

Marketing to children – Examining parental regulatory preferences using parenting styles framework

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Abstract

The study aims to understand and highlight parental regulatory preferences for restricting marketing activities targeted at children. It also examines the utility of parenting styles' framework in predicting these parental preferences. The data was collected from 400 parents of school-going children, studying between classes I to VII, using a bilingual (English and Telugu) 3-part self-reporting questionnaire. In this study, majority of the parents demanded tougher statutory restrictions to limit the marketing activities aimed at children. Further, the study revealed that authoritarian and authoritative parents are more supportive of statutory restrictions than permissive parents. The study also resulted in the identification of the socio-demographic factors influencing parental regulatory preferences. With majority of the parents demanding tougher statutory restrictions, policymakers will be forced to think and act towards strengthening the regulatory landscape for limiting child-targeted marketing. Further, marketers have to be conscious of the fact that parents are demanding closer scrutiny and restrictions on their actions, and initiate voluntary measures to reassure the parents.

Keywords: Marketing to Children, Parental Regulatory Preferences, Parenting styles

Introduction

Children are viewed as an important demographic by marketers, as they buy products for their own consumption, influence family purchases, and are potential future consumers (John, 1999; McNeal, 1992). Children in the United States alone account for over a trillion dollars in purchases every year and influence parental purchases worth another \$670 billion (Mayo & Nairn, 2009; Schor, 2004). Aided by the affluence of parents, proliferation of mass media, and development of new-age media, marketers are leaving no stone unturned to make the most of the profitable children's segment/market, and are engaged in a relentless pursuit of the young consumer (Calvert, 2008). They spend over \$15 billion in marketing expenditure to attract, convert, and retain children (Calvert, 2008; Schor, 2004). Children are incessantly bombarded with marketing messages aimed at influencing, shaping, and producing market desired thoughts, actions, and behaviours among them (Giroux, 2016; Kunkel et al., 2004). Working closely with experts from the field of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, marketers design and implement irresistible marketing campaigns targeted at children, intertwining their identities, values, and dreams with brands and commodities (Giroux, 2016; Kunkel et al., 2004; Mediasmarts, 2015). With markets playing an important role in raising, educating, and shaping children, consumerism has become the default philosophy of life (Bauman, 2005; Campbell, 2004).

Critics of marketing to children question this reckless and relentless pursuit of the young consumer by marketers in their insatiable hunger for profits (Marshall, 2010). They denounce the priority attached to the economic benefits arising out of marketing to children, ignoring the social and psychological consequences attached to such a lopsided prioritization (Calvert, 2008). The actions of marketers aimed at children were labeled as 'toxic', 'unfair', 'hostile', and 'inherently deceptive', causing 'marketing-related illnesses', and some even designating marketers as 'child molesters' (Linn, 2004; Moore, 2004; Nader, 1999; Palmer, 2007; Schor, 2004). Marketers think otherwise. They argue that children are autonomous individuals with specific

needs/wants and possess the necessary rights to satisfy these needs/wants –(Cowell, 2001). Marketers also emphasize their contribution in educating the child to develop into a competent consumer –(Cowell, 2001; Davidson, 1998; Kline, 2010). The views of the industry and society are polarized to the extremes, hampering the efforts aimed at achieving a consensus (Hadjiphani, A., Hadjiphanis, L., & Christou, 2009).

Parents play a pivotal role in the consumer socialization of their children. Children and their parents complement each other in the marketplace –(Hawkins, Mothesbaugh, & Mookerjee, 2010). Children learn from their parents, and also seek their guidance, assistance, and approval in making purchase decisions (McNeal, 1992, 1993). With researchers linking marketing to children with a host of unintended consequences, concerned parents are demanding a tougher regulatory environment for limiting the same (Chan & McNeal, 2002; Dens, De Pelsmacker, & Eagle, 2007; Young, de Bruin, & Eagle, 2003). The current regulatory landscape surrounding marketing activities aimed at children is dominated by three modes of regulation – statutory regulation (those prescribed by the law of the land), government guidelines (those issued by the government, but not having any legal sanctity), and industry self-regulation (those recommended by the industry associations/organizations) (Hawkes, 2004). Researchers have questioned the efficacy of self-regulation in limiting the marketing efforts aimed at children, strengthening the demand for tougher regulatory framework from the parents and other stakeholders (Effertz & Wilcke, 2012; Romero-Fernández, Royo-Bordonada, & Rodríguez-Artalejo, 2010). Though the debate surrounding the topic of regulating the marketing efforts aimed at children is not new, very few studies have focused on understanding regulatory preferences from a parental perspective. This study attempts to understand and highlight the parental regulatory preferences concerning the marketing activities targeted at children. Further, these preferences are examined from consumer socialization perspective by using the parenting styles framework. The findings of this study will provide much needed inputs to policymakers interested in restricting the marketing activities aimed at children and mitigating the effects of such actions. Although the study is restricted to a specific region of South-India, its findings can be cautiously generalized to the rest of the country and other emerging economies. The study also brings forth the gray areas in the monitoring and regulating of marketing activities directed at children, as identified by parents, which can also be generalized to other emerging economies.

Literature Review

Parental regulatory preferences

The history of protecting the vulnerability of children and preventing their exploitation dates back to 1874 when the British parliament passed a resolution to protect children from questionable practices of greedy businessmen and absolved parents of any debt resulting from the inducement of children to purchase products (Kunkel et al., 2004). In the 1970s, the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) conducted an extensive investigation into the nature and extent of marketing efforts (and the resulting effects) specifically aimed at children, and proposed a ban on all television advertising (the then-popular medium), citing the inability of children to understand and interpret the selling intent of marketing communications (FTC, 1978). However, the proposal was termed over-reaching and stalled from enactment by Congress, owing to the skilled lobbying by powerful industrialists (Beales III, 2003). The demand of concerned parents and society to restrict the marketing efforts targeted at children only intensified in later years, and also received endorsement from reputed organizations like American Psychological Association, which termed the actions of marketers as 'fundamentally unfair', warranting government interference (Kunkel et al., 2004). Even the industry acknowledges the vulnerability of children and the harm associated with exploiting them (Dresden & Barnard, 2004). Under pressure to avoid statutory restrictions, limit the damage resulting from growing parental concerns, and meet their mandatory social commitment, the industry volunteered to limit the nature and extent of marketing activities aimed at children through self-regulation –(Kunkel, Castonguay, & Filer, 2015; Srinivas, 2020). However, with several studies highlighting the ineffectiveness of such voluntary initiatives, terming them as 'weak' and 'ineffective', the demand for government intervention intensified in recent years (Bettcher & Subramaniam, 2001; Effertz & Wilcke, 2012; Noel, Babor, & Robaina, 2017; Romero-Fernández et al., 2010). Owing to these demands, a few countries/provinces (Norway, Sweden, and Quebec in Canada) have experimented with a complete ban on all forms of marketing targeted at children (Hawkes, 2004; WCRF, 2018). Further, many countries have specific statutory restrictions aimed at limiting these efforts (Hawkes, 2007).

Parenting styles

Previous researchers have attached a tremendous amount of significance to the role of parenting in the course of the child's development and childhood socialization (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Maccoby, 1992, 2000). With socialization being viewed and understood as an adult-oriented process, Baumrind (1980) proposed the parenting styles framework to provide deeper and better insights into parenting practices surrounding childhood socialization (Carlson, Laczniak, & Wertley, 2011). Based on the dimensions of responsiveness (extent of warmth and support) and demandingness (extent of control and monitoring), three distinct parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) were conceptualized (Baumrind, 1968, 1991; Carlson, Laczniak, & Muehling, 1994). Baumrind (2013), in her later works, suggested

the depiction of parenting styles based on the dimensions of acceptance vs rejection, autonomy vs control (psychological), and firm control vs lax control (behavioural). Authoritarian parents exercise a higher degree of control, expect complete acceptance of the rules formulated by the authority figure, enforce strict adherence, discourage willful behaviour, and punish deviations (Baumrind, 1968, 2013; Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). They attach adult responsibilities to children but do not recognize their rights (Baumrind, 1980). Authoritative parents do recognize the rights of their children and strive hard to achieve a balance between their rights and children's rights (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). Considered as the optimal style of parenting, parents inclined towards the authoritative style are generally warm, support self-expression, value autonomy, and also enforce discipline when needed (Baumrind, 1968, 1978, 2013; Baumrind et al., 2010). Permissive parents allow substantial freedom to their children and focus on the removal of all the constraints which come in their way of self-expression and self-will (Baumrind, 1978, 1980, 1996). They attach adult rights to their children, ignoring their responsibilities (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). In the later years, researchers identified one more parenting style – the neglecting style (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Neeley & Coffey, 2007). However, the current study is limited to the initial three parenting styles proposed by Baumrind (1968). The authoritarian and authoritative parents are expected to be more concerned about the unintended consequences arising out of marketing efforts aimed at children than permissive parents, resulting in their preference for increased statutory restrictions than permissive parents (Crosby & Grossbart, 1984). Though the previous studies did not report significant differences in the level of concerns between authoritarian and authoritative parents, authoritarian parents' respect for authority and preservation of order is expected to result in increased preference for statutory restrictions than authoritative parents (Crosby & Grossbart, 1984; Walsh, Laczniak, & Carlson, 1998). The following hypotheses are formulated to predict the parental regulatory preferences related to the marketing efforts targeted at children, using the parenting styles framework.

H1: Authoritarian parents prefer tougher statutory restrictions for limiting the effects of marketing to children than authoritative parents.

H2: Authoritarian parents prefer tougher statutory restrictions for limiting the effects of marketing to children than permissive parents.

H3: Authoritative parents prefer tougher statutory restrictions for limiting the effects of marketing to children than permissive parents.

Research Method

The study was conducted in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, India, consisting of four districts, namely, Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, and Kurnool. The sampling unit of the study was defined as any parent (father/mother) with at least one child studying between classes I to VII in a school located within the headquarters of these four districts. The schools in the headquarters were grouped under two categories, Government Schools and Private Schools, based on the ownership and control structure of the schools. With schools in each district headquarter divided into two strata, the population of the study was divided into 8 strata. Further, one school was selected at random from each stratum, and all the students studying between classes I to VII in the school were distributed questionnaires. The students were instructed to get it filled by their parent (mother/father) and return the same within three working days. The sample size of 400, which was equally divided among all the 8 strata, was arrived at using the reference table published by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The summary of the socio-demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table I.

Table I – Sample Profile

S. No	Description	N	%
1	Gender		
	Male (Father)	206	51.5
	Female (Mother)	194	48.5
2	Age		
	<20	0	0
	21-25	9	2.3
	26-30	60	15
	31-35	143	35.8
	36-40	109	27.3
	41-45	59	14.8
	46-50	14	3.5
51-55	5	1.3	
	56<	1	0.3
3	Education		
	Illiterate	29	7.3
	Secondary	163	40.8
	Higher Secondary	96	24
	Graduate	70	17.5
	Post Graduate	40	10
	Ph.D.	2	0.5
4	Monthly Income (In Indian Rupees)		
	<10,000	244	61
	10,001-25,000	112	28
	25,001-50,000	32	8
	50,001-100,000	12	3
5	Occupation		
	Businessman	18	4.5
	Agriculture	76	19
	Service (Govt)	16	4
	Pvt Employment	82	20.5
	Self-employed	82	20.5
	Wage worker	53	13.3
	Homemaker	73	18.2
6	Family Type		
	Joint	131	32.8
	Nuclear	269	67.2
7	Family Size		
	Up to 4 members	237	59.3
	5 or more members	163	40.7
8	Number of children		
	One	49	12.3
	Two	255	63.7
	Three	87	21.8
	More than 3	9	2.2

Measurements

The bilingual (English & Telugu) self-reporting questionnaire administered to the parents through their school-going children consisted of three parts. Part-I included questions pertaining to the socio-demographic information of the respondent. In Part-II, the 32-item Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) was presented to the parents to identify their parenting style orientation. In Part-III, the 7-item scale developed by the researcher to understand and measure the parental regulatory preferences related to the statutory restrictions aimed at limiting the nature and extent of marketing activities targeted at children was presented to the respondents to elicit their responses.

Measuring parenting styles

The shorter version of Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart (2001), consisting of 32 items, was used to identify the style orientation of the parents. The PSDQ included 15 items for measuring the authoritative style of parenting, 12 items for measuring the authoritarian style of parenting, and 5 items for measuring the permissive style of parenting. The structural summary of PSDQ is presented in Table II.

Table II – Structural Summary of PSDQ

S.No	Parenting Style	Sub-Dimensions	Item Numbers
1	Authoritative	Warmth - Support Autonomy Granting Regulation	1, 7, 12, 14, and 27 3, 9, 18, 21 and 22 5, 11, 25, 29 and 31
2	Authoritarian	Physical Coercion Non - Responsive and Punitive Dimension Verbal Hostility	2, 6, 19 and 32 4, 10, 26 and 28 13, 16, 23, and 30
3	Permissive	Lack of Confidence Lack of follow-through	8 15, 17, 20 and 24

Each item in the scale was rated by the parents based on the frequency of their parenting behaviours and practices, with response options ranging from 'Never' to 'Always' on a 5-Point Likert type scale. The mean score for each parenting style was calculated, and the category with the highest mean score represented the respondent's parenting style (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995; Robinson et al., 2001). It is important to note that parenting styles are contextual and not mutually exclusive (Robinson et al., 2001). As the study was conducted in a predominantly Telugu-speaking region of South-India, PSDQ was translated from English to Telugu following a prescribed procedure and the bilingual (English and Telugu) version of the instrument was presented to the respondent to elicit and appropriately register their responses (Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996). Before the actual study, the translated version was administered to a convenience sample of 30 parents who did not report any difficulty in understanding the statements and registering their responses. Further, the translated version of the instrument was presented to 5 chosen experts to rate each item in the instrument based on its relevance and representativeness. Prior studies, involving the translation and implementation of PSDQ in various cross-cultural contexts, have demonstrated its cross-cultural fit (Önder & Gülay, 2009; Pedro, Carapito, & Ribeiro, 2015; Slone, Shechner, & Farah, 2012; Xu, 2007).

Measuring parental preferences concerning statutory restrictions

For this study, the parental regulatory preferences are understood as the preferred regulatory choice of the parents related to the statutory restrictions aimed at limiting the extent and mitigating the impact of marketing efforts aimed at children. In the year 2016, UNICEF published a detailed report after examining the statutory and regulatory frameworks currently existing in various countries for limiting the marketing activities aimed at children –(UNICEF, 2016). The specific questions used in this report to compare the statutory frameworks are borrowed and adapted to represent the parental regulatory preferences. The 7-item scale included the need/demand for strengthening the existing legal frameworks, regulating the marketing of harmful products, regulating in-school marketing, prohibiting the use of children in child-targeted promotions, restricting the use of attractive and appealing characters, imposing timing/placement restrictions, and regulating social media marketing –(UNICEF, 2016). The items were presented as statements to understand and measure the regulatory preferences of the parents on a 5-

point Likert type scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree). A higher item-level score indicates parents' support/demand for formulating statutory restrictions or strengthening the existing statutory restrictions (if already in force) for limiting certain specific actions of the marketers. Further, a higher scale-level mean score indicates parental preference for tougher statutory restrictions in general aimed at limiting the marketing activities targeted at children.

Data Analysis

The data collected by administering the 3-part self-reporting questionnaire to 400 parents were digitized for carrying out statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 26). The face validity (judging the validity from a common sense perspective) of the bilingual version of 32-item PSDQ and 7-item scale for measuring parental regulatory preferences were assessed by analyzing the responses of the 30 parents selected through a convenience sample, who evaluated the instruments based on clarity, simplicity, and usefulness (Parsian and Dunning, 2009; Salkind, 2010). Item-level content validity index (I-CVI) and scale-level content validity index (S-CVI/UA) were generated to assess the content validity (the relevance and representativeness of the items to the measured construct) of the instruments used in the study (Anastasia, 2001; Rusticus, 2014). The construct validity (the extent to which the instrument sufficiently measures what it intends to measure) of the instrument was assessed by examining convergent validity (convergence of related items to measure a specific trait) and discriminant validity (existence of meaningful differentiation between dissimilar constructs), using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Ginty, 2013; Hubley, 2014; Piedmont, 2014). The internal consistency of the instruments was assessed by computing Cronbach's alpha values. The differences in parental regulatory preferences across the parenting styles were compared using the Kruskal-Wallis test with Dunn's procedure for post hoc analysis. Further, the differences in regulatory preferences contributed by demographic factors were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test for 2 samples / Kruskal-Wallis test for k samples.

Results

Reliability and validity of the instruments

The internal consistency of the translated version of PSDQ was assessed by computing the Cronbach's alpha values for the various sub-dimensions included in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha values for various parenting style dimensions were 0.866, 0.835, and 0.654, for authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive dimensions, respectively, which were in line with those reported for the original version, indicating adequate reliability (Robinson et al., 2001). The higher ratings received for clarity, simplicity, and usefulness in registering a response from the 30 parents selected through a convenience sample indicated sufficient face validity for the translated version of PSDQ. The perfect I-CVI (score of 1 for all items) and S-CVI/UV (score of 1) demonstrated the content validity of the translated version. After verifying the appropriateness of the factor analysis technique for data analysis using KMO (Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, EFA was performed using principal axis factoring method of extraction, employing promax rotation with Kaiser normalization (iterations set to 25). The resulting 3-factor solution was identical to the structure of the original version of the instrument. The pattern matrix of the resulting structure is presented in Table III. The convergence of the related items indicated the convergent validity of the instrument. Further, the absence of cross-loadings implied discriminant validity, which is also substantiated by the intercorrelations observed between the mean scores of the three parenting styles (ranging from weak positive to weak negative). Construct validity of the translated version of the instrument was implied from the demonstration of convergent and discriminant validity.

The 30 parents who were selected through a convenience sample also rated the 7-item instrument developed for measuring parental regulatory preferences highly on parameters of clarity, simplicity, and usefulness in registering a response, indicating adequate face validity. Further, higher ratings from the chosen experts on the parameters of relevance and representativeness indicated adequate content validity for the 7-item scale. Further, EFA (using the same methods and parameters employed in the case of PSDQ) of the data obtained by administering the self-reporting questionnaire to 400 parents resulted in a single-factor solution identical to the theoretical construct, with significant factor loading on all the items. Also, Cronbach's alpha value of 0.853 for the 7-item scale indicated adequate reliability. The initial analysis demonstrated adequate reliability and validity for the translated version of PSDQ and the newly developed scale for measuring parental regulatory preferences.

Table III – Pattern matrix for the translated version of PSDQ

Item No	Parental Style	Sub-Dimension	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
1	Authoritative Style	Warmth-Support	0.518		
3	Authoritative Style	Autonomy Granting	0.489		
5	Authoritative Style	Regulation	0.548		
7	Authoritative Style	Warmth-Support	0.454		
9	Authoritative Style	Autonomy Granting	0.484		
11	Authoritative Style	Regulation	0.534		
12	Authoritative Style	Warmth-Support	0.562		
14	Authoritative Style	Warmth-Support	0.540		
18	Authoritative Style	Autonomy Granting	0.688		
21	Authoritative Style	Autonomy Granting	0.687		
22	Authoritative Style	Autonomy Granting	0.610		
25	Authoritative Style	Regulation	0.566		
27	Authoritative Style	Warmth-Support	0.507		
29	Authoritative Style	Regulation	0.665		
31	Authoritative Style	Regulation	0.683		
2	Authoritarian Style	Physical Coercion		0.558	
4	Authoritarian Style	Non Responsive & Punitive		0.422	
6	Authoritarian Style	Physical Coercion		0.630	
10	Authoritarian Style	Non Responsive & Punitive		0.587	
13	Authoritarian Style	Verbal Hostility		0.622	
16	Authoritarian Style	Verbal Hostility		0.520	
19	Authoritarian Style	Physical Coercion		0.495	
23	Authoritarian Style	Verbal Hostility		0.495	
26	Authoritarian Style	Non Responsive & Punitive		0.446	
28	Authoritarian Style	Non Responsive & Punitive		0.380	
30	Authoritarian Style	Verbal Hostility		0.680	
32	Authoritarian Style	Physical Coercion		0.714	
8	Permissive Style	Lack of confidence			0.518
15	Permissive Style	Lack of follow-through			0.469
17	Permissive Style	Lack of follow-through			0.432
20	Permissive Style	Lack of follow-through			0.518
24	Permissive Style	Lack of follow-through			0.690

Differences in parental regulatory preferences across parenting styles

The mean score of parental regulatory preferences (scale-level) for all the parents included in the study was found to be 3.71 (SD=0.85), indicating that the majority of parents demanded tougher statutory restrictions for limiting marketing efforts aimed at children. The preference for strengthening the existing regulatory landscape was also evident from item-wise mean scores (ranging from 3.51 to 3.93). The mean score was computed for each sub-dimension in PSDQ, and the highest-scoring sub-dimension indicated the style orientation of the parent. Out of the 400 parents who participated in the study, 52 were identified with authoritarian style orientation, 312 with authoritative style orientation, and 36 with permissive style orientation. The mean score of parental regulatory preferences (scale-level) was highest for authoritarian parents (Mean=3.87, SD=0.71), followed by authoritative parents (Mean=3.86, SD=0.69) and permissive parents (Mean=2.13, SD=0.58), in the same order. Further, the item-wise descriptive statistics for understanding the variations in specific parental regulatory preferences across the parenting style groups are presented in Table IV.

Table IV – Item wise descriptive statistics – Parental Regulatory Preferences

Item No	Item Description	Authoritarian Style		Authoritative Style		Permissive Style	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Strengthening the existing legal frameworks	4.00	0.95	3.81	1.08	2.08	0.99
2	Regulating marketing of harmful products	3.85	1.79	4.13	1.07	2.31	0.92
3	Regulating in-school marketing	3.83	0.92	3.88	0.99	2.42	0.99
4	Prohibiting the use of children in child-targeted promotions	3.85	1.03	3.82	1.08	2.06	0.75
5	Restricting the use of attractive and appealing characters	3.77	1.09	3.66	1.07	1.83	0.74
6	Imposing timing/placement restrictions	3.83	0.96	3.74	1.01	2.08	0.96
7	Regulating social media marketing	3.98	1.11	3.96	1.15	2.14	1.05

Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the mean score of parental regulatory preferences (scale-level) across the parenting style groups. The visual inspection of the boxplot revealed a similar distribution of mean scores of parental regulatory preferences across the three parenting style groups. Median scale-level scores were significantly different between the parenting style groups, $\chi^2(2) = 81.234$, $P < 0.001$. The subsequent pairwise comparison using Dunn's (1964) procedure with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed statistically significant differences in the parental regulatory preferences (scale-level) between authoritarian (median=4) and permissive parents (median= 2) ($P < 0.001$), and authoritative (median=4) and permissive parents ($P < 0.001$). However, no significant differences in parental regulatory preferences were found between authoritarian and authoritative parents. Further, the item level differences (specific regulatory preferences) were analyzed using the same test (Kruskal-Wallis). The inspection of boxplots for the item-wise comparison of scores across the parenting style groups revealed that the scores were not similarly distributed across the groups. Significant differences were observed between the groups with respect to all the items included in the scale. The summary of independent samples Kruskal Wallis test for all the 7 items included in the scale is presented in Table V.

Table V- Parenting Styles and Specific Regulatory Preferences – Independent Samples Kruskal Wallis Test Summary

Item No	Item Description	Total N	Test Statistic	df	Asymptotic Sig (2-sided)
1	Strengthening the existing legal frameworks	400	58.956	2	p<0.001
2	Regulating the marketing of harmful products	400	64.185	2	p<0.001
3	Regulating in-school marketing	400	53.668	2	p<0.001
4	Prohibiting the use of children in child-targeted promotions	400	65.392	2	p<0.001
5	Restricting the use of attractive and appealing characters	400	67.785	2	p<0.001
6	Imposing timing/placement restrictions	400	59.920	2	p<0.001
7	Regulating social media marketing	400	56.218	2	p<0.001

Post-hoc using Dunn's procedure revealed significant differences between authoritarian and permissive parents, and authoritative and permissive parents for all the 7 specific regulatory preferences. However, no significant differences were found between authoritarian and authoritative parents for all 7 specific regulatory preferences. The pairwise comparison of parental regulatory preferences across the parenting style dimensions is presented in Table VI.

Table VI - Pairwise Comparisons of Parental Styles - Parental Regulatory Preferences

Item No	Item Description	Sample 1/ Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.a
1	Strengthening the existing legal frameworks	Pr-Ar	141.988	19.182	7.402	0	0
		Pr-An	160.357	23.627	6.787	0	0
		Ar-An	18.369	16.323	1.125	0.26	0.781
2	Regulating the marketing of harmful products	Pr-An	123.438	23.65	5.219	0	0
		Pr-Ar	152.967	19.2	7.967	0	0
		An-Ar	-29.529	16.339	-1.807	0.071	0.212
3	Regulating in-school marketing	Pr-An	128.418	23.651	5.43	0	0
		Pr-Ar	140.634	19.201	7.324	0	0
		An-Ar	-12.216	16.339	-0.748	0.455	1
4	Prohibiting the use of children in child-targeted promotions	Pr-Ar	155.219	19.37	8.013	0	0
		Pr-An	156.934	23.86	6.577	0	0
		Ar-An	1.715	16.483	0.104	0.917	1
5	Restricting the use of attractive and appealing characters	Pr-Ar	157.287	19.536	8.051	0	0
		Pr-An	169.42	24.063	7.041	0	0
		Ar-An	12.133	16.624	0.73	0.465	1
6	Imposing timing/placement restrictions	Pr-Ar	144.927	19.064	7.602	0	0
		Pr-An	153.409	23.482	6.533	0	0
		Ar-An	8.482	16.222	0.523	0.601	1
7	Regulating social media marketing	Pr-Ar	144.214	19.415	7.428	0	0
		Pr-An	146.04	23.914	6.107	0	0
		Ar-An	1.825	16.521	0.11	0.912	1

Pr – Permissive; An – Authoritarian; Ar – Authoritative

The differences in parental regulatory preferences resulting from the demographic factors were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test for 2 samples, or the Kruskal-Wallis test for *k* samples. Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine the gender-based differences in parental regulatory preferences (scale-level). No significant differences in regulatory preferences were found between males and females. Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that parental regulatory preferences did not differ with age. The same test also found that parental regulatory preferences differed significantly with education, $\chi^2(5) = 15.302$, $p < 0.001$, and income, $\chi^2(4) = 18.380$, $p < 0.001$. However, the pairwise comparison using Dunn's procedure revealed significant differences in regulatory preferences only between parents educated up to secondary level (Mean Rank=180.88) and those educated up to post-graduate level (Mean Rank=241.45) ($p < 0.05$), and between parents earning less than Rs 10,000/month (Mean Rank=180.5) and those earning between Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000 per month (Mean Rank=230.70) ($p < 0.01$). With respect to the occupation of the respondent [$\chi^2(6) = 13.566$, $p < 0.05$], significant differences were found in the regulatory preferences only between parents engaged in agriculture (Mean Rank=179.71) and those engaged in government service (Mean Rank=284.75) ($p < 0.05$). The regulatory preferences of parents did not differ significantly with the occupation of the partner. Further, no significant differences in the preferences could be traced to the family type or family size. Also, the preferences differed significantly based on the number of children the parent had, $\chi^2(3) = 9.067$, $p < 0.05$. The pairwise analysis revealed significant differences only between parents with two children (Mean Rank=210.44) and those with three children (Mean Rank=167.76) ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion and Conclusions

The study resulted in the cross-cultural adaptation and validation of PSDQ for measuring parenting style orientations in the South-Indian context. Further, it also resulted in the development and validation of a scale for measuring the parental regulatory preferences related to the statutory restrictions aimed at limiting the marketing efforts targeted at children. The inspection of scale-level and item-level mean scores of regulatory preferences of all the parents included in the study revealed the growing support for tougher statutory restrictions for limiting the actions of marketers aimed at children. The item-level mean score was highest (3.93) for statutory restrictions aimed at regulating the marketing of harmful products (tobacco, alcohol, and foods high in fat, sugar, and salt), resulting from increased parental concerns associated with the consumption of such products. Parents also preferred increased government participation in restricting the online and social media marketing efforts aimed at children (Mean Score = 3.80), suggesting the helplessness experienced by them in limiting the exposure of

their children to these new-age mediums which are conveniently and extensively used by marketers. The study also found that parents increasingly preferred tougher statutory restrictions for limiting in-school marketing (Mean Score = 3.75) and also supported the prohibition of the use of children in child-directed marketing activities (Mean Score = 3.68). Further, the parents wanted the government to strengthen the existing statutes and codes aimed at limiting marketing to children (Mean Score = 3.67), and also supported the imposition of tougher timing/placement restrictions on child-directed marketing activities (Mean Score = 3.60). Parental preference for tougher statutory restrictions aimed at restricting the use of appealing characters in child-directed marketing communications was comparatively lower than the other items on the scale (Mean Score = 3.51), indicating a slightly lesser level of concern associated with it. The findings of the study also suggest the higher reliance of parents on the government to restrict the marketing efforts aimed at children and are in-line with those reported by other cross-cultural studies (Chan & McNeal, 2002; Dens et al., 2007; Young et al., 2003).

The study demonstrated the usefulness of parenting styles' framework in understanding and predicting parental regulatory preferences for limiting the nature and extent of marketing efforts aimed at children. Based on the mean scores reported on the various sub-dimensions of PSDQ, the 400 parents included in the study were classified into three style groups – authoritarian (52, 13%), authoritative (312, 78%), and permissive (36, 9%). As PSDQ measures self-reported parenting style orientation, the parents might have reported a socially desired style of parenting than their actual style of parenting, resulting in a significant number of parents getting labeled as authoritative (Johnson & van de Vijver, 2003). Future research should throw light to understand and measure the social desirability bias resulting from the application of PSDQ among the sample population. It was hypothesized that parents identified by socialization tendencies (styles) differed in their regulatory preferences for restricting the marketing efforts. The analyses of scale-level mean scores of regulatory preferences indicated that authoritarian and authoritative parents prefer tougher regulations for limiting the marketing effects targeted at children as compared to permissive parents. The results of hypothesis testing (H1) did not provide sufficient evidence for differences in parental regulatory preferences between authoritarian and authoritative parents. The second (H2) and third (H3) hypotheses, positing that authoritarian and authoritative parents demand tougher statutory restrictions for limiting the effects of marketing to children than permissive parents, was accepted. In both cases, permissive parents were least supportive of statutory restrictions for curtailing marketing to children. The same pattern was observed with item-wise analyses of specific regulatory preferences across the parenting style categories, with permissive parents expressing least support for all sorts of statutory restrictions. The findings are consistent with the notion that authoritarian and authoritative parents are more concerned about the unintended consequences resulting from marketing to their children than permissive parents, explaining the support for tougher statutory restrictions from authoritarian and authoritative parents than permissive parents "(Crosby & Grossbart, 1984).

The study also examined whether parental regulatory preferences depended on the demographic characteristics of the parents. No significant differences were found in regulatory preferences with respect to age, occupation of the partner, family type, and family size. Parents with post-graduate degree demanded tougher statutory restrictions than those educated up to secondary level. This might be because the parents with post-graduate degrees recognize the unintended consequences resulting from marketing to children better than those educated up to only secondary level. Parents earning between Rs 10,000 to Rs 25,000 per month preferred tougher regulations than those with income less than Rs 10,000. This might be because parents earning less than Rs 10,000 have other pressing concerns stemming from their economic condition than the negative consequences associated with marketing to children. Parents employed in government services demanded tougher restrictions than those engaged in agriculture. This might be because of the awareness of the existing regulatory landscape among those employed in government service, and the lack of similar awareness among those engaged in agriculture. Further, the parents with two children preferred tougher statutory restrictions than those with three children. This might be because the parents with three children are too busy with their day-to-day activities, and find very little time to think and act on such issues.

With majority of the parents demanding tougher statutory restrictions, the businesses will be forced to rethink and rework their existing approach and resulting strategies aimed at children. Businesses have to be conscious of the fact that parents are demanding closer scrutiny and restrictions on their actions, and initiate voluntary measures to reassure the parents about their commitment towards the health and well-being of the children. Further, efforts should be made by the businesses/industry to initiate a dialogue with parents to understand and address their concerns, and indicate their / its willingness to consider parental preferences in formulating self-regulatory policies aimed at limiting the marketing efforts directed at children or mitigate the impact of such efforts. Also, the findings of the study would compel the policymakers to review the existing regulatory framework encompassing the marketing activities targeted at children and initiate measures to accommodate the demands of the parents to strengthen the same. The policymakers' failure to acknowledge and act on these demands would

seriously undermine their credibility. In the process, the policymakers are expected to formulate a clear-cut policy framework for restricting the marketing efforts targeted at children, strengthening existing statutes and codes, restricting in-school marketing, having timing/placement restrictions, regulating stealth marketing, and regulating online and social media marketing. Also, to disassociate brands from children, the policymakers should contemplate prohibiting or limiting the use of children or appealing characters in child-directed promotions.

Applicability and Generalizability

The findings of the study are reflective of the growing concerns and negative attitudes of the parents towards the marketing activities directed at their children. The study confirms the increased reliance of parents on the government to restrict the actions of marketers targeted at children, which is in-line with those reported by earlier studies, and thus, the same can be generalized about the parents in other emerging and developed economies (Chan & McNeal, 2002; Dens et al., 2007; Young et al., 2003). The study found that parents do not find the existing regulatory frameworks adequate for protecting their children from the onslaught of marketers and that they see a definite and immediate need to strengthen the statutes and codes concerning the same. The perceived inadequacy of the existing statutes and codes to limit the actions of the marketers, owing to their ingenuity, creativity, and desperation, can be found in various other cross-cultural contexts, and thus, the same can be generalized to the parents from other emerging economies. Many countries, both emerging and developed economies, do not have comprehensive policies for safeguarding children from the reckless and relentless bombardment of marketing promotions using online and social media, and the same was overwhelmingly identified by the parents included in the study. The study confirmed the utility of PSDQ for assessing parenting styles in various cross-cultural contexts. Also, the findings of the study that authoritarian and authoritative parents demand tougher statutory restrictions than permissive parents are consistent with the findings of a similar study carried out in a developed country, leading us to safely apply the findings of this study to understand parental preferences from both emerging and developed economies "(Crosby & Grossbart, 1984). The study also resulted in successful development and validation of the scale for measuring parental regulatory preferences. More work is warranted to assess the applicability of the scale for use in cross-cultural contexts.

The data for the study was collected from 400 parents of school-going children, studying between classes I to VII, by administering a 3-part bilingual (English and Telugu) self-reporting questionnaire. The use of a bilingual questionnaire eliminated the ambiguities and comprehension problems that might result from the use of a single-language questionnaire. In this study, an attempt was made by the researcher to accommodate the perceived socio-economic differences existing between the parents of children studying in government schools and the parents of children studying in private schools, which might affect their parenting style orientation, and also impact their regulatory preferences. The sample size was large enough to be truly representative of the population from which it is taken. The sample had adequate representation of parents of varying demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, occupation, income, family type, family size, etc. However, the geographical limitations of the study warrant caution when generalizing the findings. Also, the study examined the parental preferences concerning statutory restrictions alone, and the other modes of regulation (self-regulation and compliance with non-statutory guidelines issued by the government or quasi-government authorities) were not included. Further, PSDQ does not measure the subsequent addition to parenting style categories – the neglecting style. The sample included some parents without any formal education. It is assumed that they drew support from friends or family members to register their responses. In all such cases, the responses of the parents might be influenced by the orientation or preferences of the people who supported them. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study emphasizes the appropriateness and usefulness of parenting style orientations in predicting the parental regulatory preferences for restricting marketing to children. Further, it highlights the growing demand from parents for tougher statutory restrictions to limit the actions of marketers aimed at children, which the businesses and the government can no longer ignore.

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