



THE FUTURE TREND OF BUBBLE MILK TEA IN BANGKOK AFTER COVID 19 PANDEMIC: APPLYING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Bubble milk tea is a famous drink from Taiwan since 1980 and became famous in Thailand in 2001. This kind of beverage is rapidly very popular among Thai customers who love sweet drinks, especially the pearl beads that are added to the bubble milk tea help to please the customers to enjoy the bubble milk tea. Bubble milk tea is one of the promising business and still keep growing in Thailand and other countries. This research applied and planned behavior theory to study the customer purchasing behavior of bubble milk tea in Bangkok, Thailand after the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample size is the bubble milk tea customers in Bangkok with the age between less than 20 years old and more than 50 years old. The purposive sampling method was applied to screen and choose the respondents. In a total of 546 bubble milk tea customers responded to the questionnaire in both an online survey and paper questionnaire. The SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) with the help of the AMOS program was used to analyze the data and path analysis. The result shows that attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control are 3 main factors that have strongly effect and influence on the purchasing intention of the bubble milk tea in Bangkok. While purchasing intention has the strongly effect to mediate the relationship between these 3 factors (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control) with the purchasing behavior. This research suggested the business owner to focus on the effort of increasing the positive attitude and perceived behavior control to their customers because there are the significant factors that increase the intention to purchase which lead to the purchasing behavior of their customers.

Keywords: Theory of planned behavior, Perceived behavior control, Purchasing intention, Purchasing behavior, Bubble milk tea



Introduction

Nowadays one of the very popular drinks in Thailand is "bubble milk tea". This is probably the name that many people think of because of the sweet aroma of milk tea and the stickiness of pearl beads. Which is pleasing to many people, causing many bubble tea businesses to pop up in both small and large shops. Some shops adapt pearl pellets to other drinks, such as Thai tea, coffee, green tea, cocoa, etc. Moreover, although many people are well aware of the enormous calories in a glass of pearl milk tea when thinking about its sweet, chewy aroma, too difficult to resist, "Bubble Milk Tea" has become a very popular drink. Bubble tea originated in Taiwan in the 1980s. "Cha Chun Shuitang Shop" in Taichung City was probably the first shop to invent a bubble tea menu in 1988 while at a meeting. Ms. Lin Qiuhui (Product Development Manager) poured a small piece of sweet candy into the tea. Everyone in the conference room found it interesting. Therefore, it was released for sale. It turned out that the sales were very good, breaking records for other beverages. Some say that bubble tea should have come from the Hanlin tea shop. in Tainan City Taiwan Mr. Tua Songhe He added white sago seeds to the tea. make it look like a pearl It is the origin of the word "bubble tea" soon after. Hanlin changed the color of sago from white to black which is popular today. In the 1990s, this drink became very popular in East and Southeast Asia. In June 2012, McDonald's McCafe Branches in Germany and Austria began selling bubble tea. There are a variety of teas to choose from, including black tea, green tea, and white tea, both mixed and without milk. Including fruit syrups of various flavors, able to create more than 250 new menus.

Bubble milk tea or bubble tea, also known as Pearl Milk Tea Bubble Milk Tea, or Puapa Milk Tea is the national drink of Taiwan. Created in the 1980s, these chewy, chewy balls made from tapioca starch are popularly added to beverages. Most people like to call it "pearl." Its origin is in Taichung Province, Taiwan.

Bubble milk tea first became famous in Thailand around 2001 and became very popular among teenagers. It became a trend of fashionable drinks. However, due to the limitations of flavors that were not very diverse at that time, the trend soon began to subside. Until around 2011, the bubble tea business began to gradually grow again. Because there are starting to be, more diverse menus pearl pellets can be added to a wider variety of drinks. It is not limited to just milk tea and fruit tea. This research focus that the bubble milk tea business should be improved and developed to increase the



quality of both products and services because it could be able to grow and bring a good economy to Thailand

Research Objective

This research aims to analyze the association of each factor, which are attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavior control, bubble milk tea purchasing Intention, bubble milk tea purchasing behavior by using structural equation modeling (SEM). Another objective of this research is to find the relationship between each variable and present the conceptual framework according to the topic.

Literature Review

Attitude:

(Lien and Cao, 2014) suggested that attitude is the satisfying psychological motivation of the individual person which has been learned and developed over the curtain period. It is different from each other and very difficult to change (Peña-García et al, 2020). On the other hand, the attitude was also mentioned in TRA theory that the purchasing intention of the customers must occur from the positive attitude of the customer toward that particular product and service (Amaro and Duarte, 2015). In this research, the attitude would be understood as the evaluation of personal beliefs that will lead to the intention to purchase or not purchase the product and services (Alam et al, 2012).

Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is the social influence in the society where people live or spend their lives. It deals with the expectations of society and having a positive relationship with the intention to perform their behavior (Yau and Ho, 2015). Ajzen, (2020) suggested that subjective norm is the person's perceived pressure that a human receives from someone who is important and has an impact on their lives such as parents, friends, families, spouses, colleagues, or classmates. The opinions, beliefs, or behavior of these significant persons could affect the behavior of the human and tend to perform their behavior as that significant person thought or expected. Koay and Cheah, (2023) studied the intention to revisit the bubble tea store in Malaysia, and suggested that the subjective norm is the person perceiving pressure derived from the significant person and it could shape the behavior of that person.



Perceived Behavior Control

The perceived behavior control could be used to predict the actual behavior of the customer in the future (Ajzen, 2002). This factor is the psychological factor that believe about the behavior could be increased when it is under the control. Trafimow et al, (2002) presented that the behavior could be predicted from two perceiving characters which are perceiving control and perceiving difficulty but the behavior could be triggered mostly from the perceived behavior control. In this research the perceive behavior control of the bubble milk tea customers who believe in the quality and taste of the bubble milk tea and having a control power in their mind in order to purchase this products.

Bubble Milk Tea Purchasing Intention

Phan and Mai, (2016) suggested that the intention to purchase is considering as a plan in the future to purchase products and services of the customers. There are including several factors that help to stimulate the intention to purchase of the customer such as branding, customer satisfaction, price consciousness (Wen and Aun, 2020, Norfarah et al, 2018). Astuti and Putri (2018) found that word of mouth marketing has a positive effect on the purchasing intention of their customers. This research focus the purchasing intention on the strongly and positive feeling of customers about the bubble milk tea and their planning to purchase bubble milk tea in the future.

Bubble Milk Tea Purchasing Behavior

Purchasing behavior is the real action that customer decided to buy products and services that they want. This process was derived from several stages earlier before came to the action of purchase. Kotler & Armstrong (2014) suggested that there are plenty of factor that influence the purchase behavior of the customers for example motion, perception, believe and attitude. Yakup, D., & Jablonsk, S. (2012) stated that the characteristic of buyer also reflect their purchasing behavior by having four major factors: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. In the research, the purchasing behavior focuses on the frequency of customer to really purchasing the bubble milk tea to fulfill their desire.

Hypothesis and Conceptual Framework

According to the research background and research objective of every factors namely attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavior control, bubble milk tea

purchasing intention and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior. The hypothesis and conceptual framework was formed accordingly.

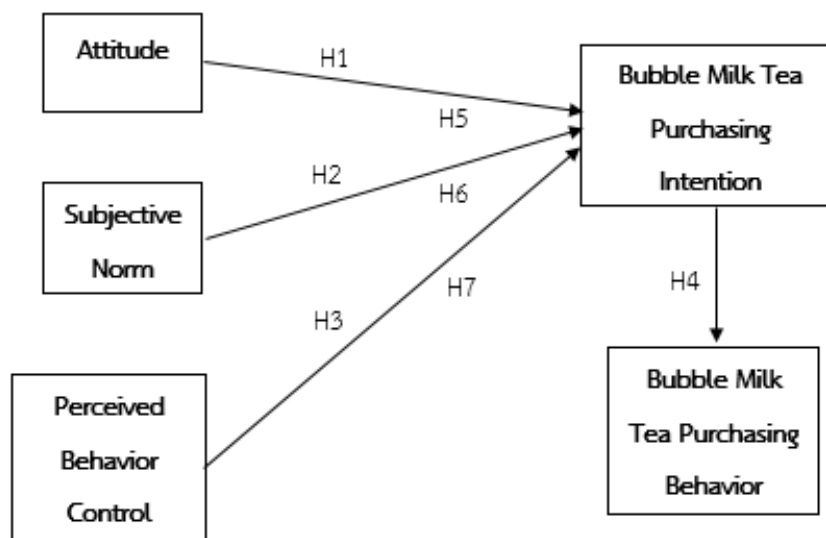


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the research

Relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing intention

Dewanto and Belgiawan, (2020) studied about the sustainable of fashion products in the big cities of Indonesia namely Jakarta and Bandung, suggested that attitude is a factor that has been studied by several researchers because it is one of the significant factors that strongly influence the purchasing intention of customers. From this study, the first hypothesis of this research is proposed that: H1: There is a positive relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing intention.

Relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing intention

Koay and Cheah, (2023) studied the intention to revisit the bubble tea store in Malaysia and suggested that the subjective norm is highly effect the purchasing intention of the customers because when customers have their strongly believe about the quality of product then they tend to increase their intention to own that products even sometime it might be some negative noise about it. By this literature review, the second hypothesis was proposed as: H2: There is a positive relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing intention.

Relationship between perceived behavior control and bubble milk tea purchasing Intention Perceived behavior control is the belief of humans to control the



ability to perform a behavior. It is quite similar to self-efficacy. (Ajzen, 2002) found that the perceived behavioral control is likely to affect the intentions of customers in order to purchase and not purchase products and services. The third hypothesis then presented that, H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and bubble milk tea purchasing intention.

Relationship between bubble milk tea purchasing intention and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior: The intention to purchase is the issue that several marketers and authors tried to study for a long time. Because it is the high potential psychological variable to stimulate the profit of the organization. The higher level of intention is the high opportunity to sell the products and services. The fourth hypothesis was proposed; H4: There is a positive relationship between bubble milk tea purchasing intention and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior.

Mediating effect

Purchasing intention is the positive feeling of the customers who like the product by having the previous positive experience for example having a good attitude to the products, hearing the story from the significant person, friends or family. The perception of behavior control is another factor that having a positive effect to the increase in the intention to purchase of the customers. As this factor are very strong, the purchasing intention could be able to mediate between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control. From this literature review the fifth, sixth and seventh hypothesis were proposed;

- H5: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior
- H6: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior
- H7: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between perceived behavior control and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior

Research Methodology

Population and sample size

The sample size in this research is the bubble milk tea customers in Bangkok who love bubble milk tea and have experience to purchase the bubble milk tea at least one time. It is quantitative research which using the questionnaire as a tool to collect



the data and purposive sampling methods was applied to screen and choose the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed both in the paper questionnaire and online. A total number of 546 customers responded to the questions

Descriptive Statistics Result

The 546 responders were made up of 325 women (59.5%) and 221 males (40.5%). Furthermore, at 196 (35.9%), the bulk of the mean age was between 21 and 30 years old. This investigation revealed 111 people between the ages of 31 and 40 (20.3%), 93 people above the age of 50 (17.0%),

Table 2 Construct Reliability (n=546)

Construct and Items	Cronbach's lpha
At	.737
Sub	.769
Per	.860
In	.735
Be	.794

Structural Equation Model (SEM Report)

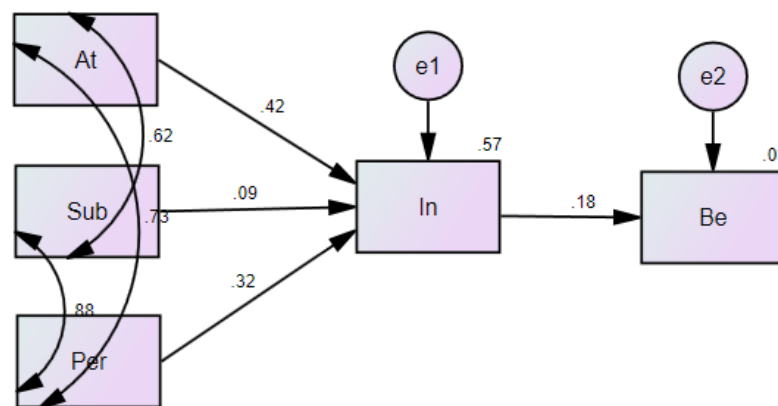
Structural equation modeling or SEM was applied to test the overall fit of the structural model, which examined the outcome of the hypothesis testing. According to Hair et al. (2010), the criteria of model fit should have $\chi^2/df \leq 3.00$, GFI ≥ 0.90 , CFI ≥ 0.90 , NFI ≥ 0.90 , AGFI ≥ 0.90 , RMSEA ≤ 0.07 , and RMR ≤ 0.08 . This is a criterion of good model fit value that can statistically accepted (Hair et al, 2017), In the Table 4 the model fit indices was demonstrated following; firstly, the initial model showed moderate fit ($\chi^2=1211.164$, $\chi^2/df=201.861$, $p=.000$, GFI=.596, CFI=.283, NFI=.284, AGFI=0.010, RMSEA=.607, RMR=.163). After modification the model showed good fit ($\chi^2=6.379$, $\chi^2/df=2.126$, $p=.000$, GFI=.995, CFI=.998, NFI=.996, AGFI=.977, RMSEA=.0045, RMR=.007). The results shown in Table 3 and Figure 1 present the structural equation modeling model results.



Table 3 Absolute Model Fit Indices

Model	Absolute Model Fit Indices							
	χ^2	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	NFI	AGFI	RMSEA	RMR
Criteria	-	≤ 3.00	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.07	≤ 0.08
Initial model	1211.164	201.861	0.596	0.283	0.284	0.010	0.607	0.163
Final model	6.379	2.126	0.995	0.998	0.996	0.977	0.045	0.007

Note: χ^2 = chi-square, χ^2/df = relative chi-square, GFI = goodness of fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normed fit index, AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit statistic, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, RMR = root mean square residual



Picture 2 Structural Equation Model Result

Results

In total, the 7 hypothesis results were presented in Table 4. According to the result of the study. Most of the hypothesis was theoretically supported except the subjective norm. The first hypothesis proposed that there is a positive relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing intention. This hypothesis was supported. It could indicate the important of positive thinking and a positive attitude of the customer toward bubble milk tea product. The second hypothesis stated that there is a positive relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing intention. This hypothesis was not supported which indicated that the subjective norm or the influence from the society or environment of the customer does not affect a lot to the behavior of the customer to purchase the bubble milk tea. The third hypothesis was there is a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and bubble milk tea purchasing intention. This hypothesis was supported. From these results, the



perceived behavioral control or the power to control the mind and behavior of bubble milk tea customers plays an important role in the purchasing intention which leads to the real action to purchase and consume. The fourth hypothesis proposed that there is a positive relationship between bubble milk tea purchasing intention and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior. This hypothesis was supported to emphasize that customers will purchase the bubble milk tea if they have an intention to purchase it.

The fifth hypothesis suggested that bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior. This hypothesis was supported. This indicated that the purchasing intention which is supported by the positive attitude of the customer could be able to stimulate the higher level of purchasing behavior. The sixth hypothesis proposed that bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea stimulating purchasing behavior. This hypothesis was not supported showing that the subjective norm or influence from the other people or from the society could not stimulate the intention to purchase or purchasing behavior of the bubble milk tea customers. The last hypothesis was bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between perceived behavior control and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior. This hypothesis was supported. This result displayed that purchasing intention will strongly affect to purchasing behavior if it is supported by perceived behavior control.

Table 4 Hypothesized Relationship Results

Hypothesized relationship	Results	P-value
H1: There is a positive relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing intention	supported	.001
H2: There is a positive relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing intention	not supported	.138
H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and bubble milk tea purchasing intention.	supported	.001



Hypothesized relationship	Results	P-value
H4: There is a positive relationship between bubble milk tea purchasing intention and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior	supported	.001
H5: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between attitude and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior	supported	.007
H6: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between subjective norm and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior	not supported	.122
H7: bubble milk tea purchasing intention mediates the relationship between perceived behavior control and bubble milk tea purchasing behavior	supported	.009

Table 5 Mediating Effect Results

Mediating effect	IV-M-DV		Mediation type
	direct	indirect	
At → In → Be	0.418*** (0.043)	0.074** (0.077)	Full mediation
Sub → In → Be	0.086 (0.063)	0.015 (0.052)	Partial mediation
Per → In → Be	0.320*** (0.076)	0.056** (0.013)	Full mediation

Table 6 Total effect, Direct effect and Indirect effect

Path	Path coefficient	SE	t-value	P-value
Total effect				
At → Be	0.074	0.020	2.352	0.012
Sub → Be	0.015	0.013	1.880	0.142
Per → Be	0.056	0.024	2.591	0.011
Direct effect				
At → In	0.418	0.043	10.204	0.001
Sub → In	0.086	0.063	1.483	0.138
Per → In	0.320	0.076	4.831	0.001



Path	Path coefficient	SE	t-value	P-value
Indirect effect				
At → Be	0.074	0.020	2.352	0.012
Sub → Be	0.015	0.013	1.880	0.142
Per → Be	0.056	0.024	2.591	0.011

Discussion

Following the results, this research concludes that bubble milk tea still has a promising future for their business in Thailand because it is quite popular among customers, especially the young and teenage generation. All variables namely attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control, could perform and indicate that they were the significant factors which could help to stimulate the intention to purchase the bubble milk tea. Positive attitude derived from the customer experience which could be from their own direct experience of tasting bubble milk tea or even from other people, could be able to initiate the intention to purchase or repurchase again. Family, friends, or society were grouped in this research as a subjective norm. Playing the least power to stimulate the intention to purchase and actual purchase behavior. It might be because most of the bubble milk tea customers could decide by themselves whether or not to purchase this product. After all, the price in general is not so high and most of the customers perceived or tasted this kind of beverage before. Therefore, they could make their own choice to purchase it or not. Perceived behavior control is another factor that is very important and could help induce customers to purchase bubble milk tea. Lastly, this research found that the real action of purchasing or the purchasing behavior of bubble milk tea customers could be created from the intention to purchase which is derived from other 3 significant variables which are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control. Once all factors are merged in the right direction that will increase a great opportunity for the positive purchasing behavior of the customers and will lead to the positive performance of the bubble milk tea business.

Body of Knowledge

The theory of planned behavior was applied and tested in this research to perceive the level of purchasing intention and the purchasing behavior of bubble milk



tea in Thailand. The results from the data collection from bubble milk tea customers in Bangkok exhibited that the three factors of planned behavior theory, which are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control, could be able to increase the level of both purchasing intention and purchasing behavior. The result also showed that the using of 3 variable attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control in the proper way could increase the trustworthiness of the products and services in the customer's perception, which finally will lead to a higher level level of intention to purchase and also the real action of purchasing behavior in the long run. On the other hand, the higher level of trust and satisfaction of the products and services will help to increase the level of positive attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control, which could increase the level of intention to purchase and purchasing behavior in the future as well.

Conclusion

The bubble milk tea business is another business that is very interesting to invest in and still has a great chance to grow in the future, due to several reasons for example the sweet taste of the tea, the delicious bubbles, and other topping, including the reasonable price. The theory of planned behavior with three viable (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control) could help to arouse the intention of the customers in order to purchase this product. Attitude is the thinking of the customers toward the bubble milk tea. From this research, the majority of customers have a positive attitude to bubble milk tea. Some customers received a positive attitude from their own experience while some customers received this thinking from other people or social media. The subjective norm or the influence from the reference group which means their family, friends, colleagues or other people, plays a low power to stimulate the intention to purchase. This might be because most of the bubble milk tea customers have their own opinions and have had an experience with this product before. Therefore they already perceived the taste or other value of this product and could be able to rely on their own opinion. Lastly perceived behavior control is another factor that has a strong influence to stimulate the intention of the customers to purchase the bubble milk tea.



Suggestion

The researcher recommended that business owners focus on the effort of increasing the positive attitude and perceived behavior control to their customers because there are significant factors that increase the intention to purchase which lead to the purchasing behavior of their customers.

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