

The Influence of Advertisements on Preschool Children and Their Roles in the Purchase Decision Making Process

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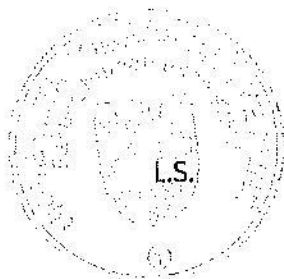
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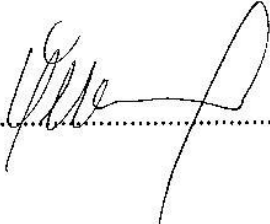
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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá vlivem reklamních sdělení na děti předškolního věku a rolí těchto dětí v nákupním rozhodovacím procesu rodiny. Hlavním cílem je získat informace o tom, do jaké míry jsou předškolní děti ovlivněny reklamou, které role týkající se rodinného nákupního rozhodovacího procesu děti ztvárňují a jak velké je jejich slovo při nákupním rozhodování. Práce je rozdělena dvěma částmi. Teoretická část poskytuje informace o reklamě, její historii a typech médií. Popisuje fáze nákupního rozhodovacího procesu a jednotlivé role, ve kterých se účastníci tohoto procesu objevují. Dále je zde znázorněn rozhodovací proces z pohledu dítěte. V závěru teoretické části je nastíněna problematika moci dítěte v rámci rodiny. Praktická část se skládá ze dvou jednotlivých výzkumů. První z nich je zaměřen na Vánoční přání a dárky dětí a jejich spojitost s reklamou. Druhý výzkum podává odpovědi na otázku, ve kterých rolích nákupního rozhodovacího procesu se předškolní děti objevují a informace týkající se jejich moci v rámci rodiny.

Klíčová slova: reklama, média, děti předškolního věku, nákupní rozhodovací proces, iniciátor, ovlivňovatel, rozhodovatel, kupující, moc dítěte

ABSTRACT

The bachelor's thesis is focused on the influence of advertising on preschool children and their roles in the family purchase decision-making process. The main aim is to find out to what extent preschool children and their parents are influenced by advertising and in which roles of the family purchase decision-making process they appear, thus how strong is their power concerning the family shopping decisions. The whole thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part provides basic information about advertising, its history and media types. It describes stages of the decision-making process and roles in which the participants of the process appear. It is explained how the decision making looks like from the point of view of children as well. In the end of this part, the issue of the children power is outlined. The analytical part consists of two researches, the first of which deals with the Christmas wishes and presents and their relation to advertisements. The second research is focused on roles of children in the decision-making process and their power.

Keywords: advertising, media, preschool children, purchase decision-making process, initiator, influencer, decider, buyer, children power

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

As Timothy J. Coffey starts one of his books “it has long been said the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. And the best way to a mom’s heart is through her children” (2006, ix). Mothers are very specific target group - naturally every mother tries to be a better mother than the others and wants to do her best for her beloved child. On the basis of this fact, a connection between children and marketers is created since it makes their power bigger than ever. Nowadays, children are integral to family decisions and marketers are well aware of it so advertisements and marketing strategies are targeted on children more and more.

The bachelor’s thesis is focused on such children-marketers connection. The main aim is to find out to what extent preschool children and their wishes are influenced by advertising and in which roles of the family purchase decision-making process they appear, thus how strong is their power concerning the family shopping decisions.

The theoretical part explains main terms connected with the thesis topic namely advertising and purchase decision-making process and their relation to children. It deals with the information related to these terms such as advertising history, media types, decision-making process stages and roles or a children power and its reasons and then provides an opinion of Czech marketers on advertising to children as well.

The analytical part consists of two researches which were focused on children Christmas wishes and presents in order to find out the relation between these things and advertising and also dealt with the children power and their roles regarding the family decisions.

I. THEORY

1 ADVERTISING

Even we do not realize it sometimes, advertising is all around us and is part of everything that we do. Companies are trying to think up new and new ways how to target and attract all the people. That is obvious from the number which Green (2011, 7) states in her book – 600 billion dollars – the amount of money annually spent by marketers in connection with advertising.

And what actually the advertising is? That magical thing companies are willing to spend so much money for. Kumar and Raju describe advertising as “paid, non-personal communication through various media by business firms, a non-profit organization, and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform or persuade members of a particular audience” (2013, 37). They also define the main goal of advertising which should be “to establish a basic awareness of the product or service in the mind of the potential customer and to build up knowledge about it” (Kumar and Raju 2013, 37).

1.1 History

The beginning of advertising is associated with the ages before a written form of a language was created. “Ancient wall paintings were the spiritual cousin of billboards and smoke signals can be seen as the first form of on-air advertising” (Oceanmedia 2013). However, it was not about the brand promotion so much, people were more likely sharing information about themselves this way. After the written language had appeared, people found out that it is a good way how to influence people. And so the first pamphlets and tangible advertisements were created to tell people about political ideas and also services which people were supposed to know – for example, big pictures placed on buildings showing where certain places were in order to lure there as many visitors as possible. (Oceanmedia 2013)

Written and then printed advertisements were an important part of the colonial period as well. The British press was full of “ads that promised solutions to nagging problems, ads that offered the fulfilment of dreams and the realization of hopes” (O’Barr 2010) so as to motivate the settlers and encourage other men to leave home and create the New World even it was not easy at all. Ads in the British press were also related to a lot of new things imported to Britain from other countries. Nobody had seen those commodities earlier, thus, it was crucial to present the basic information about them to people somehow. However, it was not about presenting new goods in the way which is common now. No different brands,

everything was only about the particular commodities. As O'Barr states, "this was an age when rum was rum, sugar was sugar, and pepper was pepper" (O'Barr 2010).

The nineteenth century is connected with young men travelling from town to town selling miscellaneous products. Since they were travelling a lot, they had their own wagons with paintings of the products and various slogans on them to let people know what they were coming with. (Oceanmedia 2016) Some stories about these salesman and their snake oil bottles appeared meaning they were able to sell the unknown liquid to almost everyone just owing to their persuasive and acting skills. (O'Barr 2010) There was also a significant change concerning radio and aerial communication in the nineteenth century.

And so thanks to this change the first radio advertisements were heard in the first half of 20th century. Few years later in 1941 also the first TV commercial was created. (Oceanmedia 2016) These times are connected mainly with advertisements for woman. As O'Barr says "80 percent or more of consumer purchases – except for big ticket items like appliances, automobiles, and homes – were made by women" and since there were strictly defined the roles of women as consumers "when advertising spoke to consumers, it usually did so with the voice of male authority" he adds (O'Barr 2010). Everyone was carried away by this new media and so it was not easy for marketers to target a smaller audience. The change came in 1970s with the cable television. Owing to more viewing options it started to be easier to target groups of consumers with the same interests – e.g. DIY channels, cooking shows full of food or for instance various channels and programs for children or nature lovers. The year 1990 made it even easier as regarding the World Wide Web advent which enabled the marketers to target not only the smaller groups of people but also the individuals.

As to the term advertising, it was firstly used a long time ago. It is not easy to determine, who has come up with this term for the first time, but it can be said that advertising is probably older that we think.

Wharton (2014, 14) states that the word appeared in several works dated back to the turn of 16th and 17th century. However it was used in different context and it has not much in common with advertising as we know it today. For example advertising appeared in Bacon's essay *An Advertisements Touching the Controversy of the Church of England* or in Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida*. The first one is from 1589 and the term advertising is rather connected with kind of religious issues. As for *Troilus and Cressida* from the beginning of 17th century, the term was associated with information or knowledge. For better understanding Wharton quotes a sentence from the play "I am advertised their great

general slept.” and explains that in this case it probably means something like “I have been made aware of” (Wharton 2014, 14).

He also points out that just as the term advertising had a different meaning than today, also a lot of totally differently connoted words served as terms for activity which we call advertising nowadays. “Early adverts were often referred to as puffs, bubbles, blasts, devices or even impertinences” (Wharton 2014, 14).

1.2 Types of Advertising

Since the advertising is everywhere, it is almost impossible to determine all the types, but the following quotation is probably the most accurate for today’s world. “The world has gone digital,” says Tungate. “A creative idea can now be expressed in myriad ways, across numerous media platforms. Posters still exist, certainly. So do newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. But there are also apps and online videos and social networks and all the rest of it” (Tungate 2013, 1). Press, radio, TV, outdoor advertisement, and the internet one are the types which we the most frequently get in touch with. Of course that it exist more than just those five types of media in which the advertisement can be used. However, those types are usually considered just as the complementary ones. (Vysekalová and Mikeš 2010, 38)

1.2.1 TV

The majority of people has probably seen at least one TV spot and very likely more than just one. According to Karlíček and Král (2011, 52), TV is one of the biggest advertisement sources watched daily by almost 88 % of all Czech people.

It is the medium which uses the combination of visual and hearing perceptions of the viewer, it can be distinguished by excellent quality and it often take advantage of the fact that the advertisements can be easily targeted and repeated. (Machková 2006, 185)

As it is a visual medium, if the viewers are not attracted at the very beginning of the TV spot their interest fade away very quickly. (Vysekalová and Mikeš 2010, 41) This fact is connected with the increasing criticism of TV advertising. A lot of critics claim that this type of advertising has no bright future ahead. The reason is that it is almost impossible to attract viewers nowadays as they switch the TV channels all the time. Another problem is that even when the channels are not switched, there are so many advertisements and stimuli for the viewers’ brains to work with that it loses its effectiveness. (Kotler and Keller 2013, 537) This theory can be confirmed also by the numbers stated by Chobotová. As it is mentioned above, the world is so much digitalized today that it is maybe not so surprising that the

popularity of television is declining when talking about young people from 15 to 24 years. Statistics states that the average amount of hours spent on watching TV was a little less than 1:38 a day in 2009. Numbers from 2013 are a bit lower – about 1 hour and 30 minutes. (Chobotová 2014)

1.2.2 Radio

Radio is a type of medium which uses the hearing perception of the people. In view of the fact that there are limited possibilities while creating only an audio advertisement, it is necessary for marketers to use some kind of sound contrast, thus, it catches the attention of the listeners more easily. (Vysekalová and Mikeš 2010)

It is often said that radio has no future and is not good for advertising, but think about it at least for a while. As Hertz points out “you cannot do gardening while on Facebook” and “it is hard to read the newspaper while driving” so in other words “radio is a perfect medium for today’s time-poor lifestyle since we can continue to enjoy it even when we are doing something else” (2013, 24).

1.2.3 Press

Press advertising can be divided into two big groups – the first one includes newspapers and daily press advertisements and the second group is the advertising in magazines. Also, smaller additional categories like product catalogues and another company internal publications can be included in the press advertising. Nowadays, the popularity of press is decreasing, but that does not have to mean anything bad. The ones who will stay loyal to their favourite magazines and newspapers will consider all the contained information necessary for their lives and will probably trust and pay attention to the advertisements even more. (Vysekalová and Mikeš 2010, 38)

1.2.4 Internet

No medium could be ever connected with as massive expansion as the internet is. It is the newest branch of advertising and in contrast to other branches, it is more interactive. The biggest part of the internet advertising is displayed on various web pages and the information can be presented in many ways. This type of advertising combines all the possible forms – text messages, pictures, soundtracks and videos as well. (Přikrylová and Jahodová 2010, 74; Machková 2006, 187)

1.2.5 Outdoor

The outdoor advertising uses a wide range of instruments and formats and tries to attract people at many various places. This type is also very miscellaneous as to an amount of new technologies appear all the time.

The most common outdoor advertisements are especially billboards, backlight advertising, city lights and advertising poles and pillars. And then also the advertisements on the benches, buildings, phone booths, toilets and all the things which are all around us. (Machková 2006, 186)

1.3 Advertisements and Children

Nowadays, marketers do not target children only when it is related to things for them, but as Coffey et al. state also “foods, beverages, travel, entertainment, health and beauty, technology and even automobile” (2006, 3) companies are trying to attract the youngest members of the families. They are aware of how easily the children can be manipulated and how they can sway their parents when regarding what to buy.

A lot of world leading advertising agencies cooperates with children psychologists and specialists in order to find the best way to attract and convince the children consumers. Even this strategy is not much ethical it is used a lot since the results are pretty positive for the sellers. (Děti a media) Obluk (Ogilvy & Mather 2012, 2) agrees that marketers have to be very cautious in connection with ethical standards while creating ads for children, however, he thinks that advertising is nowadays a part of children world just as other sources of information. It learns them how the world of adults looks like and it also helps them to formulate their wishes just as to be able to say what they like and dislike. Rustin (Vajnerová 2009) provides a quite sad description of how marketers see the children in relation to advertising. He states that children are for marketers only some kind of economic resources, which can be used the same way as for example wood or bauxite.

1.3.1 The Children Perception of Advertising

As for the perception of advertising by children, it is naturally changing with their age as the perception of the surrounding world is. It is very different from the way how adults perceive it. Since TV is still one of the most used ways how to target the advertising at children, this chapter will be rather focused on the perception of television advertisements. (Blades et al. 2014, 17)

1.3.1.1 Preschool Children

The development stage of three and four-year-old preschool children is called the pre-recognition. These children are usually not able to see and understand the difference between reality and fiction and the same it is with advertising and TV shows and programs. They perceive it the same way and they distinguish only between things which attract them and things which do not. (Carter et al. 2011, 962; Dvořáková 2007)

Older (like about five-year-old) preschool children can already recognize some differences, but still the only thing which they have connected with ads is that they serve as a kind of entertainment. (Dvořáková 2007) According to Obluk (Ogilvy & Mather 2012, 2) it is very easy to target the advertising on preschool children generally since they are usually not able to read and to think about the content of advertisements, so TV ads are the perfect way how to get to their minds.

1.3.1.2 Younger Elementary School Children

Younger elementary school children are meant to be from six to eleven years old. Dvořáková (2007) says that these children already know what the main purpose of advertisements is, they are able to understand that marketers try to sell certain products this way and also that everything in advertisements does not have to be true and real.

According to the Lawrol and Prothero study, eight and nine-year-old children are able to understand the main purposes but cannot see the real differences between the main programs and advertisements properly. The most repeated recognition sign for them was the length distinction (in particular, “ads go on for 30 seconds and then they go off and it is different for a programme because a programme would go on for longer” or “ads are usually just a few seconds” (2003, 417)), then the appearance of the show name at the beginning and the closing credits worked as hints as well. Furthermore, also, the differences in the characters were considered as crucial. However, this fact can be confusing for children – in case the characters in the advertisement are identical to the characters from the show, it is more complicated for children to discern the advertisement (“you’d think that the programme is still on” (2003, 417)). This fact proves that even children are usually able to see the differences between main shows and advertisements these differences are rather found out by watching and observing than by some critical thinking or understanding, so it is still very easy to manipulate them.

1.3.1.3 Older Elementary School Children and Teenagers

Then it comes the older elementary school age and teenage years. For these children it is extremely important to have modern things which are somehow acceptable for the same-age peers – an opinion of the rest of the generation is crucial. Older elementary school children and teenagers often do not realize they are influenced by advertising. These children are sure that advertisements have no influence on them and usually state they hate manipulation. However, even they clearly understand what the purpose of advertising is and how it works and their feelings are often rather negative, it is very easy to manipulate them by means of advertisements where all the new-fashioned, cool and for the survival in the world of teenagers required things appear. (Dvořáková 2007)

1.3.2 Children and Advertising in the Czech Republic

As for the view of marketers, Czech part of the marketing company Ogilvy & Mather made a study related to children and advertising. More than 300 marketing specialists were asked about their opinions on advertisements for children and some of the answers and findings will be stated in this chapter.

As it was already mentioned children advertising is a discussed issue due to its ethic and the study deals with the questions connected with this topic as well. The results are that all the marketers agree that the advertising in kindergartens is not ethical and consider the advertising in schools and at the doctor's rather problematic as well. Despite the fact that they feel certain problem in relation to advertising in schools, answers to a question about investments into advertising for children indicates that they care rather about the money than this ethical issue. These answers show that even it is not considered to be ethical, 18 % of the money should be used for advertising to children via their schools.

As for TV advertising, the internet, merchandising and promotional events, the majority of respondents think that these ways of advertising to children are ethically right. 80 % of them than admit that the first time to attract children should be in their later elementary school years and definitely not earlier. In the similar study made three years later almost a third of respondents answered that advertising should not be targeted to children till their high school age. (Ogilvy & Mather 2014) 8 % of marketers state they are not comfortable while targeting children with their advertisements and they would rather not communicate with children at all. (Ogilvy & Mather 2012)

And what is the most effective theme? All respondents have said yes for characters and animations from popular TV shows. These answers confirm the already mentioned claim

that when there are used characters from the main programs in the advertisement, it is very effective since this type of advertisements is absolutely confusing for children and they are unconscious of the fact that they are being manipulated.

To sum it up, marketers in the Czech Republic know that children and advertising is a very problematic topic and they are definitely sure about the ethic of the children advertisements. However, they consider the children customers to be very important. Products for children are offered by more than a half of asked firms and advertising and another activities targeted on children are still a significant part of the marketing strategies of more than a third of respondents. Money and earnings connected with children products are obviously still more important than children themselves, ethics and people. (Ogilvy & Mather 2012)

2 PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

To purchase does not mean only to go to the store, take the required stuff, pay for it and go home - this is just a minor part of the more complex process which includes a lot of subprocesses. During this subprocesses, the buyer is trying to make a decision based on certain criteria. There are a lot of questions to ask. To buy or not to buy the product? What it should be like? Which one to choose and why? (Jurášková and Horňák 2012, 169)

2.1 Process Stages

According to Geoffrey Lantos consumer purchase decision-making process generally consists of five main stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. Some of them can be skipped in certain types of decision making. To show how the whole process without any skipping looks like, the general model of decision making will be described in this chapter. The first three of total five stages are crucial because it is possible that during this time the buyer changes his opinion and decides to stop the whole process. There can be various reasons for not completing the process such as problems with money and time or buyer's dissatisfaction with the possible choices. (Lantos 2011, 66; Cant et al. 2009, 65)

2.1.1 Problem or Need Recognition

As Hoyer et al. claim, at the very beginning of the consumer decision-making process appears some need or problem. This problem or need recognition can be understood as “the perceived difference between an ideal and the actual state” (2012, 185) of consumer's affairs and for the consumer it means some kind of impulse to make an action.

It all begins with certain stimulus or stimuli. Either it can be internal stimulus which is usually some kind of bodily need and is always interwoven with the consumer such as pain, hunger or “a desire to impress people” (Cant et al. 2009, 65) or it can be also an external type of stimulus, for example a situation or event for which some new things are needed, friends' recommendation or experience, trends, advertisements etc. In some cases it can take a long time to recognize the need, people can live with the problem without realizing that they actually need something. In such a situation various advertisements and methods to show the person that he or she wants or needs the product are used. (Pride and Ferrell 2016, 136)

2.1.2 Information Search

After the need is recognized it is important to search for the information about the alternatives to make the best possible decision. There are two types of information - internal

and external. Internal information search is connected with consumer's own experience and facts taken from the memory. External information is connected with the affairs outside and is usually not considered as relevant as the internal ones. The main sources for this type of information are salesperson, friends, family, catalogues and advertisements. (Blythe 2013, 280; Lamb et al. 2015, 93; Cant et al. 2009, 68)

Every person needs a different amount of information and this amount is influenced by few factors. Firstly it depends on how risky the potential purchase is. The higher is the risk, the more information is necessary. Another significant factor is related to buyer's previous experience and his knowledge. If he already has an experience connected with the same or similar good or service or is at least somehow informed about it, there is not so big need to search for a lot of new facts. It is also very important how attracted the buyer is. Bigger interest means a bigger effort to search for the proper information about the product. (Cant et al. 2009, 68)

2.1.3 Evaluation of Alternatives

Everyone has some expectations or ideal characteristics of the product which he wants to buy. When we have enough information about the possible options, we usually evaluate each alternative based on certain criteria to find out which one is optimal and the most efficient for us. Since "the abundance of evaluation criteria involved in any major decision makes evaluation difficult indeed" (Cant et al. 2009, 69), for every decision making it is crucial to determine at least few criteria.

The evaluation is made by scrutinizing and comparing pros and cons of those product characteristics which are connected with the criteria or somehow important for the buyer's decision. (Lamb et al. 2015, 95)

2.1.4 Purchase Decision

This stage is connected with the final decision and selection of the product. Even it looks like the whole process is finished at this moment, it is not. For sellers it can be the end – the product is paid and there is nothing to do. However, for the customer, it is only the outset of the whole consumer journey. (Blythe 2013, 327)

2.1.5 Post-Purchase Behaviour

After the purchase, it comes the time for comparison of the product and the previous expectations. It is necessary to determine whether the product successfully fulfilled the need

or not. The result is either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the whole purchase. (Ferrell et al. 2016, 138)

The customer can be also confronted with the cognitive dissonance. Such an unpleasant feeling usually appears right after the purchase and make the customer call the rightness of the purchase into question. (Cant et al. 2009, 73) Sometimes it can be mistaken for dissatisfaction. Dissonance can transform to dissatisfaction but it is not the same thing. Dissatisfaction means that the product was not able to satisfy the need, the customer regrets the purchase and probably will not buy this type of product or anything from this brand ever again, whereas dissonance can appear even if the customer is satisfied. These doubts are caused just by thinking about the fact that one of the unchosen options might be better. Consumers contending with the dissonance are likely to escape from this situation, they often give various reasons for their decision, think up as many arguments as possible and are very likely to try to persuade themselves that the purchase was not wrong. (Cant et al. 2009, 73; Lantos 2011, 154)

Blythe describes the post-purchase behaviour as very important stage of the whole purchase process since it - according to his words - “determines (ultimately) whether customers will buy again whether they will come back and complain or (in the worst case) whether they will tell their friends, family and even consumer protection organizations about their bad experience with the product” (2013, 327) and this information are significant for marketers as they can change and improve certain things based on this customer’s evaluation and it is also very common and important source of information in the information search stage of another people.

2.2 Members of the Process and Their Roles

To manage all the stages is not an easy task for some individuals. And although there are a lot of purchases which are managed by just one person and do not have to be debated at all, “within families, a great deal of decision making is collective” (Blythe 2013, 258). As it is often said - two heads are better than one. So the following part is focused on the participants of the decision-making process, their roles and also the main tasks and characteristics. (Blythe 2013, 258)

2.2.1 Initiator

The absolutely first person who is connected with the decision-making process is an initiator. The initiator is the person who notices a gap between the ideal and present state and feels

the need or want for the certain product. The suggestion to satisfy this need or want and the idea of purchasing comes from the initiator as well. (Cant et al. 2009, 87) That is why this particular role is called this way. The person initiates all the action – due to initiating the problem recognition as the first stage of the process the initiator and his mental processes can be considered as a trigger of the whole purchase decision-making process. (Lantos 2011, 265)

2.2.2 Influencer

Influencers are connected mainly with the stages of the information search and the evaluation of alternatives. They speak about their preferences and what they personally want, provide information and advice which are reflected in the opinions of another people in the process, so they can change the attitudes and feelings related to the product and influence the final decision this way. As more people try to push through their opinions, it is natural that problems and conflicts occur. However, it is rather positive in some cases, for example, a totally new and ideal option can appear or the opponents can get something beneficial from the whole situation. (Lantos 2011, 265-266)

2.2.3 Decider

The decider or decision maker is a person who determines whether to buy the product or not and if need be he also selects which of the possible options is ideal, considering all the given information. In plain terms, he is responsible for the very final decision. When talking about stages of the process, deciders are the essentials of the purchase decision stage. (Cant et al. 2009, 87)

Decision makers are usually characterized as powerful and dominant ones with some authority who are in a sort of way of the higher position than the others (whether they are older, their opinion is the most important, they will use the product or they just handle the money to pay the purchase) and “also typically have expertise, interest, and involvement” (Lantos 2011, 266). In families, the role of deciders is in most cases associated with parents. (Cant et al. 2009, 87)

2.2.4 Buyer

A person in the role of buyer “purchases or physically acquires the product” (Lantos 2011, 265). It is often the same person as the decision maker. Sometimes it can be also a person with the best skills to make the purchase or the one who made the same type of purchase earlier. (Blythe 2013, 259)

2.2.5 User

A user is a person whose need is being satisfied by means of the process, it is the final consumer who consumes and uses the product. His subsequent feedback and evaluation influences the whole post-purchase behaviour. It is important for the seller as well as for the participants of the whole decision-making process. (Lantos 2011, 267; Kapoor 2003, 6)

2.2.6 Other Roles

In some publications, there are mentioned more than just five basic roles. For example Blythe (2013, 259) states eight various roles and referring to Lantos (2011, 265) there exist even more family decision-making roles. These roles are not so frequently included into the basic ones, sometimes they are connected rather with the use of the product itself than with the decision making and so they will be described in this separate section.

Gatekeeper - a gatekeeper is usually someone who knows a lot about the product, the one who is the most interested and who has also very easy and quick access to the sources of information. It is a person with a very similar role to the influencer. Gatekeepers and influencers alike search for the proper information and share them with all the participants of the decision-making process. (Lantos 2011, 265) However, gatekeepers' task is not to persuade and influence others, they just have to manage that all of the necessary information go to the right people. (Blythe 2013, 259)

Preparer - according to Blythe a preparer is "a family member responsible for transforming a product into a condition suitable for other members to use it" (2013, 259). Simply he prepares the product for proper use by the user. As Lake states (2013, 151) it can be for example a parent who assembles the product and makes it ready to be used by another family members.

Maintainer - as the name of the role indicates, maintainer's task is to regularly check the product and its condition to maintain it to be ready for use all the time. All the repairs, cleaning, and services are in maintainer's hands. (Lantos 2011, 267)

Monitor - the monitor is kind of regulator of the product. Lantos (2011, 267) describes the role of the monitor as to be obliged to control and monitor who and how is using the product. He also has the power to give permissions or bans to use it.

Evaluator - a function of this member is probably clear from the name of the role. The evaluator is to evaluate and review the performance and functions of the product. Share the opinion on how the product works and on its overall impression on him.

Disposer - this is the family member whose task is connected with getting rid of unnecessary products. Disposers have to decide when it is the right time for the used-up product disposal and think of the best way for it. (Lake 2013, 151) It can be done by “trashing, recycling, reselling, trading, or giving it away” (Lantos 2011, 268).

3 CHILDREN AND FAMILY DECISION MAKING

Since it has been already described what the decision making is about, a lot of people can give some thought to how many of the roles are connected with today's children and how important their opinions are.

3.1 Children Roles in the Process

Despite the fact that children are definitely important participants of almost every family decision making, their roles are not the same as the parental ones. Which of the five basic roles (initiator, influencer, decider, buyer, and user) are connected with children is discussed in this chapter. Supposing every person is a user or consumer of certain things and so are the children, this role is not described in more detail.

The first role which appears in the decision making is the role of an initiator. Martensen refers to some previous studies and explains that "children tend to have the strongest influence at the problem recognition stage of the decision process" (2008, 15) which means that they are the main initiators of the whole process in most cases. This fact is then confirmed by results of Martensen's own study. (Martensen 2008, 17)

As for the role of children as influencers, they exert influence over their parents not only during the need recognition stage but during the whole process. When speaking about this influence it is necessary to mention the nag factor. The nag factor or the so called pester power is a phenomenon which points out the power of children to influence parents so much that they can totally change their earlier purchase decision. Marketers are well aware of this phenomenon and so they often target advertising and marketing activities on the youngest family members in order to take an advantage of this children power. (Bodden 2015, 9)

Children are usually not the process members who make the final decisions about the product purchases. However, parents often let them decide regarding the "expressive sub-decisions e.g., product attributes such as color, model, and brand choices" (Martensen 2008, 16), describes Martensen the role of the children as deciders. Older children than can have the final say in purchases connected with toys or things directly meant for them.

The buyer role is definitely the parent's one in most cases. However, as Kapoor states "with the increase in the age children played an important role of buyer for the number of personal products, consumables, and toiletries" (2003, 135). The reason why this role is dependent on the age can be also the fact that the higher is the age the more enjoyable the purchase process is. Younger children do not consider the activity of buying much enjoyable and so the role of the buyer is not too attractive for them. Furthermore, Marshall notes that

the amount of money which children get increases with their age as well and so it is a likelihood that it is the main reason why younger children do not buy things by themselves a lot. ((Kapoor 2003, 200; Marshall 2010, 5)

3.2 The Children Power

When looking in the past, children have never had so great influence in the family decision-making processes as they have now. (Blythe 2013, 259) To be more precise, as Calvert states “two to fourteen-years-olds have sway over 500 billion American dollars a year in households purchasing” (2008, 207). And in the Czech Republic, the influence of children is very intense as well. According to Šilerová (2008) when the decision making is related to products for children, their influence is almost absolute. Marketers have found out that it is very easy to target the whole household right through the youngest members since a lot of decisions, actions and purchases are centered on them.

3.2.1 Fewer Children per Family

Lantos (2011, 263) explains why is the children’s influence so big and still growing and why they have such an impact on family decisions. The first reason is that the average of children per family is decreasing. The age when there were about at least five children in the family is gone. (Sutherland 2003, 14) On the basis of the Czech Statistical Office statistics (CZSO 2014) - and as it is stated in the table below – the average in 2013 was less than one children per one two-parent nuclear family. About a half of Czech families were without any children and three and more children were a part of only a little less than five percent of the households. Further, it is obvious that *3 or more children* means three in the most cases, as the average number of children in three and more children households was 3,17.

Two-parent nuclear families in 2013					
	Total	No children	1 child	2 children	3 or more children
Number of households	2 034 945	1 043 582	403 819	491 599	95 946
%	100 %	51,3 %	19,8 %	24,2 %	4,7 %
Children per household	0,83	X	1	2	3,19

Table 1: *Children per Family in 2013.* (CZSO 2014)

3.2.2 Hardworking Parents

Lots of parents spend an enormous amount of time working and if not, there are just one-parent households and so they spend only a few hours a day with their children together at home. Thus, as Sutherland states (2003, 17) absolutely new family model is created. “Latchkey kid” (Suwandinata 2011, 32) is a term used for a new type of self-reliant child who is often home alone and has to bear the responsibility for the whole household for certain part of the day. Since parents do not have so much time, there appears a need for someone to buy all the goods and the obligation to do the family shopping is transferred to children as well as their power in decision making is getting higher. Apart from the family shopping, children also have to prepare or cook a meal for themselves more than once a week (approx. 60 % of 6 to 14-year-old children). (Suwandinata 2011, 32; Sutherland 2003, 17)

3.2.3 KGOY

The bigger responsibility is connected with the fact that children are becoming psychologically older. Johnson states that this phenomenon is called KGOY (Kids Getting Older Younger) and it “is also referred to as age compression” (Johnson 2009, 45). Toys which used to be made for ten-years-old children now tends to be popular among kids by the preschool age. And Lantos gives other examples. Nine years old girls are really into accessories which were made for teens earlier and it is the same with drugstore products, smartphones, and fashion, which were the part of the teenage life few years ago and now it is rather connected with younger pre-teen girls. (Johnson 2009, 45)

Lantos (2011, 263) explains that it is mainly because of the already mentioned higher independence and the surprisingly wide knowledge related to technologies. So why to play with a doll when there are a lot of mobile apps and games available. It is a vicious circle. Marketers have to react to this type of change, so they target the advertising differently and so the children are influenced this way. Then marketers have to adapt to this again. And that’s the case of the parents as well. “Because of this perception that kids are getting older younger, we often mistakenly expect them to behave and think in ways for which they simply are not developmentally ready,” says Johnson (2009, 45).

3.2.4 Media Expansion

Coffey et al. give a description of another reason and that is the media expansion. He states that “today youth is exposed to average of 8,5 hours of various media every day – often using more than one medium at a time like TV and the internet, or radio and print” (Coffey et al. 2006, 16), therefore, all the media and new technologies become a natural part of their

everyday lives. Adults are not so comfortable in this environment since they did not grow up like this. In contrast to their children they are rather conservative and usually have some kind of respect when it comes to trying new things and technologies, hence, they give the power to make the purchase decisions in some for them unknown fields to younger family members. (Coffey et al. 2006, 16)

3.2.5 New Mom & Kid Relationship

“The mom versus child is old school” define Coffey et al. (2006, 3) the present day. He explains that it is no more about fights between mom and her screaming children who make her mad. The new mom and kid relationship is now about the partnership and a kind of agreements between them, not about the endless wars. Today’s parents do not want to raise children the same way as their parents have raised them. Naturally they agree with certain limits and rules but want to give their kids some freedom and be not only in the role of parents but also their children’s close friends. It is a way how to be able to do all the childish things which you wanted to do all your adulthood but felt too old for them. Now there is a chance to not only do all the crazy things but also fully enjoy them without any regrets. Simply said – as Coffey et al. aptly write in their book – “having a kid gives you license to be a kid again!” (2006, 5).

II. ANALYSIS

4 RESEARCH

The thesis research consists of two sub-researches. Each of them is focused on the different target group and use diverse methods for the data gathering. The first one (R1: The Influence of Advertising on Children) deals with the influence of advertising on children and its impact on preschoolers' decision making.

The second sub-research (R2: Roles of Children in Family Decision Making) is aimed at roles in the family decision making and their connection with children. This part slightly deals with the issue of their spending power as well. Each sub-research is then described in detail in a particular chapter.

As for the methods used, considering the differences between target groups it is the combination of both quantitative and qualitative researches in forms of personal interview and questioning and online questionnaire as well.

5 R1: THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN

5.1 Research Introduction

The main aim was to determine to what extent are preschool children influenced by advertisements when speaking of their wants and wishes and how they influence their parents concerning presents which they found under Christmas trees.

Since the research was aimed at preschoolers only, the chosen target group consisted of eighteen preschool children at the age from three to six. Respondents were approached directly in the premises of the local kindergarten *MŠ novojičínská Beruška*.

When speaking of the methodology almost no child of the preschool age is able to read and to comprehend the read text properly, thus the form of the personal interview was considered as the best method for the information gathering. During the questioning, both open and closed questions were asked. Questions were formulated sort of the way that mostly qualitative information was collected.

5.2 Research Questions

Before the research was made there had been stated several research questions connected with the issue. Concerning the knowledge gained in the theoretical part, one question for each of two research phases had been stated.

RQ1: To what extent are preschool children wishes based on advertising?

RQ2: How much are parents influenced by advertising concerning Christmas presents?

5.3 Research Process

The first phase of the research was focused on children Christmas wishes. Respondents were asked what they wanted for Christmas in order to find out how much of their wishes are rather of the general character and how much are obviously based on advertising.

The second phase dealt with the question connected with real presents which children had found under their Christmas trees. The purpose of such a question was to get some information about whether their wishes had come true and whether the parents are influenced by advertisements during the Christmas shopping or not.

5.4 Introduction to Results

As for the gender, there were asked 8 girls and 10 boys, all of them were preschoolers and so they were from three to six years old.

5.5 RQ1 Evaluation and Results

5.5.1 Results

To answer the research question it was necessary to ask children what they wished for Christmas and gather the information about whether they wanted rather things which could be seen in advertising, ordinary toys of a general character or both.

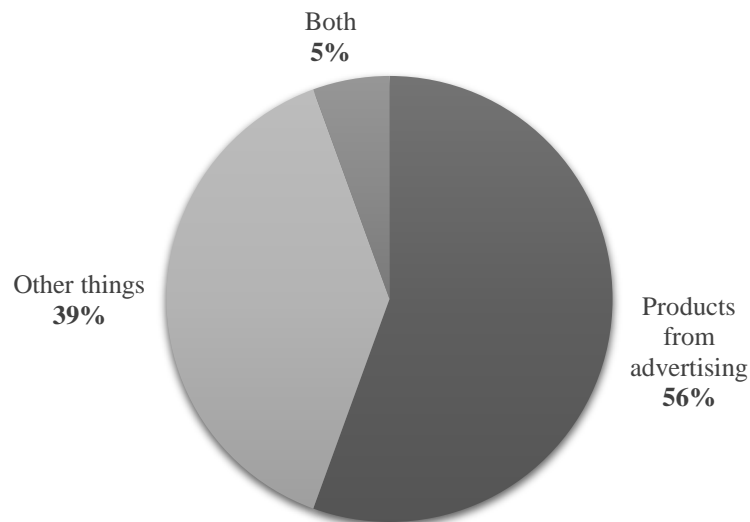


Figure 1: *Children Wishes and Their Relation to Advertisements.* (self-created)

As it is clear from the pie chart above 61 % of children wanted things which can be connected with advertising. 56 % of these children wanted only this type of things and nothing different, 5 % of respondents' answers contained a combination of advertised and general products. As wishes related to advertisements are considered wishes which were described using the whole name or exact description of the product e.g. Lego Technic or Lego Friends house with an elevator. Some of the products were mentioned more times even children were not able to listen each other. This recurrence actually not surprisingly appeared in connection with topics which were all around us that time, namely Star Wars (Star Wars figures), Lego (Lego figures, Lego Technic, and Lego Friends sets, Lego Ninja) or both (Lego Star Wars) and famous Frozen movie (Elsa doll). 39 % of little respondents mostly wanted ordinary toys which are usually popular with preschool children such as trains, stuffed animals or dolls and did not mention any products connected with advertising.

5.5.2 RQ1 Evaluation

RQ1: To what extent are preschool children wishes based on advertising?

To sum up and as for the RQ1 evaluation, preschool children are not as influenced by advertisements as one would expect. According to Smith (1997, 140) when speaking about food, children do not prefer only products which are being advertised and based on the research results it is possible to say the same about Christmas wishes. Wishes of only 61 % of children were about at least one product which could be seen in advertising so even today's world is so full of media a lot of children still prefer ordinary toys and do not need only all the modern and the most advertised ones. Further questions indicate the same since only 37 % of preschool children come up with the idea to buy something during or after seeing an advertisement which is much less than during shopping or seeing it somewhere around (see Figure 5).

5.6 RQ2 Evaluation and Results

5.6.1 Results

Results of the second part of this sub-research concerning the power of children and to what extent their wishes are fulfilled by their parents are quite surprising. Only 50 % of children got desired toys, the other half had to be content with something else. Sometimes it was at least similar to their wishes but there were totally different things in most cases.

So of what character were things that children found under Christmas trees? Did they get things based on advertising? How big is the influence of advertisements on parents?

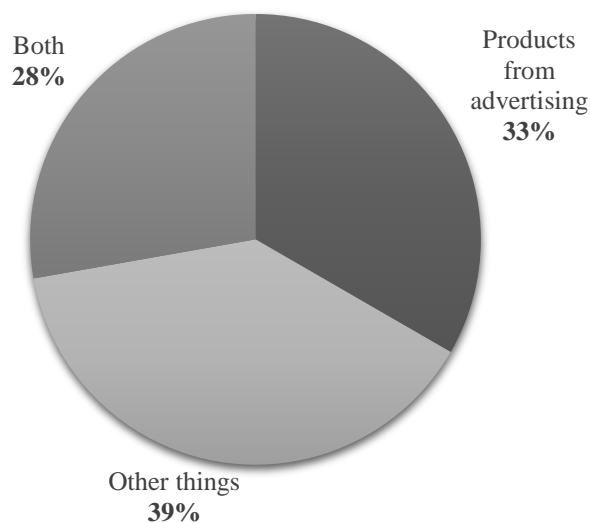


Figure 2: *The Relation between Christmas Presents and Advertising.* (self-created)

5.6.2 RQ2 Evaluation

RQ2: How much are parents influenced by advertising concerning Christmas presents?

The number of children who got at least one present that could be seen in advertising is the same as the number of children who had at least one wish connected with advertisements – slightly over a half (61 %). That means that the influence of advertising on parents is similar to its influence on preschool children, at least when speaking about Christmas presents.

However, the fact which is worth to mention and which cannot be read from the chart is that about a third (36 %) of these children actually had not wanted anything like this before Christmas. Their wishes had been rather general and they had not mentioned any concrete brands or types of products, yet they got the ones often shown in advertising. This can be a consequence of the lack of parents' time for them or bad communication between parents and children when parents had not known what their children actually had wanted and so they just bought them advertised toys believing that it was the best possible choice.

6 R2: ROLES OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY DECISION MAKING

6.1 Research Introduction

The second sub-research was targeted rather on parents of preschool children and its main goal was to find out which roles are connected with preschool children during the family purchases the most and what products is it related to. It was also focused on the still increasing children power and parents' opinion concerning this matter. The aim was to determine if opinions of today's parents correspond with opinions of experts (chapter 3.2).

The target group was made up of 82 preschool children parents. Respondents were approached through web pages concerning children and leisure time activities for them, namely a well-known web portal for mothers *mimibazar.cz* and two Facebook groups *predskolaci.cz - náměty a inspirace pro učitelky a učitele* and *Předškolní činnosti*.

In view of the fact that there was expected no personal contact with respondents, the form of the online questionnaire was chosen for this research. The questionnaire consisted predominantly of closed and half-open questions.

6.2 Research Questions

Based on theoretical information about children roles in the decision making and their power during family shopping, I had stated several research questions before the questionnaire was posted on the web pages.

RQ3: In which roles of the process do children appear?

RQ3.1: How strong is the influence of preschool children on the family decision making?

RQ3.2: Do preschool children appear in the role of deciders?

RQ3.3: Does the buyer role depend on children age?

RQ3.4: Which is the most frequent role represented by preschool children?

RQ4: What do parents think about today's children power?

6.3 Research Process

The questionnaire was intended for parents of preschoolers and consisted of 19 questions. Firstly respondents were asked for basic information about their children such as gender or age. Then they went through a set of questions related to decision-making process roles of children where they had to specify whether their children appear either never, only exceptionally, sometimes (meaning it is a common situation which does not appear too often but time to time) or often in given situations. The final part of the questionnaire was focused

on the opinion of respondents considering the power of children in the family decision making and was targeted on reasons for such a power as well. The last question was there in order to gather information about the parental view of today's children.

6.4 Introduction to Results

As for the gender, there were no big differences, the amount of parents who have a preschool girl is very similar to a number of parents with boy preschoolers. In particular, the questionnaire contains information about 45 girls (55 %) and 37 boys (45 %).

Concerning the age of respondents' children, the difference was slightly bigger. Only 21 (26 %) respondents are parents of three-to-four-year-old children, whereas 61 (74 %) of them have a five-to-six-year-old child.

6.5 Children in the Initiator Role and RQ3 Evaluation

Answers for three following questions help to imagine to what extent children initiate family purchase decision making and what type of product children demand the most.

6.5.1 Children in the Initiator Role Results

How often does your child come up with an idea to buy anything?

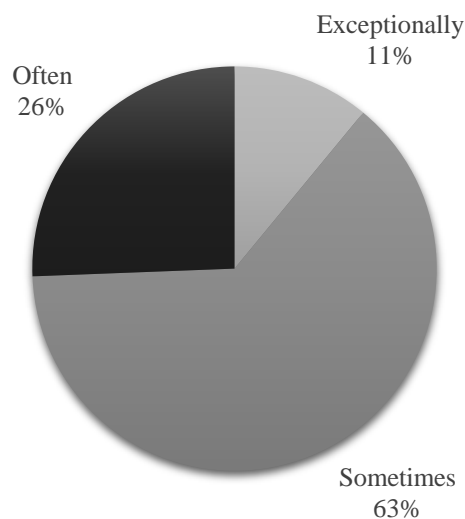


Figure 3: *Child in the Initiator Role.* (self-created)

All 82 parents confirmed that their children want them to buy something. 11 % of children come up with such a demand only exceptionally, more than a half of parents (63 %) have to answer questions concerning a purchase of something from time to time and 26 % of parents admitted that they have to deal with this kind of question quite often. None of the parents

chose the answer “never” and so all of the respondents’ children appear in roles of initiators even it is connected with some of them only exceptionally.

What is this idea usually related to?

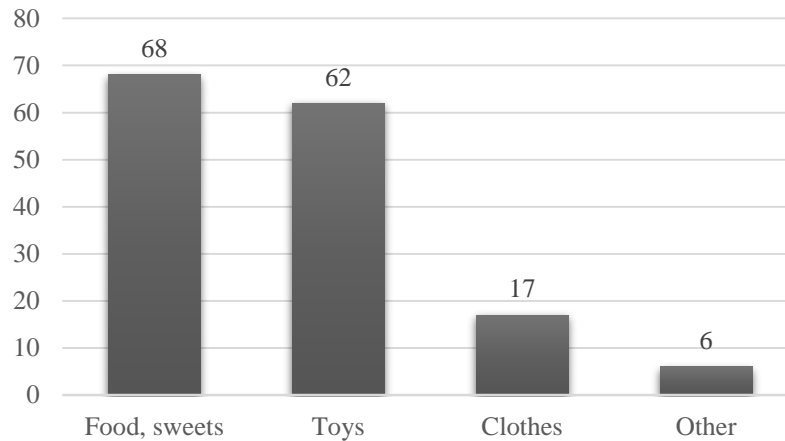


Figure 4: *Products Initiated by Children.* (self-created)

This question was connected with the type of product which is usually the children demand related to. Respondents could mark more than one option and there was a possibility to add an own answer as well.

Results show that the most demanded products by children are food, sweets (68 answers, 83 %) and toys (62 answers, 75 %). Clothes are demanded by only 21 % of children. Some parents used the space for their own answer and added other things usually demanded by their children – three of them mentioned stationery or painting facilities, the rest of the answers contained e. g. Xbox games, sports facilities or magazines.

When does this type of question appear the most?

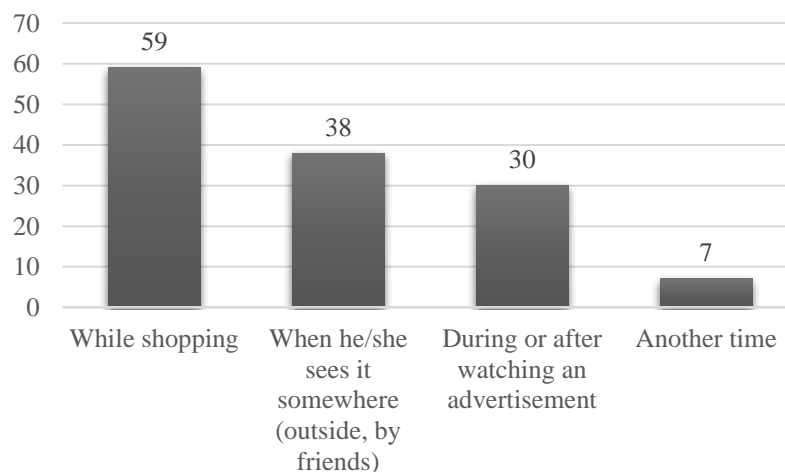


Figure 5: *Situations When the Children Initiation Appears the Most.* (self-created)

It is not a surprise that parents have to deal with their children demands mostly during shopping (59 answers, 72 %). Almost a half of children (46 %) also say that they would like to have something when they see it somewhere around them e.g. outside, their friends have it, it is in the photo etc. 37 % children initiate the purchase based on an advertising. Less than one percent of respondents mentioned other situations such as a time before the child goes to bed or when some favorite food is used up at home.

6.5.2 RQ3 Evaluation

RQ3: In which roles of the process do children appear?

Although experts were not sure about children appearance in some roles, results of the research show that preschoolers can be connected with all roles of the purchase decision-making process. To what extent they appear in particular roles is stated in following chapters.

6.6 Children in the Influencer Role and RQ3.1 Evaluation

Following questions were put to the questionnaire to find out how often children express their opinion during family shopping so if they can be considered as influencers or not and what this potential influence is connected with.

6.6.1 Children in the Influencer Role Results

Do you ask for an opinion of your child when shopping?

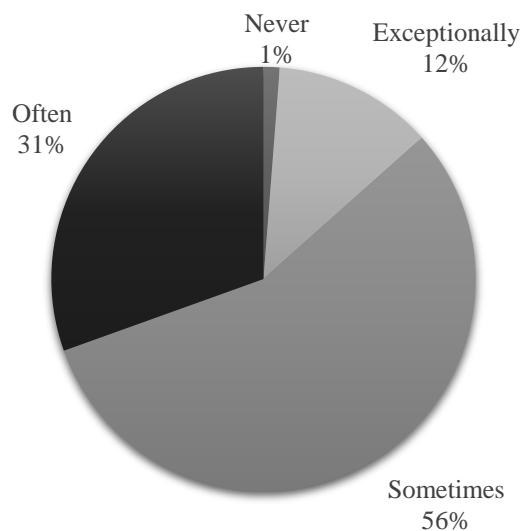


Figure 6: *Parental Demand for Children Opinions during Shopping.* (self-created)

99 % of respondents ask their children what they think about products while shopping so they let children be in the influencer role at least exceptionally. 12 % of parents actually do it only exceptionally, more than a half of parents (56 %) want to know their children'

opinions from time to time and 31 % of parents consider their children opinions as very important and often ask for them. 1 % of responding parents is absolutely uninterested.

Concerning which products are you interested in the opinion of your child?

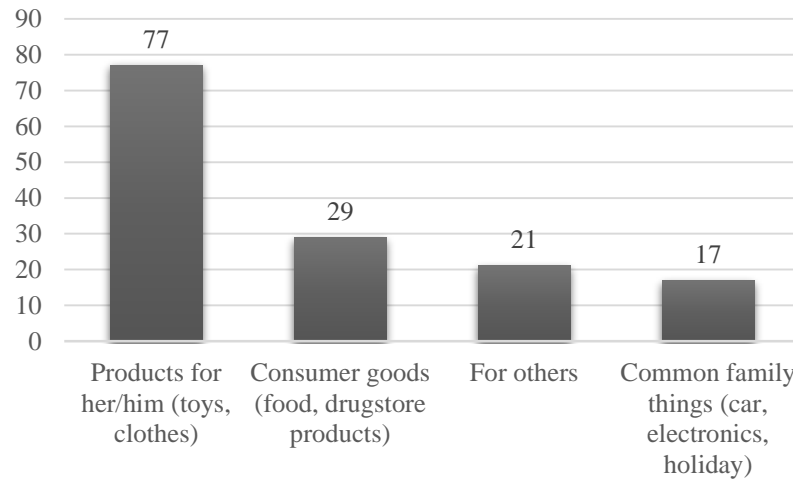


Figure 7: *Children Influence Considering the Type of Products.* (self-created)

Children influence mostly purchases of things for them such as toys or clothes. Almost all (94 %) respondents are interested in children opinions while buying something for them. 35 % of parents care about what their children think while buying consumption products like food or drugstore goods as well. 26 % children influence purchases including things for others. Purchases related to common family things such as cars, electronics or holidays are not influenced by children a lot, only 21 % of respondents are interested in children opinions concerning this type of product.

Does your child share his/her opinion on products even you do not ask him/her to do so?

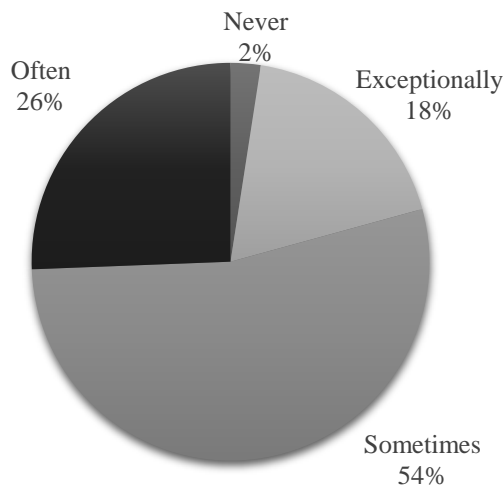


Figure 8: *Children Commenting on Products without any Spur.* (self-created)

This question was included in the questionnaire in order to find out if children influence family decisions even if they are not asked to share their opinions. The result is that they definitely do. Only 2 % of parents answered that their children do not comment on products when they are not asked to do so. 98 % respondents have children who share their opinions spontaneously of their own accord. 18 % do this only exceptionally, more than a half do it sometimes and 26 % share their opinions without asking to do so very frequently.

How often do you (or people who go shopping with your child) have to deal with a situation when the child cries and screams so much that he/she gets the product after a while even you said no at first?

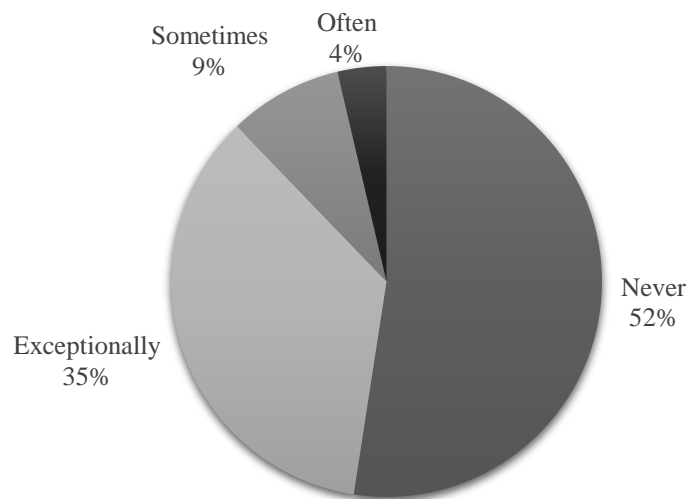


Figure 9: *The Power of Children and Their Nag-factor.* (self-created)

Maybe quite surprisingly the nag-factor of preschool children is not as strong as one would expect. About a half (52 %) of parents answered that their children never get the product just because screaming or crying. Another 35 % respondents admitted that there are some situations when they give in and their children get what they want thanks to tears but definitely not regularly but only exceptionally. 9 % children are successful with this nagging strategy time to time and only 4 % of children are skilled enough to get products thanks to their crying and screaming quite often.

In this type of situation who usually gives in and decides to make a purchase?

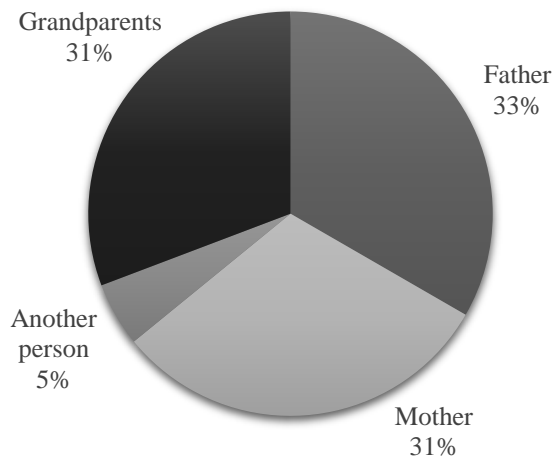


Figure 10: *The Nag-factor and Family Members.* (self-created)

As it can be seen in the chart above no family member is more convincible than the others. Fathers were chosen as the most convincible by 33 % (13) of respondents and mothers and grandparents by 31 % (12) of respondents.

There was also a space for own answers in the questionnaire – one respondent claimed that everything depends on both mother and father and the second respondent mentioned their neighbor.

What type of products is this situation usually connected with?

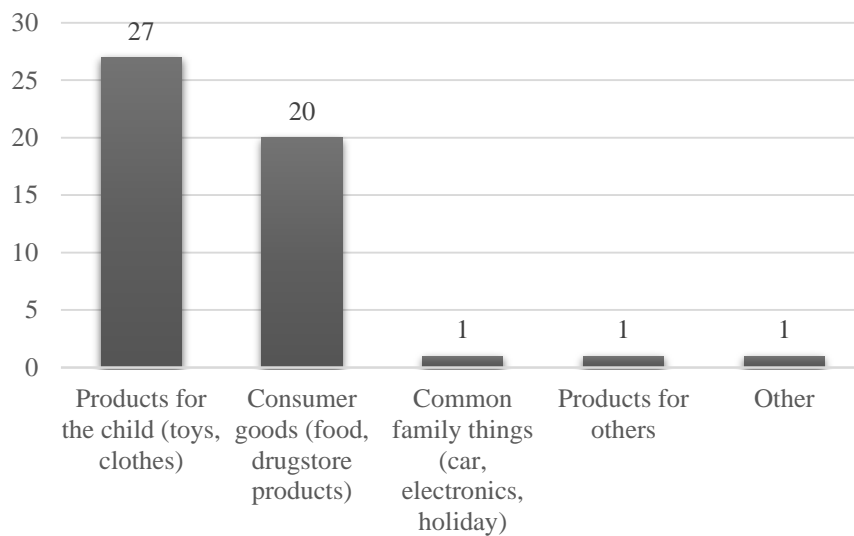


Figure 11: *The Nag-factor Considering the Type of Products.* (self-created)

Results of previous questions show that children usually have not the ability to convince parents by tears and screaming. However, when this kind of situation appears mostly it is related to products for children such as toys or clothes as it is stated in the answer of 27 (69 %) respondents. In twenty cases (51 %) it is also usually related to consumer goods e.g. food or drugstore products. When speaking about other products such as family things, products for others or totally different products like PC games, there are preschool children not so convincing since only one respondent marked each of them as this appearing in their family.

6.6.2 RQ3.1 Evaluation

RQ3.1: Does preschool children influence the family decision making?

To sum up and as for the RQ3.1 evaluation, with the role of an influencer, it is quite difficult. Parents usually care about opinions of their children and want to know what children like and do not like, in particular almost all parents (99 %) are interested in their children opinions at least exceptionally and consider them important so children definitely have some word during family shopping and influence the family decision making this way appropriately. However, their power is not big enough to change opinions of their parents markedly. Situations, when the child uses tears and scream to get something and is successful with this type of manipulation, are only exceptional and so it can be said that the children power and their nag-factor is not as strong as a lot of people think nowadays.

6.7 Child in the Decider Role and RQ3.2 Evaluation

6.7.1 Children in the Decider Role Results

Are there situations during your family shopping when the child can make the final decision?

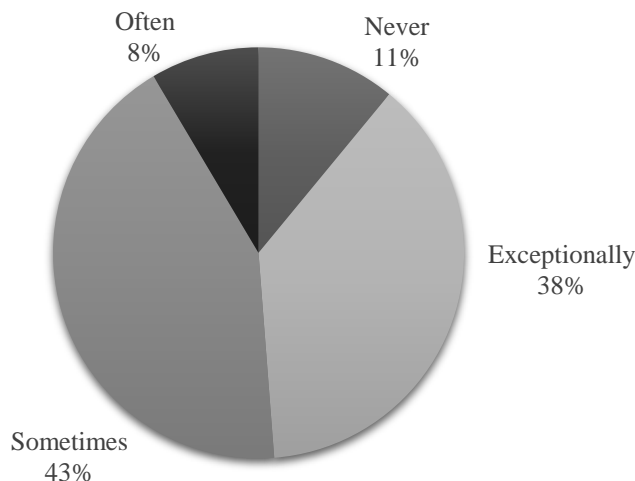


Figure 12: *Children as Deciders*. (self-created)

11 % of children have no chance to make a decision during family shopping. 38 % have such a chance but only exceptionally. Answers of 43 % parents show that children have the final word during family shopping time to time and 8 % children have the chance to decide even often.

What is this decision usually related to?

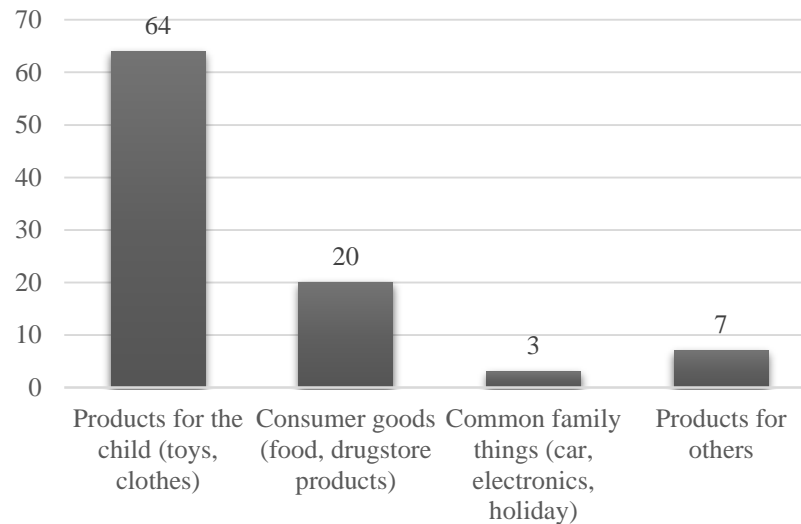


Figure 13: *Children as Deciders Considering the Type of Products.*(self-created)

88 % of parents answered that if their children get the opportunity to have the final word it is usually connected with products for them such as toys or clothes. 27 % of parents let their children decide also during consumer goods purchases and about 10 % of children purchase decisions are related to things for other people. 4 % of respondents admit that their children have the chance to decide about common family things like a car, electronics or trip and holiday destinations and activities.

6.7.2 RQ3.2 Evaluation

RQ3.2: Do preschool children appear in the role of deciders?

To sum up and as for the RQ3.2 evaluation preschool children naturally does not appear in the role of decider too often, since so small children usually do not have enough experience and knowledge to decide properly. One thing is definitely clear and that is the fact that when it comes to the opportunity and they have the final word almost always it is connected with a purchase of products meant for them (88 %).

However, the results of the research show that even some children have no chance to decide during family shopping, a lot of them has the opportunity to do so at least

exceptionally and almost a half of preschoolers can make the final decision quite commonly, which means that parents are mindful of the proper decision making development of their children from early childhood.

6.8 Children as Buyers and RQ3.3 Evaluation

6.8.1 Children as Buyers Results

Another part of the questionnaire was focused on preschool children as buyers. Not surprisingly 78 % of parents answered that their children either do not have a chance or money to buy anything by themselves. 22 % children do have money and a chance to do so.

One of the research questions was focused on whether the child buyer role depends on the age of the child. For the purpose of the future research question evaluation, the answers were divided considering the age of preschoolers as well.

Do your children have money and a chance to buy anything by themselves?

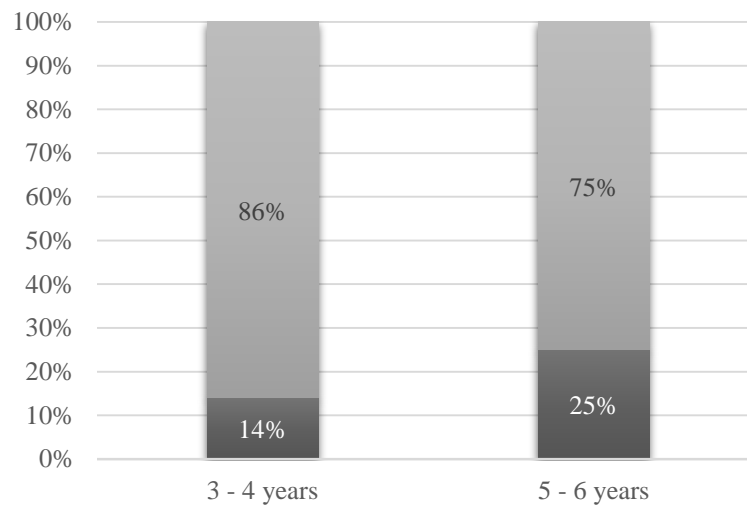


Figure 14: *Children as Buyers Considering Their Age.* (self-created)

As it is clear from the chart above, older children appear in the roles of buyers more often than younger ones. 25 % of five-to-six-year-old children have money and chance to buy something when speaking about three-to-four-year-old kids it is only 14 %.

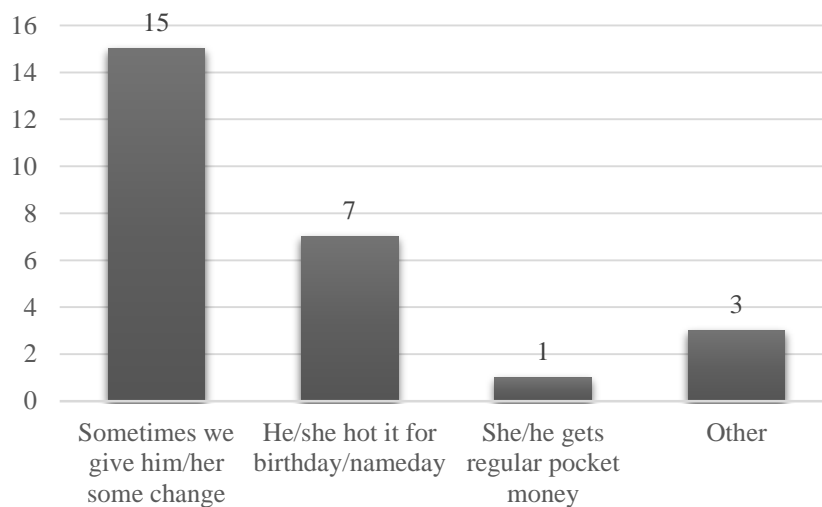
Where the child got money for such a purchase?

Figure 15: *Children Source of Money*. (self-created)

Even some preschool children have the chance to buy something by themselves it is not so clear with money for it. According to results of this question they usually do not get their own regular pocket money (only 1 answer, 0,4 %). 7 children save up the money that they got for their birthdays or name days and 15 of 26 (58 %) children sometimes give some change from their parents to buy something.

Three people used the free space for their own answer – these answers were quite similar and said that children get a certain amount of money for a certain occasion. For example, parents give their children some money for their kindergarten trip or when there is a fair a grandmother saves up something for that.

Please describe how this purchase usually looks like:

Despite the fact that it was an open-ended question and respondents did not have the possibility of any options or could not see answers of others their descriptions were very similar. Children usually get a certain amount of money for some small thing e. g. ice-cream, candy, bubblegum etc. and parents then just stand aside, let children make the purchase and only oversee the whole situation. The second quite common situation was concerning trips or fair stands where they can go and buy something together with their friends.

6.8.2 RQ3.3 Evaluation

RQ3.3: Does the buyer role depend on children age?

To sum up and as for the RQ3.4 evaluation, of course, the role of a buyer is not usual when speaking about preschool children. Only 22 % of preschool children have money and

opportunity to buy something by themselves. It is being spoken about very young children so these situations are usually not like they do it completely alone but their parents stand aside most of the time and oversee the whole situation. Just as in the previous question evaluation concerning children as decision makers it is a way how to teach children the basics of a purchasing behavior which are important for their future lives, so it is probably not surprising that the older the children are, the more opportunities to buy something by themselves appear because these things have to be taught gradually.

6.9 RQ3.4 Evaluation

RQ4.4: Which is the most frequent role represented by preschool children?

When speaking about the RQ3.4, results indicate that all children appear in roles of initiators come to their parents with an idea to buy something at least exceptionally. Results connected with other roles shows that the role of the initiator is the only one which can be connected with all children and so the role of the initiator can be considered as the one which preschool children appear in the most.

6.10 The Children Power and RQ4 Evaluation

The last part of the research was aimed at the parental view of children power and its reasons. The answers were then compared with the opinions of experts stated in the theoretical part of the thesis.

6.10.1 The Children Power Results

Do you think that your child has a big influence on you during shopping?

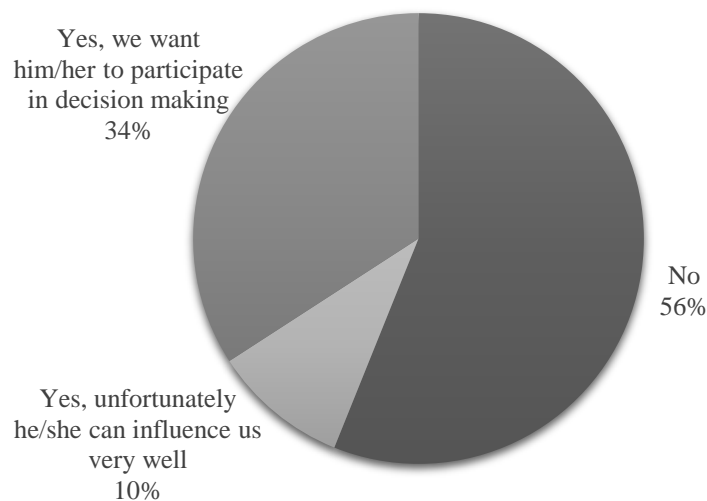


Figure 16: *The Parental View of Their Children Power.* (self-created)

56 % parents do not think that their children have a big power when speaking about family purchase decision making. 34 % let their child be an important member of family shopping and 10 % admitted that their children are powerful and unfortunately have a bigger influence than they would like them to have.

Do you think that children generally have bigger power during family shopping than earlier?

In contrast to the previous question where about a half of parents claimed that they do not consider their children as much influential, the most of the parents (68 %) perceive today's children as much more powerful than children in the past. 32 % respondents do not agree with this fact and do not think that children have such a big power nowadays.

What do you think the reason is?

Those 68 % respondents who said yes were asked for the reason of this power. Their answers are very similar to explanations of experts which can be found in chapter 3.2. Parents mostly believe that the children power is caused by all the media around, that the advertising can be seen almost everywhere and there is also a wider range of products offered so they can choose what they want and not just the only product available or affordable.

Other opinions are connected with the difference in relationships between parents and children comparing to the past. They claim that a lot of parents consider their children as friends more than as their offspring. Respondents also mentioned the type of mothers who behave as their children were gods and so they fulfill all their wishes.

Opinions about that parents do not have enough time for their children appeared as well. Hence, these parents who do not have time think that if they buy their children all the newest things they will feel loved and it replace the lack of the personal contact and communication.

6.10.2 RQ4 Evaluation

RQ4: What do parents think about today's children power?

To sum up and as for the RQ4 evaluation, almost a half of respondents admit that their children have certain power during the family shopping. As for the children power generally, 68 % of parents are coincident with each other concerning the fact that such a power is stronger than it was in the past. In their opinions mostly it is caused by media expansion since media and advertising is everywhere, by today's relationships between parents and children and also by the fact that parents work more and do not spend enough time with their children so they tend to be kind of materialistic. Reasons stated by respondents were almost identical to the reasons of experts (chapter 3.2 Children Power).

7 RESEARCH SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

As for the summary, it was found out that the influence of advertising is similar when speaking about children and their parents. However, an interesting fact came out, that is that some parents do not buy Christmas presents based on their children wishes but rather products connected with advertising, which can mean the lack of communication within the families and the tendency to win a favor of children this way.

Results of the second part of the research show that preschool children appear in all the decision-making process roles, thus they influence family decision making during family shopping quite a lot. Preschool children participate in decision making mostly as initiators and roles of influencers can be connected with them quite extensively as well. Roles of deciders and buyers cannot be considered as so frequent ones, which is justifiable considering that the research was focused on information about preschool children and not older. Results also indicate that the appearance of children in the buyer roles is increasing with their age as parents teach them the basics of purchase behavior gradually. The last part of results indicates that parents tend to perceive the children power stronger than it was earlier. As the main reasons, they stated the hard-working parents, a broader range of products offered in the market and the influence of today's advertising. Results of the research mostly correspond with the information stated by specialists.

Given the topic, it is not possible to give any improvement suggestions since every family is different and there is no chance to see into lives of all of them. However, it is necessary to mention that communication within a family is really important and so parents should communicate with their children as much as they can since they are the biggest teachers and idols for the children. To show them how the real life looks like and teach them the basics which nowadays can mean also skills of the right decision making and life in the world of advertising. That is their greatest role which should not be left to marketers.

CONCLUSION

The bachelor's thesis was focused on the relationship between children and advertising and dealt with children roles in the family purchase decision-making process. It looked into the issue of children power as well. The main goal was to find out to what extent children and their parents are influenced by advertising, mainly concerning the Christmas wishes and presents. Another goal was to determine in which roles of the family decision making children appear, how it looks like and to find out what parents think about the children power.

The theoretical part was devoted to terms such as advertising, purchase decision-making process and information connected with these terms. It also dealt with children and decision making, mostly with the children power issue and its reasons based on studies of specialists.

The analytical part contained information about the research and its results. The first part of the research was focused on the influence of advertising on children and their parents concerning Christmas presents and the second part was aimed at the family decision-making process and children appearance in it. At the end of the research, there were studied opinions of about 80 parents of preschool children on the children power and its reasons. These reasons were then compared to reasons stated by experts.

Stated goals were achieved in this part. Even if it is said that preschool children cannot see the difference between the reality and fiction and so they are influenced by advertisements very well and easily, results show that the influence is not so big since wishes of only about a half of children were based on advertising. The number of influenced parents was almost the same but the fact that a lot of these children actually did not want anything like this revealed the lack of communication and time when speaking about children and their parents. In the second part of the research, it was found out that even so young small preschool children appear in all of the decision-making process roles and their opinions are considered as important for the family decision making. The children power and reasons for such a power stated by specialists were then confirmed.

At the beginning, it was spoken about the connection between marketers and children. However, after the research, it can be said that it is more about parents and children. It is necessary for parents to realize that they decide to what extent marketers will influence their children. They are the ones who form their attitudes and values, not the marketers. They prepare their children for the real life in the real world. And although it was not the purpose of this thesis, as the most valuable fact I would consider the fact that it is the communication which influences children much more than any of the advertisements.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Approx.	Approximately
CZSO	Czech Statistical Office
DIY	Do it yourself
E.g.	For example
Etc.	And so forth
KGOY	Kids Getting Older Younger
MŠ	Mateřská Škola
TV	Television

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APPENDICES

P I: Written Notes from the R1 Research

P II: The Questionnaire for the R2 Research

APPENDIX P I: WRITTEN NOTES FROM THE R1 RESEARCH

Name: (for privacy reasons only the first name is stated)	Christmas wish:	Did “Ježíšek” bring what the child had wanted?	What did he bring?
Maruška	Teddy bear, nail polish	NO	Different stuffed toys, little mirror, sewing machine, clothes
Jeníček	Large railway line, train	YES	-
Světlanka	Stuffed monkey, book, Barbie doll	NO	Frozen doll, Lego Friends, leggings
Tomášek	Parrot, military books	NO	Clothes, different than military books
Viktorka	Barbie champion doll with a horse	NO	Elsa doll from Frozen movie
Víteček	Train	NO	Star Wars Lego, book, basketball basket
Marco	Lego car, Lego figure	NO	Guitar, pistol, machine gun
Matýsek	Star Wars, Star Wars big figure, NERF set	YES	-
Matoušek	Lego Technic plane, car for land, water and snow	YES	-
Viktorka	Lego Friends house with an elevator, Rapunzel doll	NO	Elsa and Anna dolls, book
Adámek	Eiffel Tower puzzle, steamship	YES	-
Verunka	Lips cosmetics	NO	Schoolbag, bike, rollerblades, ski
Vojtíšek	Star Wars figure (because he already has some at home), Lego Technic set, Transformers	YES	-
Vojtíšek	Lego Star Wars, Lego Ninja, acrobatic car	YES	-
Adrianka	Elsa doll from Frozen movie	YES	+ ski, rocking horse
Bruno	Lego Ninja 2	YES	-
Evelínka	Frozen movie doll	YES	+ Frozen Elsa dress
Adélka	Guinea pig	NO	Schoolbag, clothes

APPENDIX P II: THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE R2 RESEARCH

(Note: The questionnaire format is not completely the same since for respondents it was available in the form of online questionnaire.)

All-Powerful Child: The Participation of a Child in the Family Decision-Making

Good afternoon, dear parents,

Do you have a preschool child?

If your answer is yes, I would like to ask you for few minutes of your free time and a completion of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is anonymous and consists predominantly of closed questions concerning a role of your child during family shopping. Results of the research will be used for my bachelor's thesis focused on the roles of preschool children in the family purchase decision-making process. Thank you in advance for your time and kindness.

Kateřina

1. State the gender of your child please:

- a) Girl
- b) Boy

2. State the age of your child please:

- a) 3 - 4 years
- b) 5 - 6 years

3. How often does your child come up with an idea to buy anything?

(Note: When answering *never*, questions 4 and 5 were hidden.)

- a) Never
- b) Exceptionally
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often

4. What is this idea usually related to? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a) Food, sweets
- b) Toys
- c) Clothes
- d) Other (Specify it please):

5. When does this type of question appear the most? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a) While shopping
- b) When he/she sees it somewhere (outside, by friends)
- c) During or after watching an advertisement
- d) Another time (Specify it please):

6. Do you ask for an opinion of your child during shopping?

(Note: When answering *never*, question 7 was hidden.)

- a) Never
- b) Exceptionally
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often

7. Concerning which products are you interested in the opinion of your child? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a) Products for her/him (toys, clothes, kindergarten facilities)
- b) Consumer goods (food, drugstore products)
- c) Products for others
- d) Common family things (car, electronics, holiday, and trips)

8. Does your child share his/her opinion on products (which product, brand, color he/she likes) even you do not ask him/her to do so?

- a) Never
- b) Exceptionally
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often

9. How often do you (or people who go shopping with your child) have to deal with a situation when the child cries and screams so much that he/she gets the product after a while even you said no at first?

(When answering *never*, question 10 was hidden.)

- a) Never
- b) Exceptionally
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often

10. In this type of situation who usually gives in and decides to make a purchase?

- a) Mother
- b) Father
- c) Grandparents
- d) Another person (Specify it please):

11. What type of products is this situation usually connected with? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a) Products for her/him (toys, clothes, kindergarten facilities)
- b) Consumer goods (food, drugstore products)
- c) Products for others
- d) Common family things (car, electronics, holiday)
- e) Other (Specify it please):

12. Are there situations during your family shopping when the child can make the final decision?

(Note: When answering *never*, question 13 was hidden.)

- a) Never
- b) Exceptionally
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often

13. What is this decision usually related to? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a) Products for her/him (toys, clothes)
- b) Consumer goods (food, drugstore products)
- c) Products for others
- d) Common family things (car, electronics, holiday)
- e) Other (Specify it please):

14. Do your children have money and a chance to buy anything by themselves?

(When answering *no*, questions 15 and 16 were hidden.)

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. Describe such a situation please and describe which products it is related to:

16. Where the child got money for such a purchase?

- a) We give him/her some change time to time
- b) He/she got it for his/her birthday/name day
- c) She/he gets regular pocket money
- d) Other (Specify it please):

17. Do you think that your child has a big influence on you during shopping?

- a) Yes, we want him/her to participate in decision-making
- b) Yes, unfortunately, he/she can influence us very well
- c) No

18. Do you think that children generally have bigger power during family shopping than earlier?

(Note: When answering *no*, question 19 was hidden.)

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. What do you think the reason is?