

Factors Influencing Customers Purchasing Decisions on Herbal Products in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to study factors affecting decision making of customers purchasing herbal products from Utthayan Bunniyom store in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand. The research used quantitative as research methodology to study according to classified general information of participants. This general information contained gender, age, occupation, education, and monthly income. Sample group of this research was 385 customers purchasing products from Utthayan Bunniyom store in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand chosen by accidental sampling method. Research instrument was questionnaire. Statistics used in this research were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The research showed marketing factors in price aspect, place aspect, economic aspect society aspect, healthy knowledge aspect, and health care aspect were affecting decision making of customers purchasing herbal products at statistically significance 0.01. While Product aspect was affecting decision making of customers purchasing herbal products at statistically significance 0.05.

Keywords: Purchase decision making, Herbal products, Marketing mix

Introduction

Many industries are utilizing herbs as their raw material. Especially in cosmetic industry, food industry, beverage industry, and food supplementary industry that have been focusing on herbal products resulting in continuously high growth in herbal market. Global herbal product has total market value around 91,800 million USD. Countries with high market value in herbal products are Japan, Korea, China, France, Germany, and Asia region. Data from Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce showed that Thailand had been exporting herbal products for 100,000 million THB which containing 80,000 million THB from food supplement, 10,000 million THB from spa related products, and 10,000 million THB from Thai traditional medical according to local wisdom. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of herbal products consumed domestically had increased 10.3 percent (Manager Online, 2022). According to the operation to develop Thai herbs under the national master plan, the development of Thai herbs issue 1, 2017-2022. Thailand is the number one in exporting decent medicinal raw materials and herbal products in Southeast Asia with a total value more than 12,211 million THB. The total market value of herbs from the average consumption is 46,916.44 million THB (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health. Office of Information, 2022). Herbal industry is one among many industries that has high potential for becoming S-curve industries, both as a First S-curve industry for sustainable potential and New S-curve industry for increasing economic growth. The herbal industry has been expected to be a crucial key to propel economic system in the future. In addition, Thailand is becoming aging society country that conducts a notion to use herbal products for alternative medicines which can strengthen sustainability and reduce a burden in expenses related to health care (Chanitnan Suriyawittayawet, 2019).

There are a lot of local herbs that can be used to be extracted and produce Thai traditional medicines with the development in manufacturing local herbs. This can also be alternative for customers in terms of affordable prices (Yeboah-Banin and Asante, 2020). Utthayan Bunniyom is already well known among the people living in Ubon Ratchathani province for the place that encourages communities to earn income in various fields such as distribution of clean foods, health foods, soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, facial nourishing cream, mosquito repellent, ointments, balms, herbal medicines, and cosmeceuticals. These products can influence customers to consider and make decision before their purchase while communities are developing packaging and marketing in 4P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion). These factors may attract and encourage customers to commit purchases in Utthayan Bunniyom (Chakraborty and Dash, 2022). These actions are conducting product value that affecting GDP, economic development, and improvement in community environment that cherishing quality of life of people in communities.

In responding to needs and satisfactions of customers, researchers were focusing on study the factors that affecting decision making for purchasing healthy and local processed herbal products in Utthayan Bunniyom. Hoping that this research may be used as a guideline for analyzing behaviors of customers and conducting marketing strategies to improve economic and encourage utilization in herbal products that can ensure consumers to select products that suit their needs.

Literature review and related research

Concept and theory about decision making in purchase of customers

Amstrong & Kotler (2020) stated that purchasing decisions of consumers referring to purchasing behavior of customers for goods or services to respond their needs which are in the final process of decision (Supakiat Khambuthong, 2017). Both stimulating factors are from Marketing mix that contains Product, Price, Place, Promotion and another part other than marketing such as factors about politics, economic, society, culture, technology, and buyer's black box. These factors influence decision process and responses of buyers in selecting goods, product, brand, supplier, time, and quantity that needed for consumption (Patcharaporn Khamsai, 2022). Stage of buying decision process has correlation with Thought, Feeling, Action, Motive, Experience, Perception, and Stimuli in both internally and externally that leads to decision and post purchase behavior. Consisting with 5 stages.

- 1) Problem or need recognition. This happens when individual realize a difference between ideal and reality surrounding oneself, then individual is willing to fulfill the missing part from ideal into reality. Problems of individual may contain various causes though.
- 2) Search for information. When facing a problem, consumers have to find a solution by gathering more information to aid their decision. Information can be gathered from various sources including another person, business, general news, etc.
- 3) Evaluation of alternative. When customers already collected enough information from second stage, they will evaluate the most suitable choice. There are many methods that customers used for evaluating such as comparing specifications, considering their experience and satisfaction, etc.
- 4) Decision marking. Customers would generally require different information and time for each product to commit their decision. Some products tend to need more information and time than the other.
- 5) Post purchase behavior. After customers committed their purchases, they will acquire consuming experiences that may or may not be satisfied. If customers are pleased, then they might suggest the product to other or repurchase it. On the other hand, dissatisfied customers may not repurchase and recommend the products to other which may lead to reduction in customers.

Factors of economic, society, environment

Purchase decision of customer refers to a decision-making process that involves selection consisting of several steps. This process conducts purchasing behaviors in customers (Sarocho Mankananchot, 2012). Factors that impact purchasing behaviors are internal factors from individual (needs, persuasion, experience, perception, characteristic, perspective) and external factors influenced by various groups such as reference groups, family, social class, and culture.

One factor that affects a development in increasing competitiveness is understanding. By understanding conditions of problem, need, opportunity, competitiveness, potential of management, and business strategies such as economic, society, and environment. These different perspectives are connected and can be summarized as per following:

The Royal Institute (2003) defined economy that economy means a production, trade, distribution, and usage of things by the community (Chayavadee Chai-anan, 2021). Economic drive comes from spending of people including consumption, investment, and domestic travel. IT also includes the social reconstruction that has

been affected from the global trade structure forcing to change. For example, environmental trends that laws of importing control are now focusing on products with low carbon footprint. A sustainable development originates from the development of cities altogether in social, economic, and environmental dimensions. This can affect pattern of urban people in daily life, especially social interactions that form social capitals (Pavinee lamtrakul and Jirawan Klailee, 2018). In a social theory, an integration of resources (institution, organization, individual) can form a stable network that contains relationship and acceptance. If the relationship and acceptance between the members of society are at low level, social capital tends to be less. An environment that discourages social interactions will negate social capital too. In addition, there is a correlation between good social capital and good health.

According to the definition of environment in the National Environmental Promotion and Conservation Act, the word "environment" means physical and biological things surrounding human being that can be happened by nature or created by man, with or without benefit, visible or invisible, concrete or abstract, toxic or non-toxic. If the environment is destroyed or overused, it is impacted and caused environmental pollutions such as water pollution, air pollution, land pollution, noise pollution, and waste pollution (Seree Worapong, 2014).

Concept of health and care

The World Health Organization (WHO) (1986) defined health as the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Being not only an absence of disease or infirmity, but health also means emphasizing on complete well-being in physical, mental, and social aspects (Norris, 1987). A Self-care refers to a process that people and their families have opportunities to help and take responsibility for their own health. This may happen because people realize importance and benefit of taking care their own health and/or pushback from their dissatisfaction of doctors and the high cost in medical care. Eventually, they realize about the potential to take care of their own health (Kunnatee Phumsanguan, 2014). When people in the nation have good physical and mental health, they will have an effective conscious and ability to learn to create decent things, which will affect both the economic and social development of the whole country.

Concept and theory of 4P marketing mix

Kotler & Keller (2012) stated about concept and theory of marketing that a traditional marketing has main purpose to create brand recognition. This level of marketing is emphasizing on marketing mix to respond to needs of customers and target groups as controllable marketing factors with 4 aspects (Supattra Khamhaeng, Chanyanuch Morasilp and Bupphachart Tangkliang, 2022).

1) Product This factor means something that represents to a market for interest, desire, usage, and consumption which is be able to respond to any need or requirement of customer. Product strategies are form, characteristic, qualification, package, brand, etc.

2) Price factor means amount of currency or another thing that required to be paid in order to obtain a product, also referred to a value of product in monetary terms. Normally, customers will evaluate between a value and a price of a product, if the value is higher than the price then customers will commit purchase.

3) Place factor means structure of distribution that consists of institution and activity use for logistic of product and service from an organization to a market.

4) Promotion factor means communication tools that provide satisfaction to a brand, service, notion, or individual by conducting incentives to create demand and awareness of a product. Expecting to influence customers in

feeling, belief, and behavior. Communicating between sellers and customers about information to create perspective and behavior in purchasing. The communication may use salesperson to make sale or use another communication without people. There are many tools for communication including advertising, salesperson, direct marketing, public relation, and marketing promotion.

The literature review of Arpornpaisal (2021) found that Marketing mix factors affecting tourists' purchasing decisions at Dvaravati Sri Nakhon Pathom Walking Street Nakhon Pathom province is product, distribution, price and marketing promotion. Arpornpaisal, Chatchawanchanchanaki & Arphonpisan (2021) found that the factors of marketing mix that affect the the purchasing of ornamental fish, Fish Village Fish Market. Ban Pong District Ratchaburi is Price, distribution channel marketing promotion and product. Thiangmak, Jinhpra, Inkum & Chienwattanasook (2022). The product aspect of the marketing mix influenced cooked-to-order restaurant operator's decision to repurchase Thai chili paste products.

The study of healthy and local processed herbal products, Harnvanich, Wanichwecharungruang, Chandrachai, & Asawanonda, (2020) evaluated market potential for a new herbal skincare found that 'price' as the most important and 'product', 'place' and 'promotion' as important factor affecting purchase of product. Moongvicha, (2017) studied in Thai SMEs herbal cosmetics customers and their competitors that related to market situation in elderly market. The outcomes are customer factors have related to herbal market situation in moderate range. Thai SMEs herbal cosmetics' competitors have related to its market situation in moderate range except the supportive from government has effected in high range. The relationship between elderly customers of Thai SMEs herbal cosmetics and its competitors have related to their market situation in moderate range. Moreover, Moongvicha, (2016) focusing on creative Product Marketing Strategies in Herbal Cosmetics of Thai SME in Bangkok suggest that trend of health awareness that can effect to change in marketing strategies, when extraneous variables are government support while government policy or staffs in administrative level may change with times. From the review led to the following Conceptual framework:

Conceptual framework

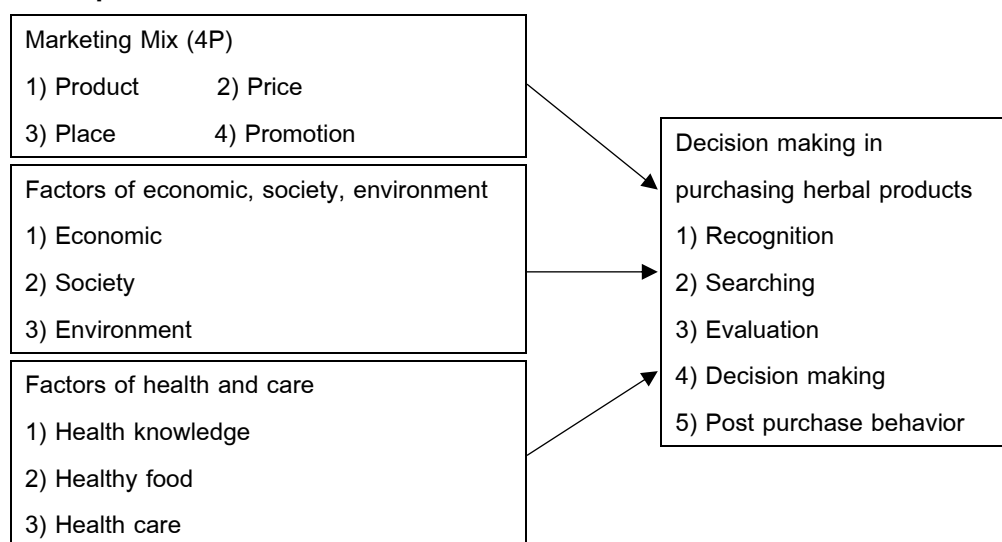


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the research about Influential Factors on Decision Making of Customers Purchasing Herbal Products from Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province

Research Methodology

Population of this research is customer who bought herbal products from Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Since the population of this research was uncertain, researchers had calculated by using Cochran formula (1953) with confidence level at 95 and margin of error at ± 5 . The sample size for data collection was 385 people that will be able for estimating the percentage with less than 5 percent error at 95 percent confidence level. Researchers had considered to utilize 385 samples which can be considered to pass the criteria as specified by the conditions to be more than 385 samples for convenience in data evaluation and analysis. This research used Accidental Selection Sampling for studying the area of Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province.

Researchers had collected 385 set of questionnaires considered for 100 percent in the total. All questionnaires were completed and ready for analysis. Reliability Analysis was using computer application to analyze Alpha Coefficient as per Nunnally represented that C-Alpha Coefficient was equal to or more than 0.70. The total value of Reliability Analysis for the whole research instrument was at 0.99 which more than the criterion at 0.70. This research was using Descriptive Analysis to analyze data by computer application with statistics including percentage, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis.

Research results

Personal information of participants in the research showed that most of participants were female (54.4 percent), aged between 30-40 years (26.5 percent), had their own businesses (37.4 percent), had bachelor's degree or higher vocational certificate (34.3 percent), and had monthly income less than 10,000 THB (39.7). Data analysis of factors in the aspects of health support, marketing mix, economic, society, and environment by mean and standard deviation showed as per following:

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation of factors (health support, marketing mix, economic, society, and environment aspects) that affecting customers decision making in purchasing herb products.

| Variables | \bar{x} | S.D. | Results |
|---------------------|-----------|------|---------|
| 1) Product | 4.285 | .500 | highest |
| 2) Price | 4.093 | .527 | high |
| 3) Place | 3.841 | .548 | high |
| 4) Promotion | 3.876 | .561 | high |
| 5) Economic | 3.948 | .505 | high |
| 6) Society | 4.020 | .552 | high |
| 7) Environment | 4.210 | .557 | highest |
| 8) Health knowledge | 4.003 | .508 | high |
| 9) Healthy food | 4.115 | .553 | high |
| 10) Health care | 4.143 | .563 | high |
| 11) Recognition | 3.882 | .556 | high |
| 12) Searching | 3.870 | .570 | high |
| 13) Evaluation | 4.134 | .568 | high |

| Variables | \bar{X} | S.D. | Results |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|
| 14) Decision making | 4.188 | .539 | high |
| 15) Post purchase behaviors | 4.184 | .553 | high |

From the table 1, it can be showed the ascending values of Mean and Standard Deviation. Variables with the highest values are Product ($\bar{X} = 4.285$) and Environment ($\bar{X} = 4.210$). Variables with highest values are Decision Making ($\bar{X} = 4.188$), Post Purchase Behavior ($\bar{X} = 4.184$), Health Care ($\bar{X} = 4.143$), Evaluation ($\bar{X} = 4.134$), Healthy food ($\bar{X} = 4.115$), Price ($\bar{X} = 4.093$), Society ($\bar{X} = 4.020$), Health Knowledge ($\bar{X} = 4.003$), Economic ($\bar{X} = 3.948$), Recognition ($\bar{X} = 3.882$), Promotion ($\bar{X} = 3.876$), Searching ($\bar{X} = 3.870$), and Place ($\bar{X} = 3.841$), respectively.

Comparative analysis of factors affecting the decision making in purchasing herbal products from Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province Thailand.

Table 2 Results of comparative analysis of factors affecting the decision making in purchasing herbal products from Utthayan Bunniyom store in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province Thailand.

| Predicting Variables | Unstandardized | | Standardized | t | P |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------|------|
| | B | Std.Error | Beta | | |
| 1) Product | .126 | .057 | .114 | 2.232* | .026 |
| 2) Price | -.154 | .056 | -.146 | -2.748** | .006 |
| 3) Place | .227 | .051 | .224 | 4.489** | .000 |
| 4) Promotion | .021 | .051 | .021 | .402 | .688 |
| 5) Economic | .148 | .051 | .135 | 2.913** | .004 |
| 6) Society | .151 | .054 | .150 | 2.816** | .005 |
| 7) Environment | -.069 | .058 | -.069 | -1.194 | .233 |
| 8) Health Knowledge | .187 | .059 | .170 | 3.159** | .002 |
| 9) Healthy food | .065 | .048 | .065 | 1.357 | .176 |
| 10) Health care | .291 | .050 | .295 | 5.768** | .000 |

n = 385, Constant = -.104, R = .780, R² = .608, R²_{adj} = .597, F = 57.982, Sig. = .000

Table 2 showed the results of Multiple regression analysis by Enter method for predicting variables that influencing aspects of health support, marketing mix, economic, society, and environment and effecting decision making in purchasing herbal products with 10 predicting variables including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Economic, Society, Environment, Health, Knowledge, Healthy food, and Health care. Together, the variables according to the perception of the analysis were at 59.7 percent (R²_{adj} = .597). Price, Place, Economic, Society, Health knowledge, and Health care factors had affected decision making in purchasing herbal products was at statistically significance 0.01. Product factor had affected decision making in purchasing herbal products was at statistically significance 0.05 with correlation coefficient of R = .780.

$Z = .114$ (Product) - $.146$ (Price) + $.224$ (Place) + $.135$ (Economic) + $.150$ (Society) + $.170$ (Health knowledge) + $.295$ (Health care)

Discussion and Conclusion

Factors that affecting decision making in purchasing herbal products from Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province Thailand can be discussed as followed:

Marketing Mix

Research showed that Product factor affected decision making. Therefore, products should have a certified standard and a label content that is beneficial to the purchase decision. Products should contain raw materials with ingredients from natural herbal extracts (Preyanuch Dangdet, 2015). Products must have clean packaging, good quality, and the standard certified mark with FDA support, and a product label. Products must have no side effects on the body, up to date decent technology to develop herbal products will ensure consumers in consumption (Nicha Teerathawatkul, 2018). Products should contain information on the content, properties, labels, and benefits of herbal products will encourage purchase decision. In term of promotion factor, there should be regular promotions and design the packaging to look reliable by apply documented advice on benefits of herbal products (Kanchanok Sia, 2017). The decent packaging design helps to make the product look more expensive. Package makes it possible to distinguish herbal brands for health without confusion. Packaging design can make the brand rememberable and help to make the product look more trustworthy (Kulthida Kerdjang, 2019: Thongruang, 2008). Advertising and public relations of new products together with sale staffs with advice on benefit of products will influence the purchase decision as well.

Economic, Society, Environment

Environment factor had the most influence on decision making in purchasing herbal products following by Society factor and Economic factor, respectively (Pavinee lamtrakul and Jirawan Klailee, 2018). Resources that exist naturally and beneficial in terms of social, economic, and environmental dimensions are determine the pattern of daily life in urban people. Especially social interactions that contribute to the creation of social capital (Chayavadee Chaianan, 2021). This will conduct people in spending that causes circulation in the economy.

Health Care

Health care factor affected decision making in purchasing herbal products when the community was aware of information about the health promotional policy utilizing local herbs and local herbal products such as butterfly pea, aloe vera, and kaffir lime for self-care that promoted better health. Recognition in health policy according to health promotion in relation to locations and equipment (Wanna Thananuphappaisan and Rossukon Pichaiphaet, 2022). Perception of information about the severity of the disease and realization in barriers to protection were positively correlated with self-defense and health behaviors (Astrini, Bakti, Rakhmawati, Sumaedi and Yarmen, 2022). There was significantly different from health beliefs on perceptions and behavioral control in repurchasing intentions (Roy, Ghosh and Vashisht. 2022). While organic products are still in short supply for consumption.

Recommendations from the result of Influential Factors on Decision Making of Customers Purchasing Herbal Products from Utthayan Bunniyom in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, researchers would like to suggest guidelines for utilizing the results to benefit next research as follows:

1) Entrepreneurs or distributors related to herbal products should have FDA approval and content with certified standards. Packaging design helps to make the product look more reliable. There should be a document recommending products or benefits of herbs and promote sales regularly. Empathizing on presentation to customers in place and channel of marketing. Sorting products into categories so that customers can choose products conveniently. Increasing marketing channel such as delivery services.

2) Consumers should consider using herbs and non-toxic material including organic products and local herbs for health care since good health is built when consuming healthy food. Herbal products should have FDA approved label with certified standards. Utilize herbs wisely, cost effectively and put on fewer chemical pesticides to reduce air and water contamination will help reducing cost and creating a good environment for society.

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