
Examining THE ROLE OF ALGERIAN FAMILY MEMBERS ON THE PURCHASE DECISION.

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Abstract

Faced with the evolutions and upheavals brought about by the opening up of the Algerian market, it became essential for companies to fully understand the family in order to develop marketing mix strategies. Moreover, this field of study has emerged as an indispensable condition for the survival and development of the company. The present work focuses on the roles of family members in the decision to purchase household appliances. This study attempts to provide some answers to the following research question: How do Algerian families make their purchasing decisions?

The subject proposed in this article is not new, but the novelty lies in the circumstances in which this study was conducted. Studying the roles played by the different members of the Algerian family is not much exploited. Indeed, our own research results were introduced on the basis of the qualitative analysis carried out on a sample which, to a certain extent, could be representative of the families of Tlemcen (Algerian city). These results are oriented towards family buying and the roles held by the different members of the family.

Keywords: Family, Roles, Purchase decision, Electrical appliances.

I. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the world has undergone profound changes due to the internationalization of national markets, where competitive strategies have eliminated geographical boundaries. This has had a direct influence on the Algerian market, which in turn underwent transformations in the economic sector (Boutefnouchent, 1988). In addition, the other important component in this mutation is the changes in the family structure and in the lifestyle of Algerian family members as well.

The upheavals experienced by the Algerian society have had direct consequences on the buying and consumption habits within the family. Consequently, the status of the father within the family is not the same as before because the children's educational level today generally exceeds that of the father. Moreover, the woman who works and has a salary, though in small number but still very visible, plays a more important role in the family (the Algerian family is moving from the patriarchal, to the synchronic, and sometimes even to the matriarchal structure). In this new socio-economic context of the Algerian family, it has become inevitable today for Algerian companies, and more specifically for the marketing department, to know more about the new family sphere, and its characteristics.

The objective of this study is to determine the roles of family members in making purchasing decisions, and in particular in purchasing household appliances. This is a fundamental issue for company managers. Our study therefore consists in assessing the family buying behavior among the Algerian consumers in order to be able to assert or invalidate the following hypotheses:

H1: *The purchase of household appliances is performed by a single individual, and that is the father.*

H2: *The roles within Algerian households in purchasing household appliances are different from one zone to another.*

In order to better understand the subject, it is suggested to divide the present work into two parts. The first part presents a review of the literature on family buying behavior. The second is devoted to the empirical study, where an attempt is made to evaluate the role of the members of the Algerian family in the purchase decision.

II. Purchase Decision Making and roles within the family

Sometimes the purchaser and the consumer are the same person in purchasing certain common products (a pack of cigarettes for example) (Belchand Willis, 2002; Sosanie and Tenebein, 1979; Sigué and Duhaime, 1988; Solomon, 1998). However, for other products (food products, household equipment, etc.) the purchase requires the involvement of several members of the family (Jensen, 1995; Lee and Beatty, 2002; Lysonski and al, 1996)). Thus, for relatively complex purchases, up to five roles may be involved in the purchase decision: The initiator: the person who for the first time suggests the idea of buying the product, The influencer: any person who, directly or indirectly, has an impact on the final purchase decision, The decision-maker: the person who determines one of the different dimensions of the purchase (Should we buy?, where, when, what, and how).

The buyer: the person who carries out the transaction itself

The user: the person who consumes or uses the product or service.

These roles reflect the domestic organization or the distribution of tasks. They can be played by one of the two spouses or by the child. Generally, a distinction is made between roles in which:

- The husband dominates
- The wife dominates
- The decisions are made jointly by family members
- And the decisions are made independently by one or the other of the family members.

According to Davis (1976), due to the existence of these different roles, the respective influence of each member of the family is likely to vary according to the stages involved in the decision-making process. The existence of these scenarios depends on the social norms of the members of the household (Bettman and Park, 1980). These norms allow distinguishing, particularly, traditional families (where men dominate) from modern families in which the roles are equal. The distribution of tasks also depends on the economic, temporal, psychological, intellectual and physical resources of the members of the family (Chandon, 2011; Chan and McNeal, 2003; Davis and Rigaux, 1974; Fill, 2002; kaur and Medury, 2011)). The influence of individuals in the family is commensurate with their financial resources. Thus, temporal constraints favor the separation of roles. If the contribution of the husband to the income of the household is low, the search for information and the purchase decision are carried out by both spouses. On the other hand, if the contribution of the husband is important and the wife also has a salary, then the roles tend to become much more balanced. Family members use strategies to make their point of view prevail (Wilkes, 1975; Zeithmal, 1988). These may consist, for example, of:

- Taking advantage of their area of influence, availing themselves of their status as experts
- Trading (one buys the product that suits him now, and the other buys the next one).
- Criticizing the other's preferences.
- Blackmailing.

Indeed, the problem of distribution of roles within the household has given rise to much research and reflection (Rajesh and Anil, 2013; Shoham and Dalakas, 2005). The consumer is supposed to play several roles (seek information, recommend, choose, pay, use). These roles are not necessarily played by the same person. It is interesting to know whether each of these roles is assumed by a single individual or shared among several people (Cox, 1975). It is also important to know how the collective decision is actually taken, how to determine the most important criteria, and also how to make arbitrations and manage conflicts (Perreau, 2014). In general, the collective nature of

consumption of products and services for family use always implies the elaboration and implementation of a detailed and collective purchase strategy. Thus, studying the buying behavior in the family context becomes interesting because the family is the center of many purchasing decisions.

In particular, the following section is devoted to the empirical study in order to describe, analyze and understand the workings of the Algerian family when making a purchase decision.

III. Empirical investigation

This research attempts to clarify the purchase process within Algerian families. The present study focuses on household products. A list of 10 household appliances was established, namely a refrigerator, washing machine, stereo, video, television, satellite dish, camera, Playstation games, landline phone, and mobile phone. Most of these products are used by all household members. This collective aspect enables one to understand the interactions and influences of family members during the purchase process. The survey conducted in the present work concerned, of course, households residing in the Wilaya (province) of Tlemcen (Algerian town). The sample used consisted of 200 households, all living in that province, and was distributed in proportion to the total number of households, in each area; there were 112 urban families and 88 rural families.

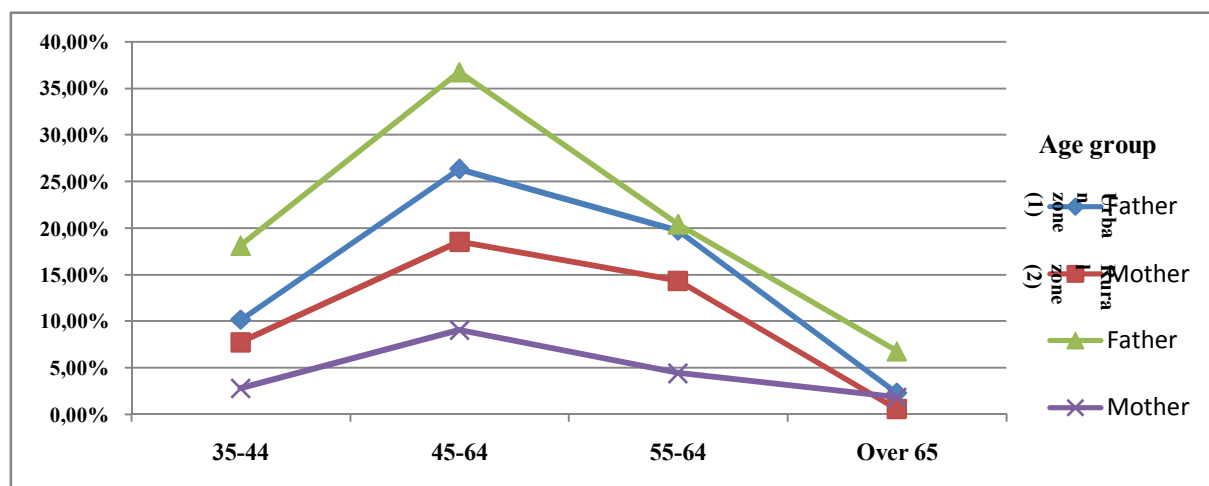
3.1. Presentation of results

3.1.1. Analysis of the socio-professional aspect of surveyed households

Consumer practices depend on a number of factors, such as gender, age, marital status, education level, income level and profession. They provide a set of indicators on the statut of the individual and his social environment and are commonly used to segment markets.

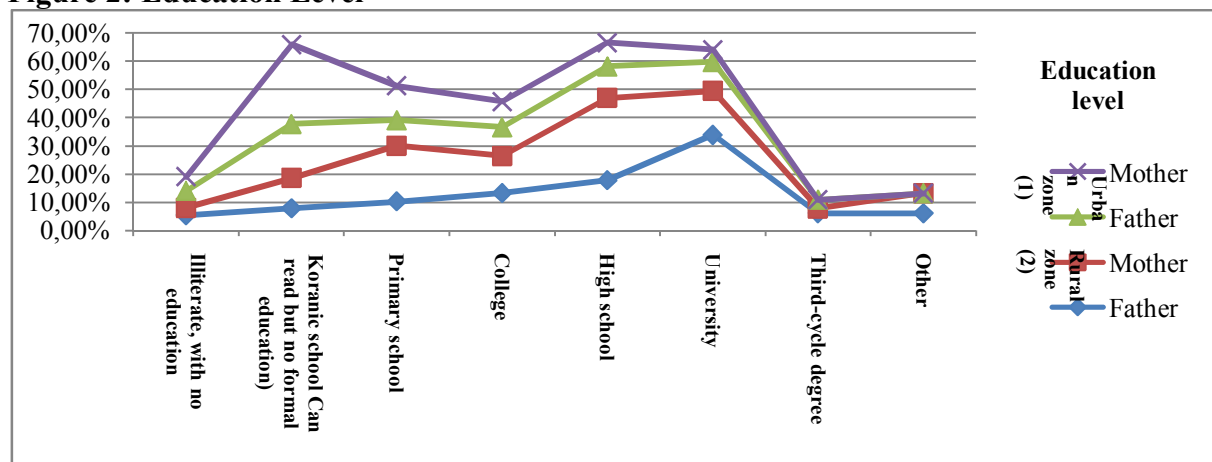
Regarding the age group of surveyed parents, it is clearly noted that the percentage of surveyed men is higher than that of women (over 58% in urban zone and 82% in rural zone). This is due to cultural reasons (husbands are reluctant to let their wives be interviewed) and to narrow thinking (some mothers do not trust us enough and avoid the questionnaire).

Figure 1: Age Group



Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

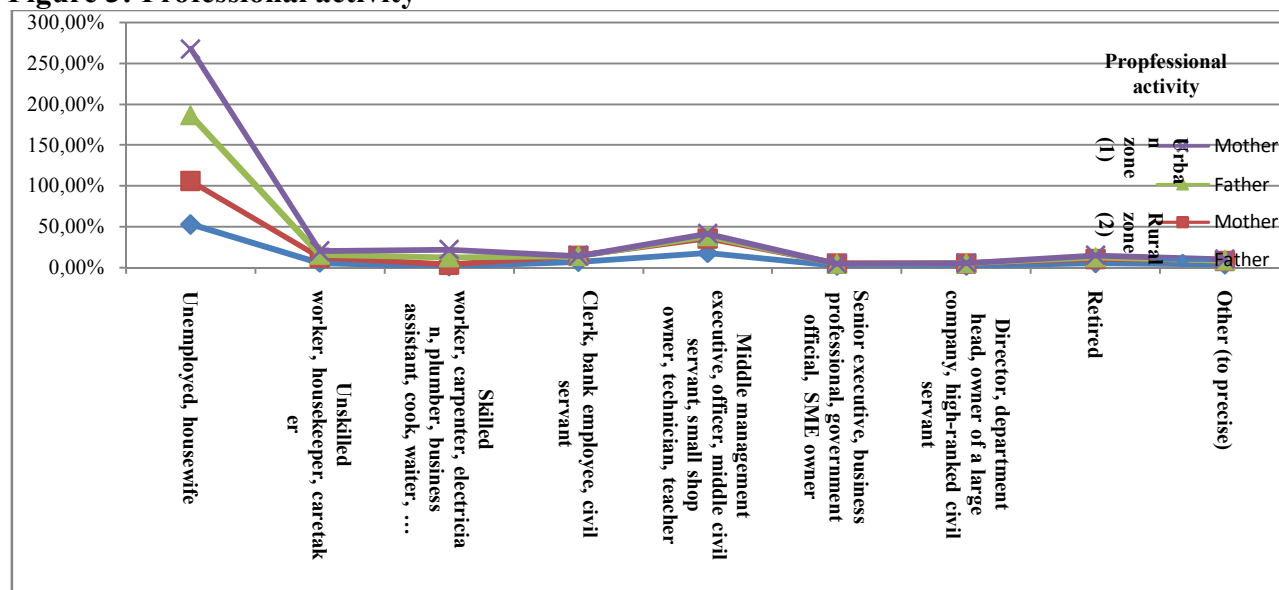
Regarding the importance of the education level in the *family decision-making process*, one can say that when parents have a good education level, the roles in *decision-making process* are *more balanced* (there are more discussions and negotiations between family members). However, when the father has a higher level of education, he monopolizes all decisions within the family (see figure2).

Figure 2: Education Level

Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

Concerning the professional activity of parents, it was found that the percentage of unemployed mothers is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas (82.76% in rural areas against 52.87% in urban areas). Mothers are supposed to look after the home (housework).

It can clearly be seen from figure 3 that employed fathers and mothers are generally found in the third and fourth categories. There is a male predominance in the different occupations mentioned in the 6th and 7th categories (Fig 3). Other types of jobs, such as liberal professions (doctor, lawyer, etc.) representing about 5%, are practiced by both men and women and are equally distributed between the two genders. Women with that kind of job in rural areas represent only 1%.

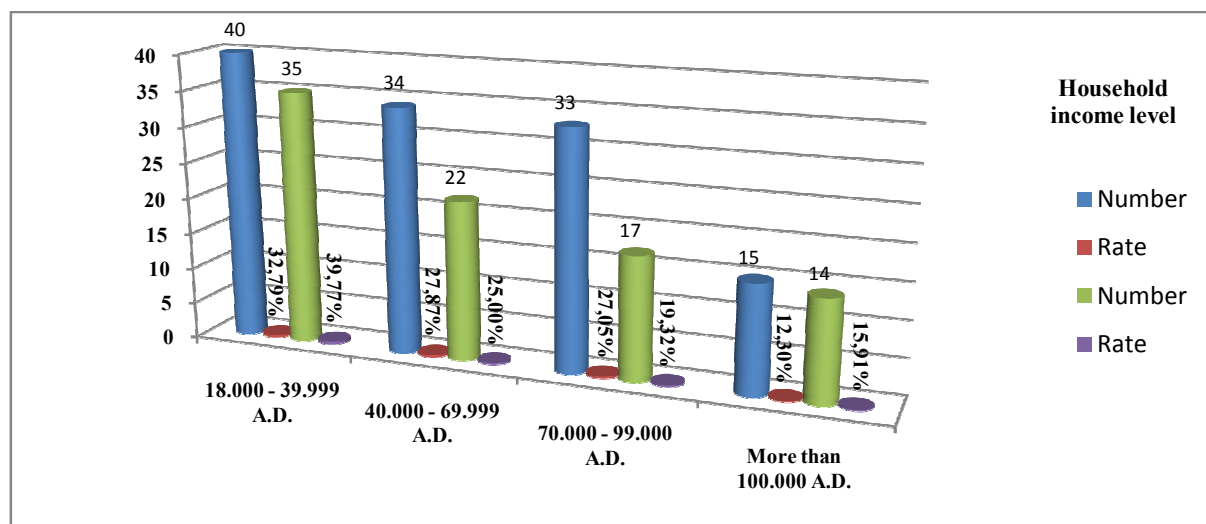
Figure 3: Professional activity

Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

It is well known that the household income is a good indicator of the standard of living, type of consumption and purchasing power within a family. Identifying the elements that contribute to the household income, with their respective proportions, enables us to know if the buying process is dominated by the person with the highest income or, by cons, the purchase process is influenced by other factors. The survey conducted in this research work allowed saying that over 35% of the visited families have an income lower than 39999 AD. In general, households strive to put some money aside; they purchase or replace a household product only by necessity (low purchasing power). Furthermore, the highest percentage was found for households with a salary between 40000 and

99999 AD (54.92% in urban areas and 44.32% in rural areas). For this income range, families have an acceptable purchasing power. Finally, households with an income above 100 000 AD have better living conditions. In addition, some households owned appliances that were not mentioned in our study; some of these are the VCR, vacuum cleaner, dishwasher, microwave, etc (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Household Income Level



Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

3.1.2 Involvement of children in the buying decision process

The present study was interested in households, with at least one child between 10 and 19. The analysis of the questionnaire allowed us to obtain the following results:

Table 1: Children by age group

Children in age group between 10 and 19	Urban area (1)		Rural area (2)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
From 10 to 12	5.24%	2.66%	7.62%	4.77%
From 12 to 14	7.00%	4.54%	3.80%	5.72%
From 14 to 16	8.74%	5.94%	5.72%	7.62%
From 16 to 18	10.84%	7%	1.9%	9.52%
Over 18	25.31%	22.73%	29.52%	23.18%
Total of boys and girls	57.13%	42.87%	48.56%	51.14%

Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

One can easily note that the highest proportions are found in the age group over 18 (boys and girls). This survey was interested more in adolescents. Researchers consider that this age group, namely boys and girls over 18, have recently started financing their own purchases; they are becoming increasingly independent from their parents. On average, in each surveyed family, there are three or four children, one or two of them are between 10 and 18 years old. In general, the financial contribution of children is insignificant in comparison to that of parents.

3.1.3. The presence of electric appliances in the Algerian homes

The homes in both sample areas are fairly well equipped with the household goods considered in the present study (see Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of Algerian homes having household products

Household products	Urban area (1)	Rural area (2)
Camera	62.25%	20.45%
Hi-Fi system	76.78%	48.86%
Video game	23.14%	19.31%
Washing machine	67.58%	40.90%
Personal dish antenna	81.25%	76.75%
Refrigerator	95.75%	90.00%
Landline telephone	53.57%	49.16%
Mobile telephone	81.25%	62.25%
Television	98.20%	96%
Video	53.29%	51.13%

Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households, 10 electrical equipment.

Indeed, the *television and video* are found quite equally present in both urban and rural areas. For the *Hi-Fi system*, the percentage difference between the two areas can be explained by the fact that a Hi-Fi system is perceived as a secondary product by rural people; its purchase can only be done occasionally. Regarding *the camera* (62.25% in urban areas and 20.45% in rural areas), one can see a significant difference between the two areas. In the urban area, the camera is used for professional and occasional uses, while in the rural area, it is used more or less occasionally (parties, weddings), and this is the reason the camera is commonly encountered mostly in urban households. Regarding *the washing machine* (67.58% in urban areas and 40.90% in rural areas), it is easy to notice the influence of the urban woman to acquire this appliance which is so valuable for her as a housewife; her domestic life has dramatically changed (shopping in markets, accompanying children to school, visiting administration offices, etc.). Moreover, the urban woman is more involved in her family life, compared to the rural woman, and this causes her to be exceeded by her daily housework. Hence, this kind of equipment becomes necessary for her. The *dish antenna*, estimated at 81.25% in urban areas and 76.75% in rural areas, is more prevalent in the rural area, perhaps due to the lack of entertainment and recreation. All households give a particular importance to the dish antenna, which is encountered in more than 75% of urban and rural homes.

Some home appliances are more present in households, because they are important and necessary as well (refrigerator, TV, dish antenna, mobile phone). Others products are considered more like entertainment products (Hi-FI system, video system, PlayStation game); these are only bought if the financial resources of the family are sufficient.

3.1.4. The elements of decision making

The importance of an element of decision-making varies from one person to another, for the same household. Certain elements of decision-making were put together and proposed to the surveyed families. The results obtained are presented in the following table.

Table 3: Elements of decision-making

Area	Urban (1)			Rural (2)		
Person Element	Father	Mother	Child	Father	Mother	Child
Prior knowledge	46.71%	10.77%	4.38%	51.52%	6.06%	2.09%
Trust a relative	14.97%	42.51%	15.57%	15.15%	24.24%	12.12%
Product attributes	37.78%	7.78%	18.56%	18.18%	4.09%	9.09%
Emotion	6.59%	11.38%	4.79%	6.06%	36.36%	9.09%
Advertisement	5.39%	15.99%	12.57%	6.06%	9.09%	9.09%
Seller in a store	7.78%	14.79%	24.55%	6.06%	9.09%	21.21%
Relevant information on product	37.19%	4.79%	4.79%	13.27%	3.03%	3.03%
Price	52.75%	7.78%	13.77%	42.42%	9.09%	21.21%
Culture	4.79%	1.80%	2.99%	9.09%	6.06%	6.06%

Source: own research 2016, n= 200 households

In rural areas, fathers give a particular importance to the price of the product (42.42%); they often base their choice on lived experience (51.52%), by contrast, mothers are more subjective in their choice. They can either be advised by a close relative or friend (24.24%) or can be influenced by the *physical characteristics (design, color, size ...)* of the *product* (36.36%). Moreover, children are influenced by vendors (21.21%), prices (21.21%), and advertising (90.6%). Similarly, for urban areas, fathers insist on knowledge (46.71%) and the financial aspect of the product (52.33%). In addition, they give great importance to the product attributes (32.11%). However, mothers pay more attention to inter-personal elements, such as trusting a relative (15.57%) and emotions (11.38%). Children are more attentive to product attributes (18.66%) and prices (13.77%). They are influenced by vendors (24.55%) and advertising (12.57%). Price, prior knowledge, product attributes and information are the most important and most considered elements by fathers, but of course with different degrees. In general, mothers prefer to trust relatives; the decision is made in a rather subjective way since they give more importance to emotions and are more influenced by the sellers. Trusting a relative, price and seller's advice represent the most important elements for a child; the other elements have little impact on their choice.

3.1.5. Participation of family members in purchasing decision-making

Fathers are more concerned and more involved in the family expenses. Overall, the results show that they participate in all stages of the purchase process, and particularly in the *final purchase decision*. Mothers are less involved financially; they have a rather restricted participation in the process. They have secondary roles; they may prescribe certain products in which they are interested, and can influence their husband to buy them. They do not have a big impact on the final purchase decision of household appliances.

The child's interest is higher for products of a personal character. He is more attracted by recreational or entertainment products such as a stereo system, Playstation games, etc. Children's contribution to household income is low, and therefore, their roles are limited to prescription (suggestion) or search for information. The child is rather an initiator and a user.

The results obtained confirm the existence of differences between the socio-professional variables of families surveyed in urban and rural areas; however, there are no perceptible differences between urban and rural families, so that one can interpret the role of family members in the purchase process of the products previously mentioned.

IV. Conclusion

After this presentation of family buying behavior among Algerian households, there is no doubt that it is not easy to accurately determine the roles played by family members. This is due to the ambiguity of socio-cultural parameters (the social environment). Indeed, it is the patriarchal system that influences the family buying decisions.

This study did, however, clarify certain aspects of the purchase of certain household appliances. The results obtained are almost identical to those hoped for. The process of purchasing household appliances from Algerian households is done in a rational way. The child is an important member of the Algerian family. It is more attentive and active in prescribing and researching information on entertainment and leisure products, such as hi-fi systems and Playstation games.

The Algerian woman, at home or active has an influence on initiating the purchase, but the search for information and the final choice belongs to the husband.

For the Algerian man, the equation is not the same as that relative to the child and the woman. Being the head of the family, he is the one responsible for the expenses, and his purchases depend on his financial capacities. The role of the husband remains the most important since it intervenes in the purchasing decisions of almost all products, whether expensive or not. Thus, the process of purchasing household appliances between the two zones (urban and rural) is likely to be balanced.

As a conclusion, family buying remains a special behavior, requiring several studies that allow the researcher to understand all its influential aspects.

Thus, it can be said that understanding family buying behavior is an essential step in the marketing process. It is a complex behavior that depends on several determinants. Such an analysis is indeed crucial to the development of company strategies and to the marketing mix management.

All this leads us to propose some themes that require further research in order to determine the effective distribution of roles within the Algerian family. Thus, it is important to:

- study the sociology of the Algerian family and the distribution of authority within the Algerian home,
- analyze the impact of women's professional activity on collective purchasing decisions,
- propose another way of looking at the determination of marital roles according to the different social classes in our society. This criterion is considered by researchers as a factor that influences the distribution of roles between spouses in terms of consumption and family purchasing,
- extend the study to other products (products of the masculine territory vs. products of the female territory).
- explore the degree of influence of the adolescent in making purchasing decisions within the family.

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