

# THE EFFECTS OF TURKISH TEENS OVER FAMILY PURCHASE OF VARIOUS PRODUCTS<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The objective of this study is to investigate the power of teens over family purchasing decision process over 25 products. The study divides these 25 products into 5 main categories according to the prices/riskiness of each product. Moreover, the study distinguishes purchasing process as three sequential steps (i.e. recognition of need, information search and actual purchase), we conducted a survey over 821 high school students in Eskisehir. The study is aimed at addressing this question: What is the role (or influential power) of teens in family purchasing decision process (for each step) of these five type of product groups? The study finds that the teens are dominant player in each steps of purchasing for products at which teens are the main users. Moreover, the results are almost same for low and high risk (or price) products. Teens are selective for products directed at family use. In particular, the relative influential power of teens in family purchasing process for technology related products (e.g. TV, home theater system, DVD player, and camera) is significantly apparent while teens are not willing to contribute decision making for other products such as detergent, washing machine, soap etc.

**Key Words:** family purchasing, purchasing decision process, teen's influence, reverse socialization

**Özet:** Bu çalışmanın amacı ergenlerin aile satın alım kararlarına olan etkilerini incelemektir. 25 adet ürün ya da mal nispi risk ya da fiyatları temel alınmak sureti ile 5 ana gruba bölünmüştür. Buna ilave olarak bu çalışma satın alma sürecini 3 aşamadan (ihtiyacın belirlenmesi, araştırılması ve satın alınması) oluştuğunu varsaymıştır. Cevaplandırılmak istenen soru: Her bir mal grubunun satın alınması sürecinde ergen bu süreçte ilgili ürün grup merkezinde ne kadar katkı yapmakta ya da bu sürece ne kadar etki etmektedir? Bunun için Eskişehir ilinde 821 lise öğrencisi üzerinde anket çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu anketlere uygulanan analizler ekseninde, ergenler kendilerine yönelik ürünlere (gerek düşük risk/fiyat gerekse de yüksek risk/fiyat) ait karar verme aşamalarının tümünde temel karar verici durumundadırlar. Aile kullanımına yönelik ürünlerin satın alınması sürecinde ise ergenler seçici oldukları bulunmuştur. Örneğin ergenler, aile kullanımına yönelik teknolojik ürünlerin (televizyon, ev sinema sistemi, DVD oynatıcısı ve kamera gibi) satın alınması aşamalarında aktif rol oynamaktadırlar. Bunun aksine ergenler, aile tüketimine yönelik bazı ürünlerin (örneğin deterjan, çamaşır makinesi, sabun gibi) satın alınması sürecinde etkili değildirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** aile satın alımı, satın alma karar süreci, ergen etkisi, tersine toplumsallaşma

## INTRODUCTION

Children and teens are seen today as a powerful and an attractive market segment, not only by marketing practitioners, but also by the academy (Beirao, 2006: 1). As teens' purchasing power, market size, and family influence increase, it becomes vital for marketers to understand this unique market (Schoenbachler et. al, 1995: 1).

The developments observed in the last few decades in both information and communication technologies have caused significant changes over both consumption pattern and consumer socialization process. While psychologists and family counselors research debate the social and psychological impact of technology and the internet on children and adolescents, consumer behaviorists have generally not ventured far into this domain (Batat, 2008: 4). However, the technology-related products offer many new research questions and interesting opportunities for scholars in marketing discipline.

The factors brought by technology to lives of both adults and teenagers have become very important area for several disciplines including marketing. Due to their dynamism, aptitude towards risk-taking, flexible and adequate free time, teens are perceived to be seeking out innovations and they are willing to adopt them. With regards to consumer electronic products they are called technology trendsetters who are able to wield considerable influence in household technology purchases (Götze, 2006: 1). Adults, especially parents, often look to teens to guide a technology purchase (Koening 2005: 2).

Marketing scholars have been investigating the factors determining the purchasing decision process of families for several years. One of the important research questions in this domain addressed by the scholars has been the influence of teens over the family consumption decision. By dividing purchasing decision into some sequential steps (i.e., recognition of need, information search, actual purchase etc.), the scholars' objective is to detect the factors (i.e., age, sex, family type etc.) positively or negatively correlated with teens' influence over each step of the process.

The more recent research avenue differentiates the superior role of teens over family purchase of technology related products. In particular recent studies show that there exists some products for which the knowledge of teenagers about these products is much more or superior than that of parents (or other adults surrounding these young people). Today's teenagers are 'early adopters' of new technologies, while they live in a digital world surrounded by communication technologies and leisure activities (Batat, 2008: 3). The phenomenon is known as reverse socialization. The main motivation of reverse socialization

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model which is still in infancy is to incorporate the superior knowledge of teenagers over some products so that the parents (and other adults) are on the position to demand the help of teenagers for these products.

In this research, we will have two objectives: Firstly, by dividing purchasing process into three sequential steps, we will show the relative influence of teens over family purchasing process over 25 different product/product groups in each step. Secondly, by including some technology related products into our product categories, the study is aimed at findings the degree of reverse socialization for Turkish teens.

The paper consists of five parts. In the second part, we will present some background issues regarding the influence of teens over family purchasing process. The third section of the paper will explain the research design and hypothesis. The fourth part will present the statistical findings. The final part of the paper will discuss and evaluate the findings.

## **BACKGROUND: THE POWER OF TEENS OVER FAMILY PURCHASE**

Researches linking the family with consumption behavior and consumption process have been dated back to 1970s. The early works generally focused on the interaction of husband and wife over family consumption process<sup>3</sup>.

Why are teens so important in family-consumption process? When we look at the issue in historical perspective, the paradigm shift in the role of children and teens in family consumption process took place after 1950s. The developments after the WW-II observed in economics, finance, technology, politics and in many other areas have caused significant alteration over the structure and organization of family. Among other things, the developments have caused major changes over the role of children and teenagers. Due to these structural and organizational shifts, children and teens have become important consumer agents in the family.

Prior to 1950s (it can go all the way back to invention of press), the traditional family structure did not allow children and teens to out speak their ideas. The paradigm shift took place in the 1950s due to several reasons. With the entrance of women in the work-force, women gained financial independence which lead divorces occur more and more frequently. Secondly, connected with the first argument, the number of one-income families diminishes to the advantage of two-income families affecting amongst other the number of hours a week parents work. Thirdly (also connected with the first argument), the families started to have children in their 30s or 40s. Finally, (also connected with the first and the third argument), birth rate has fallen, leading to smaller families (See for detail treatment for example; Wang et.al., 2007; Clulow, 1993; Ellwood, 1993, and Geuens et.al., 2003) . All these factors (relative to teens who had lived prior to this century) caused teens to have more responsibilities, more financial resources to command and less competition from brothers and sisters.

In the literature, teens are perceived as important actors in the market because of at least three reasons. They are a primary market because they have money of their own; secondly, they influence buying decisions of the persons to whom they relate most closely; and they are tomorrow's customers, the "future market" (See for example; Bao et.al. , 2007; Bao, 2001; McNeal, 1998; Beatty & Talpade, 1994, and Götze, 2005).

During the previous decades all three aspects have gained in relevance (e.g., in comparison to their parents, children get more pocket money, and they also are admitted more impact in family buying decisions (See for detail treatment for example; Caruana and Vassallo 2003; Götze, 2005).

Due to these developments, the scholars in marketing started to include children (and teens) into family-consumption process particularly after the late 1970s<sup>4</sup>. These researches focused different aspects of the family-teen-consumption triangle (also known as triadic studies). One of the aspects in these researches is to evaluate the interest of teens and children over one particular good or set of goods. Many of the triadic studies focused on goods of particular interest to children, such as cornflakes, chocolate bars, and lemonade<sup>5</sup>. In addition to these relatively cheap and non-sophisticated or "minor" goods, triadic studies in the early 1980s started to investigate more sophisticated goods and services including; house, refrigerators, TV, VCR, decorative items, furniture, location and hotel selection for family vacation, type or location selection for family dinner etc. <sup>6</sup>. The focus of most studies was the children's relative role in their parent's buying decisions, children's various influence strategies, and their success (Götze, 2005: 2).

In examining, the effects and influence of teenagers in family consumption process, consumer socialization theory has been the main theoretical tool. The term consumer socialization borrows its basis from socialization researches where the traditional focus was the development of children from a perspective far more related to production, work and education than consumption, as when e.g. psychologists and sociologists have studied achievement motivation, learning abilities, schooling practices, and so forth (Bjurstöm, 2002: 9). Consumer socialization, defined as the processes by which young people acquire

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<sup>3</sup> See for example; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Davis 1976; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Spiro 1983.

<sup>4</sup> See for example; Foxman, Tansuhaj et al. 1989; Beatty and Talpade 1994; Götze and Schlegelmilch 2001.

<sup>5</sup> See for example; Berey and Pollay 1968; Mehrotra and Torges 1977; Atkin 1978; Roberts, Wortzel et al. 1981; Isler, Popper et al. 1987; Rust 1993.

<sup>6</sup> See for example; Ward and Wackman 1972; Szybillo and Sosanie 1977; Jenkins 1979; Moschis and Moore 1979; Nelson 1979; Belch, Belch et al. 1985; Darley and Lim 1986; Foxman and Tansuhaj 1988; Beatty and Talpade 1994; Mangleburg, Grewal et al. 1999.

skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace (Ward, 1974: 2). The studies referencing consumer socialization model have focused on factors that might contribute to children's choice of and knowledge about consumer products, as well as their behavior in different kinds of markets and the growth of consumer skills. The model has been used since the 1970s to study different aspects of children's and young people's relations to market places, shopping and advertising (for an overview of some aspects of this research, see e.g. Bjurström 1994 and John 1999). Consumer socialization theory stems from social learning theory, but encompasses cognitive development theory as well (Moschis and Churchill 1978:60). Social learning theory assumes that young people learn skills through a continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental factors. The key to understanding development is to identify the personal and environmental factors relevant to the behavior of interest, as well as the processes driving the interaction. Not surprisingly, therefore, studies presented from this point of view have been first and foremost concerned with the young consumer's role in marketing, and especially advertising (Bjurström, 2002: 9).

In broad sense, having employed the consumer socialization theory as the theoretical backbone, the empirical pieces investigating the effects of teenagers over family-purchasing process have produced some reasonable and testable factors or variables. The researches have specified large number of variables in measuring such effects:

1. Variables related to teens (i.e. age [cognitive ability], gender, birth order.
2. Variables related to family (i.e. family type [democratic, tolerant, intolerant etc.], age of mother and father, education level, age of mother and father)
3. Variables related to culture
4. Variables related to products/services in question
5. Decision stage of related good into process of purchasing (recognition of need, information search, actual purchase etc)

In our study, we will focus on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> in investigating the family consumption process. Although we include almost all of the above variables in our broad research (i.e. "reverse socialization"), in this paper, we limit ourselves with "consumer-socialization" issue. The most important reason for this is due to fact that when we design our broad research, we did not participate to investigate the influence of teens over purchase of the traditional goods and services. Therefore, we did not pursue full scale statistical analysis over all the variables outlined above. Since this work is still on progress, we are on the process to pursue this objective.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Why do we purchase some goods and services? Consumers' purchasing is quite complex involving interaction of several variables. Marketing discipline distinguishes purchasing decision as a process involving a sequence of steps. The study assumes that the family purchasing comprises three steps and these steps are: 1) recognition of need; 2) information search; 3) actual purchase.<sup>7</sup> The first step of the purchasing process is addressing (at least partially) this "why" question. In the research design of the study, we assume that a family makes a single decision over each step in the purchasing process, but each members of the family has some influential power or role in the formation of that particular choice. Therefore, we assume that each step of purchasing process is considered as a choice and each member in the family uses his/her persuasion power or forming coalition with other family members so that the final choice is formed. The recognition of need, information search and actual purchasing, are assumed to be independent choices formed by the family members through some sort of bargaining and through this bargaining final choices are made at each separate step.

The purchasing process begins with recognition of need. Whenever the consumer gets aware that there exists a disparity between his current situation and some desired goals, the first step of purchasing over a particular commodity or service becomes evident. Although Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995) recognizes three major determinants of need, including individual differences, environmental influences and information stored in the memory, in literature, the awareness of a want or deprivation is generally expressed by the former two factors. In other words, the first step of purchasing encompasses a variety of external or environmental factors (e.g. culture, social class, personnel influence, family) and individual or internal factors (e.g. consumer resources, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, lifestyle, demographics) (Williams, 2002:47). The need may be aroused in response to a specific problem (e.g. a broken window, flat tire) or a regular and common need (e.g. hunger, companionship, prestige). Finally, in some times, the need may be triggered by internal stimuli (e.g. physiological thirst) or external stimuli (e.g. TV advertisement) (Stokes and Lomax, 2008:120).

Once the consumer recognizes the need for a product, the second stage of the purchasing takes place. In this stage, consumers tend to engage searching for information about possible purchase choices, the extent to which may be feature of how important or routine the decision is seen to be decision maker (Williams, 2002:48). Although the intensity and the involvement of the consumer over the search activity may depend on properties of products (e.g. expensive, cheap, private) as well characteristics of consumers (e.g. income level, gender, stinginess, outgoingness), the level of search can be regarded as a good indicator the degree of consumer involvement. Potential source of information are considered, including the media, friends, relations or other significant influences, with external messages dominated by range of marketing sources, including sales persons, point of sale material and other forms of advertising, etc (Williams, 2002:48).

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<sup>7</sup> In some studies, there are five steps: 1) need recognition, 2) search, 3) evaluation of alternatives, 4) actual purchase and 5) post purchase.

In some circumstances, the consumer recognizes the need but no further information is sought as the consumer moves straight to the act of purchase. On the opposite end, sometimes consumers spend significant amount of time and resources in gathering detail information about products. Before buying these (most likely) risky and expensive products (e.g. house, car), an active search for information is instigated by reviewing product literature, reading consumer reviews, talking to friends or seeing product demonstrations. Another possibility is simple ignorance. The consumer acknowledges the need but takes no deliberate steps towards fulfilling it (Stokes and Lomax, 2008: 121). Instead their awareness of products or services fulfilling the need is heightened and they become more receptive to communications about those products, including advertising, and promotions and conversations among friends.

In the literature, product evaluation is also considered as another step before the actual purchase made. In this step, having considered the range of alternatives available, the potential consumers then evaluates each in terms of gains and losses, this consideration being based on the range of criteria that has developed as being important to the particular decision (Williams, 2002:50). In our study, we assume that at the second step (i.e. information search) , the consumer not only gather information but also evaluate the alternatives before final decision is made.

Finally, the study assumes that the final step of purchasing is “actual purchase” of the good. Actual purchase is the act of acquiring the product or service. Although the time and effort spend by consumers in each step of the purchase display significant variation, it is generally accepted (*ceteris-paribus*) that the resources devoted in these steps are positively related with the consumer's perception of risk. In other words, the consumer's perceived risk, consumer's involvement and resources devoted in each step are expected to be linked. For a certain product, the higher the perceived risk, the greater the consumer's involvement and thus the greater the time and effort spent in each of the steps. In order to capture this point (at least partially), we divided products into five major sub-categories. The definition and description of each class are given on Table 1. On the table, the first two product categories (A and B) contain products directed at family consumption. Category A consists of “high risk” products while category B contains “low risk” products. Product category C consists of products directed at mother and father use. Last two product categories (D and E) target products for teen use. Category D and E consists of “high risk” and “low risk” products, respectively. In conclusion, the design of the study is aimed at investigating the teens' influence over family purchase of some goods where the study not only differentiates products according to their relative riskiness (and thus price) but also decomposes purchasing as three sequential but independent events.

**Table-1: Product-Product Category**

Class	Directed to use of	Relative Price	Products
A	Family	High Risk	car, camera/digital photo machine, refrigerator, TV/movie system, washing machine, DVD player, laptop-desktop computer, home furniture (for family)
B	Family	Low Risk	toothpaste, movie/rental purchase, chocolate/chips, cosmetics (shampoo, soap), honey, jam, peanut butter ,cola, fruit juice, vegetables, fruits, washing detergents
C	Father/Mother		cell-phone (for M&F), clothes and shoes (for mother and father)
D	Teenager	High Risk	Bicycles, clothes and shoes for teen, furniture for teen's room, cell phone for teen's use
E	Teenager	Low Risk	stationery goods, on-line games, game rental or purchase

In order to measure the effects of teenagers over these 5 product categories (25 products) for three purchasing steps: we conducted a survey over 821 students<sup>8</sup>. The sample is drawn from the universe of “students attending high school in Eskisehir”<sup>9</sup>. Based on all the students attending high school in Eskisehir as our universe, we employ Stratified Sampling method where each type of high school is sampled according to their relative size in total universe. These schools are: 1) General high schools, 2) Anatolian high schools, 3) Science high school, 4) Private high schools, and 5) Vocational high school.

In determining the effect of teens; we ask the teen to choose the answer among a five point Likert scale for particular goods. Table-2 shows the explanation of the score for the scale we employ in the study.

**Table-2: Likert Scale Scores**

Score	Meaning
1	My decision entirely: Teens is the only actor
2	My decision is more important than my parents

<sup>8</sup> The survey was distributed total of 1273 students. The survey with incomplete data is excluded from the analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Eskişehir with a population of over 600,000 is a relatively large city by Turkish standards and it is very close to nation's capital city, Ankara.

3	My parents and I decide together
4	My parents decision is more important than me
5	My parents decision entirely

### *The Measure of Teens' Influence on Purchasing Process*

Following Güneri et.al. (2009)'s study, we transform the result of questionnaire into a single Likert scale. The scale is employed through the analysis, where, 1 indicates a %100 child's influence and 5 indicates a %100 influence by parents. At the certain step of the purchasing process for a particular product, the mean score indicates the average influencing power of teens. The higher the mean (or median) score for a particular good for a particular step of purchasing, the lower the influence of teens at that particular step of the purchasing process. In more precisely, the mean score greater than 3 implies that teens hardly affect the step of purchasing process under investigation. The score close to 5 suggests the effect of teen is insignificant. On the other hand, if the score is less than 3 (or get closer to 1), the influence of teens over a particular product is more apparent. In addition to this, in the analysis, we distinguish relative influence of teenagers. The mean score less than 3 but greater than 2 is considered as *modest influence* and the mean score less than 2 is considered as *major influence*.

### *The Reliability Analysis and Software*

In order to analyze the data we use SPSS (15) software package. Before applying statistical analysis, we conducted a reliability test (Cronbach Alfa test) to make sure that our questioners and therefore our survey is reliable for the analysis. The estimated Cronbach Alpha values for each step of consumption step is greater than 0.80. In particular, we estimated Cronbach Alpha values for recognition of need, information search and actual purchasing steps 0.82, 0.87 and 0.86, respectively. Since all the Cronbach Alfa values are greater than 0,70, we concluded that the survey result is reliable or consistent with statistical analysis.

## **RESULTS**

### *Demographics*

Table 3 contains information about the demographic variables of the sample. The current sample (N=821) consisted of 447 male (%54.4) and 374 female (%45.6). The distribution of the age the responders indicate that majority of the group is located 15-17 years old where the share of the group in total sample is %81.6. The mean and median age of responders are 16,07 and 16, respectively. Table 2 also shows the distribution of high school. The information about the school of the responders was as follows: % 26.6 General High School, % 23.5 Anatolian High School, % 10,7 Science High School, % 11,4 Private High School, and % 27.8 Vocational or Technical High School.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 3. Demographic and Other Characteristics of the Sample**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	447	54,4
	Female	374	45,6
<b>Age</b>	13	2	0,2
	14	63	7,7
	15	198	24,1
	16	248	30,2
	17	226	27,5
	18	84	10,2
<b>School Type*</b>	General	218	26,6
	Anatolian	193	23,5
	Science	88	10,7
	Private	94	11,4
	Vocational	228	27,8

<sup>10</sup> Note that the distribution of our survey according to the type of high school is consistent with the universe or the share of each school in total size in Eskisehir city. This is because of Stratified Sampling method.

(\*) The name of these high school and their Turkish names are provided as italic: General High School (*Genel Lise*), Anatolian High School (*Anadolu Lisesi*), Science High School (*Fen Lisesi*), Private Schools (*Özel Lise*), Vocational and Technical High School (*Meslek/Teknik Lise*). See for detail information: <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1564/Turkey-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html>

### *The Effects of Teens in the Recognition Step*

The first step of purchasing process begins with recognition of need. Table 4 shows the mean, median and standard deviation scores for each statement measuring the influence of teenagers in the recognition of needs over 5 main product classes. The table shows that the teens' influence on family decision making is particularly prominent for products directed towards teens' use and the influence seems to be independent from risk or prices. All the mean score for products in both Class D and E is less than 2 indicating teens are *major influencer*. Overall, teens appear to have significant influence in the first step of product decisions for which they are the primary consumer. The finding is consistent with other studies conducted in mainly Western countries (e.g. Ahuja 1993; Atkin 1978; Beatty and Talpade 1994; Belch, Belch, and Ceresino 1985; Burns and Gillet 1987; Foxman and Tansuhaj 1988; Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom 1989; Isler, Popper and Ward 1987; Mangleburg 1992; Swinyard and Sim 1987; Ward and Wackman 1972).

**Table 4: The Influence of Teens on Recognition of Needs<sup>(1)-(2)</sup>**

	<b>Product Type</b>	<b>Mean (3)</b>	<b>Med (4)</b>	<b>Std. (5)</b>
<b>Class-A:</b>	1.Car	3.64	3	0.99
	3. Refrigerator	4.22	5	0.99
	4. Washing Machine	4.23	5	1.01
	10. Laptop-desktop computer	2.34	3	1.24
	13. Camera/digital photo mach	2.52	3	1.22
	17. TV/ Movie System	3.15	3	1.19
	18. DVD player	2.21	2	1.20
	22. Home furniture (for family)	3.75	3	1.06
<b>Class-B:</b>	2. Toothpaste	2.33	2	1.43
	7. Movie/rental purchase	1.61	1	0.97
	14. Chocolate/ chips etc	1.45	1	0.86
	19. Cosmetics (shampoo, soap)	1.78	1	1.10
	20. Honey, jam, peanut butter	3.08	3	1.35
	23. Cola, fruit juice	2.07	2	1.21
	24. Vegetables, Fruits etc..	3.14	3	1.38
	25. Washing detergents	4.50	5	0.94
<b>Class-C:</b>	9. Cell-phone (for M&F))	4.10	5	1.20
	16.Clothes and shoes (for M&F)	4.40	5	0.95
<b>Class-D:</b>	8. Cell phone for teen's use	1.67	1	1.03
	12. Bicycles	1.71	1	1.05
	15. Clothes and shoes for teen	1.45	1	0.85
	21. Furniture for teen's room	1.86	1	1.17
<b>Class-E:</b>	5. Stationery goods	1.34	1	0.80
	6. Game rental or purchase	1.44	1	0.89
	11. On-line games	1.67	1	1.07

1- The score is based on Table-2

2- Dark shaded area shows the effect of teenager over this product is relatively significant.

3, 4, 5-Shows the mean, the median and the standard deviation, respectively.

In terms of Class A and B, the result suggests that teens are very selective. For high risk products or Class A, the table shows that the calculated mean score of some of the products is less than 3 (e.g. laptop/desktop computer, digital camera and DVD player) while the score is greater than 3 for the others (e.g. refrigerator, washing machine, and home furniture). For low risk products or Class B, the influence of teens is more obvious relative to Class A but we still observe some discrimination by teens. For Class C, the mean scores are above 4 suggesting little involvement by teens.

### *The Effects of Teens in the Information Search Step*

The second step of family purchase is information search. In this stage, the families are assumed to recognize the need and move to engage searching for information about possible purchase choices and evaluate them. In this part, the objective is to show the relative involvement of teens in search of information about the product or product category analyzed.

The results for information search are shown on Table 5. Firstly, the mean and median scores for products within Class D and E show that the teens' involvement in each products over these categories is extremely clear. Secondly, the pattern we observed in recognition step for Class A and B does not change in the second step of purchase. We observe that the teens are selective in involving the search activity for products directed at family use. For low risk goods (i.e. Class B), teens' contribution in search activity for some products is very noticeable (e.g. toothpaste, movie rental and purchase, chocolate and chips and cola and fruit juice) while for the others it is not (e.g. honey, jam, vegetables, fruits, washing detergent). The mean scores for high risk products (i.e. Class A), teens are also very selective with a relatively clear pattern: the more teenagers use durable family products, the greater is their relative participation in the search activity. In particular, the mean scores for products with low-ambition or unable-to-use by teens (e.g. car, washing machine, home furniture and refrigerator) display very high score indicating low level of involvement. On the other hand, in this category, teens tend to contribute high ambition products (e.g. Laptop-desktop computer, Camera/digital photo mach, TV/ Movie System, DVD player ) in the search activity. Finally, we found that for cell-phone of their mother and father (Class C), teens tend to involve search activity. The results for Class A and Class C in the step support the "reverse socialization" hypothesis.

**Table 5: The Influence of Teens on Information Search** <sup>(1)-(2)</sup>

Product Type		Mean (3)	Med (4)	Std. (5)
<b>Class-A:</b>	1.Car	3,60	4	1,33
	3. Refrigerator	4,17	5	1,08
	4. Washing Machine	4,15	5	1,14
	10. Laptop-desktop computer	2,17	2	1,23
	13. Camera/digital photo mach	2,28	2	1,25
	17. TV/ Movie System	2,92	3	1,31
	18. DVD player	2,18	2	1,26
22. Home furniture (for family)	3,72	4	1,21	
<b>Class-B:</b>	2. Toothpaste	2,71	3	1,52
	7. Movie/rental purchase	1,49	1	0,91
	14. Chocolate/ chips etc	1,72	1	1,12
	19. Cosmetics (shampoo, soap)	1,90	1	1,21
	20. Honey, jam, peanut butter	3,18	3	1,42
	23. Cola, fruit juice	2,26	2	1,36
	24. Vegetables, Fruits etc..	3,26	3	1,45
25. Washing detergents	4,27	5	1,17	
<b>Class-C:</b>	9. Cell-phone (for M&F))	2,89	3	1,49
	16.Clothes and shoes (for M&F)	4,09	5	1,21
<b>Class-D:</b>	8. Cell phone for teen's use	1,55	1	0,98
	12. Bicycles	1,75	1	1,30
	15. Clothes and shoes for teen	1,55	1	1,04
	21. Furniture for teen's room	1,99	1	1,27
<b>Class-E:</b>	5. Stationery goods	1,48	1	0,97
	6. Game rental or purchase	1,39	1	0,83
	11. On-line games	1,60	1	1,04

1- The score is based on Table-2

2- Dark shaded area shows the effect of teenager over this product is relatively significant.

3, 4, 5-Shows the mean, the median and the standard deviation, respectively.

### *The Effects of Teens in the Actual Purchase Step*

The third step of family purchase is information search. In this stage, the families are assumed to finish recognition of the need and the search (and the evaluation) and move to actual purchasing. In this part, the objective is to show the relative influence of teens in the actual purchase over 25 different products. Table 6 outlines the mean, median and standard deviation scores of our survey. When we compare Table-4, Table-5 and Table-6, the mean and median scores for all three steps for each goods seems to be very close suggesting that the influence of teens for a particular good displays quite smooth pattern throughout the purchasing process.

In Table-6, the mean scores for high and low risk products (Class A and B) resemble the score we observed in the second step of purchase. The teens believe they play role for some products while they do not for the others. To articulate more clearly, teens are not active player in this step for products such as car, washing machine, and refrigerator while they are more active in the actual purchase of laptop-desktop computer, camera, TV and movie system, and DVD player. The result is parallel to the findings for previous steps and it suggests that the more teenagers use durable family products, the greater is their relative participation in the actual purchasing. For family products with low risk, the results are not different from the previous steps. For Class D and E, Table-6 shows that the teens' are the major actors in the actual purchase of these products.

**Table 6: The Influence of Teens on “Actual Purchase”** <sup>(1)-(2)</sup>

Product Type		Mean (3)	Med (4)	Std. (5)
<b>Class-A:</b>	1.Car	3,76	4	1,15
	3. Refrigerator	4,12	5	1,06
	4. Washing Machine	4,10	5	1,12
	10. Laptop-desktop computer	2,40	3	1,28
	13. Camera/digital photo mach	2,42	3	1,21
	17. TV/ Movie System	2,94	3	1,23
	18. DVD player	2,31	2	1,25
	22. Home furniture (for family)	3,62	3	1,19
<b>Class-B:</b>	2. Toothpaste	2,73	3	1,49
	7. Movie/rental purchase	1,61	1	1,04
	14. Chocolate/ chips etc	1,79	1	1,15
	19. Cosmetics (shampoo, soap)	1,96	1	1,24
	20. Honey, jam, peanut butter	3,01	3	1,40
	23. Cola, fruit juice	2,29	2	1,32
	24. Vegetables, Fruits etc..	3,25	3	1,42
	25. Washing detergents	4,23	5	1,18
<b>Class-C:</b>	9. Cell-phone (for M&F))	3,27	4	1,38
	16.Clothes and shoes (for M&F)	4,10	5	1,21
<b>Class-D:</b>	8. Cell phone for teen's use	1,72	1	1,15
	12. Bicycles	1,85	1	1,16
	15. Clothes and shoes for teen	1,62	1	1,06
	21. Furniture for teen's room	1,96	1	1,25
<b>Class-E:</b>	5. Stationery goods	1,55	1	1,04
	6. Game rental or purchase	1,49	1	0,96
	11. On-line games	1,77	1	1,14

1- The score is based on Table-2

2- Dark shaded area shows the effect of teenager over this product is relatively significant.

3, 4, 5- Shows the mean, the median and the standard deviation, respectively.

## CONCLUSION

During the last fifty years, we observed major developments in both information and communication technologies. These developments have been significantly altering the family structure. Marketing scholars have been investigating the factors determining the purchasing decision process of families for several years. One of the sub study areas is the influence of teens over this decision process. For many product or product types, the family purchase can be regarded as a process rather than a snap-shot action. In this process, each member can play role and the degree of role in each step may depend on several things. In the research, we divide purchasing process into three steps (recognition of need, information search, actual purchase), and we define these three process for 25 different products or product groups. The study is aimed at fulfilling three objectives: 1) Firstly, we want to differentiate the products/product-groups so that we want to systematically differentiate the relative influence of teens over these products, and 2) we want to differentiate the degree of influence in these three steps in the purchasing process, and 3) we want to shed some lights on the main features of products for which the teens actuate their influential power in the purchasing process. Through investigating these objectives, the paper also indirectly assesses the reverse socialization for Turkish teens.

The research shows that the influence of teens is independent from the purchasing steps. That is we found that the effects of teens in each step of purchasing process (i.e. recognition, information search and actual purchase) for several products does not change significantly. For a particular product, If a tens is not influential in the first step (or recognition of need), he or she is not influential in the second or third step either (or vice-versa). The characteristic of good or product seems to be more important than the step of purchasing. If a teen is not interested in for a particular product, he tends not to be an active player in the purchasing process.



Second, teens are very active for products that they are the main users. In other words, for product category D and E, teens are the main players. For example, for products; bicycle, video games, cell phone for teenagers, clothes etc, teens are willing to play active role in each step of the purchase. Third, when we look at the picture for goods for family use, we found mix results. Teens are active player for some but not for the others.

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