CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed based on a review of current literature on the area of pharmaceutical marketing efforts to physicians. Some inputs were gathered from sales representatives. The questionnaire was then pre-tested by 2 physicians and their comments and suggestions were taken to improve the quality of the questionnaire. These two physicians were excluded from the subsequent study.

3.2 Sampling Design

The 250 sets of questionnaires were randomly distributed to physicians of government, private and university-based hospitals in Peninsular Malaysia. Five pharmaceutical sales representatives were involved in the distribution of questionnaires. Each of them distributed 50 sets at the ratio of 15 sets to private hospitals and 35 sets to government and university-based hospitals according to their own choice of physicians. All sales representatives were reminded to remain anonymous in the distribution process and do not do “face-to-face” hand over the questionnaire to the selected physician to avoid scepticism.

3.3 Research Hypothesis

3.3.1 Hypothesis A: Usefulness of Source of Drug Information

There were researches showed that the physicians' has changed their preference on sources of information from commercial to non-commercial source.

The commercial sources are,

1. Advertisement in medical journal
The non-commercial sources are,
1 Medical Books
2 Medical Guidelines
3 Medical Journal
4 Recommendation by Other Physicians
5 Conference

Hence, Hypothesis A ($H_0$): There is no difference in usefulness between commercial and non-commercial source of drug information.

### 3.3.2 Hypothesis B: Influence on Prescribing Practice

The change in physicians' preference on sources of information from commercial to non-commercial sources indicates that the sources of influence physicians rely on to decide which drug to prescribe has also changed.

The commercial sources of influence are,
1 Advertisement in Medical Journal
2 Direct Mail Advertising
3 Sales Call/ Detailing by Sales Representatives
4 Sales Promotional Material
5 Free Sample
6 Seminar/ Lecture Organized by Pharmaceutical Companies

The non-commercial sources of influence are,
1 Clinical Papers of the Related Drug
2 Personal Experience with the Drug
3 Recommendations Made by Colleagues in Informal Discussions
Hence, Hypothesis B, (H₀): There is no difference in influence on prescribing practice between commercial and non-commercial sources of influence.
In 2006, it was the first pharmaceutical company in Malaysia to launch economical generic alternatives such as Atorvastatin (a cholesterol-lowering medication) and Oseltamivir (an influenza treatment). SG Global Biotech Sdn Bhd. Based in Klang, SG Global Biotech (also known as Hai-O Pharma) is the nation’s first Good Manufacturing Practice -certified traditional medicinal plant.

Realising the growing demand of traditional Chinese medicine in Malaysia, Managing Director Tan Kai Hee and his partners founded the company in 1994. Backed by a strong marketing network of medical professionals and a sales team of over 120 people, the company serves the needs of more than 10,000 customers comprising clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, veterinarians, farms and feed mills. This study investigates physicians’ responses to different marketing media and promotional tactics typically used by the pharmaceutical industry. Results from a sample of 109 physicians show that pharmaceutical representatives were most useful, followed by drug samples and advertorials in medical journals. Direct mail, promotional faxes, and promotional products were used less by physicians. In addition, the investigation explored which sources of information physicians use in obtaining information about pharmaceuticals. Medical books, medical journals, and medical conferences and symposia were used by physicians. In addition, the investigation explored which sources of information physicians use in obtaining information about pharmaceuticals. Medical books, medical journals, and medical conferences and symposia were used by physicians. Previous studies showed that pharmaceutical companies succeeded to manage physicians prescribing behavior in developed countries. However, very little studies investigated the impact of pharmaceutical marketing strategies on prescribing pattern in developing countries, middle-eastern countries. However, very little studies investigated the impact of pharmaceutical marketing strategies on prescribing pattern in developing countries, middle-eastern countries. The objective of this research was to examine the influence of drug companies’ strategies on physicians’ prescription behavior in the Lebanese market concerning physicians’ demographic variables quantitatively.