

## **Influence and Structure of Roles in Purchase Decision - Making within Algerian Households**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present research work aims at providing a detailed picture of the process of family purchase decision within Algerian households. More specifically, the main objective is to analyze the variables that influence the purchase process (type of product, financial involvement, attitudes and culture). The increased interest in this theme reflects the centrality of the family in the marketing strategy. An empirical study was conducted using a sample of 200 families. The results obtained showed that companies and distributors should focus their communication on the right decision maker(s) within the family.*

**Index terms:** *Decision making, Influential factors, Structure of roles, Algerian households.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The family decision process has emerged as a fundamental topic in marketing (Anderson and al , 2002); it still continues to be a topic of great interest, given the high number of changes that are taking place in the Algerian traditional family (Boutefnouchet, 1988). The composition of families and the roles of their members have significantly evolved during the past three decades, due to the numerous social changes (women in the labor market, divorce, urbanization ...). These changes requested investigations on the way the individual or the group make their decisions (Gharbi, 1998). Certain purchases involve only one person (perfume, watches, etc.), while others are rarely made by one individual only; they are decided by the entire family unit (Riley, 2012). In any case, there are some products whose buying decision usually comes down to one of the two spouses (Szybillo and al, 1979). The present research work fits within this framework of reflection. It is aimed at exploring the influences of household members as well as their impact on making purchase decisions. To achieve our goals, an attempt was made to provide some answers to the following question:

***What are the roles of the mother, father and children in the Algerian families? What influences do they exert on the different phases of the purchase process, especially on the final decision?***

So, the present research intends to examine the influence of each one of the household members, at different stages of decision-making process, for the purchase of household appliances in an Algerian socio-cultural environment.

Two hypotheses are tested in order to investigate this issue:

***H1. The roles of family members (spouses and children) in the decision-making process differ, depending on the product.***

***H2. The influence within households of modern attitude (urban zone) is different from that within households of traditional attitude (rural zone).***

This work is organized in two main axes. The first one tries to determine the factors influencing the purchase decision-making process within Algerian households. The second one is an empirical study that allows developing the methodology related to the proposed assumptions, along with the results and the discussion of the results.

### **II. THE FAMILY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Traditionally, within families, the man used to play an instrumental role (final purchase decision-making, price and time of purchase ...), while women played a rather expressive role (choice of style, color ...) (Belch and Willis, 2002). According to Tinson and al (2008), these two roles would be subject to some cycles within the family. For example in the first year of marriage, both spouses seem to have equal instrumental roles; while in the second year, the woman tends to have more influence in the decision-making process. Wolf (1959) suggested that the dynamics of the decision-making power relationship between husband and wife can be explained through four main points:

1. Successful husbands and those who have reached high professional status tend to be more authoritarian within their families compared to others. Husbands are inclined to be more commanding in higher socioeconomic classes; however wives are found to be more dominant in lower strata
2. Professionally active wives or those who have worked outside the home are more authoritarian within their families than to the ones who have never worked outside the home. The family financial resources are controlled by the dominant person within the household
3. Women gain increasing influence with age. Moreover, studies related to decision-making within the couple often aim at identifying the relative influence of each spouse (Sigué and Duhaime, 1998).

The questions to be asked are then: Who dominates? For what kind of decision? For which stage in the process? These are important questions for marketers who need to identify the family members most involved in the decision-making process (Perreau, 2014). Therefore, one of the goals of our research on the family decision-making process is to present the structure of roles and the influence of family members in the purchasing decision based on a multitude of variables, such as the type of product, nature of the decision to be made, and the stage of the process in making the purchase decision (Gupta and Chandawat, 2002).

### III. EMPIRICAL STUDY

The present study intends to address a social dimension, which is the family, as well as the interactions between its members. It also tries to examine the impact of peculiarities within the Algerian socio-economic context in order to understand the roles of family members, at different stages of the decision making process, the factors affecting this process, as well as the importance of the type of family (modern or traditional) in decision making.

#### 3.1. Research methodology

The empirical research methodology in this study was based on a field survey. Due to the inability to organize an exhaustive general survey, it was decided to carry out a partial inquiry through a survey. The selected technique to be used was the direct interview with one spouse of the households residing in the province of Tlemcen (Algeria). These households are kinds of "nuclear families". Our sample involved 200 households. The sample was distributed in proportion to the total number of households in each area as follows: Urban area = 112 families (representing modern households); rural area = 88 families (representing traditional households). To make things easier, the decision-making process was considered to involve three (03) steps.

1. Problem recognition or initiation of the decision-making process
  2. Search for information for a better choice on the different possibilities available in the market
  3. Final purchase decision which includes both the decision and the actual purchase
- A list of ten (10) electrical appliances was established, i.e. *Camera - Hi-Fi system - Video game - Washing machine - Personal dish antenna - Refrigerator - Landline telephone - mobile telephone - Television and Video*

#### 3.2. Presentation of results

##### 3.2.1. 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 1).

**Table 1:** 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%

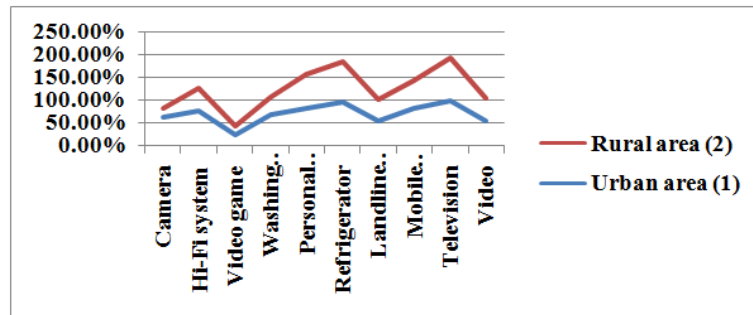


Figure 1: Algerian homes having household products by area

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.

### 3.2.2. Analysis of the purchase of household appliances

#### 3.2.2.1. Searching for information

The results in Figure 2 show that, in general, the husband fulfills the purchase action. Before acquiring the product, getting informed about the product is an essential step in Algerian households.

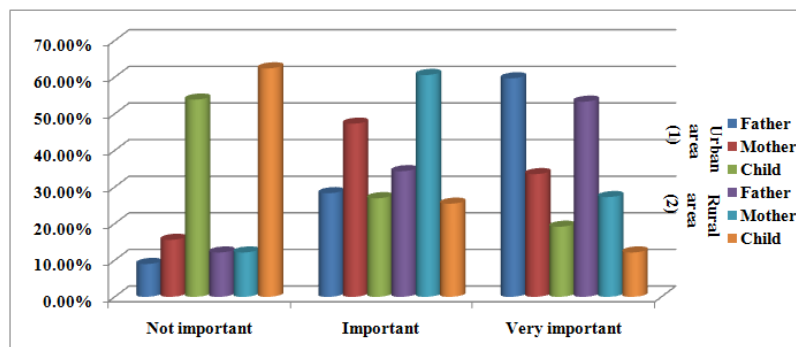


Figure 2: Level of inquiry per person

The intensity and the importance of searching information is different from one person to another within the same family; they depend on:

- Whether the product to be purchased is for personal or collective use,
- Whether the product is going to be bought for the first time, and therefore it is necessary to get thoroughly informed about it (to avoid any risk of error). If the purchase of the same product is repeated, then simple information is sufficient.

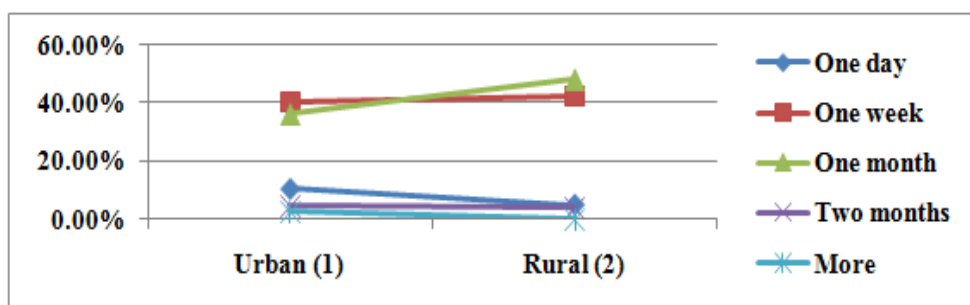
It was found that the father gives the greatest importance to the above-mentioned step for two reasons. First, he is the most involved financially and second, he insists on protecting his family from the harmful effects of the product.

**3.2.2.2. Time needed to search for information**

Most households think that one day is not sufficient to have clear and reliable information on a product. However, a period of two months and more is largely enough; during that time, a large amount of information may be collected, and the choice between various proposals becomes increasingly difficult. This creates in the buyer a permanent fear of error, and this prevents him from buying (purchasing postponement or procrastination). Nevertheless, the time needed to get the necessary information may change, depending on the type of product (involving or little involving), on its use (private or collective use) and on prior knowledge about it (degree of experience and expertise).

**Table 3:** Time spent searching for information, by area.

Area	One day	One week	One month	Two months	More
Urban (1)	10.55%	40.71%	36.37%	4.79%	2.58%
Rural (2)	5.15%	42.42%	48.32%	4.10%	0.00%



**Figure3:** Time needed to search for information by area

The products presented in the study are rather involving, sometimes for a private use, sometimes for a collective use, with high innovation rates. This shows the importance of time, which is needed to search for information that is required for a better assessment of alternatives.

**3.3. Purchasing process**

To be informed about the purchasing process adopted by Algerian households, four variables were selected to identify the way adopted in the purchase process.

**1- Brand popularity** (assuming that the buyer knows well the different brands available on the market), and prior knowledge of the product, with some use of expertise, will certainly help the shopper choose the product. These three points push the purchaser towards the product (appreciation and preference), and this incites him to buy it.

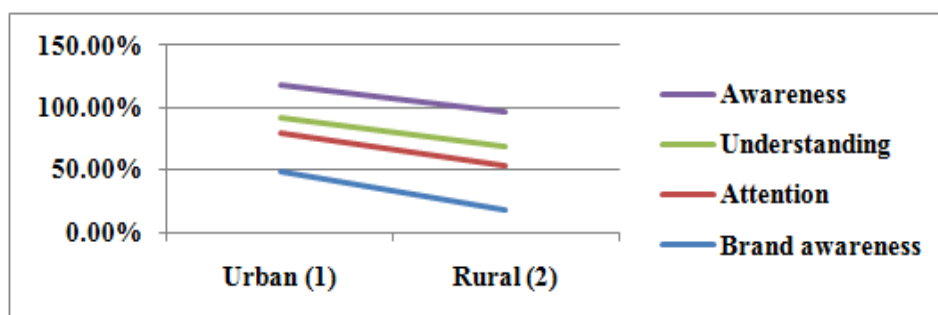
**2- Attention** results in thinking about the purchase (thoughtful purchase vs. impulsive purchase).

**3- Understanding** which means that the buyer seeks to understand a number of things about the product (avoid contradictory aspects with its beliefs and values).

**4- Awareness** which supposes that the product is adopted after assessment of the alternatives and choices that are available (product testing is essential for purchase).

**Table 4:** Overview of the variables encouraging Algerian households to carry out the buying process

Area	Brand awareness	Attention	Understanding	Awareness
Urban (1)	49.49%	29.49%	12.44%	27.33%
Rural (2)	18.18%	35.58%	15.18%	28.33%



**Figure 4:** Elements of decision- making

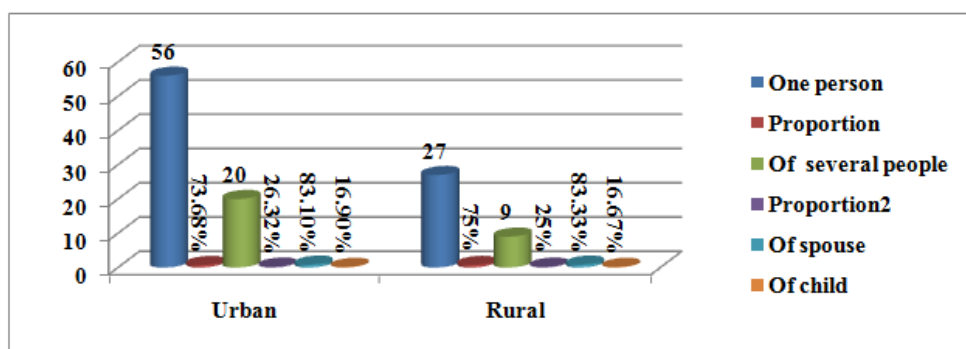
So, one can see for example that buying a TV, a refrigerator, or a washing machine is done thoughtfully, with a very high consideration for the brand, because these items are essential and indispensable in homes. More than 27% of households prefer trying the product before buying it (fourth variable). Families use the first variable (Awareness), with a rate of 49.49% in urban areas, against a lower rate for rural areas. The third variable is the least used by urban families (12.44%) and rural families (15.18%). It can be concluded that the purchasing process within Algerian households is done in a rational way, which indicates that the role of husbands is still the most dominant, since he gets involved in the purchasing decisions of almost all products, whether the purchase requires high spending or not. The wife intervenes in triggering the purchase only, but the search for information and the final choice are performed by the husband.

**3.4. Degree of involvement**

The purchase decision-making for the fridge and TV are made by both spouses; these decisions are made jointly. This fact may be explained by the strong involvement of the two partners in the purchasing process of these products which are indispensable. So, the entire household makes the joint purchasing decision, with a slight dominance from the husband. The purchase decision-making for the dish antenna, the camera and the mobile phone goes to men. Regarding the washing machine, two types of contributions were analyzed. The first one is the financial contribution of one single person; it represents 73.68% of households in urban areas and 75% in rural areas. In most cases, the father who buys the product, under the insistence of his wife who considers that domestic work is becoming increasingly difficult. Age and health status are two other reasons for the wife to ask for products that facilitate her housework. The second one is the contribution of many people; this occurs when the financial resources of a single person are not enough. The family members help the head of the household. The highest contribution comes from the wife (over 83%); the children with a permanent work contribute with only 16%.

**Table 5:** Level of interest / product, per area

Product	Urban area (1)			Rural area (2)		
	Father	Mother	Child	Father	Mother	Child
Refrigerator	3.53	4.48	2.39	3.62	4.4	1.99
Television	3.96	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.06	3.42
Dish antenna	3.9	3.19	3.63	3.54	3.1	3.33
Camera	2.76	1.53	2.66	2.7	1.84	3
Mobile telephone	3.65	2.32	3.3	3.61	2.63	2.7
Video game	1.21	0.93	4.53	1.9	1.5	4.27



**Figure 5:** Contribution of the members of the family in buying a washing machine

**IV. CONCLUSION**

This study tried to clarify the purchase decision-making process within Algerian households. Searching for information, within the studied families, is a feature that may reduce the risk to affect the customer’s satisfaction. The main findings of this research showed that, in Algeria, tradition which encompasses religion and culture in general, has a strong grip on the decision-making process within the family. Most surveyed households are patriarchal where the father monopolizes all purchase decisions; he gets involved at all levels of the decision-making process. However, from the obtained results, it is easy to note that the influence of the wife and children is quite important in urban areas (modern households) as compared to rural areas (traditional households) [Confirmation of hypothesis 2].

Moreover, the role of household members varies with the type of product to buy. The father assumes to himself the right to make the majority of decisions; for him, the degree of decision-making power usually depends on the financial and cultural resources he can provide. Thus, the results show that women cannot clearly assert themselves on any decision, but they have a more cautious role in the purchase process. Children’s

role is not very important, but is still essential for the products that concern them directly (video games) [Confirmation of hypothesis 1].

These results confirm that the socio-cultural context of each family should be considered by Marketing Managers. They must also take into account the presence of other people in the household because they may play some other roles that have not been identified in our research.

This work, like any research works, opens up a number of other research perspectives to Validate the results for other categories of goods and services (food, sustainable products, clothes, holiday destination, home purchase). Explore the role of other variables such as involvement, perception, and risk on buying decision process. It would probably be interesting to conduct a comparative study between nuclear and extended families in order to determine the roles played by these two types of families.

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