

A STUDY OF FACTORS ON BUYING DECISION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS DIETARY
SUPPLEMENT FOOD PRODUCTS

MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
SUDARIN AUECHOTPANICH

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

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การศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อของผู้บริโภคต่อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริม

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ของ
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เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
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สารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารเสริมของ

ผู้บริโภคต่อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมเฮอร์บาไลฟ์และผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้ออื่นๆที่มีขายตาม

ท้องตลาด โดยใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างจากลูกค้าที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมเฮอร์บาไลฟ์จำนวน 50 คน

ที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์จากบริษัท บางกอก นิวทริชั่น อะเคเดมี่ ในเดือนกันยายน 2550 โดยกลุ่มตัวอย่าง

ตอบแบบสอบถาม และผู้วิจัยนำข้อมูลที่ได้รับมาวิเคราะห์ผลโดยใช้ค่าร้อยละ

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการซื้อของลูกค้าต่อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมเฮอร์บาไลฟ์

และลูกค้าให้ความสำคัญมากที่สุดได้แก่ ปัจจัยด้านสินค้า ปัจจัยด้านการส่งเสริมทางการตลาด และ

ปัจจัยด้านหลักฐานทางกายภาพ คิดเป็น 100% ส่วนปัจจัยที่มีผลมากที่สุดในการซื้อของลูกค้าต่อ

ผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้ออื่นๆที่มีขายตามท้องตลาด คือ ปัจจัยด้านสินค้า ร้อยละ 81.6 และ ปัจจัย

ด้านราคา ร้อยละ 83

A STUDY OF FACTORS ON BUYING DECISION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS DIETARY
SUPPLEMENT FOOD PRODUCTS

AN ABSTRACT
BY
SUDARIN AUECHOTPANICH

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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Sudarin Auechotpanich. (2008). *A Study of Factors on Buying Decision of Customers towards Dietary Supplement Food Products*. Master's project, M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakarinwirot University. Project Advisor: Assistant Professor Penny Diskaparakai.

The objectives of this study were to explore factors that affected the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife dietary supplement food products and to explore the factors influencing customers to buy other dietary supplement products available in the market. Questionnaires were used in the survey to collect data from fifty randomly selected customers who bought Herbalife's products from Bangkok Nutrition Academy in September, 2007. The data were analyzed by using percentage.

The findings of the study revealed that all customers (100%) considered the product, promotion and physical evidence the most important factors when making a buying decision. The results also showed that most customers considered the product mix (81.6%) and price mix (83%) the most important factors when making a buying decision of other dietary supplement products available in the market.

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication Program, and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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This Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

.....Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Associate Professor Chaleosri Pibulchol)

February....., 2008

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the globalization era, advancement of technology, economy, society, science and education brings people better lifestyles but at the same time degrades the environment. Unfortunately, these developments have caused the unacceptable conditions such as pollutions, urgency, stress, malnutrition and diseases. Behaviors and lifestyles of people have been changed because of these social factors. The urge to have a better lifestyle of people in the metropolitan areas gradually changes their eating habits, with the rising consumption of fast foods, junk foods, and unhygienic foods that have caused rising health effects. Green (2000: 69) states that at least 300,000 deaths each year in western countries are caused by heart diseases, diabetes, cancers, and other serious chronic diseases that are associated with unhealthy nutritional choices and lack of physical activities. In Asia, heart disease and stroke are calculated to 27% of death accounted (Bangkok Post. 2002: Online). Consequently, people have started to realize that healthy living is the best solution

for protecting themselves against illnesses. They gradually have changed the values of life from being rich and successful to being healthy, both mentally and physically.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not the absence of disease.” (WHO. org: 2007: online). Medical research has shown that several diseases can be prevented simply with a healthy diet; such as diet consists of low in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium, with a healthy proportion of plant-based ingredients. In addition, people involved in medication area have paid more attention in alternative medicines or preventing diseases through the use of supplementary vitamins and minerals that are naturally extracted from plants. This alternative medication helps people to reduce their expenditures in medicines in a long term (Herb medication. 2004: Online). People are concerning more about prevention instead of cure.

The importance of nutrition and the benefits of dietary supplements to health promotion and disease prevention have been documented increasingly in scientific studies. Dietary supplements become popular all over the world because of health concerns. The dietary supplements industry is now among the world's fastest growing economic sectors. Consumers' spending have nearly doubled from 1994 to 2000, and it continues to grow

more than 10 % each year (Food and Drug Administration. 2002: Online). In 2006, Thai View research showed that 51 % of people in Bangkok are saying that they will consume products derived from naturally extracted ingredients, and 37% will increase the consumption of dietary supplements (Thai View. 2006: 45). The competitive market of dietary supplement will increase accordingly to the rising consumers' demand.

The wellness industry market in developed countries is now one of the leading markets around the world; however, Thailand has only just adopted this health concern over the last few years. This can be seen from the consumer products available in the market, many leading companies in wellness industry have developed their products more along the better health line such as green tea extract, omega 3, collagen, and etc. The dietary supplement market in Thailand is growing exponentially; and with this growth, one of the major leading companies in nutritional supplement is Herbalife International (Thailand) Ltd. Herbalife has a large share of the Thai consumer market; last year, the company sales volume was approximately over \$2 million (Myherbalife. 2007: Online). In addition, in USA, Herbalife International Inc. has joined New York Stock Exchange in 2005, which certifies the reliability of the company. Whereas around the world, the wellness industry is just now taking off, already approximately a \$200 billion business, with most of its revenue coming

from vitamin sales and health club memberships. In just ten years, an additional \$1 trillion of the U.S. economy will be devoted to providing healthy people products and services to maintain their health (Pilzer. 2002: 7).

Bangkok Nutrition Academy (BNA) sells Herbalife products through the use of marketing mix. Customers come from the Internet advertising by the use of banners which are advertised in the selected websites. However, the banner has to be something that when the customers see for the first time are interested in it. This is achieved by a well known presenter who is always in good shape and good health. Another point is that the banner is planted on approximately 200 websites; therefore Internet users are bound to see them sometime. After they have accessed the website through the banner and are interested in the products, they are required to give their contact number. Afterwards, they are invited to a "Nutrition Seminar" to be educated about health care and how to lose weight safely. This seminar is set up after work once a week, and the information on the Herbalife products only appears in the last five minutes of the seminar. This makes it a lot easier to get them to become customers, and then they can buy more with after-sales services, personal coach, health information magazines and etc.

The researcher chose this company to conduct her study focusing on dietary supplement food because BNA is a company that represents a healthy lifestyle through the use of Herbalife. The company was formed by a group of independent distributors, by working as a team. They share mutual benefits of both monetary and relationship. The company becomes successful in only 2 years. Furthermore, the sales have nearly doubled each year. Therefore, the researcher has a great interest in how the company creates their strategies to achieve such growth. This study will take a disintegrate look into one of the leading companies specialized in nutritional products to see how the company has developed its strategic movement in the market have affected both direct and indirect customers' decisions in purchasing dietary supplement products.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To explore factors that affect the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife's dietary supplement food products.
2. To explore the factors influencing customers to buy dietary supplement products available in the market.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. What were factors affecting the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife dietary supplement food products?
2. What were important factors customers consider when buying other dietary supplement food products available in the market?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study revealed factors that affected the buying decision of the consumers towards dietary supplement food products. The advantages of the dietary supplement food products that affected the customers' buying decision were also explored and analyzed.

The findings of the study would be useful for people who wanted to start a new business on dietary supplement food products and for the owners of the dietary supplement food product companies to improve and enhance their business strategies to urge the customers to buy the products.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore factors affecting the customers' buying decision towards Herbalife's dietary supplement food products as well as other dietary supplement food products. The questionnaires concerning factors affecting buying decision were distributed to fifty customers who bought Herbalife's products from BNA in September, 2007.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Terms in this study are defined as follows:

1.6.1 Dietary Supplement

The diet supplement refers to a food product that contains a "dietary ingredient" intended to supplement the diet. The "dietary ingredients" in these products may include: vitamins, minerals, herbs or other botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes, organ tissues, glandulars, and metabolites. Dietary supplements can also be extracts or concentrates, and may be found in many forms such as tablets, capsules, softgels, gelcaps, liquids, or powders.

1.6.2 Customers

Customers in this study are people who buy Herbalife products from Bangkok Nutrition Academy (BNA).

1.6.3 Marketing Mix (4 Ps)

The marketing mix is generally accepted as the use and specification of *the 4 Ps*; Product, Price, Place, and Promotion describing the strategic position of a product in the marketplace.

1.6.4 Marketing mix (7 Ps)

7 Ps is the same original 4 Ps. Although some marketers have added other Ps which are People, Process, and Physical Evidence.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter emphasizes the related research studies and literature on three main parts; consumer behaviors, marketing mix, and related research works.

2.1 Consumer Behaviors

This part focuses on three sections: (1) the definition of consumer behavior, (2) the stages of the buying decision process, and (3) factors affecting consumer buying decisions.

2.1.1 Definition of Consumer Behaviors

The consumer behavior definition is briefly discussed to give basic understandings of consumer behaviors and their important roles in the marketing communication. In marketing literature, there are a lot of definitions of the term “consumer behaviors”. However, those definitions are quite similar. The following are definitions of the term “consumer behaviors”.

Consumer behavior is the study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy, and why they buy. It is a subcategory of marketing that blends elements from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics, psychographics, and behavioral variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general (Wikipedia: 1998: Online).

Belch (1998) defined consumer behaviors as the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and service so as to satisfy their needs and desires.

The American Marketing Association defines the term "consumer behaviors" as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives (Peter; & Olson. 1996: 11).

Consumers' product and service preferences are constantly changing. Creating a proper marketing mix or a strategy for a well-defined market, marketing managers must

have knowledge of consumer behaviors. Therefore, consumer behaviors are studied in order to understand perceptions, attitudes, and activities in which person responds to his or her environments. This understanding can provide guidelines to develop marketing approaches and activities to encourage people to purchase products.

2.1.2 The Stages of the Buying Decision Process

The American Marketing Association has developed a “stages model” of the buying decision process as shown in exhibit 1. The consumer passes through five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and postpurchase behavior.

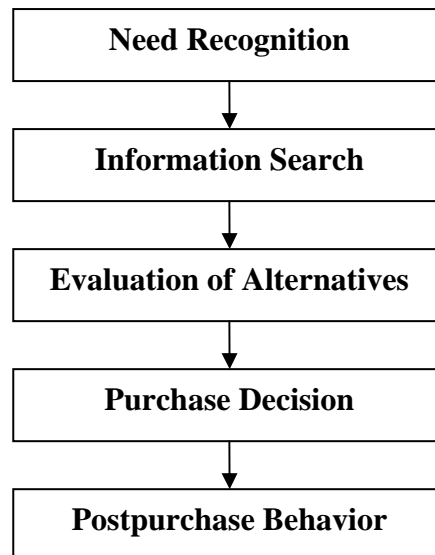


Exhibit 1 The stage model of Consumer Buying Decision Process (Hardesty and

Bearden. *Journal of Retailing*. (2003:17)

In exhibit 1 Hardesty and Bearden imply that consumers pass through all the above five stages in buying a product, however this is not the case: consumers may skip or reverse some stages as follows:

Need recognition

The buying process starts when the buyer recognizes a problem or need. Need recognition occurs when consumers are faced with an imbalance between actual and desired states. It is triggered when a consumer is exposed to either an internal or an external stimulus. Hunger and thirst are internal stimuli; the color of an automobile, the

design of a package, a brand name mentioned by a friend, or an advertisement on television are considered external stimuli (William. 2002: 50).

Information search

After recognizing a need or want, consumers search for information about the various alternatives available to satisfy it. An information search can occur internally, externally, or both. An internal information search is the process of recalling information from previous experiences with a product. In contrast, an external information search seeks information in the outside environment divided into four groups:

- Personal sources: Family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances
- Commercial sources: Advertising, salespersons, dealers, packaging, and displays
- Public sources: Mass media and consumer-rating organization
- Experiential sources: Handling, examining, and using the product

The consumer's information search should yield a group of brands, sometimes called the buyer's evoked set (or consideration set), which are consumer's most preferred alternatives (Clow; & Baack. 2001: 150).

Evaluation of alternatives

After getting information and constructing an evoked set of alternative products and/or services, the consumers perform comparison among brands, product characteristics or services. The capability of solving problems among various products and/or services is then identified. The products and/or services which can fulfill needs or motives, which initiated the decision-making process will be selected. Brands, which will be selected to group purchase options, will also be considered during the alternative evaluation process (Hawkins, Roger; & Kenneth. 1998: 150).

Purchase decision

This step occurs when the “evoked set” has been considered and been narrowed down to one. This is where the consumer decides the purchase location. In addition, consumers may also form an intention to buy the most preferred brand. However, two serious factors can intervene between the purchase intention and the purchase decision. The first factor is attitudes of other people. A buyer’s preference for a brand will increase if someone he or she respects favors the same brand strongly. The second factor is the unpredictable situational factor that may erupt to change the purchase intention (William. 2002: 58).

Postpurchase behavior

When buying product, consumers expect certain outcomes from the purchase. They will experience some level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This action influences a consumer's subsequent behavior. If the consumer is satisfied, he or she will exhibit a higher probability of purchasing again. The importance of postpurchase satisfaction suggests that product claims must truthfully represent the product's likely performance. Dissatisfaction may lead consumers to form negative attitudes toward the brand, and even eliminates the brand from the consumer's purchase options.

To understand the stage of buying decision process; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and postpurchase behavior, helps marketers create the best strategy to retain the customer and repurchase in the future.

2.1.3 Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Decisions

People buy different products from different brands to satisfy their needs. Consumer purchases are strongly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristic. Culture factors, which include culture and values, subculture, and social class, exert the broadest influence over consumer decision making.

Social factors sum up the social interactions between a consumer and influential groups of people, such as reference groups, opinion leaders, and family members.

Individual factors, which include gender, age, family life-cycle stage, personality, self-concept, and lifestyle, are unique to each individual and play the major role in the type of products and services consumers want.

Psychological factors determine how consumers perceive and interact with their environments and influence the ultimate decisions consumers make (Lamb, Jr., Hair, Jr.; & McDaniel. 2004: 152). Exhibit 2 summarizes these influences.

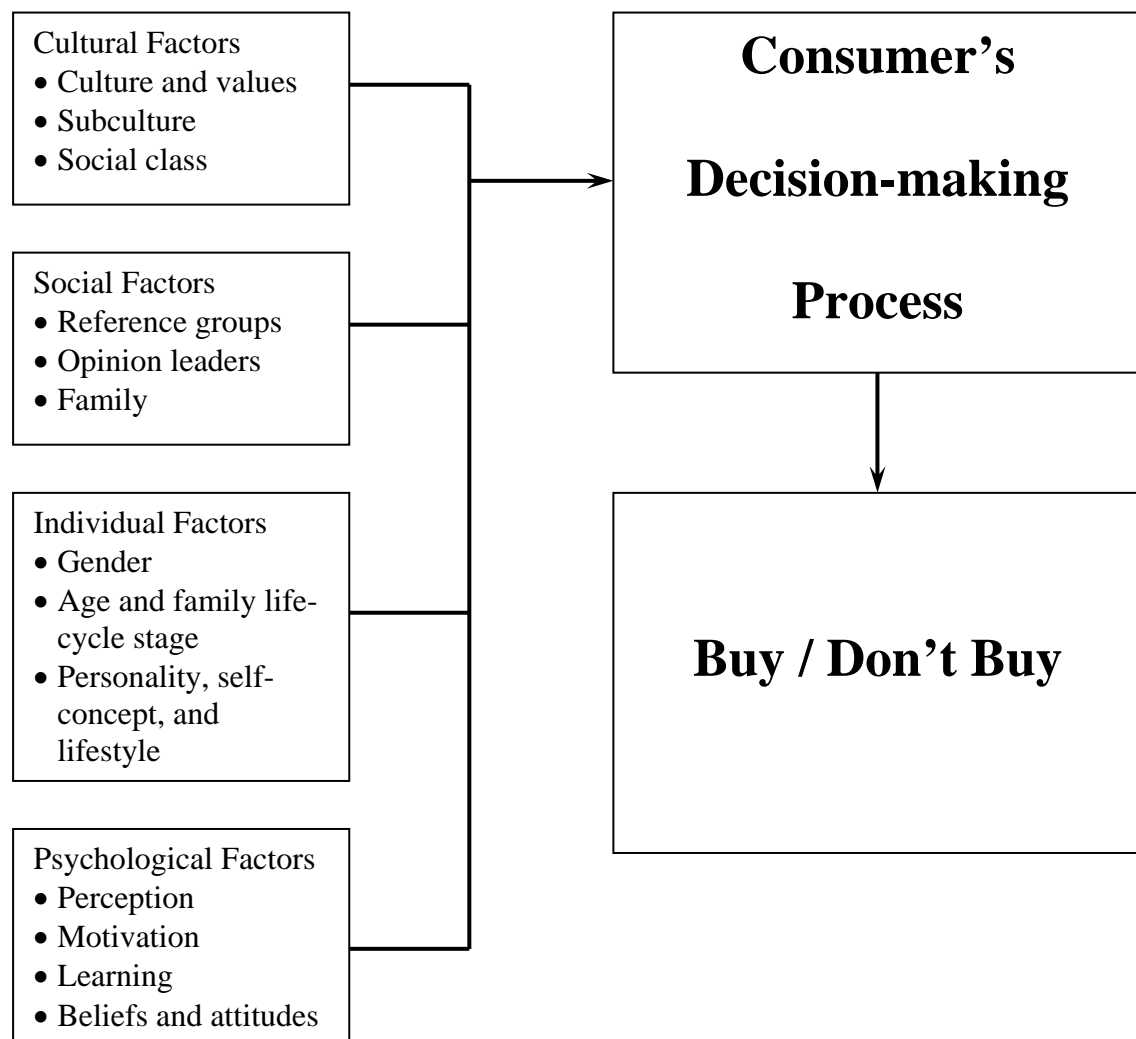


Exhibit 2 Factors that affect the consumer decision-making process

Lamb, Jr., Hair, Jr.; & McDaniel. *Marketing*. (2004) P.152

Cultural factors

Culture is the a of basic values, perception, wants and behaviors learned by a member of society from family and other institutions. Every group or society has a cultural influence on buying behavior that may vary greatly from country to country, or even neighborhood to neighborhood. Each culture contains smaller subcultures which consist of

a group of people with shared value system based on common life experiences and situations. Subcultures also include nationalities, religions, racial groups, and geographic regions.

Social Factors

Almost every society has some forms of social class structure. Social classes are society's relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values, interest, and behaviors. Social class is not determined by single factor, but is measured as a combination of occupation, income, education, wealth, and other variables. Social classes show distinct product and brand preferences in areas such as clothing, home, furnishing, leisure activity, and automobiles (Krigjsman. 2007: online).

Most consumers are likely to seek out the opinions of others to reduce their search and evaluation. They may also seek out others' opinions for guidance on new products or services. Specifically, consumers interact socially with reference groups, opinion leaders, and family members to obtain product information and decision approval. Reference group can be defined as two or more people who interact to accomplish individual or mutual goals. Groups that have direct influence and to which a person belongs are called

membership groups. In contrast, reference groups serve as direct or indirect points of comparison or reference in forming consumers' attitudes or behaviors.

Reference groups frequently include individuals known as group leader, or opinion leader. Opinion leaders are persons who influence others because of their special skills, knowledge, personality, or other characteristics. In other case, marketers may use buzz marketing by enlisting or even creating opinion leaders to spread the word about their brands.

Family member can strongly influence consumer's behavior. Husband and wife involvement varies widely by product category and by stage in the buying process. In the United States, the wife traditionally has been the main purchasing agent for the family, especially in the areas of food, household products, and clothing.

The consumer's position in each group can be defined in terms of both role and status. A role consists of the activities people expected to perform according to persons around them. Each role carries a status reflecting the general esteem given to it by society. People often choose products that show their status in society (Kotler. 2000 : 177).

Individual Factors

A person's buying decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics that are unique to each individual, such as gender; age, life-cycle stage, personality, self-concept, and lifestyle. Gender: physiological differences between men and women resulting different needs, such as health and beauty products. Trends in gender marketing are influenced by the changing roles of men and women in society. For instance, as women around the world are working and earning more, many industries are attracting new customers by marketing to women (Lamb, Jr., Hair, Jr.; & McDaniel. 2004: 165).

The age and family life-cycle stage of a consumer can have a significant impact on consumer behavior. People change the goods and services they buy over their lifetimes. Taste in food, clothes, furniture, and recreation are often age related. Buying is also shaped by the stage of family life-cycle. Traditional family life-cycle stages include young singles and married couples with children. Young singles spend more than average on alcoholic beverages, education, and entertainment. New parents typically increase their spending on health care, clothing, housing, and food. Household with children spend more on food, entertainment, personal care products, and education, as well as cars and gasoline. A consumer's occupation also affects the goods and services bought. Blue collar workers tend

to buy more rugged work clothes, whereas executives buy more business suits. Economic situation will affect product choice. If economic indicators point to recession, marketers can take steps to redesign, reposition, and reprice their products closely.

Each consumer's distinct personality influences his or her buying behavior.

Personality is a broad concept that can be thought of as a way of organizing and grouping how an individual typically reacts to situations. It combines psychological makeup and environment forces. Self-concept, or self-perception, is how consumers perceive themselves. It includes attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and self-evaluation. Personality and self-concept are reflected in lifestyle. A lifestyle is a mode of living, as identified by a person's activities, interests, and opinions. People coming from the same subculture, social class, and occupation may have different lifestyles.

Psychological Factors

An individual's buying decisions are further influenced by psychological factors: perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitudes. These factors are what consumers use to interact with their world. They are the tools consumers use to recognize their feelings, gather and analyze information, formulate thoughts and opinions, and take action.

Motivation is a dynamic factor which is always changing in reaction to life experiences. A

need becomes a motive when it is aroused to a sufficient level of intensity. A motive is a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction. Many human motivation theories have been developed by many psychologists. One popular theory belongs to Dr. Abraham Maslow. His theory, which is based on universal hierarchy of human needs, explains five basic levels of human needs, sequencing in order from lower-level needs to higher-level needs. Five needs of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are psychological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, ego needs and self-actualization (Schiffman; & Kanuk. 2000: 80).

A motivated person is ready to act. How the person acts is influenced by his or her perception of the situation. Perception is the process by which people select, organize, and interpret information to form meaningful picture of the world. In essence, perception is how we see the world around us and how we recognize that we need some help in making a purchasing decision. The perceptual process is also influenced by characteristics of a stimulus such as size, color, or intensity and the context in which it is seen or heard.

Almost all consumer behaviors result from learning which describe changes in individual's behavior arising from experience and practice. It is not possible to observe learning directly, but we can infer when it has occurred by person's actions. Most human

behaviors are learned. Learning theorists believe that learning is produced through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement (Kotler., Ang., Leong.; & Tan. 2003: 186).

Through doing and learning, people acquire beliefs and attitudes. A belief is a descriptive thought that a person has about something. Marketers are interested in the beliefs that people formulate about specific products and services, because these beliefs make up product and brand images that affect buying behavior. An attitude is a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and actions toward some object or idea (Krech., Crutchfield.; & Ballachey. 1999: 208). Attitudes put consumers into a frame of mind of liking or disliking things, or moving toward or away from them.

In conclusion, the aim of marketing is to meet and satisfy target customer's needs and wants. Understanding the factors affecting consumer buying process: cultural factors, social factors, individual factors and psychological factors help marketers adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies more effectively reach the consumer.

2.2 Marketing Mix

The term marketing mix refers to the four major areas of decision making in the marketing process that are blended to obtain the results desired by the organization. The four elements of the marketing mix are sometimes referred to the 4 Ps of marketing. Each element in the marketing mix is product, price, promotion, and place (Kotler. 2000 : 15).

Product

The first element in the marketing mix is the product. A product is any combination of goods and services offered to satisfy the needs and wants of consumers. Thus, a product is anything tangible or intangible that can be offered for purchase or use by consumers. A tangible product is one that consumers can actually touch, such as a computer. An intangible product is a service that cannot be touched, such as computer repair, income tax preparation, or an office call.

Price

The second element in marketing mix is price. Price is simply the amount of money that consumers are willing to pay for a product or service. In price setting, companies should estimate customer reactions to possible prices. Companies should also estimate the

preferable profit margin and possible discounts in the future. Companies must be aware of legal restrictions on pricing.

Place

Place refers to having the right product, in the right location, at the right time to be purchased by consumers. This proper placement of products is done through middle people called the channel of distribution. The channel of distribution is comprised of interdependent manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. These groups are involved with making a product or service available for use or consumption.

Promotion

Promotion is a communication process that takes place between a business and its various publics. Publics are those individuals and organizations that have an interest in what the business produces and offers for sale. In order to be effective, businesses need to plan promotional activities with the communication process in mind. The elements of the communication process are: sender, encoding, message, media, decoding, receiver, feedback, and noise.

Recently, the American scholars; Booms and Bitner (2007: online) had extended the marketing mix model from the four in the original to seven or what is known as: 7 Ps. The

traditional marketing mix model was primarily directly and useful for tangible product. The 7 Ps model is more useful for service industries which are people, process, and physical evidence.

People

An essential ingredient to any service provision is the use of appropriate staff and people. Recruiting the right staff and training them appropriately in the delivery of their service is essential if the organization wants to obtain a form of competitive advantage. Consumers make judgments and deliver perceptions of the service based on the employees they interact with. Staff should have the appropriate interpersonal skills, aptitude, and service knowledge to provide the service that consumers are paying for.

Process

Refers to the systems used to assist the organization in delivering the service. It is the process that allowed you to obtain an efficient service delivery. For instance banks that send out credit cards automatically when their customers' old one has expired again require an efficient process to identify expiry dates and renewal.

Physical Evidence

Physical evidence is a way of formalizing aspects of place and product that are particular to service purchases. It refers to all the physical things that a purchaser of a service might encounter. This would include the ambience and design of the surroundings in which the service is encountered, tickets and information leaflets.

2.3 Related Research

Since this research is mainly related to marketing mix. The survey of related research was focused on factors of marketing mix associated to the main point.

Chupayuk (1999) worked studied about opinions toward food supplements of consumers in Bangkok. The results revealed that more than half of the respondents were married women with average age of 39.2 years old, with bachelor's degree, owned private businesses, and average income of 22,428.10 baht, more than half of the respondents consumed food supplements prior to the research. The two most important factors were labeling and price, with the spending average of 500 to 1,000 baht from independent distributors every three months. Also other important factors of purchase were media and friends. The research concluded that opinions toward food supplements depended on

gender and marital status. Promotion mix showed that consumers with different age, education, occupation, and income had different health concerns.

Sae-tang (2006) studied about factors that affect the behaviors of purchasing Swensen's Take Home ice-cream from retailers of consumers in Bangkok. The results showed that the customers were mostly single women aged between 21 and 31 years, with a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, working as employees of a private company, and having income of 20,001 to 50,000 baht per month. In addition, it was also found that consumers recognized the importance of marketing factors at high level. The results showed they were satisfied with the product's marketing mix in the aspect of product, shop, distribution channels and marketing promotion at very high level. All marketing mix factors, including product price place and promotion, have positive relationship with consumers' purchasing behavior in term of frequency of purchase at low level.

Meanwhile, Phokanan (1999) found from her study that the difference of gender, age, demographic, marital status, and occupation had effects on the consumer behavior. Health status did not affect the consumer decision making. In addition, communication channel of Apaibhubeth products had effects on consumer decision making.

Mahachanok (2003) studied factors effecting vitamin C dietary supplement consumption behavior of consumers in Bangkok metropolitan area. The findings demonstrated that the most favorite brand is Bio C (Blackmores). Demographic: consumers with difference age and education level are statistically significant different at 0.05 with the type of vitamin C dietary supplement consumption. Consumers with different marital age, educational level, occupation, income were statistical significant different at 0.05 with the brand of vitamin C dietary supplement consumption. Consumers with the different gender, marital status, education level were statistically significant different at 0.05 with paying vitamin C dietary supplement. Consumers with different age, occupation, income, were statistically, significant different at 0.05 with the quantity of vitamin C dietary supplement consumption. There were direct relationships between the attitude toward the marketing mix such as attitude toward price, place, promotion and the frequency of vitamin dietary supplement eating with a low level at statistically significant of 0.05.

Another interesting study of Chaihiranwattana (1997), revealed the demographic characteristics of consumers in Bangkok Metropolitan Area gender had no effect on the informants' age range was from 26 to 35, with average education of a bachelor degree, and a monthly income range of 10,000 – 20,000 baht. Opinions from the respondents showed

that approval from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the quality of products, and suggestion from doctors were the three most rated factors.

Sirirasmee (1999) studied on food supplement business in Thailand and found that the growth rate was increasing and this correlated with consumers' demand and market competition. The food supplement industry should emphasized more on the importance of the quality, product claim, safety, price, public image, and natural derived products. The marketing strategy should increase awareness through advertising media such as televisions, radio, newspapers, banners, and brochures.

In conclusion, there have been a lot of research works studying on consumer behaviors and marketing mix in the marketing area. Those research works focus on different products depending on the focusing point of the researchers. Even though, there are a lot of research works focusing on the determination of effective marketing mix or 4 Ps, there is no specific study on 7 Ps that are product, price, place, promotions, people, process and physical evidence. This research, therefore, attempted to study the marketing mix comprising 7 Ps to see how these influenced the buying decision of customers.

CHAPETR 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of the research. It contains five parts:

subjects of the study, procedures of the study, research instrument, data collection and data analysis. The details are as follows:

3.1 Informants of the Study

The informants of this study consisted of fifty Bangkok customers who bought Herbalife's products from BNA company. They were randomly selected to answer the questionnaire.

3.2 Procedures of the Study

The primary data was collected from responses to questionnaire distributed to a sample group of 50 customers, both male and female of different ages and occupations.

However, the age of sample group is 18 above due to the company rules which states that

people under 18 is not authorized to buy Herbalife product from BNA. The researcher distributed a set of questionnaire to the target group who bought Herbalife's products during September, 2007.

3.3 Research Instrument

An instrument in this research was a questionnaire distributed to the randomly selected customers of Herbalife products from "BNA". The questionnaire was adapted from the researcher specialist from a private company.

The questionnaire was designed to measure the factors affecting buying decision of both Herbalife dietary supplement products and other brands. It was divided into four parts convincing the objectives of the research: the general information, the measurement of effects on the marketing mix towards Herbalife consumption, the measurement of effects on the marketing mix towards dietary supplement products available in the market, and consumers' behavior of Herbalife product use.

The questionnaire was adjusted from two previous drafts covering 7 Ps in part two and three because the marketing plan of the Herbalife company focused both products and services. However, in part three, the results shown that the respondents did not answer the

last 3 Ps which are people, process, and physical evidence because other dietary supplement products focused on the products only. Therefore, the last 3 Ps were neglected from part three in the final draft. The questionnaire is shown in the appendix.

3.4 Data collection

Fifty randomly selected customers, who bought Herbalife's products from "BNA" during September, 2007 were asked to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the Thank You party. The party was set up every Thursday at Jet Bar and Restaurant, Thonglor, Bangkok. The questionnaires were later analyzed.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the data collection had been completed, the researcher classified the information into four parts: the general information of the respondents, the measurement of effects on the marketing mix towards Herbalife product consumption, the measurement of effects on the marketing mix towards dietary supplement products available in the market, and consumer behavior of Herbalife product use. Percentage was used for calculating and analyzing the data. The findings were presented in the form of tables.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. Details of the data obtained from the completed questionnaires which consisted of four parts: general information of the respondents, factors of marketing mix affecting the Herbalife products' buying decision making, factors of marketing mix affecting other dietary supplement products' buying decision making, and the customer's behavior of Herbalife product use.

Tables were drawn to display the findings in percentages and brief discussion is presented underneath each table.

PART I. GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The questionnaire was randomly distributed to customers who bought Herbalife products from BNA at the Thank You party held at Jet bar and restaurant, Thonglor, every Thursday in September 2007. Details were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: General Information of the Respondents

Item	Number of respondents	Percentage
1. Gender		
Male	24	48%
Female	26	52%
Total	50	100%
2. Age		
19-29	28	56%
30-39	17	34%
40-49	3	6%
50 or above	2	4%
Total	50	100%
3. Status		
Single	27	54%
Married	19	38%
Divorced	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Number of respondents	Percentage
4. Background Education	2	4%
Less than or equivalent to high school	7	14%
Diploma	30	60%
Bachelor's degree	11	22%
Above Bachelor's degree	50	100%
Total		
5. Occupation		
Student	10	20%
Housekeeper	3	6%
Government officer	5	10%
Business owner/ Self employed	24	44%
Private company officer	6	12%
Other	2	4%
Total	50	100%
6. Income (Per month)		
Below 10,000 baht	3	6%
10,001-20,000 baht	8	16%
20,001-30,000 baht	15	30%
Above 30,000 Baht	24	48%
Total	50	100%

From Table 1, it can be seen that 52% of the respondents were female. The remaining (48%) were male. 56% of the respondents were 19-29 years old, 34% were 30-39 years old, 6% were 40-49 years old, and 4% were 50 years old and above.

54% of the respondents were single, 38% were married, and 8% were divorced.

60% of the respondents were Bachelor's degree holders, 22% of them held above Bachelor's degree, 7% of them held a Diploma.

The majority of the respondents (44%) were business owners or self employed while 20% were students. 12% of them were private company officers, 10% were government officers, and 6% was housekeepers. The respondents' income range was put into four groups: below 10,000 baht, 10,001-20,000 baht, 20,001-30,000 baht, and above 30,000 baht. The results revealed the percentage of respondents in each group was at 6%, 16%, 30%, and 48% respectively.

PART II. FACTORS OF MARKETING MIX AFFECTING BUYING DECISION

MAKING OF THE HERBALIFE PRODUCTS

This section presents factors that affect the buying decision of the respondents towards Herbalife's dietary supplement food products. The results of this part are presented in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2.

Table 2.1: Customers' Decision on Buying Herbalife Products Regarding the Factors of

Marketing Mix: Product, Price and Place

Item	Very important		Somewhat Important		Fair		Somewhat unimportant		Very unimportant		Total N/P	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Product												
Good Quality	43	86%	7	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Natural ingredients	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
FDA Approval	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Various qualities	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Reputation and Credibility	31	62%	0	0%	10	20%	7	14%	2	4%	50	100%
Convenience for usage	34	68%	16	32%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Price												
Reasonable price	0	0%	7	14%	42	84%	1	2%	0	0%	50	100%
Terms of payment	0	0%	0	0%	48	96%	2	4%	0	0%	50	100%
Price reliability of BNA dealers	41	82%	9	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Place												
Location of company	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	18	36%	32	64%	50	100%
Easy Access	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	12	24%	38	76%	50	100%

According to the product mix, all respondents (100%) considered the issues of natural ingredients, FDA approval and various qualities (lose weight, gain weight, and maintain good health) as "very important" when they buy Herbalife products. The findings also reveal that 86% of the respondents thought that the good quality was rated as "very

important". In terms of convenience for usage (tablet size, natural color, and odorless), 68% of the respondents thought it was "very important". In terms of reputation and credibility, 62% of the respondents considered it "very important". Whereas 32% of them considered it "somewhat important".

Regarding the price mix, most of the respondents (96%) rated the terms of payment as "fair". In terms of reasonable price, 84% of them considered "fair". Meanwhile, In terms of price reliability of BNA dealers, 82% of them thought it was "very important".

Concerning the place mix, 64% of the respondents believed that the location of the company was "very unimportant" where as 36% of them believed that it was "somewhat unimportant". In terms of easy access, 76% of them thought it was "very unimportant". Meanwhile, 24% of them believed that it was "somewhat unimportant".

Table 2.2: Customers' Decision on Buying Herbalife Products Regarding the Factors of

Marketing Mix: Promotion, People, Process and Physical Evidence

Item	Very important		Somewhat important		Fair		Somewhat unimportant		Very unimportant		Total N/P	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Promotion												
Internet advertising	44	88%	0	0%	6	12%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Information from nutrition seminars	47	94%	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Guaranteed Satisfaction	43	86%	0	0%	7	14%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
After-sales service	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Special discounts	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Party or meeting for customers	41	82%	2	4%	7	14%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
People												
Politeness of distributors	44	88%	0	0%	6	12%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Resourceful distributors	39	78%	6	12%	5	10%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Product result experienced for distributors	46	92%	0	0%	4	8%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Process												
Fast delivery	43	86%	0	0%	7	14%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Correct product delivery	44	88%	0	0%	6	12%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Correct address delivery	46	92%	1	2%	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Physical Evidence												
Expectation of product result	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Expectation of services	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%

According to promotion mix, all respondents (100%) revealed that after sales service and special discounts for members were “very important”. Also, 94% of them believed that information from nutrition seminars was “very important”. In terms of Internet advertising, 88% of the respondents thought it was “very important”. Whereas 86% of them realized that guaranteed satisfaction (refund within 30 days) was “very important”. In terms of the issues of party or meeting, 82% of them thought it was “very important”.

Regarding the people mix, the majority of the respondents (92%) claimed that product result of distributors was “very important”. Also, 88% of them thought the courtesy of distributors was “very important”. Whereas, 78% considered knowledgeable distributors “very important”.

Concerning the process mix, most of the respondents (92%) revealed that correct address delivery was “very important”. In term of correct product delivery, 88% of the respondents considered “very important”. In term of fast delivery, 86% of them claimed that it was “very important”.

Regarding physical evidence mix, expectation of product result and expectation of services, all respondents (100%) considered that these factors were “very important”.

To sum up, the factors that all BNA customers (100%) considered the most important when they buy Herbalife products were: product mix, promotion mix and physical evidence mix. Product factors which all respondents (100%) regarded as important were natural ingredients, FDA approval and various qualifications: weigh lose, weight gain and good health. For the promotion factors, they chose after-sales service and special discounts for Herbalife's customers. Lastly, concerning physical evidence factors, all respondents (100%) emphasized that both expectation of product result and expectation of services were "very important". It could be possibly assumed that when customers decided to buy Herbalife's products, they seriously considered these three aspects. Therefore, the Herbalife's distributors should give priority the three factors in order to meet or exceed the customers' buying decision. In addition, the issues of people and process mix were considered as "very important" when the customers bought Herbalife's products. Consequently, the Herbalife's distributors should also pay attention on these two factors as well.

Interestingly, the findings showed some factors that do not affect buying decision of BNA customers. The respondents considered the following factors as "fair", "somewhat or very unimportant". These factors were price and place mix, reasonable price (84%), terms

of payment (96%), and price reliability of BNA dealers (82%), location of company (64%) and easy access (76%).

To sum up, when the major significant factors - product, promotion and physical evidence - meet or exceed the customers' buying decision, they do not pay much attention for the price of products.

PART III. FACTORS OF MARKETING MIX AFFECTING THE CUSTOMERS'

BUYING DECISION MAKING OF OTHER DIETARY SUPPLEMENT PRODUCTS

This section presents the factors that are important when buying the dietary supplement food products available in the market. The results of this part are presented in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Customers' Decision on Buying Other Dietary Supplement Product Regarding the Factors of Marketing Mix

Item	Very important		Somewhat important		Fair		Somewhat unimportant		Very unimportant		Total N/P	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Product												
Good taste	35	70%	10	20%	0	0%	1	2%	4	8%	50	100%
Natural ingredients	39	78%	11	22%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
FDA Approval	50	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Expected quality	46	92%	4	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Reputation and Credibility	45	90%	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	50	100%
Convenience for usage	30	60%	15	30%	5	10%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Price												
Reasonable price	42	84%	8	16%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Reasonable price compared with other brands	41	82%	9	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%

Table 3.1 (continued)

Item	Very important		Somewhat important		Fair		Somewhat unimportant		Very unimportant		Total N/P	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Place												
Convenience of purchasing place	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	1	2%	44	88%	50	100%
Product availability	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	2	4%	43	86%	50	100%
Promotion												
Internet advertising	0	0%	0	0%	3	6%	5	10%	42	84%	50	100%
Radio advertising	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	4	8%	44	88%	50	100%
Television advertising	0	0%	45	90%	5	10%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Magazine advertising	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	5	10%	43	86%	50	100%
Special discount for members	32	64%	0	0%	18	36%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%
Free taste and demonstration at sale points	30	60%	8	16%	9	18%	3	6%	0	0%	50	100%
Free gifts	26	52%	22	44%	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	50	100%

All respondents (100%) considered the first marketing mix, in terms of the product “very important” with FDA approval when they buy other products. In terms of expected quality, 92% of the respondents thought it was “very important”. In terms of reputation and credibility of the company, 90% of the respondents thought that it was “very important”. In terms of natural ingredients, 78% of the respondents considered it “very important”. The findings also revealed that the majority of respondents (70%) thought that the good taste

was “very important”. For the convenience for usage (tablet size, natural color, and odorless) 60% of the respondents revealed that it was “very important” while 30% of them stated that it was “somewhat important”.

In terms of the price mix, 84% of the respondents pointed out that the reasonable price was “very important”. In terms of reasonable price compared with other brands, 82% of them considered that it was “very important”.

Regarding the place mix, 88% of respondents stated that the convenience of purchasing place was “very unimportant”. 86% of them also stated that it was “very unimportant” with product availability.

Concerning the promotion mix, 90% of the respondents revealed that television advertising was “very important”. For radio advertising, 88% of the respondents thought it was “very unimportant”. Also magazine advertising, 86% of them thought it was “very unimportant”. In terms of Internet advertising, 84% of them realized that it was “somewhat important” with this factor. In terms of special discount for members, 64% of the respondents thought that it was “very important”. Another 36% of them stated that it was “fair”. For the free taste and demonstration of products at sale points, 60% of the respondents thought that it was “very important”. In terms of free gifts promotion, 52%

of the respondents concerned that it was “very important” while 44% of them revealed that it was “somewhat important”.

The findings revealed that the factors that all respondents (100%) considered the most important when they buy other dietary supplement products were: product and price mix. The product mix which all respondents (100%) chose is FDA approval. In addition, most respondents considered that price mix: reasonable price and reasonable price compared with other brands were “very important”. It could possibly be that when customers decided to buy other dietary supplement products, they considered these two aspects as most important factors.

Interestingly, the promotion mix can be divided into two factors, advertising and sales promotion. For the advertising factors, most respondents considered that radio advertising (88%), magazine advertising (86%), and Internet advertising (84%) were “very unimportant” but 90% of them considered television advertising as “somewhat important”. Furthermore, sales promotion factors which were special discount for members (64%) and free taste and demonstration of products at sale points (60%) were considered “very important”. Finally, 44% of them thought free gift promotion was “somewhat important”.

In conclusion, customers have their own reasons when selecting any brand of dietary supplement food. These were particularly referred as the product and price factors.

PART IV CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR OF HERBALIFE PRODUCT USE

This section presents the customers' behavior of Herbalife product use. The results of this part are presented in table 4.1 to 4.3.

Table 4.1: The Herbalife Customers' Behavior

Item	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Reason for using		
For better health	35	70%
Friends or family advices	6	12%
Motivation from medias	6	12%
Doctor or pharmacists' advices	3	6%
Others	0	0%
Total	50	100%
Influencing people		
Father/Mother	2	4%
Brother/Sister	5	10%
Friends	5	10%
Husband/Wife/Girl/ or Boyfriend	3	6%
Yourself	35	70%
Total	50	100%
Order process		
Order from an independent distributors	48	96%
Order from Herbalife warehouse	2	4%
Total	50	100%

The findings showed that 70% of the respondents used Herbalife products because they need the better health. Their friends' or family' s advices and the motivation from medias were equally chosen by 12% in each group. 6% of the respondents used it because the advices from their doctors or pharmacists.

When purchasing Herbalife products, most respondents (70%) relied on their own. The findings also revealed that the advices from father/ mother, brother/ sister, friends, and husband/ wife/ girl or boyfriend were not significant enough at 4%, 10%, 10%, and 6% of the respondents respectively.

For the order process, the results showed that 96% of the respondents ordered Herbalife products from an independent distributors while 4% of them ordered from Herbalife warehouse.

Table 4.2: Frequency of Buying Herbalife Product

Frequency of buying Herbalife products (per month)	Number of respondents	Percentage
once a month	45	90%
twice a month	4	8%
3 times a month	1	2%
Total	50	100%

In terms of frequency of buying Herbalife products, the majority of the respondents (90%) bought the products once a month while 8% of them bought it twice a month. Another 2% of them bought it three times a month.

Table 4.3: Amount of Money Spent on Herbalife Products

Amount spending for Herbalife products (per time)	Number of respondents	Percentage
4,800 baht	20	40%
4,100 baht	13	26%
2,400 baht	5	10%
1,200 baht	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.3 shows that most of the respondents (40%) spent approximately 4,800 baht for Herbalife products each time. The results also indicated that 26%, 24% and 10% of the respondents spent approximately 4,100 baht, 2,400 baht, and 1,200 baht each time for Herbalife products.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains three main sections: summary of the study, discussion of the major findings, limitations and recommendations for further studies.

Summary of the study

This study was conducted with fifty customers, who bought Herbalife's products from BNA Company. The purpose of the research is to explore the factors affecting the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife products and other dietary supplement food products. The data from the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed to answer two research questions as follows:

1. What are factors affecting the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife dietary supplement food products?
2. What are important factors customers consider when buying the dietary supplement food products available in the market?

Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that gender, age, status, education level, occupation, and income were significant factors affecting the buying decision of Herbalife customers. From the data gathered, most of the Herbalife customers were self employed and students, both male and female between the ages of 19-39. Only 10% of the customers were above 40 years old. The result also showed that the majority of Herbalife customers hold a bachelor's degree or above and their monthly income was 20,000 baht or above. This could be possibly stated that "BNA" aimed to attract the self-employed people who were able to buy the product at a premium price.

The following are the major findings addressing the research questions posed in the study.

Research question 1: What are factors affecting the buying decision of the customers towards Herbalife's dietary supplement food products?

From the study, it could be concluded that the customers considered almost every marketing mix when making a decision to buy Herbalife's dietary supplement food products but the finding revealed that all customers (100%) considered the product, promotion and physical evidence mix the most important factors concerning buying decision. Additionally, people and process were considered important as well.

According to the three factors of marketing mix, product, promotion and physical evidence; the results were as follows: for the product mix, it was found that all customers confirmed that FDA approval, natural ingredients, and various qualities (weight lose, weight gain, and good health) were considered the most important when they buy Herbalife product. The findings could be ascertained by Boonchuykuekoon (2001), who studied factors affecting buying decision of dietary supplement food and found that most respondents rated product mix, FDA Approval and natural ingredient, as the most important factors when they made a decision to buy a dietary supplement product.

For the promotion mix or sales promotion, the findings of this study revealed that all customers accepted that after-sales services and special discount were the most important

factors for choosing Herbalife products. The findings are supported by the study of Tripattanasuwan (2006) on product mix and integrated marketing communication (IMC) affecting buying behavior of "Nutrilife" dietary supplement products. She found that after-sales services and special discounts were considered highly important when compared with other sales promotions.

Regarding the physical evidence mix, all customers indicated that the expectation of product result and service were considered very important when they purchase Herbalife products. The results could be ascertained by a study of the consumer behavior of Suprederm customers by Kwanpare (2003). He found that when customers decided to buy a dietary supplement product, they always focus on qualities, FDA approval, ingredients, and reputation of the company of those products. After they decided to buy one product, they expect the good results and services at high level.

This could be concluded that these three factors: product mix, promotion mix, and physical evidence mix were the main factors to be considered when people decided to buy Herbalife's products.

In addition, people mix and process mix are other two important factors.

Chaihiranpattana (2002) who studied factors influencing direct sales business: a case study

of Amway company. She stated that customers wanted a good product as well as a good service in direct sales business. It could be concluded that the good personalities of distributors who could provide the customers enough information, were the essential factors in direct sales business.

Lastly, Herbalife distributors of "BNA" have their own "Before-After" album which provides the pictures of themselves and others who use products and get a good result to convince customers. Customers consider this factor as an important reason to choose the products as well.

To sum up, when the customers decided to buy Herbalife product, they considered the product, promotion and physical evidence mix the most important factors concerning buying decision.

Research question 2: What are important factors customers consider when buying other dietary supplement food products available in the market?

The study revealed that most customers considered the product mix and price mix the most important factors concerning buying decision of other dietary supplement products available in the market.

This study indicated that the factors aforementioned were rated at a high level. The findings are supported by the study of Hantakul (2002), who studied factors effecting dietary supplement. The results indicated that price and product are the important factors when they decided to buy or not to buy the products.

Interestingly, the promotion mix or advertising factors, were not rated as important. The advertising in the Internet, radio, and magazine was not rated as an important factor. Whereas, television advertising was rated “somewhat important” (90%). It could be assumed that the advertising in the Internet, radio, and magazine were not interesting enough to attract the customers. However, customers gained information about the products from television. This result is supported by Tubwej (2004), who studied the satisfaction of receiving information from medias. She found that television played a crucial role as most people confirmed that they could easily get information from TV advertising.

Regarding the customer’s behavior of Herbalife product use, the results showed that the most important reason that customers decided to use Herbalife was because they wanted a better health. Moreover, other factors are that they got information from friends and medias and they decided to buy Herbalife products themselves. The finding is supported by Eamsiri (2002) who studied factors affecting buying decision of Garcenia GTH

products. The finding showed that people bought the products because they were health concerned. They gathered information from their friends and medias and then they made a decision to buy the products themselves.

Regarding order process, most customers (96%) ordered Herbalife from their own distributor because it was easier than ordering products from the warehouse; they do not need to fill in the order form and they do not need to order products at least 2,600 baht per time for free delivery. On the other hand, when they order products from their distributors, they just call their distributor and make an appointment where to get the products. This process is a lot easier and matches their desire.

In terms of the frequency of buying Herbalife products, most customers (90%) bought the products once a month. It is because each product can be consumed within a month.

In terms of the amount of purchasing at a time, most customers were willing to pay about 4,800 or 4,100 baht. Normally, Herbalife sells their products in sets but the two popular sets are the "Ultimate" set which cost 4,800 baht and the "Advanced" set which cost 4,100 baht.

In conclusion, the customers thought that the need of good products and good services were much more important. The price, however, was a secondary decisive factor. On the other hand, when customers decided to buy other dietary supplement products, they looked at the price as the major concern. Therefore, Herbalife distributors should take this point into account to create the customer loyalty to the brand. According to the survey of the Siam Commercial Bank Research (1998), they found that when starting up a business, the price and the quality of the products should be the first two things to take into consideration, but when the customer had already chosen the products, and if the products could satisfy the customers, the price was not a major concern.

The findings and the data of this study can be used as a guideline for the owners or the distributors of the dietary supplement food products' companies to enhance the businesses, and for the new beginners who want to start a health business successfully.

Nevertheless, the owners or distributors should give equal importance to all the factors concerning buying decision because nowadays customers have more choices for the products. This can be ascertained according to Waller (1996), customers were increasingly open to new ideas, and they were subjected to new ideas and standards. Consequently, needs are continuously changing and customers have become more

demanding. For these reasons, the success of any brand of dietary supplement products depends on a number of factors; product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. If orchestrated well, these elements are a recipe for success and will certainly ensure re-ordering in the future.

Limitations and Recommendations for further studies

The limitations of this study are three folds. Firstly, the data was collected from only fifty customers who bought Herbalife products from “BNA” company. Hence, further study should explore the factors on buying decision of a larger number of customers towards Herbalife products in other companies such as “WBS”, “Mind and Care”, and others that do marketing for Herbalife products in Bangkok or other provinces. Since, a larger numbers of respondents for the study will yield more accurate and reliable data.

Secondly, the current study aimed to study and examine the marketing mix of Herbalife and any brand available in the market only on customers’ response to the questionnaire. Thus, it could be done with an in-depth interview and/or other open ended questionnaire which may reveal the customers’ individual attitudes more thoroughly.

Thirdly, this study focused on marketing mix or 7 Ps of buying decision on dietary supplement products but other research emphasized the 4 Ps only. So, the results of 7 Ps in other studies to support the findings of this study were not found. The future study should focus not only on 4 Ps but also on 7 Ps for buying decision on other brands of dietary supplement products.

Fourthly, the findings showed that the majority of the respondents were 18-39 years old because the party was held in the evening so people who came to the party were mostly consisted of teenagers and middle-aged people. So, further study should select a place or an event which can be distributed evenly among all ages.

Lastly, this research was using comparison between Herbalife and other dietary supplement products which did not have the same product range and services. Therefore, further study should compare companies which offer similar product range and services.

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ที่มีอิทธิพลต่อพฤติกรรมการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมที่หอนิวทริไลท์ของผู้บริโภคในเขต

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ถ่ายเอกสาร.

APPENDIX

แบบสอบถามการวิจัย

เรื่อง “การศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อของผู้บริโภคต่อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริม”
แบบสอบถามนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อเป็นเครื่องมือในการรวบรวมข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการวิจัย จึงขอความ
กรุณาในการตอบแบบสอบถาม และขอขอบพระคุณในความร่วมมือ

ส่วนที่ 1 คำถามเกี่ยวกับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

คำแนะนำ กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย ลงในช่อง () ที่ท่านเลือก

1. เพศ

<input type="checkbox"/> ชาย	<input type="checkbox"/> หญิง
------------------------------	-------------------------------

2. อายุ

<input type="checkbox"/> 19-29 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 ปีขึ้นไป

3. สถานภาพ

<input type="checkbox"/> โสด	<input type="checkbox"/> แต่งงาน	<input type="checkbox"/> หย่าร้าง
------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

4. ระดับการศึกษา

<input type="checkbox"/> น้อยกว่าหรือเทียบเท่ามัธยมศึกษา	<input type="checkbox"/> ปวช. ปวส. /อนุปริญญา
<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาตรี	<input type="checkbox"/> สูงกว่าปริญญาตรี

5. อาชีพ

<input type="checkbox"/> นักศึกษา	<input type="checkbox"/> แม่บ้าน / พ่อบ้าน
<input type="checkbox"/> ข้าราชการ/รัฐวิสาหกิจ	<input type="checkbox"/> ค้าขาย/ทำธุรกิจส่วนตัว
<input type="checkbox"/> พนักงานบริษัทเอกชน	<input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ).....

6. รายได้ส่วนตัวเฉลี่ยต่อเดือน

<input type="checkbox"/> น้อยกว่าหรือเท่ากับ 10,000 บาท	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-20,000 บาท
<input type="checkbox"/> 20,001-30,000 บาท	<input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 30,000บาท

ส่วนที่ 2 ปัจจัยทางการสื่อสารการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้อ เฮอร์บาไลฟ์

คำแนะนำ กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ เพียงคำตอบเดียวในช่องที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

ปัจจัยการสื่อสารการตลาด	สำคัญมากที่สุด	สำคัญมาก	ปานกลาง	สำคัญน้อย	สำคัญน้อยที่สุด
2.1 ด้านผลิตภัณฑ์					
2.1.1 เป็นผลิตภัณฑ์ที่มีคุณภาพ					
2.1.2 เป็นผลิตภัณฑ์ที่มีส่วนประกอบจากธรรมชาติ					
2.1.3 มีตรารับรองจาก อ.ย.					
2.1.4 คุณสมบัติ : ลดน้ำหนัก เพิ่มน้ำหนัก รักสุขภาพ					
2.1.5 ความมีชื่อเสียงและความน่าเชื่อถือของบริษัท					
2.1.6 ความสะดวกในการรับประทาน : เม็ดไม่ใหญ่เกินไป ไม่มีกลิ่นยา สีสั้เป็นธรรมชาติ					
2.2 ด้านราคา					
2.2.1 ราคาที่ขายอยู่เหมาะสมกับคุณภาพของสินค้า					
2.2.2 เงื่อนไขการชำระเงิน					
2.2.3 ราคาเท่ากันไม่ว่าจะซื้อจากผู้จัดจำหน่ายรายใด					
2.3 ด้านช่องทางการจัดจำหน่าย					
2.3.1 ทำเลที่ตั้งของร้าน					
2.3.2 มีความสะดวกในการเดินทาง					

ปัจจัยการสื่อสารการตลาด	สำคัญ มากที่สุด	สำคัญ มาก	ปานกลาง	สำคัญ น้อย	สำคัญ น้อย ที่สุด
2.4 ด้านการส่งเสริมการตลาด					
2.4.1 โฆษณาทางอินเทอร์เน็ต					
2.4.2 ข้อมูลที่น่าสนใจจากงานสัมมนาทางวิชาการของบริษัท					
2.4.3 รับประกันความพอใจ (คืนเงินภายใน 30 วัน)					
2.4.4 บริการหลังการขาย					
2.4.5 ส่วนลดพิเศษสำหรับสมาชิก					
2.4.6 งานเลี้ยงหรืองานพบปะสังสรรค์กับลูกค้า					
2.5 ด้านบุคลากร					
2.5.1 ผู้ขายพูดจาสุภาพ เรียบร้อย มีบุคลิกภาพดี					
2.5.2 ผู้ขายมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับตัวสินค้าและสามารถตอบข้อซักถามแก่ลูกค้าได้					
2.5.3 ผู้ขายใช้ผลิตภัณฑ์และได้ผลที่ดี ทำให้เกิดความน่าเชื่อถือ					
2.6 ระบบการจัดส่งสินค้า					
2.6.1 ส่งสินค้ารวดเร็ว					
2.6.2 ส่งสินค้าถูกต้องตามใบสั่งซื้อ					
2.6.3 ส่งสินค้าถูกต้องตามที่อยู่ที่ระบุ					
2.7 ด้านหลักฐานทางกายภาพ					
2.7.1 ความคาดหวังในประสิทธิภาพของสินค้า					
2.7.2 ความคาดหวังในด้านงานบริการ					

ส่วนที่ 3 ปัจจัยทางการสื่อสารการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหาร

เสริม

คำแนะนำ กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ เพียงคำตอบเดียวในช่องที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

ปัจจัยการสื่อสารการตลาด	สำคัญมากที่สุด	สำคัญมาก	ปานกลาง	สำคัญน้อย	สำคัญน้อยที่สุด
3.1 ด้านผลิตภัณฑ์					
3.1.1 มีรสชาติดี					
3.1.2 เป็นผลิตภัณฑ์ที่มีส่วนประกอบจากธรรมชาติ					
3.1.3 มีตรารับรองจาก อ.ย.					
3.1.4 มีคุณสมบัติตรงตามต้องการ					
3.1.5 ความมีชื่อเสียงและความน่าเชื่อถือของบริษัท					
3.1.6 ความสะดวกในการรับประทาน : เม็ดไม่ใหญ่เกินไป ไม่มีกลิ่นยา สีสันเป็นธรรมชาติ					
3.2 ด้านราคา					
3.2.1 ราคาที่ขายอยู่เหมาะสมกับคุณภาพของสินค้า					
3.2.2 ราคาผลิตภัณฑ์มีความเหมาะสมเมื่อเทียบกับผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้ออื่นๆ					
3.3 ด้านช่องทางการจัดจำหน่าย					
3.3.1 ผลิตภัณฑ์หาซื้อง่ายตามร้านค้าทั่วไป					
3.3.2 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีให้เลือกครบทุกประเภทที่ต้องการ					
3.4 ด้านการส่งเสริมการขาย					
3.4.1 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีโฆษณาผ่านอินเทอร์เน็ต					
3.4.2 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีโฆษณาผ่านวิทยุ					

ปัจจัยการสื่อสารการตลาด	สำคัญ มากที่สุด	สำคัญ มาก	ปานกลาง	สำคัญ น้อย	สำคัญน้อย ที่สุด
3.4.3 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีโฆษณาผ่านโทรทัศน์					
3.4.4 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีโฆษณาผ่านนิตยสาร					
3.4.5 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีรายการให้ส่วนลด ณ จุด ขาย					
3.4.6 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีการสาธิตและให้ชิมฟรี					
3.4.7 ผลิตภัณฑ์มีรายการให้ของแถม					

ส่วนที่ 4 พฤติกรรมการใช้ผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้อเฮอร์บาไลฟ์

คำแนะนำ กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย ลงในช่อง () ที่ท่านเลือก

4.1 เพราะเหตุใดท่านจึงตัดสินใจรับประทานผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้อเฮอร์บาไลฟ์ (กรุณาเลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

- () อยากมีสุขภาพที่ดี () เพื่อน หรือ คนใกล้ชิดแนะนำ
 () ได้รับแรงจูงใจจากสื่อโฆษณา () แพทย์ หรือ เภสัชกรแนะนำ
 () อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)

4.2 บุคคลใดที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์อาหารเสริมยี่ห้อเฮอร์บาไลฟ์

- () บิดา / มารดา () พี่ / น้อง () เพื่อน
 ()สามี / ภรรยา / แฟน () ตัวเอง

4.3 ท่านซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์เสริมอาหารยี่ห้อ เฮอร์บาไลฟ์จากทางใด (กรุณาเลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

- () สั่งซื้อจากผู้แทนจำหน่ายโดยตรง () สั่งซื้อที่บริษัทเฮอร์บาไลฟ์

4.4 ท่านซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์เสริมอาหารยี่ห้อ เฮอร์บาไลฟ์โดยเฉลี่ย.....ครั้งต่อเดือน

4.5 ค่าใช้จ่ายในการบริโภคผลิตภัณฑ์เสริมอาหารยี่ห้อ เฮอร์บาไลฟ์.....บาทต่อครั้ง

ขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถาม

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a Master's Project entitled "A Study of Factors on Buying Decision of Customers towards Dietary Supplement Food Products". Please fill out the following information according to your preference. Your assistance in completing the information required will be very useful for the study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Part 1 General Information

Direction: Please mark \surd in the provided box.

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

19-29

30-39

40-49

50 or above

3. Status

Single

Married

Divorced

4. Background Education

Less than or equivalent to High School Diploma

Bachelor degree

Above Bachelor degree

5. Occupation

Student

Housekeeper

Government Officer

Business owner/ self employed

Private Company Officer

Others.....

6. Income (Per month)

Below 10,000 baht

10,001-20,000 baht

20,001-30,000 baht

Above 30,000 baht

Part 2 Factors of marketing mix affecting buying decision making of the Herbalife products

Direction: Please mark ✓ in the provided box. Please choose only one answer that best describes your opinion.

Marketing mix	Very important	Somewhat important	Fair	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
2.1 Product					
2.1.1 Good quality					
2.1.2 Natural ingredients					
2.1.3 FDA approval					
2.1.4 Various qualities : weight lose, weight gain, and good health					
2.1.5 Reputation and credibility of company					
2.1.6 Convenience for usage (tablet size, natural color, odorless)					
2.2 Price					
2.2.1 Reasonable price					
2.2.2 Terms of payment					
2.2.3 Price reliability of BNA dealer					
2.3 Place					
2.3.1 Location of company					

Marketing mix	Very important	Somewhat important	Fair	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
2.3.2 Easy Access					
2.4 Promotion					
2.4.1 Internet advertising					
2.4.2 Information from Nutrition seminars					
2.4.3 Guaranteed satisfaction (refund within 30 days)					
2.4.4 After-sales service					
2.4.5 Special discounts for members					
2.4.6 Party or meeting for customers					
2.5 Company's People					
2.5.1 Courteous of distributors					
2.5.2 Resourceful distributors					
2.5.3 Product result experienced for distributors					
2.6 Distribution Process					
2.6.1 Fast delivery					
2.6.2 Correct product delivery					
2.6.3 Correct address delivery					
2.7 Physical Evidence					
2.7.1 Expectation of product result					
2.7.1 Expectation of service					

Part 3 Factors of marketing mix affecting the customers' buying decision making of other dietary supplement products

Direction: Please mark ✓ in the provided box. Please choose only one answer that best describes your opinion.

Marketing mix	Very important	Somewhat important	Fair	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
3.1 Product					
3.1.1 Good taste					
3.1.2 Natural ingredients					
3.1.3 FDA approval					
3.1.4 Expected quality					
3.1.5 Reputation and credibility of company					
3.1.6 Convenience for usage (tablet size, natural color, odorless)					
3.2 Price					
3.2.1 Reasonable price					
3.2.2 Reasonable price compared with other brands					
3.3 Place					
3.3.1 Convenience of purchasing place					
3.3.2 Product availability					
3.4 Promotion					
3.4.1 Internet advertising					
3.4.2 Radio advertising					
3.4.3 Television advertising					

VITAE

VITAE

Name: Miss Sudarin Auechotpanich

Date of Birth: February 10, 1980

Place of Birth: Bangkok

Address: 79 Soi Somded 1, Somded Road, Klongsan Bangkok 10600

Educational Background:

1998	Benjamarajarai School, Bangkok
2000	Bachelor of Arts (Thai)
	Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok
2008	Master of Arts (Business English for International Communication) Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok