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# FACTORS AFFECTING OOLONG TEA PURCHASING DECISION: A CASE STUDY OF CONSUMERS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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**Abstract**

The objectives of this research were to study the factors affecting the Oolong tea purchasing decision and to compare the decision factors for buying Oolong tea. The samples were classified by personal attributes of consumers who live in Bangkok. A questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data from a sample of 400 persons to be analyzed by percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test and F-test. The data were further analyzed by Scheffe's method in case of statistically significant differences. The study revealed that most consumers were female, aged between 21-30 years old, graduated with a bachelor's degree, worked as an employee of a private company. For the factors in decision-making to purchase oolong tea among consumers in Bangkok, the overall level was moderate. Considering each aspect, it was found that consumers had the highest decision-making factor in terms of products, followed by distribution, marketing, promotion, price, respectively. 3) The results of hypothesis testing revealed that overall, consumers had different personal characteristics, gender and occupation significantly at 0.5 level. In gender and education, no difference was found.

**Keywords:** Purchasing Decision, Oolong Tea, Consumer Behavior

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## **Introduction**

Nowadays, Thai consumers are paying attention to health and quality of life. People are starting to pay more attention to themselves. They exercise or do activities that are beneficial and change eating and drinking habits from drinking normal drinks to healthy food and drink. The healthy food that Thai consumers prefer to eat include food that contain all natural ingredients, high in fiber, low in fat, high in protein or in sufficient amounts of protein. From these reasons, these healthy food and beverage businesses have good growth opportunities (Thanyakit et al., 2023). However, one with interesting and healthy properties is tea (Liu et al., 2019).

Tea is the *Camellia Sinensis* product that has been processed. This includes beverages obtained from baking or drying the tea leaves to be brewed or boiled with hot water. Tea is a beverage that is consumed all over the world. There are different types of tea classified by the fermentation process which can be divided into 3 types; tea that has undergone a complete fermentation process, unfermented tea and semi-fermented or partially fermented tea. From the scientific process, it was found that Oolong Tea Polymerized Polyphenols (OTPP) is an important substance in oolong tea with properties to prevent or help reduce obesity. It functions through the mechanism of pancreatic lipase to reduce the absorption of nutrients such as fat (Han et al., 1999). Drinking oolong tea rich in OTTP can reduce blood triglyceride levels by about 18%. This study shows that Oolong tea can reduce fat absorption, help reduce the accumulation of fat in the body. Oolong tea contains OTTP, which can inhibit fat absorption resulting in Fecal Lipid Excretion to prevent obesity (Kubitzki, 2004).

Oolong tea is a semi-fermented tea containing many types of antioxidants. From the semi-fermentation process, the active ingredient called Oolong Tea Polymerized- Polyphenols (OTPP) with antioxidant properties was obtained. It is a substance found only in Oolong tea with unique taste and distinctive features. It also stimulates the metabolic system to increase the burning of body fat resulting in weight loss (He et al., 2009).

The results of this study revealed that drinking Oolong tea with high fat foods or drinking as a daily drink can help reduce the absorption of fat in the body. It also reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity and cardiovascular disease. Therefore, in the marketing of Oolong tea, the entrepreneurs should understand the needs, perceptions, factors that affect consumer motivation and purchasing decision in order to formulate appropriate marketing strategies. This will be helpful in product improvement and development as well as formulating marketing strategies for further business for this research. Therefore, the objectives were 1) to study the level of opinions about the marketing mix of consumers and 2) to compare the buying decision factors of oolong tea classified by personal attributes of consumers.

## **Literature Review**

### **Consumer's Purchasing Decision Process**

The purchasing decision consists of 6 steps; recognizing a need; considering the level of importance in what to buy, determining the choice, assessing the choice, making the purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviors.

The consumer's purchasing decision process consists of two parts. The first part is the decision process of the purchaser, and the second part is factors affecting the process. The purchasing decision process consists of 6 steps: perceiving stimuli, perceiving problem, searching for information, assessing choice, making purchase decision and post-purchase behaviors. The factors that affect the purchasing decision process are factors related to demographic characteristics or demography and social and psychological factors (Evans & Berman, 2001).

Oolong tea is a semi-fermented tea causing many types of antioxidants to occur from the semi-fermentation process until obtaining the active ingredient called Oolong Tea Polymerized-Polyphenols (OTPP). It has antioxidant properties and is a substance found only in Oolong tea

with its unique taste and features. It also stimulates the metabolic system, increases the burning of body fat, and has a weight loss property (He et al., 2009).

The results of this study show that drinking oolong tea with high fat food or drinking as a daily drink can help reduce the absorption of fat in the body. It also reduces the risk of various chronic diseases such as obesity and cardiovascular disease. Therefore, in the marketing of Oolong tea, the entrepreneurs should understand the needs, perceptions, factors that affect consumer motivation and purchasing decision in order to formulate appropriate marketing strategies. This will be helpful in product improvement and development as well as formulating marketing strategies for further business for this research. Therefore, the objectives were 1) to study the level of opinions about the marketing mix of consumers and 2) to compare the buying decision factors of oolong tea classified by personal attributes of consumers.

### **Factors Affecting the Consumer's Purchasing Decision**

The purchasing decision process of consumers is influenced by 4 groups of factors: 1) Social Forces, 2) Psychological Forces, 3) Information Forces, 4) Situation Forces. All the aforementioned 4 factors can significantly affect the purchasing decision process of purchasers or consumers (Karnreungsiri & Praditsuwan, 2017). Especially at the stage of accepting needs, it is considered the basic process before a concrete purchasing decision of consumers occurs. It is therefore essential for marketers to study the potential impact of these factors, even if some factors are beyond the control of the marketers. The obtained information can be used in analyzing the purchasing behavior of consumers before proceeding with marketing activities for the products of the organization (Samerjai & Sommi, 2002).

The research in the past 5 years indicated that demographic factors and marketing mix were two important factors that affected consumers' purchasing decisions (Chatchawanchanchanakij et al., 2018; Pumchitamorn et al., 2020; Arpornpisal et al., 2021; Thiangmak et al., 2022).

### **Demography**

Demography is the science that studies sample size, or the number of people distributed within a population's area. Demography is a word derived from two Greek words; Demos means people and Graphic mean Describing. Thus, Demography means the description of population and Statistical Aspects. It is the study of specific characteristics at a certain time such as age, gender, race, marital status, education, etc. Most demographic studies are for determining the Population Size in each area and changes in population size. The main factors that affect the change include births, deaths and population distribution. The population density in each area must be studied on the population composition such as age, gender, race, religion, marital status, education, etc. (Prasitwatthanasaree, 2019).

Demography refers to the study of population to determine the size or number of people living in an area. This includes the study of human behaviors. The demographic characteristics are personal internal factors such as age, gender, status, education level, occupation and income which can be used in analyzing the market, market share, and in planning the marketing strategies that best meet the needs of the target groups (Udomtummakul et al., 2020).

### **Marketing Mix**

Marketing Mix or 4P's refer to marketing variables that can be controlled and used by companies altogether to meet the satisfaction of the target groups (Rungruengphon, 2002).

1) Product means anything that is offered for sale by a business to satisfy the needs of customers. Products offered for sale may be tangible or intangible consisting of goods, services, ideas, places, organizations or individuals. The products must be utility and valuable in the eyes of customers so that they can be sold.

2) Price refers to the value of the product in monetary terms. Price is the second P that occurs next to the Product. Price is the Cost of the customers. Consumers will compare the value of the product and the price. If the product is worth more than the price, the customers or consumers will decide to buy.

3) Promotion is the communication of goods or services between purchasers and sellers to create the attitude and purchasing behavior of purchasers. In communication, a salesperson may be used to selling that product or service (Personal Selling) and communication without people (No Personal Selling). The communication tools are various. One or more tools may be chosen to use. However, the selection of tools must be based on Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) principles, which must be considered to be suitable for target groups, customers or consumers, products and competitors, etc., in order to achieve common goals.

4) Place or Distribution refers to the structure of distribution channels consisting of institutes and activities. It is used to move products and services from the organization to the market and to the consumers. An institute that brings products to the target market is the marketing institute. The activities that help in the distribution of goods include transportation, warehousing, and inventory storage.

## Research Methodology

This is Quantitative Research using Questionnaires to conduct demographic survey and to explore the purchasing decision of Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok. There are 400 samples. However, as it is a research study that cannot determine the exact number of samples, the researcher has calculated the sample size using the formula for determining the sample size without the absolute population. This is to study the purchasing decision of consumers of Oolong tea in Bangkok. The collected questionnaires were taken to verify their accuracy and completeness of information. They were processed and analyzed using a statistical computer program. The Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation (S.D.) were explained.

## Research Results

The research results on demographic data revealed that most of the samples were female for 217 persons representing 54.25%. 154 people aged between 21-30 years representing 38.50%. 224 people had bachelor's degree representing 56.00 %. 95 people were private company employees, representing 23.75%.

Factors in making the purchasing decision of Oolong tea for consumers in Bangkok are product, price, distribution channel, and marketing promotion. The decision weight was divided into 5 levels, namely highest, high, moderate, low and lowest as follows:

**Table 1** Mean and Standard Deviation of Oolong Tea Purchasing Decision Factors of Consumers in Bangkok

Decision Factors for Purchasing Oolong Tea of Consumers in Bangkok	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Decision Weight
Product	3.77	0.67	High
Price	2.94	0.68	Moderate
Place	3.21	0.71	Moderate
Promotion	2.95	0.84	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

From Table 1, it can be concluded that the decision-making factors for purchasing Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok was overall at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.24$ , S.D. = 0.56). Considering each aspect, it was found that the consumers had the highest deciding factors in products ( $\bar{x} = 3.77$ , S.D. = 0.67), followed by distribution ( $\bar{x} = 3.21$ , S.D. = 0.71), promotion ( $\bar{x} = 2.95$ , S.D. = 0.84), and price ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ , S.D. = 0.68), respectively.

1) For the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of products, it was found that the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of products was overall at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.77$ , S.D. = 0.67).

When considering each aspect, it was found that the most deciding factors were the famous Oolong tea (brand) ( $\bar{x} = 4.11$ , S.D. = 0.78), Oolong tea taste ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ , S.D. = 0.79), Oolong tea quality ( $\bar{x} = 3.88$ , S.D. = 0.80), modern style packaging (glass) ( $\bar{x} = 3.02$ , S.D. = 0.92), respectively.

2) For the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of Price, it was found that the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of price was at the moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ , S.D. = 0.68). When considering each aspect, it was found that the most deciding factors were the discount ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ , S.D. = 0.93), followed by the high decision making in the price of products ( $\bar{x} = 2.92$ , S.D. = 0.72) and that the products can be purchased according to the size of the packaging ( $\bar{x} = 2.86$ , S.D. = 0.79), respectively.

3) For the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of Place, it was found that the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of place was at the moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.21$ , S.D. = 0.71). When considering each aspect, it was found that the most deciding factors were the distinctive outlets that attract consumers ( $\bar{x} = 3.66$ , S.D. = 0.78), there are stores everywhere ( $\bar{x} = 3.09$ , S.D. = 0.83), and salespeople recommend products ( $\bar{x} = 2.87$ , S.D. = 0.82), respectively.

4) For the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of Promotion, it was found that the factors of decision-making to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of promotion was at the moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.95$ , S.D. = 0.84). When considering each aspect, it was found that the most deciding factors were the seasonal giveaways ( $\bar{x} = 3.16$ , S.D. = 0.91), there are special seasonal sale items ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ , S.D. = 0.88), there are other free items ( $\bar{x} = 2.88$ , S.D. = 0.92), and there are collectible items to redeem ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ , S.D. = 0.90), respectively.

## Conclusion and Discussion

According to the results of a study on the factors influencing consumers' decision to purchase Oolong tea in Bangkok, it was found that the overall level was moderate. When considering each aspect, it was found that the consumers pay the most attention to product factors, followed by distribution, marketing promotion, and price, respectively.

Factors in the decision to purchase Oolong tea of consumers in Bangkok in terms of products were at a high level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the factor in purchasing decision at the highest level was on the discount followed by the purchasing decision factor at a high level on the price of the product and that it can be purchased according to the size of the packaging, respectively. This is consistent with the research of Rotphenphian & Tilokavichai (2017) who studied factors affecting the decision to buy healthy drinks of consumers in Bangkok. It was found that consumers gave importance to product factors at the highest level. This also agreed with the research of Mahatanapiwat (2010) who has studied the marketing mix factors influencing the purchasing decision process of germinated brown rice water consumers in Bangkok. It was found that consumers gave the most importance to product factors, followed by the price factor. As brown rice germinated is a useful product which meets the needs of people in terms of health, tea producers should pay attention to the quality of products that are useful and meet the health needs of consumers.

According to the results of study above, the researchers have some recommendations for consumers and those with consumer responsibilities resulting in product consumption behavior which leads to better quality as follows:

1) In terms of product, the quality product model should be provided to be hygienic, modern, unique, and can create demand for consumers, such as packaging (Oolong tea glass), brand of Oolong tea, store decoration, etc.

- 2) The price should be reasonable with the quality Oolong tea and various discounts according to festivals or promotions of the store.
- 3) Distribution locations for oolong tea shops should be provided where it can attract consumers and be easily accessible, such as in shopping malls, gas stations, airports, tourist attractions, etc.
- 4) In terms of promotion, there should be periodic price specials, giveaways during the festive season, and detailed advice on each type of Oolong tea products that customers ask for. The documents may be displayed at a point where customers can read easily with continuous publicity advertising.

Therefore, Oolong tea shop entrepreneurs should pay attention to the results of the study in terms of the factors of Oolong tea which are different according to the characteristics of consumers. The information obtained from this study can help determine strategies in terms of management and marketing to meet the needs of consumers who are the target customers of the business.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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