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<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's thesis

Subject	Marketing	Date	13.4.2007
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		Number of pages	123
Title	Factors influencing a toy purchase decision		
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Abstract

The constant worry of kids abandoning traditional toys and engaging in the world of video games is really making the toy manufacturers go the extra mile. To add to the equation, not only is the market driven by the necessity of coming up with exciting and new innovations but toy manufacturers targeting children are under the constant scrutiny from the media, consumer groups and governments. Operating in the challenging marketing environment, the commissioning company Scanditoy felt the need to find out more about the consumers' toy purchase process. The aim of the Thesis is to examine what it is that actually influences the toy purchase decision – why does the consumer end up at the cash register with some particular toy in the first place? What are the factors influencing a toy purchase decision the most in reality – could it be the child's wish, the toy catalogue, the price of the toy or perhaps something completely else?

The theoretical framework of the Thesis lies on the consumer buying process consisting of the five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, product choice and outcomes. Furthermore, also the concepts of the motivation process, different levels of purchase decision making and the particularities of children as a consumer group are taken into wide consideration. The quantitative research was carried out in Turku and Helsinki in two supermarkets, a specialized toy store and a department store on four weekends before Christmas 2006. The data was gathered by conducting a survey on 180 respondents mostly shopping for Christmas presents.

The research findings showed what factors had the most substantial influence on the toy purchase decision within the whole group of respondents. Also, differences between different genders, age groups, family size and the toy receiver's age were considered. Furthermore, the meaning of the toy's price on the purchase decision was examined separately. The group of people surveyed was segmented into different customer groups using cluster analysis. The largest segment with 42 % of the respondents in the research was that of the Middle aged women shopping what the child wants. All of the four segments formed were evaluated on how they ranked on different dimensions found by conducting factor analysis on twenty variables of the survey form that can possibly influence a toy purchase decision. The research results will give new insight into what influences the toy purchase decision, which market segments were formed and what different factors each of them value when selecting the toy of choice.

Key words	consumer behaviour, children, toys, segmentation, motivation
Further information	