

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with statistical findings related to the relationship between children's influences by product type, factors affecting children's influence and disagreement between "M/Hs" and children perceptions. The data were obtained from a survey of 446 families in Peninsular Malaysia conducted by ACNielsen Malaysia. Methods used in the analysis included descriptive methods, both graphical and numerical summaries, non-parametric techniques mainly chi-square test and logistic regression. Logistic regression method was applied to identify the variables, which are useful in making the prediction for children's influence. This concluding chapter summarizes results of the study, the limitations of the study and some suggestions for future research based on the findings of this analysis.

6.2 Summary of Results

Overall, the results of this study support much of the earlier family decision-making research findings. Influence of the children varied as a function of product. Their influence was greater for products they were most involved with, like toys, snacks, food and clothing. As expected, decision on holiday destination and restaurant choice were not significant. The decision on holiday destinations and restaurant choices generally involve both the adults and the children and this decision is for the whole family. As Foxman et al. (1989a) indicated in their study, children's had least influence on matter that did not solely related to them but more for the family as a whole.

Snacks is the least expensive product among the six items and it was the purchase decision with highest percentage of children's involvement, which is consistent with the study done by Ward and Wackman (1972). Their findings showed that children had more influence for products that are less expensive. However, children influence in toys purchasing was not as strong as expected. This may be due to the fact that parents are more cautious on the safety of the product as well as the quality of the product which might affect the children's mental and physical development. This may be a factor that is not much understood by the child

Although children were found to have some influence in the purchase of toys, snacks, food and clothing, but most of their decision was actually "joint-decision" with the "marketing housewives" rather than their decision alone. The proportion of "joint-decision" was much higher than the category for children decision on toys and clothes purchasing. There are several reasons, which may be able to explain the high percentage of "joint-decision" between the children and "marketing housewives" for these items. One of the reasons may be due to the fact that clothes is a product for the child's personal used. The child would prefer to make his/her own choice, however, the "marketing housewives" would also want to ensure that the choice made by their children meet the needs and the budget set. Hence, both parties made the joint-decision for this purchase.

The findings of this study revealed that the influence of the children on the various items analyzed varied according to demographic characteristics of the family. However, the results showed that gender and "marketing housewife" education achievement had no direct relationship on children's decision towards all the six decisions. "Marketing housewives" education achievement was expected to

affect children's influence. Yavas et al. (1994) reported in their study that husband's role in decision-making decreased as the wife's education level increased. So we anticipated the same relationship between "marketing housewives" and children in this study. However, our study did not seem to support Yavas et al. (1994) findings.

Results also indicate relationship between race and purchase decision. It was found significant for all the items except for the snacks purchasing. Chinese children were more involved in the decision-making compared to the other ethnic groups. However, Indian children influence on snacks purchasing was surprisingly high but they had the least influence on holiday destination. It seems that Indian children have more influence on products for their own (snacks), but in deciding where to go for holiday, the "marketing housewives" made the decision.

This study also found that household income had positive impact towards children's influence in family decision-making. However, respondents from families with household income above RM3000 gave different rating for children's influence across the six items. This group of respondents ("marketing housewives" and children) perceived children had less influence compared to the other groups. Looking at the pocket money received by this group of children, majority of them did not received any pocket money. This may indicate that more parents from this income group did not give pocket money to their children, instead they made the purchase for them. It is therefore children influence was perceived lower.

Children see themselves had more influence on the family decision-making process than do the "marketing housewives". The child's overestimation of his/her influence may suggest that the children perceived themselves as having more influence than they have in actuality. On the other hand, the difference in perceptions between the "marketing housewives" and the children may also reflect

the parents' unawareness of the child's actual influence on the family decision-making process. The child's perception of his/her influence may be correct and that the differing perception is a result of the parent's understatement of the child's influence. Although these differences in perception were not very significant and the actual reasons are difficult to determine from this study, further investigation is worth carry out.

6.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study supports much of the findings from previous studies, there are a few apparent limitations to be addressed.

Looking at the relationship between the pocket money received and children's influence in family decision-making, it was found that the amount of pocket money a child received will only affect the children's influence for less expensive products such as snacks and toys. This may be due to the fact that the information available was only the daily pocket money received and it only incurred amount from RM1 to RM2. It may be better if other sources of allowance such as small gifts of money from parents and relatives during special occasions and children's income earned by doing household chores were available to pick up more information. This may allow us to seek for relationship between pocket money and children's influence on more expensive products (holiday destination and restaurant choice).

Previous studies revealed that children's influence varied as a function of product type, specific decision areas, stages of decision-making process and demographic or socio-economic characteristics. However, our study is restricted by tacking only product categories and demographic factors, which might affect the

children's influence in family decision-making. Future research should take various family characteristics such as dual-career or single-parent household and marital status into account, since these variables may have significant impact on children's shopping responsibilities for the household, which will in turn influence the development of their consumer styles. Exploration of children's influence in various stages of the decision process and how they actually influence their parents (strategies used such as bargaining, persuasion, request and etc.) should also be carried out in the study. Furthermore, both parents' rating should be included in order to better understand the children's role in the family purchase decision.