

PESTER POWER

A Report on Attitudes in Spain and Sweden

Research by NOP Solutions

for

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I Introduction

Assessing the importance of what has come to be known as “pester power” is difficult. Assessing the extent to which such behaviour is a result of commercial television or children’s advertising generally, or other factors, is clearly even more difficult given the numerous factors which influence children’s desire for toys, sweets and various forms of food and drink.

This exercise is a first attempt at assessing the general importance of pestering behaviour as assessed by adults, and then looking at differences between countries with few controls (in this exercise Spain) and a country with a ban on television advertising to children (Sweden).

Given the emotive nature of the subject matter, it was believed to be essential to put “pester” questions in a general framework of other questions relating to shopping. If pestering is of a real importance than it should emerge during shopping trips to a greater extent than on other occasions.

Two questions were asked. The first was a general question relating to shopping:

Question 1

“Which of the following do you think are the two worst things about shopping?”

Seven possible responses were allowed:

- In-store promotion over the sound system
- Children pestering parents
- Not enough staff
- Changing display positions
- Poor quality staff
- Queues at till
- Parking problems

A second question was asked of all respondents who mentioned “children pestering parents” as one of the worst things about shopping in the first question.

Question 2

“Which two of the following do you think should be done to make shopping more agreeable?”

- Don't display toys and sweets where children can reach them
- Ban advertising displays intended to attract children
- Ban children's advertising
- Ban in-store commercials
- Ban children in busy shops
- Have in-store activity areas for children

The questions were asked of representative samples of adults in Spain and Sweden using local ‘omnibus’ surveys (see technical details in Appendix I).

II Results

The results are shown below in tables 1, 2 ,3 and 4.

Table I “Which of the following do you think are the two worst things about shopping?”.

(results shown as percentage of people mentioning pestering as either one of the two worst things)

	SPAIN	SWEDEN
In-store promotion	9%	11%
Children pestering	7%	9%
Not enough staff	34%	34%
Changing displays	32%	37%
Poor quality staff	30%	29%
Queues at till	51%	62%
Parking	15%	14%

It can be seen from Table I that of all the various aspects of shopping that people disliked, children pestering parents was the lowest of all the factors listed. Only 7% of adults in Spain and 9% in Sweden found this a problem.

When the answers are rebased to allow for the fact that all respondents were allowed two reasons for disliking shopping, it can be seen in Table II that only approximately 4% of adults found “pestering power” to be a problem. Again the lowest level of answers for any of the questions. Again, Sweden scored higher than Spain.

Table II “Which of the following do you think are the two worst things about shopping?”

(results shown as percentage of all reasons given by respondents for disliking shopping)

	SPAIN	SWEDEN
In-store promotion	5.3%	5.5%
Pestering	3.4%	4.4%
Not enough staff	18.9%	17.2%
Changing displays	17.9%	18.9%
Poor quality staff	16.5%	15.0%
Queues at till	28.4%	31.7%
Parking	8.6%	7.2%

Table III “Which two of the following do you think should be done to make shopping more agreeable?”

(results shown are answers given by people who mentioned ‘pestering’ as a problem – not the whole sample)

	SPAIN	SWEDEN
Do not display toys and sweets where kids can reach	34%	71%
Ban advertising display for kids in shops	22%	17%
Ban kids advertising	9%	19%
Ban in-store advertising	8%	4%
Ban children in busy stores	16%	4%
Have in-store activity areas for kids	60%	64%

The results shown in this table indicate that even those people who felt pestering to be a problem did not, in the main, feel children’s advertising should be banned. Only 9% in Spain and 19% in Sweden wanted a ban on children’s advertising

Table IV “Which of the following things should be done to make shopping more agreeable

(results shown as percentages of whole sample)

	SPAIN	SWEDEN
Don't display toys and sweets where kids can reach	2.3%	6.4%
Ban advertising displays for kids in shops	1.5%	1.5%
Ban kids advertising	<1%	1.7%
Ban in-store advertising	<1%	<1%
Ban children in busy stores	11.1%	<1%
Have in-store activity areas For kids	4.2%	5.8%

When viewed as a proportion of the whole sample, the small proportion who felt that pestering by children was a problem, who also wanted a ban on advertising to children, was very small indeed. Less than 1% of people in Spain wanted this and only 1.7% in Sweden.

III Conclusion

In summary, it is clear that only a small proportion of people in either Spain or Sweden believe that children pestering parents is of any major significance, and only an extremely small proportion of these people felt that an advertising ban would be an appropriate solution.

APPENDIX: TECHNICAL DETAILS

Method	The research was carried out using standard OMNIBUS surveys running in Spain and Sweden
Scope	National surveys were used
Universe	Resident adults, aged 18+
Sample size	1000 in each country
Distribution	The samples were chosen to be statistically representative of a cross section of both populations by sex and age
Research company:	NOP Solutions was commissioned to carry out the research