

DECISION MAKING ON BUYING FASHION PRODUCTS VIA FACEBOOK BY THAI FACEBOOK USERS

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Abstract

Thailand, the number of active Facebook users has been increasing; as a result, businesses are now attracting customers through Facebook. The aim of this study is to examine the decision-making on buying fashion products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users. To answer the research questions of the study and to address the research problem, a primary quantitative research method. Participants in this study are 400 Facebook users in Thailand. A random sampling technique was used to obtain the participants for this study. The research instrument used in this study is questionnaire. The survey has been developed from literature review. The data collected from the surveys has been analyzed using statistic software. Data collected was entered into software and using descriptive statistics. Frequency tables were generated and then interpreted to analyze the results. The results found that Facebook has a significant impact on the purchase decision of fashion products.

Keywords: Decision-making, Buying process, Facebook, Social media, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

We all experience psychological processes that are fundamental to understanding how we make decisions regarding the purchase on Internet, and each of the phases that make up the so called decision making of purchasing fashion products are intensified, adopting more and more powerful tools where projected.

Unlike the traditional business model, which relied on mass marketing and unidirectional communications, tipped marketing professionals were forced to recognize that communication strategies should be reviewed and adapted to a new

situation of communication. Now, users clearly indicate their intention to participate actively in all spheres of socio-economic activities (Curtis & Giamanco, 2010).

The Internet has revolutionised the communication medium by allowing people and organisations to overcome any time and geographical constraint (Harris & Rae, 2009, p. 26). Because of the dynamic and evolving IT environment, online activities are performance through a new form of communication technology called “social media” or “Web 2.0 (Gretzel, Kang, & Lee, 2008, p. 92).”

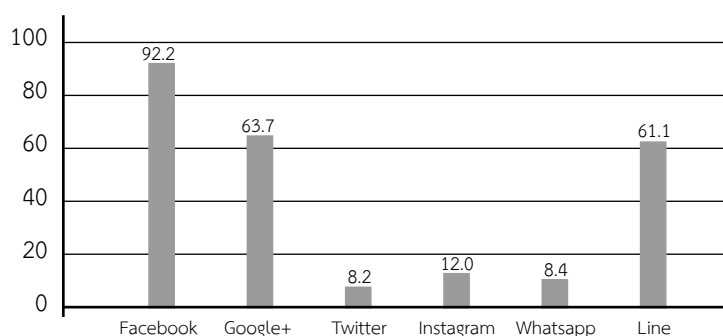


Figure 1 - Thailand Social Media Users in 2013

(Source: Electronic Transactions Development Agency [ETDA], 2013)

Facebook and Social Media in Thailand, it is becoming the trend for Thai people who is accessing in the Internet. Social Media is increasingly important in Thailand for business sections and entertainments (Techinasia, 2013). Social Media has played major role in Thai culture. For example, Hi5 was the most popular social media for Thai who had Hi5 profile meaning they were in trend. Unfortunately, surviving online is not last for every company on the high competitive market with huge money and high technologies, which is the time to pop up of Facebook. According to Electronic Transactions Development Agency or ETDA 2013, the top 5 social media in Thailand are Facebook ranking the top social media, and following up with Google+, Line, Instagram and Whatsapp.

Objective of the Study

The scope of this study is to examine the decision making on buying fashion products via Facebook by people in Thailand. This scope has been achieved through the following objectives:

1. To highlight the unique characteristics of Facebook.
2. To analyze the benefits and challenges of Facebook in social media marketing in Thailand.
3. To examine the implications of Facebook on the decision process of people in Thailand.

Significance of the Study

The result will be information for businesses, marketer, seller and new entrepreneur to solve out the problem and find out the solution to create and promote the business successfully, moreover, it will be helpful for people who wants to start business on Facebook or the people who interested in this topic area. Also the result will be the information on the next research or other researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Facebook.com (2011), Facebook can be defined as “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers.” The company is also proud of itself on revolutionizing information technology by facilitating the sharing of information through social graph. Social graph is the “digital mapping of people’s real-world social connections.”

Additionally, In the research Fashion products refers to “Consumer products where style, trendy or most in trend are the most important and the second thought is Price such as clothing, jewellery, handbags, sunglasses, watch, shoes, etc.

As a consequence, there are many more literature review that are relevance to decision making on fashion products via Facebook by Thai Facebook users, there are:

- Facebook as a Unique Medium.
- Implication of Facebook on Consumption Behaviour.
- Benefits and Challenges of Social Media Marketing.
- Word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).
- Social Influence and Consumer Decision Process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

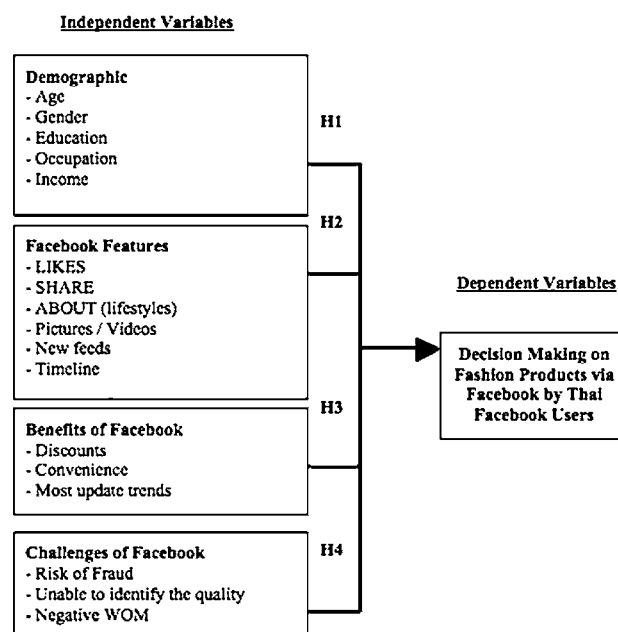
According to Kotler presented that the consumer decision process. The figure below presents the five-stage model of consumer decision making process. Traditionally, customers go by five stages in order to decide purchasing or repurchasing a particular product or service. These five stages are: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior.



Figure 2 - Consumer Buying Process

(Source: Kotler, 2009, p. 208)

Conceptual Framework



Hypothesis

H1 - Demographic results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

H2 - Facebook Features result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

H3 - Benefits of Facebook result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

H4 - Challenges of Facebook result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

METHODOLOGIES

This research is founded on both primary and secondary data. The research encompasses the publications, articles and similar studies accessible on the Internet. Keeping in view the approach taken in earlier studies the research began with a broad analysis of the existing literature. The methodology used for the purpose of this research is based on the primary and secondary data. This research is more or less based on the literature review & the conclusions are drawn on the basis of actual resources listed in the references. The aim of the secondary research was to obtain information regarding the literature review.

To answer the research questions of the study and to address the research problem, a primary quantitative research method also seemed appropriate for this study. The study is descriptive in nature. A descriptive research describes a particular phenomenon. The purpose of this study is to investigate the decision process on buying product or service via Facebook by Thailand people. The proposed study is based on quantitative research

method and employs a questionnaire. Questionnaires were developed through literature reviews in order to examine the decision process on buying product or service via Facebook. A random sample from the identified population received the survey questionnaire. Quantitative data was obtained from Facebook users in Thailand. The data collected has been analysed using statistical software and findings are presented in form of tables generated by the software. The aim of the researcher is to understand the decision process on buying product or service via Facebook by Thailand people.

Population and Sampling

The total population of this study is 24 million active account in Thailand then the information from EDTA 2013 showed that the main activities on Facebook is 21.8%, moreover, the sample selection of this study is the Thai Facebook Users who have experienced of shopping on Facebook. Thus, 24 million users deducted by 21.8% then the population of this research is 5,232,000 people.

The size of sample group in this study was calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) equation as follows:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

Remark; n = sample size

N = 5,232,000

e = significant level (0.05)

From equation the sample size can be calculated as follows;

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 5,232,000 / 1 + 5,232,000(0.05)^2 \\ &= 399.97 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, Participants in this study are 400 Thai Facebook users in Thailand. A random sampling technique was used to obtain the participants for this study.

Method

The research instrument used in this study is questionnaire. The survey has been developed from literature review. A pilot study was conducted to test the survey questionnaire and corrections were made if any mistakes are identified in it. Moreover, the pilot study also helped in examining the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Pre-test

On this research, IOC or index of objective congruence is the statistic to test the questionnaire by five experts. The pre-test overall result of the question on this questionnaire is reliability and following the objectives in this research by analyzing all questions by the expert. The overall is 0.95, which means pass the standard. There are some questions that will be adapting to improve the quality of the research. For instance, question no.4 is asking about education, that some experts are not understood as the comment that should they ticking on doing education or complete one. Also, some mistake on the word as how frequent should change to how often. All of these, the comments from experts will be improving on this research to complete following the objectives of the topic.

Data Collection

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data generated by this study. Initially, data were placed into a raw-data matrix.

The researcher then used descriptive statistics to summarize and organize the raw quantitative data into a more manageable form. Demographic items were summarized using descriptive statistics that were appropriate to the measurement scale. Inferential statistics were used to draw additional conclusions from the data. The Statistics software was used to compute the mean, median, and the standard deviation for the responses to the survey statements resulting in a general overview of the distribution of the survey responses (Creswell, 2009).

The data collected from the surveys has been analysed using statistics software. Data collected was entered into software and analysed using descriptive statistics. Therefore, Frequency tables were generated and then interpreted to analyse the results. The findings are discussed with respect to previous research findings.

Limitation

The following problems are anticipated in completing this research: (1) Selecting Sample Participants: Identifying and selecting the right participants who have experience and knowledge of buying products online, together with the available time, (2) Response Failure: It is anticipated that a number of the sample will decline to participate and (3) Limitations of the Model: Sample size could impact average results. The researcher will try to minimize these limitations as much as possible in order to ensure valid and reliable results.

RESULTS

TABLE 1 - The hypothesis result of H1 Demographic results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

Hypothesis	Sig.	Results	
		Accepted	Rejected
H1.1 Age results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.048	√	
H1.2 Gender results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.562		√
H1.3 Education results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.003	√	
H1.4 Occupation results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.123		√
H1.5 Income results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.625		√

The hypothesis result of H1 Demographic results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

TABLE 2 - The hypothesis result of H2 Facebook Features result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

Hypothesis	Sig.	Results	
		Accepted	Rejected
H2.1 Comments result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.000	√	
H2.2 Features (Like, Share, Timeline, etc.) result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.000	√	
H2.3 ABOUT (lifestyles) results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.002	√	
H2.4 Pictures / Videos result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.000	√	

Indeed, Facebook Features are significantly inference in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users at significant level 0.05.

TABLE 3 - The hypothesis result of H3 Benefits of Facebook result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

Hypothesis	Sig.	Results	
		Accepted	Rejected
H3.1 Discounts result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.000	√	
H3.2 Convenience results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.000	√	
H3.3 Most update trends result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.004	√	

As the result, Benefits of Facebook are significantly inference in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users at significant level 0.05.

TABLE 4 - The hypothesis result of H4 Challenges of Facebook result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.

Hypothesis	Sig.	Results	
		Accepted	Rejected
H4.1 Risk of Fraud results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.080		√
H4.2 Unable to identify the quality result in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.003	√	
H4.3 Negative WOM results in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users.	.111		√

To conclude, Challenges of Facebook is not inference in Decision Making on Fashion Products via Facebook by Thai Facebook Users at significant level 0.05.

CONCLUSIONS

For marketers, it has been a holy grail to understand the link between purchase and social media activities. In the current situation, most of the marketers are involved in social media activities because that think it is important to have a presence in space where their customers and consumers are spending most of their time instead of the fact that

that have been able to generate positive return on investment by engaging in these activities.

As defined by former, products are divided into two main categories: low involvement and high involvement. Low-involvement products are the ones purchased on frequent basis, are less costly, and required investment of minimum level of efforts and thoughts. On the contrary, high-involvement

products are the ones that are purchased less frequently, are less costly, and required more efforts and time in the research phase. Kitchen appliances, vehicles, and laptops are typical products that fall under the category of high involvement, while beauty and fashion products generally fall under the category of low involvement.

In case high-involvement products, higher amount of research is involved which means that heavy information channels predominate, so consumers are usually involved in greater amount of research, by accessing user review sites, consulting family and friends, and visit brand websites, for obtaining word of mouth and recommendations. In case of low involvement purchases, the research phase is generally skipped, therefore, the initial source from consumers have heard about the products, such as Twitter, Facebook, become more important, effective and influential in making final purchase decisions. This does not at all mean that social networks like, Facebook and Twitter, do not play any role in the purchase decision making of high-involvement products. They still can play crucial role and influence the consumers in making product purchase related decisions, whether it is through hearing directly from contact or by conducting research about the product. The research also found that social media has played a significant role in the purchase decision made by consumers related to fashion products. This type of product category was not just the one identified through research, but the type of consumers also played a significant role, and here these were divided into high and low sharer.

In summary, the lower the involvement in the product, the higher the role played by images and looks in its purchase decisions, and the higher sharer the consumers is, the more effective influential the social networks becomes in the purchasing

process. The reports provides information about the role played by social media in purchase decisions, it does not focus on the role played by consumer-repurchase through community building or how it will be helpful in resolving issues related to customer services.

DISCUSSIONS

As marketers, we know that the Internet and growth of mobile options have significantly impacted the buying process as online purchasing continues to grow at a remarkable pace. Globalization and internet has lead to the explosion of media alternative, word-of-mouth experiences through social media, products and other information sources that has influenced traditional decision making process. Businesses, marketers and their agencies should acknowledge these changes in the consumer decision process. Therefore, reaching consumers at the right place at the right time can be achieved easily through social media by sending marketing messages to influence purchase decisions. The same is the case in Thailand as the Facebook users in the country are increasing every year. Firms are now targeting the people, especially the youth to generate sales through Facebook.

From the survey results and the literature review, the first step of buying decision process seems to be the same. The consumer identifies the need or recognizes the problem and then moves towards information search. In the second stage the consumer, based on his/her perception and exposure, considers an initial set of brands. The consumer then moves to the third stage where he/she evaluates the considered options. The consumer may move back and forth between stages two and three as he acquires information from websites, friends, and family members, which affects the list of available options to choose from. Thus,

the number of choices available is constantly revised. Here, some original choices might be rejected and new choices are evaluated before the consumer moves to the final stage of purchase decision. Therefore, the marketer can affect the initial considerations of the consumer by “push” marketing strategy and influence the decision process of the consumer.

While purchasing a product online, consumers also seek information regarding the already known brands, as well as obtain information regarding other brands they are unaware of through internet reviews and other websites. Moreover, consumer also seeks word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family. Thus, the decision process is influenced because of it. The decision is also affected by past experience. For instance, if a consumer has had a bad experience regarding an online purchase, then he/she will be apprehensive in purchasing goods next time. Therefore, a variety of factors influence the decision process and many times the purchases are the result of a last minute decision.

Furthermore, the last stage of the decision process, i.e. the post purchase evaluation has been affected significantly after the arrival of internet as well. Users go online and conduct further research after the purchase. Thus, consumers obtain information regarding the product after the purchase of the product. This stage was never a part in the original Kotler’s decision process. This post purchase research can have 2 impacts. Firstly, the research can confirm the wisdom of their decision to purchase the product/service and secondly, by affecting the future purchase behaviour of the consumer.

Marketers should identify the touch points to influence consumer decision process in future.

Marketers should be actively pursuing every opportunity to help them build a bridge between the brand and their customer. Understanding how their

customer reaches the ultimate purchase decision is a crucial ingredient in finding that bridge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the next research, the researcher will attempt to study further on qualitative method. It will help the researcher and other clarify on Facebook what are advantages for the best practices and disadvantages for developing in the better way which will be focused on Facebook in Thailand for businesses, marketers including the new entrepreneur who is interesting on Facebook particularly.

Store (Walk-in store); It is necessary to have store or physical address for customer to contact the company or store. As an increase truth, which is one of the most problem for online shopping, ensures the customer truth. Additionally, the store could be stock or show products as well. It is possible to be house or a small corner display. Following those statistics is, customer is more believe if they are able to touch or see the quality of products.

Bento Application, this one of famous application for Facebook shopping, it provides automatic service to reply customer, it helps the owner save times and save money in case of your online Facebook shopping is very busy, for example, as some Facebook shopping page have 200 messages in the inbox. Moreover, the customer is able to purchase the fashion products directly. It will save time on both side.

Post-Purchase refers to the service after sale, which is very important in Europe and United States country; they provide a good service after sale to their customer until they are satisfied. If Thai Facebook shop owner can satisfy their customer, the good word of mouth or reputations will return back as the profit. Refund Policy is also one of post purchase service to customer, as we can see easily in the shop as H&M or Forever21, they have a well

organized refund policy for customer which they are expanded branches around the world.

Facebook Marketing is not the new coming in town. There are many books about Facebook Marketing. It is a great opportunity for the owner or new entrepreneurs to study and educated them to increase the knowledge how to make the most profitable on your own Facebook. Advertising is still be the important way to promote your page on Facebook, and Facebook can be the one of the most powerful tool for marketing your company as well.

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