

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHILD IN THE FAMILY CONSUMPTION DECISION IN SHOPPING IN SUPERMARKET

A INFLUÊNCIA DA CRIANÇA NA DECISÃO DE CONSUMO DA FAMÍLIA NAS COMPRAS EM SUPERMERCADO

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ABSTRACT

The changes that have taken place in recent years in Brazil have affected the structure of families, allowing children to play an important role in the purchasing decisions of the family group. Thus, the children's public has become a significant influence on the acquisition of goods and products, as well as the brands and models acquired by the families. Faced with this reality, the present study sought to identify the influence of the child on the family consumption decision in shopping at supermarkets in the city of Sant'Ana do Livramento / RS. For that, a quantitative approach was carried out, with descriptive character and *Survey* method. The data were collected with 115 parents of children aged between two and twelve years, with the collection of supermarkets and state schools in the city of Sant'Ana do Livramento. The results show that the children accompany their parents in shopping at the supermarket and participate in them, influencing the acquisition of certain products. In the same way, one can perceive the influence of the media in deciding what the children want to consume.

Keywords: Child Consumption, Marketing Influence, Media, Purchase Decision.

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RESUMO

As mudanças ocorridas nos últimos anos no Brasil afetaram a estrutura das famílias, permitindo que as crianças passassem a desempenhar um papel importante nas decisões de compras do grupo familiar. Assim, o público infantil tem se tornado influência significativa na aquisição de produtos e serviços, bem como das marcas e modelos adquiridos pelas famílias. Frente a esta realidade, o presente estudo buscou identificar a influência da criança na decisão de consumo da família nas compras em supermercados da cidade de Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS. Para tanto, foi realizada uma pesquisa de abordagem quantitativa, com caráter descritivo e método Survey. Os dados foram coletados com 115 pais de crianças na faixa etária dos dois aos doze anos, tendo como local de coleta os supermercados e escolas estaduais da cidade de Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS. Os resultados evidenciam que as crianças acompanham os pais nas compras ao supermercado e participam destas influenciando na aquisição de determinados produtos. Do mesmo modo, se pode perceber a influência da mídia na decisão do que as crianças querem consumir.

Palavras-chave: Consumo Infantil, Influência do Marketing, Mídia, Decisão de compra.

1 INTRODUCTION

The study on the child consumer and its influence on the family's supermarket shopping is an issue that has been arousing the interest of communication and marketing professionals (Andrade, 2011). Considering family and socioeconomic changes which occurred in Brazil in the last years, the role of children stands out in the family structure, since they are increasingly inserted in the consumer market, influencing the buying decisions. Behind a considerable part of products purchased by families there is the children's interest and opinion, as consumers, influencers or users, making them a very accessible target to companies, since it is easy for them to assimilate contents to which they are exposed to (Campos, 2015).

According to Ventura (2010), the child audience is already seen as a group of potential clients while setting a pattern of personal consumption and presenting a high power of buying decisions in the family. Besides that, according to the author, children and teenagers are adopting consumption habits earlier, a fact that might be happening due to the changes which happened in family dynamics in recent decades and because of the impact of technology on children and teenagers. According to Veiga Neto and Melo (2013), there is a new consumption profile of children if we compare it to the previous generations, considering that they precociously have knowledge on how to obtain something they want.

In consonance with Sampaio (2009), it is necessary to comprehend the huge potential that companies see in the child audience, since even those children who are not yet at the age of being authors of their own consumption, are capable of exert strong influence and even cause the consumption of others, mainly regarding their parents and guardians. Moreover, soon these individuals will become the consumption audience itself, stimulating the need for observing these individuals.

In this regard, the influence potential of the child in the varied segments makes it clear that the conduction of studies is indispensable in the consumption universe, being noticeable the recurrence of multiple sources of knowledge (Veloso, Hildebrand & Campomar, 2012). Nowadays, it is known that the children market goes beyond toys, since the consumption on the part of the children also turns to food, clothing, perfumery products, accessories, school supplies, magazines, among others. The new consumption profile of these individuals is characterized as independent, with strong influence on parents, being influenced by media and social life, having preferences for fast consumption and practicality (Piedras, 2013).

Considering the background presented, this research seeks to answer the following question: What is the influence of children on family consumption decisions in supermarket

shopping in the city Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS? Thus, this study aimed at identifying the children's influence on the decision making of family consumption in supermarket shopping in Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS.

The development of this research is based on approaching the children's universe in the process of consumption, focusing on the family decision making in supermarket shopping, aiming to contribute to the studies on the children in the consumer market. Because, besides the fact that the child consumer is seen as an extensive and growing emerging market, its consumption behavior changes according to the different age groups and the products to be consumed.

Exploring this research theme is fundamental to understand how the child consumer influences the decision making of families in relation to supermarket shopping. In addition, the literature on this subject is still limited, it can be found in Marconi, Lima and Santos (2012), Moreira, Pedrosa, Rocha & Vieira (2013) and Marshall (2014), studies which approach the marketing theme and the child consumer, and also the influence of the child consumer on the purchasing power of parents in supermarkets, thus, this study aims at contributing to the field of consumer behavior, focusing on the influence of children on family supermarket shopping, a theme that is little approached in national studies.

This research is structured as follows: after this brief introduction, the theoretical framework is presented, in which themes that approach the consumer behavior of children and their roles at the time of purchase are presented. Followed by the methodological procedures which guide the elaboration of this study, as well as the analysis of the results, concluding with the final considerations.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section will approach the concepts and definitions of the phenomena studied in this research.

2.1. Consumers in childhood

Before the 12th century, children were not recognized in the peculiarities of their stages of development and, instead, they were seen as miniature adults. According to Ariés, (1981), the childhood was conceptualized as the result of a social construction. The discovery of childhood started in the 12th century, and the signs of its developments, particularly numerous and significant, in the 16th century. In the 19th century, the child leaves anonymity and centers the attention of adults.

In the 1960's, the first scientific articles whose purpose was to understand the child audience in the consumer society were intended to study the consumption and purchase of sweets (Karsaklian, 2012), and, nowadays, children are perceived as consumers of many other products. Among the possible factors able to trigger this interpretation, is the significant role of the industrial and consumer characteristics of today's society and the exposure to the media that these little individuals are subjected to. About this, Chechelaky (2013) highlights that the media provide to the children enough information to create desire for consumption and provide the feeling of freedom of choice for the products they feel more attracted to. Besides that, media vehicles unveil the child audience as a potential consumer, which, most of the time, makes the programs directed at them as a means of delivering profitable and business messages (Villagelim & Prado, 2011).

Montigneaux (2003) carried out a study defining five groups of children: newborns and lactating (0-24 months), young children (2-4 years), preschoolers (4-6 years), juniors (6-9 years) and pre-teens (9-11 years), according to the following categories: socialization, autonomy, development and learning. From this study, it is possible to recognize that the likes and preferences of children are directly related to factors, such as socialization and autonomy, showing differences according to each age. At the stage of young children and preschoolers, the development of language is predominant. The juniors stage is characterized by the acquisition of reading and writing, besides that, they start making friends. And at the pre-teens stage, they start conquering independence. At this last stage, the development and learning are characterized by the beginning of abstraction in which they start to notice the marketing practices.

According to Freitas, Lima e Santos (2012), there is a process of development of children as consumers, which starts when they accompany their parents to the supermarket and observe them, after, when they accompany them and request products, accompany them and select goods and services under permission; accompany them and make their own shopping in an independent way and finally, when they go to the store alone and go shopping in an autonomous way, making their own shopping. Therefore, the new profile of little consumers is characterized as independent, presenting a strong power of influence on the parents and suffering direct influences from media and society (Piedras, 2013).

According to Veloso, Hildebrand and Campomar (2012), the child as the subject of a consumer market goes beyond the consumption of basic products, exerting direct and indirect influence on other purchasing decisions of the family, when the child asks for a product or when the parents purchase a product or service thinking about the child. In accordance, Karsaklian (2000) clarifies the power of decision that children have related to the family consumption planning, pointing out the need for monitoring the transformations that occur in the family nuclei and how such changes can impact the attitude of these young people towards the market.

Similarly, the market behavior may influence children and adolescents and, according to Barros, Merabet and Gouveia (2016), the consumption market of children presents profitable characteristics and configures itself with a growth potential. However, the stimulation to the early purchasing of products and services may stimulate negative consequences to the young consumers, since these impacts can be found many times related to marketing communication activities, which end up influencing significantly the child audience (Barros, Meraber & Gouveia, 2016).

2.2. Marketing to children

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), marketing discusses the identification and satisfaction of human and social needs and aims at transforming these needs into profit to the organizations, this way contributing to their affirmation in the market. According to Rodrigues (2007), marketing is characterized by the function it plays in the markets, performing exchanges that satisfy the needs and desires of consumers. The author also exposes that the marketing strategies are different according to the target audience to which they are directed to, may being related to the product, price, distribution or communication. Therefore, when the target is the child, the term Marketing to Children is used. The marketing to children is developed to attract, conquer and retain the child consumer, and this kind of marketing presents strategies directed to the adult audience, however, establishes its main focus on children (Linn, 2006).

In order to comprehend the child market, it is necessary to take notice that it does not only covers children, but also the family as a whole, friends and companies that sell goods and

services to this audience (Nascimento, 2015). There is the possibility of understanding the child as part of the primary market (as a consumer), of the influence market and of the market of the future (Velooso, Hildebrand & Campomar, 2012). Therefore, allowing the comprehension that this marketing form transits among one of the current study fields that deserve attention by developing a complex form of interaction, diverse processes and large number of stakeholders.

In this context, Rabelo and Cardoso (2007) defines marketing strategies directed to the child audience from the comprehension of the purchasing process and from the behavior of children and parents; from the understanding of the practice of market segmentation, practicing it in the child audience, so that the mistake of considering this public as homogeneous is not made; the knowledge of the many particularities of segments in the child market, in order to comprehend today's children, bearing in mind the transformations suffered by the present world; and considering children as the target audience of communication.

For marketing professionals, what is important is to find arguments which convince even children to purchase a product, using all their ability to stimulate them to consume, however, in Brazil, the Resolution of the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA), points out some types of advertising as abusive to this audience:

is abusive the advertising that encourages the child to consume a particular product or service making use of child's language, special effects, excess of colors, soundtracks of children's songs or sung by children's voices, children's portrayal, people or celebrities appealing to children, children's characters or presenters, cartoons or animations, besides dolls or similar, promotion with distribution of awards or collectible gifts (Brasil, 2014).

In view of this and according to Fontanelle (2016), it is understood as ethically and morally unjustifiable to use marketing strategies to manipulate children in order to sell, being these individuals, equally to adults, vulnerable to advertising and marketing efforts, being immoral targeting advertising to them.

Concluding the literature review that granted theoretical support to this study, we present, in the next section, the methodology used in the research development.

3. METHODOLOGY

Aiming to reach the objective proposed in this research, a descriptive study with quantitative approach was carried out, performed through a cross-sectional survey (Hair Jr, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2005). The inhabitants of the city Sant'Ana do Livramento/RS who have children aged between 02 to 12 years were selected as research subjects. Therefore, given the lack of access to the population parameter, the sample was characterized as non-probabilistic for convenience. (Hair et al., 2005).

As a data collection instrument, we opted for a questionnaire. Thus, the instrument was composed by 25 objective questions that constituted two structured blocks, the scale used was developed based on the literature on marketing and child consumption. Such questions aimed at comprehending the behavior of parents and children in relation to the consumption in the supermarket environment and the influence of marketing on the consumption decisions of children aged between 02 to 12 years. Besides that, 16 questions of sociodemographic profile were added and 05 questions corresponding to the behavior of young consumers.

The items were measured through the five-point Likert scale, which varied between "1 – Strongly disagree" to "5 – Totally agree", so that the respondents indicated the degree of

agreement or disagreement regarding the variables presented to them. The questions of socio-demographic profile and of consumption behavior were measured from nominal and ordinal scales. In order to avoid comprehension problems, a pretest was performed with 10 subjects who present similar characteristics to the target population of the study. Upon completion of this pretest, improvements needed to the instrument were pointed out, which were met in order to facilitate the understanding by respondents.

The questionnaires were applied by the researchers in supermarket halls and state schools in Sant'Ana do Livramento, bearing in mind that these locations allowed direct contact with the target audience. In the end of the collection, the total of 115 observations suitable and valid to the development of this research were obtained. After the collection, the data were tabulated through the software Excel, and analyzed from the information generated on the software SPSS version 20.0.

In order to analyze the sociodemographic characteristics and the consumption behavior, the descriptive statistics technique was used (Hair et al., 2005). Bearing in mind that the scale applied in the study was created based on the literature and that it was not tested in previous investigations, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed, in order to identify the underlying dimensions. Two measures of sample adequacy were used, supporting the application of EFA to the data obtained in the field research, which are the following: Bartlett's test of sphericity, which tests the overall significance of the totality of correlations in a correlation matrix and whose significance should be inferior to 0,050 and the sample adequacy measure *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* (KMO), which evaluates the adjustment of the sample regarding the degree of partial correlation between the values. The rates of this measure range from 0 to 1, and values inferior to 0,05 determine that the Factor Analysis is satisfactory. (Hair et al., 2009).

In order to estimate the factor loadings, the analysis of the main components was used as a method. And, in order to minimize the number of variables that have high loads in one factor, facilitating the interpretation of the resulting factors, we used the Varimax rotation method (Hair et al., 2009). The reliability of the factors was measured using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, assuming as the lower limit of reliability the value of 0,65 (Hair et al, 2009). Subsequently, the factors were analyzed through descriptive data analysis.

Concluding this chapter that exposed the methodology, the analysis and results discussion is presented.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS DISCUSSION

In this section, the results, obtained through field research about the influence of children on their parents' supermarket shopping, will be presented. Initially, the profile of respondents is presented, followed by the exploratory factor analysis of the scale developed and used in this research. Finally, it is performed the analysis of the influence of children on the consumption decision making and the behavior of parents in the presence of their children in supermarket shopping.

4.1. Profile of the respondents

This topic covers the sociodemographic characteristics of the individuals who answered the survey instrument. It can be noticed that from the sample of 115 subjects interviewed, in the gender question, most of them (80,9%) are female. Bearing in mind that the research was applied

in schools and supermarkets, it can be related that most women answered the questionnaire, because they are usually the ones who are mainly responsible for buying food for the family (Moura, Silva & Batalha, 2006) and drive children to school.

In relation to the marital status, the majority of the sample is composed by married subjects (55,7%). Concerning the respondents' age, we obtained a certain homogeneity, since the subjects are aged between 35 to 44 years. Regarding education, it is observed that 35,7% of subjects completed high school and the same percentage said they completed higher education. Regarding employability, it was possible to show that 33,0% of the respondents said they were civil servants, 27,0% said they were independent professionals and 24,3% were employees of a private company.

Regarding monthly family income, it appears that most families have a monthly income between R\$1.501,00 to R\$2.500,00, corresponding to 33,9%. Therefore, some specific questions were asked regarding the respondents' children. It was requested that the parents answered about the number and gender of their children aged 02 to 12 years, in the answers most of them (49,6%) said they have a girl and 47% have a boy. Such result points out that families are well balanced in relation to the number of children, since most of them said to have only one child.

Regarding the age of their children, the research shows that the age group is between 6 and 11 years old, with the highest percentage being 38,6% for children aged 8 to 10 years. Another significative rate corresponds to children aged over 11 years (25,8%), still belonging to the age group selected for this research.

The following questions investigated about the period of time children spend on the Internet and watching television. Most respondents (47,0%) indicated that their children's internet access time is equivalent to a period of 2 to 4 hours. Regarding the time they spend watching television, 39,1% said that their children spend 1 to 2 hours. According to Cardoso (2011), nowadays, parents spend little time with their children due to the heavy workload, which make children more exposed to a big quantity of media contents and advertising, without adult supervision.

Concluding the analysis of variables that allowed us to make a profile of the respondents, the factor analysis of the scale used in this study is presented.

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Initially, in order to identify the influence of a child on the consumption decision making of the family in supermarket shopping, the aim is to verify the reliability of the instrument applied and developed for this study. Therefore, the applied scale, composed by 25 items developed based on the literature, was submitted to an Exploratory Factor Analysis, in order to verify the underlying dimensions. Firstly, the adequacy of the sample to the analysis technique was verified, using the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO), the rates of both tests confirm satisfactorily the use of this technique (Hair et al., 2009).

Regarding the commonalities, it was observed that the variable "My child(ren) influence the decision of some items in supermarket shopping", presented a value inferior to 0,5, not corresponding to the premises suggested by Hair et al. (2009) to the EFA. Thus, such variable was excluded, and the Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed again. The second round presented acceptable and suitable rates to the Bartlett's and KMO tests, and also obtained commonalities superior to 0,5, originating 07 factors.

However, when analyzing the reliability of the factors from the Cronbach's alpha, it was evidenced that three factors presented coefficients lower than the established as satisfactory

rates ($\alpha = 0,65$). Thus, the variables “Whenever I can I satisfy the desire for consumption of my child(ren) in supermarket shopping”, “I am used to buying the things that my child(ren) ask for at the supermarket”, “When I buy a product that my child(ren) ask for at the supermarket, is because this product was already in my shopping list”, “When I buy a product that my child(ren) ask for at the supermarket, is because this product has a low price” and “My child(ren) pay attention and talk about advertising they see on television”, were excluded.

After excluding these variables, the Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed again in which, despite of the acceptable rates for the Bartlett’s test of sphericity and the KMO test, commonality values inferior to 0,50 were obtained for the variables “When I am with my child at the supermarket he/she gives me kisses and hugs me and after asks me for a product he/she wants me to buy for them” and “Parents must impose consumption limits on their child(ren)”, characterizing their exclusion for the analysis of the results in this study.

Finally, after a new Exploratory Factor Analysis, suitable rates were identified, as suggested by Hair et al. (2009). The results of the sampling adequacy tests were satisfactory, and the KMO presented a coefficient of 0,811, and the Bartlett’s test had significant result ($sig = 0,000$), as it can be seen in Table 01.

Table 01 - Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Measure of Sampling Adequacy Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin		,811
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	959,802
	Df	153
	Sig.	,000

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

Regarding the commonalities, it was found out that all the variables presented values superior to 0,5, indicating that, at least, 50% of the variance of the items was explained by the factors (Hair et al., 2009). At the stage of factor extraction, the eigenvalue criterion was used, which presented all values superior to 1,0. The criterion of percentage of variance explained by the factors was also used, and a level of explanation around 60% was considered satisfactory (Malhotra, 2019). Based on this criterion, the scale used obtained the explanation of 25,3% of variance by the first factor, together, the four factors extracted explained 64,2% of all variance. The individual values of variation and the cumulative percentages can be observed below in Table 02.:

Table 02 - Individual and cumulative variances of factors

	Initial eigenvalues			Sums of extraction of squared loads			Rotating sums of squared loads		
	Total	% of variation	Accumulated Percentage	Total	% of variation	Accumulated Percentage	Total	% of variation	Accumulated Percentage
1	5,97	33,16	33,16	5,97	33,16	33,16	4,56	25,36	25,36
2	2,21	12,32	45,48	2,21	12,32	45,48	2,53	14,07	39,43
3	1,90	10,57	56,05	1,90	10,57	56,05	2,29	12,74	52,17
4	1,47	8,21	64,27	1,47	8,21	64,27	2,17	12,09	64,27

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

As it can be observed, the procedures employed allowed us to summarize the 17 variables in four factors, they were named based on the behaviors they sought to determine, such as: Influence of children by brands and products (Factor 1), Child consumption based on external influences (Factor 2), Consumption as a reward (Factor 3) and Children as decision makers (Factor 4). Giving sequence to the analysis, it was also verified the internal consistency of the factors, from Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The values obtained show a good reliability of

the four dimensions extracted, since they present alpha values superior to 0,673. According to Hair et al. (2009), it means that the factors and the variables exposed in the questionnaire are reliable in measuring what they propose. The value of alpha found for each factor is exposed in Table 03.

Table 03 – Internal consistency of factors

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1 – Influence of children by brands and products	0,865
Factor 2 – Child consumption based on external influences	0,751
Factor 3 – Consumption as a reward	0,758
Factor 4 – Children as decision makers	0,673

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

Regarding the definition of each factor extracted, the factor “Influence of children by brands and products” is the action of children purchasing certain products and brands in the supermarket environment, such dimension is composed by eight variables. The second factor, called “Child consumption based on external influences” is constituted by three variables concerning the media impact on children’s desire to consume, which ends up influencing the consumption actions of families at the supermarket.

The dimension “Consumption as a reward”, composed by three variables, corresponds to one of the motivations by which family members tend to buy the products chosen and requested by children, performed as a way to reward positive behaviors and attitudes of children. The fourth and last factor, entitled “Children as decision makers” refers to children’s performance not only as influencers of what will be consumed, but also as decision makers of their families buying process.

In Table 04, we present the variables, the factor loadings and the respective factors corresponding to the four dimensions extracted by exploratory factor analysis.

Table 04 – Factors and factor loadings

Variables	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
When I am with my child(ren) at the supermarket they ask nonstop until I give them the product they want.	,819			
My children opine regarding product brands.	,773			
I spend more time at the supermarket when my child(ren) accompany me.	,720			
When I am with my child(ren) at the supermarket they promise to be well behaved in exchange for buying a product they want.	,698			
My child(ren) influence the decision for some supermarket shopping items.	,646			
My child(ren) ask for items that show characters in the packages.	,645			
When I am with my child(ren) at the supermarket they ask directly for products they want.	,632			
The TV influence my child(ren) to ask for particular products from the supermarket.	,502			
Children are greatly influenced by advertisements, designs, characters and fads.		,892		
Children are encouraged by TV, videos and the internet to consume things they do not need.		,843		
I believe that many parents buy certain products because of the insistence of their children.		,714		
When I buy some product that my child(ren) ask for at the supermarket is because they deserve a reward.			,807	
I buy products for my child(ren) when they ask me, to make up for the time I was away from home.			,740	
When I buy a product at the supermarket for my child(ren) is to be able to keep shopping peacefully.			,673	
I like that my child(ren) participate in supermarket shopping.				,785
My child(ren) accompany me in supermarket shopping.				,785
My child(ren) ask to buy items for themselves at the supermarket.				,566

Factor 1 – Influence of children by brands and products
 Factor 2 – Child consumption based on external influences
 Factor 3 – Consumption as a reward
 Factor 4 – Children as decision makers

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

The rates of the tests performed from the Exploratory Factor Analysis show the reliability of the instrument developed for this study. Allowing the analysis that will be presented in the next topic on the influence of children on parents' buying decisions in supermarkets.

4.3. The influence of children on parents' buying decisions in supermarkets

In this topic we seek to approach the influence of children aged 2 to 12 years on their parents' buying decisions in supermarkets. In order to do that, the rates concerning the factors 01 and 04 extracted from Exploratory Factor Analysis are analyzed. Such values can be verified in Table 05.

Table 05 – The influence of children on parents' buying decisions in supermarkets

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 1 – Influence of children by brands and products	2,50	2,63	0,933
When I am with my child(ren) at the supermarket they ask nonstop until I give them the product they want.	1,00	1,90	1,111
My children opine regarding product brands.	2,00	2,22	1,283
I spend more time at the supermarket when my child(ren) accompany me	3,00	3,01	1,592
When I am my child(ren) at the supermarket they promise to be well behaved in exchange for buying a product they want.	1,00	2,01	1,308
My child(ren) influence the decision for some supermarket shopping items.	3,00	2,70	1,171
My child(ren) ask for items that show characters in the packages.	3,00	2,83	1,357
When I am with my child(ren) at the supermarket they ask directly for products they want.	3,00	3,03	1,350
The TV influence my child(ren) to ask for particular products from the supermarket.	4,00	3,41	1,176
Factor 4 – Children as decision makers	3,33	3,34	0,828
I like that my child(ren) participate in supermarket shopping.	3,00	3,38	0,979
My child(ren) accompany me in supermarket shopping.	3,00	3,26	1,132
My child(ren) ask to buy items for themselves at the supermarket.	3,00	3,38	1,081

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

According to the information in Table 05, the respondents of the sample evidence to be influenced by their children regarding the choice of determined brands and products in the supermarket, as found in the mean ($\bar{x} = 2,63$), median (2,50) and standard deviation (0,933) values. Besides that, the subjects seem to notice the role of their children as decision makers in the process of the family shopping, such assertion has support from the mean, median and standard deviation rates verified for the factor "Children as decision makers". According to Colzani (2009), this behavior is a common practice of children in supermarkets, it is common for their requests to be determined by the products and goods observed on television or other media.

The influence of children on parents' consumption decision making process is different in each of the product categories, occurring because of the child's involvement with what will be consumed. Therefore, the greater the child's involvement with the acquisition, the greater the influence it will have on their parents' decisions (Curtale, 2018). Regarding specifically the supermarket environment, it seems that children can exert important influences on the buying decisions of different types of products, being the food one of these main categories (Marshall,

2014). This happens because the supermarket environment and the acquisition of products in these places is an essential part of the socialization process of little consumers, who accompany their parents daily in the realization of such activity from an early age (Patton, 2014).

The results found in this research are similar to the ones verified by Maciel, Lima Filho, Silva and Sauer (2018), who identified that 66,8% of families are directly influenced by their children during the decision-making process of buying many products, and, mainly, in food consumption. The authors also observed the constant participation of children during shopping, in which this is a frequent behavior in the investigated families.

The literature on child consumption behavior evidences the prominent positioning of children as decision makers in the consumer process of families from different social classes and structures, which has made the practice of meeting the demands of these new consumers even more frequent. According to Fragoso (2009), it is difficult for parents to refuse to satisfy their children's wishes, especially when it comes to buying food, since there is a relation of affection between the subjects.

Consequently, nowadays, children are taking a role each time more important in the buying decisions of families. However, the reasons and the way such influence occurs are not completely comprehensible (Karsaklian, 2012). To understand the positioning of these consumers and the existing family cultures in the buying process seems to be essential, so that marketing managers can devise strategies that cover everyone involved in this family dynamic.

The behavior observed in the studied sample characterizes what Nørgaard et al. (2007) and Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2011), determine as active influence, in which the children directly influence on the family spending, whether during the buying process or when requesting specific products and brands. This definition also covers the position that the child occupies during the decision-making process, in which they actively participate with their family in consumption activities or present themselves directly as decision makers of the products and brands that will be consumed (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2011).

Aiming to complement the information obtained from the scale used, it was asked to parents in relation to their children's reactions when a buying request is not fulfilled. In Table 06, the results are evidenced.

Table 06 – Reaction of child(ren) when a buying request is not fulfilled

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Cry	14	11,2%
Make scandals	6	4,8%
Get grumpy	27	21,6%
Accept no	46	36,8%
Beg	9	7,2%
Make a sad face	37	29,6%
Blackmail	3	2,4%
Say they will use their allowance	3	2,4%
Other	19	15,2%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

Observing Table 06, it is possible to notice that the variable "accept no", was the most frequent one, corresponding to 36,8% of respondents. Followed by the variable "make a sad face" with percentage of 29,6%. The variable "get grumpy" also stood out, with a percentage of 21,6% of answers. According to Zagury (2010) parents should not give in to children's requests, even though they get sad, frown or do some kind of blackmail. Parents should maintain their position, therefore, they used criteria that they considered fair to say and maintain "no".

Although most of the respondents evidenced that children accept "no", researches

show that this situation is not so common. “Parents do not like to refuse things to their children, if they do so is because there is no financial condition for that or because they do not consider the request a priority” (Ferreira, 2013, p.50).

Subsequently, parents were asked which products their children request the most when they are in a supermarket. The results can be seen in Table 07.

Table 07 – Products requested by children in supermarket shopping

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Chocolate/candy	60	48,0%
Yogurt	52	41,6%
Stuffed cookies	48	38,4%
Fruit	24	19,2%
Toys	34	27,2%
Magazine	17	13,6%
Perfumery	04	3,2%
Vegetables	06	4,8%
Hygiene products	12	9,6%
Bread	06	4,8%
Chips	44	35,2%
Soda	29	23,2%
Cereals	13	10,4%
Juice	36	28,8%
Bubble gum	18	14,4%
Other	03	2,4%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

Analyzing Table 07, it is clear that the variables which obtained the highest response rates were: Chocolate/candy corresponding to a percentage of 48,0%, followed by the option Yogurt with 41,6%, right after is the option Stuffed Cookies reaching 38,4%. The alternatives, chips and juice, were also evidenced, in a percentage of 35,2% and 28,8% respectively. According to Karsaklian (2012, p.257), “in Brazil, there are more than 49 million children aged 0 to 14 years, responsible for the consumption of 60% to 80% of yogurts and 40% of soda sold in the country”. Limeira (2008) points out that studies indicate that children influence significantly on various buying decisions, especially about products in which they are users such as chocolates, candies and toys.

The understanding that their children influence their buying decisions may be related to the fact that parents make this activity a common practice in the home environment. This is because children’s influence and demands for consumer goods become more significant when their parents include them in buying decisions (Curtale, 2018). According to Cairns, Angus, Hastings and Caraher (2013), the increased participation of children in the parents’ supermarket buying process, accompanying and making requests, can be noticed in families where consumption is encouraged, demonstrating the possible relation between such behaviors.

Paying attention to this approach, in this research, we aimed at identifying why parents take their children with them when they go to the supermarket, in order to comprehend if the family culture could be related to children’s influence on consumer practices (Table 08).

Table 08 – Children go with parents on supermarket shopping

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Because they like it	17	13,6%
It's a ride	14	11,2%
I have no one to leave them with	27	21,6%
To teach how to buy products	21	16,8%
It's practical and it is on the way of home/school	25	20,0%
To do their will	03	2,4%
It's fun to shop with them	21	16,8%
To show them the value of money	41	32,8%
Other	13	10,4%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

When the parents were asked about the presence of their children when they go shopping, the variable which obtained the highest percentage (32,8%) was “to show them the value of money”, followed by the variable “I have no one to leave them with” (21,6%). According to Ferreira (2013), it is fundamental to promote the comprehension of children that money and work are two concepts which are connected. Thus, is it possible that parents want to develop skills and educate their children financially, making the buying process a way to do that.

Besides that, with the obtained rates, it is common for children to accompany their parents when shopping for reasons related to family relationship and culture, which may early arouse the child’s interest in consuming certain products and brands, corroborating the discussions of Cairns et al. (2013) and Curtale (2018) on the consumer activity as a reflection of family habits and customs.

It turns out that the family culture of consumption is not the only determining factor for child consumption, and other variables are able to influence the characterization of children as consumers. Subsequently, the role of marketing and social media on consumption of child audience is discussed.

4.4. Determinants for child consumption in supermarket shopping

Aiming at knowing external factors capable of influence child consumption and the behavior of parents regarding their children in supermarket shopping, the analysis of factors 2 and 3, extracted in the Exploratory Factor Analysis, is performed (Table 09).

Table 09 – Child consumption based on external influences

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 2 – Child consumption based on external influences.	4,00	4,05	0,753
Children are greatly influenced by advertisements, designs, characters and fads.	4,00	4,06	0,930
Children are encouraged by TV, videos and the internet to consume things they do not need.	4,00	4,17	0,752
I believe that many parents buy certain products because of the insistence of their children.	4,00	3,93	1,032

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

The results observed in Table 08, show the influence of external variables on child consumption behavior ($\bar{x} = 4,05$). According to the investigated sample, children are influenced to consume certain products and brands because of advertising and promotions directed to the child audience in different kinds of media. Freitas, Lima e Santos (2012), highlight that television advertisements influence children’s wishes and, therefore, they end up requesting to their parents a larger number of products that contain characters and brands that they see on media.

The usage of known characters has been employed by companies which seek to increase the consumption by child audience (Moreira et al., 2013). In Brazil, the advertising market is considered to be a sales-promoting army capable of strongly influence adults in the purchase of any product or service. (Instituto Alana, 2007). Besides that, the use of gifts consolidated itself as a marketing strategy that ensures customer loyalty and conquest (Dexheimer & Bacha, 2011), being perceived even by parents, who end up purchasing impulsively products containing characters their children have affection for (Brehm & Brehm, 2013). The authors also highlight that child advertising provides a strong direct influence on children and adolescents, indirectly impacting adult consumers.

According to Villagelim and Prado (2011), media sees children as potential consumers and the programs directed to them have the objective of a commercial and profitable interest,

often leaving aside the educational, social and ethical values such as health. In accordance with that, Carmona (2002, p. 331) assures that “Brazilian children have always been seen as consumers by television channels and, therefore, the programs produced to them are invariably more concerned with business interests than with social or educational aspects”.

Trying to complement such analysis, this research also used one question as an instrument of collection to verify the parents’ positioning and opinion on child consumption. Although this question was not mandatory, the open question had a good adherence by respondents, who pointed out that child consumption is inevitable, since children are under the strong influence of media.

When answering to the question, parents agree that children are influenced to spend each time more because of advertising they see on television. “Nowadays children are becoming more consumerist because of TV”. According to Gonçalves (2010), 30 seconds are enough for a brand to influence a child, thus children become the main subjects in family consumption.

One of the respondents said that child consumption is unnecessary, according to him many times “the daughter asks something just because a friend has it”, (Questionnaire 12,) which leads us to think that parents should be responsible for deciding what their children can consume. According to Linn (2006), one should not give in to all children’s whims when they use the nuisance factor or popularly known as “power to pester”, when the child asks parents so much that they end up “overwhelmed by fatigue” and giving in to the tastes and wishes of their child.

Still on this question, Mamede (2013) clarifies that children can associate consumerism with fun and by making this “connection” they can ask for “things” they do not even need. Souza (2014), says that, nowadays, what is seen are children who are hyperconnected and hyperstimulated, who prefer to win cell phones instead of toys and go shopping instead of playing, being the mall their favorite place. Based on the observations made by the respondents and also based on the literature, it is believed that children and adolescents become vulnerable consumers in the face of massive marketing strategies (Barbosa & Veloso, 2017), determining the need to keep up with family members about commercials and advertisements to which they are exposed to.

The family’s attitude towards children’s consumption was also obtained. Thus, questions were asked about the motivations that lead parents to buy products for their children in the supermarket environment. (Table 10).

Table 10 – Consumption as a reward

Factor	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 3 – Consumption as a reward.	2,25	2,46	0,910
When I buy some product that my child(ren) ask for at the supermarket is because they deserve a reward.	2,00	2,10	1,100
I buy products for my child(ren) when they ask me, to make up for the time I was away from home.	2,00	2,72	1,136
When I buy a product at the supermarket for my child(ren) is to be able to keep shopping peacefully.	2,00	2,25	1,241

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2019).

Although the sample seems to disagree with the reasons given ($\bar{x} = 2,46$), when the significant value of standard deviation (0,910) is verified, there are subjects who claim to resort to buying the products requested by their children as a reward, whether it is done to compensate for children’s good behavior or to compensate for the absence of family members in the family environment.

About this, Silva (2014) explains that because our society is materialist, parents are each time more involved with work, having little time to dedicate themselves to children, therefore, they try to compensate it with material goods. Corroborating, Trindade (2009) evidence that parents

many times end up being sensitive to children's appeals, giving in to their consumer wishes in order to attempt to ease the blame for their absence, that is, to satisfy the children's emotional demands.

After completing the interpretation and discussion of the data collected in the research, the next topic presents the final considerations.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed at analyzing the influence of children on the family consumption decisions in supermarket shopping in Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS. In order to do that, a quantitative and descriptive research was performed from a survey with 115 inhabitants of Sant'Ana do Livramento-RS who have children aged 02 to 12 years. Initially, as a way to identify the reliability of the instrument developed by the authors for this study, the technique Exploratory Factor Analysis was used, which presented satisfactory rates to the performance of analysis on children's influence on buying decisions of their parents in supermarket shopping.

The results evidenced the influence of children on their families' consumption, many times, the young consumers act as decision makers of their families' purchases. Furthermore, it was noticed that the presence of children in supermarkets could be related to the family culture of the sample investigated, who assure they take their children during shopping to teach them the value of money or for reasons related to the family's habits.

Regarding the possible external influencers of the child consumption behavior, it was evidenced that the television and other media, as well as marketing strategies, for example, the gifts directed to some products, become reasons why children ask for specific products. In addition, child consumption has been expanded in the families studied by the purchase of products as a reward for the absence of parents, this occurring for different reasons.

The findings of this study clarify the decision-making role of children in family consumption, signaling the importance of marketing professionals to deepen their knowledge on factors that influence such audience and the role these consumers have in the consumer market. However, it is worth noting that such subjects are still in formation, both psychologically and socially, which demands the comprehension of the vulnerability of these consumers regarding the advertising and actions that, sometimes, may interfere aggressively on their consumer wishes. Therefore, marketing managers and researchers of this field must concentrate efforts on developing strategies that meet the organizational demands, but that prioritize the well-being of the little consumers.

When we comprehend that children are in a constant process of formation as individuals, it is considered that the role of the family regarding consumption, should be to teach their children issues such as financial education and literacy through the family's shopping habits. As a consequence, children could understand early the value of money, constituting a behavior that is able to avoid future adversities related to consumption, such as the materialism, the consumerism, the indebtedness, the compulsion for shopping, among others.

This research presented some limitations such as the lack of a larger number of respondents. Besides that, we can mention the fact that the research was performed through a non-probability sample, which does not allow the generalization of its results. Therefore, the development of new quantitative investigations, through probability approaches and that have a larger number of observations, is suggested. Similarly, it stands out the possibility of carrying out studies which use statistical analysis as hypothesis testing or that have longitudinal structures, in order to explore family and child consumption behaviors. We also suggest interviews with consumer children, as a way to compare their perception with their parents'.

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Contribution	[Author 1]	[Author 2]	[Author 3]	[Author 4]
1. Definition of research problem	√	√		
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√	√		
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√	√		√
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√	√		√
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√	√		
6. Data collection	√	√	√	√
7. Statistical analysis	√	√		
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√	√		
9. Critical revision of the manuscript	√	√	√	√
10. Manuscript writing	√	√		√
11. Other (please specify)				