

Kids' pocket money

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Youth TGI shows levels of pocket money and other income for the 7-10 and 11-14 age groups have increased over the last two years. Across the 7-10 age group, the proportion who receive Â£7 or more a week has risen by almost fifty per cent since 2002. Those who get between Â£5-6.99 have also seen a significant rise of 37%. Amongst the 11-14 age group, there are consistent rises in income however not as dramatic with the younger group. Those who receive an income of Â£15+ have risen by three per cent in penetration and the children who are within the Â£10-14.99 income bracket has increased by twenty-two per cent.

Breaking the age groups further down, there is a steady increase in the percentage in children who receive Â£5 or more a week. 14-year-olds are clearly the most likely to acquire Â£5+ a week, with 78%. This percentage has risen by six per cent in penetration since 2002 when 74% of 14-year-olds received Â£5+ a week. This increase could be attributed to many factors, most notably the growing affluence could be due to an increase in employment rate, or perhaps a greater willingness of parents/grandparents to give their child more pocket money.

Through Youth TGI, we can identify the various sources of income and compare it with previous surveys to distinguish whether there has been a swift in the way in which children acquire money. Looking back over the last decade, there has been a decrease in levels of financial support from parents. Among the 7-10-year-olds, there has been an eight per cent decrease in receivers since 1994, while within the 11-14-year-olds the decline in six per cent. The decrease within the 11-14-year-olds has been offset with a twenty-four per cent penetration increase in those receiving pocket money from grandparents. There is a significant shift across both age groups that supports the idea that although parents are not providing their children pocket money, without strings attached, they are actually making them work for their allowance by doing â€œodd jobs/chores.â€™ This phenomenon shows a substantial rise amongst the 7-10-year-olds where there has been a sixteen per cent penetration increase; the 11-14s showing a thirty-seven per cent increase. However, against this increase, there has been a twenty-three per cent decrease in the number of 11-14-year-olds who have a regular part-time job outside the home. Perhaps this fall could be attributed to parentsâ€™ unwillingness to let their child work in an â€œoutsideâ€™ environment and might explain the rise in chores within the home as a source of replacement â€œearnedâ€™ income.

In terms of saving their income, the age groups differ. The 11-14s show an increased awareness of the need to retain their money. In 1994, fifty-three per cent saved some of their money, in the Autumn 2004 Youth TGI survey, the figure has risen to sixty-four per cent, which is a proportional rise of twenty-one per cent. The 7-10s have seen a nineteen per cent penetration decrease over the same time period. Girls appear to be marginally better â€œsaversâ€™ than boys, within the 7-10 age group two per cent more girls save their income than boys. When faced with the attitudinal statements â€œI like saving money,â€™ 7-10-year-old girls are ten per cent more likely to agree than boys. However, amongst the 11-14s, although four per cent more girls save than their male counterparts, boys are twelve per cent more likely than girls to agree that they â€œlike saving money.â€™

In relation to how they spend their income, crisps, sweets and chocolate continue to dominate spending amongst both sexes and within both age groups. Interestingly, it is within the 11-14-year-old group that crisps/sweets/chocolate are the most popular purchases and not the 7-10s, where boys and girls within this age group prefer to buy toys and games rather than consumables. A reason for this could be parents supplying 7-10s with such items, whereas 11-14s buy their own.

Since 1994, toiletries and cosmetics have seen a major rise in penetration, particularly amongst the 7-10s. Amongst the 7-10 girls, the rise has been ninety-four per cent increase in penetration, with the boys showing a seventy-eight per cent increase over the last ten years. This characteristic also runs within the 11-14-year-olds, the girls have a six per cent penetration increase, with the boys showing a seventeen per cent increase since 1994. This could be attributed to an increased awareness of â€œselfâ€™ and augmented perception of the need to look good. When asked the attitudinal statement â€œit is important to be attractive to the opposite sex,â€™ the noticeable rise in awareness of â€œselfâ€™ amongst the 11-14-year-olds becomes more apparent. In 1994, only twenty-eight per cent of 11-14 girls agreed with the statement, in Autumn 2004 Youth TGI survey, almost fifty per cent agreed. Within the 11-14 boys there is also a rise, from forty-three per cent to fifty-five per cent in penetration.

Through the Youth TGI Autumn 2004 survey, the data has indicated some change in childrensâ€™ income through comparison with other surveys. However, changing social attitudes clearly affect the way in which children spend their

money. The evidence presented suggests these changing attitudes could continue to manifest themselves within the realms of kids'™ pocket money. Furthermore, with high levels of obesity being regularly documented and an increased awareness of attractiveness, the data implies children could begin to ignore the temptation to spend their money on confectionary and crisps in favour of items such as toiletries, cosmetics and clothes.

Written by BMRB