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Communication Pattern of Indonesian Parents-Children and Its Role in Buying Decision

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ABSTRACT

This research has purpose to test the influence of communication pattern of parents and children, that is concept and social orientation toward the children role as the influencer in buying decision making in Indonesia. Sample in this research is dyadic sample that involves parents and children. The sampling was done with purposive sampling method. One hundred and twenty respondents had been successfully collected in this research. Data was collected using questionnaire.

Data analysis used regression analysis. This research result shows that the communication pattern of parents that is social-oriented does not significantly influence the children role as the influencer in buying decision. Parents' communication pattern that is concept-oriented influences positively the children role as the influencer in buying decision.

Keywords: Communication Pattern; Concept Orientation; Social Orientation; Influencer; Buying Decision

I. Introduction

Children are the interesting market target. Although children and teenagers do not have their own wages, but the pocket money, they are the biggest influencer for parents to do their demands. Whimpers and tears of children often can melt parents' heart to fulfill their demands. Many parents cannot stand the whimpers and tears of the children, so the children's demands tend to be fulfilled because of love reason. The children's persuasion also has the role in determining the choice

and pattern of family's expense. The ability of children to influence parents buying behaviour has encouraged promotions across diverse industries. For example, in the USA, Shell Oil promoted petrol stations through the launching of a Walt Disney film production in conjunction with the film producers 20th Century Fox (Stanley, 1997).

One of the market segments which the marketers try to serve are children. The markers are very interested in working on children potential market in Indonesia. Indonesia demographic reality shows that children are the potential market that is big enough for products' marketing. Since the beginning of 1990s, children had been the potential focus of the marketers. While becoming their own customers, the children's influence in family buying decision also increases more. The report in marketing literature suggests the retailers to target children as the keys that influence marketing, among others by

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giving comfort for children and giving little prizes such as interesting souvenirs.

Children's ability to influence parents' buying behavior has supported the different cross-industry promotion (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003). In a whole, children have a critical influence for foods, drinks, children toys, and TV program category (Belch *et al.*, 1985; Foxman *et al.*, 1989; Swinyard and Sim, 1987; Ward and Wackman, 1972). Because of that, children can be viewed as the amazing market targets. The teenagers segment has its own uniqueness, because sometimes the buying decision of this segment cannot be done soon. Teenagers do not have the money resource power to do their own buying decision. Products buying process by children is often related with children's demands, that is related with decision making process in families that consist of *gatekeeper, influencer, decider, buyer, and user* (Engel *et al.*, 2000). In accordance with that family decision making process, children tend to have the roles as the users, as the influencers who influence the other family members (parents) to buy products.

Children's ages significantly influence the advertisement and can cause three children's behavior types, those are buying, buying demands, and antisocial behavior (Mizerski, 1995). Children's buying behavior means the children directly buy the promoted products or services because of having money. The buying demand behavior happens when children accept the advertisement and interested, but they do not have money to get the products.

Children buying decision can influence parents' decision in buying products or services, because children have the role as influencer (Mowen, 2000). The marketers are very interested to work on teenagers' potential markets as the influencers of consumptive behavior of parents in Indonesia. Producers, who see decision making process in the families above, see children's segment as the dream targets. Producers try to maintain children's segment so it can be the future markets, those are the future potential goal markets. Product marketers try to attract the attention of children's market segment to be the future markets, one of which is by advertisement.

This research is focused on children's roles as the influencer in buying decision as communication pattern result adopted from parents. Social orientation and concept orientation are two main parents' communication style that is influencing, that children believe in what parents'

believe. Parents with social oriented communication style have character to monitor and control children's learning and behavior, and try to apply obedience in their children's behavior. They do not discuss consumption activity and hope that their children fulfill the determined stipulation. Parents with concept communication style support their children in developing their own ability and skills and support them to decide the buying without depending on others' opinions. They consult their children and value their opinions in buying decision although it is not for the products consumed by them.

Concept orientation and social orientation are two different dimensions. Concept orientation consists of Pluralistic and Consensual, meanwhile social orientation consists of Laissez-faire and Protective. When communicated in a matrix, it can form 4 family communication pattern typologies that consist of Laissez-faire, Protective, Pluralistic, and Consensual. In Laissez-faire, there is only little communication between parents and children. In Protective, parents emphasize social dimension orientation that emphasizes obedience and social harmony, and it is not related with various conceptual things. In Pluralistic, family emphasizes concept orientation dimension by emphasizing on respect sense for someone's importance and others, and children are supported to discuss ideas without being afraid of punishments. In consensual, children are supported to investigate the world around them and to form their own opinions (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003). Factors that form teenagers' role consist of internal and external factors (Mowen, 2000). External factor involves social environment in which children grow and develop such as school, home, and mass media (television advertisement, and so on). Internal factor involves parents' communication pattern and religious teachings. Both factors have roles very much in forming teenagers' role in behavior. In this research, the chosen product category to be examined was a restaurant.

This research had purpose to examine parents' communication pattern toward children's role as influencers in deciding the buying decision in Indonesia. In this reserach we use concept and social orientation as the proxies of parents' communication patern. This research confirmed research significance developed by Caranua and Vassalo (2003) with Asia context that had different communication pattern from Western countries. Indonesia was a developing country with different

consumers' characters especially in attitude, culture, and values so it needed to be examined more. The other consideration, a model prediction might be various in different condition and culture (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2000), and both buying and consumption behavior (Hempel & Jain, 1978). Those differences would result different empirical condition and also needed different observation.

II. Literature Reviews

A. Parents-Children Communication Pattern

Children get attitude and skills toward market from consumers' socialization process. From all environment socialization agents, parents' influence is the most important. Parents' response toward children's effort in influencing buying can function as strengthener in children's future. It also pushes children's attention to pay attention more toward the met advertisement and will ask the products more. Meanwhile parents who often discuss their children's demands will push their children to develop skills in choosing and interpreting products' information.

Since parents are regarded as the most prominent socialization agent, communication natural character understanding between parents and children (parent-child communication) can help explaining the causes of children's skills and behavior difference (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003).

The approach in this research was done through cultural and social approach, in which the learning by children was seen as when happening in their environment. The learning or socialization is the critical things for children to get skills that will help making them the efficient operators later in the market. Family communication pattern plays the most important role in this socialization. Social orientation and concept orientation are two most influencing main parents' communication styles because children must be sure of their parents' belief. This research is focused on children's role as influencers in buying decision as communication pattern result adopted from parents.

Communication pattern has been successfully used to predict consumers' socialization process in which children's consumption behavior was also conditioned

by parents-children communication style. Communication pattern in family is an instrument that also influences, that children are trained through family's decision as experienced today and they will also act as consumers in the future. Social orientation and concept orientation are family's communication pattern between children and parents. Socio-oriented communication dimension means to produce children's obedience and to help social relationship development that is pleasant and in harmony at home. This communication form is based on monitoring process and children behavior control, and is motivated by social adaptation. Children are supported to make consumers' decisions that are pushed toward their likeness and others' admittance. They are taught to avoid controversies, not to argue adults or risks that may attack others. Meanwhile communication dimension related with concept-oriented parents pushes children to develop their own perspective toward world. Parents' concept orientation is focused more in functional aspect and faces the events by evaluating their own services. This kind of parents pushes children to take into account all alternatives before deciding and exposing children controversially by discussing issues openly (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003).

Parents with socio-oriented communication style have character always monitoring and controlling children consumers' learning and their behavior. They do not discuss the consumption activities that are done and expect their children to fulfill the determined stipulation. Parents with concept-oriented communication style support their children in developing their own ability and skills, and push them to decide buying without depending on their opinions in buying decision although for the products what are not consumed by themselves (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003).

Concept orientation and social orientation are two different dimensions. Concept orientation consists of Pluralistic and Consensual, meanwhile social orientation consists of Laissez-faire and Protective. When communicated in a matrix will form 4 family communication pattern typologies consisting of Laissez-faire, Protective, Pluralistic, and Consensual. In Laissez-faire, there is only little communication between parents and children. In Protective, parents emphasize social orientation dimension that emphasizes obedience and social harmony, and not related with various conceptual things. In Pluralistic, family emphasizes

concept orientation dimension by emphasizing respect sense for someone and others' importance, and children are supported to discuss ideas without being afraid of punishments. In Consensual, children are supported to investigate the world around them and to form their own opinions. Those four family communication pattern typologies are very useful in marketing research, those are for learning buying behavior in family, and related with attitude toward advertisement and media (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003).

Teenagers in their development will experience puberty from children to adults phase. As the other individuals, in their development phases, teenagers also have development tasks. According to Conger (1991), one of teenagers' development tasks is making and choosing decision. Things, that influence children in making and choosing decisions, come from communication pattern that is delivered by parents to children. The study by Henley Centre stated that children who influenced buying in the household did not decide the goods that would be used by them. According to survey, 84% of parents stated that their children were the ones who decided the buying of foods, 29% of parents admitted that they were influenced by their children in choosing their clothes (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003). Parents with socio-oriented communication style have character always monitoring and controlling children consumers' learning and their behavior. They do not discuss consumption activities that are done and expect their children to fulfill the determined stipulation before, so children tend not to have roles in buying decision or they have low influence level. Parents with concept-oriented communication style support their children in developing their own ability and skills, and push them to decide the buying without depending on their opinions in buying decision although for the products not consumed by them, so children tend to have roles in deciding. So, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

- H1: Parents' communication pattern that is socio-oriented negatively influences children's roles as influencers in buying decision.
- H2: Parents' communication pattern that is concept-oriented positively influences children's roles as influencers in buying decision.

III. Methods

A. Research Design

Research design is framework or blueprint that has purpose as the main orientation in doing all research activities series (Sekaran, 2003). Based on data collection perspective that was done, this research was survey research. This research was based on hypothesis testing, so called causal research, and according to time perspective of view, this research was cross-sectional research.

B. Population and Sample Determination

Populations in this research were parents (father or mother) and children who did buying in family restaurant in Yogyakarta. The population numbers were unknown, so the population frame and sample frame were also unknown. As a result, the sample numbers that needed to be taken in such condition could not be certain (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). This research was planned to take samples as many as 60 parent-child pairs as respondents or 120 total respondents, with dyadic method.

Sampling method was done by non-probability sampling especially convenience method spread in Yogyakarta. This method use consideration was the numbers of population, so the difficulties in determining sampling frame could be minimal. Respondents' characters who became questionnaire division targets were children from age 13 until 15 years old or junior high school age range. According to Winkel (1997), children in those ages included in tentative phase, so with those respondents' ages, it was expected the meant respondents had had influence toward behavior that could really become respondents' representation in research.

C. Data Collection Method

Method used in data collection of this research was personally survey method (personally administered questionnaire) with respondents target as many as 120 persons.

D. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

Operational definitions of this research mostly refer to Caranua and Rosello's research (2003). Operational definition of each variable is as follows (Caranua and Rosello, 2003):

First, parents' communication pattern variable has two main parents' communication styles that are felt influencing, that children believe what parents believe, and consist of social orientation and concept orientation. Socio-oriented communication dimension means to produce children's obedience and to help social relationship development that is pleasant and harmonious at home. Communication dimension related with concept-oriented parents pushes children to develop their own view about the world. Parents' concept orientation is focused more on functional aspect and faces the events by evaluating their own merit.

Second, children's roles variable as influencers in buying decision is children's attitude reflection in influencing buying behavior and children's roles to decide in family buying.

E. Research Variables' Measurement Scale

To achieve measurement scale consistency, all instruments of parents' communication pattern in this research were measured with 5 scales of Likert's attitude, with values starting from number 1=very disagree until number 5=very agree. Meanwhile children's influence instrument as influencers was measured with 3 scales, that number 1=Always, 2=sometimes, and 3=never. It was because children with ages between 13 and 15 years old were regarded limited cognitively, so the statements' interpretation was made in order for the answer choices to be understood more (Caranua and Rosello, 2003).

In this research, the measurement toward 5 variables used instrument developed by Caranua and Rosello's research (2003). In order for the answers of the questions to be controlled, some exceptions were done with inversion way toward some questions (data recode), so respondents' seriousness attitude in answering the proposed questions would be able to be monitored and controlled.

F. Validity Testing

Instrument validity testing was done by using factors analysis (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). The testing result showed factor loading was in the range of 0.40 and above, that was 0.516-0.756.

G. Reliability Testing

Instrument reliability testing was done by using cronbach alpha with the value of rule of thumb 0.7 (Nunnaly, 1979). In this research, reliability testing was done by using the approach of internal consistency reliability that used Cronbach Alpha to identify how good the items of the questionnaire related to each other. Reliability testing result showed the Alpha range as many as 0.73-0.85.

H. Data Analysis Method

Model used in this research used multiple linear regression analysis.

IV. Results

The multiple linear regression result of communication pattern variable influence that consists of concept and social orientation toward children's roles as influencers, produces regression equation as follows:

$$Y=0.009 X_1 + 0.439 X_2$$

Notes:

Y=Children's Roles as Influencers

X₁=Social orientation

X₂=Concept orientation

From the equation of that regression result, it can be seen that concept orientation (X₂) has the highest coefficient, that is 0.439, so this variable was the most dominant influencing factor toward children's roles as influencers in determining the buying decision. The greatness of communication pattern influence value was

showed by R^2 value=20.0%, that social and concept orientation influence percentage toward children's roles level change as influencers was as many as 20.0%. The other variable that explained children's roles level change variation as influencers wholly was as many as 80.0%.

To test socio-oriented parents' communication pattern variable influence (X_1) toward children's roles as influencers in buying decision was by comparing probability value $0.962 > 0.05$, so it could be concluded H_1 was rejected that meant socio-oriented parents' communication pattern variable (X_1) partially and significantly did not influence children's roles as influencers in buying decision.

The test of the concept-oriented parents' communication pattern variable influence (X_2) toward children's roles as influencers in buying decision had the probability $0.030 < 0.05$, so it can be concluded that concept-oriented parents' communication pattern partially influence children's roles as influencers in buying decision. It means the highest the concept-oriented parents' communication pattern (X_2), the highest the children's roles as influencers in buying decision. In the contrary, the lowest the concept-oriented parents' communication pattern (X_2), the lowest the children's roles as influencers in buying decision.

V. Discussions

The socio-oriented communication style parents have the character always monitoring and controlling children consumers' learning and their behavior. They do not discuss consumption activities that have been done and expect their children fulfilling the stipulation that is determined before. In Laissez-faire pattern, there is only little communication between parents and children. In Protective, parents emphasize social orientation dimension that emphasizes obedience and social harmony and it is not related with various conceptual things (Caranua & Vassallo, 2003). This pattern does not pay attention toward children's roles in deciding, so children feel decisions are determined by parents. In deciding family restaurant, children tend to follow parents' will and wholly submit it to parents.

The concept-oriented communication style parents support their children in developing their own ability

and skills, and support them to decide buying without depending on their opinions in buying decision, although not for the products consumed by themselves (Caranua and Vassallo, 2003). This pattern involves children in deciding, so children are used to endure the learning process of deciding. Children try to express their opinions in deciding the family restaurant. So, children are indirectly demanded to have roles in deciding.

In marketing restaurant products, the marketers therefore need to increase children's belief in trying to increase buying decision. In increasing children's belief, the marketers can strengthen the likeness toward products through informative advertisement, and involve children in various marketing program. The marketers need to give special attraction for children because indirectly the buying decision is also determined by children.

VI. Conclusion

Based on data analysis, the conclusion is that the socio-oriented parents' communication pattern does not significantly influence the children's roles as influencers in buying decision. The concept-oriented parents' communication pattern positively influences the children's roles as influencers in buying decision. It means the highest the concept-oriented parents' communication pattern, the highest the children's roles as influencers in buying decision.

These research limitations are only on family restaurant object and not differentiating both high and low involvement. It is better for the future research to expand the research with the other object that separates between high and low involvement, so able to increase generalization ability of the research results.

Theoretically, this research results support the concept of parents' communication pattern and children's roles as influencers in deciding buying in Asia. Concept-oriented communication pattern is implied on children's roles as influencers in deciding buying. It is better for the marketers of family restaurant category to use the promotion directed to children, so children can influence their parents in deciding buying. Besides, the marketers also can do new products planning and development for family restaurant, so the offered products can be accepted and wanted by children.

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