purchase process.

Keywords – *Passive social power, legitimate social power, expert social power, decision-making process, level of expenditure, importance of consumption, marital status.*

Introduction: Preadolescent Passive Social Power

Demographic and structural changes in households have modified the preadolescents' roles in family purchase activities, increasing their participation in family decision-making as well as their interaction with the level of expenditure, importance of consumption or even the marital status of the family structure.

Carrillo, Gonzales-Sparks & Salcedo (2018) identified, in a first study of Latin American context oriented in Peruvian toy stores, the existence of significant relationships between the preadolescents' passive social powers, expert and legitimate. Besides, they demonstrated the influence that these two dimensions cause in the mothers' purchase decision.

Preadolescent social power is represented through decisions or actions taken by parents, based on their children's preference, without the need of them to be present (Aldea & Brandabur, 2012). Considering these studies as well as others (Flurry & Burns, 2005; Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2010), it is concluded that the parents perceive from their children the application of legitimate and expert powers on the purchase decision process. For example, Flurry & Burns (2005), quoted by Carrillo, Gonzales-Sparks & Salcedo (2018), say the expert social power implies having additional knowledge or a superior ability to the person you wish to influence. While legitimate social power focuses on an implicit right that resides in the person who seeks to change the behavior of another. For these reasons, according to Carrillo, Gonzales-Sparks & Salcedo (2018) and Flurry & Burns (2005), it was evident that mothers perceived and received from their children, both passive legitimate and expert social power in a context of purchase.

Consequently, on the basis of these evidences and in order to extend these studies, the present research develops four hypotheses that seeks to contribute with three moderator variables: (1) the level of expenditure, (2) the importance of consumption and (3) marital status. In order to test a broader model that can describe the purchasing behavior of the unit of study in Latin American toy stores context.

Preadolescent influence in the purchase decision process

Since John (1999), quoted by Ebster, Wagner & Neumueller (2009), it was identified that from 8 to 10 years of age, children are in an analytical stage and take into account different attributes when assessing a brand and are able of thinking from the perspective of another person. And from 11 years, the reflexive stage, already have developed their cognitive and social skills. In turn, they have strategies and knowledge about the art of influencing their parents in the purchase decision process.

The influence that children exert on their parents may vary, not only according to the product, but also according to the stages they through in a purchase decision process (Aldea & Brandabur, 2012). In the present study, two main stages are addressed: Initiation, where the "identification of a necessity is influenced by the environment and the individual differences" (Singh & Nayak, 2014) and Search/Decision, in which the family members are collecting information to be evaluated and reach a final decision (Aldea & Brandabur, 2012; Singh & Nayak, 2014).

According to Nelson (1979) and Belch et al. (1985), quoted by Torkia, Fakhri & Najeh (2015), suggest, “Adolescents have more influence in the recognition (initiation) stage of the problem and the search for information”. Further, parents are more inclined to act on the basis of suggestions raised by their children from the analytical stage (Ebster et al., 2009), such as, their legitimate power.

From another angle, an important concept that varies in the influence of children is the decision stage in the decision-making process (Shergill, Sekhon & Min Zhao, 2013). Mentioning to Wimalasiri (2004), quoted by Shergill et al. (2013), found that children influence the decision stage of the decision-making process and to achieve that, they use different tactics and strategies, such as expert power. Also, Holdert and Antonides (1997) established that children have more participation in stages of evaluating alternatives or making a decision than in initial or recognition stages (Shergill et al., 2013).

Family Expenditure

In Perú, for 2017, the expectations of selling toys presumed to reach 800 million soles, due to an increase in the average ticket in 40% (Código, 2017). The purchasing power of children has acquired increasing relevance in decision-making on family expenses, due to the important role of women as professionals, combined with access to the technology and information that children are having and being exposed (Foxman et al., 1989a; 1989b). Taking into account the above, it raised the following hypothesis that is broken into two parts:

H1a: There is a moderating effect of level of expenditure on the relationship between the passive legitimate social power of preadolescent children and the initial stage of the mother’s purchasing process in toy stores.

Researchers have concluded that children tend to influence the purchase decisions of products that are directly related to or affecting them. However, they could have a lesser contribution on decisions that involve a high cost and their parents would be who take the decisions (Foxman et al., 1989a; 1989b). Which led to raise the following hypothesis:

H1b: There is a moderating effect of level of expenditure on relationship between the passive expert social power of preadolescent children and the search/decision stage of the mother’s purchasing process in toy stores.

Family purchase importance

It has been found that with the presence of children at the point of sale, the composition of the family basket varies (Alonso & Grande, 2013). According to Aldea & Brandabur (2012) there is a high probability that a purchase will be made when the child is present and especially if it comes to exert some kind of strategy. Likewise, parents tend to agree with major frequency to buy while major the age of the child is. Therefore, the following hypothesis is considered:

H2: There is a negative moderating effect of purchase importance of toys on relationship of passive legitimate social power of preadolescent children and the initial stage of the mother's purchasing process in toy stores.

Marital Status

Although mothers present impulsive tendencies of purchasing toys (Turčínková et al., 2012), this can be affected by other variables such as the marital status of themselves (Singh & Nayak, 2014). Since the social and demographic family structure has been varying and today, compared to before, it is normal to find single-parent families who settle the expenses of their homes (Aldea & Brandabur, 2012). Being so, the following hypothesis arises:

H3: There is a negative moderating effect of being single mothers on relationship between the passive expert social power of preadolescent children and the search/decision stage of the mother's purchasing process in toy stores.

Similarly, children from family structures with one parent are people who acquire the early ability of consumption because they tend to help and seek to replace the missing role on the family structure (Aldea & Brandabur, 2012). Thus, it would be suitable to contrast the mothers with regard to their marital status. Also, only at the national level, 69,4% of the mothers have partner, either married or cohabitant (INEI, 2017b). So, there is the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a bigger negative moderating effect of being single mothers than to be married on relationship between the passive expert social power of preadolescent children and the search/decision stage of the mother's purchasing process in toy stores.

Methodology

This research is non-experimental transversal because the information collected has been given at a specific time and has not been manipulated. In addition, it is correlational because seeks to describe the relationship between the variables of social power and purchase decision process.

Sample

The target population was Peruvian mothers whose children oscillate between the ages of 8-11 years; in other words, they are preadolescents and attend to buy toys to any of the toy stores located in Lima.

INEI (2017a), in a press release, established that only Lima concentrates more than 50% of the population where the most populous districts are: San Juan de Lurigancho, San Martín de Porres, Ate, Comas, Villa El Salvador, Villa María del Triunfo, San Juan de Miraflores, Los Olivos, Puente Piedra y Santiago de Surco.

According to the Peruvian Company of market studies and public opinion (2017) in its last population report indicated that only in Lima there are 11,181.7 thousand people (35.1%), of which 10,982.3 thousand people (98%) represent the urban population of Lima. On the other hand, the Lima population from 25 to 45 years of age reached a figure of 3,418.867 thousand people (35%) and only the female segment would be 5,729.9 thousand (51.24%) (CPI, 2017).

Additionally, another relevant data for the research proved to be the number of mothers in the country, which amounts to 8,612,000, representing 68.80% of total women (El Comercio, 2017).

Taking into account the above, the method of proportion was used to approximate the number of mothers who reside in urban Lima, who have between 25 and 45 years of age, which would be 1,355.061 thousands of people approximately.

Once the previous data was known, the finite population formula was used, where with 90% for the confidence level, 5% in the desired sample error level and the probability of success is 0.5. It is obtained that the number of individuals representing the sample is 280.

Measurements

A questionnaire consisting of three parts was put into action: demographic questions, attributes and main concepts. The instrument consisted of closed questions that are the filter and control questions (demographics and attributes) in addition to the Likert-scale questions that had a five-point scale.

The measuring instrument used were adaptations of Swasy (1979) of the scales of the social power used to measure the perception of the mothers according to the two types of passive social power selected. While, for the measurement of influence in the purchasing decision process, the adaptations of Beatty and Talpade (1994) were used for the purpose of the research. For this, the items were translated into Spanish by a specialist and submitted to a validation by a panel of experts to clarify its relevance used in the present investigation.

Procedure

Initially, a correlation analysis of Pearson was performed among the items that conform each dimension to confirm its level of significance and requirement of factoring.

The significant correlation between the items of passive social power, both of the expert social power and the legitimate social power, supports the generation of independent factors. At the same time, the family purchase decision process also presents a significant correlation between the items of the initial stage and the search/decision stage. Both dimensions studied were correlated according to the bilateral significance with most of their items.

In order to start with a factorial analysis, contrast and validation tests were carried out to establish if it is appropriate for the realization of this procedure.

According to the KMO, 0.900 was obtained for the concept of passive Social power and 0.839 for the concept of family purchase decision process. Thus having values above 0.5, which means that it was possible to proceed with the proposed method of factoring and in turn, to group the variables for a data interpretation.

In the test of sphericity of Barlett, as the significance is 0.000, for both concepts of study, which in turn is less than 0.05 is rejected the null hypothesis.

Table I. Rotated Components – Social Power

Dimension	Item	Rotated Components		Community
		C1	C2	Extraction
ESP	EPS4	.814	.164	.689
	EPS3	.812	.162	.686
	EPS6	.790	.170	.652
	EPS2	.774	.129	.615
	EPS1	.766	.185	.622
	EPS8	.744	.183	.587
	EPS5	.736	.176	.573
	EPS7	.662	.234	.493
LSP	LPS3		.848	.726
	LPS2	.286	.783	.694
	LPS1	.183	.692	.513
α Cronbach		.910	.713	% Variance Accumulated
Eigenvalue		5.437	1.413	
% Variance explained		49.427	12.848	62.275
KMO				.900
Chi-Square				1528.929
Barlett Test				55
gl				.000
Sig.				.000

In addition, it is appreciated that the dimensions are independent and have correspondence with the defined concept. Therefore, the study identified two dimensions that shape each concept and the items loaded correctly.

Table II. Rotated Components – Family Purchase Decision Process

Dimension	Item	Rotated Components		Community
		C1	C2	Extraction
DIP	DIP3	.777	.238	0.660
	DIP2	.752	.183	0.599
	DIP5	.740	.167	0.575
	DIP4	.722	.137	0.540
	DIP1	.683	.264	0.536
	IIP4		.848	0.730
IIP	IIP1	.142	.844	0.732
	IIP2	.367	.740	0.682
	IIP3	.302	.601	0.452
α Cronbach		.820	.805	% Variance Accumulated
Eigenvalue		4.150	1.356	
% Variance explained		46.106	15.071	61.177
KMO				.839
Chi-Square				968.837
Barlett Test				36
gl				.000
Sig.				.000

Moreover, it was demonstrated that both for the concept of passive Social power and family purchase decision process there are two eigenvalues that explain the 62.28% and the 61.18% of the variance of the original data,

correspondingly. Which are acceptable to be higher than 60% that is usually requested in most cases, indicating that with two factors is explaining more than 60% of the concept.

Continuing with the comprehension of the data, it is showed the communalities, which are located at the extreme right in the tables. Those indicates that all the variables were well explained by the factor or dimension.

Results

According to the results, an initial correlation analysis confirms that the dimensions of social power as well as those of the stages of the purchasing decision process have significant relationships. These relationships are also higher when the dimensions are complementary. On the other hand, of the moderator variables, the expenditure and the degree of importance of consumption have a significant positive relationship with the expert social power.

Table III. Pearson Correlation

	IIP	DIP	LSP	ESP	Lexpend	Icons	Mstatus
IIP	1.000						
DIP	0.520***	1.000					
LSP	0.138*	0.072	1.000				
ESP	0.135*	0.150*	0.437***	1.000			
Lexpend	-0.019	0.034	0.077	0.147*	1.000		
Icons	-0.001	-0.010	0.066	0.217***	0.037	1.000	
Mstatus	-0.055	0.066	0.032	0.107	0.042	0.006	1.000

N = 266. Significance levels * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

After having clear the previously said, the variables in function of moderation were performed. Then, six models are presented for this study. The first two models (Model 1 and Model 2) that corroborated the direct effect of the LSP toward the IIP and the ESP toward the DIP. In the first model showed that the degree of importance by categories is significant in each level. Whereas, in the second model, the direct effect of the ESP towards the DIP was corroborated. However, the other variables tested showed no significant effects.

Subsequently, two models are posed (Model 3 and Model 4), as extensions of Model 1 and Model 2, using as a moderator variable the last expenditure made in toy stores. According to the results, it is stated that the variable moderator expenditure is not relevant in any of the models presented. Concluding that the H1a and H1b are rejected. Only the significant direct effects of each category of purchase importance in the Model 3 are seen again.

Table IV. Model Estimates

	(1) Model1	(2) Model2	H1a (3) Model3	H1b (4) Model4	H2 (5) Model5	(6) Model6
PSL	0.147** (0.07)		0.021 (0.23)		3.018*** (1.13)	
_IUltGas_2	-0.150 (0.16)	0.052 (0.18)	-0.502 (0.67)	-1.007 (0.98)	-0.202 (0.17)	0.074 (0.18)
_IUltGas_3	-0.114 (0.16)	0.027 (0.19)	-0.471 (0.66)	-0.980 (1.00)	-0.146 (0.17)	0.035 (0.19)
_IUltGas_4	-0.188 (0.18)	0.111 (0.22)	-0.343 (0.74)	-1.301 (1.24)	-0.202 (0.18)	0.100 (0.22)
_IGradIm_2	1.288*** (0.46)	0.713 (0.47)	1.297*** (0.46)	0.827 (0.54)	8.344*** (2.68)	0.491 (0.42)
_IGradIm_3	1.072** (0.44)	0.409 (0.46)	1.091** (0.44)	0.486 (0.54)	8.005*** (2.66)	0.235 (0.40)
_IGradIm_4	1.169*** (0.44)	0.389 (0.46)	1.180*** (0.44)	0.470 (0.54)	7.434*** (2.66)	0.195 (0.40)
_IGradIm_5	0.982** (0.44)	0.386 (0.46)	0.994** (0.45)	0.461 (0.54)	7.667*** (2.69)	0.187 (0.40)
_IEstCiv_2	0.020 (0.17)	-0.174 (0.18)	0.015 (0.17)	-0.165 (0.18)	0.060 (0.17)	0.059 (0.76)
_IEstCiv_3	-0.114 (0.12)	-0.012 (0.13)	-0.120 (0.12)	-0.005 (0.13)	-0.080 (0.12)	1.053** (0.50)
_IEstCiv_4	-0.191 (0.21)	0.167 (0.19)	-0.197 (0.21)	0.172 (0.19)	-0.180 (0.21)	2.304*** (0.79)
PSE		0.157** (0.07)		-0.136 (0.27)		0.376*** (0.12)
1.UltGasxPSL			0.000 (.)			
2.UltGasxPSL			0.145 (0.25)			
3.UltGasxPSL			0.147 (0.25)			
4.UltGasxPSL			0.071 (0.27)			
1.UltGasxPSE				0.000 (.)		
2.UltGasxPSE				0.317 (0.29)		
3.UltGasxPSE				0.301 (0.29)		
4.UltGasxPSE				0.410 (0.34)		
1.GradImxPSL					0.000 (.)	
2.GradImxPSL					-3.029*** (1.14)	
3.GradImxPSL					-2.964*** (1.13)	
4.GradImxPSL					-2.712** (1.13)	
5.GradImxPSL					-2.867** (1.14)	
1.EstCivxPSE						0.000 (.)
2.EstCivxPSE						-0.088 (0.20)
3.EstCivxPSE (H4)						-0.318** (0.14)
4.EstCivxPSE (H3)						-0.629** (0.24)
_cons	2.096*** (0.46)	2.394*** (0.47)	2.393*** (0.70)	3.285*** (1.07)	-4.588* (2.63)	1.860*** (0.46)
N	266	266	266	266	266	266
F	1.621	1.177	1.279	1.167	2.601	2.027
r2_a	0.024	0.009	0.014	0.007	0.034	0.027

Standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Then, it is arising a Model 5 on the basis of Model 1. Where LSP exerts a direct effect towards IIP using as a moderator variable the degree of importance of consumption in toy stores. According to the results, it is evident that this category variable has a positive significant direct effect towards the initial stage of the purchasing decision process. But when this variable acts as a moderation of the legitimate social power of pre-adolescents, its effect is significant and negative in each category. Therefore, H2 is supported. These results allow the conclusion that the degree of purchasing importance inversely moderates the social power on the initial stage of the purchasing decision process.

Finally, Model 6 is developed on the basis of Model 2, using as a moderator variable the marital status of the mothers. In this model the direct variables as well as the moderators present significant effects if the category possesses a marital status of single mother and married mother. When these categories of marital status exert direct effects, these are positive.

But when these categories of marital status interact with the expert social power to generate moderation, their effects are negative. For such reasons, the H3 is supported. In addition, seeing the effects of moderation of single mothers compared to that of married mothers, the coefficient is greater in the case of single mothers than married. So the H4 is supported.

Discussion

The findings allows to infer that should be tested in this type of contexts other dimensions of social power to be able to identify the application within a purchase decision process. In addition, a way to deepen the study could include more stages of the purchase decision process.

On the other hand, it would be interesting to test the instrument in pairs of mother and son, to contrast both perspectives to extend the study. As well as, take into account the type of communication and family relationship they have in their homes, in order to explain the reason for the application of certain types of power.

The results confirmed that, in our local context, the items submitted to the sample are correctly identified and related to the concept they belong to. This made it possible to affirm that thanks to the various panels of experts and tests that this instrument has undergone, throughout various researches, a solid tool is used to be applied.

Taking into account that it must be taken very careful with the context in which it is applied and above all, what you want to communicate over this instrument.

The applied Social powers did not act jointly on each stage of a process of decision of family purchase in the Latin American context studied. Rather, their correlation is given independently for each stage of the purchasing decision process. Being so, LSP is correlated and presents an effect on IIP; whereas the same case is for the ESP, but about DIP. Thus corroborating the existence of such specific relations for an emerging context.

Conclusions

The research has demonstrated that the two dimensions studied expert and legitimate corresponding to passive Social power and the two, initial and search/decision dimensions corresponding to the family purchase decision process are constructed on a strong way; because of that, are correctly identified by the sample.

It was also shown that not necessarily the two powers should be presented jointly in the stages of the purchasing decision process studied. Concluding thus, the mothers of the Lima Society for an initial stage were found predisposed to visit these stores because the only presence of their children inclined them to consider this type of actions, but when they passed to a search/decision stage, there are very few mothers who were able to conclude this process in an effective purchase. This is because at this stage it was not enough to have a legitimate power link with your child, but it is necessary to have the expertise to maneuver the toy required.

Also, it was found that the level of expenditure was not a variable that generate any effect on the relationships studied, even as moderating variable; which means, for mothers was not a variable to take into account during the two stages of the family purchase decision process.

On the other hand, the degree of importance that results for the mothers to buy with their children moderated in a negative and meaningful way. Which led to the fact that, instead of contributing, it reduced the effect of the passive legitimate social power of preadolescent children on the initial stage of the mother's decision-making process.

This shows that when preteen initiates any possible intention of buying on the mother, the degree of importance of consumption that mothers give to buy with their children would reduce this direct effect. There are only manifestations of desires and intent of purchase that correspond to a first stage of this process; but not in a

search/decision stage. As a practical example it was evidenced that mothers go out for a walk with their children on weekends to toys, but not necessarily buy toys.

Finally, for the variable marital status as a moderator variable, it is presented in a negative and significant way when it comes to single mothers on the relationship between the passive expert social power of preadolescent children and the search/decision stage of the mother's purchase decision process. Which indicated that this marital status in the mothers reduces a possible final purchase and if it is compared with mothers whose marital status is married, it will continue to prevail with higher coefficient the moderating effect of single mothers.

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