

FACTORS AFFECTING THE CUSTOMER'S INTENTION TO SELECT ONLINE FITNESS SERVICE IN BANGKOK AND METROPOLITAN AREA

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ABSTRACT

At the current stage, the trend of health-loving conscious has been spread widely throughout the world. There are more than 200,000 health clubs and fitness gyms available in worldwide. Combining the technological advance in online communication device, an online fitness service has been born to serve the demand of health lovers who would like to have trust consultant or partner to guide them to better health. In consequence, this study has used questionnaire to collect data from 103 Thai who has a social media account living in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.

The study found out the majority of respondents are male, age between 31-40 years old, and monthly income between 20,001 – 40,000 Baht. Hypothesis testing revealed that (Statement of H1: Marketing Mix (4P's) will have an effect on consumers' intention to choose online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.), and (Statement of H2: Influencers will have an effect on consumers' intention to choose online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.). This partial relationship is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Keywords: Online Fitness Service, Marketing Mix, Purchase Intention

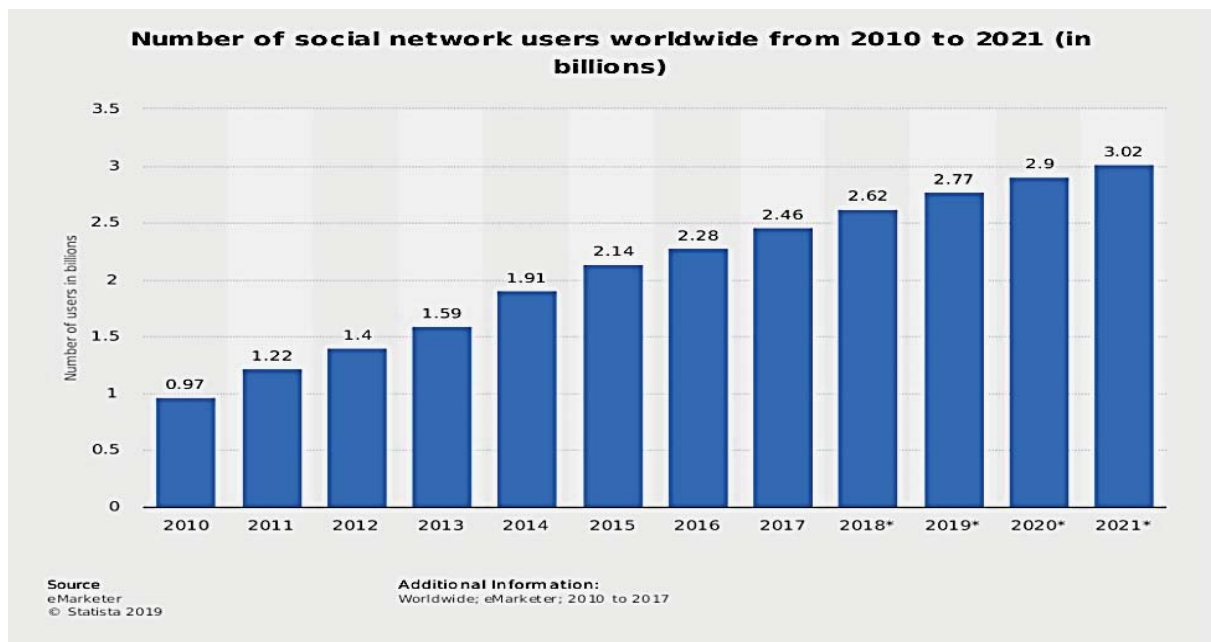
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Introduction

At the present time, the health-loving conscious has been rapidly growing, and linking with other business industries. One of the most related fields to healthy trends is physical fitness training which has become essential routine in worldwide scale. The core benefit of Physical fitness training is to improve or boost our fitness level which is the key to maintain youthfulness and good health. There are various terms of fitness training such as cardiovascular training, weight training, or calisthenics training.

Today, fitness trainer is highly demanded and job career's growth rate increasing in immensely ratio. According to IBISWorld research, in U.S market, personal training grew 2.5% between 2010 and 2015. Also, the number of employment is estimated at 590,146 persons. However, since the business competition is getting higher and higher, the online channel has been considered as a significant tool to reach the target.



From above image (www.statista.com, 2017), readers could understand that online social platforms have become more and more essential to humans' lives. So, fitness service providers have begun to make their moves to reach or instruct their clients via these platforms while a new definition of this career has been born as "online fitness trainer". While the competition of fitness training course becomes more intense making more choices for client to select a service course. With this situation, the interest picks the researcher what factors influencing buyers. Therefore, an implementation of factors identification is needed; demographic profiles, marketing mix (4 Ps'), influencers, and etc. The hypotheses were proposed as follows;
H1: Marketing Mix (4 Ps) will have an effect on consumers' intention to choose online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.

H2: Influencers will have an effect on consumers' intention to choose online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.

Investigating Construct

The definitions of key terms in this study are described as follows:

- Intention to purchase of this study means a kind of decision making that studies the reason to buy a particular brand by consumer (Shah et al., 2012). In other words, purchase intention has another aspect that the consumer will purchase a product after evaluation. Many factors affect the consumer's intention while selecting the product and the ultimate decision depends on consumers' intention with large external factors (Keller, 2001)

- Online fitness service of this study means a service providing to a targeted clients specializing in fitness and health through online platform. The service could be referred to instructor, experience, or satisfaction. Refers to Malek, M. H., Nalbene, D. P., Berger, D. E., & Coburn, J. W. (2002), fitness instructors use a personalized approach to assess, motivate, and train clients with regard to their health and fitness needs. Professional knowledge, responsibility, and courtesy of employees are the highest-ranked aspects of the core service in fitness industry (Lagrosen, S., & Lagrosen, Y. (2007))

- Influencer means an individual that has authority or power to affect the others' purchase decision or intention thanks to his/her authority, knowledge, position or relationship with his/her audience. The type of influencers in this study could be divided into the following categories;
 1. Celebrities
 2. Macro influencer
 3. Micro influencer

Methodology

The research is a survey research designed that uses a self-administrative questionnaire to collect the data from respondents. The survey implemented convenience sampling method by using both online and offline questionnaires to collect the data. The respondents are Thai who has a social media account living in Bangkok and Metropolitan area. Due to the number of population is unknown, the researcher use Taro Yamane table to calculate by the approximately sample size for this study (Poldongnok 2009). The sample size is calculated based on 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error. However, this study collected data from 384 samples due to the limitation in terms of study period for the independent study course, the researcher was allowed to collect 103 samples.

Data has performed normal distribution with $-1 < \text{Skewness} < 1$ and $-2 < \text{Kurtosis} < 2$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistic to describe variables by mean, frequency standard deviation and percentage. Multiple regression was used to find the relationship between marketing mix (4P's) and purchase intention as well as the relationship of influencers and purchase intention at the confidence level of 95% or $\alpha < 0.05$.

Result and Discussion

This study collected data from Thai who has a social media account living in Bangkok and Metropolitan area. The questionnaires were distributed to 127 person, resulting 109 respondents leaving the response rate of 85%.

First of all, the majority of respondents in this study is male (55.3%), age group is 31 -40 years old (70.9%), monthly income range is 20,001 – 40,000 Baht (32%), and the most popular social media platforms are Facebook (96.1%), Line (93.2%), and Instagram (68.9%).

In accordance of descriptive results of 4P's in this study, it can be revealed that the most agreed marketing mix are price (mean = 4.53), followed by product (mean = 4.36), place or distribute channel (mean = 4.15), and lastly is promotion (mean = 4.05)

For the descriptive results of Influencers, it can be arranged in order of level of agreement as follows; micro influencers (mean = 3.73), macro influencers (3.70), and celebrities (mean = 3.69).

In addition, the level of agreement of purchase intention is depicted as following table;

Table 1 : Descriptive statistic of purchase intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
1. I definitely would purchase a course of online fitness service in near the future.	103	3.35	1.118	Feel Neutral
2. I would purchase a course of online fitness service in near the future.	103	3.27	1.068	Feel Neutral
3. I might or might not purchase a course of online fitness service in near the future.	103	3.33	.943	Feel Neutral
4. I would not purchase a course of online fitness service in near the future	103	3.15	1.070	Feel Neutral
5. I definitely would not purchase a course of online fitness service in near the future.	103	2.94	1.227	Feel Neutral
Total	103	3.20	1.085	Feel Neutral

This leads to development of conceptual framework of the study and the following hypotheses:

H1* : Marketing Mix (4P's) will have an effect on customers' intention to select online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.

H2* : Influencers will have an effect on customers ' intention to select online fitness service in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.

Note:* Partial support at significant level of 0.05.

Table 2 : Relationship between marketing mix (4P's) and purchase intention

Items	Statistic test	Significance	
Marketing Mix (Product)	Multiple Regression	Sig = .005*, r = .279	
Brand name of the service provider is easy to memorize			
Marketing Mix (Promotion)			
1. Advertising			
I know the service provider via search engine (e.g. Google, or Youtube)			Sig = .020*, r = .303
2. Public Relation			
I know the service provider via online event posted on social media (e.g. Instagram, or Facebook)			Sig = .042*, r = .206
I know the service provider from online article in sports website.			Sig = .002*, r = .312
3. Personal Selling			
The service provider has customer service via online channel to provide fitness services information.			Sig = .000*, r = .364
4. Direct Marketing			
The service provider contacts me directly via online platforms (e.g. chat application, direct message on social media, or email).	Sig = .001*, r = .335		

Remarks : level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

The table 2 showed that marketing mix (4P's) has significant effect on customer's purchase intention. The factors of marketing mix affecting purchase intention are product, and promotion.

Marketing mix (product) and purchase intention

The study found that easy-to-memorize-brand name tends to increase the purchase intention of the customers (Sig = .005, and r = .279).

Marketing mix (promotion) and purchase intention

From the study, the result was found out that marketing mix (promotion) showed positive significant towards purchase intention. First of all, advertising via search engine tends to increase purchase intention of customer (sig = .020, and r = .303). Moreover, launching public relation campaign by posting online event on social media tends to increase purchase intention of the customer (sig = .042, and r = .206). Also, posting online article in sport website tends to increase the level of customer's purchase intention as well (sig = .002, and r = .312). Furthermore, having customer service via online channel tends to increase purchase intention of the customer (sig = .000, and r = .364). Lastly, contacting customer directly via online platform tends to increase purchase intention of the customer (sig = .001, and r = .335).

Table 3 : Relationship between influencers and purchase intention

Items	Statistic test	Significance
Influencers (Macro Influencer)	Multiple Regression	Sig = .029*, r = .340
Famous online streamers have posted an video about the service provider on their online channel (e.g. Youtuber, or Vlogger)		
Influencers (Micro Influencer)	Multiple Regression	Sig = .001*, r = .336
Local Youtubers (who has subscriber less than 500) posted a video on their channels.		

Remarks : level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$

The table 3 showed that influencers have significant effect on customer's purchase intention. The categories of influencers affecting purchase intention are macro influencers, and micro influencers.

Macro influencers and purchase intention

The study revealed that having famous online streamer posted an video about service on their online channel tends to increase the level of customer's purchase intention accordingly (sig = .029, and r = .340)

Micro influencers and purchase intention

The study showed that having local Youtuber posted a video on their channel tends to increase the level of customer's purchase intention accordingly (sig = .001, and r = .336)

Implication of Study

1. From the study, it implied the users considered that recognizable brand name of the service provider is surprisingly important and influential to the consumer's purchase intention. In this case, it would be recommendable to online service provider in any industry that the brand name is also one of the most importance tools to acquire consumer's consideration.

2. The users considered the importance of information acquisition which tools usage to responds the criteria in this study are advertising, public relation, direct marketing, and personal selling. The users tend to search the information via online platform such as search engine, social media, website, or online articles. Therefore, these mentioned tools are also recommended to implement in order to provide the information to the targeted users.

3. Regarding the study, macro influencers and micro influencers are playing an important role to users' purchase intention. At the moment, users tend to find the information via the internet website, and online influencers can be a crucial tool to demonstrate the information to targeted audience through their blogs, video channels, or articles. The type of suggested influencers implied in this study were macro influencers, and micro influencers which are more influential compared to traditional celebrities.

5.3 Limitation of the Study

The limitations of the study shall be analyzed to improve the studies of this area in the future. The points that the researcher would like to share are as follows;

1. Since the study only take place in Bangkok and Metropolitan area, the future study could be replicated and extend the sampling into other area or province such as Phuket, Chiang Mai, or Pattaya. It would be recommended the size of sample of future study should be extended to bigger size. This might help to increase the generalizability of the findings.
2. Another recommendation for the future study is to explore other factors such as branding and sponsorship disclosure which might have influence on purchase intention or purchase behavior of online fitness service's customer in Bangkok and Metropolitan area.
3. Other opportunities for the future study is to replicate a study identifying factors affecting purchase intention in online business industry related to health trends such as online healthy food delivery, or online personal trainer certification, since the trends of health conscious and digital communication are currently in the prosperous era.

In conclusion, the results in this study might benefits online fitness service provider in Thailand, since it can be served as a guideline in order to prepare better marketing strategies to understand the essence of targeted customers' wants.

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