

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussion, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section summarizes objectives of the study, subjects, materials, and procedures as follows;

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate whether parents had a knowledge about junk food and its harmful effects on their children. In addition, the sub-objectives of the study were to identify how much parents were aware of the harmful effects of junk food and to find out whether parents were concerned about their children's junk food consumption.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

The study was conducted with the parents of the schoolchildren at a school in Bangkok. One hundred and fifty parents participated in this study, and they were selected by means of the accidental sampling technique. To achieve the main objective and sub-objectives of the study, 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the parents through the schoolchildren. The questionnaires comprised 3 main parts: demographic information, parents' knowledge, and parents' concern about children's junk food consumption

After the data were obtained, they were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program version 13.0. Then, they were presented and interpreted in the forms of percentage, mean, and Likert scale's range.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic Information

The study shows that the majority of the respondents were female (68.70%) while the rest of them were male (30.00%). Most of the respondents were at the age of 31-40 (60.00%) and graduated with a secondary school, vocational certificate and diploma (49.30%). The occupation of most respondents was private company officer (24.70%). In addition, most of them earned household income of less than 20,000 baht a month (65.30%).

5.2.2 Parents' Knowledge

(1) Parents' Knowledge of Junk Food

1.1 Knowledge of What is Considered Junk Food

Parents' knowledge of the different kinds of junk food was summarized. Most respondents knew that the food listed was junk food. However, it was also found that the percentage of the respondents who believed fish burger was junk food was nearly equal to the percentage of those who thought it was not. The majority of the respondents believed that pork steaks and onion rings were not junk food.

1.2 Knowledge of the Nutritional Value of Junk Food

Parents' knowledge of the nutritional value of junk food was summarized. Most of the respondents knew about the nutritional value of junk food. However, the majority of them did not know that a piece of seafood pizza and a dish of seafood fried rice did not provide equal amounts of fat. Most of the respondents were undecided about the nutritional value of onion rings. The percentage of the respondents who answered 'Yes' to the statement that onion rings give only essential nutrients was nearly equal to the percentage of those who answered 'No'.

(2) Parents' Awareness of the Harmful Effects of Children's Junk Food Consumption

Parents' awareness of the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption was summarized. Most of the respondents agreed with the

statements on the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption. The average Mean of all statements was (3.95). This was interpreted as the respondents were aware of the harmful effects of their children's junk food consumption.

5.2.3 Parents' Concerns about Children's Junk Food Consumption

Parents' concerns about children's junk food consumption were summarized. Most of the respondents were concerned about their children's junk food consumption. On the contrary, the majority of them (92.00%) did not always provide their children with a packed lunch when they went to school. The percentage of the respondents (46.70%) who usually cooked meals for their children themselves and the percentage of those (44.70%) who did not cook were nearly equal. This may be because they had to work outside and rush in the morning, so they had limited time to take close care of their children's meals.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

This section is concerned about how the findings of the study answer the research questions and match the literature that was been reviewed. Therefore, the discussions are as follows:

5.3.1 In the overall picture, the majority of the respondents had a knowledge of what is considered junk food and the nutritional value of junk food. In addition, most of them were aware of the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption. Last of all, they were concerned about their children's junk food consumption.

5.3.2 The overall picture showed that most of the respondents had a knowledge about what is considered junk food, but the majority of them were still undecided about pork steaks and onion rings. Also, many respondents considered fish burgers as non-junk food. The reason why the respondents were undecided about pork steaks and onion rings as well as why they considered a fish burger to be non-junk food may be because they might consider only the benefits from the main ingredients of these kinds of food. Actually pork steaks, onion rings, and fish burgers are junk food although their main ingredients are pork, onion, and

fish which are considered sources of essential nutrients. Protein is derived from pork and fish while vitamins and minerals come from onions. The cooking processes of these three kinds of food are grilling and frying, and their other ingredients are palm oil, butter and flour. A high amount of palm oil, butter, and flour which contains a high level of cholesterol can lead to obesity and many diseases such as liver damage and heart disease.

5.3.3 The overall picture presented is that the majority of the respondents had a knowledge of the nutritional value of junk food, but most of them remained undecided as to whether a piece of seafood pizza provided fat equal to a dish of seafood fried rice. The amount of fat in a piece of seafood pizza was more than the amounts of fat in a dish of seafood fried rice. Although both kinds of food had seafood as their similar main ingredient, they were cooked in different ways. In a piece of seafood pizza, the high amount of cheese and butter were included while a dish of seafood fried rice did not include the mentioned ingredients and gave consumers fat. In addition, most of the respondents were undecided as to whether some kinds of junk food such as onion rings provided consumers with only essential nutrients because it had vegetable as a main ingredient. Although onion was a kind of vegetable that gave consumers advantages, onion rings did not provide consumers with only essential nutrients because it was covered by crisp flour and cooked by frying. It also contained high amounts of fat derived from palm oil, and crisp flour was good at absorbing oil.

5.3.4 The overall picture revealed that the respondents were aware of the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement that junk food provides children with long-term bad effects; however, they remained undecided about the statement that cancer can develop if children lack essential vitamins and minerals. In addition, they were undecided about the statement that high cholesterol from junk food consumption can cause liver damage. Although most of them were aware of the harmful effects of junk food consumption, they did not have enough knowledge about its long-term harmful effects. If most respondents knew more about the long-term harmful effects of junk food consumption, they would take action to counter those which

are serious illnesses such as cancer, liver damage, and heart diseases. The result of the study also supports the study of Samang Suebsaman (สำออง สืบสมาน, 2545) that pointed out that although most youths aged 15-19 had a knowledge of the calorie sources from food, their knowledge of fast food related to the risk of heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol and overweight was limited. Nearly all of aforementioned harmful effects are long-term effects. The result of this study and the study of Samang Suebsaman (สำออง สืบสมาน, 2545) showed that most people including both parents and children had a knowledge of food and its nutritional value, but their knowledge of the long-term effects of fast food and junk food should be improved.

5.3.5 The overall picture unveiled that most of the respondents were concerned about their children's junk food consumption. However, it was shown that the majority of them did not always provide their children with a packed lunch. This might be because most parents in this study were private company officers. They had to work outside and had limited time to take close care of their children's meals, especially lunch at school. This action of the respondents might be a factor that makes their children select food themselves, and they might select junk food or food that did not provide enough nutrition.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 Based on the results from the study, most respondents were female aged 31-40 years old. Most of them graduated with a secondary school, vocational certificate and diploma, and they were private company officers. They had a household income of less than 20,000 baht a month.

5.4.2 The respondents had a knowledge about the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption and were concerned about their children's junk food consumption.

5.4.3 Although most respondents were aware of the harmful effects of children's junk food consumption, they still did not know for sure about its long-

term effects. Consequently, they should learn more about the long-term effects of junk food consumption.

5.4.4 Although the majority of the respondents were concerned about their children's junk food consumption, they did not always provide their children with a packed lunch. The respondents should be encouraged to prepare lunchboxes for their children when they go to school in order to completely control their children's food selection and junk food consumption. Otherwise, they should teach their children what is a suitable food for lunch.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 The main limitation to this study was the generalization of the data collection. The data was collected from the parents of the schoolchildren at a middle-class school in the Bangkok area. In order to gain a wider and better picture of the knowledge of parents of schoolchildren, subjects in any future study should be selected from all levels of the school equally.

5.5.2 The time and budget of the study was limited, so this study was conducted with 150 parents. It was suggested that the sample size in any future studies should be larger in order to attain a stronger generality in the study.

5.5.3 From this study, it was clear that the parents had a knowledge of harmful effects of children's junk food consumption, but they were not sure of the long-term effects of junk food consumption. Further study should be conducted to research the different levels of schools to investigate the parents' knowledge of the long-term effects of junk food.