



The Factors Affecting Decisions of Undergraduate Students on Taking Extra English Courses in Tutorial Schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai*

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Keywords: Extra English courses, Tutorial schools, Undergraduate students

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Introduction

English is the language of commerce, technical innovation, scientific research, and the global community in general. As a result, proficiency in English has become a pre-requisite in the global workforce, in which English language is one of the foreign languages necessary for economy communication, and the demand for English proficiency in Thailand is increasing, especially within the government workforce since they seek employees with a good command of the language to attract more foreign investors for economic development. With the opening of AEC in 2015, it can be assumed that the number of foreign workers will drastically increase. To be able to compete and excel in the foreseeable competition in the ASEAN workforce, Thai students must be proficient in English communication and have technical knowledge in various fields. Seeing that English language education seems to be lacking, many Thai students feel it is necessary to take extra language classes in tutorial schools. According to Sarnsonthed (2014), there were 2,342 tutorial schools in Thailand in 2013 (Updated 5 November 2014), which is double the number in 2009. This demonstrates the extraordinary growth rate in the number of tutorial schools in Thailand, presumably to meet the demand. According to Napompech (2011), the administrators of tutorial schools usually focus on students' satisfaction as customers. She also shows that the factors influencing students in choosing tutorial schools include the expertise of the instructors, the provision of learning materials, the variety of courses on offer, free consultation, the instructors attention to the wellbeing of the students, such as replying to questions outside of the classroom, a comfortable classroom with air conditioning, convenient and safe entrances and exits, convenience to transportation (bus, train, taxi), provision of car parking facilities, and a policy of guaranteeing success (money back in case of failure). The above factors are consistent with the marketing mix proposed by some researchers. In 1960, an American Professor of Marketing, Jerome McCarthy, proposed the four P's mix theory. This theory proposed four marketing mix factors; Price, Place, Product and Promotion. This marketing mix can be applied in various forms to meet the changing needs of a target group. In 1981, Booms and Bitner suggested an extended marketing mix or services marketing mix. This services marketing mix is called the 7 P's model, but is better referred to as the Services Marketing Mix. This model is an extension of McCarthy's original 4 P's marketing mix, and is more relevant and applicable to service companies and knowledge intensive environments, not only product marketing. The Services Marketing Mix thus subsumes the traditional 4 P's plus Process,



People and Physical Evidence (Booms and Bitner, 1981). In 2007, Lovelock and Wirtz added Productivity and Quality, creating the 8 Ps services marketing. The factors comprising the 8 Ps of services marketing are Price, Place, Product Elements, Promotion, Process, People, Physical Environment, and Productivity and Quality which is the latest in the series of marketing models.

However, no previous research has been conducted regarding the marketing factors outlined by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), the 8 Ps of services marketing, particularly in their applicability to undergraduate students who will compete in the ASEAN workforce. The popularity of attending tutorial schools by undergraduate students in Chiang Mai is obvious in the different advertising strategies undertaken by tutorial school owners (**Insightenglish, 2014; Tutoring and Education School-Thailand, 2014**). Furthermore, Chiang Mai holds the record of the highest number of tutorial schools (59 tutorial schools) in northern Thailand (Thaipublica, 2013). Many university students have decided to take extra English courses at tutorial schools (**Insightenglish, 2014; Tutoring and Education School-Thailand, 2014**), while their universities provide English classes for students. Therefore, the researcher desires to know what influences university students to take extra English courses at tutorial schools, which leads to the problem that the researcher needs to find out about factors affecting the decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools.

Research Objectives

The aim of this current research was aimed to investigate the factors affecting the decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools, and further to investigate the level of importance of each factor according to the different year levels of the undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai.

Theoretical Framework

In this thesis, the theoretical framework inspired by McCarthy (1960) proposed the services marketing mix, which included 4Ps (Product, Place, Price, Promotion). In 1981, Booms and Bitner added 3Ps (People, Process, Physical evidence) that expands the number of controllable variables from the four in the original services marketing mix to seven. In 2007, Lovelock and Wirtz added Productivity and Quality, creating the 8 Ps of services marketing. The 8Ps of services marketing are defined as follows (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007, pp. 22-23):

Product Elements: the core and periphery service elements at the centre of the company's marketing strategy;

Place: delivering product elements to customers can be done physically and/or electronically, depending upon the service. Speed and convenience are essential to the customer and are important value-adds;

Price: pricing is only a part of what customers may part with when purchasing a service; one must also consider time and convenience;

Promotion: the marketer must make sure communications not only provide information, but also persuade the customer of the service's relevance to the customer's particular problem.

Process: the means by which the firm delivers product elements;

Physical Environment: the appearance of the place where the services are delivered may have a significant impact upon whether the service is satisfactory;

People: front-line staff will have a direct impact on perceptions;

Productivity and Quality: improving productivity is a requisite in cost management; but quality, as defined by the customer, is essential for a service to differentiate itself from other providers.

Research Methodology

Research Instruments

A questionnaire was used in the study. The questionnaire was adapted from Yangyuen questionnaire (2010) to identify the factors affecting the decisions of the students.

Data Collection

The primary data collection instrument is the questionnaire. It was sent to the 385 undergraduate students who were taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai during the second semester of the academic year 2014.

Data Analysis

A quantitative design was chosen to analyze the data in all parts whereas descriptive analysis. The students' decisions were divided into five levels: 5.00-4.51 = the most important, 4.50-3.51 = very important, 3.50-2.51 = moderately important, 2.50-1.51 = not very important and 1.50-1.00 = the least important, based on Srisa-ard (2010).



Research Conclusion and Discussion

This section, the results were concluded and discussed according the purpose of the study as follows:

Conclusion and Discussion of finding one

The purpose of the study one aimed to investigate the factors affecting the decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. The factors based on Lovelock and Wirtz (2007)'s model of service marketing which comprises the marketing elements: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Process, People, Physical Environment, and Productivity and Quality. The result indicated that all these factors were very important in affecting the decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. However, the mean of People was the highest factor, followed by Product Elements, Promotion, Productivity and quality, Place, Process, Physical environment and Price, respectively. This study also shown that People with the sub-factor "instructors' profiles" was the highest level, followed by "good professional skills of teacher and staff" and "influence of friend and parents". The Price (the lowest level) with the sub-factor "paying a tuition fee by installments" was the highest level, followed by "a reasonable price for the quality in each course", and "being clear in price details of each course". The result of the study was similar to the studies of Panthong (2004), Boromrit (2005), Duangjan (2006), Manorueang (2008), Nilket (2008), Senapa (2008), Viranuvat (2010), and Charoenchaiwong (2011). These studies investigated the marketing mix factors affecting decision on taking extra English course in tutorial school, but these studies did not use the factors based on the 8 Ps of services marketing by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007). Panthong (2004), Duangjan (2006), Manorueang (2008), Nilket (2008), and Senapa (2008) used seven factors of the marketing mix factors based on Booms and Bitner (1981) in their analysis: Price, Place, Product, Promotion, Process, People, and Physical Evidence while Borommarit (2005) used six factors of the marketing mix factors in his analysis: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Process and People. Charoenchaiwong (2011) used only people, place, physical appearance, and price. Although these studies were different population and sample, their studies showed that People was the most influential factor motivating the respondents to take extra English course in tutorial schools. However, there were only four studies: Borommarit (2005), Manorueang (2008), Charoenchaiwong (2011), and Yangyuen (2010) that were similar to this study in



the Price that was the lowest influential factor motivating the respondents to take extra English course in tutorial schools. For existing language schools, tutorial school and new entrepreneurs, the result ensure that business opportunities are available for them, with Chiang Mai expected to be a growing market because the People in tutorial school can motivate not only elementary and secondary students but also undergraduate students to take extra English course in tutorial school.had lexical hedges or fillers in their language use, and male in Bridget Jones's Diary obviously tended to speak lexical hedges or fillers more than female did.

Conclusion and Discussion of finding two

The purpose of the study two aimed to investigate the level of importance of each factor according to the different year levels of the undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. The result indicated that the mean of People was the highest factor for first and second year level of undergraduate students while the mean of Product Elements was the highest factor for third and fourth year or higher level of undergraduate students. The lowest factor for all year levels of undergraduate students was the mean of Price.

This study also showed that 79 first year and 125 second year level of undergraduate students considered the mean of People that was the most important with the sub-factor "influence of friends and parents" was the highest level, and the mean of Price was the lowest factor with the sub-factor"a reasonable price for the quality in each course" was the highest level for first year level while the sub-factor "paying a tuition fee by installments" was the highest level for second year level . This result was similar to the studies of Bray (2005) and Tahaineh (2013). Bray (2005) investigated whether attending tutorial classes is a new trend in Hong Kong. The sample consisted of 66 secondary students who responded to questionnaires. His study was found that the students attended tutorial schools as recommended by their parents and friends or classmates in school. Tahaineh (2013) studied the motivations and attitudes of undergraduate university students towards learning English as a foreign language. He mentioned that 81.8% of the respondents were encouraged by their parents to take English class exceeding the regular school curriculum. For the result of the first year level of undergraduate students, this may be because they had just graduated from secondary school so they were still young and would be adolescence, and the second year level of the undergraduate students were still adolescence. Moreover, the second year level of undergraduate students was the highest group in taking



extra English course in tutorial school in Muang District, Chiang Mai. According to Kirk. A (2000), friends significantly influenced all facets of adolescence's life, including academic achievement. In addition, friends influenced second year level of undergraduate student because it can be noticed when collecting the data in tutorial schools that they were from same major and university.

For the result of 87 third year and 94 fourth year or higher level of undergraduate students, they considered the mean of Product Elements that was the most important with the sub-factor "offering a variety of English language courses" was the highest level, and the mean of Price was the lowest factor with the sub-factor "paying a tuition fee by installments" was the highest level. This result was similar to the study of Yangyuen (2010). She studied consumer behavior and factors affecting high school students' decisions to take English courses at language schools in Phatthalung. She used four factors (Product, Place, Promotion, and Price) of the marketing mix factors based on Edmund, J. M. (1960). Her study shown that Product was the highest and Price was the lowest influential factor motivating the respondents to take extra English course at language schools in Phatthalung. Her study also shown that the students selected a language school that provided a general English course which included listening, speaking, reading, and writing development, and also specific courses such as English for Examinations and English for Business. This may be because the third and fourth year level of undergraduate students or higher attended to take extra English course in tutoring school in Product factor more serious than students in other levels as they are going to graduate from the university and eagerly want to further improve their English for career path or even continue their education in the higher level.

Recommendations

The current study explored the factors affecting decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English language courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. As the study only adapted the factors based on the 8 Ps of services marketing by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), it would be interesting to recommend for further studies based on the findings as followings:

1. The present research only studied and adapted the marketing factors. Moreover, this study showed that People was the most important factor affecting decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English language courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. There should be a further study of factors which compare quality of teachers in university with teachers in tutorial school.



2. As the study only highlighted on factors affecting decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English language courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai, it would be interesting to study targeted students, their needs, their consuming behavior.

3. A further study should be conducted on the satisfaction of students towards tutorial school that they have already attended.

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