

# "Mum, buy me that chocolate, pleeeeee!" New study shows the pervasive influence of children on their parents' in-store

March 18 2009

---

The influence children wield over their parents' purchase decisions at the point of sale is grossly underestimated by parents. This was shown in a new study conducted by researchers at the University of Vienna, Austria. According to the study by consumer researchers Claus Ebster and Udo Wagner, twice as many purchases in supermarkets are triggered by children than their parents are aware of. The study was published in the internationally renowned Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services.

"Most [parents](#) seem to be completely unaware of how much their little ones make them buy", said Claus Ebster. 178 parents shopping with their child in Austrian supermarkets were unobtrusively observed while strolling through the aisles, after which they were interviewed. When asked how many products their [children](#) had made them buy, on average parents only reported half the number of purchases that had been secretly observed. "Considering that the majority of [purchase decisions](#) in a supermarket are made in the store, neither retailers nor parents should underestimate the importance of child-induced purchase decisions", said Udo Wagner, professor of business administration of the University of Vienna.

The two researchers also investigated factors responsible for the number of purchase requests children make. It was found that children primarily request products that are placed at their eye-level, such as sweets and toys strategically positioned by retailers on the lower shelves. The best

way for parents to reduce the number of purchase requests from their child is to seat the child in the shopping cart (facing the parent), thereby restricting the child's field of view. According to Claus Ebster, "Children seated in a stroller are also less likely to bug their parents with purchase requests".

Furthermore, parents are more likely to yield to a child's request if the product can be used or consumed in the store, such as toys, sweets and fruit, as it keeps the child busy during the shopping trip.

The researchers also have advice for children: Asking nicely pays off! Parents were considerably more willing to yield to a child's request if asked clearly and politely rather than when a child either angrily demanded a product or stated the request rather weakly.

More information: [Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services: Children's influences on in-store purchases.](#)

Provided by University of Vienna

Citation: "Mum, buy me that chocolate, pleeeeee!" New study shows the pervasive influence of children on their parents' in-store (2009, March 18) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-mum-chocolate-pleeeeee-pervasive-children.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.