Correlates of Power Bases, Marital Power, Purchase Involvements and Decision Control: A Preliminary Analysis

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to develop and test a model of marital power and purchase decisions, which includes variables to provide a theoretical explanation of how purchase decisions are made in two parent families. The model was developed after a thorough review of the literature in the area. The predictor and moderating variables established from this review included bases of power, purchase involvements, marital power and decision control. The first two components were considered independent variables of the model while the last two components were considered dependent variables. The major dependent variable is marital power that in turn is related to decision control.

I. Introduction

There has been considerable research in the field of marketing regarding the decision making process in families. Most studies were conducted as though individuals make decisions independent of other household members (Kasulis and

* This study was financially supported by the University of Southern Queensland.
Hughes 1984). In fact, many decisions, within the family are more complicated and tend to be joint decision processes. This is reflected in a continued interest in the literature on family power structures over the period between 1960 and 1980 under the influence of a number of scholars (Davis 1970; Aldous, Hill, Strauss and Tollman 1971; Blood and Wolfe 1960; Ferber 1971; Sprey 1972; Turk and Bell 1972; Turner 1970; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980). The literature has also identified elements of a number of purchase decision processes and in general tries to measure the structure of shared influence between husbands and wives for each of the elements.

Other studies extended the work of Davis in specific areas, especially in examining the structure of husband/wife roles across a series of decisions over a period of time (Burns 1977; Burns and Granbois 1977; Davis and Rigaux 1974).

With respect to the gaps in our present knowledge, minimal published research has investigated interrelationships among bases of power and variables leading to purchasing decisions. Thus, much additional empirical work is needed to clarify our understanding of the linkages between family power structures and purchasing decisions.

The present investigation explores these issues as well as the effects of marital power. More specifically, the study examines the linkages between bases of power, marital power and decision control. Furthermore, the research extends prior empirical work through the inclusion of three additional variables: spousal empathy, self involvement (purchase involvements) and evaluation of purchase decisions. The first two variables are included because of its expected links to some bases of power and marital power. Evaluation of purchase decisions is included because of its expected links with purchase involvements, decision control and bases of power.

II. The Hypothesized Model

As depicted in Figure 1, the model examined encompasses the following components: (1) Bases of Power, (2) Purchase Involvements, (3) Marital Power, (4) Evaluation of Product Decisions and (5) Decision Control.

The first two components are independent variables of the model while the last three components are dependent variables. The major dependent variable is marital power which, in turn is related to decision control, that is, individual versus joint decisions. Causality between components in the model is indicated by arrows which show the direction of postulated influence. The model assumes that there is a one-way flow of causation. The solid lines together with the arrows show hierarchically how determinants cause or influence other determinants.

The model presented reflects only a small number of the potential links that could be made. Obviously, this study cannot deal with all the variables and possible combinations of relationships contained in the model. Those relationships which will
be formally tested in this study were determined by prior research and by the basic objective of the study.

The various components of the model will now be defined and interrelationships among them are discussed below:

**Bases of Power**: According to McDonald (1980) power, in terms of a family, is "the ability of an individual within a social relationship to carry out his or her will, even in the face of resistance by other." Cromwell and Olsen (1975) delineate power into three distinct domains, bases of power which consist of the resources an individual possesses which can increase their ability to influence decisions; family power processes which are concerned with the interaction of family members and finally family power outcomes or the results of the process.

This study is specifically concerned with the concept of power bases. While many bases of power have been identified (French and Raven 1959) for the purposes of this study the sources identified by McDonald (1980) as follows will be adopted:

1. **Normative Resources** – which refers to the cultural and subcultural definition of who has the authority;
2. **Affective Resources** – which refers to the level of commitment and the degree of dependence of the other person;
3. **Personal resources** – which refers to personality, physical appearance and role competence;
(4) Cognitive resources – which refers to the influence the perception of power has on the individual and others

The influence of economic resources has been included in many studies such as Schaniger and Buss (1986) and Ramu (1987). In this study, these resources are considered as a part of the normative resources.

**Purchase Involvements:** These refer to the time and effort expended on the decision making process by an individual and his/her spouse (Burns 1976).

**Marital Power:** This refers to "the relative ability of the two marriage partners to influence the behavior of each other (Rollins and Bahr 1976)."

**Evaluation of Product Decisions:** This is the importance of family product decisions to a husband or a wife.

**Decision Control:** In the literature on family decision making, decision control refers to who controls each stage of the decision making process. However, in this paper, we will focus on the control made by either husbands or wives in making final purchase decisions.

1. **Effects of Bases of Power**

It is expected that there is a direct link between each power base and purchase involvements. That is, the greater the resource, the greater the involvement. Thus the following hypothesis emerges:

H1: There is a positive relationship between each power base and purchase involvements.

Prior research has also indicated that there is a positive relationship between power bases and marital power (McDonald 1980; French and Raven 1959). However, magnitude of the influence of each resource under various purchasing decisions still remains unknown. Thus, the following hypotheses will be examined:

H2: There is a positive relationship between each power base and the marital power.

H3: There is a positive relationship between each power base and the evaluation of product decisions.

H4: There is a positive relationship between each power base and decision control.

2. **Effects of Purchase Involvements**

In this paper, we separate the purchase involvements made by an individual him/herself from the perceived involvement made by his/her spouse. To distinguish between the two, we call the former one "self involvement" and the latter one
“spousal empathy.” More specifically, spousal empathy refers to the importance of purchase subdecisions to an individual that his or her spouse’s preferences be reflected in the final decision. Since a couple are living together under the same roof, it is likely that they are influencing the way in which each is involved in purchase subdecisions. Thus, the following hypothesis emerges:

H5: There is a positive relationship between self-involvement and spousal empathy. The higher the self-involvement, the higher will be the spousal empathy.

H6: There is a positive relationship between purchase involvements and decision control.

3. Effects of Marital Power
Marital power was measured by asking respondents to rate on a scale ranging from “wife has all the say” to “husband has all the say.” In fact, various levels of marital power would have various impacts on decision control. For example, high marital power of a spouse would lead to his/her making the purchasing decision by him/herself, whereas low marital power would result in his/her spouse making the purchasing decision. It is logical that a joint decision would most likely be made when a medium level marital power of a spouse is measured. Thus the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: There is a positive relationship between involvement and marital power.

Burns (1977) and Burns and Granbois (1977) have indicated that self-involvement has a positive relationship with joint decision making (which pertains to decision control in this paper). Hence, we propose that following hypotheses:

H8: Decision control varies by the level of marital power. The greater the marital power of a spouse, the more likely that he/she makes the final purchase decision; the lower the marital power, the more likely that his/her spouse makes the final purchase decision.

4. Effects of Evaluation of Product Decisions
The evaluation of product decisions is virtually a form of marital power. It differs from marital power in the way that it is more an attitude towards purchase decisions than a “behavior”. Marital power, as defined in the previous section, can be regarded as a summary measure of past purchase decisions. Along the same line, it is likely that the following hypothesis emerges:

H9: Decision control varies by the level of evaluations of product decisions. The
higher the evaluation of product decisions of a spouse, the more likely that he/she makes the final purchase decision; the lower the evaluations of purchase decisions, the more likely that his/her spouse makes the final purchase decision.

It is also expected that there is a direct link between involvements and the evaluation of product decisions. That is, the higher the involvements, the greater the evaluation of product decisions. Hence, the following hypothesis emerges:

H10: There is a positive relationship between involvements and the evaluation of product decisions.

III. Methodology

1. Data Collection Method
   The first step in the data collection process is to run focus group interviews to help check the relationships in the model. Two focus group interviews were conducted, one of husbands and one of wives.
   Data were then collected by means of a questionnaire administered simultaneously to husband/wife dyads chosen from a representative sample in Brisbane, Australia. In order to increase the response rate a priori notification letter was sent to each household in the sample informing them of the visit of interviewers.

2. Questionnaire Design
   The questionnaire was the same for both husbands and wives. It consisted of four sections. The first section was composed of the inventories of power bases and purchase involvement. The second section contained two scales to measure martial power and the evaluation of product decisions respectively. In the third section, respondents were asked to nominate the major influence (husband, wife or joint) in the final purchase stage of the decision making process. The fourth section of the questionnaire consisted of socio- demo- graphic variables. A convenience sample was used to pretest the questionnaire before final administration.

3. The Sample
   The population in this study is defined as all households containing a married/defacto couple. The White pages were used as a sampling frame. The systematic sampling method was used to select a total of 300 non-business households. It was anticipated that after refusals and ineligibility this would result in a final sample size of 160 couples (households). However, due to higher refusal and ineligibility rates than anticipated, the effective response rate was reduced to 25.7 percent (72 households) from the 300 on the list. To supplement this, a
snowballing sampling technique was used. Interviewers asked the random sampling units to recommend other households for inclusion in the sample. As a result, another 79 couples were obtained in this manner, resulting in a final sample size of 151 couples. A chi-square test was then run to determine if significant differences existed in demographic variables between the random sample and the snowball sample. No significant difference were obtained.

4. Measurement of Variables

Bases of Power Base on the literature on family and marriage (Venkatesh 1980; Schaniger and Buss 1986; Hendrick 1989; Schafer and Keith 1984; Ramu 1987) and the focus group interviews, an inventory of 34 items describing the four bases of power was developed. These items were modified as a result of the pilot study before being incorporated in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement on each item using a five-point Likert-type scale raging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The construct validity of the subscales was assessed using factor analysis. After several runs, only 18 items remained. Both the K-M-O measure of sampling accuracy and the Bartlett test indicate that the input correlation matrix is amenable to factor analysis. In the study, the eigenvalue criterion was used as a cutoff point to determine the number of factors (Mun and Yau 1979). There are five factors whose eigenvalues were equal to or greater than one. However, in order to avoid under or over factor analyzing so that a meaningful and interpretable factor structure will be conducted, rotations of four, five, and six factor solutions were performed. The results of these rotations showed that the best factor structure contains six factors. The six-factor solution explained 65.9 percent of the variance in the seventeen items. A cutoff of 0.5 was used for item-scale selection (see Table 1).

Internal consistency of each factor (base of power) was tested using item-to-total correlation. For each factor, correlation coefficients were greater than 0.5 and significant at the level of 0.05, indicating that all factors were internally valid.

The factors were also tested for reliability, or the extent to which the measures are repeatable (Nunnally 1967), using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. The coefficients were 0.764, 0.866, 0.756, 0.598, 0.737, and 0.500 for “Affective Resources A,” “Normative Resources,” “Personal Resources,” “Dominance,” “Affective Resources B” and “Cognitive Resources”. Thus, the six bases of power exhibited well over the 0.50 reliability level suggested by Nunnally (1978) as a minimum source for acceptable reliability in basic research.

It is noteworthy that we now have six underlying dimensions of power bases, instead of four. However, these dimensions are very consistent with those identified by McDonald (1980). The “affective resources” dimension in McDonald’s classification is split into two dimensions, affective resources A and B, in this study. Affective resources A is concerned with respondents’ emotion towards his/her spouse while resources B is related to respondents’ dependence on his/her spouse because of
Table 1. The Scale of Bases of Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Loading</th>
<th>Item-to-Total Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1. Affective Resources A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 20.1%; Alpha = 0.764)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The approval of my spouse means a lot to me.</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>0.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am highly loyal to my spouse.</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>0.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I respect my spouse’s judgment.</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>0.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I get good advice from my spouse.</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2. Normative Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 15.2%; Alpha = 0.866)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The husband should be the main breadwinner in a marriage.</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>0.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. A wife should be the major homemaker in a marriage.</td>
<td>.900</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A wife should be the major care giver to children.</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>0.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3. Personal Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 9.4%; Alpha = 0.756)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My spouse is capable of fulfilling his/her duties effectively.</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>0.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My spouse is capable of fulfilling his/her duties efficiently.</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>0.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I consider my spouse an ideal spouse.</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>0.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4. Dominance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 8.5%; Alpha = 0.598)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*24. I am the main income earner in my family.</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. My spouse has a more authoritative physical appearance than I do.</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>0.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My spouse has no right to tell me what to do.</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td>0.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5. Affective Resources B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 7.7%; Alpha = 0.737)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I do not have much confidence in making purchase decisions on my own.</td>
<td>.873</td>
<td>0.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I always have difficulties in making purchase decisions on my own.</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>0.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 6. Cognitive Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of variance explained 5.0%; Alpha = 0.500)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When we disagree I get my way most often.</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>0.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*27. When we disagree I tend to give in more often than my spouse.</td>
<td>.683</td>
<td>0.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I have a more dominant personality than my spouse.</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>0.489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The scale for this item has been reversed.
lacking of confidence. Further, dominance (of the spouse) is a new dimension to be added to McDonald's classification.

**Evaluation of Product Decisions** The measure for the evaluation of product decisions was adopted from Cromwell and Olson (1975). It consists of 22 items of product decisions. For each item, respondents were asked to express how important the item was to them on a five-point scale ranging from "very unimportant" to "very important". The reliability of the scale was found to have an alpha coefficient of 0.787, with all item-to-total correlations significant at the level of 0.05. Thus, the scale can be claimed to be reliable.

**Purchase Involvements** The scale of purchase involvements developed by Burns (1977) was adopted in this study. This scale consists of 45 purchase subdecisions. Respondents were first asked to indicate how important they think it was that their spouses' preferences were reflected in the final choice of these subdecisions. This forms the "spousal empathy" construct in this study. Respondents were then asked to indicate how important they think it was their own preferences were reflected in the final choice. This forms the "self involvement" construct. The reliabilities of the scale from these two perspectives were found to be 0.933 and 0.926. Item-to-total correlations were found to be very high and significant at the level of 0.05.

**Decision Control** Decision control was operationalized by using twenty-two purchase decisions used by Yau and Sin (1991) at the final decision stage.

### IV. Data Analysis

1. **Results of Two-way Relationships**

   In order that the structural model depicted in Figure 1 holds, it is necessary that the individual relationships between variables be statistically significant, in the predicted direction, and of a magnitude warranting further interest. Each hypothesis between variables (or construct) is tested in this section. It should be noted that these hypotheses are for the association among empirical concepts. No causality is intended to be involved. Each hypothesis is tested by a Pearson correlation coefficient, which is one of the most commonly used techniques to test association between two variables. Further, the one-tail test is employed to the hypotheses as direction of relationships is known.

   Prior to performing the correlation analyses, t-tests were used to check if there were differences between the husband and the wife sub-sample in terms of the key variables. Results of the t-test indicated that differences exist between the two sub-samples in most variables. Thus it was decided that the two sub-samples would be treated separately when testing these hypotheses.

   Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients among variables for the two sub-samples, and Table 3 is a summary of the results of testing the seven hypotheses.
Table 2. Correlation Coefficients Among Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Affective Resources A</th>
<th>Affective Resources B</th>
<th>Cognitive Resources</th>
<th>Personal Resources</th>
<th>Normative Resources</th>
<th>Dominance</th>
<th>Decision Control</th>
<th>Self Involvement</th>
<th>Spousal Empathy</th>
<th>Marital Power</th>
<th>Product Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Resources 1</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.0418*</td>
<td>.0330</td>
<td>.5752a</td>
<td>.0261</td>
<td>-.0854</td>
<td>.0485</td>
<td>.0821</td>
<td>.1438c</td>
<td>-.0928</td>
<td>.1684b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Resources 2</td>
<td>.0446</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-.0195</td>
<td>.0139</td>
<td>.2157a</td>
<td>.0331</td>
<td>-.0508</td>
<td>.1682b</td>
<td>.2468a</td>
<td>.0689</td>
<td>.0410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Resources</td>
<td>.0315</td>
<td>-.0039</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>.0407</td>
<td>-.0340</td>
<td>.1026</td>
<td>.2480a</td>
<td>.0694</td>
<td>.2338a</td>
<td>-.0273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Resources</td>
<td>.6336a</td>
<td>.0356</td>
<td>.0755</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.0620</td>
<td>-.1464c</td>
<td>-.0206</td>
<td>.0559</td>
<td>.1215</td>
<td>-.0609</td>
<td>.1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Resources</td>
<td>-.1601b</td>
<td>.1749b</td>
<td>-.0870</td>
<td>.0009</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-.1311c</td>
<td>-.3346a</td>
<td>.2736a</td>
<td>.2444a</td>
<td>.1188</td>
<td>.0236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>.0199</td>
<td>.0217</td>
<td>-.0395</td>
<td>-.0729</td>
<td>-.0437</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.0249</td>
<td>-.1019</td>
<td>-.1218</td>
<td>.0204</td>
<td>.1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Control</td>
<td>.1219</td>
<td>.0655</td>
<td>-.2167b</td>
<td>.1639b</td>
<td>-.1598c</td>
<td>-.1497</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.0770</td>
<td>.1326</td>
<td>-.0248</td>
<td>.2760a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Involvement</td>
<td>-.0572</td>
<td>-.0438</td>
<td>-.0444</td>
<td>-.0166</td>
<td>.1398c</td>
<td>-.0376</td>
<td>-.0089</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.6175a</td>
<td>.0220</td>
<td>.3152a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spousal Empathy</td>
<td>.1064</td>
<td>-.0497</td>
<td>-.1515c</td>
<td>.1059</td>
<td>.0771</td>
<td>.0784</td>
<td>.2839b</td>
<td>-.5809a</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>.0343</td>
<td>.2278b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Power</td>
<td>.1385b</td>
<td>.2072b</td>
<td>-.3379a</td>
<td>.0297</td>
<td>.0360</td>
<td>.0378</td>
<td>.2425b</td>
<td>-.0036</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-.0765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Product Decision</td>
<td>-.0975</td>
<td>-.0577</td>
<td>-.0332</td>
<td>-.1249</td>
<td>.0443</td>
<td>.0106</td>
<td>-.0766</td>
<td>.5718a</td>
<td>.3027a</td>
<td>-.0212</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The entries below the diagonal are correlation coefficients for the wife sample and those above the diagonal are for the husband sample.

* Number of cases for each pair of variables vary because of missing values.

a significant at the level of 0.01.
b significant at the level of 0.05.
c significant at the level of 0.10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis Variables</th>
<th>Husband Sample Relationship Status</th>
<th>Wife Sample Relationship Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1. Each resource and self-involvement</td>
<td>affective (B) cognitive and normative resources</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each resource and spousal empathy</td>
<td>affective (A&amp;B) and normative resources</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2. Self-involvement and spousal empathy</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3. Involvement and marital power</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4. Each resource and marital power</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5. Decision control and evaluations of product decisions</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6. Each resource and evaluation of product decisions</td>
<td>affective (A) resources</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7. Involvements and evaluation of product decisions</td>
<td>self and empathy</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8. Each resource and decision control</td>
<td>normative resource</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9. Decision control and marital power</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H10. Involvement and decision control</td>
<td>empathy</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 3, some hypotheses are rejected and some are accepted. For the husband sub-sample, H3, H4, and H9 are rejected. These findings reflect that the following relationships do not exist: (1) purchase involvements and marital power and (2) decision control and marital power. However, for the wife sub-sample, a different set of hypotheses are rejected (H1, H3, H5 and H6), indicating that no significant relationships were found between (1) individual resource and product decisions, (2) individual resource and spousal empathy, (3) marital power and involvements and (4) decision control and product decisions.
2. Two Modified Models
According to the foregoing findings, it is likely that husbands and wives behave differently. To reflect those significant relationships as indicated in Table 3, the model depicted in Figure 1 was modified to form two new models for the husband sub-sample (Figure 2) and the wife sub-sample (Figure 3) respectively. As no causality is assumed at this preliminary stage, arrows in both Figures 2 and 3 only suggest possible causal directions that will be tested later by LISREL (Joreskog and Sorbom 1989).

Figure 2. A Revised Model of Family Decision Making: The Husband Sub-Sample.
The Husband Sub-sample For the husband sample, Figure 2 shows that the relationship among resources, product decision, involvements and product control are positive. These results are consistent with postulated hypotheses. However, they may be misleading for two reasons. First, moderating effects have not been taken into consideration. The zero-order correlation between two variables might reflect the presence of various indirect and direct relationships. Second, the relationship might be spurious. Thus, spurious relationships are tested using the partial correlation technique. In Figure 2, it is necessary to test the possibility (1) the relationship between product decisions and decision control is spurious perhaps due to spousal empathy, and (2) the relationship between product decision and spousal
empathy is due to self involvement. However, the partial correlations were found to be significant at the level of 0.05, indicating that the relationships are not spurious.

The Wife Sub-sample For the wife sample, Figure 3 shows that the relationships between cognitive resources and marital power, and cognitive resource and decision control are negative.

However, as indicated in Figure 1, it is necessary to test the possibility that the relationship between cognitive resources and decision control is spurious perhaps due to marital power. Yet, the partial correlation was found to be significant at the level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not a spurious one.

V. Discussion

The main purpose of our research is to understand and explain the phenomenon of family decision making. To this end, we developed a model of the intention to integrate power bases, purchase involvement, product decisions and decision control, based on sociological theory of family and marriage. The primary dimensions of the model include previously identified power bases and decision control (i.e. decision making at the purchase stage.) Moderating dimensions of the model include evaluation of product decisions, and purchase involvements (self and empathy). Results of the preliminary data analysis indicated that the model has to be revised into two revised models: one for the husband sub-sample and one for the wife sub-sample, as these two models seem to be complementary to each other. These models therefore tend to provide explanation for why some relationships among variables do not exist as prior theory may suggest. We begin the discussion of our main findings with factors hypothesized to explain family purchase decisions.

1. The Husband Sub-sample

Power Bases For the relationship between power bases and the evaluation of product decisions, we find that affective resources (A) is the only power base which has a linkage with the evaluation of product decisions in the husband sub-sample. Our result indicates that affective relationship does play a major role in forming husbands' perception of making product decisions. When the affective resource A power base is higher, husbands are likely to believe that family purchase decisions are more important to husbands.

We also hypothesized that power bases and involvement are positively related. We find that cognitive, affective (B) and normative resources are linked to self-involvement whereas affective (A and B) and normative resources are related to spousal empathy. These findings, which are consistent with the proposed hypotheses, reflect that both normative and affective resources are important to influence purchase involvements in the final decision-making. Husbands with high levels of both affective resources A and B or a traditional view of authority (normative resources) would urge themselves or their wives to be involved in the final decision
making. Cognitive resources only have a significant relationship with self-involvement. This finding suggests that husbands who have a more dominant personality than their spouse tend to perceive themselves to be more involved in making final purchase decisions.

**Product Decisions** It is very reasonable to find that the evaluation of product decisions is related positively with spousal empathy. This implies that the more the husbands think product decisions are important to them, the more they will be involved in making these decisions.

**Decision Control** It is noteworthy that decision control is related to product decisions and spousal empathy, but not to self-involvement. These findings indicated that husbands seldom make final purchase decisions although they are likely to be involved. In contrast, final purchase decisions were made by their spouses who usually involved in various stages of the purchase process.

It seems that product decision has a stronger link with decision control than spousal empathy. As previously mentioned, the evaluation of product decisions is an attitudinal form of marital power. It is likely that husbands who think themselves to possess more marital power have a higher possibility to make final purchase decisions.

Interestingly, the normative resources were found to have a strong and negative relationship with decision control. This implies that the more traditional husbands are in their attitudes towards their role in the family, the less likely that they are not the decision makers in family purchasing decisions. There are two possible explanations. First, husbands with strong normative resources do not regard making purchase decision as a symbol of marital power at all. Second, judging from the relationship of decision control with spousal empathy, we think that husbands with strong normative resources tend to make their spouses more involved (in purchase subdecisions) while husbands with weak normative resources tend to involve themselves in joint decision-making. It seems that the second reason is more acceptable than the first one.

2. **The Wife Sub-sample**

Despite some differences, findings obtained from this sub-sample are very similar to those from the husband sub-sample.

**Power Bases** Interestingly, we do not find any significant relationship between power bases and the evaluation of product decisions in the wife sub-sample. This result indicates that power bases are not key variables in molding wives’ perception of making product decisions.

Instead, affective and cognitive resources are found to have significant relationships with marital power. These findings indicate that the more emotional and dependent (affective resources A and B) the wives are, the greater the marital power they have. However, their relationship of cognitive resources with marital power is negative. This implies that it is likely that a more dominant personality
does not lead to having more say in purchase decisions.

We also hypothesized that power bases and involvement are positively related. We find that only normative resources are linked to self-involvement. This is in line with the husband sub-sample.

**Product Decisions** It seems very reasonable to find that the evaluation of product decisions is related positively with both self-involvement and spousal empathy. This implies that the more the husbands think product decisions are important to them, the more they will make themselves as well as their spouses to be involved in making these decisions.

**Decision Control** It is consistent that decision control is related to product decisions and spousal empathy, but not to self-involvement. These findings indicate that wives tend very much to rely on their spouses' involvement (in subdecisions) although they are in most cases final decision makers.

Interestingly, product decision does not appear to play a role in decision control. Decision control is likely to be influenced by a number of other sources, such as marital power, personal resources, cognitive resources, dominance resources and normative resources. Wives who have more marital power have a higher possibility to make final purchase decision.

Very consistent with the husband sub-sample, the normative resources were found to have a strong and negative relationship with product control. The implications that we suggest previously can be applied to this sub-sample.

Different from the husband sub-sample, dominance and personal resources are found to have a close link with product control. As indicated in the factor analysis, dominance resources refer to the dominance of the spouse and not the respondent himself. It is reasonable that the relationship is negative. Thus, the more dominant the husband is, the less likely that the wife has the say in purchase decisions.

3. **Limitations**

While the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding family decision-making there are some limitations that surfaced. First, the study has been confined to two parent families only. Second, the influence of other family members such as children has not been considered. Third, testing of the model has been limited to only some of the possible linkages in the model. Fourth, the sample was restricted to the Brisbane area only and so may not be representative of Australia.

**VI. Conclusion**

The model of bases of power investigated here provides a basis for increasing understanding of the family decision making process. The components of the study, which are based on past research confirm some of the hypothesized relationships. Yet, they also provide insight regarding questions raised in past work (about marital power, for example) and suggest new questions (about congruence of behavior
between husbands and wives, for example.) The components of the study which are
new to family decision-making provide support for the investigation of new variables
(such as spousal empathy, self involvement and evaluation of product decisions).
Future search should continue to explore the linkages described in this study and to
develop a model of greater predictive power, by incorporating marital satisfaction.

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