

ATTITUDE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARD DIFERENT TYPES OF SUPERMARKETS IN BANGKOK METROPOLITAN AREAS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the attitude and consumer behavior toward supermarkets in Bangkok Metropolitan Areas by conducting a survey with 625 self-administered questionnaires randomly from 50 areas in Bangkok. The conclusions of significance analysis are that 1) the most important factor is the convenience in going to a supermarket 2) most preferred products bought at a supermarket are personal care products such as shampoo, soap, and toothpaste 3) the most significant influence on buying products in each product category is its quality, and 4) the majority of consumers think that supermarket's on-line service like Internet is not necessary at this time, and if it is available, a non-food product is likely preferred.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing business in Thailand has been continually in expansion. Currently, it has a sales value of approximately 600,000 million baht annually (43 Baht = 1 US dollar), consisting of 60% traditional trade and 40% modern trade. The Faculty of Economics at Chulalongkorn University forecasts that retailing business's sales value will be increased approximately to 1,014,647 million baht in 2007 (Watasarn, 1999).

Supermarkets are place, where food and non-food products for daily are sold: Food products can be categorized as non-perishable and perishable food. Non-food products can be classified as personal care and household products. In Thailand, supermarkets can be separated into three-type of stores, which are supermarket section in department stores (idp), in discount stores (idc), and stand-alone supermarkets (sta). For every day life, generally, we can buy goods and products in supermarket. Supermarket is one of retailing business types, consisting of traditional trade and modern trade. Therefore, it is the first priority for this survey. The research is attempted to study attitude

and consumer behavior toward supermarkets in Bangkok metropolitan areas, especially in modern trade.

Hasty and Reardon (1997) mention that factors influencing the purchase decision process in retail store are buyer factors, product factors, and retailer factors. This study focuses on retailer factors that are composed of store location, store promotion, product selection (product assortments), store services, store atmosphere, store personal, and price.

Store location:

This is the first factor that entrepreneurs should be concerned (Hasty and Reardon, 1997; Mason, Mayer, and Ezell, 1994) because it is very difficult to change after running the retailing business (Dunne, Lusch, and Gable, 1995). Sometimes, store promotion does not affect on consumer behavior because of time and cost constrain for switching store (Hoch, Kim, Montgomery, and Rossi, 1995). Consequently, the stores located near target consumers are proper location; Moreover, a convenience to going to store is included.

Store promotion:

The favorite store promotion is sales promotion, especially price discounts (Mulhern and Leone, 1991; Walters, 1991). Sales promotions do not usually influence on purchasing decision (Raju, 1988). Fader and Lodish (1990) state that practitioners should select the promotion instruments that are appropriate with product categories and product items.

Product selection (assortment management):

Retailing businesses should focus on product varieties more than product depth and breadth (Bhatnagar, 1998). Harlam and Lodish (1995) suggest that practitioners should interest customer behavior in the assortment process of more than the quantity of purchase in each time because the retailing store with more product varieties will satisfy customer needs and wants (Bergen, Dutta, and Shugan, 1996; Fader and Hardie 1996).

Store services:

This factor is facilities provided by retail stores such as car parks, store layout information charts and pushcarts (Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 1998; Peter and Olson, 1993). Park, Iyer, and Smith (1989) convey that some store services such as store layout information charts assist unplanned buying customers to find out the needed and wanted products, and sufficient car parks can make a good customer attitude (Uusitalo 1998).

Store atmosphere:

This factor mainly consists of store decoration, store size, and the width of aisle in the store (Dunne, Lusch, and Gable, 1995; Hasty and Reardon, 1997; Mason, Mayer, and Ezell, 1994; Miller, Reardon, and McCorkle, 1999). Different store atmosphere can build a dissimilar attitude of customer (Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 1998; Uusitalo, 1998).

Store personal:

This factor facilitates store to increase sales value (Mulhern and Padgett, 1995). Miller, Reardon, and

McCorkle (1999) suppose that store personal as customer service reaches a customer satisfaction.

Price:

Normally, before buying products, many customers do not investigate price due to time limitation and believability in retail store (store loyalty) and in brand (brand loyalty) (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990). Reasonable price in retail store induce customer satisfaction as well as building customer loyalty. In retailing sector, store having reasonable prices will have large market share. (Mason, Mayer, and Ezell, 1994)

Hence, this research attempts to start examining some of these issues. Specifically, our survey examines the attitude and perceptions of buying behavior in supermarket stores. We wish to gain more understanding of how consumers choose the store.

METHODOLOGY

The first stage of this study involves in-depth interviews with practitioners and some consumers to gain more detailed understanding of consumer behavior in supermarkets. The practitioners consist of Deputy Marketing Manager of C.P. Seven Eleven PLC, Division Manager (advertising and sales promotion center) of Robinson Department Store PLC, and National Key Account Manager (food and special product division) of Diethelm & Co., Ltd., and some consumers were two undergrad students at Bangkok University, three Tesco-lotus's customers, and four Tops supermarket's customers. A questionnaire, therefore, was developed by in-depth interview and literature review. Finally, before surveying, question wording were validated by several instructors and researchers from Bangkok University and Kasetsart University.

This research used areas sampling, dividing Bangkok metropolitan into 50 areas (Appendix 1), and interviewing respondents at supermarkets located in those areas. A survey was conducted by issuing with 625 self-administered questionnaires randomly 5,645,834

Bangkokians. A summary of respondents' characteristic is presented in Table 1. The obtained data are analyzed with the mean of Likert's scale of 5 points, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, and regression method is used for analyzing store preference.

RESULTS

Two-thirds of respondents are single, having personal income less than 18,000 baht per month (Table 1). They prefer shopping at supermarket in department stores (e.g. Tops supermarket and Home fresh mart) than supermarket in discount stores (e.g. Tesco-Lotus, Big C, and Carrefour) and stand-alone supermarkets, respectively (Table 2 and 3). Their store patronage frequently is mostly Tesco-Lotus and Tops supermarket (Table 2). For Tesco-Lotus, it is supermarket section in discount store, and for Tops supermarket, it is supermarket section in department store and stand-alone supermarkets.

The most important factors are the convenience of reaching a supermarket, product price, and product variety. Cronbach's alpha, for reliability issue, is medium-high 0.6991 (Table 5). The most preferred product bought at a supermarket is personal care products such as shampoo, soap, and toothpaste. It is found that women buy personal care and household products frequently more than men (Table 6). The most significant effect on buying products in each product category is its quality (Table 7).

For supermarket section in department stores, more product varieties and sales promotion would increased the store preference, and more product variety and reasonable price in supermarket section in discount stores would enhanced the store preference (Table 8). Half of respondents think that supermarket's on-line service like Internet is not necessary at this time, and if it is available, two-thirds of respondent think that a non-food product both of personal care and household product is likely preferred (Table 9).

CONCLUSION

Supermarket-retailing store businesses should manage the product assortment by initially considering product quality, and providing sufficient customers' favored products. For a store location, it should be located near the target group, and provided the convenience to go shopping. In the future, if supermarket's on-line service like Internet is available, a non-food product (e.g. personal care and household products) is recommended to implement first.

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Table 1
Respondents' characteristic

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Male	254	40.6	40.7
Female	370	59.2	59.3
Missing	1	0.2	
Total	625	100.0	100.0

Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Single	461	73.8	75.2
Marriage	148	23.7	24.1
Others	4	0.6	0.7
Missing	12	1.9	
Total	625	100.0	100.0

Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Less than high school	43	6.9	6.9
High school	121	19.4	19.4
Polytechnic	43	6.9	6.9
Bachelor	381	61.0	61.0
Graduate	37	6.0	6.0
Missing	-	-	
Total	625	100.0	100.0

Income (Baht/Month)	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
3,000 - 8,000	290	46.4	47.0
8,001 - 13,000	141	22.6	22.8
13,001 - 18,000	61	9.8	9.9
18,001 - 23,000	30	4.8	4.9
23,001 - 28,000	29	4.6	4.7
More than 28,000	66	10.6	10.7
Missing	8	1.3	
Total	625	100.0	100.0

Note: 43 Bath = 1 US Dollar (On research date)

Table 2
Means of patronage frequency by store names

Store Name	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Tesco-Lotus ^{idc}	570	1	5	3.41	1.17
Tops supermarket ^{idp / sta}	579	1	5	3.06	1.22
Big C ^{idc}	518	1	5	2.87	1.15
Carrefour ^{idc}	454	1	5	2.82	1.16
Home Fresh Mart (The Mall) ^{idp}	298	1	5	2.70	1.32
Siam Jusco ^{sta}	314	1	5	2.27	1.23
Plus-one supermarket ^{idp / sta}	159	1	5	1.99	1.24
Foodlion supermarket ^{sta}	185	1	5	1.97	1.21
Foodland supermarket ^{sta}	312	1	5	1.96	1.02

Question: For each store names, please indicate the level of your patronage frequency.

Scale: not at all frequent = 1; most frequent = 5

If respondents did not use to patronage in the stores, a data would not be included to analyze in this case.

- 58 Notes: idp = Supermarket section in department stores
idc = Supermarket section in discount stores
sta = Stand-alone supermarkets

Table 3
Means of preference by type of supermarkets

Type of Supermarket	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Section in department stores ^(idp)	585	1	5	3.67	.94
Section in discount stores ^(idc)	597	1	5	3.52	.94
Stand-alone supermarkets ^(sta)	517	1	5	2.97	.99

Question: For each type of supermarkets, please indicate the level of your preference.

Scale: not at all preferable = 1; most preferable = 5

If respondents did not use to patronage in the stores, a data would not be included to analyze in this case.

Table 4
Means of store-patronage frequency by type of supermarkets

Type of Supermarket	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Section in department stores ^(idp)	552	1	5	3.54	1.11
Section in discount stores ^(idc)	562	1	5	3.38	1.08
Stand-alone supermarkets ^(sta)	487	1	5	2.82	1.12

Question: For each type of supermarkets, Please indicate the level of your patronage frequency.

Scale: not at all frequent = 1; most frequent = 5

If respondents did not use to patronage in the stores, a data would not be included to analyze in this case.

Table 5
Means of attitudes about store-patronage factors

Store Patronage Factors	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Convenience in going to store	623	1	5	4.09	.75
Product Price	622	1	5	4.03	.82
Product variety and assortment	623	2	5	3.97	.73
Store location	622	1	5	3.82	.81
In store service (customer service)	621	1	5	3.79	.96
Sales promotion	622	1	5	3.75	1.05
The width of aisle in the store	621	1	5	3.47	.87
Car park	622	1	5	3.43	1.20
Store atmosphere and decoration	623	1	5	3.38	.89
Store size	621	1	5	3.37	.86
Cronbach's alpha: 0.6991					

Question: Please rate how important each of store-patronage factors to you when you make decision to patronage at supermarket store?

Scale: not at all important = 1; most important = 5

Table 6

Means of frequency to buy in each product categories by gender

Product categories	Gender	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev	t	p
Personal care	Male	251	1	5	3.79	.99	-2.415	.016 *
	Female	368	1	5	3.98	.93		
	Total	619	1	5	3.91	.96		
Household	Male	244	1	5	3.21	1.08	-3.799	.000 *
	Female	366	1	5	3.55	1.10		
	Total	610	1	5	3.42	1.10		
Non-perishable food	Male	251	1	5	3.37	1.06	-1.636	.767
	Female	364	1	5	3.39	1.10		
	Total	615	1	5	3.38	1.08		
Perishable food	Male	237	1	5	2.67	1.21	-.297	.102
	Female	359	1	5	2.84	1.20		
	Total	596	1	5	2.77	1.20		

Question: For each product categories, please indicate the level of your purchasing frequency.

Scale: not at all frequent = 1; most frequent = 5

If respondents did not use to buy in the categories, a data would not be included to analyze in this case.

Note: * = significantly different ($p < 0.05$) between group of gender

Table 7

Means of buying criteria by product categories

Categories	Personal care	Household	Perishable food	Non-perishable food
Buying Criteria				
Product quality	4.32 (.68)	4.17 (.73)	4.42 (.82)	4.08 (.87)
Product variety / assortment	3.80 (.74)	3.78 (.77)	3.88 (.90)	3.84 (.84)
Product price	3.95 (.78)	3.95 (.81)	3.81 (.87)	3.77 (.86)
Sales promotion	3.37 (.96)	3.45 (.99)	2.97 (1.13)	3.24 (1.05)

Question: Please rate how important each of buying criteria to you when you make decision to buy in each product categories?

Scale: not at all important = 1; most important = 5

If respondents did not use to buy in the categories, a data would not be included to analyze in this case.

Note: Mean (Std. Dev)

Table 8
Regression of store preference on store patronage factors

Store Patronage Variables	In Department Store		In Discount Store		Stand Alone	
	β	Sig.	β	Sig.	β	Sig.
Convenience in going to store (X1)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
Product Price (X2)	--	ns.	.110	.016 *	--	ns.
Product variety and assortment (X3)	.141	.001*	.102	.022 *	--	ns.
Store location (X4)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
In store service/customer service (X5)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
Sales promotion (X6)	.086	.057 **	--	ns.	--	ns.
The width of aisle in the store (X7)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
Car park (X8)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
Store atmosphere and decoration (X9)	--	ns.	--	ns.	.135	.023 *
Store size (X10)	--	ns.	--	ns.	--	ns.
F test	3.713	.000 *	2.721	.003 *	1.081	.375
R ²	.061		.046		.021	
Adj. R ²	.044		.029		.002	
R	.246		.215		.146	

Store Preference: $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10}$

Notes: * = Significant ($p < 0.05$)

** = Significant ($p < 0.10$)

ns. = Not significant

Table 9
Frequency of preferred product categories to buy via Internet

Product categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Personal care	268	42.9	43.9
Household	219	35.0	35.9
Non-perishable food	102	16.3	16.7
Perishable food	21	3.4	3.5
Missing	15	2.1	
Total	625	100.0	100.0

Question: If your favorite supermarket store provides a service on Internet, which product category is you mostly prefer to buy via Internet?

Appendix 1:
Bangkok Metropolitan Population by Areas

Area	Population	Respondents
1	142,582	16
2	114,213	13
3	86,882	10
4	76,060	8
5	170,437	19
6	174,951	19
7	142,881	16
8	166,660	18
9	158,745	17
10	99,317	11
11	51,430	6
12	86,578	10
13	189,442	21
14	141,249	16
15	163,250	18
16	90,218	10
17	104,237	12
18	167,268	18
19	120,473	13

Area	Population	Respondents
20	171,371	19
21	161,535	18
22	99,710	11
23	71,781	8
24	123,781	14
25	63,270	7
26	135,941	15
27	109,401	12
28	117,371	13
29	76,876	8
30	91,608	10
31	82,884	9
32	101,252	11
33	142,188	16
34	96,054	11
35	93,791	10
36	107,181	12
37	946,947	10
38	111,607	12
39	107,126	12
40	106,046	12
41	80,641	9
42	71,051	8
43	110,774	12
44	139,996	15
45	37,782	4
46	110,603	12
47	86,871	10
48	108,231	12
49	117,614	13
50	78,453	9
Total	5,654,357	625

Source : Government of Bangkok Metropolitan