

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This final chapter concludes the research by giving an overview of the study, summary of the research results, limitations of the study, recommendation for future study and managerial implication of the research. Finally, the chapter ends with concluding remarks.

### **5.2 Overview of the study**

The study attempts to explore the decision-making styles governing the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia namely Malay, Chinese and Indian using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and also to demonstrate that consumer decision-making styles differ according to consumers' ethnicity. Specifically, the study focused on the decision-making styles towards casual wear buying. This study also examines the applicability of the CSI model in Malaysia.

The data for the study was collected through a four page self administered questionnaire. The sample consisted of 380 respondents dominated by female (74%). Malay respondents made up of 58% of the total sample followed by Chinese (25%) and Indian (17%). The percentages of the respondents' ethnicity

were considerably close to the ethnic group percentage representation of Malaysia as mentioned in Section 1.2.

### **5.3 Summary of the Research Results**

This study shows after factor analysis, the adopted 40-item Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) in the questionnaire can be group into nine factors. Only eight factors consisting 39 items were retained and this explains a total of 65.6% of the variance. This percentage is higher than Sproles and Kendall's (1986) study which explained only 46% of the variation. From the results shown in Chapter 4, it is concluded that the CSI is applicable to the Malaysian consumer.

Further frequency analysis test to compare the consumer decision-making styles of the different ethnic groups towards casual wear buying revealed that Indians respondents demonstrate the perfectionistic / high quality conscious trait towards casual wear buying. They are also more novelty – fashion conscious compared to Malay and Chinese respondents. Malay on the other hand scored high on the confused by over-choice factor compared to the Chinese and Indian respondents. They also scored higher on the Brand Conscious, “Price Equals quality” factor showing that they are more brand conscious compared to the other two ethnic groups and perceived that more expensive casual wear are of better quality. However, due to the smaller percentage of respondents agreeing to the items in this factor, it is concluded that this factor is not viewed as the most important

factor when buying casual wear. The results also show that a high percentage of Malay respondents were careless when buying casual wear and that respondents from the three ethnic groups were generally recreational, hedonistic in characteristics when come to casual wear buying. The respondents who agree with the items in the habitual, brand loyal factor were not high as well. Finally, Indians are more price and “value for money” conscious among the three ethnic groups with Malay being the least price conscious consumer when making decision to buy casual wear.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

The findings of this research were interpreted based on a sample of 380 respondents. A larger sample may produce results that are more generalized. Further, this study was limited to consumers from the three major ethnic groups in the Klang Valley area only, thus it may not truly represent the total market.

Finally, the interpretation of the current findings on casual wear buying may not be generalized to other industries. Nevertheless, the findings of this research could provide an insight into the differences in consumer decision-making styles of the three major ethnic groups.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Future Study**

There are areas on which further research can be conducted to gain a better understanding of the consumer decision-making styles in Malaysia. As this study is limited in location and sample size, subsequent research should consider a larger sample drawn from every part of the country. A geographically diverse sample is important for the purpose of clear generalizability. Additional studies comparing decision-making styles of casual wear buying of the other ethnic consumers as well as from different regions of Malaysia might produce interesting findings. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) can be used to analyse the differences in consumer decision-making styles of the three major ethnic groups in future studies.

Further, decision-making styles of casual wear buying of consumers within the same ethnic group should be studied as well. Hofstede (1991) acknowledges the existence of variations in behaviour among the members of any culture. According to him, cultural patterns only show the possible and understandable reactions and behaviour based on one's past. It is not possible to have all individuals from one particular country behaving exactly the same. The moderating influence on ethnicity by demographic variables such as age, education and income in different cultural settings can be investigated as well.

## **5.6 Managerial Implications**

In a country with a variety of subcultures resulting from the different ethnic groups, the understanding of the differences in their consumer decision-making styles is very important especially for marketers and retailers. This study suggests that casual wear fashion retailers can benefit from an understanding of the consumer decision-making styles towards casual wear buying. As Malaysia is a multi-racial country, retailers and marketers should equip themselves with an understanding of the decision-making styles of the consumers from diverse ethnic groups in order to implement proper marketing strategy and position their brand to better cater to the diverse market. As an example, since Malay consumers are more brand conscious compared to the Chinese and Indians, when targeting Malay consumers, retailers should carry more casual wear with famous brand names originating from Europe, America or Japan.

Further, this study adds to our understanding of the existence of differences in consumer decision-making styles of the different ethnic groups. More work is needed by the marketers and retailers in aspects of marketing strategy, such as branding issues, pricing issues and sales promotion issues to better cater the requirements of the multi racial consumers which in turn enabling the seller to get hold of the lucrative share of the casual wear market.

When considering the current keen competition in the fashion retailer industry, understanding consumers' priority of consideration and casual wear preferences

can provide useful information to the industry. In addition, the findings of this research can be applicable to future studies in understanding consumer decision making towards apparel buying as well as spark interest in exploring the decision-making styles of consumers towards other consumer products which are necessary for marketers in other industry to understand in order to device appropriate marketing strategy.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Casual wear will continue to be sought after by consumers. With the emergence of many fashion retailers, competition in this industry is intense. Consumers now have more choices to select from compared to previously and therefore, marketers will have to device appropriate strategies in order to market their products. An understanding of the consumer decision-making style is thus crucial. The findings obtained from this study will be able to help casual wear fashion retailers in designing their marketing strategy to tackle the intense competition in the present apparel industry.

The findings of this study infer that Indian respondents are perfectionistic / high quality conscious compared to members from the other two ethnic groups namely the Malays and Chinese. They are also more novelty – fashion conscious. Malays on the other hand scored higher on the Brand Conscious, “Price Equals quality” factor showing that they are more brand conscious compared to the other two ethnic groups and perceived that more expensive

casual wear are of better quality. However, this factor is not viewed as the most important factor when buying casual wear as the percentage of respondents agreeing to the items in this factor is smaller. Malay respondents are also prone to confused by over-choice compared to the Chinese and Indians and they were more careless when buying casual wear. Chinese take the longest time to shop and respondents from all three ethnic groups were generally recreational, hedonistic in characteristics when come to casual wear buying. The findings also shows that Indians are more price and “value for money” conscious among the three ethnic groups with Malay being the least price conscious consumer when making decision to buy casual wear.