

MARITAL ROLES IN DECISION MAKING: THE EFFECT OF HISPANIC SUBCULTURAL IDENTIFICATION

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Husband/wife influence differences in decision making were examined between Hispanic groups categorized on the basis of how closely they adhere to their parent culture. Significant differences were found for a variety of product categories. Many of these differences remained even after income, social class, and couple age effects were removed.

INTRODUCTION

Marital roles in decision making are of considerable interest to both sociologists and psychologists and to marketing and advertising strategists. Sociologists and psychologists are concerned with the roles played by husbands and wives in decision making and the dependence of these roles upon various psychological and socioeconomic factors (Holloman 1973). Marketing and advertising researchers and practitioners are concerned with determining which spouse has the dominant role in various types of decisions so that marketing and advertising strategy can be oriented accordingly (Davis 1976; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Menasco and Curry 1989). Though the influence of culture and subculture upon marital roles in decision making has received some attention (i.e., Cromwell, Corrales, and Torsiello 1973; Imperia, O'Guinn, and MacAdams 1985), it remains a largely unexplored area of consumer behavior. This lack of attention is unfortunate, particularly in regard to the Hispanic subculture as many researchers and practitioners consider research on Hispanic consumer behavior as important due to its size, extent of purchasing power, distinctiveness, and geographical concentration (Hoyer and Deshpande 1982).

Although some generalizations can be made regarding family purchasing behavioral differences between Hispanic groups categorized according to the extent of subcultural identification, little is known about the effects of Hispanic subcultural identification on husband-wife influence in decision making with respect to product attributes. This study will attempt to expand the empirical knowledge of Hispanic subcultural marketplace behavior by first determining if there are husband-wife relative influence differences in decision making among Hispanic groups categorized according to subcultural identification. Second, this study will seek to

determine if any marital role influence differences are due to subcultural identification or to other factors such as income, education, or age of the couple. Due to the significance of marital role influence in purchasing decisions, the findings of this study should aid the marketer in targeting the rapidly growing Hispanic market more effectively with product and company communications.

BACKGROUND

Past Research on Marital Roles in Decision Making

Few studies have focused on Hispanic marital roles in decision making. Cromwell et al. (1973) compared Mexicans' and Anglos' marital roles regarding general issues. This study found an egalitarian pattern of conjugal decision making; however, it should be noted that respondents were asked "who should have influence." Other studies had findings contrary to those of Cromwell et al. (1973). For example, Imperia et al. (1985) found that Mexican-American families tend to be more husband dominant than Anglo families regarding decisions on attributes of major durables, while Anglos engaged in more joint purchase decision making. Huszagh and Murphy (1982) found a patriarchal power structure among lower-income couples and a negative relationship between income and the relative influence of the Mexican husband. Finally O'Guinn et al. (1987) found that Mexican American wives' perception of equality in decision making related positively to acculturation.

No past study has focused on the effects of subcultural identification on marital roles in decision making. This study begins to fill this void in several ways. First, this study focuses on marital roles regarding several economically-important products. Second, three Hispanic groups based upon subcultural identification are performance for one product attribute facilitate prediction of roles for other attributes? For example, does the spouse who has the greater amount of influence in deciding where to buy also decide how much to

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spend or does the influence shift as the couple proceeds through several decisions regarding the purchasing of one particular product? Does income, social class, or age affect marital roles in decision making? We need to know if and how subcultural identification differences affect any of these questions in order to influence effectively purchase decisions among different Hispanic groups.

Forces Underlying Subcultural Differences

High Hispanic identifiers, or Spanish-speaking Hispanics, differ from Anglo-Americans and English-speaking Hispanics in demographics, religious tradition, and subcultural separation. Those who adhere more closely with their culture tend to be lower in social class, income, education, and occupation status. They have more children, greater family stability, stronger father roles, and more extended kinship systems (Sturdivant 1969). They also tend to have strong Latin European, Roman Catholic roots, which have been found to relate to lower achievement motivation (McClelland 1961) and to a tendency toward more immediate need gratification (Gelfand 1975; Hoyer and Deshpande 1982). Additionally, language, surnames, and neighborhood location tend to make those Hispanics who identify strongly with their ethnic groups a target for discrimination. These forces are likely to result in differences in marital role influence in purchasing decisions. Previous research has also indicated that the Mexican-American family has several traits in common with the traditional Mexican family. These traits include father dominance, male superiority, sharply defined separation of the sexes, and submission to authority (Padilla and Ruiz 1973). In comparison to the dominant Anglo-American culture, the Mexican-American subculture is more patriarchal, and particularly resistant to family role deviance. Murillo (1971) has suggested that this may be due to the fact that Mexican-American Latin values are more clearly defined and behavioral patterns more closely adhered to than is common in the Anglo culture.

Research on cultural assimilation reveals that Hispanics are now achieving more spatial assimilation than they have in the past. Due to their higher level of contact with Anglos (Massey and Denton 1985), Hispanics are more likely to assimilate than some other ethnic or racial groups (i.e., blacks) (Massey 1979; Massey and Blakeslee 1983; Massey and Mullan 1984); however, Hispanics vary in their propensity to assimilate. The Hispanics who are more likely to assimilate and have a relatively high level of contact with Anglos are those who have moved away from the community of origin (often the central city) to suburban locations. Studies by Massey (1979) and Massey and Denton (1985) show that this re-location results in a higher socioeconomic status, increased usage of English, and a decreased emphasis on the value of preserving their Mexican cultural origin. There appears also

to be differences in the degree of cultural assimilation between Hispanic men and women. Hispanic women lag significantly behind Mexican men on functional integration with mainstream society. This burden on Mexican women mainly stems from the generally dominant position of men. Even though many Hispanics are in the process of cultural assimilation, there seems to be a continued reliance on the parent culture. Such a reliance seems even more likely given the formal and institutionalized bilingual/bicultural policy of both public (bilingual education) and private (bilingual mass media programming and advertising) sectors. This reliance on the parent culture may manifest itself in many ways, perhaps playing a very important role in the manner in which couples decide on the purchase of specific goods and services (Imperia et al. 1985). Indeed, a synthesis of the research suggests that Hispanic family roles are primarily determined by the submission of female to male and of younger to older. Husbands have more dominance, more control over all types of decisions, within and out of the household (Penalosa 1968). Although a study of marital decision making power in Mexican conjugal pairs indicated that there is a trend towards joint decision making, the Hispanic father is still the absolute head of the household with full authority over the wife and children. Most, if not all, major decisions are his responsibility (Alvirez and Bean 1976).

The preceding discussion suggests that there are some variables which are likely to affect husband/wife influence in decision making (i.e., income and social class) besides that of ethnic identification. Yet another variable which may induce variation in couple purchasing roles is that of age of the couple (Green and Cunningham (1975). Komarovsky (1961) notes the existence of more joint decision making among younger couples, and Sharp and Mott (1956) found more wife participation in life insurance decisions among older couples. In the design of this study, therefore, the possible effects of the respondents' income, social class, and age will be removed to better the assessment of the effect of ethnic identification on husband/wife influence.

Theoretical Orientations

Three major theoretical orientations dominate the explanation of marital power in husband-wife dyads: ideology, resource, and sex-role attitudinal theories. The ideology theory emphasizes social norms and cultural determinants of who should have power. This theory advances that the culture with which an individual identifies will largely dictate whether the husband or the wife will have more power. On the other hand, the resource theory focuses on personal attributes or possessions. From this theory, Lupri (1969) has deduced that social status as a base for marital power is a resource, drawn from the external system, that apparently constitutes a significant contribution of the husband to marriage. The Hispanic male generally comes into conjugal relationship with

more resources and a higher status than his female counterpart (Keefe and Padilla 1987). Research on the incidence of traditional and modern sex-role attitudes suggests that modern attitudes are more likely to be found among respondents who are more highly educated and higher in social status (Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980). In other words, egalitarianism is more likely to be found among these with a relatively high education, income, job position, and those who wait longer to have children (Scanzoni 1979; Hazuda et al. 1988). This theoretical orientation is somewhat contradictory to the resource and ideology theories in that this theory does not necessarily point to the Hispanic husband having more influence as ethnic idealist theories. Instead, one might expect that the relative influence of the Hispanic husband would decrease as ethnic identification increases for products that have traditionally been in the woman's domain of interest and influence.

On the basis of previous research findings regarding the Hispanic family, family purchasing roles, and the propositions of the theories regarding cultural influence, the following are hypothesized for five economically-important product categories (automobiles, major appliances, furniture, housing, and financial management):

- H1: *The relative influence of the Hispanic husband significantly increases as the extent of ethnic identification increases.*
- H2: *The relative influence of the Hispanic husband significantly increases as the extent of ethnic identification increases even after the possible effects of income, social class, and age are removed.*

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of married couples in the greater San Antonio metropolitan area. This bilingual city, considered to be one of the most representative cities in the U.S. (Burgoyne Information Services 1990), is the nation's tenth largest and is comprised of 53.7% Hispanic and 38.1% Anglo ethnic origin (Strategy Research 1988). A sample of 28 zip code zones from the metropolitan statistical area was selected at random. After examining detailed census statistics, the sample was deemed to be a representative set of areas by varying in both proportion of English- and Spanish-speaking residents and median family income levels. Carefully-instructed interviewers delivered the questionnaires to a representative sample of families in their zones, using detailed street maps. At most four questionnaires were delivered to any one block, and an attempt was made to cover most of each geographical zone. The sampling process was completed in two weeks, including afternoons, evenings, and weekend days.

Each interviewer carried both Spanish and English versions of the questionnaire. Most interviewers were bilingual, and those most fluent in Spanish were assigned to predominantly Spanish zones.

After verbally explaining the purpose of the study, agreement of the married couple to participate was secured. The use of one partner or both as respondents has been discussed extensively in the literature. While both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, substantial evidence exists that the reported perceptions of both husband and wife need to be considered in order to predict or explain purchasing decisions (Davis 1970, 1976, Menasco and Curry 1989). Thus, this study relied on the perceptions of both husband and wife; each couple completed the questionnaire together. Only couples meeting the screening requirements were asked to participate in the study. The screening requirements were as follows: (1) both husband and wife had to be present and agree to participate; (2) the couple had to match on the measure of subcultural identification (language spoken at home); (3) the couple had to be of Hispanic origin (this study relied on self-reports); (4) the couple had to have had experience since married in buying products in the categories on which this study focused; and (5) the products must have been recently purchased for ease in memory retrieval. From the 296 eligible couples (79% of the contacted households), 296 agreed to participate in the study, which yielded a 84.8% response rate. Examination of the characteristics of the refusals revealed that they did not differ in terms of demographics from those who agreed to participate. Since 11 questionnaires were not usable, the final sample had 240 units for analysis.

Questionnaire

Couples were asked a series of questions about the relative influence of husband and wife in four durable goods purchases and financial management decisions. Several interrelated decisions were included for each area (see Table 1). The questions were rated on a validated (Davis 1970) five-point scale (husband decided = 1; husband more influence than wife = 2; equal influence = 3; wife more influence than husband = 4; wife decided = 5). Since these five categories refer only to the roles of husband and wife, the response to any given question represents a respondent's perception of the relative influence in the decision. Due to the nature of the questionnaire, respondents were further screened to ensure that they owned (or were financing) only one car and one house. Control on the referent purchase was exercised by asking the respondents to look a year back on their memories for the relevant purchases. An exception to this guideline was the possible case of a particular product not being purchased within the past year (i.e., house or an automobile). In such an instance, respondents were asked to remember the last time such a product was purchased. During the pretesting of the

TABLE 1
HUSBAND/WIFE RELATIVE INFLUENCE* IN
PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR FIVE PRODUCT CATEGORIES

	Spanish (n=70)	Bilingual (n=87)	English (n=83)	F _{SI}	F _{SI/C}
<u>Automobile Purchase Decisions</u>					
Color of automobile to buy	2.49	2.71	2.39	0.68	0.68
Where to buy the automobile	1.54	1.39	2.02	3.18 ^b	2.94 ^b
What model of automobile to buy	1.57	1.89	2.31	3.40 ^b	3.11 ^b
What make of automobile to buy	1.54	1.87	2.33	4.06 ^b	4.02 ^b
When to buy the automobile	2.06	2.08	2.54	1.78	1.58
How much to spend for the automobile	1.13	2.13	2.53	4.38 ^b	4.22 ^b
Wilks' Lambda				.926 ^b	.939 ^b
<u>Major Appliance Purchase Decisions</u>					
When to buy the appliance	3.85	4.01	4.02	0.72	0.61
How much to spend	2.03	2.79	4.00	6.04 ^b	5.88 ^b
Where to buy	3.40	3.42	3.89	0.81	0.74
Which brand	3.93	4.06	4.08	0.57	0.47
Which model	4.34	4.23	4.39	0.23	0.19
Wilks' Lambda				.967	0.98
<u>Furniture Purchase Decisions</u>					
Color of furniture	4.40	4.38	3.99	1.50	1.42
The particular piece(s) to buy	4.39	4.25	3.81	2.64 ^a	2.55 ^a
What style to buy	4.54	4.59	4.08	2.27	2.14
Where to buy the furniture	3.97	4.01	3.68	0.91	0.86
How much to spend	3.49	3.63	3.15	1.64	1.64
When to buy furniture	3.70	3.91	3.46	1.45	1.39
Fabric of furniture	4.46	4.63	4.17	1.76	1.49
Wilks' Lambda				.963	0.96
<u>Housing Decisions</u>					
Size of home	2.01	2.34	2.80	3.60 ^b	3.44 ^b
Price	1.21	2.23	2.64	7.81 ^c	3.68 ^b
Location	1.99	2.02	3.18	6.90 ^c	4.34 ^b
Wilks' Lambda				.771 ^c	0.83
<u>Financial Management Decisions</u>					
When to open a savings account	2.83	2.98	3.39	1.91	1.85
Where to open the savings account	2.50	2.76	3.30	3.54 ^b	3.15 ^b
How much money to deposit into the savings account	2.59	2.86	3.22	2.11	2.03
When to add to the savings account	2.59	2.78	3.35	3.70 ^b	3.63 ^b
When to open a checking account	2.80	2.78	3.22	1.38	1.27
Where to open a checking account	2.53	2.99	3.33	3.25 ^b	3.21 ^b
How much money to deposit into the checking account	2.79	2.64	3.55	5.71 ^c	5.05 ^c
When to add to the checking account	2.41	2.82	3.48	6.55 ^c	5.78 ^c
Wilks' Lambda				.900 ^b	.901

*Influence was measured using 5-point scales (1=husband decided, 2=husband more influence than wife, 3=equal influence, 4=wife more influence than husband, 5=wife decided).

a_p ≤ .10b

b_p ≤ .05

c_p ≤ .01

instrument, respondents appeared to have no problems or confusion with this method. Questionnaire pretesting also revealed that respondents found the task uncomplicated of indicating relative influence in the purchasing of furniture and appliances in the generic sense. In other words, couples said that relative influence did not significantly change from one type of furniture or appliance to another type. To aid in assessing the validity of the construct measured in the instrument, i.e., relative influence in decision making, a multimethod-multiproduct framework was employed (Szybillo

et al. 1979), who found that the popular 5-point and constant sum scales were dissimilar. Perhaps the reason for the dissimilarity stems from the cognitive behavior performed when respondents address the two types of scales. For example, when one responds to the 5-point scale, he or she usually has to consider both spouse's relative influence simultaneously. On the other hand, when responding to the constant sum scale, an individual has only to consider the extent of his or her influence, and whatever remains is naturally allocated to his or her spouse. A pilot study was

conducted in which 37 couples were randomly selected from the target population and asked to respond to each item by using a constant sum scale (Haley and Overholser 1975) and then the popular five-point scale ranging from "husband decided" to "wife decided" (Davis 1970, 1976; Davis and Rigaux 1974). Following the procedure used by Szybillo et al. (1979), the attributes, or subdecisions, were combined. Correlation coefficients were then computed for each product. The coefficients relevant to the assessment of convergent validity are all statistically significant. The relatively high coefficients imply that statistical convergent validity has been established. Discriminant validity was also deemed to exist. Computation of Cronbach's alpha (1951) for reliability considerations resulted in a coefficient alpha of .91.

Demographic information such as education and occupation was also collected for the husband and wife, as well as combined family income and number of children. The occupation and education information were collected in a manner that facilitated calculation of the popular Hollingshead's Two Factor Index of Social Position (Hoyer and Deshpande 1982). To facilitate the utilization of age as a covariate, an average was assessed for each couple. To assure idiomatic equivalence of the Spanish and English questionnaires, they were translated from English to Spanish and from Spanish back to English. Demographic profiles were examined to establish how well the sample represented the population. All income, education, and occupation categories were equivalently represented. Since the early work of Max Weber (1961), the explication of the term "ethnicity" has implied several dimensions. These include a sense of common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette. Though there are several measures of subcultural identification (i.e., country of origin, parents' ethnic identity, self-identification), the variable which has been most closely associated with national ethnic identity is these finding language spoken at home (McArthur 1984). Indeed, previous research has provided support for the reliance on language spoken at home as a measure of subcultural identification (e.g., Keefe and Padilla 1987). To measure ethnic or subcultural identification, therefore, the questionnaire utilized in the present study included an item to measure the extent to which Spanish is spoken in the home. Approximately 35% of the sample were classified as English or low Hispanic identifiers by checking English only. Similarly, 29.1% were classified as Spanish or high-Hispanic identifiers by checking Spanish only. About 36% were classified as bilingual.

Analysis

Multivariate and univariate analyses of variance were used to test the hypotheses. In the MANOVA model, the independent variables are the three levels of ethnic identification (the three Hispanic subpopulations grouped according to language spoken at home). Relative influence for the decision-making items for each product constitute the dependent variables. MANCOVA was run to remove statistically the possible effects of income, social class and age.

RESULTS

The data in Table 1 reveal the group means and F tests for husband-wife influence regarding various attributes for the five product categories. The means, which were found to be normally distributed, were calculated before removal of the covariates. The first column of F values (F_{SD}) presents the single factor design testing only for the effects of subcultural identification and the second column of F values (F_{SDC}) presents conditional F values on the effects of subcultural identification after removing income, social class, and age effects. Three out of five significant multivariate findings were discovered for the single factor design as well as for the majority of the conditional tests after removing or adjusting the effects of income, and then social class, and lastly, age. This finding suggests that, in general, the degree of ethnic identification has a significant effect on marital roles in decision making. In general, H1 and the ideology and resource theories were supported in this study as the influence of the Hispanic husband increased as the ethnic identification of the couple increased. This pattern was found for automobile, major appliance, housing, and financial management decisions. On the other hand, the opposite effect was found for furniture purchasing decisions. Here, sex-roles attitudes may explain the finding that the influence of the Hispanic wife increases as subcultural identification increases for these household items. In support of H2, the differences in husband/wife influence among the three Hispanic subpopulations appear to be due to ethnic identification rather than to income, social class, or age.

Automobile Purchasing Behavior

Data in the first section of Table 1 show that significant differences between Spanish-speaking, bilingual, and English-speaking Hispanic couples exist for four of the six auto purchasing elements for the single factor design, also four of the six after removing both income and social class effects. These differences remained for two of the six once the age effects were removed. Coupled with the significant multivariate results, these findings imply that strong auto purchasing differences exist in husband/wife influences which are not particularly attributable to either income or social class. Overall, the Hispanic husband plays the dominant role in making auto-related purchasing decisions; and indeed, in each of the four significant cases, the male was the dominant party in decision making. Men exhibited more influence in the decisions concerning where to buy the auto, the amount to spend on the auto, and the model and make to buy. No significant differences were found in husband/wife influence between the Hispanic groups regarding the color of the auto and when to buy the auto.

Major Appliances

Though husband/wife influence appears to be quite

equal regarding major appliance purchase decisions, husbands who are high-Hispanic identifiers still have relatively more influence. However, the data in the table show that only one of the five elements resulted in a significant difference. In that case, the husband had significantly more influence in deciding how much to spend for the appliance, and the influence of the Hispanic husband increased as ethnic identification increased. No significant differences were found in husband/ wife influence between the Hispanic groups regarding when to buy the appliance, where to buy, and which brand and model to buy. Furniture. Data in Table 1 show that none of the seven components of furniture purchasing behavior resulted in a significant difference between the groups in husband/wife influence at the .05 level. However, it is interesting to note the patterns of husband/wife influence regarding this product category. For instance, the Hispanic wives have more influence in the purchasing decisions than their husbands. Also, low-Hispanic husbands have more influence than their Spanish-speaking counterparts. Though this finding contradicts the resource and ideology theories, a possible explanation may be the sex-role orientations of the Hispanic couples. That is, the purchasing of furniture may be viewed as a "feminine task" which means that the relative influence of the wife would be likely to increase as ethnic identification increases.

House

Unlike furniture purchasing decisions, the F values in Table 1 indicate that males in high-Hispanic identification households have significantly more influence in home purchasing/renting decisions than males in the other Hispanic groups. These findings clearly state that house-related decisions in these households are husband dominated. Supporting ideology and resource theories, high-Hispanic males have significantly more influence in decisions about size, price and home location than the husbands in the other two groups.

Financial Management

For each of the subcultural identification groups the decisions regarding financial management tend to be quite equal in husband/wife influence. However, the data in Table 1 show that high-Hispanic males have significantly more influence than the husbands in the other two groups regarding the decisions of where to open the savings account and a checking account, when to add to the savings account and to the checking account, and the amount of money to deposit into the checking account. However, no significant difference in husband/wife influence between the Hispanic groups was found for 3 of the 8 financial decisions: When to open a savings account and a checking account and the amount of money to deposit into the savings account. To acquire a better understanding of why Spanish-speaking Hispanic men have generally more influence in purchasing decisions than their English-speaking counterparts, the sex-role orientation of the

Hispanic men was assessed. Their sex role orientation was assessed by using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem 1974). A chi-square analysis was then performed to determine the relationship between ethnic identification for the husbands and their sex role orientation. Indeed, high-Hispanic, or Spanish-speaking, husbands were found to have a more masculine role orientation ($\chi^2 = 137$, $p = .001$). This finding is consistent with other studies concluding that (1) sex role orientation is instrumental in defining the decision role responsibilities (Qualls 1987), (2) Mexican-American families are more husband dominant than Anglo families in the purchase of durables (Imperia et al. 1985), and (3) as sex roles in a family become more modern and less traditional, the influence of the husband is likely to decline (Spiro 1983). Thus, husband/wife roles in purchasing behavior appear to be more distinct and traditional among high-Hispanic couples than among couples who have become assimilated into the U.S. society.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Significant differences in husband/wife influence among Spanish, bilingual, and English-speaking families were found for many decisions regarding the purchasing of several durable goods. As hypothesized, the relative influence of the Hispanic husband appears to increase in most purchasing situations as ethnic identification increases. The differences generally appear to be due to subculture rather than to income, social class, or age, and in a few cases are actually strengthened by the removal of income, social class, or age effects. The results will be summarized in terms of whether they are supportive or not of the stated hypotheses.

HYPOTHESIS/FINDING CONGRUENCE

Males in Spanish-speaking or high-Hispanic couples, compared to males in English-speaking couples or low-Hispanic, have more influence in the decisions of:

- where to buy an automobile
- model and make of auto to buy
- amount of money to spend on the auto
- amount of money to spend on appliances
- size, price, and location of home
- where to open a savings and checking account
- when to add to a savings account.

HYPOTHESIS/FINDING INCONGRUENCE

Males in high-Hispanic subcultural identification couples do not have significantly more influence in the decisions of:

- color of the auto
- when to buy the auto
- when to buy a major appliance
- where to buy the appliance
- brand and model of appliance to buy

- color, style and fabric of furniture
- particular piece(s) of furniture to buy
- where and when to buy the furniture
- amount of money to spend on the furniture
- when to open a savings and checking account
- amount of money to deposit into the savings account.

Even though the Spanish-speaking husbands did not have significantly more influence in the above mentioned decisions, it should be noted that the wives also did not have more influence in the decisions.

BILINGUAL FAMILIES

Bilingual couples generally tend to show patterns of husband/wife influence in decision making between the Spanish- and English-speaking Hispanic couples. In the majority of the cases, bilinguals are indeed between the other two Hispanic groups in husband/wife influence. For example, in each of the four significant cases regarding automobile purchasing decisions, the pattern of husband/wife influence for bilinguals is between the other groups. In instances where bilinguals are not in the middle, they are consistently closer to the Spanish-speaking couples (e.g., price and location of the home, where to open a savings account, when to add to a savings account, etc.). Interestingly, the males in bilingual couples tended to show more influence in the decisions of the amount to deposit into a checking account and when to add to

a checking account. Similar to the findings of Schaninger et al. (1985), the pattern of findings for bilingual husband/wife influence does support an assimilationist viewpoint, although bilingual couples do not always fall between Spanish- and English-speaking couples.

While the present study addresses only a few product categories, the findings can be considered illustrative of the types of husband/wife influence in decision making among Hispanic couples. Consistent with the findings of Davis (1970), this study found that husband/wife roles vary both with the product and the type of decision. However, where other studies (i.e., Hempel 1975) found that housing decisions are autonomic, this study revealed that they are husband dominant in high-Hispanic identification families. In support of the resource and ideology theories, these findings clearly indicate a stronger pattern of husband dominance in Spanish-speaking or high-Hispanic identification couples than in English-speaking or low-Hispanic identification couples. The findings also suggest that the Spanish-speaking couples engage in significantly less joint decision making than do English-speaking couples, at least when a home and an automobile are concerned. In both cases, these subcultural identification differences appear to be genuine and not merely the product of disparate income, social class, or age. It should be noted that the number of wife dominant decisions in the Spanish-speaking homes was quite low.

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