CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Kids are an interesting, yet the most challenging segment to cater to. With rapidly changing needs and getting to fall an easy prey to peer group/external influences, it is both easy and difficult to capture their attention towards a product. Hence, parents have a challenging task of diverting the kids’ attention towards their family values while marketers have a tough time to satisfy the kids and at the same time convince a concerned parent.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS FROM STUDY

The relation between pester power of kids, purchase intention of parents and satisfaction of the parents was empirically tested using various indicators. All the indicators used to measure the various constructs used in this study irrespective of their nature were found to be appropriate and significant to extract the domain of interest pertaining to the construct of interest.

Among the three first order dimensions EI, PU, AWC which contributes towards Pester power of kid, it was found that the External influences ($\beta-0.28$) have got a strong say in developing Pester Power in kid. This implies that the kid has more influence towards factors such as advertisements, peer pressure and situational influences. Among the three indicators used to measure the external influences of the kid, it was found that the Standard Regression coefficient pertaining to Peer group influence was
found to be the strongest indicator (β-0.36). The next significant contributor of Pester power of kid was the Awareness level of the kid about the product (β-0.21) with strongest indicator as awareness from the media. With regard to the strongest indicator of the Perceived Use of the product by the kid, it was found that the taste particulars influenced the kid more than any other indicators in the study.

Among the three First Order dimensions contributing to Purchase Intention of adult (parent), the Situational influence (β-0.34) was found to be the strongest dimension with strongest indicator being the attitude of the parent to keep the kid happy. The Financial constraints of the parent too have a prominent and significant role in developing purchase intention among adult (parent). The strongest construct in this regard was found to be the budgetary constraints of adult. The Hygiene considerations form the strongest indicator among adult awareness about the product.

The construct of unethical aspects, even though assumed to have a critical impact on Purchase intentions of the adult, was found to be insignificant in this study. This corroborates with the findings of Mc Lean (2006) wherein he stated that unethical considerations were not an influential factor in buying decisions in one of his studies on unethical marketing practices towards kids. However, in this study the indicators used to measure unethical aspirations of adult were found valid and significant.

Another major objective of the study was to identify the impact of pester power exercised by the kids on purchase intentions of parent with regard to packaged convenience food items and its linkage with satisfaction component of the adult. Two hypotheses were proposed to fulfill this objective. It was found that The Pester Power of kid has got a strong and significant relation with Purchase intention (β-0.43) which in turn strongly and significantly relate to satisfaction among adults (β-0.56). This observation
is highly relevant and implies that kids have a major role in influencing their parents in purchase of ready to eat packaged convenience and hence while developing the strategies aimed at promotion of such products, the marketers should take care of the creative views of kids.

From data analysis it is very clear that Indian consumers’ buying behavior and their attitude have changed drastically in the recent past. It can be concluded that the pace of change in the needs, desires and wants of the Indian consumers will be even steeper and will further change drastically in the near future. Kids, teenagers and youth constitute a very important consumer segment for the market. Their consumption habits are unique and their purchase decisions are based on popular trends, brand image, use of new technology, flavor of food products, and style. The market also realizes that young consumers have a propensity to consume junk food and prefer them over traditional forms of food. This characteristic is exploited by the market by associating convenience and a brand image with junk food like colas, pizzas, and fast-food joints.

Young consumers are special targets of the junk-food industry. The market knows that fast food is addictive and once young people get used to having their fat, salts and sugar rich food, they will become their consumers for life. Also, young consumers have the indirect purchasing power of their parents, which makes them a very lucrative consumer segment. Thus it does not come as a surprise that the market spends huge sums of money at advertising campaigns alone.

The issue of excessive food marketing to kids is fast becoming a hotly debated topic. Marketing to kids under age eight is unethical because young kids don't have the critical thinking skills required to evaluate media messages. Kids under twelve spend more on their own or influence family spending decisions but are not capable of resisting or understanding
marketing tactics at such younger ages. At older ages, competitive feelings towards kids are stronger than financial sense. The use of marketing practices targeted at kids to sell highly salted products is unethical marketing practice. Ethical practices are aimed to ensure a sustained market. Although promotional techniques are used to encourage usage by a particular target audience, they should not be used on those that are vulnerable and at such a crucial stage of their life. While kids use friends, television commercials, or other media outlets as information sources, they are also seen as an information source for parents.

8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Using kids for research brings up several issues. Adults may have difficulty communicating efficiently with kids. Kids often view adults as authority figures and may have a hard time maintaining a conversation with them. Also, discriminating between what a kid is really thinking and what he or she says to please the researcher is difficult (Seiter, 1993). Kids also have language barriers. They have trouble articulating themselves and what they know, especially about personal matters. Kids have a hard time understanding research measurements and abstractions.

Furthermore, kids are difficult to reach. Kids are either at daycare or in school. Likewise, some people think kids should be protected from research. Due to these problems many businesses choose to conduct more research with parents and minimal research with kids. Parents are often utilized for research in relation to aspects pertaining to research on kids. The current study exhibits the opinion of the parents only. This is considered as the major limitation of the study.

The study has been carried out exclusively among the students of private unaided schools from selected districts in Kerala. As a result, the
students of the same age group belonging to the Government schools were not subjected to the study nor were their parents contacted. This is also another limitation.

8.4 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has been carried out among students of the private unaided schools and no Government schools have been taken into the study. As a result the pester power among the students of the Government schools have not been studied. Similarly, a comparative study of the pester power influence of kids in these three districts i.e. students of Government schools vs. students of the private unaided schools could also be taken up for study in future.

The study revealed that prolonged pester behaviour did not support purchase intention. The reasons behind prolonged pester behaviour and its effect on purchase intention of parents can be taken up for future research.

8.5 SUGGESTIONS

Some of the suggestions made by the researcher are as follows:

8.5.1 Marketing Practices

Current generation young people are growing up with the Internet as a daily and routine part of their lives. By creating engaging, interactive environments based on products and brand names, companies can build brand loyalties from an early age.

Kids are extremely conscious about product features and thereby brands and hence comes the concept “Kid influence” is the direct or indirect influence kids have over family household purchases. Indirect influence
means that the kids’ preferences are given consideration when parents make a purchase decision.

The convenience food products in India must realize the fact that consumer groups are on a drive to put a control on the amount of junk food marketing targeted at kids. Therefore the ads and marketing campaigns of product should encourage kids to choose nutritional foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meat; and foods aimed at kids should have limits on saturated fat, trans fat, added sugar and sodium.

Food companies should serve support parents’ efforts to serve as the gatekeepers of sound nutrition for their kids and not undermine parental authority. Marketers should not encourage kids to nag their parents to buy low-nutrition foods.

Schools are a unique setting. Parents entrust their kids into schools’ care for a large proportion of kids waking hours. Also, schools are dedicated to kids education and are supported by tax dollars. Companies should support healthy eating in schools and not market, sell, or give away low-nutrition foods or brands anywhere on school campuses.

Convenience foods manufacturer can develop new and reformulated products that help kids eat healthfully, especially with regard to nutrient density, energy density, and portion size. They may use cartoon characters, games, and premiums to market healthful foods among the kids aged below ten years.

8.5.2 Inculcating Ethical and Consumer Practices

Parents should be educated with respect to what should be healthy food as per proper nutritional intake for their kids.
Schools can also play a very active role in making sure that students get healthy diet at its canteen. It is very important that schools do not stock junk food in their canteen, by getting lured by approach of fast food and soft drink companies to stock their stuff. Since kids spend most of their time in school, schools can imbibe on kids mind what a healthy diet should consist of.

Since the intake of junk food & carbonated drinks causes numerous diseases such as obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), gall bladder ailments, cancer, psycho-social problems, breathlessness, sleep disorders, asthma, arthritis, weak bones and reproductive hormone abnormalities. So it should come with statutory warnings as in the case of milk powder such as “Intake of this food more than twice a week is not good for health.”

The parents’ must understand the fact that shared shopping experiences (i.e., co-shopping when father/mother and kid shop together) also give kids the opportunity to acquire in store shopping skills.

Co-shopping is a way of spending time with one’s kids while at the same time accomplishing necessary task. Because communication, guidance and supervision must be maintained all the times. when both parents are working ,they have to allocate sometime and regularly check his activities. For instance, parents frequently use the process of reward of material goods as a device to modify or control a kid behavior.

Kids have changed a lot in the last decade. Consumerism is the new religion of the day and its most devout followers are kids. Family peers and media are key socializing agents for kids. Parents, role models, teachers also influence them a lot. It is the role of parent and teacher to teach a kid to growth within the socialization process.
8.6 CONCLUSION

As the final word, the study revealed that parents ultimately ‘reserve the right’ to have the final say in decisions and determine the amount of money to spend on food items. Yet both parents and kids were seen to be equally involved in choosing the type and specific convenience food items and were capable of identifying the problem and offering information about the food items selection, health and development.