THE INFLUENCE OF TEENAGER PEER INTERACTION AND WORD OF MOUTH TO THE INTENTION TO PURCHASE AND THE PURCHASING DECISION MAKING: CASE STUDY OF THAI TEENAGERS IN BANGKOK

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Abstract

Teenagers are a group of young people who have a lot of energy and like to learn many things in their lives. They are a group of students and critical workforces in business, industry, and countries. Most countries are successful and have strong economies because they have a high quality of young people. In contrast, many countries face tremendous setbacks because they do not have enough teenagers to work or have a lower-quality workforce. This research studied the influence of teenagers' peer interaction and word of mouth (WOM) on the intention to purchase which led to the purchasing decision-making. This quantitative research used a questionnaire both online and offline to collect the data from 466 teenage customers in Bangkok about the factors that influenced on their intentions to purchase and purchasing decision-making. The result showed that word of mouth had a significant positive impact on the intention to purchase and led to purchasing decision-making, while teenager peer interaction did not theoretically support it. The intention to purchase also had a positive influence on the purchasing decision-making process of purchasing behavior of the sample group. Companies or any providers that produce products or services should recognize the importance of word-of-mouth marketing, particularly through social media as a form of viral marketing because this marketing tool is very powerful to directly and indirectly impact sales. Especially if any organization could be able to generate a positive viral to their business, that could be one of the very significant factors to bring more customers and more success to their companies.

Keywords: Teenager peer interaction, Word of mouth, Information search and assessment, online purchasing decision

Introduction

The purchasing behavior and power to purchase of teenagers are famous topics that have been researched by several researchers (Singh & Nayak, 2014). The behavior of teenagers is mostly influenced by several factors such as their family, friends, social media, and so on. According to Zotova et al (2016) which defined that teenagers or young adults is the people who rely on social and value interconnection with other people, especially their peers, and community. Teenager's behavior mostly relies on the social mindset to adjust their selves and behavior to be matched with the norm or culture. Even though sometimes could be different from the other or sometimes it could be strange for the older people. Teenager is considered the last stage of acquaintance and create an identity before becoming an adult with a clear and stable personality according to psychological principles It is considered a stressful and transitional period. It is normal and necessary for teenagers to seek and experiment with different experiences. Sometimes it is an experience that goes against the rules that he or she has learned will bind them to the group the most. Consumer behavior means the actions of any person involved directly in the procurement and the use of products and services. This includes the decision-making process that already exists and which is involved in specifying such action. Consumer behavior is a method of studying behavior.

The shopping behavior of teenage customers especially in Thailand is different from other countries which could be influenced by culture, beliefs, groups of friends, family, social media, and so on. In this research, the two main factors between teenager peer interaction and the power of word of mouth or WOM are focused and believed to be the influencers to increase the level of intention to purchase products and services, which will lead to purchasing decision-making in the future.

Research gap and research objective

There are 2 main objectives of this research, the first is to find the influence of teenager peer interaction and word of mouth on the intention to purchase of teenagers in Thailand, especially in Bangkok. Another objective is to discover the effect of intention to purchase on the purchasing decision-making among teenagers in Thailand

Literature review

Teenager Peer Interaction

Teenager is a group of people who are older than the child and a little bit younger than adults. Actually, teenagers are the changing time of humans from young

men to older people. So many things in their bodies and lives would be changed including their thinking. Peers or people who are surrounded the teenagers are one of the very significant factors in forming their thoughts and personalities. Singh and Nayak 2014) defined peer teenagers as a socialization agent for the teenagers and has an influence on the purchase decisions. Therefore, the decision-making sometimes will rely on the group or society that they belong in both ways direct and indirect effects (Brey & Lehto, 2008)

Word of Mouth (WOM)

One of the very powerful marketing tools for the organization is word of mouth or WOM because it is dealing with 3 process concepts of seeking, giving, and sharing information of the products and services (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). Brown et al., (2007) added word of word-of-mouth marketing is more credible than other marketing tools because customers are independent from other factors from the company and they could be able to share their opinions about the products and services to anyone they prefer which could be in both directions positive and negative. For teenagers, word of mouth among their friends is very significant and affects their thoughts about whether or not to purchase the products (Abubakar et al., 2016).

Intention to purchase

Intention to purchase is the consumer's attitude about the products and services. Salazar (2017) stated that A positive attitude will connect with the behavior intention and could be able to increase the level of intention to purchase. Chang, 2011) studied the intention to purchase among teenagers in the city of Changsha in China and found that the intention to purchase could be stimulated by several factors such as peer groups, word of mouth, good quality products, reasonable prices, and purchasing celebrity-endorsed apparel. This purchasing intention. Spears and Singh (2004) stated that the intention to purchase is the individual's conscious plan of customers to whether or not to purchase the particular products and services because as there are so many products and services in the market. Most of them are similar types of products, closely priced to each other and other beneficial. Therefore, customers need to have their thoughts, attitudes, and intentions to choose, purchase, and consume (Salazar, 2017).

Purchasing decision-making process

The purchasing process of customers consists of several factors from before purchase until after purchasing the products and services (Miklošík, 2015). Most of the

customer's feelings at the beginning are not so comfortable but this stage could be released by the next step of searching for more information. This state of confusion of comparing the uncertain feeling and more desire to purchase is called the motivation of making a choice process (Han, 2021; Miklošík, 2015). This process could be done via many activities such as searching by themselves on the internet, asking someone, or hearing something about the products. However, if the motivation for making a choice process is stronger than the ambiguous initial feeling which could be from diverse reasons such as high-quality products and services, reasonable price, good location, tempting promotion, etc, later on, the purchasing decision-making will be formed and actioned in the long run (Ridwan, 2022; Puspa, et al., 2020).

Hypothesis and conceptual framework

According to the literature review of four factors namely teenager peer interaction, word of mouth, intention to purchase, and purchasing decision making. The conceptual framework of this research was created as follows

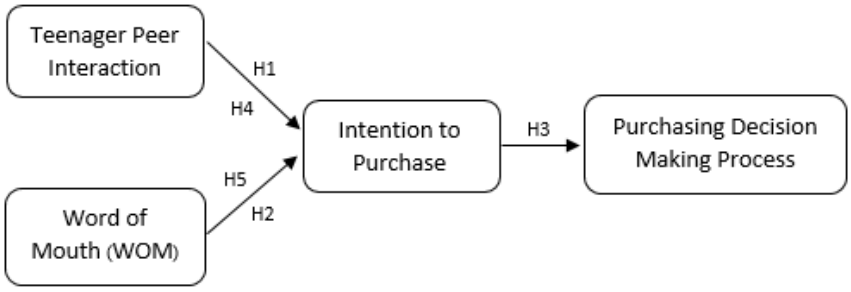


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the

Relationship between teenager peer interaction and intention to purchase

Shalaby and Agyapong (2020) stated that a peer is someone who is in a similar level of demographic and society. A peer is the one that is together and shares their opinions, experience, and empathy in a reciprocal relationship. For business, peer refers to a reference group of people who could motivate and influence customers to have a positive or negative feeling and thinking. The influence and interaction of peers for teenagers are very powerful and could encourage the level of intention to whether or not purchase the products and services. Chang (2011) suggested that teenagers' peer interaction could be able to form the beliefs, feelings, and intentions to purchase

which could be aligned with their previous knowledge and experience. Referring to the literature review, the first hypothesis of this research was presented as:

H1: Teenager peer interaction has a direct positive effect on the intention to purchase

Relationship between word of mouth and intention to purchase

Word of mouth is a marketing tool that has been focused by several authors and marketers for a long time. Lang and Hyde (2013) suggested that word of mouth, or WOM is a very forceful marketing method because it is the communication between a non-commercial communicator and a receiver concerning some products and services. Martin and Soelasih and Sumani (2021) studied the LCC flight passengers in Indonesia and found that passenger word of mouth has a tremendous impact on the intention to purchase of the other passengers. According to the literature review. The second hypothesis was created;

H2: Word of mouth has a direct positive effect on the intention to purchase

Relationship between intention to purchase and purchasing decision-making

Purchasing decision-making of customers could not occur immediately by themselves, but it must have some process to lead the customer from the initial stage of not knowing, not trusting, and having no intention to purchase, to the final stage of purchasing the products and services. Wee et al., (2014) studied the behavior of organic food customers in supermarkets and surrounding areas in the district of Kluang, Johor, Malaysia found that intention to purchase is the important variable to stimulates and affects the purchasing decision and making and actual purchase. Following the literature review, then third hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Intention to purchase has a direct positive effect on purchasing decision-making

Mediating effect

Purchasing decision-making is the final step of purchase because at this stage customers have already decided to spend their money on particular products and services that could be able to serve their needs. However before customers will decide to spend their budget, it must be more process to lead the customer to the final stage of purchasing. Intention to purchase came before the real final decision will be proceeded. Tudoran et al., (2012) staged that the intention to purchase came from the satisfaction that customers were satisfied by the products or services that they

received, and this purchasing intention will be able to persuade customers from hesitating to buy to more confident to spend their money and use the products (Sprott & Shimp, 2004; De Groot et al., 2009). Wang and Yu (2017) studied the online purchasing behavior of three undergraduate-level courses at a university in the southeastern United States and found that friends, social and word of mouth affect the intention to purchase of these undergraduate students and could lead them to the purchase the products in the long run. Following this information, the fourth and fifth hypotheses were proposed:

H4: Teenager peer interaction has a positive effect on purchasing decision-making through the intention to purchase

H5: Word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decision-making through the intention to purchase

Research methodology

Sample and data collection

Teenagers are one of the significant groups of customers for every company because they are the future adults who are going to enter the workforce and labor markets shortly. Most teenagers have the right and permission to choose to purchase the products and services themselves. However, in some families, the teenager could influence the intention to purchase from their parents. Teenager customers rely their intention to purchase on their knowledge about the products and services, together with their experience and information from their peers namely family, friends, and people they believe.

This is qualitative research by using the questionnaire as a tool to collect the data. The sample of this research is teenagers or younger customers both male and female in Bangkok. These teen customers will be asked and interviewed about the factors that influence their intention to purchase which leads to the purchasing decision-making. According to Soanboon et al., (2016) referred to the World Health Organization defined teenagers are a group of people aged between 15–24 years old. Therefore, the sample group is mostly teenagers and students in high school, technical school, and university, and some teenagers in the labor market (Stark et al., 2016). As this research is quantitative research, which applies the purposive sampling method to collect the data and apply structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires. The Google form of 7-point Likert scale questionnaire and paper questionnaire were created and distributed to teenagers in the Bangkok area. Researchers and team members will introduce our project to the

teenagers to fill out the questionnaire. For SEM analysis, the proper and reasonable sample size is a very tremendous topic because smaller samples can easily cause sampling errors. Referring to Hair et al., (2010) the suggested sample size should be in the range of 100 to 400 or larger because it could make the goodness of fit measurement and analysis. Moreover, following this number, any difference could be easy to be detected. This research has 466 sample despondences, which is suitable and enough amount for SEM to analyze.

Result and Discussion

According to the data analysis, the result of this research shows the effect and influence of each variable on each other. The result of five hypotheses are described, the first hypothesis proposes that teenage peer interaction has a direct positive effect on the intention to purchase. The first hypothesis is supported which indicates that teenage peer interaction is a powerful and positive influence on the intention to purchase of customers. The second hypothesis presented that word of mouth has a direct positive effect on the intention to purchase. The second hypothesis is not supported. This result indicated that word-of-mouth marketing is compelling but it does not have a direct positive impact on the intention to purchase from the customers. The third hypothesis suggested the intention to purchase has a direct positive effect on purchasing decision-making and this hypothesis is supported. The theoretical support of the third hypothesis shows that the intention to purchase is very important and it has a positive impact on the purchasing decision-making of the customers.

The fourth hypothesis and the fifth hypothesis are indirect effects which having the intention to purchase to be the mediator between other factors. The fourth hypothesis proposed that teenager peer interaction has a positive effect on purchasing decision-making through the intention to purchase, while the last hypothesis mentioned that word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decision-making through the intention to purchase. The fourth hypothesis was not supported while the fifth hypothesis was supported. The unsupported of the fourth hypothesis describes that the intention to purchase is not a powerful mediator between teenage peer interaction and purchasing decision-making. Lastly, the fifth hypothesis which is theoretically supported shows the positive relationship between 3 variables namely word of mouth which has a positive impact on purchasing decision-making by having the intention to purchase plays an important role as a mediator to lead the positive impact on the topic.

Table 1: Model Tests

Label	X^2	df	p
User Model	1.1368	1	0.286

According to the model testing in this research which indicate the value of X^2 x2 test for these data gives a numerical value of 1.1368, df is 1 and P = 0.286 which the level of statistical significance is consistent with the 99% (Gardner & Altman, 1986).

Table 2: Fit Indices

					RMSEA 95% CI		
AIC	BIC	adj. BIC	SRMR	RMSEA	Lower	Upper	RMSEA p
258.0674	291.3907	265.9998	0.0036	0.0170	0.0000	0.1242	0.525

Table 3: Fit Indices

CFI	TLI	RNI	GFI	adj. GFI	pars. GFI
0.9999	0.9993	0.9999	1.0000	1.0000	0.0714

Table 4: R-squared

		95% Confidence Intervals
Variable	R^2	Lower
Purchasing Intentions	0.0853	0.0431

Note. Some R-square index cannot be computed for this model

Table 5: Parameter Estimates

				95% Confidence Intervals				
Dep	Pred	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
Purchasing	Intentions	5.7161	0.8548	4.0406	7.3915	3.1984	6.6868	<.001
Intentions	Teen	0.0009	0.0146	-0.0277	0.0295	0.0011	0.0625	0.950
Intentions	WOM	0.1801	0.0290	0.1233	0.2369	0.2910	6.2187	<.001

Table 6: Defined Parameters

					95% Confidence Intervals				
Label	Description	Parameter	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
IE1	Teen Intentions Purchasing	p2*p1	0.0052	0.0834	-0.1582	0.1686	0.0035	0.0625	0.950
IE2	WOM Intentions Purchasing	p3*p1	1.0295	0.0620	0.9079	1.1511	0.9307	16.5925	<.001

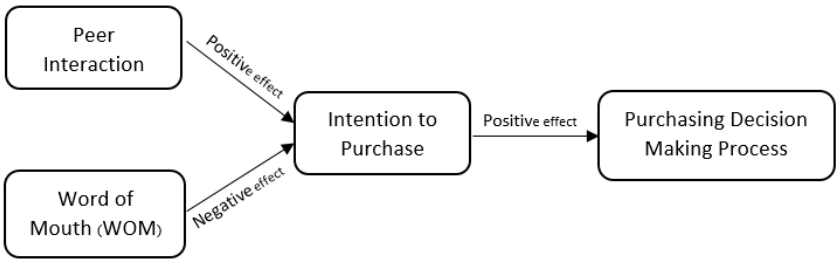


Figure 2: Structural Equation Model Result

Body of Knowledge

The academic and theoretical knowledge that was found and received from this research shows that the 3 factors namely teenager peer interaction, word of mouth, and intention to purchase impact purchasing decision-making from the customers in Thailand, especially in Bangkok which is one of the very busy and crowded metropolitan in this region, was presented accordingly

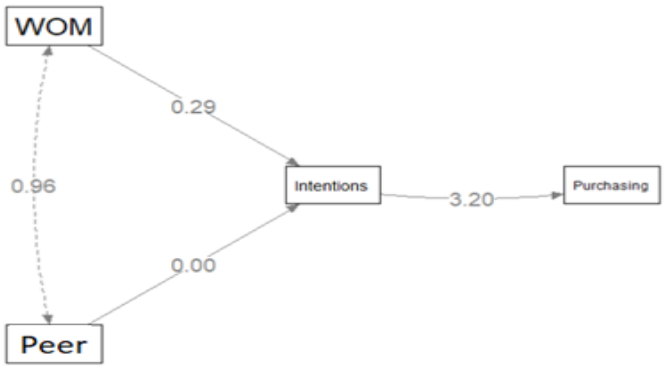


Figure 3: Result of the research and Body of Knowledge

Following the result of word-of-mouth marketing has a very significant impact on both the intention to purchase and final purchasing decision-making. The reason for the positive impact of the word of mouth marketing for young customers because this target group of customers has a very high level of self-enhancement and socialized society then word of mouth of the viral event is very powerful among this customer group (Fan et al, 2023). Another factor is the intention to purchase which in this research has a very positive impact on the purchasing decision making to purchase products and services for the young customers in Thailand. The reason for this positive result of this factor is positive confidence and a good image of the company in the customer's sight and perspective including the positive feedback from other customers via several channels such as social media, public media, or among the customers themselves (Widyastuti et al., 2017).

Another factor that is not theoretically supported in this research is the teenager's peer interaction. The reason for the unsupported factor among young customers in Thailand is that most of the young people like to talk, discuss, and socialize with their peers such as family, friends, colleagues, etc. but it is mostly not for the business or deciding to purchase products and services. Therefore, the final purchasing decision-making of young customers in this research use and prefer other factors to proceed rather than peer interaction.

Conclusion and Discussion

According to the all details, information, and results that found in this research, it shows the shopping behavior of Thai youngster customers is unique and relies on 2 main factors as we have hypothesized. The word of mouth marketing is work and powerful factor to influence a positive effect on the intention to purchase among this group of customers. As young people, care and give a high value to their society. What other people talk about or what is famous for their group during that particular topic or period. Nowadays word of mouth become famous in social media which is called these famous topics or events as a viral topic or viral marketing (Yeoh et al., 2013). This original word of mouth or viral marketing in the present time could affect the shopping behavior of young customers via several activities such as product reviews, interviews, influencers, and so on (Adha et al, 2023). The perceiving information, awareness of the brand, and event bring satisfaction to the customers and will lead to the intention to purchase those products and services. When customers have the intention to purchase, later on, this emotion and feeling of intention will lead

the customer to the final process of making a decision to purchase that particular product in the long run.

Another factor is teenager peer interaction is important for the Thai young customer group because as mentioned earlier young people care and are concerned about their group and society. What topic that their peer talking about or famous among their group is a big issue for this generation. However, what we have found in this research that peer interaction for young customer groups does not impact a lot on their intention to purchase products and services. This might be because most of the young customer like to talk, hang out, and socialize with their friends but they do not talk or consult about making a decision to purchase products or services a lot. Most young people talk to their peers because they would like to know what topic or what products are famous for their group. Later on, after perceiving the information, they will start to find information or search about these products by themselves via other marketing tools such as the internet, social media, product reviews, word of mouth or viral marketing. Therefore, the opinion of the peer interaction plays a role of socialized information rather than the factor that affects final decision-making.

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