

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS IN BANGKOK REGARDING DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS CONTAINING THAI HERBAL INGREDIENTS

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Abstract: The objectives of this study were: (1) to examine the decision-making process of consumers in Bangkok when purchasing dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients, and (2) to investigate consumer purchasing behavior concerning the marketing mix (4P's) of these products. The sample group consisted of 400 consumers in Bangkok, with data collected through questionnaires. Statistical methods employed included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that consumers in Bangkok place high importance on the decision-making process, emphasizing product quality, reasonable pricing, convenience in purchasing through online channels, and marketing promotions such as discounts and advertisements. Product quality and reliability were identified as the most crucial factors influencing purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Condition and Demand; Dietary supplement business entrepreneurs, Dietary supplement containing Thai herbs, Decision-making process toward Thai herb dietary supplements purchase

Introduction

Thailand has long been recognized for its rich biodiversity of medicinal herbs. Thai herbs have been widely used in various products ranging from traditional medicine to dietary supplements, gaining popularity both domestically and internationally. In 2019, the Thai herbal market was valued at over 18.2 billion baht, and it is expected to grow continuously due to the increasing interest in herbal consumption among younger generations.

According to Euromonitor, the global herbal products market in 2021 was valued at approximately USD 54.96 billion, with the Asia-Pacific region representing the largest share. Thailand itself possesses a strong and expanding herbal market, which is projected to reach 59.5 billion baht by 2026. This growth potential has led to a surge in investment from entrepreneurs in the dietary supplement sector featuring Thai herbal ingredients.

To succeed in this competitive market, manufacturers must maintain high product quality in both production standards and service excellence. SVS Foodtech Co., Ltd. is one of Thailand's leading manufacturers of dietary supplements. The researcher, with a background in Thai pharmacy and a focus on the application of Thai herbs in supplements, has initiated this study to collect data and insights that will support the development of effective and accessible Thai herbal dietary supplements.

This research aims to identify consumer needs and preferences in order to develop products that are not only high in quality and efficacy but also reasonably priced. Furthermore, the study's findings will contribute to product planning, marketing strategies, and business development for companies in the Thai herbal supplement industry.

Research Objectives

1. To study the decision-making process of consumers in Bangkok regarding the purchase of dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients.
2. To examine consumer purchasing behavior in relation to the marketing mix (4Ps) of dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients in Bangkok.

Scope of the Study

1.Content Scope: This research focuses on the decision-making process and purchasing behavior of consumers in Bangkok regarding dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients. The scope of the study is defined as follows:

1.Population: The target population includes consumers in Bangkok who purchase dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients. Since the exact population size is unknown, the study adopts a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The sample size is determined using Yamane's formula for an unknown population. Thus, the study utilizes a purposive sample representing consumers who use or have used Thai herbal dietary supplements within the Bangkok metropolitan area.

2. Research Content: The study examines the decision-making process across five key stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. It also investigates purchasing behavior related to the marketing mix (4Ps), including product, price, place, and promotion, specifically for dietary supplements with Thai herbal ingredients.

2.Sample Group:The sample group consists of 400 consumers residing in Bangkok.

3.Time Frame: Data collection was conducted between January 2024 and August 2024.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach using survey methodology. Data were collected from a sample of 400 consumers residing in Bangkok through a structured questionnaire, which served as the primary research instrument.

The researcher conducted an extensive review of relevant theories, concepts, and previous studies to develop a theoretical framework guiding the construction of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted mainly of close-ended questions designed to explore the decision-making process and purchasing behavior of consumers regarding dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients.

After data collection, the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation. The data collection process was conducted between January 2024 and August 2024.

Expected Benefits

1. To provide insights into the decision-making process of consumers in Bangkok when purchasing dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients.
2. To serve as valuable information for entrepreneurs in the dietary supplement industry, enabling them to utilize the research findings as a guideline for product development and improvement in alignment with the genuine needs and preferences of consumers.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of relevant theories, concepts, and previous research studies in order to develop a conceptual framework that guided the design of the questionnaire. The survey was designed using a close-ended question format and employed a quantitative research approach to collect data from the selected sample group.

MODEL	COMPONENTS	AUTHOR
Sujinda Yaowakulpatana (2017)	Demographic characteristics	Diversity in background including gender, age, marital status, physical characteristics, and seniority in the workplace.
Paramat Panprat et al. (2014, p. 16)	Evaluation in decision-making	Evaluation refers to selecting a product based on collected information and specific criteria concerning product attributes.
Siriwan Serirat et al. (2009)	Marketing mix concept	The marketing mix includes controllable variables used together to satisfy target markets—namely product, price, place, and promotion.
Seree Wongmontha (1999, p. 17)	Marketing communication and satisfaction	The marketing mix (4Ps) are controllable tools organizations use to respond to customer satisfaction and achieve communication objectives.
Siripan Mek-a (2015)	Marketing mix factors affecting purchasing behavior of Thai herbal supplement consumers at Naresuan University	Most influential factor: price relative to quality, followed by standardized pricing, variety in product options, and affordability compared to other brands.

Research Findings

1. The analysis of the decision-making process for purchasing dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients among consumers in Bangkok revealed that, overall, the level of importance placed on the process was high. When examined by individual components, all aspects were rated as highly important.
2. The analysis of the marketing mix (4Ps) and its influence on the decision-making process in purchasing Thai herbal dietary supplements among consumers in Bangkok yielded the following results:
 - 2.1 The marketing mix components of product, place (distribution channels), and promotion were found to have a significant influence on consumers’ purchasing decisions.
 - 2.2 The price component, however, was found to have no significant effect on the decision-making process regarding the purchase of dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients.

Discussion

1. The findings of this study indicate that marketing mix factors significantly influence the decision-making process

of consumers in Bangkok regarding the purchase of dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients. When examined in detail, each stage of the decision-making process can be discussed as follows:

1.1 Problem Recognition: Consumers become aware of their health-related needs, such as blood sugar control, and are driven by both internal and external stimuli to consider dietary supplements as a solution.

1.2 Information Search: Consumers actively seek information through personal experience and online sources, placing importance on clear and reliable data about the benefits and potential side effects of herbal ingredients used in the supplements.

1.3 Evaluation of Alternatives: Consumers compare product attributes such as quality and price before making a purchase decision. They tend to choose products that most closely align with their personal health goals and expectations.

1.4 Purchase Decision: The decision to purchase is primarily influenced by product quality, perceived value for money, and brand credibility.

1.5 Post-Purchase Behavior: Consumers report satisfaction with product quality, leading to repeat purchases and brand loyalty. They also expect good after-sales service as part of their overall product experience.

2. The study further analyzed the influence of the marketing mix (4Ps) on consumer decision-making regarding Thai herbal dietary supplements. The results are summarized as follows:

2.1 Product: Consumers value product quality, including clearly labeled ingredients, usage instructions, manufacturing/expiry dates, certified quality marks, a variety of sizes, and appealing packaging. These factors help build trust and influence purchasing decisions, consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of packaging and product information clarity.

2.2 Price: Reasonable pricing in relation to product quality and clear price labeling influence purchase decisions. Consumers prefer a range of price options to suit different target groups, aligning with the principle that buyers expect value commensurate with the cost.

2.3 Place (Distribution Channels): Convenience is a key factor. Consumers prefer multiple distribution channels including both online and offline platforms, along with fast and reliable delivery services. Online channels such as Facebook and Instagram are especially popular among modern consumers.

2.4 Promotion: Promotional activities such as advertising, free samples, loyalty programs, and sales events play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior. For instance, promotions during special occasions or free trial offers enhance product awareness and stimulate interest among potential buyers.

Recommendations

1. Future studies should consider exploring additional variables that may influence the decision-making process of consumers in Bangkok regarding the purchase of dietary supplements containing Thai herbal ingredients. These may include factors such as purchasing behavior, situational influences, and consumers' knowledge and understanding of the products.
2. This study focused solely on consumers in Bangkok. Therefore, to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable findings, future research should expand the study area to include consumers from other regions in Thailand.

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