

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAI PARENTAL STYLES, CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE STRATEGIES AND PARENTAL DECISIONS FOR PROCESSED SNACKS

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## ABSTRACT

*Research interest in documenting and understanding children's influence on family purchases has grown tremendously over recent years. The findings of these studies have been beneficial for understanding children's influence in a variety of contexts. Yet, with a few exceptions, most empirical studies were conducted in the USA and less is known about children's influence elsewhere. In Thailand, there is a paucity of studies on children's influence on parental decision making. The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between parental style, children's influence strategies and parental decision for processed snack products in the Thai context. A total of 420 respondents who were parents/guardians of children aged between 5-14 were selected in Bangkok. The findings showed positive relationships between all three parenting styles and parental decision for processed snacks. In studying the relationship between children's influence strategies, the study found that Thai children were more likely to use persuasion over bargaining or emotional strategies. The findings have interesting implications for marketing practitioners in that children tend to have higher influence for products, such as snacks, that are more relevant for them. Consequently, marketers need to keep in mind that they do need to appeal to children as much as they may need to appeal to parents.*

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, children represent an important group to marketers, having their own purchasing power while still being able to influence the decisions of adults. They represent a significant part of the food market segment. This has led to increased interest from marketers, especially in the food industry which has vigorously pursued new, alternative and inventive marketing strategies to captivate ever youthful buyers. More particularly, the interest in the topic of children's influence on parental purchase decision has been growing (Bao, 2001). Fisher (2000) stated that children as young as three years can recognize brand logos and so brands can become part of the family consumption via children's influence on parental purchase decisions.

Children are becoming increasingly valuable to marketers especially for their strength in in-

fluencing parental purchase decisions. This research examines the relationship between parental style and purchase decision for processed snacks in the Thai context. In addition, it studied the relationship between influence strategies children use and parental purchase decisions for such snacks.

### The snack market in Thailand

Snack foods are popular in Thailand. The market consists of a mix of traditional snacks and western products. The processed snacks market is defined as the total retail sales of corn-based snacks, nuts and seeds, popcorn, potato chips and local savory snack varieties in the country's market. The market for processed snacks in Thailand increased between the years 2001 to 2006, growing at an average annual rate of 7.9% (Datamonitor, 2008). In the year 2008, the Thai savory snacks market had a value of \$619