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Family Buying Behaviour:
Parents’ perspective of children influence on their
buying behaviour.

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Title
Family Buying Behaviour: Parents’ perspective of children influence on their buying behaviour.

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Abstract
Even though power and influence of children on family buying behavior is growing little is known about their involvement. Previous studies of family and household consumption often neglect the role of children in decision-making, but nowadays, children are becoming one of the most powerful influencers in family buying behavior. They dominate family buying decision and can influence their parents in many product categories from cars till regular grocery shopping and therefore the question arises, what influences children when requesting products and what strategies they use to make their parents yield to their requests. Thus, this research paper tries to explain how are influence strategies that children use and family complexity related to parents buying behavior of groceries. The primary data have been collected through an electronic questionnaire, which resulted in sample of 164 parents respondents from around the globe. The data were analyzed by using various statistical tools and concluded that (1) aggressive, persuasion, rational and knowledge strategies are positively affecting parents buying behavior, (2) non-traditional family structure has positive impact on buying behavior, (3) older children have more influence power over parents buying behavior and (4) number of children has no significant influence on parents buying behavior.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In a family unit in the twenty-first century, independent of the family structure, the youngest members of the family are gaining more buying power by the day. This power has grown to go over the things that they use themselves but even in major family decisions such as buying a car or deciding where to go on a vacation (White, 2013). Families act like democracies where every member’s opinion is valued and taken into consideration the same way (ibid).

Another surprising fact is that even younger children nowadays are starting to request specific brands when it comes to the products that they use. A study conducted on little children showed that 52% of three-year-olds and 73% of four-year-olds usually ask their parents to buy them specific brands (Greninger, 2017, para 1). The majority of people has been a witness or experienced this first hand. You are in a grocery store and out of the sudden; you hear a little kid throws a tantrum because its favorite brand of cereals did not get picked up. Most of the time you see a parent surrender and buy them what they want but some do not.

A lot of literature is writing about this phenomenon and how children’s empowerment has increased over the years. Goodwin (2013, para 4) explains that “children's spending has roughly doubled every ten years for over three decades, and had tripled in the 1990s. Children 4-12 spent $2.2 billion in 1968, and $4.2 billion in 1984. But by 1994 the figure climbed to $17.1 billion, and by 2002 their spending exceeded $40 billion”. He continues by saying that the numbers presented above are what children directly spend because if the influence that they have on their parent’s decision is to be taken into consideration the numbers would be staggering. This is shown by an example of the year 2012 where children’s buying power and the influence that they had on their parents buying decisions reached 1.2 trillion dollars with an emphasis on the “T” (Goodwin, 2013).

Time writes that 71% of parents ask their children about the purchases they make (White, 2013). Almost all parents let children give an opinion about things like toys, clothes, and food that is bought for them, and around two-thirds of parents take into consideration what their children want when making family decisions (ibid).
Forbes attributes this change in children buying power to millennials parenting style: “as parents, Millennials are evolving the decision-making process to include their children. According to the Family Room, 76% of Millennial parents identify with the “Family Meeting” decision-making style, which means they will discuss decisions, small and large, with the whole family. This means that even a minor purchase will be made with input from both parents and kids” (Fromm, 2015, para. 6). Furthermore, children have received more responsibilities and more direct-purchasing power, as a result of the changes that our society has gone through the years, like mothers spending more time outside their houses because of work and the increase in single-parent families (Greninger, 2017, para 2). Mothers feel guilty for not being able to spend more time with their children because they have to work full-time and that is why they try to compensate by giving children more decision power (Rindfleisch et al., 1997). Living in single-parent family children have more influence on what the family eats because sometimes they are the ones who do the shopping for the whole family (ibid).

White (2013) states that even though there might be a temptation to blame it all on the American parents, this is a global phenomenon and there is research that parents in Israel, India, China, Fiji, and the Philippines are giving deference to the smallest members of their families. This information is relevant for parents and marketers as well. On the one hand, it can help parents set limits to their children’s buying behavior or make them more part of the family decision process depending on what is better for that specific family. On the other hand, it can help marketers focus more on children as a target group for future products and advertising. With the children’s increase in influence on family buying behavior, they should be considered more like a market segment, hence more ads should target them Goodwin (2013). Marketers should consider also that the children of today are the consumers of tomorrow and if they gain them as a consumer on a young age, they might be loyal customers for life (Medialit, 1987; White, 2013).

1.2 Problematization

Research on the influence of children on buying behavior of family dates back to the 1960s (Williams & Burns, 2000). Back then, Berey and Pollay (1968) conducted a study
on what role and how much power children have in buying behavior of family. Previous research shows that children represent themselves in three markets at once (McNeal, 1992; as cited in Nicholls & Cullen, 2004). According to McNeal (ibid.), they are part of a primary market where they spend their own money - savings, allowances; a secondary market, where they pose as ‘influencers’ on mainly parental spending; and lastly part of a future market of potential adult consumers. In this paper, the main focus is on the secondary market with children as the ‘influencers’, which was chosen based on the fact that according to Euromonitor (2001) most of the spending on products was by secondary purchases - adults primary or directly influenced secondary purchases (49%) (as cited in Nicholls & Cullen, 2004). Furthermore, parents pose as main breadwinners of the families, because they bring money to the household and thus also make final decisions when shopping (Pahl, 2000; Swinyard & Sim, 1987; Balcarova, Pokorna & Pilar, 2014; Ward & Wackman, 1972). Therefore, it is relevant to focus on parents. Moreover, even though children gain influence buying power over their parents generally in all categories, food and groceries is a product category, where children seem to exert much influence power (Belch et al., 1985; Foxman et al., 1989; Hansen et al., 2002; Jenkins, 1979; John, 1999; Lee & Beatty, 2002; McNeal, 1992; Balcarova et al., 2014), hence groceries is the product category the paper will research for.

On that account, understanding the relationship between children and parents buying behavior is important from practical and theoretical reasons. First, the research can contribute to the field and help the researchers of this field to understand what influence strategies affect the decision-making of parents and how age and number of children affect buying behavior, from which the marketing field can learn. Second, this knowledge can help parents to see to what extent their children influence them and what strategies are they using and finding effective to have the most impact on them.

Previous studies that researched the field of children’s impact on family buying behavior has its limitations. One of the main limitations is that the research is based on only one or two countries (for comparison) (Shoham & Dalakas, 2005; Mohanram, 2012; Kaur & Medury, 2011; Balcarova et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 1997; Pettigrew, Jongenelis, Quester, Chapman & Miller, 2016; Ward & Wackman, 1972), which constrains the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the wider population. Another limitation is that the
studies rather focus on one factor that would affect buying behavior than more. This restricts the findings to only knowing influence strategies (Wood, Weinstein & Ronald, 1967; Atkin, 1978; Cowan, Drinkard & MacGavin, 1984; Palan & Wilikes, 1997; Williams & Burns, 2000; Wimalasiri, 2004; Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012; Chaudhary, 2013), family structure (Flurry, 2007; Alam & Khalifah, 2009; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Kaur & Singh, 2006; Qualls, 1987; Lee & Beatty, 2002), number and age of children (Krumpel, Haudrup & Romero, 2007; Ahmad, Sidin & Omar, 2011; Ward, Wackman, 1972; Atkin, 1978; Swinyard & Peng Sim, 1987; Pettigrew et al., 2016) and therefore, it is relevant that the paper will focus on studying the relationship of all the factors mentioned above - influence strategies, family structure, age and number of children in regards to buying behavior.

Based on the literature, the paper analyzed two main aspects influencing buying behavior, which are family complexity - age and number of children and family structure; and influence strategies. The importance of keeping track of family structure is recognized by marketers and researchers as well and according to Lee and Beatty (2002), it is important to know and understand the roles of parents and children within the family because it is the most important decision-making and consumption unit. Furthermore, according to Lee and Beatty (2002), Krumpel et al. (2007), Ahmad et al. (2011), Ward, Wackman (1972), Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987), Atkin (1978) and Pettigrew et al. (2016) the age of child is an important influencer; as well as number of children and further according to Flurry (2007), Alam and Khalifah (2009), Carlson and Grossbart (1988), Kaur and Singh (2006), Qualls (1987) gender of parents and parents relations are very important factors. The paper will consider children of all ages as included in previous literature (Swinyard and Peng Sim, 1987), but will only count the ones living with parents. Lee and Beatty (2002), Krumpel et al. (2007), Ahmad et al. (2011), Ward, Wackman (1972), Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987), Atkin (1978) and Pettigrew et al. (2016) studied how the number of children and age of children affect parents buying behavior and whether with increasing age and number of children they have more influence on their parents buying behavior. Flurry (2007), Alam and Khalifah (2009), Carlson and Grossbart (1988), Kaur and Singh (2006), Qualls (1987) on the other hand studied what role parents relations and gender play in the family buying behavior.
Another factor that the paper is focused on is different influence strategies that lead to children power in the final decision-making process. Wood et al. (1967), Atkin (1978), Cowan et al. (1984), Palan and Wilkes (1997), Williams and Burns (2000), Wimalasiri (2004), Chaudhary and Gupta (2012), Chaudhary (2013) studied how different influence strategies that children use affect their parents. All these influencing strategies and family complexity are affecting family buying behavior connected with the intention of purchase of parents.

To sum up, to fill the gap of previous research, the paper will focus on international families including influence strategies and family complexity.

The research problem of the study is to analyze how and to what extent strategy and family complexity affects parents buying behavior. The paper will try to find out how and to what extent family complexity and influence strategies influence family decision-making and how strong is the intention of purchase using different strategies by children and also how family complexity affects the buying behavior.

1.3 Research question

How are influence strategies and family complexity related to parents’ buying behavior?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explain which influence strategies influence parent’s buying behavior, and how family complexity like traditional or nontraditional family and age of children and number of children affect this buying behavior, as perceived by parents.

1.5 Outline

This paper contains six sections.

Section One: Introduction

In this section buying power that children have gained in recent years is introduced. Further it is explained why this topic is relevant, followed by the problematization. The research question and the purpose of the thesis is also part of this section.
Section Two: Scientific Method

This section consists of a presentation of the theoretical methods that are used in this dissertation. In the theoretical method, it is explained why the deductive approach was chosen and why the quantitative method is better suited for this research. The chosen theory is briefly explained and a part that critiques the sources of that theory follows. To conclude the theoretical method, the time horizon is justified.

Section Three: Theoretical Framework

The theories and concepts that are used for the research model are presented in this section. This is followed by the presentation of the hypothesis and the research model, which is based on the theories.

Section Four: Empirical Method

This section consists of the presentation of empirical methods used to collect data for the paper. The empirical method explained what research strategy was used in the thesis, how the data were collected and how was the sample of respondents selected. Further, the section explains how dependent, independent and control variables were measured and how the collected data was analyzed. Last part of the empirical method is the explanation of the reliability measures used and ethical consideration of data collection.

Section Five: Results and Analysis

In this section, a presentation of the data collected through the electronic questionnaire is presented with a descriptive statistics analysis. How the control, independent, dependent variables correlate with each other will be shown. To conclude with the multiple linear regressions that will show if the hypothesis of this paper is supported.

Section Six: Discussion

In this section, the results of the analysis of the data collected in section five are going to be further discussed. Each one of the eight hypotheses that the research model of this paper has is explained and discussed in connection to whether they were supported or not.

Section Seven: Conclusions
In the final section, overarching conclusions of the findings of the paper are introduced alongside with theoretical contributions and practical implications. Moreover, to conclude, limitations of the study and proposals for the future research are presented.
2. Scientific Method

2.1 Research approach

In order to predict and generalize human behavior or activity, a social science like positivism is used, which combines empirical studies of human behavior with deductive logic to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws (Neuman, 2003, as cited in Tuli, 2010). Researchers who use this perspective use quantitative terms to explain how variables interact with each other, how events are shaped and the cause of the outcomes (ibid). To do so they use multivariate analysis such as the one that is used in this paper.

The acquisition of new knowledge may come as a result of two main general approaches namely inductive and deductive approach (Hyde, 2000; Spens and Kovács, 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The inductive approach is more a theory building process and the deductive approach is more a theory testing process. The deductive theory consists of the most common view of the relationship between theory and research. The researcher starts with an established theory or generalization and tests if this theory applies to more specific entities (Hyde, 2000). This is done by deducing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that should be tested empirically. In the hypothesis, the concepts that the research is focusing on should be integrated. It is the researcher’s duty to deduce the hypothesis and translate them into operational terms, by deciding the data collection method that is related to the concepts used in the hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The deduction process is explained in Bryman & Bell (2011) as six steps processes which are: 1. Theory; 2. Hypothesis; 3. Data collection; 4. Findings; 5. Hypothesis confirmed or rejected; 6. Revision of theory. These are the steps that this paper follows to answer the research question.

In this paper, a deductive approach is used to answer the research question: how are influence strategies and family complexity related to parents’ buying behavior. Eight hypotheses were derived from previously established theories like the consumer socialization theory and family buying decision theory. To test this hypothesis and the model that is formed by them a quantitative method is used, more about that is going to be explained below. The deductive approach is used because usually it is associated with a quantitative research approach, unlike the inductive approach that is related to the qualitative research approach (Hyde, 2000; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, Hyde
(2000, p. 83) claims that “research in marketing has historically emphasized deductive processes” and this paper has a focus in understanding family as a consumption unit.

2.2 Choice of method

This thesis aims to explain the relationship between family complexity and influence strategies and whether and how they affect family buying behavior. According to Denscombe (2009), quantitative approach suits the best when the aim of the researchers is to find a relationship. Therefore, the paper applies a quantitative empirical approach. The quantitative method uses research methods such as questionnaires and research strategies such as surveys (Denscombe, 2009). Furthermore, since the paper uses deductive research approach and aims at objectivity, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) and Bryman & Bell (2015) claim, that the most suitable method is a quantitative method. Moreover, since the method aims at objectivity, quantitative data is based on objective laws instead of the researchers own values as it is in the qualitative data, therefore the data are more credible and can be measured and controlled (Denscombe, 2009). The data collected by quantitative research method can be further used effectively and help the researcher to “organize data, summarize findings, show evidence, describe the findings profile, and nexus parts of data” (Denscombe, 2009, p. 327).

2.3 Choice of theory

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on three main theories, which are social group theory, consumer socialization theory, and family buying decision theory. These theories have been used as a base to understand family as a group and its complexity and structure, buying behavior of family and how children influence their parents and to what extent. Social group theory explains what structures and interaction patterns family as a group has (Burns, Roszkowska, Corte & Johansson, 2017). Consumer socialization theory emphasizes how young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes as consumers on the marketplace (Ward, 1974). This theory is important for the paper because it states how children are influenced as consumers but it suggests that they are influencers also. Finally, family buying decision theory argues that family consumption comes as a result of their buying decision (Sheth, 1970). This theory explains buying decision which is done either
autonomously by one person or together as a family and how these affect buying decision (ibid.).

2.4 Source Critique

The articles used as references for this thesis are all scientific and peer-reviewed, and have been retrieved from Google Scholar and Summon@HKR. To have a full view of the topic some newspapers articles and webpage’s were used. Moreover, the rest of the sources are academic literature.

To have a more critical view of the sources used in this paper the 2015 ABS rating of journals is used. These ranking systems measure the quality of the research based on the place of publication (Tourish and Willmott, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABS Rating</th>
<th>Meaning of Quality Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4*</td>
<td>As the world-leading journals in the field, they would be ranked among the highest in terms of impact factor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>As top journals in their field, these journals typically have high submission and low acceptance rates and has among the highest citation impact factors within their field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>These journals typically have good submission rates and are very selective in what they publish but not all journals carry a citation impact factor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>These well-regarded journals publish original and well-executed research papers; citation impact factors are somewhat more modest in certain cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The journals meet normal scholarly standards. Few journals in this category carry a citation impact factor.</td>
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Table 1. Ranking of Articles from ABS Ranking System (Academic Journal Guide, 2018, p. 3-7)
In Table 2 there is a summary of where are the articles used in this paper ranked in the ABS Ranking system. The majority of the articles used are published in journals that are recognized by this ranking system. In this thesis, 59 articles in total are used, from which 35 articles are published in prestigious journals recognized and evaluated by the academic journal guide (ABS, 2015).

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<td>8%</td>
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<td>41%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Table 2. ABS Ranking of the articles used in this thesis

In this paper, 59% of the 59 cited articles have been published in journals recognized by ABS Ranking. The majority of these articles, 37% of them are published in world leading journals in their fields which would make these articles of high quality. A high number of articles about 41% of all the articles cited in this paper are published in journals not recognized by ABS Ranking and this may imply that they are of lower quality. In the end where the articles that are used to write this paper are published does not give certainty of the quality of the paper per se.
2.5 Time Horizon

The time horizon of a research paper can be separated into two dimensions, cross-sectional or longitudinal (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The longitudinal design is used in management and business research where a change in time needs to be captured (ibid). On the other hand, Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 53) explain that “a cross-sectional design entails the collection of data on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association”. This paper has a time constraint of 11 weeks, which start on the first of April and ends on the seventh of June. Hence, the cross-sectional design is deemed more suitable and is what is used in this dissertation.
3. Theoretical framework

In this part of this dissertation, the theories and concepts that are used to respond to the research question and help to create the hypothesis will be explained. First, the family buying decision theory will be explained. This theory has the main focus because all the other theories will be connected to it. Then the social group theory will be presented which is used to explain the family complexity. Moreover, the consumer socialization theory will be presented which focuses on children, how they get influenced in their buying decision and what strategies they use to influence their parents. In the end, the model where this paper has concentrated its research and the hypothesis will be derived.

3.1 Family buying decision theory

Family buying decision has been the center of attention of different studies in different fields such as rural sociology, social anthropology, social psychology, clinical psychology, home economics, consumer psychology, marketing and economics (Sheth, 1970). This inspired Sheth to work on a specific theory that explains this phenomenon more deeply (1970). According to this theory “the total consumption of a family is classified as that by 1. the individual member, 2. the family as a whole, and 3. the household unit” (Sheth, 1970, p. 40).

What a family consumes comes as a result of their family buying decision (Sheth, 1970). When something is rented, gifted and acquired not by buying it is not considered as family consumption (ibid). Sheth (1970) divides the family buying decision into two types: when it is done autonomously by one single member or when it is done together by several or all family members. It would appear that a member that buys something individually would buy its favorite brand. But this is not always the case because usually housewife’s act as a purchaser agent for all the family members. This means that they take into consideration even the preferences of their husbands. On the other hand, the buying act may be totally autonomous but the consumption is from all the family members (ibid).

According to Zaichkowsky (1991) the theoretical models of consumer’s decision making have gone through different stages from the economic paradigm of 1940s where
“purchasing decisions are the results of largely 'rational' and conscious economic calculations” (p. 52), through the irrational consumer of 1950s “consumers were seen as passive, open and vulnerable to external influences” (p. 52), and 1960s, to the information processor of 1970s where “consumers had the right to be informed and protected” (p. 53), and 1980s to cognitive miser which is a “low-involvement decision maker as unable or unwilling to engage in extensive decision making activities in many cases and settle instead for "satisfactory" decisions” (p. 54) and 1990s to the collective decision maker “shift in joint decisions for purchase of goods and services, since goods and services will be shifting to a collective consumption style” (p. 55). Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) confirm what Zaichkowsky (1991) states that in the 1940-1950s children were not considered part of the buying experience they were just their parent’s extensions. Time have changed and now with the influence of television and internet children have become experienced consumers and have the buying power for almost every product category as research shows (Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012). Differently from earlier studies where the focus for the family decision-making process was primarily focused on the spouses, nowadays the role of children has increased, by being a vital part of this process. This comes as a result of a higher family income, an increase in nuclear families which have fewer children (ibid). Wimalasiri (2004) on the other hand attributes this power to working couples that can afford to give their children whatever they request, the constant exposure of children to media and advertising and as Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) stated to families having fewer children.

Children have a relevant role in families purchasing decision, this role depends on the product, parents, child, decision stage and family characteristics that is what different researchers claim (Shergill, Sekhon, and Zhao, 2013). They are not passive buyers anymore but children actively participate in their families purchasing decision. This happens because they have their money which is spent on various products and services but even by influencing their parents purchase decision making (ibid). Furthermore, Rindfleisch et al. (1997) suggest that children that live in a single-parent household which usually do not have a good economy, start working to earn money and help their single-parent or help them by looking after their younger siblings. Ishaque and Tufail (2014) suggest that family structure has an impact on the level of influence that children have over their family, which is why children from nontraditional families attribute more
influence to themselves. Swinyard and Sim (1987) claim that children have more influence in the purchase of nondurable products which are for their personal use.

Davis and Rigaux (1974), which are some of the first authors to divide the buying decision-making process into stages, advocate for the three-phase decision process that is problem recognition, internal and external search, and final decision. Some researchers at times use the four phase’s by adding the alternative evaluation phase but Davis and Rigaux (1974) state, that individuals usually do this during the search phase, which is why the three stages process is better. Shergill et al. (2013) state that children’s influence on their family buying decision varies on the decision stage and they look into what other studies say in this regard. According to Shergill et al. (2013), the majority of literature states that children have a higher influence on the early stages like problem recognition and information search. This influence decreases on the final stage that is the final decision. On the other hand Holders and Antonides (1997, as cited in Shergill et al., 2013) state the contrary, that children have a greater influence on the final stages like alternative evaluation and final decision rather than the first stage that is problem recognition. Szybillo and Sosanie (1977 as cited in Swinyard and Sim, 1987, p. 27), claim that “children and parents interact to a high degree in all stages of the decision-making process”.

Different studies have come to different conclusions on which phase of their family buying decision process children have more influence. That is why this paper is going to test the impact that children have on their parents buying behavior. This somehow could be classified as the last stage of decision-making process, but this paper is not going to test how children influence each phase of this process. This has been done before and no decisive conclusion was found even though most of the research agrees that children have a greater influence in the first stages (Shergill et al., 2013). In this regard, Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom (1989) advocate that even family members do not agree on the level of influence children have over family purchases. Furthermore, they claim that parents are more in agreement about the perception of the influence children have, in regard to what perception children have about their influence. The focus is going to be only on how children using different tactics influence their parents buying behavior and how family complexity impacts it. One thing that all the researchers agree with is the fact
that children influence their parents buying decision that is why this paper is going to test only that and not all the stages.

3.2 Family Complexity

The social group is explained in social science as two or more people who interact together, share similar characteristics and have a sense of unity (Turner & Tajfel, 1982). One of such groups that share the same unity and interdependence is family (ibid.).

Definition of a family and what is accepted as a family differs based on demography, culture and what national regulation allows. Family can be defined as “a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people are considered as members of one family” (Glick 1957; Casper & O’Connell 2000; Fields & Casper, 2001; as cited in Tillman & Nam, 2008,p.368). Assael (1998) identified the family as the most important consumption and decision-making unit (as cited in Shoham & Dalakas, 2005) and over recent years, children and adults are viewed as a major market force for the food and beverage industry (Haryanto, Mautinho & Coelho, 2016). Therefore, it is very important to know how its complexity affects buying behavior. Family complexity has many different categories, from which the paper will focus on family structure, number of children within the family and age of children.

A family can have following types: a) married couple without children; b) married couple with one or more unmarried children; c) father with one or more unmarried children; d) mother with one or more unmarried children e) couples living in consensual unions (Tillman & Nam, 2008). In recent years, individuals changed the way in which they form families and therefore a family structure can be seen as traditional family and non-traditional family (Li, 2014; as cited in Bouchard & Lachance-Grzela, 2016). Traditional family structure is the most common type and has four main aspects to be considered as traditional: a) role of male is to be husband and father with reference to masculinity; b) role of female is to be wife and mother with reference to femininity c) husband- - wife and parent-child relationships, where attention is concentrated on authority and responsibility; d) to have general values, expectations, and morality (Levinson & Huffman, 1955). On the other hand, there is a non-traditional family, which can be defined as a same-sex family or single parent family. Single parent family is defined as father or mother with one or more
unmarried children (Tillman & Nam, 2008). Same-sex family is considered to be a married couple of same-sex or homosexual couple living in consensual union with or without children. The paper considers both types of families structures important and both types of structures were chosen due to change in the way individuals form their families (Li, 2014; as cited in Bouchard & Lachance-Grzela, 2016) and that non-traditional families are becoming more common worldwide, where single parents or same-sex families are raising children (Minnotte, 2012). Furthermore, the paper will look only at families, where children are present and therefore will only use married couples with one or more unmarried children, single-parent with one or more unmarried children and couples living in consensual unions with one or more unmarried children to find out how these children affect family buying behavior.

Since the paper considers only families with children, among the family complexity will focus on their age and number of children within the family. Age of children was considered by some scholars important factor of how much children affect or participate in family buying decisions (Gupta, 2015, p.22; Ahmad et al., 2011; Ward, Wackman, 1972; Swinyard & Peng Sim, 1987). According to Gupta (2015) age of children matters and he claims that even though children aged 5-10 participate in family buying decisions on quite a high level, children aged 10-14 participate in buying decision on a higher level. Benn (2004) claims that children aged 13-17 have an ability of full-blown consumer (as cited in Ahmad et al., 2011) and are contributors to the process of development of consumer skills of their parents (Ahmad, Sidin & Omar, 2011). Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987) also stated that the older the child, the more influence he/she has. Findings of Ward and Wackman (1972) are different, where they claim that even though children have purchase influence in all age groups (5-7; 8-10; 11-12) the highest purchase influence has age group 5-7. In regards to the age of children, the paper used a range of the age used in Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987), where they consider children in 8 age groups ranging from 0 to 31 and above. The paper will consider children all ages as in previous literature, but will only count the ones living with parents. Therefore, the paper will include the age of children to find out, how age of children affects the buying behavior of parents, due to the fact that scholars who studied how and what age affects buying behavior, do not have a unified opinion.
Last part of family complexity is the number of children. The number of children was studied by scholars to find out whether more children have a stronger impact on buying behavior (Ward & Wackman, 1972; Gupta, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2016). According to Ward and Wackman (1972) number of children did not play any significant role in the decision making of parents. Their study shows that there was no higher or lower significance when there was more or less number of children. On the other hand, Gupta (2015) claims that a single child participates in family buying process more than if the child has one or more siblings. Pettigrew et al. partially support the idea of Gupta, where they claim that a smaller number of children parents have, the more likely they influence the family buying decision. Their findings show that a single child or two children have the strongest influence on buying decision. Due to previous findings, which are not unified, the paper considers the number of children important and therefore will have it as a part of family complexity.

The paper will analyze family complexity based on traditional and non-traditional family, the number of children and age of children and how these individual parts are connected to the family buying decision.

3.3 Influence Strategies

“Consumer socialization” is defined as processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace (Ward, 1974, p. 2). Ward states that some of the reasons why it is important to study consumer socialization are to understand: “family consumer behavior; inter-generational consistency and change; and the impact of social trends on buying patterns of young people and on family consumer behavior” (1974, pp. 1-2). This theory is going to be used to understand children as a consumer. As consumers, they are influenced by different variables but they take the role of the influencer also.

Ahmad et al. (2011) explain the consumer socialization model as comprised of socialization agents and outcomes. The socialization agents are the ones that influence children, those that transmit the knowledge and the ones that help in forming their attitudes. Previous research features three main socialization agents which are: parents, peers, and mass-media (Ward, 1974; Ahmad et al., 2011; Gbadamosi, 2012). On the other
hand, the outcomes are the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that a person learns from the socialization agents. Moreover, Ahmad et al. (2011, p. 9) state that researchers have identified some of the socialization outcomes as: “consumer affairs knowledge, consumer activism and ability to manage consumer finance, attitude towards prices, materialism, consumption motivation, brand evaluations, exposure to media and advertising information processing, participation in family purchasing process, children’s relative influence in family consumption decisions and children’s choice of influence strategy”.

From the socialization outcomes that Ahmad et al. (2011) mention it can be understood that it is not only the parent that influences their children’s consumer behavior but that even children somehow influence their families consumption decision by using different strategies. The influence that children have on their parents is shown even on Ward (1974, p. 1), when it is explained that “socialization research focuses on influences affecting children’s development, but research on consumer socialization necessarily involves analysis of children’s influence on intra-family patterns”. Children as influencers use different strategies to convince their parents to buy them something, these strategies are going to be explained below.

Children of different ages and cultures use various influence strategies to persuade their parents to buy what they want because they do not have any control over them (Wimalasiri, 2004). Wimalasiri (2014, p. 275) states that “influence occurs any time a source (children) attempt to change the receiver's (parents) thoughts, feelings or behaviors. Inducing a change in behavior is called compliance and inducing a change in attitude is called persuasion.” Furthermore, Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) explain this process through the exchange theory, where children get the tangible asset that they have requested and parents get intangible assets such as house chores, better behavior, and psychological values. This kind of exchange between tangible and intangible entities helps in maintaining harmony among family members and their interdependence (Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012).

There have been various researchs on the different strategies children use to influence their parents like: Wood, Weinstein, and Ronald (1967); Atkin (1978); Cowan, Drinkard, and MacGavin (1984) ; Palan and Wilikes (1997); Williams and Burns (2000); Wimalasiri(2004); Chaudhary and Gupta (2012); Chaudhary (2013). Most of them derive
from Yukl and Falbe (1990) work that describe the tactics that are used by managers to influence subordinates, peers, and superiors. In their work (ibid) come up with a list of eight influence tactics that are: pressure tactics; upward appeals; exchange tactics; coalition tactics; ingratiating tactics; rational persuasion; inspirational appeals and consultation tactics.

Palan and Wilikes (1997) are two other researchers that have investigated the strategies that children use to influence their parents into buying something for them. They conducted a qualitative study where they categorize the responses of parents and children that were part of the study into these categories: bargaining strategies; persuasion strategies; emotional strategies; request strategies; expert strategies; legitimate strategies; directive strategies.

Bargaining strategies mean that between the family members there is an agreement from which both parts are beneficial. Simply put, this strategy can be described as “if you do this, I will do that” (Spiro, 1983, p. 394). On the other hand, when using the persuasion strategies the benefits are unilateral for the persuader and usually, manipulation is used to convince parents. This category consists of three subcategories that are: persistence, begging and whining (Palan and Wilikes, 1997). Emotional strategies require the use of emotions intentionally to influence parents into buying what they want. Some of the tactics that researchers have discovered that are used in this case are crying, pouting, withdrawing, or giving the silent treatment; anger; sweet talk and having a positive effect (ibid). Another tactic is making them feel guilty for buying something to their siblings and not to them. Making a direct request or a more demanding request are elements of the request strategies, where they ask for a specific item. The expert strategy consists of parents sharing their knowledge with their children so that they can make smart purchases (ibid). Legitimate strategies are also more focused on parents influencing their children since they have legitimate power. According to Palan and Wilikes (1997), with the passing of time this power is reversed. Some tactics used by parents, in this case, are: we can not afford it and delay. The last category is the directive strategy that is also based on parental authority and on parents asking for their children opinions (ibid).

In their work, Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) make a summary of different strategies used by different researchers, some of which are already mentioned in this paper. According to
Wood et al. (1967) some of the manipulation tactics that children use are: “norm invocation (appeals to rules, fair play, reason, etc.), positive sanctions (gifts, favors, bargaining, politeness, etc.), negative sanctions (physical aggression, nagging, begging, crying, etc.), ask, and do not know or other” (as cited in Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012, p. 1157). Cowan et al. (1984) suggest there are fourteen influence strategies used by children like: “asking, begging and pleading, telling or assertion, reasoning, persistence, demanding or arguing, state importance, bargaining, negative effect, positive effect, verbal manipulation, using an advocate, eliciting reciprocity, evasion, and laissez-faire to influence parents” (as cited in Chaudhary and Gupta, 2012, pp. 1157-1158).

There are other researchers that have studied the influence tactics children use to persuade their parents into buying them what they want. Atkin (1978) identified: asking, bargaining, persisting, using force, telling, being demonstrative, threatening, and using pity. Williams and Burns (2000) have classified this influence attempts into seven dimensions: asking nicely, just asking, bargaining, showing affection, displaying anger, begging and pleading, and conning.

What can be deducted from the work of all different authors is that it is explicit that children use different strategies to influence their parents and different researchers have categorized them differently. In this paper, the categorization of Chaudhary (2013) will be used to test which one of these strategies children use more to persuade their parents. In his work, he mentions five influence strategies, which are: 1. Aggressive Influence Strategies, where the child uses verbal or non-verbal aggression; 2. Persuasion Strategies, where children use arguments and beliefs to gain what they want; 3. Rational Strategies, where a child brings a logical explanation of why he/she demands the product and in return to gaining it offering deals - bargain; 4. Knowledge Strategies, where children use the knowledge of the product or brand; 5. Emotional Strategies, where the child is unnaturally nice to parent and acts affectionately in behavior. These strategies are chosen because they are in line with the strategies that Palan and Wilikes (1997) came up with in their study but taking out the strategies that parents use to influence the children. Moreover, Chaudhary (2013) influence strategies are like a summary of the different strategies that various researchers have used. For example, begging and pleading, persistence, demanding or arguing that are different strategies for Cowan et al. (1984) can
all be grouped in this first category of Chaudhary that is aggressive influence strategies. The same can be said for the other elements of any category out there. Hence, instead of having up to sixteen different categories one that has only five but consists of all other tactics will be used.

3.4 Model

Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) state that through the years of using different tactics with their parents, children have figured out which strategies are the ones that are going to make their parents yield in. Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) advocate that one of the lowest ranked strategies that it is deemed to be unsuccessful is being aggressive and demanding something. Ebster, Wagner, and Neumueller (2009) claim that children seem to understand that it is not worthy to be aggressive with their requests. The study of, Palan and Wilkes (1997) show that mothers, fathers but also children all agree at one point, which is that using anger and being aggressive in demanding things will not be helpful in getting what children want. Thus:

\( H1. \text{Aggressive strategy is negatively linked to parent’s buying behaviour} \)

In their work Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) suggest that their findings, in regard to what strategies are more effective and less effective, support what other researchers have claimed before like Palan and Wilkes (1997); Wimalasiri (2004); Shoham and Dalakas (2005). Persuasion is one strategy that according to Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) children have learned through experience is useful in persuading their parents to comply with their requests. Thus:

\( H2. \text{Persuasion strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour} \)

Moreover, what Shoham and Dalakas (2005, p. 160) state about which are the strategies that are more successful is that parents prefer it more when rational approaches are used instead of just mere insistence like “. . . when adolescents use rational tactics . . . parents are more likely to yield to the request than when adolescents use emotional tactics.” Thus the deal offered by a teenager – “I’ll go halves” or “I’ll mow the lawn” – works better than the passionate appeal – “Mary’s got one, everyone’s got one, I’ll be left out”. In
accordance to this Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) state that due to the high exposure to media nowadays are more knowledgeable and use more strategies that involve rational arguments and avoid using pressure or emotions to influence their parents. Thus:

**H3. Rational strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour**

Children nowadays grow up surrounded by media outlets like television and the internet. While using these platforms they are bombarded with information and advertising of different products. All this information that they gather through these platforms is usually used to convince their parents about groceries that they want to try. As Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) state due to this exposure to media, they become more knowledgeable about products and use this knowledge to their advantage to influence their parents to comply with their demands. Mothers and fathers agree that from the different strategies that children use to persuade them to buy groceries they like, reasoning and having a reasonable request is one of the most effective (Palan and Wilkes, 1997). Thus:

**H4. Knowledge strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour**

Shoham and Dalakas (2005) advocate that parents have a tendency to not respond to emotional tactics in comparison to rational tactics that are more accepted. Palan and Wilkes (1997) in their study of the strategies that are more successful and the ones that are not to mothers, fathers and according to children come up with the same results. In their research, they found out that mothers and fathers agree on the fact that whining which is an emotional strategy is least effective to them when used by their children. Logically emotional strategies like whining, nagging, giving the silent treatment to their parents and pretending to be sick do not give the desired effect when they are used. Thus:

**H5. Emotional strategy is negatively linked to parent’s buying behaviour**

Furthermore, buying behavior is closely related to age and number of children. Number of children is considered as an important factor in connection to family buying behavior (Ward & Wackman, 1972; Gupta, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2016) state that fewer children tend to have a higher influence on the family buying behavior. According to Gupta (2015) and Pettigrew et al. (2016) children with no siblings or one sibling tend to be more spoiled
by their parents and therefore when they request something parents are willing to yield to their requests and therefore:

**H6. Number of children is negatively linked to parent’s buying behavior**

Furthermore, age of children is considered as an important factor in relation to buying behavior. Benn (2004), Gupta (2015), Atkin (1978), Ahmad et al. (2011), Moschis and Mitchell (1986), Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987) and Nelson (1978) claim that older children tend to have more positive influence on parents. In previous research they claimed that the reason why it is that older children have more power is that they request less and therefore parents are more willing to buy them what they want and also that older children tend to have an opinion based on knowledge and experience and thus:

**H7. Age of children is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour**

Further, children have more responsibilities and more purchasing power due to changes in society and family structure (Greninger, 2017, part 2). Ishaque and Tufail (2014), Kaur and Singh (2006), Flurry (2007), Alam and Khalifah (2009) and Qualls (1987) claim that family structure has an impact on the level of influence and furthermore their research found that children from non-traditional families have more influence than children from traditional families. They claimed that the reason why it is like that is that children in non-traditional families are viewed by parents as equals, while children from traditional families are treated as subordinates to their parents authority and thus:

**H8: Non-traditional family structure has greater influence on parents’ buying behavior than traditional family structure.**
Figure 1: The research model
4. Methodology

4.1 Research Strategy
It is important to consider the research question and aim of the study when deciding for a research strategy because the strategy has to reflect upon the question. There are several research designs, from which possibly suitable for this quantitative research is survey study and archival research (Saunders et al., 2009). These research designs are also connected to different research approaches (ibid). Archival research was excluded due to lack of information for the study this paper is focused on. There was not sufficient information regarding buying behavior, influence strategies and family structure, that could have been used for this paper. Therefore, the most suitable study for this paper surveys, which supports the deductive approach with explanatory research.

Furthermore, the survey is a very economical way of data collection and allows a collection of a large amount of data (ibid.). Another advantage of using survey study is that a questionnaire gives an opportunity to every participant to respond to the exact same questions, which was learned to be very efficient in the collection of a large number of data. On the other hand, using survey strategy has some limitations as well, such as the number of questions, which would keep respondent’s attention, limited within the choices as well as no possibility of further comments, answers or questions from respondent’s side neither from researcher’s side.

4.2 Data Collection
For further understanding and exploration of the relationships that are included in the thesis, the paper collected primary data, using a quantitative method. The data for this paper were collected through an online survey using an electronically administered questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2009). The questionnaire included closed questions for easy and quick answers and statements answered based on the 1-7 Likert scale. Online survey was shared with social network and on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and WhatsApp on personal accounts and on different Facebook pages (altogether 23) such as Oslo International Parents Group, Parents of Yaletown, Gay Fathers Parenting, Parents With Kids age 0-5 in Singapore, Parents in Malmo, International Parents in Sweden, Informed Parents of California and Gay Parents in London. The survey was active and shared for 7 days.
First and guiding questions for the survey was whether the respondent is or is not a parent. If the respondent answered yes for being a parent, he/she continued to the next question. If the respondent replied no to being a parent, the survey was finished. This resulted in 237 participants, from which 191 were parents, which is almost 81% positive response rate. After looking through the answers, some had to be removed and not counted due to incomplete answers. The final number of complete and usable responses was 164. The survey through which the data were collected was written in the English language and was filled by individuals anonymously.

4.3 Sample Selection

The key factor in research design is sample selection and good sample selection and appropriate sample size saves and protects time, resources, money and enhance the strength of the study (Shorten & Moorley, 2014). It is claimed that investigation of the whole population is impossible (Denscombe, 2009) and that it is almost infeasible to conduct a study that would reach every possible sample in the population of interest (Shorten & Moorley, 2014).

The initial sample of this study represents the population of parents, which is applied on an international level. Thus, the survey was posted on social media in parents groups located worldwide and was spread out through the social network of parents to ensure that a great number of individuals were reached. The survey was decided to be spread out internationally because the paper wanted to obtain as many answers and to have as an overall aim general picture, which could only be achieved through international data collection.

The sample selection criteria for this paper was being a parent, who currently lives with their child/ren.

The fact is that nowadays there is a smaller share of households, that would include children worldwide than it was 40 years ago (UN, 2017). In countries of Africa and Asia, there are still more than 80% of households that would include at least one child under the age of 15 while on the contrary to that, most European countries have fewer than 30% of the households that include children (ibid.). Despite the fact that the sample size is decreasing, there is still a great number of possible participants.
The survey that was aimed for individuals, who represent specific population - parents, was posted randomly into different Facebook pages only choosing word parent/s. Request for acceptance into the groups was sent out to over 40 groups, from which only 23 accepted it. Afterward, a random member of the group or just a random person, who saw the link to the survey could fill it out. Therefore, the probability (representative) sampling method was used to select a sample that represents a specific population, where participants were randomly selected so the whole population sample had an equal chance for being selected to eliminate the possibility of sample selection bias (Shorten & Moorley, 2014).
4.4 Operationalization

The data were collected from parents of traditional and non-traditional families all over the world. Most of the statements that are used in the questionnaire are retrieved from articles about buying behavior and children influence strategies.

4.4.1 Dependent Variable

The concept of buying behavior was measured through the parent's intention to buy groceries for their children. These measures were formulated in line with previous literature (d'Astous, Maltais & Robegrge, 1990) where eight statements were measured on a seven scale Likert scale where 1= Strongly disagree and 7= Strongly agree. These statements were chosen due to its relevance to buying behavior, which was modified from friends and family effects on buying behavior to how children affect the buying behavior of parents. Respondents indicated on scale, to what extent the following statements apply to them as an individual:

- I often shop for groceries with my child/ren.
- My child/ren can decide what he/she/they want/s when grocery shopping.
- I take into consideration my child/ren desires when I buy groceries.
- I listen to what my child/children have to say about groceries I buy and I take their opinion into consideration when shopping for groceries.
- What my children like have influence on what I buy (groceries).
- When I buy groceries, my child/ren’s opinion is very important to me.
- When I buy groceries I wonder whether my child/ren will like it.
- Usually, when I want to buy groceries, I talk about it with my child/ren.

The dependent variable was measured as a mean and to ensure that the scale was valid, the paper used Cronbach alpha reliability test and confirmed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of α=0.855 which is quite high above the ideally alpha coefficient of α=0.7 (Pallant, 2013).

4.4.2 Independent Variables

In the questionnaire, there were different statements that referred to the strategies that children use to influence parents buying behavior. Articles that are in line with this paper like Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) and Wimalasiri (2004) were studied and are used as a
reference point into creating statements for each strategy. The statements regarding the strategies were all measured by a seven scale Likert scale where 1= Strongly disagree and 7= Strongly agree.

4.4.2.1 Influence Strategies

Aggressive Strategies - Three statements were used to measure if children were aggressive while asking their parents to comply with his/her request in parents perspective. The Cronbach alpha reliability test was done to make sure the scale was reliable and confirmed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of $a=0.799$ which is above the ideally alpha coefficient of $a=0.7$ (Pallant, 2013). Due to the acceptable alpha-value of 0.799, an aggressive strategy variable was created as the sum of the three statements.

A. My child/children refuse to eat if I do not agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children act stubbornly when they want me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children make demands, uses threats, or intimidation to persuade me to comply with his/her request.

Persuasion Strategies - Four statements were used to measure how parents perceive their children act while they use persuasion strategies to influence their buying behavior. For these four statements, the Cronbach alpha coefficient proved validity with a value of $a=0.793$. Due to the acceptable alpha-value of 0.793, a persuasion strategy variable was created as the sum of the four statements.

A. My child/children express an opinion on a product to buy.
B. My child/children insist on a product when they want me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children beg me to agree with his/her request.
D. My child/children tell me that a friend has a product, when they want me to agree with his/her request.

Rational Strategies - To understand if parents are being influenced by their children to buy them groceries with rational strategies four statements were formulated. To test the validity of these statements the Cronbach alpha coefficient was done and it showed a value of $a=0.885$, which is way higher than the ideal value $a=0.7$ (Pallant, 2013). Due to
the acceptable alpha-value of 0.885, a rational strategy variable was created as the sum of the four statements.

A. My child/children offer deals to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children make an explicit or implicit promise to give me some sort of service such as washing the car, cleaning the house, or taking care of the baby, in return for me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children seek to persuade me, by saying that the request was approved or supported by an older member of the family, a teacher or even a family friend.
D. My child/children seek the aid of others to persuade me to comply with his/her request or uses the support of others as an argument for me to agree with him/her.

Knowledge Strategies - Children usually use their knowledge of products to convince their parents to buy them a preferred grocery. Three statements were formulated based on previous research to test how parents agree with this. When tested for the Cronbach alpha coefficient those statements showed a value of a=0.9 which makes them reliable since the ideal value of it is a=0.7 (Pallant, 2013). Due to the acceptable alpha-value of 0.9, a knowledge strategy variable was created as the sum of the three statements.

A. My child/children use/s logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children imply that they have more information regarding a specific product, to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children state different arguments why one product is better than the other, to persuade me to agree with his/her request.

Emotional Strategies - Sometimes children are emotional in their request for groceries to their parents, in this paper four statements were used to find out from parents if their children use these strategies. This was the only case where the Cronbach alpha coefficient was lower than the ideal a=0.7 with an a=0.682. An a= 0.65 is deemed acceptable by some researchers due to smaller scales (Schmitt, 1996), that is why the alpha of this statement is deemed acceptable too. Due to the acceptable alpha-value of 0.682, an emotional strategy variable was created as the sum of the four statements.

A. My child/children start nagging and whining to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children give me the silent treatment when they want me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children are nice more than usual to me when they want me to agree with his/her request.
D. My child/children pretend they are sick when they want me to agree with his/her request.

4.4.2.2 Family Complexity

Number of children. All the participants in the questionnaire were asked to specify the number of children living with them at the moment. This variable was used as an independent variable since the decrease in the number of children in the household increases their influence on the buying decisions (Pettigrew et al., 2016). The number of children was coded as a continuous variable.

Age of children. In relation to the last hypothesis of this paper, a question about the age of children was asked in the questionnaire. The age of children was used as an independent variable because according to Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) the age of children influences the level of power that children have in the decision-making process. Furthermore, age of children was measured as an average of children from the family, due to the previous research showed that children tend to imitate each other and therefore it is relevant to measure age of children as average age (Sankar & Chuda, 1976; Bharathi & Venkatramaiyah, 1976). Age of children was coded as a continuous variable.

Family structure - The paper formulated hypotheses for family structure, given that previous research indicated that children have more control and more influence over buying behavior in less traditional and less conservative families (Flurry, 2006). Respondents were asked to state who their family consist of and then considered as traditional or non-traditional family. Participants could choose from options, where family consisted of mother-father-child/ren, mother-mother-child/ren, father-father-child/ren, father-child/ren, mother-child/ren.
**4.4.3 Control Variables**

*Gender of parents.* Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were Female or Male, which was coded as a categorical variable using only two categories 1 and 0. Gender was used as a control given that previous studies have indicated that there is an impact of sex role orientation on the outcome of a family home purchase decision (Qualls, 1987). A relatively strong relationship is found between sex-role orientation and decision outcome (ibid.).

*Age of parents.* Participants were asked to write down the year they were born so later on the age could be calculated in Excel by subtracting from 2019. Furthermore, the age of parents was used as a continuous variable. The age of the parent was used as a control because according to Stávková, Stejskal and Toufarová (2008) and Balcarová et al. (2014) consumers buying decision making are influenced by their age.

*Education.* Respondents were asked to report their level of education - elementary, high-school, bachelor, master or Ph.D. The level was used as a control due to previous studies have indicated that children from families, where parents attained higher education have more power and influence over their parents (Flurry, 2006). Education was coded as a continuous variable.

*Work status.* In line with previous studies within the field of parents buying behavior control for work status was used by asking respondents if they are working full-time, part-time, students, retired, self-employed or others. According to Moschis and Mitchell (1986), work status is important, because the more parents are occupied work wise, the more influence their children have. Due to zero respondents, who would claim that they are retired, this category was removed. Other categories were separately coded as categorical variables using only two categories 1 and 0. 1 represented being a part of that category and 0 not.

*Status.* A question regarding the status was answered by all the respondents. The status as control was important because as Flurry (2006) states, the changes in the structure of the
traditional families has increased the role of children in decision making. This is proven by the increase in children born to unmarried mothers (ibid). The respondent could choose out of five categories - single, married, in a relationship, cohabitation partnership or other, and therefore these categories were individually coded as a categorical variable using two categories 1 and 0, where 1 represents being a part of that category and 0 not.

*Nationality of parents.* Respondents were asked regarding their nationality based on an open question and were firstly grouped into category being European or not, where 1 represents being European and 0 not. These variables were coded as categorical variables. Later on grouped into categories of Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, America, Africa, and Oceania. Nationality of parents was used as a controlled variable since previous studies have indicated that different nationalities significantly differ when it comes to buying behavior (Sood & Nasu, 1995). This variable was divided into categories and individually coded as a dummy variable, where 1 means being part of that category and 0 not.

Among the questions of the questionnaire, there was a closed question that asked parents to identify how their children behave when they are out shopping for groceries with them. There were five options to this question and each one described one of the strategies. This question was asked to understand based on parents perceptions which of the strategy was used more by children to persuade their parents to buy groceries for them and it is not part of the correlations and regressions. It is only for descriptive purposes.

1. Child/children do not eat, show anger and act stubbornly. *(Aggressive Strategies)*

2. Child/children express opinions on the product, insist that this is what he/she wants, they beg for it. *(Persuasion Strategies)*

3. Child/children offer deals (example: clean room in return of a chocolate), bring some external reason, propose fair competition (example: coin toss). *(Rational Strategies)*

4. Child/children say they have more information about a product and state facts why the product is better. *(Knowledge Strategies)*
5. **Child/children are nicer than usual, are annoyed, whine and pretend they are ill. (Emotional Strategies)**

The name of the strategy in brackets was not in the online questionnaire.

### 4.5 Data Analysis

After collecting the information through the online questionnaire, this information needed to be transformed into usable “data” (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The transformation of data in a quantitative research means that it needs to be quantified (ibid). In some cases for some type of information this process can be done directly for example for the number of children and the statements that were answered in Likert scale in this research. The rest of the variables were quantified, which means that the information was coded into numbers to facilitate the analysis of the quantitative data which is done by SPSS analytical package. “Codes act as tags that are placed on data about people to allow the information to be processed by the computer”(Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 152). The coding process is done in an Excel document that was downloaded from the website esurveycreator.com where the questionnaire was created and the information was collected. From the coding a lot of control variables were identified such as the different control variables about the nationality. The questions about buying behaviour were coded and then used as dependent variable and a group of eight independent variables were created from the statements about the five strategies and family complexity. When all the variables were coded they were transported into SPSS so the analysis of the data could begin.

Firstly, Cronbach alpha reliability test was conducted for the dependent variable and the independent variables to measure the level of reliability. As it is shown above all the variables were reliable so no changes were needed. Secondly, a descriptive statistics was done to generate the arithmetic mean, median and standard deviation of all the variables, controlled, dependent and independent. After that the Spearman correlation test was done to understand the correlation between the different variables. Lastly, multiple regression tests were done to test if the eight hypothesis of this research model were supported. All
the independent variables were tested with the dependent variable of buying behaviour separately.

4.6 Reliability/ Validity/Trustworthiness

Reliability, replication, and validity are three of the most important evaluative criteria in business and management (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

In relation to reliability it can be said that it is concerned with repeatability of the results, more specifically the consistency of the measures of the different concepts used in this research (ibid). If the measure is not reliable then even what they are measuring will not be reliable. Replication goes on the same line as reliability with the change of consistency in the results of the research. According to Bryman and Bell (2015) the research should be explained in detail in order for other researchers to be able to replicate it if it is convenient.

The third criteria of evaluation is “validity which is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman and Bell, 2015. p. 41). Validity is comprised by measurement validity, internal validity and external validity. Measurement validity, verifies if a measure that is used to measure a concept does really do that. “Internal validity is concerned with the question of whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water”(Bryman and Bell, 2015. P. 42). “External validity is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context” (ibid).

The paper based its sample selection on probability sampling, which relies on random selection (Denscombe, 2010). It is based on normal distribution, where researcher has no influence on the selection of the sample (ibid.). Normality should be taken seriously, for when the data are not normally distributed, drawing reliable conclusions is impossible (Ghasemi & Zahediasl; 2012). On the other hand, if the sample size is large enough, meaning according to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) more than 30 or 40 or Denscombe (2010) over 100 responses, the violation of normality should not cause major problems.
4.7 Ethical Consideration

After carefully reading what the Declaration of Helsinki had to say about the ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects (World Medical Association, 2001), it was logical that the participants of the questionnaire should be informed about the seriousness of this research in handling their data. In every social network where the questionnaire, which was used to obtain data was published, the reason why this data was being collected was clearly specified before they would click on the link to start the survey. Once the link was clicked a short presentation of the two authors of this paper was given and the reason why they asked to answer this questionnaire was explained once more. An emphasize on the fact that the information that the participants would give was going to be totally confidential and only used for the analysis of this research. The participants were assured that the information was going to be deleted after this paper was finished. This was done so the participants could answer freely and honestly to all the questions and statements of the questionnaire and more reliable data could be collected.
5. Results and analysis

In this chapter, the findings of statistical data analysis of the survey will be presented. Throughout this chapter, the results of all statistical data will be analyzed and discussed in relation to all 8 hypotheses of the paper.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics was used to provide an overview of the empirical findings. Furthermore, all of the variable - dependent, independent and control will be presented on its own.

Dependent variable in this thesis is buying behavior, which was measured through the statements of intention to buy. According to the results, strongest intention of buying parents have when they personally wonder and considered their children’s desired or whether their child will like it or not. Averagely, participants slightly agreed that they are affected by their children when shopping for groceries. Mean of buying behavior is 4.6.

The independent variables in this paper are all influence strategies - aggressive, persuasion, rational, knowledge and emotional, family structure, number of children and age of children. All these variables are individually analyzed below.

Influence strategies - Descriptive statistics results for the aggressive strategy showed that the mean is 3.32, which means that the parents slightly disagree with the statements for the strategy of children to make their parents to buy groceries. On all strategies except emotional strategy minimum on the scale, which was chosen by the participants was 1 and the maximum was 7. The results for persuasion strategy are that mean is 3.98, which means that parents on average chose on scale, that they neither agree nor disagree with the statements. According to descriptive statistics results, rational strategy had a mean of 3.20, which means that parents slightly disagree with their children using acts of rational strategy. Descriptive statistics results of the knowledge strategy were that mean is 2.95, which indicates that parents slightly disagree with the statements and acts of knowledge strategies. The result for the mean of emotional strategy is 3.18, which shows that parents
slightly disagreed with the statements and unlike all other strategies used 1 as a minimum and 6.5 as a maximum.

*Number of children* - Results of descriptive statistics for number of children was that mean of the number of children is 1.64 with standard deviation of 0.75. Most families have 1 child - 50%, 38.5% of families have 2 children, 9% have 3 children and 2.5% of the families have 4 children.

*Age of children* - Age of children was counted as an average age of all the children within the family and the mean of the age of children was 5.7 years old with a standard deviation of 4.2. The youngest child in the results was newborn and the oldest child was 26.

*Family structure* - According to results of descriptive statistic, traditional family, which consist of mother-father-child/ren had representation of 77%, while non-traditional family, which is either single parent or same-sex parents had 23%.

The paper used 6 control variables, from which all of them were to control for respondents demographics.

*Gender* - Out of all 164 respondents, 68% were females and 32% were male respondents.

*Age* - Minimum age of the respondent in the survey was 19 years old and maximum age was 79 years old with average age 36.4 and standard deviation of 7.1.

*Nationality* - 73% of all the respondents were Europeans and 27% from other parts of the world. From all 73% European respondents 30% were from Northern Europe, 28% from Southern Europe, 9% from Eastern Europe and 6% from Western Europe. Other non-European respondents were 12% from America, 8% from Asia, 5% from Africa and 2% from Oceania.

*Education* - According to statistics, mean of the education is 3.52 with standard deviation of 0.9. Most of the participants are educated on master level - 44%, 35% of respondents claim that they are educated on bachelor level, 10% achieved PhD, 9% have education on high school level and 2% have elementary level of education.

*Status* - Most of the respondents, numerically, 72% were married, 11% were single and 10% of participants were living in cohabitation partnership. 5% were in relationship and 2% claimed to be part of category others, which included being widowed or divorced.
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Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

5.2 Correlations

After the descriptive statistics analysis was done, it was time to perform two other analyses to the data collected through the online questionnaire to study the relationship between buying behaviour and all the other variables. This two analysis are the multiple linear regression and Spearman's Correlation. Pallant (2007, p. 126) explains that “the correlation analysis is used to describe the strength and the direction of the linear relationship between two variables”. Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used when you have a continuous variables such as buying behaviour and a dichotomous variable such as gender (Pallant, 2007). Spearman’s coefficient is used when one variable is ordinal and the other is an interval or a ratio (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the data in this paper is ordinal and interval/ratio the Spearman’s coefficient is used.

In this paper a simple bivariate correlation is performed to the data, which “is concerned with the analysis of two variables at a time in order to uncover whether or not the two variables are related” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 346). Some key features of this method are the fact that it certainly “lies between 0 (zero or no relationship between the two variables) and 1 (a perfect relationship)—this indicates the strength of a relationship”
(Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.347). This coefficient is either positive or negative, the sign before the number is there to indicate the direction of the relationship (ibid). When the value is closer to the number one the stronger the relationship is, when it is closer to the zero the weaker the relationship is (ibid).
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<td>-0.181*</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>-0.179*</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-604***</td>
<td>0.540**</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-2.53***</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.228**</td>
<td>-0.264***</td>
<td>-0.204**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.170*</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.132</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>-0.310***</td>
<td>-0.271**</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.173*</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>-0.139</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>0.513***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.320***</td>
<td>-0.315**</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.210**</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>-0.190*</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.171*</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>-2.55***</td>
<td>0.376***</td>
<td>0.508***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.324***</td>
<td>-0.134*</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
<td>-0.222**</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>2.12**</td>
<td>0.497***</td>
<td>0.663***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
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<td>-0.200***</td>
<td>0.165*</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.176*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.545***</td>
<td>0.578***</td>
<td>0.591*</td>
<td>0.417***</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.264***</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.505***</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>0.263*</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>-0.231**</td>
<td>0.317***</td>
<td>0.276***</td>
<td>-1.96*</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.193*</td>
<td>-3.13**</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.333***</td>
<td>0.415*</td>
<td>0.509*</td>
<td>0.269*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
In Table 2 the relationship between the variables can be found. Among those relationships there are some significant correlations. The dependent variable in this paper buying behaviour has strong and statistically significant positive correlation with three strategies such as: rational strategies (0.330***); persuasion strategies (0.31***); knowledge strategies (0.324***), and a statistically significant negative correlation with family structure (-0.393***). This means that when the intention to buy increase the use of rational, persuasion and knowledge strategies by children increases also. This supports three of the hypotheses in this paper (H1; H2; H4) which state that these three strategies are positively linked with buying behaviour. The negative relationship with family
structure means that with the increase of buying behaviour the family structure decreases to the value 0 which represents non traditional families.

Most of the influence strategies used in this paper had a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between them like: rational strategies - aggressive strategies (0.376***); rational strategies - persuasion strategies (0.588***); persuasion strategies - aggressive strategies (0.513***); knowledge strategies - persuasion strategies (0.497***); knowledge strategies - rational strategies (0.663***); emotional strategies - aggressive strategies (0.545***); emotional strategies - persuasion strategies (0.578***); emotional strategies - rational strategies (0.591**); emotional strategies - knowledge strategies (0.417***). This means that when the increase of one of these strategies happens the increase of the other can be expected to happen. For example when children use emotional strategies they will use rational strategies also because this is one of the strongest relationships.

When it comes to the relationship status a significant positive correlation with family structure and being married was found: family structure - status single (-0.604***); family structure - status married (0.540***). In the case of being single a significant negative correlation was found with family structure. These correlations somehow explain that if you are a single parent you can not be married and can not be part of the traditional family structure.

Two correlations that need to be mentioned even though they do not have a very strong correlation but it is significant are the ones related to the data collected for one of the hypotheses of this paper that is about the number of children: number of children - age (0.346***); average age of children - number of children (0.317***). The first correlation means that with the increase in the age of the parent the number of children would increase and the other way around. The other one means that with the increase of the average age of children the number of children would increase also.

The average age of children correlated strongly and significantly with three out of the influence strategies such as: average age of children - family structure (-0.313***);
average age of children - persuasion strategies (0.333***); average age of children - rational strategies (0.415***); average age of children - knowledge strategies (0.500***). This means that with the increase of the average age of children the use of persuasion, rational and knowledge strategies would increase. Which makes sense because the older the child the more knowledge they have and apparently they use it. A significant negative correlation with family structure is found from this data also.

5.3 Multiple Linear Regressions

The hypotheses of the paper will be tested through the multiple linear regression analysis. Before looking at regression analysis, the paper tested and checked different models for multicollinearity at collinearity diagnostics. To check for multicollinearity, VIF-value of each model was identified, because the value indicates how much of the variability of a particular variable is not explained by the other variable in the model (Gómez, Pérez, Martín & García, 2016). According to Pallant (2013) if the VIF-value is above 10, it indicates high multiple correlation, which means that there is a possibility of multicollinearity.

This paper used 8 different multiple linear regression models, one for each hypothesis. All influence strategies are tested and analyzed in Table 6. 

H1. Aggressive strategy is negatively linked to parent’s buying behaviour, where highest VIF-value is 1,279, 

H2. Persuasion strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour and has highest VIF-value 1,261, 

H3. Rational strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour, where highest VIF-value is 1,305. Furthermore, Table 6. shows also test of 

H4. Knowledge strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour, where highest VIF-value is 1,261 and lastly 

H5. Emotional strategy is negatively linked to parent’s buying behaviour, which has highest VIF -value 1,307. All of the strategies´ VIF -values were below 10, which indicates no multicollinearity.

Moreover, family complexity was analyzed and tested in Table 7. 

H6. Number of children is negatively linked to parent’s buying behavior , where highest VIF-value is 1,235 , 

H7. Age of children is positively linked to parent’s buying behaviour , has highest VIF-value 1,859 and 

H8: Non-traditional family structure has greater influence on parent’s buying
behavior than traditional family structure, has highest VIF-value 1,227, which also means no multicollinearity.

Since the $R^2$ value tends to have more optimistic estimation, because it assumes that every variable in the model explains the variation in the dependent variable, while adjusted $R^2$ explains the percentage of variation of only independent variables that influence the dependent variable (Pallant, 2013), the paper will focus on the adjusted $R^2$ to get more reliable values and results, since the sample is not that big.

Moreover, all models, which tested for influence strategies used the same control variables and one influence strategy per model, since the correlation statistics showed strong correlation in between all strategies. Models, which tested for number of children and age of children used the same control variables, but the model, which tested for family structure did not include status being single, due to strong correlation. Further, each model is tested without control variable married, but included single, in a relationship, cohabitation partnership and others, because being married strongly correlated with the rest from status group. Furthermore, working full-time was excluded from all the models, because it strongly correlated with others in the work group - part-time, self-employed, students and others. Lastly, the paper excluded separate nationalities from all of the models, because the variables from the nationality group also strongly correlated with nationality - northern and southern Europe and therefore, the paper included being European or not to prevent problems and strong correlations.

Further, each of the models will be analyzed more in depth.
Table 6. Regression Analysis Models 1 2 3 4 5

Model 1 in Table 6, which tested for aggressive strategy had statistical significance of the regression model, where p<0.01, which means that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable. The adjusted R² for model 1 was found to be 0.112, which indicates that the variables in the model explain 11% of the variance in the buying behavior. Furthermore, in the model, there was negative significant relationship between nationality being European or not, working others, which mainly includes stay at home mothers (SAHM) and buying behavior. This means that having European nationality and being SAHM have negative impact on buying behavior. Both had significance on 10% level, where p<0.1. On the other hand, being single had positive significance on buying behavior on 1% level (p<0.01), which means that single parents have positive impact on buying behavior. Aggressive strategy had positive significance relationship with buying behavior on 5% level (p<0.05). In model 1, highest beta was found to be on being single (0.21), which shows that being single has the strongest explanatory power in the model. This finding further shows that H1 is not supported.

Model 2, which tested for persuasion strategy was significant on 0.1% level, where p<0.001. The adjusted R² for model 2 was 0.149, which shows that the variables in the
model explain 15% of the variance in the buying behavior. Moreover, working others - SAHM and nationality had negative significance relationship with the dependent variable on 10% level (p<0.1), which means that being a SAHM and European affect buying behavior negatively. Being a single parent was found to have positive significance relationship on 5% level (p<0.05) and persuasion strategy had also positive significance towards buying behavior on 0.1% level (p<0.001), which means that single parents and persuasion strategy have positive impact on buying behavior. Highest beta in the model 2 was on persuasion strategy 0.272, which means that persuasion strategy has the strongest explanatory power in the model. Finding positive significance between the variables supports H2.

Model 3 shows the test for rational strategy. The model was significant, where p<0.001, which means that model predicts the outcome variable. Adjusted R² for the model was 0.153, which indicates that the variables in the model explain 15% of the variance in buying behavior. As well as in the previous two models, work - others and nationality had negative significance. SAHM had negative significance on 10% level (p<0.1) and nationality on 5% level (0.05). This again means that SAHM and being European negatively affect buying behavior. Model 3 showed positive significance relationship with being single and rational strategy. Being single had positive significance on 5% level (p<0.05), while rational strategy had significance on 0.1% level (p<0.001). Rational strategy, which was found to have the highest significance has also the highest beta value of 0.288, which means that the explanatory power of the strategy is the strongest in model 3. The regression analysis showed support for the H3.

Model 4, which tested for knowledge strategy showed significance on 0.1% level, where p<0.001. The adjusted R² of the model is 0.176 and that shows that the variables in the model explains 18% of the variance in the buying behavior. Being European and SAHM had negative significance relationship with buying behavior, European on 5% (p<0.05) and SAHM on 10% level (p<0.1). Being single positive affect buying behavior, where significance was on 1% level (p<0.01). The regression analysis that tested for knowledge strategy showed positive significance relationship with buying behavior on 0.1% level (p<0.001) and furthermore showed that the beta value of the strategy is the highest (0.314) in the model and that means that knowledge strategy has the strongest explanatory power in the model. These findings show that H4 is supported.
Model 5 tested for emotional strategy and showed significance, where \( p < 0.05 \). Adjusted \( R^2 \) for the model was 0.089, which indicates that the variables in the model explain 9% of the variance in buying behavior. Both, nationality and work-other had negative significance relationship on 10% level (\( p < 0.1 \)) and therefore being European and SAHM affect buying behavior negatively. Only positive significance was found in status - single. The significance was on 1% level (\( p < 0.01 \)) and therefore being single positively affect buying behavior. Further, unlike in model 2, 3 and 4, where the strategies had strongest significance and highest beta value, being single was found to have the highest beta value of 0.222 in model 5, which means that status single has the strongest explanatory power in the model. Emotional strategy did not have positive nor negative significance and therefore H5 is not supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 6 Number of Children</th>
<th>Model 7 AVG. Age of Children</th>
<th>Model 8 Family Structure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Children</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.209*</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.359***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.145†</td>
<td>0.209</td>
<td>-0.14†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>-0.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>0.208</td>
<td>-0.156*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.065</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Part-Time</td>
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<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Self-Employed</td>
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<td>0.296</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
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<td>Work Student</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Others (Mainly SAHM)</td>
<td>-0.166*</td>
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<td>-0.128</td>
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<td>Status Single</td>
<td>0.227**</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.193*</td>
</tr>
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<td>Status In Relationship</td>
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<td>0.409</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Cohabitation</td>
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<td>0.094</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status Others</td>
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<td>0.066</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>F-value</td>
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<td>3.421</td>
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<td>Adj. ( R^2 )</td>
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<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.151</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIF value, highest</td>
<td>1.235</td>
<td>1.859</td>
<td>1.227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *** \( p < 0.001 \); ** \( p < 0.01 \); * \( p < 0.05 \); † \( p < 0.10 \)

Table 7. Regression Analysis Models 6 7 8

The paper further continues with the models related to family complexity, which are summarized in Table 7. Model 6, which tested for number of children was significant,
where \( p<0.5 \). Adjusted \( R^2 \) of the model was 0.079, which shows that the number of children explains 8% of the variance in the buying behavior. Gender, nationality and work-others showed negative significance, gender on 10% level \( (p<0.1) \) and nationality and work-others on 5% level \( (p<0.05) \). Therefore, being female, European and SAHM have negative impact on buying behavior. On the other hand, being single was found to be positively significant on 1% level \( (p<0.01) \) and hence being single positively affect buying behavior. Further, being single was also found to have the highest beta value of 0.227, which means that being single has the strongest explanatory power in the model. Number of children, for which this model tested for, was not found to be significant, which do not support H6 of the paper.

Model 7 tested for age of children was significant on 1% level \( (p<0.01) \). Adjusted \( R^2 \) of the model was 0.104, which indicates that age of children explains 10% of the variance in the buying behavior. Gender and nationality of the respondents was found to have negative significance relationship, gender on 10% level \( (p<0.1) \) and nationality on 5% level. Therefore, being female and being European have negative impact on buying behavior. Age of children had positive significance relationship on 5% level \( (p<0.05) \) and therefore positively affect buying behavior, and furthermore, age of children was also found to have the highest beta value of 0.209, which shows that age of children has the strongest explanatory power in the model. These findings indicate that H7 is supported.

Model 8, which tested for family structure was significant, where \( p<0.001 \). Adjusted \( R^2 \) for the model was 0.151, which indicates that family structure explains 15% of the variance in the buying behavior. Negative significance was found on variables work-others and family structure. SAHM had negative significance on 5% level \( (p<0.05) \) and family structure on 0.1% level \( (p<0.001) \), which means that SAHM and being traditional family have negative impact on buying behavior. Moreover, family structure was found to have highest beta value of 0.359, which means that family structure has the strongest explanatory power in model 8. These findings further shows that H8 is supported.
6. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from the statistical analysis obtained by the electronic questionnaire will be discussed. Furthermore, each of the hypotheses in connection to the results will be discussed.

As it is stated at the beginning of this thesis, the aim of this paper is to test the relationship between family complexity and influence strategies and whether and how they affect family buying behavior. The findings of this paper will be discussed to have a better understanding of the relationship that family buying behavior has with the influence strategies children use and family complexity.

Spiro (1983, p. 393) claims that “family decision-making process is often dynamic and complicated” and that children have influence in this process for food and toys but usually they are not influential for major durables. Kümpel Nørgaard, Bruns, Haudrup Christensen, and Romero Mikkelsen (2007, p. 212) discovered that “decision-making is a joint process when shopping for food, where children as well as parents influence decisions, and participate and carry out various tasks”. The results of the analysis clearly state that according to parents children have power in the family decision making because all strategies they use, except emotional, they use to persuade their parents to buy them groceries, in most of the cases parents give in. Most researchers in their study of children influence strategies agree that children favor more rational strategy when it comes to convincing their parents to buy them food or cereal. In Palan and Wilkes’s (1997) study of American teenagers, Wimalasiri’s (2004) study of children of Cook, Fiji and Tonga islands, Shoham and Dalakas’s (2005) study of teenagers (10-18 years) in Israel and in Chaudhary and Gupta’s (2012) study of children in age range 8-12 in India, they all came to the same conclusion, that rational strategy is used the most and emotional strategy is used the least. When asked indirectly with a closed question about the strategy that their children use when they are out grocery shopping or at home discussing shopping the parents that were participants in this survey chose the option that it is related with persuasion strategy the most and the knowledge strategy the least. This difference between the results of this paper and other studies could be explained by the fact that most of the respondents of this survey are from European countries and none of the studies above was
ambiented in Europe. Another explanation can be the age of the children that respondents have in the majority of the cases in the studies mentioned earlier. Mostly, children were teenagers ranging in age groups from 8 to 15 years old. In this paper the mean age of children is 5.7 years old which explains also why knowledge strategies are used the least by children in this study because as Gupta (2015) states older children have more knowledge of brands and use this strategy more.

Gram (2014) states that as it is identified by several studies, children are usually successful in their continuous requests for healthy and unhealthy food items. This is what the results of the analysis of this paper show as well. No matter what influence strategies, except emotional, children use to convince their parents to buy them grocery items they were successful. Even the strategies that from previous literature (Palan & Wilkes, 1997; Shoham & Dalakas, 2005; Ebster et al. 2009; Chaudhary & Gupta, 2012) had shown a negative relationship with parents intention to buy like the aggressive strategy and emotional strategy, in this paper one showed a positive relationship and the other no relationship at all, respectively. Further on all the influence strategies will be discussed in more detail.

Previous research states, that parent are more likely not to comply with their children’s request if they are aggressive (Palan & Wilkes, 1997; Ebster et al. 2009; Chaudhary & Gupta, 2012). The results from the analysis of the online survey showed the contrary. Hence, even when children tend to be aggressive in making requests for groceries they will end up getting what they want from their parents. This result goes in line with what Atkin (1978) found in its research of parents accompanied by their children to buy cereal, where he states that there were more positive response by parents when there were demands by children than when there were requests. In this analysis, the fact that there is a positive link with aggressive strategies and parents intention to buy may come as a result that most of the participants are working full time and feel guilty for not spending too much time with their children so they yield in for any of their requests. The young age of children could be another reason. Little children can not use reasoning and knowledge and they have yet to figure out that aggressive strategies are not that much successful in comparison to other strategies.

When it comes to the use of persuasion strategy from children to persuade their parents the analysis supported the hypothesis which stated that there is a positive link with this
strategy and parents buying behavior. As it is stated earlier in this paper this is the strategy that according to parents their children apply the most. As Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) state children use this strategy because they have learned through experience that it will be more successful than the others. Furthermore, children from the Cook Islands choose this strategy as one that they employ the most with their parents (Wimalasiri, 2004). This can come as a result of the young age of children that the participants have. At this young age, they tend to use tactics like insisting on one product, begging their parents and sometimes even whining to pursue them to buy their favorite food.

The analysis supported the third hypothesis of this thesis model also. This hypothesis states that rational strategy is positively linked to parent’s buying behavior. Wimalasiri (2004) advocates that this is a popular choice among children from the Fiji Islands. Furthermore, Wimalasiri (2004) states that at the age of five or six children have outgrown their needs beyond what their parents can afford, that is why they have to convince them with “real data” that they learn from radio and television. This statement is in line with the average age of children of parents that participated in the online survey. Moreover, Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) explain that children use rational strategies because they are more exposed to media from where they gain more arguments to persuade their parents. The respondents of the online survey were highly educated with the majority of them having a bachelor or master degree. Normally they would require from their children more rational arguments to convince them to buy what they want. This can explain the positive link between this strategy and parents buying behavior.

The fourth hypothesis of this research model is about knowledge strategy and its positive link to parents buying behavior. Based on the analysis of the data collected from the online questionnaire this hypothesis was supported. This means that when children approach their parents with facts about why a product is better than the other, parents will comply with their request. This hypothesis was supported by previous literature (Palan and Wilkes, 1997; Chaudhary & Gupta, 2012) and as Gupta (2015) says children have more knowledge about brands that is why they use this strategy more with their parents. As, Anger and Heineck (2009, p. 1276) found out that “individuals’ cognitive abilities are substantially associated with the skills of their parents”. Since the education of participants in this study is highly educated even their children are expected to be the same
and use their knowledge with their parents. Thus, there was a positive link between knowledge strategy and parents buying behavior.

From the analysis that is done in regard to the use of emotional strategies the results showed that the hypothesis which stated that there is a negative link between emotional strategies and parents buying behavior is not supported. The analysis showed that there is no positive nor negative significance between these two variables. This hypothesis even though was supported by previous studies (Palan & Wilkes, 1997; Shoham & Dalakas, 2005) turns out not to be supported by the data. This may come as a result of the young age of children that the participants have. As Gupta (2015, p. 22) states emotional strategy is used more by “older children that can understand the complex human emotion system”. Since the children of the participants of this paper have an average age of 5.7 they can be considered young to understand the complexity of human emotion. The non-existing relationship between emotional strategy and parents buying behavior can be explained by this.

What was found to be important in relation to children’s power in buying behavior of families is also the family complexity. As mentioned in the paper before, family complexity consists of family structure, age of children and number of children.

The family structure as a part of family complexity was considered to have an impact on buying behavior (Flurry, 2007; Alam & Khalifah, 2009; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Kaur & Singh, 2006; Qualls, 1987). Even though it was found that children have power, it differentiates based on the family structure. The paper considered traditional and non-traditional family, which includes same-sex families and single parent families. According to Mangleburg, Grewal and Bristol (1999) power of children in connection to family structure is connected with the authority of parents, which means that in some families, children are treated as subordinates to the parents, while in others are viewed as equals. In the traditional family structure, children are viewed as subordinates to their parent's authority, while in non-traditional family structure children are considered as equals (Mangleburg et al., 1999). Previous literature’s findings show that children in non-traditional families have greater influence than children in traditional families (Kaur & Singh, 2006; Flurry, 2007; Alam & Khalifah, 2009; Qualls, 1987). Even though the findings of the scholars are unified, the paper tested for family structure, where same-sex families were included as a part of the research of non-traditional families, while in
previous studies, only children from single-parent or divorced families were considered as part of non-traditional. The paper tested separately for same-sex and single-parent families, which resulted in both cases that they significantly affected buying behavior, and therefore, in the end, were grouped in the same category of non-traditional families in the paper. Empirical findings of the thesis indicated that family structure affects buying behavior and that children from non-traditional families have greater buying power that children from traditional families. The findings of the paper support the findings of previous researches and also the hypotheses of the paper.

Previous research also showed that age of children is very important in regards to their influence on family buying behavior, where all researches claimed that children in all age categories have power, which only differentiates by their age (Gupta, 2015, p.22; Ahmad et al., 2011; Ward & Wackman, 1972; Darley & Lim, 1986; Moschis & Mitchell, 1986; Nelson, 1978). Ward and Wackman’s research (1972) where they grouped children in three age categories showed that the youngest group of children (5-7) have the greatest buying power. On the other hand, other scholars such as Atkin (1978), Gupta (2015), Ahmad et al. (2011), Moschis and Mitchell (1986), Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987) and Nelson (1978) claimed that children have more influence power in decision-making as they grow older. They also discussed that one of the reasons for that is that the older they grow, they request less and therefore parents are more willing to yield to their requests. Another reason stated by Mangleburg et al. (1999) is that parents see older children as individuals, who have more knowledge and experience with the product. Therefore, the paper built the hypotheses regarding the age of children affecting the buying behavior. Hypothesis states that the age of children is positively linked to buying behavior. Empirical research conducted for this paper concluded that buying behavior is in fact positively linked with increasing age of children. This proves that the study supports findings of Atkin (1978), Gupta (2015), Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987), Ahmad et al. (2011), Moschis and Mitchell (1986) and Nelson (1978) and also support the hypotheses of the paper.

Number of children was researched as a possible factor, which has an impact on buying behavior as well. This was due to previous research has found that the number of children within the family has an impact on buying behavior (Ward & Wickman, 1972; Gupta, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2016). Most of the researchers claimed that smaller number of
children is positively linked to the buying behavior (Gupta, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2016) and therefore, the paper built its hypothesis on the number of children on that. Unlike in categories age of children and family structure, where scholars claimed that both always affect buying behavior, but were not united in the opinion of stage or how, in number of children there were scholars who also claimed that number of children do not play any significant role in family buying behavior (Ward & Wackman, 1972). Due to these oppose opinions, the paper empirically tested for the number of children in the family. The results showed that the number of children do not significantly affect buying behavior, which means that there is no positive nor negative influence whether family consists of 1, 2, 3 or 4 children. Further, these results support Ward and Wackman (1972) study and therefore also do not support the hypothesis of the paper, which stated that the number of children has an negative influence on buying behavior. The reason, why the number of children is not significant was explained in the study that it does not matter how many children you have, it depends on raising patterns of the parents.
7. Conclusions

From the beginning of this paper it is stated that children power in parents buying decision-making has grown over the past years. This generation of children is growing up with multiple screens with information and advertising surrounding them everywhere. This makes them more knowledgeable and ready to influence their parents into buying them what they want, since they are young and have not yet become direct customers even though they may have pocket money.

7.1 Overarching Conclusion

To understand the link between influence strategies and parents buying behavior, five strategies were created based on the ones used by Chaudhary (2013) which are aggressive, persuasion, rational, knowledge and emotional strategies. Supported by previous literature Palan and Wilkes (1997); Wimalasiri (2004); Shoham and Dalakas (2005); Ebster et al. (2009); Chaudhary and Gupta (2012), stated that persuasion, rational and knowledge strategies have a positive link with parents buying behavior and aggressive and emotional strategies have a negative link. The results of the analysis are somehow surprising because it showed that there is a positive link with buying behaviour and all the strategies and except for emotional strategy where no link was found. This means that even when children are aggressive in their demands for groceries their parents will give in and buy them the item that they want. These results can be explained with the fact that the parents that were the respondents of the online survey were mostly working full time and are trying to compensate for the fact that they do not spend too much time with their children with giving them whatever they like grocery wise. The non-existing link with emotional strategies may come as a result of the young age of children that the participants have. Due to young age they can not use emotions as a strategy even though they may use it unintentionally.

When it comes to how family structure, number of children and age of children, affect parents buying behaviour, supported by previous literature: Ward and Wackman (1972); Atkin (1978); Nelson (1978); Moschis and Mitchell (1986); Swinyard and Peng Sim (1987); Qualls (1987); Kaur and Singh (2006); Flurry (2007); Alam and Khalifah (2009); Ahmad et al. (2011); Ishaque and Tufail (2014); Gupta (2015); Pettigrew et al. (2016);
Benn (2004); Gupta (2015); Greninger (2017), it was stated that fewer children have more buying power. Children from non-traditional families have more influence on parents buying decision and that older children are positively linked with buying behaviour. From these three approaches only the one regarding the number of children is not supported. Even this one though is supported by research of Ward and Wackman (1972) which state that the number of siblings has no influence on parents buying behaviour.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions
The purpose of this thesis is to explain which influence strategies affect parent’s buying behavior, and how family complexity like traditional or nontraditional family and age of children and number of children influence this buying behavior, as perceived by parents. The research model that this paper presented is something that it has not been done before. What this paper contributes to the literature is the fact that for the first time same-sex couples were part of the non-traditional family alongside single parents. Another contribution is that this paper is not focused on one or two countries but has respondents from every continent. In the end about the model it can be said that is good and relevant because it focuses on aspects that have not been researched much before.

7.3 Practical Implications
Some practical implications that can be derived from the results of this paper for the family buying behaviour are for parents to understand how they are being influenced by their kids into buying them whatever they want. Parents should acknowledge the power that the young members of the family are gaining day by day. Parents have to understand that when their children insist or beg for one item they are using the persuasion strategy on them. Another implication can be for marketers that need to pay more attention to children as a marketing target group not only as direct consumers but as indirect consumers as influencers as well, because they play a very important role in the secondary market, where they pose as influencer on the breadwinners that are their parents.

7.4 Limitations
One of the limitations of this thesis is the number of respondents, who answered the survey. The paper surveyed parents worldwide through online questionnaire, but the
number of respondents were as high as 164, which constrains the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the wider population. Another limitation of the study is connected with mono-method of data collection - only survey, which limits from further questions from respondent and moderator, especially in explanation of behavior. Furthermore, the study and hypotheses were tested based on data collected from parents perspective, which gives another limitation. Even though the research proved that data collected from parents perspective are more reliable (Ward & Wackman, 1972; Pettigrew et al., 2016; Balcarova et al., 2014) it still limits the study to only just one perspective. Lastly, what is considered as a limitation of the study is the measurement of the age of the children, which was measured as an average age. This is considered as a limitation due to the fact that different age groups of children use different strategies to request what they want from parents and therefore older children being grouped with young ones gives only approximate result, even though some literature explained that children tend to imitate the behavior of older siblings (Sankar & Chuda, 1976; Bharathi & Venkatramaiah, 1976), which support the idea of how it was measured in the paper.

7.5 Future Research

Since the paper found that individual strategies, family structure and age of children significantly affect buying behavior, it can be suggested for future research to study the relationship of family complexity and other demographic variables of parents and children in relation to strategies, which would affect buying behavior such as income of parents and gender of children. This research contributed and tested all strategies and family complexity with addition of same sex families among family structure and found positive relation towards buying behavior and therefore it could be relevant to make further research, which would further study the relationship from not only parents´s but also children´s perspective. Further, to gain as most reliable data as possible, qualitative and quantitative method should be used. Furthermore, since behavior is general is considered as a psychological act, observation method to collect the data could be relevant. Moreover, to have more insights for individual behavior and why they use certain strategy and when in different regions, cross-cultural analysis could contribute to understand that.
8. References


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9. Appendix

9.1 Questionnaire

Dear participant,

For our master thesis in International Business and Marketing at the Kristianstad University, Sweden, we would appreciate if you would answer some questions about your personal experience in the family buying behavior, especially how children influence your buying behavior.

Answering all the questions will take approximately 8 to 10 minutes of your time. Be assured that all the responses are anonymous and the data collected will be treated confidentially for the solely use of our master thesis.

If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to contact us: elda.tereza@outlook.com

Thank you for your time to support us and our work.

Elda Ali and Tereza Kerpčarová

Questionnaire

Part 1: General Information

1. Do you have children?
   
   ● Yes
   ● No

(If the answer to this question is NO the questionnaire will end for the participant)
2. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

3. Age (Please write down the year you were born)
   ______________________

4. What is your nationality?
   ______________________

5. Where do you currently live?
   ______________________

6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*
   - Elementary school graduate
   - High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
   - Bachelor’s degree
   - Master’s degree
   - Doctorate degree
   - Other (please specify) ______________________

7. What is your work status? (more than one answer possible)
   - Working full-time
   - Working part-time
   - Self-employed
● Retired
● Student
● Others (please specify) ____________________________

8. Can you please write down how many children do you have?
____________________

9. Your status
● Single
● Married
● In a relationship
● Cohabitation partnership
● Other

10. Please specify the age of each one of the children living with you
a. ________________
b. ________________
c. ________________
d. ________________
e. ________________
f. ________________

Part 2: Buying Behavior
1: Strongly Disagree to 7: Strongly Agree

1. I often shop for groceries with my child/ren.
2. My child/ren can decide, what he/she/they want/s when grocery shopping.
3. I take into consideration my child/ren desires when I buy groceries.
4. I listen to what my child/children have to say about groceries I buy and I take their opinion into consideration when shopping for groceries.
5. What my children like have influence on what I buy (groceries).
6. When I buy groceries, my child/ren’s opinion is very important to me.
7. When I buy groceries I wonder whether my child/ren will like it.
8. Usually, when I want to buy groceries, I talk about it with my child/ren.

Part 3: Influence Strategies

When you answer this questions please think of similar situations that you might have found yourself in. Situations like when you are out shopping with your kids or when you are at home and discussing what groceries to buy.

Adapted from Chaudhary and Gupta (2012) and Wimalasiri (2004)

1: Strongly Disagree to 7: Strongly Agree

1. Aggressive Strategies

   A. My child/children refuse to eat if I do not agree with his/her request.
   B. My child/children act stubbornly when they want me to agree with his/her request.
   C. My child/children make demands, uses threats, or intimidation to persuade me to comply with his/her request.

2. Persuasion Strategies

   A. My child/children express an opinion on a product to buy.
   B. My child/children insist on a product when they want me to agree with his/her request.
   C. My child/children beg me to agree with his/her request.
D. My child/children tell me that a friend has a product, when they want me to agree with his/her request.

3. Rational Strategies

A. My child/children offer deals to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children make an explicit or implicit promise to give me some sort of service such as washing the car, cleaning the house, or taking care of the baby, in return for me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children seek to persuade me, by saying that the request was approved or supported by an older member of the family, a teacher or even a family friend.
D. My child/children seek the aid of others to persuade me to comply with his/her request or uses the support of others as an argument for me to agree with him/her.

4. Knowledge Strategies

A. My child/children use/s logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children imply that they have more information regarding a specific product, to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children state different arguments why one product is better than the other, to persuade me to agree with his/her request.

5. Emotional Strategies

A. My child/children start nagging and whining to persuade me to agree with his/her request.
B. My child/children give me the silent treatment when they want me to agree with his/her request.
C. My child/children are nice more than usual to me when they want me to agree with his/her request.
D. My child/children pretend they are sick when they want me to agree with his/her request.
Please indicate below how your children behave while you are shopping with them for groceries and they want you to buy them something. Feel free to choose two options.


2. Child/children express opinions on the product, insist that this is what he/she wants, they beg for it.

3. Child/children offer deals (example: clean room in return of a chocolate), bring some external reason, propose fair competition (example: coin toss).

4. Child/children say they have more information about a product and state facts why the product is better.

5. Child/children are nicer than usual, are annoyed, whine and pretend they are ill.

Part 4: Family complexity

Your family consists of

- **Mother - Father - child/ren**
- **Mother - Mother - child/ren**
- **Father - Father - child/ren**
- **Father - child/ren**
- **Mother - child/ren**

We are not focusing on separated partnerships, because in that case child still have both parents, so its family in the meaning of if the child has both parents that know of and spend time with them.