

The Model of Marketing Strategies Influencing Customer Satisfaction of Supermarkets in Bangkok Areas*

¹Sukhumpong Channuwong, ²Prapas Sirirpap,
³Veera Ladnongkun and ⁴Jureporn Makingrilas

¹Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand.

^{2,3,4}Independent Scholars

¹Corresponding Author's Email: Kruprofessor@gmail.com



Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study marketing strategies of supermarkets in Bangkok areas; 2) to study customer satisfaction towards supermarkets in Bangkok areas; 3) to find a relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction; 4) to analyze marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction; and 5) to present the model of marketing strategies influencing customer satisfaction. The samples used in this study were 380 participants who are customers of the selected Tesco Lotus and Big C supermarkets in Bangkok areas. The research questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data. Statistics used in this study consisted of Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis.

The research results were found that: 1) The overall marketing strategies of supermarkets were perceived at the highest level. In particular, product was perceived at the highest level, followed by promotion, price and place. 2) The overall customer satisfaction was at high level. In particular, customers perceived full meeting of expectation at high level, followed by repeat purchase, positive attitudes towards supermarkets, and positive word-of-mouth recommendation. 3) Marketing strategies were positively related to customer satisfaction. 4) Marketing strategies had an influence on customer satisfaction. In particular, price had the highest influence on customer satisfaction, followed by product, promotion and place. The model of marketing strategies derived from this research is called the "VACAS" model, consisting of various products (V), acceptable price (A), customer responsiveness (C), accessible place (A), and service minded (S). This model can be implemented to create

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positive attitudes, customer satisfaction, purchase intention, repeat purchase, customer retention and customer loyalty leading to increased market share, increased profitability, branch expansion, and sustainable growth of the business. Recommendations were that supermarkets should distribute high quality products that meet customer expectation with acceptable price to increase customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Marketing Strategies; Customer Satisfaction; Supermarkets; Bangkok Areas

Introduction

At the present, the world economy is in recession. Due to the rapid epidemic of COVID-19, people in many countries suffer a lot from this pandemic, which has a negative impact on economy and well-being of the world population. Each individual and organization have to adjust themselves to the changing environments and economic situations in order to survive in this most difficult time. For people, they have to make a good planning in living their lives; they have to spend less and save more money and resources sufficient for passing this critical time. On the other hand, some business companies are forced by the current economic crisis to close themselves. Some have to seek for significant strategies to sell products and provide service in order to earn income and make profit for their survival. Supermarkets have to retain existing customers, and at the same time they have to target non-customers to increase a number of customers. The competition to acquire market shares between supermarkets and other business markets is very much intense. In addition to current competitors who supply the same products and services to customers, there are many new stores who offer the same products and services to satisfy the same group of customers. Customer acquisition becomes more difficult because customers have more choices to purchase products and services from different business markets. So, supermarkets should be aware of the business dynamic of the markets and adjust their strategies to be able to compete with other product and service providers. It can be said that marketing strategies to retain current customer satisfaction and increase satisfaction of new customers are significant and meaningful to the company. Therefore, customer satisfaction is very important to increase sustainable growth and success of business companies.

Customer satisfaction is considered as an indicator of how successful a business company is at providing products or services to the marketplace. Moreover, customer satisfaction can be defined as a full meeting of customer expectation towards products, prices



and services provided by the company, which leads to create positive attitudes of customers towards business company, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth recommendation. Therefore, current business companies have to consider the increase of customer satisfaction as a principle approach to implement as a routine basis to increase more income and profitability. Various researches pointed out that satisfaction is an attractive business philosophy in which gaining more market share and acquiring repeat purchase can be expected from reaching customer satisfaction. Jones, and Rowley (2011) found that failure in doing business comes from a lack of understanding of customer need, misusing of marketing strategies and inability to retain customer satisfaction. When customers are not satisfied, they do not support that business company. A lack of business support leads to a loss of profit, and eventually leads to business closure. Heskett (2002); Leechaimongkol, Seesupan, and Narakorn (2021) mentioned that there are many interesting factors that can be used as marketing strategies to achieve the increase of customer satisfaction such as product quality, distribution, price, and service quality. These are the important factors which have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is essential for a business company to know and understand marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction in order to design and distribute the best offerings.

In addition, retaining customer satisfaction has a lot of benefits to the business company as it can expand market share, increase revenue, reduce costs and enhance the financial performance by increasing a number of satisfied customers (Egan, 2001; Bruhn, 2003). The benefits of retaining satisfied customers include decreased risks from customer perception, lower customer price sensitivity and giving referral to the company. Satisfied and loyal customers will spread positive word-of-mouth recommendations as well as recommending the company to other customers (Rowley, 2005). Maintaining customer satisfaction cannot be ignored and overlooked, especially, in a business market which has numerous competitors because keeping a good relationship with customers could lead to the increase of customer retention and company's profitability. Therefore, the company should apply marketing strategies to satisfy and retain current customers and make them loyal with the company in order to achieve long-term relationship, gain more profitability and improve the economic performance of the company (Barnes, 1994). The company should consider product quality and price on the list of priorities. High product quality and moderate price could gain greater acceptance from customers and lead to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Schellhase, Hardock, and Ohlwein, 2000; Channuwong, 2014). In general,



customer satisfaction is described as a full meeting of customer expectation, including positive attitudes towards products or services they have been provided (Oliver, 1996). Customer satisfaction is an emotional state that occurs in response to an evaluation of the interaction experience with the salesperson, including product and service (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles, 1990). Customer satisfaction can be explained as a perception of customers towards products or services performance that matches or meets their expectations. Many companies tend to focus more on the control of product quality and service quality in order to reach customer satisfaction (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, and Armstrong, 2005).

If customers are satisfied and impressed with the particular products or services provided by a company, they will have positive attitudes towards a company and repurchase the same products more frequently. Moreover, they would be inclined to try more product line extensions and recommend the products of that company to the others (East, 1997). In addition, customer satisfaction with products or services also benefits the company in several ways. Satisfied customers would spread positive word-of-mouth recommendations for the products or services to their friends and relatives (Heskett et al. 1994). On the other hand, customer dissatisfaction with the products or services would cause a decrease of the overall company satisfaction. In addition to spreading negative word-of-mouth recommendation, they tend to stop purchasing products or services from their current provider and then switch to purchase from other providers (Levesque, and McDougall, 1996). Repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth recommendations will increase significantly when satisfaction accomplishes a certain level, and at the same time, they will decrease dramatically if the satisfaction level drops to a certain point. Highly satisfied customers tend to have positive attitudes towards the business company and support it to be part of their lives (Tepeci, 1999). In general, customers who repeat purchase, maintain positive attitude towards the same product or service provider and continuously recommend products and services to the others are called “loyal customers” (Bowen, and Chen, 2001). Oliver (1999) described that loyalty is a deeply held commitment to re-purchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the present and future. Despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior, satisfied and loyal customers remain to purchase a repetitive same brand of products and patronize the same business company.

Lotus has been ranked by business information expert as number one among supermarkets in Thailand, followed by Big C and Makro. Lotus can attract customers and maintain popularity among supermarkets because of the following marketing factors: (1)

organic vegetables and groceries; (2) various products such as consumer goods, foods and drinks, home appliance products, dresses, perfumes and many other; (3) convenience in shopping; (4) privilege and gentle communication with customers; (5) in store decoration experience; (6) price and promotion; and (7) online shopping channel. Nowadays groceries and consumer goods become the most important products of Lotus to gain competitive advantage and increase sales volume. With the marketing strategy of “customer first”, Lotus can gain more market shares than other supermarkets (Brand Inside Website, 2021).

The researchers consider product, price, promotion and place as the most important marketing strategies that drive the business of Lotus and Big C to grow constantly and sustainably. The results of this study can be generalized and applied by other supermarkets such as Top Supermarket, and Family Mart to set new strategies to drive their businesses to be comparable to Lotus and Big C. Therefore, the researchers are interested in conducting this study to gain new body of knowledge and to present the model of marketing strategies influencing customer satisfaction.

Objectives of the research

1. To study marketing strategies of supermarkets in Bangkok areas
2. To study customer satisfaction towards supermarkets in Bangkok areas
3. To find a relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction
4. To analyze marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction
5. To present the model of marketing strategies influencing customer satisfaction

Research Methodology

1st Step: Population and Samples

The selected supermarkets used in this research were Tesco Lotus and Big C Supermarkets located in Phra Nakhon and Bangphlat district, in Bangkok areas. The population used in this study was customers who shopped at the selected supermarkets in Phra Nakhon district consisting of 50,382 residents (Phra Nakhon District Office, 2020), and Bangphlat district consisting of 54,618 residents (Bangphlat District Office, 2020). Therefore, a total amount of population to be studied in this research was 105,000 persons. The formula of Taro Yamane was used to calculate the sample size from a whole population at the confident level of 0.05, and 400 samples were obtained.



2nd Step: Variables Used in this Study

The variables used in this study consisted of independent and dependent variables. Independent variables were marketing strategies consisting of product, price, promotion, and place, and dependent variables were customer satisfaction consisting of positive attitudes towards supermarkets, repeat purchase, full meeting of expectation, and positive word-of-mouth recommendation.

3rd Step: Instrument Used to Collect Data

The instrument used to collect data in this study was a research questionnaire. In developing a research questionnaire, the researchers studied concepts and theories about marketing strategies and customer satisfaction from texts, books, journals, articles and related documents. The questionnaire structure can be divided into the following three parts: Part 1 included 6 questions with regard to demographic profiles of respondents consisting of gender, age, marital status, educational level and monthly income in the form of checklist. Part 2 included 16 questions with regard to marketing strategies consisting of product, price, promotion, and place in the form of 5-Point Likert Scales. Part 3 included 12 questions with regard to customer satisfaction consisting of positive attitudes towards supermarkets, repeat purchase, full meeting of expectation, and positive word-of-mouth recommendation in the form of 5-Point Likert Scales.

4th Step: Criteria Used to Interpret Data

In analysis of quantitative data, the researchers analyzed the collected data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS). The criteria used to interpret data were the 5-Point Likert Scales: 5 = very strongly agree, 4 = strongly agree, 3 = moderately agree, 2 = less agree, and 1 = least agree.

5th Step: Content Validity and Reliability Test

The researchers have conducted content validity and reliability test with the following steps:

1. The content validity of the questionnaire had been checked by five research specialists in order to find the congruency of the research questions and objectives using Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC), and the IOC value of 0.92 was obtained.
2. The reliability test of the research questionnaire was conducted with 30 customers who were not the samples used in this study, and the reliability value of 0.96 was obtained.
3. The correction of the questionnaire had been made before contribution to the targeted samples.

6th Step: Data Collection

Convenience sampling was applied in this study. The researchers had distributed 200 research questionnaires to the samples residing in Phra Nakhon district, and 200 research questionnaires to the samples residing in Bangphlat district during 10 October 2020 to 30 December 2020, and 380 questionnaires were returned, which can be calculated as 95 percent. Then, the researchers had checked the rightness and completion of the returned questionnaires before conducting statistical analysis.

7th Step: Statistics Used to Analyze data

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study: 1. Frequency and Percentage were used to analyze the demographic profiles of respondents. 2. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. 3. Pearson Correlation was used to analyze a relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. 4. Multiple Regression Analysis with Enter method was used to analyze marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction

Research Results

The 1st objective is to study marketing strategies of supermarkets in Bangkok areas. The research results were found that marketing strategies of the selected supermarkets, in total, were at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.25$, S.D. = .812). In particular, product had the highest mean value ($\bar{x} = 4.35$, S.D. = .770), followed by promotion ($\bar{x} = 4.32$, S.D. = .813), price ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, S.D. = .805) and place ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, S.D. = .861) respectively (Table 1).

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Marketing Strategies of Supermarkets in Bangkok Areas

Marketing Strategies	\bar{x}	S.D.	Translation	Ranking
Product	4.35	.770	Highest	1
Price	4.21	.805	Highest	3
Promotion	4.32	.813	Highest	2
Place	4.15	.861	High	4
Total	4.25	.812	Highest	

The 2nd objective is to study customer satisfaction towards supermarkets in Bangkok areas. The research results were found that customer satisfaction towards supermarkets, in total, were at high level ($\bar{x} = 3.93$, S.D. = .562). In particular, full meeting of expectation had

the highest mean value ($\bar{x} = 4.20$, S.D. = .613), followed by repeat purchase ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, S.D. = .513), positive attitudes towards supermarkets ($\bar{x} = 3.98$, S.D. = .612), and positive word-of-mouth recommendation ($\bar{x} = 3.39$, S.D. = .513) respectively (Table 2).

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Customer Satisfaction towards Supermarkets in Bangkok Areas

Customer Satisfaction	\bar{x}	S.D.	Translation	Ranking
Positive attitudes towards supermarkets	3.98	.612	High	3
Repeat purchase	4.15	.513	High	2
Full meeting of expectation	4.20	.613	High	1
Positive word-of-mouth recommendation	3.39	.513	Moderate	4
Total	3.93	.562	High	

The 3rd objective is to find a relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. The research results were found that the internal correlation among each variable of marketing strategies was positive, which means all four variables had a relationship in the same direction with statistical significance at .01, and correlation value between .692 and .815. The highest internal correlation was a relationship between product and promotion. The correlation coefficient between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction was in the same direction with statistical significance at .01, and correlation value between .603 and .895, where the highest correlation was a relationship between product and customer satisfaction (Table 3).

Table 3 Correlation Coefficient between Marketing Strategies and Customer Satisfaction

Variables	Product	Price	Promotion	Place	Customer Satisfaction
Product	1	.780**	.815**	.698**	.895**
Price		1	.778**	.692**	.645**
Promotion			1	.801**	.671**
Place				1	.603**
Customer Satisfaction					1

** Statistically significant at .01

The 4th objective is to analyze marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction. The results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Enter method were found that marketing strategies had an influence on customer satisfaction with statistical significance at .01 ($F=69.426$, $p=.000$). The variable of marketing strategies which had the highest influence on customer satisfaction was price (Beta = .610, $p < .01$), followed by product (Beta = .465, $p < .01$), promotion (Beta = .325, $p < .01$), and place (Beta = .320, $p < .05$) respectively. The forecasting equation from the results of Multiple Regression Analysis can describe the influence of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction at 76.50 percent (Adjust $R^2 = 765$), whereas, the rest 23.50 percent was the results of other variables which were not taken into account in this research (Table 4).

The forecasting equation of marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction can be written in the form of unstandardized and standardized scores as follows:

Unstandardized Scores

Customer Satisfaction = 1.307 (Constant) + .615 price + .568 product + .417 promotion + .236 place

Standardized Scores

Customer Satisfaction = .610 price + .465 product + .325 promotion + .230 place

Table 4 The Influence of Marketing Strategies of Supermarkets on Customer Satisfaction

Marketing Strategies	Customer Satisfaction				p
	B	SE	β	T	
Constant	1.307	.144		9.105**	.000
Product	.568	.063	.465	.872**	.000
Price	.615	.057	.610	2.785**	.000
Promotion	.417	.056	.325	3.618**	.000
Place	.236	.048	.230	.546*	.045
$R^2 =$.772			F =	69.426**
Adjust $R^2 =$.765	SE =	.387	p =	.000

** Statistically significant at .01

* Statistically significant at .05

The 5th objective is to present the model of marketing strategies influencing customer satisfaction. In order to answer research purpose 5, the researchers have presented the model



of marketing strategies influencing customer satisfaction of the supermarkets, called the “VACAS” model.

The new body of knowledge

Based on the survey of literature and research findings about marketing strategies consisting of product, price, promotion and place, the researchers gained the new body of knowledge about marketing strategies as follows:

1. Various products (V), products of supermarkets should be various and different in terms of sizes and types of products in order to serve the need of customers. Supermarkets should be a one-stop service store that customers can buy everything they need in one place.

2. Acceptable price (A), price of products at supermarkets should be moderate and acceptable which customers who have different financial status can afford.

3. Customer responsiveness (C), supermarkets should be able to produce or sell products that are responsive to the need of customers. Products must be in good quality and long duration. In addition, online markets must be provided in order to serve customers who live in remote places or who are not able to go for shopping at the supermarkets.

4. Accessible place (A), places or locations of supermarkets must be easy to be accessed. Supermarkets should be located near the community in order to serve the people in that community about consumer goods in daily life.

5. Service minded (S), supermarkets should prioritize service as the strategy to create impression to customers. Having service minded can increase good relationship and customer satisfaction.

These marketing strategies can be implemented to create positive attitudes, customer satisfaction, purchase intention, repeat purchase, customer retention, which will lead to increased market share, increased profitability, branch expansion, and sustainable growth of the business (Figure 1).

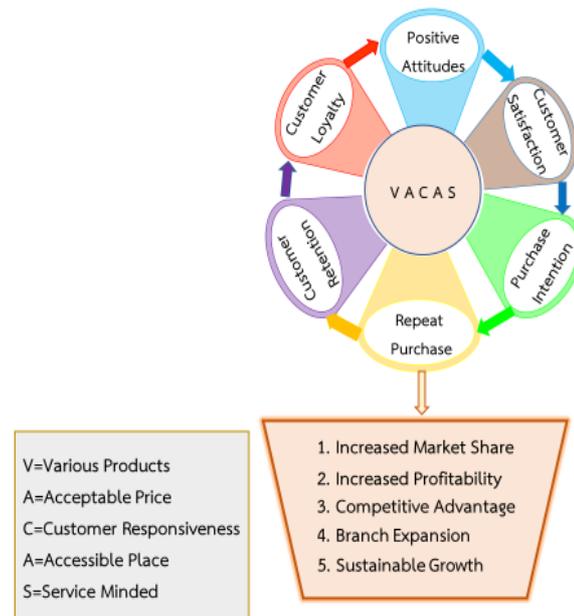


Figure 1 The “VACAS” Model of Marketing Strategies Influencing Customer Satisfaction

Discussion of research results

1. The research results were found that marketing strategies of the selected supermarkets, in total, were at the highest level. In particular, product was perceived at the highest mean value, followed by promotion, price and place respectively. The results of this study can be implied that marketing strategies are very much important to sustainable growth of the business. These research findings are relevant to a study of Huber, Herrmann, and Wricke (2001) which found that marketing strategies are the foundations of a company’s long-term success. So, it is essential for a company’s management team to create and apply appropriate marketing strategies in order to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Jones, and Rowley (2011) which found that business’s success and growth come from an understanding of customer needs and demands, appropriate implementation of marketing strategies and ability to retain customer satisfaction. Most customers are likely to support business company that provides satisfactory products and services with acceptable price. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Chiu, Liu, and Tu (2016) which found that customers are highly satisfied with product quality, followed by service and promotion. Product satisfaction was associated with intention to support business company and repeat purchase, and had the highest influence on customer loyalty.



2. The research results were found that customer satisfaction towards supermarkets, in total, were at high level. In particular, full meeting of expectation had the highest mean value, followed by repeat purchase, positive attitudes towards supermarkets, positive word-of-mouth recommendation respectively. It can be implied that customers are very much satisfied if products and services meet their expectation. So, they perceived full meeting of expectations as the most important. These research findings are relevant to a study of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (2013) which found that customer satisfaction can be measured by responsiveness to customer expectation, reliability of service providers, understanding customers, courtesy and empathy towards customers, and good communication.

3. The research results were found that the correlation coefficient between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction was in the same direction with statistical significance at .01, and correlation value between .603 and .895, where the highest correlation was a relationship between product and customer satisfaction. The results of this study confirm a positive relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. It can be implied that the increase of quality product leads to the increase of customer satisfaction. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Heskett (2002) which found that quality products are positively associated with customer satisfaction. It is essential for the company to understand marketing strategies that have an influence on customer satisfaction in order to design and provide the best offerings.

4. The research results from Multiple Regression Analysis with Enter method were found that marketing strategies had an influence on customer satisfaction with statistical significance at .01 and .05. The variable of marketing strategies which had the highest influence on customer satisfaction was price, followed by product, promotion, and place respectively. The forecasting equation from the results of Multiple Regression Analysis can describe the influence of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction at 76.50 percent ($\text{Adjust } R^2 = 765$), whereas, the rest 23.50 percent was the result of other variables which were not taken into account in this research. These research findings are relevant to a study of Channuwong (2014); Thongsrikhow, and Tuntrakul (2020) which found that there was a positive relationship between price, quality, durability and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction had a positive impact on purchase intention. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Szymanski, and Henard (2001) which found that price and product had the highest influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, customer satisfaction had a positive impact on customer

loyalty. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Sheth, and Sisodia (1999) which found that if customers are satisfied and impressed with price, product and service offered by the company, they tend to stay with and support the business company forever. Therefore, the business company must try to satisfy customers, respond to their needs and fulfill their expectations in order to make them stay loyal, repeat purchase, and recommend the company to others to increase a number of customers, market share and company's profitability. These research findings are also relevant to a study of Verhoef, Reinartz, and Krafft (2010) which found that customer satisfaction is a personal feeling of customers resulting from a comparison between the performance of products and services provided by the company and their expectations. This can be divided into three categories: (1) if the performance of products and services are lower than expectations, customers will be dissatisfied. (2) If the performance of products and services meet customer expectation, customers will be satisfied. (3) If the performance of products and services are higher than expectations, customers will be highly satisfied or highly impressed.

Conclusion

The research results were found that marketing strategies of the selected supermarkets, in total, were at the highest level. In particular, product was perceived at the highest level, followed by promotion, price and place respectively. Customer satisfaction towards supermarkets, in total, was at high level. In particular, customers perceived full meeting of expectation at high level, followed by repeat purchase, positive attitudes towards supermarkets, and positive word-of-mouth recommendation respectively. The correlation coefficient between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction was in the same direction with statistical significance at .01, and correlation value between .603 and .895, where the highest correlation was a relationship between product and customer satisfaction. Marketing strategies had an influence on customer satisfaction with statistical significance at .01 and .05. The variable of marketing strategies which had the highest influence on customer satisfaction was price, followed by product, promotion, and place respectively.



Suggestions

Based on the research findings, the researchers would like to provide the following recommendations:

1. Product was perceived as the most important marketing strategy and price had the highest influence on customer satisfaction, so supermarkets should distribute high quality products with moderate and acceptable price in order to increase customer satisfaction.

2. The present study was conducted focusing on the selected supermarkets in Bangkok areas only. The researchers would like to suggest that it would be useful to replicate similar study of supermarkets in different locations of Thailand.

3. The present study focused only on four marketing strategies: Product, price, promotion and place. The researchers would like to suggest that future research should focus on more than these four marketing strategies.

4. The present study focused only on customer satisfaction towards supermarkets in Thailand. The researchers would like to suggest that future research should be conducted in different countries in order to compare customer satisfaction towards supermarkets in Thailand and other countries.

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