

Factors Influencing Buying Behavior and Buying Decision Process of Customers: An Examination on Relationship Using One-Way Analysis of Variance

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Abstract

This research is aimed at examining the relationship between the factors influencing customer buying behavior and the buying decision process, which customer goes through before and after buying Thai herbal shampoo. Research data is collected from four hundred samples in Bangkok using self-administered questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaires is tested by Cronbach's Alpha, which results in 0.891 for buying behavior and 0.873 for buying decision process. Descriptive statistic is adopted along with one way analysis of variance. The research results show that the customer buying behavior is being influenced by the social and situational factors at a somewhat influential degree, while being influenced by marketing and psychological factors at a very influential degree. In testing hypotheses, it is found that the customers who are affected by factors influencing buying behavior at a different degree also implemented buying decision process at a different degree at a statistical level of 0.05.

Keywords: Buying Behavior, Buying Decision Process, Thai Herbal Shampoo, Small and Medium Enterprise

Introduction

The main purpose behind marketing a product is to meet the expectations or demands of the customers (Solomon, 2009). The success of small and medium enterprises relies partially on the ability of the entrepreneurs to apply marketing concepts in generating income for their business. Consequently, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Thailand have adopted various types of marketing concepts to solve different kinds of their marketing problems. Most of the marketing problems are: low quality products, limited number of channels, and lack of marketing knowledge (Nui Suk, 2006). Additional problems are advertising through media is costly, and e-commerce distribution channels are limited (Kasikorn Research Center, 2006). Among these problem, the most challenging problem which continue to exist at all levels of stakeholders interested in developing Thai SMEs is the deficiency of marketing concepts knowledge (Fiscal Policy Research Institute Foundation, 2009). The marketing concept is aimed at discovering and realizing customer needs, and developing effective marketing strategies to satisfy their needs. To identify customer needs, entrepreneurs have to explore consumer behavior (Evans, Jamal, & Foxall, 2006). Consumer behavior is defined as activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services (Blackwell et al. 2006). Consumer behavior often impacted by many influences: social, marketing, situational, and psychological. The influential degree of these influences has been related to buying and consumption decisions (Peter & Donnelly, 2007). Understanding customer's behavior is important for any organization before launching a

product (Solomon, 2009). However, the behavior of customers typically is often unpredictable. Recognizing how customers make buying decisions can help marketing managers design appropriate marketing strategies. When buying products, consumers normally follow the five stages of consumer buying decision process: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior (Mullins, Walker Jr., & Boyd Jr., 2008). As a matter of fact, the consumer may end the process any time or may not even make a purchase. Consumer's progression through these stages may vary depending on their previous experience, interest, and situation (McDaniel, Lamb, & Hair Jr., 2008). It is accepted that understanding of consumers, their needs, buying behavior and buying decision process is integral to successful marketing (Peter & Donnelly, 2007). Herbal shampoo business in Thailand is traditional SMEs which has faced with several marketing problems especially a changing consumer behavior. Nevertheless, its growth continues to increase along with the increase in herbal cosmetic business. This will effectuate a high opportunity to develop herbal products both in domestic and international markets (Kasikorn Research Center, 2006). Based on the major challenges of this business and several marketing issues, the research problem of this study is focused firstly on what are the factors that influence the customer's buying behavior. Understanding the reasons that affect customer behavior, this will assist in understanding a second research problem of what are customer's purchasing decisions. Consequently, the main purpose of this research is determined to analyze factors Influencing buying behavior and buying decision process. Recognizing both concepts of buying behavior and buying decision process are crucial for driving successful marketing. As a result, the study of these two concepts relationship will bring about a valuable research output which will be useful for Thai herbal shampoo entrepreneurs to develop congruous marketing strategies to meet customer requirements effectively and achieve ultimate business success.

Literature Review

From literary studies, theories, concepts and related research, it was found that factors influencing buying behavior and the buying decision process are preeminent marketing concepts that have been studied by many authors and researchers. Table 1 below exhibits some of the authors who identified the scope of their studies embraced factors influencing buying behavior and the buying decision process.

Table 1 Literature Review Summary

Author (s)	Factors Influencing Buying Behavior				Buying Decision Process					
	social	marketing	situational	psychological	need recognition	information search	alternative evaluation	purchase decision	postpurchase behavior	
Peter and Donnelly (2007)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evans et al. (2006)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
McDaniel et al. (2008)					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mullins et al. (2008)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jearwongwanich (2012)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Nantakowit (2011)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							

The marks illustrate in the above table are specified according to the different area of studies of each individual author. Some authors focused on few factors and stages of the process.

Some authors recognized wider view and considered more relevant elements. However, factors influencing buying behavior and the buying decision process are imperative concepts that are well known and have been widely discussed in the literature reviews of various modern authors for many years. Although these two concepts have become a critical topic of several authors in different concerns, the authors thoroughly reviewed and synthesized their literatures from a variety of sources. Conclusively, it stands to reason that the operational definition used in this study was identified to cover the most relevant elements.

Research Conceptual Framework

The key elements of the two marketing concepts: factors influencing buying behavior and the buying decision process described in the above operational definition were formulated to develop a conceptual framework of this research as shown in Figure 1 belows:

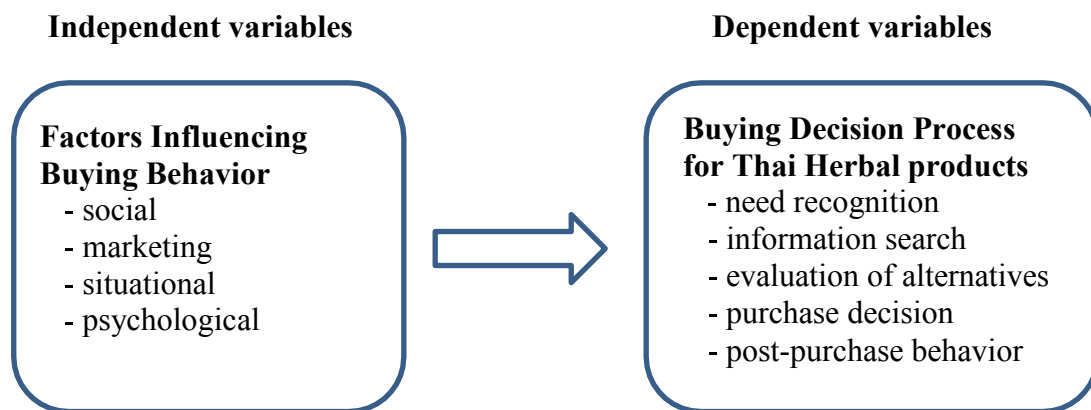


Figure 1 A Conceptual Framework of the Research

A short description of each element in a research conceptual framework is elaborated as follows: Four factors influencing buying behavior include, 1) Social factor: refers to reference groups which comprise of people that individuals compare themselves with such as co- workers, family members, relatives, neighbors, friends, seniors at workplace, etc. 2) Marketing factor: refers to marketing campaign, marketing strategies and marketing mix, etc.

3) Situational factor: refers to time, location, and marketer's geographical and institutional location, furnishings, sounds, lighting, aromas, weather, signs and observable contours, etc. 4) Psychological factor: refers to motivation, perception, learning, belief, and attitude, etc. Five stages of the buying decision process include, 1) Need Recognition: customers identify the product or type of product which is required 2) Information Search: consumers search for the product which would satisfy their needs 3) Evaluation of Alternatives: consumers evaluate the searched alternatives and decide which product would be appropriate 4) Purchase Decision: consumers finalize the decision by buying the selected products 5) Post-Purchase Behavior: consumers may spread good or bad experience after buying the products.

Research Methodology

The population of this research were the consumers who used to buy and use Thai herbal shampoos in Bangkok which was unknown of the entire size. Therefore, the sample was based on non-population sampling technique. At a 95% confidence level, the sample size was 400 consumers (Cochran, 2007). A convenience sampling method was adopted to find the customers who were easy to access particularly in the famous working areas, trading centers, department stores, flea markets, and main train stations. The data was collected from July to

September 2016. The research instrument that was used in this research was a self-administered questionnaire. It consisted of 3 parts: 1) demographic data 2) the opinions of the customers on the influential factors affecting the buying behavior of Thai herbal shampoo: social, marketing, situational, and psychological. A five interval scale of measurement was used in the questionnaire, namely, not at all influential, slightly influential, somewhat influential, very influential, and extremely influential 3) the opinion of customers on buying decision process of Thai herbal shampoo. This buying decision processes includes five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. A five interval scale of measurement was used in the questionnaire, namely, never, almost never, occasionally, almost every time, and every time. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used as a measure of scale reliability to test internal consistency of a set of items in the questionnaire as a group (Cronbach, 1951). The resulting alpha coefficient showed the factor that influenced purchasing behavior is 0.891 and the purchasing decision is 0.873. These value were higher than 0.70 which means that the scale measurements in this questionnaire have an acceptable level of reliability (Peterson, 1994).

Data analysis: The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics: frequency, percentage and mean. Additionally, inferential statistics, the one-way analysis of variance, was used to compare means of two or more samples by using the F distribution. Multiple comparisons of group means were conducted using a post hoc test and a least significant difference (LSD) was also conducted to test the difference in pair effect.

Research Results

Demographic data: The research results showed that more than half of the respondents (63.33%) were between 41-50 years old and 24.80% earned an income of 10,001-20,000 baht per month.

The opinion of customers towards factors influencing their Thai herbal shampoo buying behavior: The research results concerned the opinion of customers towards factors influencing their Thai herbal shampoo buying behavior is showed in Table 2 below:

Table 2 The degree of customers' opinion towards influential factors

I. Social Factor	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Influential
1) Values of family members such as parents, siblings, and relatives	3.84	0.858	very influential
2) Values of people in society, such as neighbors, colleagues and people in the community.	3.09	0.954	somewhat influential
3) Race, religion	2.66	0.984	somewhat influential
4) Birth place/ Home town	3.32	1.044	somewhat influential
5) Status or social level	3.23	1.065	somewhat influential
6) Advertising by celebrities such as star actors/actresses, athletes, etc.	3.57	0.961	very influential
Average	3.28	0.686	somewhat influential
II. Marketing Factor	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Influential
1. Product			
1) The product benefits e.g. protecting hair loss and colour.	4.23	0.764	very influential
2) Various sizes of products	3.54	0.755	very influential
3) Different scent of products	4.05	0.640	very influential
4) Natural colour of products	3.57	0.785	very influential
5) Short shelf life of products due to natural composition	3.48	0.810	somewhat influential
2. Price			
6) Reasonable price compared to other brands	3.98	0.658	very influential
7) Worth the product benefits	4.19	0.746	very influential
8) Worth the satisfaction of using Thai traditional products	4.05	0.853	very influential

Table 2 (Con.)

II. Marketing Factor	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Influential
3. Place			
9) Availability of products in supermarkets and hypermarkets	4.14	0.659	very influential
11) Availability of products in convenience stores	4.25	0.653	very influential
12) Availability of products in underground malls or nearby train stations	3.25	1.030	somewhat influential
13) Availability of online distribution channels	3.43	0.918	somewhat influential
4. Promotion			
13) Sales on special occasions	3.97	0.817	very influential
14) Gift offers	4.06	0.822	very influential
15) Redemption offers	3.70	0.791	very influential
16) Trade fair participation	3.59	0.650	very influential
17) Television advertising	3.93	0.813	very influential
18) Social Media advertising e.g. facebook, instagram.	3.79	0.844	very influential
19) Billboard and leaflet advertising	3.11	0.934	somewhat influential
20) Online advertising	3.57	0.750	very influential
21) Sufficient product knowledge of sales representative.	4.10	0.702	very influential
Average	3.81	0.345	very influential
III. Situational Factor	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Influential
1) Customer's age	3.45	1.075	somewhat influential
2) Customer's occupation	2.66	0.881	somewhat influential
3) Customer's income and attitude towards spending money	3.71	0.916	very influential
4) Customer's life style	3.75	0.802	very influential
5) Customer's personality	3.66	0.907	very influential
Average	3.45	0.661	somewhat influential
IV. Psychological Factor	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Influential
1) Motivation and personal needs to use Thai herbal shampoo.	4.34	0.736	very influential
2) Perception of information about Thai herbal shampoo	3.94	0.752	very influential
3) Learning and experience of using herbal shampoo.	4.18	0.839	very influential
4) Beliefs and attitudes towards the use of herbal shampoo	3.91	1.070	very influential
Average	4.09	0.622	very influential
All Average	3.70	0.345	very influential

The above research results in Table 2 show that the customer buying behavior was affected by all influential factors at an overall average of a very influential degree ($\bar{x} = 3.70$). In details, the marketing and psychological factors affected the consumers' buying behavior at an average of a very influential degree ($\bar{x} = 3.81$ and 4.09). However, the social factor and the situational factor affected at an average of a somewhat influential degree ($\bar{x} = 3.28$ and 3.45). **The opinion of customers towards Thai herbal shampoo buying decision process:** The research results concerned the opinion of customers towards their buying decision process is showed in Table 3 below:

Table 3 The degree of customers' opinion towards the buying decision process

I. NEED RECOGNITION	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Implementation
1) Realizing hair problems e.g. hair loss, gray hair etc.	4.00	0.934	almost every time
2) Requiring to buy Thai herbal shampoo which produced from natural compositions.	4.25	0.780	almost every time
3) Demanding Thai herbal shampoo due to attractive packaging and branding, and also reputation of producers.	3.25	1.074	occasionally
4) Demanding Thai herbal shampoo due to attractive promotion such as advertisement, sales, redemption, and gifts.	3.33	0.935	occasionally
Average I	3.71	0.643	almost every time

Table 3 (Con.)

II. INFORMATION SEARCH	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Implementation
1) Searching information from personal sources: family, friends, or acquaintances, etc.	3.68	0.877	almost every time
2) Searching information from commercial sources include advertisements, editorial reviews, and in-store sales staff.	3.45	0.919	occasionally
3) Searching information from public sources such as trade association, business promotion center, state organization, and public libraries.	3.12	0.985	occasionally
4) Having information from personal use	3.84	0.857	almost every time
Average II	3.52	0.497	almost every time
III. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Implementation
1) Evaluating by products' quality and brand, and also reputation of producers	3.68	0.874	almost every time
2) Evaluating by rationality of price	3.91	0.764	almost every time
3) Evaluating by accessibility of distribution channels	3.51	0.989	almost every time
4) Evaluating by good promotion e.g. advertising, sales, and gifts etc.	3.52	0.965	almost every time
Average III	3.65	0.611	almost every time
IV. PURCHASE DECISION	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Implementation
1) Based on brand name	3.61	0.861	almost every time
2) Based on quality	4.11	0.679	almost every time
3) Based on price and quality worthiness	4.07	0.663	almost every time
4) Based on channel accessibility	3.46	0.751	occasionally
5) Based on reliability of advertising	3.38	0.892	occasionally
6) Based on attraction of promotion	3.31	1.005	occasionally
Average IV	3.65	0.476	almost every time
V. POST-PURCHASE BEHAVIOR	\bar{x}	S.D	Degree of Implementation
1) Respond to the questionnaire or survey of sellers/producers	2.48	0.942	almost never
2) Complain/ compliment about products to the sellers/producers	2.60	1.007	occasionally
3). Pervade product information to family, friends, relatives and acquaintances by word of mouth	3.37	0.959	occasionally
4) Wide spread product information via social media: Face book, Instagram, and YouTube, etc	2.96	0.927	occasionally
Average V	2.85	0.697	occasionally
All Average	3.49	0.3809	occasionally

The above research results in Table 3 show that the consumers implemented the buying decision process at an overall average of an occasionally degree ($x = 3.49$). In details, the sub processes of need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase decision were implemented at an average of an almost every time degree ($x = 3.71, 3.52, 3.65, 3.65$). Anyway, only the sub process of post-purchase was implemented at an average of an occasionally degree ($x = 2.85$).

Hypothesis Test: In testing hypotheses, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of each influential factor of consumer buying behavior on buying decision process.

Table 4 P-Value for testing the influential factors of consumer buying behavior on buying decision process

Buying Decision Process	Factors influencing buying behavior			
	Social	marketing	situational	psychological
	p-value			
	0.000*	0.000*	0.001*	0.000*

Remark: * significant at a statistical level of 0.05

From the above table, the effect of all influential factors on buying decision process was significant at a statistical level of 0.05. Multiple comparisons using the least significant difference test indicated that high levels of influence substantially affects the implementation of buying decision process.

Discussion

In accordance with the first part of research results, it was found that the number of female customers was higher than male. The difference might be due to a dissimilar attitude in maintaining health care. Additionally, a finding of previous research indicated that women were more utilized herbal than men (Gunther, Patterson, Kristal, Stratton, & White, 2004). The customer age fell in a wide range of age groups. But, mostly were between 41 to 50 year old. Therefore, age is unobvious influence Thai herbal shampoo buying behavior. It is ambiguous that age has an effect on herbal use. Some studies found that the most often used herbal product were elder (Blendon, DesRoches, Benson, Brodie, & Altman, 2001). In contradiction, some found that the younger used much more often (Trotter, 1981). In studying the influential factors that affected consumer behavior, the consumers agreed that the marketing, situational, and psychological factors affected the consumer buying behavior. This is consistent with the concept of Peter and Donnelly (2007) which states that these influential factors affect the demand and behavior of customers in a different level and affect their buying decision process as well. However, Kotler and Keller (2012) believed that consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors. In detail of the finding, one of the social factor: family value, influenced customers at a very influential degree. Family is the most important buying organization. Their actions dominate the members as the first and the most critical predominance (Burns, 1992). The findings found that psychological factors: motivation, perception, learning and believes were influenced on customers at a very influential degree. Loken (2006) also agreed with these factors even the last factor is called differently as the memory. These factors are basic influences which motivate customers for their responses. In addition, Kotler and Keller (2012) described that when a customer is affected by factors influencing their purchase behavior, customers will make a purchase decision through a five-step process, including need recognition, information search, alternative assessment, buying decision, and post-purchase behavior. It is in line with a belief of Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1994) which denoted that the buying decision process begins before the actual purchase and will affect in the long run behavior. In addition, McDaniel et al. (2008) further described how customers compare actual and expected results. If they are satisfied with a product, they will buy again or tell another person. But when they are not satisfied, they may change to competitors' products and definitely tell another person too. The research also found that customers performed a need recognition stage in buying decision making process at an implementation degree of almost every time. Kotler and Keller (2012) proposed similarly that the buying decision process begins when a buyer becomes aware of a problem or needs. Their needs arise from internal stimuli such as hunger, thirst, and external stimuli, such as the marketing of products. In the information search stage, the customers performed at an implementation degree of almost every time. Cooper and Inoue (1996) described the benefits of searching for information. Customers learn about the brand and product characteristics, compare the choices, and finally make a buying decision based on their criteria. In the evaluation of alternative stage, the customers performed at an implementation degree of almost every time. This consists with the idea of Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962), which believed that people will put all effort, patience, and feelings in evaluating both favorable and unfavorable choices before making a purchase. In purchasing stage, the customers performed at an implementation degree of almost every time. This

practice is similar to Bettman, Johnson and Payne (1991) who explained that knowledge of brands, product characteristics, time and social pressures will influence decision making. Finally, in the post-purchase stage, the customers performed at an implementation degree of occasionally. Similar to Kotler and Mantrala (1985), who explained that if the product is not good and the customer is not satisfied. Some customers often extend the results by telling more to another people. But the customers who are less satisfied, they will tell less to other people. So, it is accepted to conclude as Oliver (2006), which explains that customer satisfaction is closely related to expectations and perceptions of the product. Based on the above obtained results and the hypothesis tests, the social, marketing, situational, and psychological factors are the most powerful influence on customer buying behavior. These factors also affect the customer implementation of the five stage buying decision process. The linkage of these constituents is developed to form a marketing model for Thai herbal shampoo business as exhibited in the following figure:

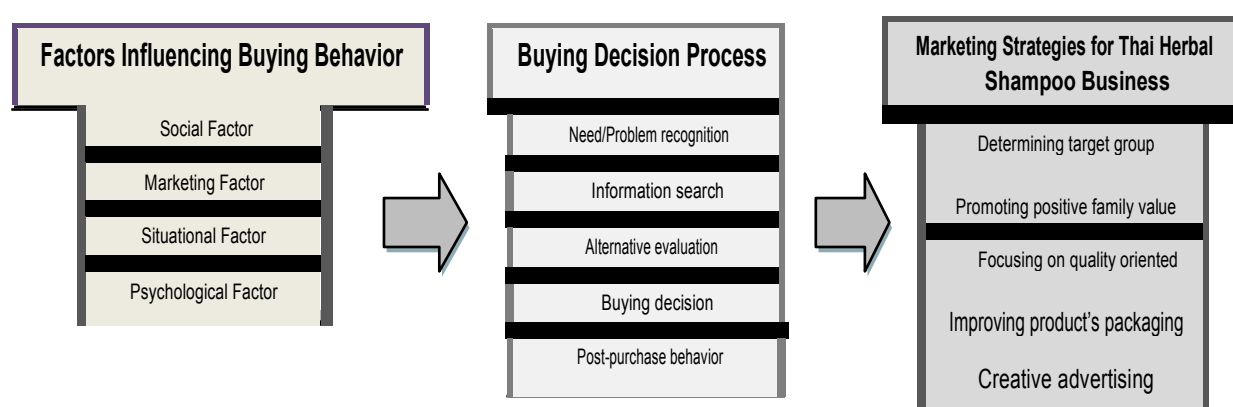


Figure 2 Marketing Model for Thai Herbal Shampoo Business

According to the above figure, the four influential factors concerning consumer buying behavior are integrated with buying decision process for developing a marketing strategic model of Thai herbal shampoo business. The essential components of a marketing strategic model are elaborated as follows: determining target group and segmentation based on the customers' age, career, income, attitude, personality, and lifestyle, promoting positive family value to children about good benefits of herbal shampoo, focusing on quality oriented production so that the customers will obtain the maximum advantages of herbal product, improving product's packaging, branding, and variety of sizes and colors for modernization, and creative advertising by famous celebrities.

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