

**FACTORS THAT AFFECT PURCHASING DECISION OF
SKIN CARE PRODUCT BY MEN IN BANGKOK**



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FACTORS THAT AFFECT PURCHASING DECISIONS OF SKIN CARE PRODUCTS BY MEN IN BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

The present lifestyle of men has changed, it has become very different from the past, increasing number of men are becoming better at taking care of their appearance and grooming in order to keep up with global trends. Men are becoming an increasingly growing consumer market for skin and body care, and this is a significantly growing population of consumers in this industry that are men.

For this paper, the purpose is to explore the decision making factors affecting purchasing of men's skincare products, and also to analyze the result related marketing theory and consumer behavior, which affects the purchasing decisions for skin care products of Thai men in Bangkok.

In-depth interviews will be used to collect detailed information from Thai men who live in Bangkok, aged 19- 39 years old. Video recorders will be used as research instruments. There are three critical factors affecting Thai men in their purchase of facial creams, these are brand reputation, price, odor. This paper will show that skin care products are vastly becoming more important the daily lives of men and the ever changing attitude of men towards skin care products as a whole.

KEY WORDS: Men / Skin care / consumer behaviour / Self-esteem

36 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In nature, many male species in the animal kingdom bear colorful ornaments in order to attract the opposite sex. Animals such as the peacock, Siamese fighting fish, ostrich proudly show off their colors as an indicator to the opposite sex of their dominance and quality as a mate (Academia.edu, 2009).

Human males are also vying for the attention of the female population, they are able to achieve this partly through focusing on personal appearances, fair skin, and good grooming.

Apart from clothing, cosmetics and beauty products help to increase confidence and appeal to the female gender to attract interest. Men are quickly catching up to women in embracing the routine of facial skin care regimen in several past years ago.

The conventional ideas about male and female behaviors and styles are evolving; aged old social conventions on gender stereotypes are slowly vanishing. More men are taking activities traditionally reserved for women from cooking, cleaning to knitting as they strive to become a well-rounded person.

Once considered a role for women, cooking has become a popular hobby for men in Thailand to show style and sophistication as well as being family-oriented or even romantic. Several cooking shows in Thailand are hosted by male Thai actors.

1.2 Issue Statement

As these old stigmas and assumptions fade away, men are slowly becoming more open to the role of cosmetics and beauty products in their everyday grooming. Men of all sexuality are taking a greater interest in their appearances, most notably, the “metrosexual” men.

These “metrosexual” men are categorized as straight men who are attracted to the opposite sex, however, they also happen to be quite conscious about their physical grooming and appearance. The word ‘metro’ is derived from ‘metropolitan’ and the word ‘sexual’ from ‘heterosexual’, referring to men who live in the cities, enjoy shopping and pay attention to their bodies and clothes because they worry about their looks. (Hall, Gough, Smith, 2012)

This group of men is able to spend a larger amount on skin care and grooming products than other men as they are more conscious about their overall physical appearances.

The term ‘masculinity’ and ‘macho’ no longer applies, it has become irrelevant when it comes to looking good. Men are becoming more open to personal grooming and the use of skin care and beauty products as society become more progressive and less tied down to old social conventions.

Another factor is globalization, people have become more conscious about other cultures as well, culture that normally pay less attention to men’s grooming are now more aware and becoming more conscious about men’s personal appearances because of influences from other cultures such as South Korea, Japan, China, Indonesia, and Thailand. Since there is now lesser cultural opposition to the use of skin care and other personal care products, these countries are quickly emerging as big players in men’s beauty and personal care market. Specifically, men all over Asia are progressively becoming more image-conscious and worried with their personal physical image, more so for the male white-collar segment because a pleasing image can serve as key indicators of social class. Beauty ideals in Asia are usually more often attached to success rather than vanity. Like women, Asian men aim for fair and flawless skin. Cosmetic surgery is now being recognized as a good and viable investment to achieve success. South Korea is now the most popular market in Asian for cosmetic surgery consumers; however, Thailand and China are expected to be a growing competitor in the coming decade (Beyondhallyu.com, 2013).

The current market for male grooming and skin care in Thailand is growing rapidly, this is partially being driven by the Thailand government’s campaign

to promote Thailand as the future for beauty capital of Asia. (Unilever-P&G, 2006)

Global sales for men's grooming and beauty care products are also growing rapidly, most notably so is the growth in Asia, which has been faster (9%) than the overall growth of the beauty segment (5%) and the personal care category (6%) as a whole with Vietnam, Taiwan, and Thailand leading the way. (Digitalmarket.asia, 2014).

The global men's grooming products market is forecasted to exceed \$33.2 billion by 2015, this according to a report by Global Industry Analysts, Inc. (Hommage.com, 2013).

The above information shows that men's grooming products are rapidly growing, and will continue to grow in the near future. Apart from men's clothing, men's cosmetics and skin care are gaining higher market share every day, including in Thailand.

Spending on skincare for men has grown significantly between 2008 to 2012 as shown in the graph below. Male skincare market shows a growth of 102% based on spending against male population in Asia. This graph may suggest that the growth rate for male skincare is climbing and still has significant potential for growth.

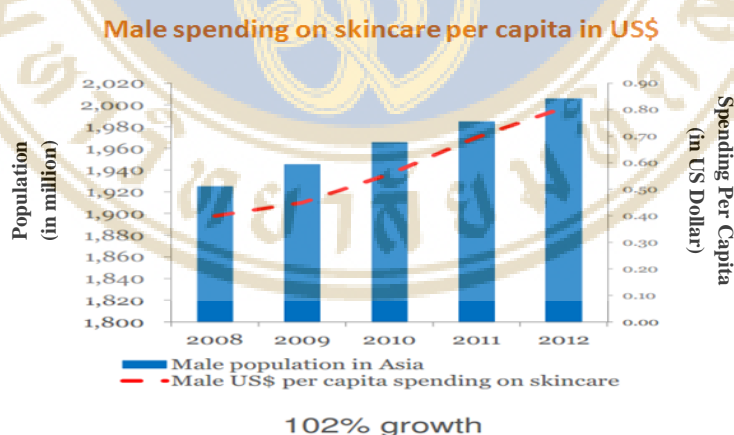


Figure 1.1 Male's spending on skin care per capita in Asia (Anuwong, 2013)

The proportion of men to women in Thailand is 1/3, so there is a big opportunity for new brands and products to gain market share in the skin care segment. (Indexmundi.com, 2014)

1.3 Research objectives

The objective of this research is to study the factors influencing Thai men in their purchasing behavior of skin care product, factors may compose of both internal and external. This study may also prove beneficial to cosmetic companies who plan to tap this market segment.

This research will cover several theories indicating the factors influencing men's purchasing behavior towards skin care products and to support and prove the author's hypothesis.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Self-Esteem theory

Blanchin, Chareyron, Levert (2010) defined “self-esteem” as the characterization of a certain attitude that, when held towards a given object, can involve positive or negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. Another definition centers on the “idea of discrepancy”, most notably the discrepancy between the self that the one wishes to be the “ideal one”, and the self that one currently sees oneself as being the “real” or “perceived self”.

They therefore concluded that the bigger the discrepancies between these two points are, the higher the individual’s self-esteem suffers.

The third way to define self-esteem is by looking at the psychological responses that a person holds towards oneself rather than looking at just attitudes alone.

Kermally (2004) refers to a component “Self-Esteem” by Maslow (1970) which stated that this need related to the need to feel good about one self. One such example is one’s desire become very good at one’s own work. He or she wants to feel confident, adequate and capable. If these needs are not met, an individual loses confidence in oneself and falls back to a sense of inferiority.

Based on these theories, the author is interested in exploring the relationship between self-esteem and influencing men’s behavioral decisions on purchasing skin care products. It is the author’s opinion that Thai men who apply skin care products must care about their image and are striving to become better looking in order to impress their social circles and become accepted.

This research will explore the effects of 'self-esteem' on the interviewee and to guide how other people's attitude and impressions on the interviewee affects their behavior.

2.2 Consumer behavior theory

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2006) there are two major components in the buyer behavior model which are marketing and other stimulus.

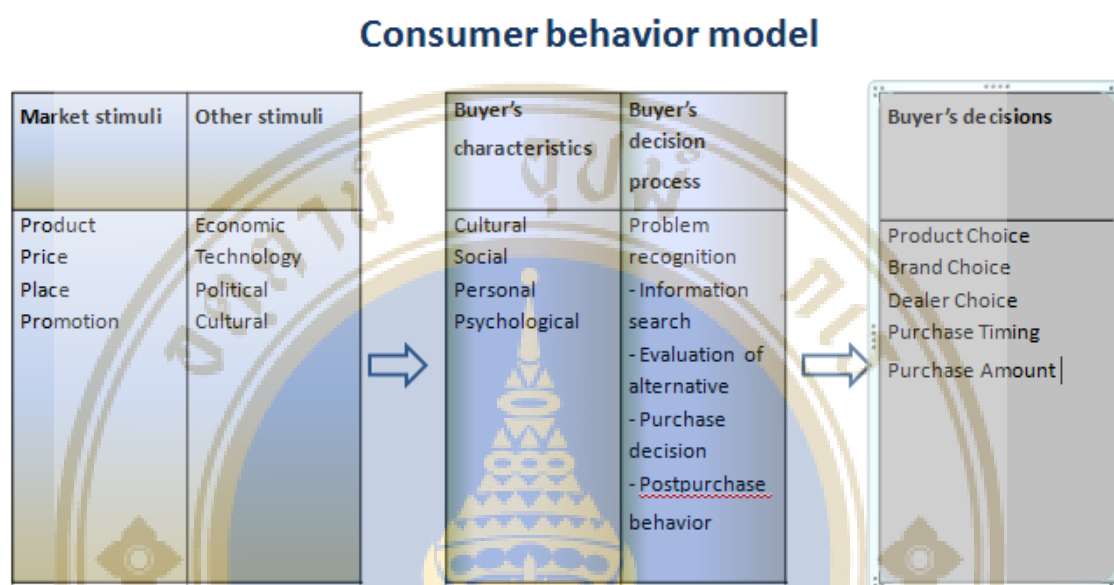


Figure 2.1 Buyer behavior model (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006)

The chart above shows the process at which the consumer arrives at his decision based on “market stimuli” and “other stimuli” interacting with the “buyers characteristics” and his decision making process.

2.2.1 Market stimuli:

- Product: attributes, features, packaging and brand
- Price: cost and value
- Place: location and accessibility
- Promotion: advertising, sales promotion, salesperson and publicity

2.2.2 Other stimuli:

This factor can be further broken down into four sub components which are; economic, technology, politics and culture. Kotler and Armstrong (2006) further

stated that “culture” is considered one of the main factors that influence a consumer’s needs and behaviors.

According to McGraw-Hil Education (2013) the description of “culture” by Greet- Hofstede stated that culture as “the software of the mind”, and culture is an influence to human on their thought and behavior. And the element of culture including values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, thought process.

He also defined “social factor” as an important constituent influencing consumer behavior with diverse classes and segments from groups, families, communities, and roles to social status.

Consumer buying behavior by Brosekhan and Velayutham (1960) is stated that having adequate knowledge on consumer behavior enables the marketers to understand how consumers think and feel, and what factors go into considering alternative products and brands. It also allows them to have a better understanding of how the consumers are influenced by their environment, reference groups, family, salespersons and so on. A consumer’s buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. They also stated that “Perception is a mental process, whereby an individual selects data or information from the environment, organizes it and then draws significance or meaning from it”. They also refer to Engel (1986) defined consumer behavior as “those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts”.

Based on these research results, we can see that a consumer’s buying behavior consists of both physiological and physical factors. These things are the instructions on human behavior found in each person i.e. culture, social which affects their attitude process and learning.

Below are the factors according to frame work of “consumer behavior” and “self-esteem” which the author finds some relevance and would like to use it to explore deeply the behaviors of Thai men thru interviews.

2.3 Influencers

Influencers are individuals who hold very large power when it comes to influencing and persuading consumers to purchase skin care products, examples of such influencers include family and friend, beauty bloggers and celebrities.

2.3.1 Reference group influence

Based on research Eszter (2008) referred to the study of Mangleburg-Doney-Bristol (2004) that looks into group shopping activities indicates that the people tend to buy and spend more when they go shopping with accompanying fellow. Therefore, the activity of shopping with friends logically leads to spending more.

2.3.2 Male Beauty Bloggers

The trend of beauty bloggers are becoming very popular, they become as the leaders who come up with updated new fashion and grooming trends. They are like grooming professionals and are very skilled at skin care, make up, and clothing. Some can even end up becoming representatives of popular brands. Company PRs always tap them to attend events when they have grand openings or new product launchings.

2.3.3 Celebrity

Mukherjee (2009) refer to the research Miciak and Shanklin (2002) that the most important component of an endorsement from a celebrity is "credibility". This is the most popular tool of advertising, providing a trend and perceived as a winning formula for product marketing and brand building as well.

2.3.4 Salesperson

According to the research of Khraim (2011), indicated that the consumer's long-term orientation toward a store which resulted from the good relationship between consumer and salesperson. Moreover, trust in salesperson related to consumer perception of the store's service quality which affects to customer satisfaction.

2.4 Brand Reputation

According to Herbig and Milewicz (1993), an example of brand reputation includes whether or not a consumer will believe the product claims made by the advertisements of a particular brand. Reputation takes place mainly through market signaling. A market signal is a type of marketing activity that supplies information that signals a competitor to its objectives, commitments, or motives. A reputation is recognized through satisfying marketing signals.

2.5 Compulsive buying

Sahoo and Garg (2012) refer to the research of Kotler and Armstrong (2010) which states that another very significant part in consumer behavior research is “Compulsive buying”, this is the obsessive repetitive buying behavior that becomes a principal reaction to a negative incident or emotion. These precede all other steps in the buying process.

Therefore, the author would like to explore the hypothesis: Influencing purchasing decisions in skin care products through theory of consumer behavior and self-esteem and the factor of influencers, brand reputation and compulsive buying.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection

The type of research which the author used for this thematic paper is “Qualitative research”. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) states that “qualitative research” has the benefits: analysis the behavior of sample or interviewee under natural condition or without the improved substance which happened in some “quantitative research”.

This helps the researcher to reach deeper understanding even without advance study of the research topics. Qualitative research is also flexible and enables the researcher to perceive new factors or topics that may be lacking in “quantitative research”.

In-depth Interview is a private and direct interview with a single interviewee, where he is examined by the interviewer to reveal their motivations, opinions, positions, attitudes, and feelings on a particular subject matter. This type of interview is used to freely exchange information and attain a more comprehensive understanding of the behavior of the interviewee. (Malhotra, N. K.,1996)

“In-depth Interviews” by means of using “open-ended question” is used in this research as an instrument to collect deep insights from the consumers regarding internal and external factors that affect them in purchasing skin care products, especially facial moisturizer. The objective of this paper is to explore the behaviors, attitudes, values, personalities, and the psychological characterization of Thai men.

All interviewees were video recorded in order to properly capture all emotions as well as facial expressions during the interview, this will help to gather a more in-depth information into the motivations and influences on Thai men to buy skin care products.

Most of the interviewees feel embarrassed to talk about this topic as they feel that it is unnatural for men to be worrying so much about their appearances, they

also worry about the perceptions about them as they worry about being labeled gay because of using skin care products.

Therefore, the author started talking about other things before starting the interview in order to make the interviewee feel more comfortable and to make a relationship and build trust that makes them feel more freely to talk about the topic.

Because men are not as detailed-oriented as women, they take more time trying to remember past details such as when they started to use skin care products, how long it takes them to use a bottle of skin care, etc. So the author asked them to bring their girlfriend or wife if possible in order to help them recall but they should not be allowed to reply instead of the interviewee in order to avoid bias.

The atmosphere during the interview is also very important because a crowded place may make the interviewee feel ashamed and embarrassed to talk about their behavior toward cosmetics. Therefore, the location for the interview was decided to be held in a quiet room in order to help the interviewee concentrate with answering the questions, as well as making him feel more relaxed and comfortable. The interview lasted for approximately 40 minutes per interviewee.

3.2 Interviewee

Huysamen (1994) stated that the number of cases (interviewees) is limited as the objective is to closely examine in order to get the relevant information. Therefore, more data sources should be available to support the case and make the case valid.

The author has conducted in-depth interviews with 6 interviewees in 3 different age range:

19 – 25 years: 2 interviewees

26 - 32 years: 2 interviewees

33 - 39 years: 2 interviewees

All of the interviewees are Thai, being real men who purchase skin care product by themselves, and apply skin care products at least twice a day. These are different from men who do not use skin care products but rather give priority to grooming their appearance instead. All of them live inside the urban area in Bangkok

because population of Bangkok drives the economy and tends to have higher purchasing power.

Wimmer and Dominick (1994) stated that “the research process composes of the following:

- 1) select a problem
- 2) review the relevant existing research and theory
- 3) form a hypothesis and develop questions
- 4) determine the methodology design
- 5) gather and collect the data
- 6) analyze and interpret the results
- 7) present the results in an appropriate form
- 8) replicate the study (if it necessary)

Therefore, the author would like to explore their behaviors and attitudes towards “skin care for men”. All interviewee profile were already provided in the appendix B.

3.3 Interview Question

The questions based on theory of self-esteem, consumer behavior and additional factor i.e. influencer, brand reputation and compulsive buying. All questions were developed from the supporting frameworks and were provided in the appendix A.

CHAPTER IV

REREARCH FINDING

4.1 Result analysis

All interviewees were screened against 3 main conditions; they must be applying facial cream on a daily basis, they must be purchasing skin care products by themselves and they must be straight Thai men

These conditions are set up in order to be able to closely explore Thai men's behavior and attitude toward purchasing skin care product, and to prove the author's hypothesis by gathering consumer insights.

4.1.1 Self- Esteem

The main purpose of this research is to assess the reasons for Thai men to purchase skin care products. The first question the author asks to open the interview is "why do you use skin care products?"

At first reply, the interviewees' answers were very similar in that they actually did not consider to use skin care products such as facial moisturize or sunscreen since they were teenagers. This is quite different from most females as they normally start to look after their appearances as early as their teenage years.

Then, the interviewees indicated that they started to use facial cream because of social pressure and embarrassment from comments which the others gave to them such as "looking old" or "looking tired and dull", and sometimes even being compared to other men with better looking skin. And this resulted in their decision to try out skin care products for men.

During further exploration by the author regarding this point, the interviewees admit that the negative attitude of others towards their image has a great effect on their feelings often resulting in lost confidence during social events, and in

many cases, affects their social status as well. Moreover, they also want to be accepted and impress people in their social circles especially the opposite sex.

This can be explored further by the hypothesis “self-esteem theory influencing Thai men purchasing skin care products”, that this is the way to define the psychological responses that a person holds towards oneself rather than looking at just attitudes alone.

The author also found that “age” affects men’s attitude towards using skin care products (age of interviewees ranged between 19 – 39 years old). The interviewees aged between 33-39 seemed to worry more about their appearances and therefore are more open to the use of skin care products compared to the interviewees aged 19-32.

According to an in-depth investigation, the interviewees admitted that this was because they were worried about the image at work and their social status, which is explained “culture” of Thai men is related “Self-esteem”.

4.1.2 Market stimuli

According to the component of Market stimuli which including; product, price, place and promotion, the author breaks this down into several factors as table 4

Table 4.1 The factors relating to Market stimuli

Product	Ingredients, packaging (label design), odor, color and brand reputation
Price	Selling prices
Place	Store, shop decoration
Promotion	Attractive promotions

Below are the top 3 factors that affect the interviewee’s purchasing decisions:

1. Brand reputation
2. Price
3. Odor

Brand reputation is a very critical factor in influencing men's purchasing decisions, as they will not buy a product if they have never seen or heard about that particular brand before, as shown in below table;

Table 4.2 Interviewee's answer regarding brand reputation and brand awareness towards purchasing skin care product

Interviewee 1	I will not buy it if I don't know the brand.
Interviewee 2	Brand reputation helps me to make easier decisions when purchasing skin care products.
Interviewee 3	My face is kind of sensitive, I don't want to get allergic reactions from facial creams. So I choose to buy facial cream from famous brands, this can guarantee it's quality.
Interviewee 4	I will not buy a brand that I am not familiar with because I am scared that it will not be effective.
Interviewee 5	I believed in the brand because I know that many people use it. If others are use it well, then I can use it.
Interviewee 6	The reputation of brand made me confident, and most of the big brands have a very good R&D and production team, so I think this would be safe for my face.

According to the information provided by the interviews, brand reputation is critical for consumers to make a decision in purchasing skin care products. This enables them to have brand awareness which leads to brand repertoire. And if they use it and it produces a positive result, they will become loyal customers to those brands.

As evident in the answers of "Mr. C", aged 27, he said that he became loyal to facial cream brand "SK-II" because after using the said product, he had observed that his face had become brighter, and so he continues to use this product for 3 years. But he indicated that the reason he chose to buy this brand in the first time was because he aware in the brand's reputation and that many people who use it said that it was a good brand.

The factor that the interviewees indicated as the 2nd most important is the “price”. Since skin care products are not a basic human need and men feels that this is unnecessary to spend a huge amount of money on. The prices of skin care products should be reasonable and acceptable in order for them to do a purchase. The average-price deemed acceptable for the interviewees is about 1,700 THB. Below are their answers of maximum price idea for facial cream.

Table 4.3 The maximum price perception towards purchasing facial cream

Interviewee 1	500 THB.
Interviewee 2	1,500 THB.
Interviewee 3	3,000 THB.
Interviewee 4	3,000 THB.
Interviewee 5	2,000 THB.
Interviewee 6	200 THB.

Based on the interview, odor also seems to affect men’s decision on choosing a product. The interviewees indicated that they are turned off if the odor is too strong, one interviewee “Mr.N” aged 26 years said that if the odor of a facial cream smells too “sweet”, it makes him feel like “gay” and said that it would be something more suitable for his mother instead of him as perception of strong smell is product for old women only.

“Mr.W” aged 36 years said that he will choose the nice smell but soft since his wife does not like the strong odors.

One of the interviewee, “Mr. S” aged 35 years who is a veterinarian explained that he prefers facial creams without odor as this can guarantee that it does not contain any perfume, since he feels that this will not lead to any allergic reaction on his face.

Moreover, most of interviewees replied in the same way stating that they will not use facial creams that are too thick or creamy as it makes them feel annoyed and uncomfortable even if the salesperson claims that this is because of a more concentrate ingredient.

The other factors such as packaging, shop decoration, specific ingredients and promotion have their own merits as well. However, as shown in the above research, these may not be as important compared to the brand, price, and odor.

These top three factors related “controllable factors” affects Thai men toward purchasing skin care product, the author also would like to explore the rest controllable factors which are place, promotion, and packaging (which is the dimension of product attribute).

- **Place**

Most of the interviewees bought their skin care products from “Boots” or “Watson”. Even though these two are technically drug stores, most interviewees have impression that they are cosmetics or skin care shops.

Three interviewees had a Watson membership card. Aside from Watsons, there were two men who bought from the other places i.e. brand counter and cosmetic department in the supermarket.

The interviewee also stated that location and convenience is a very important factor for him, as Boots and Watsons both have numerous branches located in very strategic locations which allows him to be able to purchase his skin care products at a convenience.

- **Promotion**

Promotion is one determinant factor that helps to arouse the interviewee’s motivation to buy skin care.

However, it affects only a particular brand. If they still have enough quantity of the products at home, the promotions will be not work. And when the author asked for the best attractive promotions, most of them prefer buy 1 get 1 free much more than lucky draw or whole set (combine with serum, eye cream, hand cream, body cream and etc.) because they don’t like to use too many products like women do. For men, just one type of product is enough, having too many bottles around is too exhausting and too much hassle.

- **Packaging**

The packaging is one attribute of product which also appeals to men when purchasing skin care products, according to interview, most of interviewees prefer

dark tones colors, with little decoration as it also tries to appeals to their “manly emotional benefit”.

- **Culture and Social**

There are five elements of culture namely: values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and thought process. And the element of social factors: family, religion, school, media, government, and corporate. The author had explored some elements i.e. believe, value, thought process, how they influence Thai men in purchasing skin care products, below are the questions asked to the interviewees with relation to these factors.

Table 4.4 Interviewee’s perception of how “culture” affects them towards purchasing skin care product

Culture	As you mentioned previously, you started using facial cream after getting negative feedback about your facial skin from others. Why do you believe that skin care products can help you to solve this problem?
	Do you think that facial cream is a “need” for daily life?
	What is your opinion about men being more open to using facial cream compared to the past?
	Do you think that using facial cream has an effect to a man’s masculinity?
	Are regular products or products specifically targeting men more suitable for males?
	Do you have any plans to switch away from facial cream products that you are using it now? When will you change?

Most of the interviewees’ perceptions of the benefits of skin care are based on their experiences, media communications, and influences from social factors such as families, friends and advertising. The interviewees believe that skin care products will help them to get better quality skin as this has a much faster effect than eating healthy foods or drinking vitamins.

However, “Mr.S”, one of interviewee who is a veterinarian said that “I think facial cream can help my face maintain its current condition (keep the condition of face looking like their current age), but it can’t help to obviously make skin is better, if I want to make my face look brighter or younger immediately, I will have to undergo Botox (Botulinum toxin) or laser surgery in the aesthetic clinics.”

Other interviewees mentioned that using facial moisturizers make them feel like they are taking better care of themselves. “Facial cream is needed for daily life similar to the food that we eat, which is one of “four basic human needs”. We eat food for body, skin care products are the same, it is food for our skin.” Based on the answer of interviewee, this is due to the effects of advertisements from skin care products that described the benefits of facial creams and its “necessity” in routine life.

Based on research, man have been increasing in consumption of skin care products, it is their opinion that skin care products can help them to become more handsome, this has been widely due to the media, which constantly communicates to consumers in order to change their perceptions.

And to this effect, the percentage of skin care product consumptions by men has been increasing steadily. The author has also concluded that the use of facial cream does not affect one’s perception of his “masculinity”. They feel that is normal for men to buy and use skin care products. It is simply a routine similar to a trip to the salon for a haircut. The table 4.5 is the questions and respondents related to “reference group influence” which also reflect to “social factor”;

Table 4.5 Questions regarding social factors influencing the purchase of skin care product

Reference group influence (Social)	Will you ask family such as your mother, sister, girlfriend or friend about skin care information before purchasing?
	Do their opinions and advice affect your purchasing decision?
	Do you normally go to buy skin care products with family, wife, friend or girlfriend?
	Have you discuss skin care products with friends?

Table 4.6 Interviewee's answers of social factors influencing the purchase of skin care product

Interviewee 1	Yes, I ask my girlfriend because she is a woman who is close to me so I can ask her frankly. I ask her for some ideas, and I feel free to tell her about my face problems or whatever I want.
Interviewee 2	I will ask my colleague, because she has good skin, so I can get information from a real consumer and no reason for her to advertise other brands to me because she is not salesperson.
Interviewee 3	I will ask my sister because she is the person who I can get information from easily, and she may know my habits and what kind of products I like.
Interviewee 4	I will bring my girlfriend to go shop with me and help me to choose a suitable product, as I think it is convenience to get some suggestions about cosmetics, because it is not easy for a man like me.
Interviewee 5	I will ask my mom, but normally, she always recommends the same brand of skin care that she uses, if it is good, she tells me to use too
Interviewee 6	I will ask my sister or brother (who is an actor), because she and he has same genes as I do since we are in the same family, so we may have the similar skin types and conditions.

Most of interviewees asked information from people around them such as their mothers, wives, girlfriends, or friends before they buy skin care products, they want to get to know the brands and suggestions from these people first.

Sometimes, they bring these people to help them when choosing skin care products. They go shopping with them, especially when purchasing their first bottle of skin care product, after that they become more confident in purchasing by themselves in the future. Based on the results of the interview, man will not talk to their male friends about skin care products or cosmetics because it makes them feel like a “gay”.

- **Male Beauty Bloggers**

The interviewees said that “male beauty blogger have absolutely no effect on them whatever”.

- I don't believe that they really use it, they just got hired by the brand to advertise the product.
- This is a marketing strategy, it works with the women but normally real men do not follow men who like grooming or like to use skin care products.
- Sometimes I get updates from fashion or new trends in magazines or social media, but when I see blogger come to talk about a product, this will not convince us to believe that they really use it.

Thai male is different from Thai females because beauty bloggers has a high influence on woman, women like to watch bloggers teach them how to get make up, what they use as skin care every day, how they get clothes, etc. And this can influence the followers go to shop for the same item the blogger uses.

However, male beauty bloggers do not have the same influence on Thai men as they can't motivate them to follow them on purchasing skin care products.

- **Celebrity**

When the author asks interviewees about getting influence from a celebrity or actor, most of the interviewees said that the actors who are in advertisements have no effect to them, they are just handsome but do not affect their “emotional benefit” at all.

However, if the actor is someone that they like, it has some effect on them in helping them choose the brand if they are looking to purchase skin care product. However, if they are not in any need of skin care products, they will not buy it because of a celebrity.

- **Salesperson**

Salesperson is one factor that the author thought is crucial to influencing the customer to buy a product. So, the author would like to explore if a salesperson can influence Thai men towards purchasing skin care products as shown below.

Table 4.7 Question regarding salesperson influencing the purchasing of skin care product

Salespersons	Does a salesperson affect your considerations in choosing skin care products?
	Do you think a female or male salesperson is more suitable for selling skincare products for men?

The result is “no”, most of interviewees will take suggestions from the person around them more than from a salesperson. Because a salesperson’s goal is to sell, therefore they will not say anything negative about their products, and they will always only say positive things about it.

It is different from “word of mouth” from users who have used it, so they can give both positive and negative comments about it.

As for the second, the interviewees gave the following answers below:

- “I think I will buy skin care that a female salesperson suggests to me, because women are more suitable to be a specialist selling beauty products as facial creams.

- Women salespeople are better than men because woman must give more details.

- **Compulsive buying**

Based on the question, have you ever bought facial cream unintentionally?

This question will explore whether or not compulsive buying is a factor affecting the purchase of skin care products.

Most of interviewees said that they will need skin care urgently only after getting a “super bad comment” from the others, this is the only reason that will lead them to purchase urgently.

Normally they will never walk pass cosmetics counter and simply pickup an item even when they are listening to a salesperson do a presentation on the skin care product, it is improbable to make them get motivated to buy it immediately.

There is another factor, skin care for men, which derived from this interview which occurred during the deep investigation of product which is preferred by the interviewees.

- **Skin care for men**

Skin care products exclusively for men are already available in the market, they can choose to use these products for men only, the odor is cool and manly, packaging usually comes in dark tones in order to distinguish its positioning in market.

The author would like to further explore how this unique market positioning arouses interest from Thai men. So the question becomes “which product is more suitable for men? Regular products or products specifically target on men?”

According to the interviews, 5 men replied that they thought products for men are much more suitable for male because of the difference in facial skin between male and female. Hormones also determine the condition of the skin as well as other factors, i.e. skin thickness, oily – dry skin and etc.

Moreover, most of interviewees thought that shaving causes their face to become dry. So, facial cream is the solution for this problem.

Another conclusion from this interview is that men will continue use facial cream by the same brand because they worries that switching to a new brand may make them become allergic, although they may be open to switching brands if they were to receive very convincing advertisements and marketing to persuade them.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Analysis based on the interviews indicating factors that influence Thai men in purchasing skin care products which are below critical factors;

Brand reputation

- Price
- Odor
- Promotion
- Packaging
- Self- Esteem
- Intimate person (friend, girlfriend, wife and family)

Upon closer study, below are the top three of critical factors that the interviewees responded to:

1. Brand reputation
2. Price
3. Odor

However, there are several factors based on evidence gathered in this research that also play some minimal roles on influencing these interviewees. These factors such as location, salesperson, compulsive buying, male beauty blogger, and celebrity endorsements do not seem to have much effect on Thai men in their purchasing decisions.

Based on information gathered for this paper, the author has concluded that Thai men do perceive that skin care products are necessary for them because this can boost their self-esteem and make them feel more confident, especially during social gatherings and events.

Thai men no longer feel embarrassed about the purchase and use of skin care products as their counterparts in the past. And men can also become very loyal customers if the product has quality and is able to give them the results they want.

Men also do not trade beauty tips with other men as women do, however, they can give anonymous comments on the internet as it allows them to keep their identity secret since it is not yet socially acceptable for men to be freely discussing about skin care products without the danger of being labeled as gay.

5.2 Recommendation

The following theories can be applied throughout the writing of this paper:

- Marketing mix theory (a marketing tool which associated with price, place, product and promotion)
- Consumer behavior theory
- Self-esteem theory (need theory)

In addition, the author also includes the process of "Decision Making" which is one component of "Managerial management theory".

Zuzana Papulová & Matej Mokroš (2007) refer to the research of Papula (1995), p.18 explained about “managerial management”, the managers use the managerial functions such as planning, organizing, leading and control or “playing” the following roles in the enterprise.

For management of a cosmetics company who plans to launch skin care products for men in the market, this study is an ideal reflection of the behavior of most men and their preferred qualities in skin care products such as ease of use (one-for-all solution), credibility, acceptable price and attractive attributes.

Moreover, they should begin with the emphasis on the importance of brand reputation because this has a very critical effect on consumer’s perception of brand quality and therefore influences their purchasing decisions.

Price is obviously always a factor, and as such, becomes another crucial issue that needs to be focused by any company. Consumer reception of any product relies heavily on a suitable balance between price and value perception of consumers.

Promotions are another tool that should be part of the overall strategy considered, not only to increase sales but also to bring in potential new customers, most effective promotion is “a buy 1 get 1” strategy.

Skilled R&D department is also a valuable asset for manufacturing company. Based on research and customer interviews, product attributes such as odor and color are ways a company can tweak their products based on “aesthetics” that can increase sales as well.

The author’s study also shows that women who are close in these men’s lives hold a great deal of influence on their purchasing decisions when it comes to skin care products. They are able to sway their opinions one way or another towards or away from any particular brand. Therefore, it would be also be a wise choice to launch a marketing campaign that can include women, or partially take advantage of this fact.

Men presently no longer hold any negative views of skin care products, on the contrary, many believe that these products are a daily necessity and can help them to get better skin.

Since a vast majority of the beauty market seems very open to skin care products for men, a good marketing strategy and understanding in consumer behavior can help the marketer to capture an “educated” and “aware” market which is a result in success in business.

5.3 Limitations

- **Topic Sensitive**

On some occasions, the interviewer and interviewee may not share a close relationship, therefore some of the answers regarding behaviors may not be as accurate as ideally hoped for, So, the author started talking about other things before starting the interview in order to make the interviewee feel more comfortable and to make a relationship and build trust that makes them feel more freely to talk about the topic.

Because men are not as detailed-oriented as women, they take more time trying to remember past details such as when they started to use skin care products,

how long it takes them to use a bottle of skin care, etc. So the author asked them to bring their girlfriend or wife if possible in order to help them recall but they should not be allowed to reply instead of the interviewee in order to avoid bias.

- **English proficiency**

Some interviewees may lack the proficiency in the English language and words such as ‘beauty’. Therefore they may be unable to describe and communicate their opinions properly and clearly. During these instances, the interviewer switches to Thai language instead.

- **Time limit for research**

Due to the limited research period allowed, information and facts may also be limited as the researcher did not have enough time to expand many factors.

- **Location of interviews**

To allow convenience in the part of the interviewee, interviews are mostly conducted in public locations such as malls and restaurants. This results in a lot of small distractions due to the noise level in public places. Many interviewees are also not able to refrain from accepting phone calls because much of the interviews are conducted during work days, this results in a lot of interruptions as well because the mood of the interviewee may change based on certain phone calls coming from work.

- **Survey limit**

Due to the limited time and availability of interviewees, the author chose to pick representative interviewees of Thai men who live in Bangkok and use facial cream for men. This does not cover all Thai men who use skin care in Bangkok.

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APPENDIX A : Question for interview

Factor	Question
Culture and Self-esteem	Why do you use skin care products?
	How do you feel after applying facial cream?
	What factors influenced you on your purchasing decisions?
	Do you feel that skin care trends affect your purchasing decisions?
	Do you like to try new products? If yes, Can you tell me why do you change brand?
	Do you think that facial cream is a “need” for daily life for men?
	What is your opinion about men being more open on using facial cream compared to the past?
	Do you think that using facial cream has an effect on a man’s masculinity?
Consumer-behavior	When did you start to use facial cream?
	What kind of skin care products do you use?
	How often do you apply facial cream?
	How long have you used this brand?
	Will you continue using this brand after the current facial cream finished?
	Do you like shopping?
	What kind of products do you like to buy?
	Did you purchasing it by yourself?

Consumer-behavior	How much time do you spend on purchasing facial cream?
	Have you ever bought facial cream unintentionally?
	Where do you purchase skin care?
	Are you always updated on skin care product trends?
Brand reputation	Do you think brand awareness affects consumer repertoire?
	How did brand awareness influence you in purchasing skin-care?
Social & Influence	Do you normally go to buy skin care products with family, wife, friend or girlfriend?
	Will you ask family such as your mother, sister, girlfriend or friend about skin care information before purchasing?
	Do their opinions and advice affect your purchasing decisions?
	Have you discussed skin care products with friends?
Marketing Mix (product, price, place, and promotion)	Why did you start buying this brand?
	What is the maximum price you are willing to pay for facial cream?
	What is your favorite brand?
	Are regular products or products specifically targeting men more suitable for males?
	Do you have any plans to switch away from facial cream products that you are using it now? And when will you change?
	Do you think location is an important factor in purchasing skin care products?
	Does the packaging affect your purchasing decision?
	What kind of packaging convinced you to buy skin care products?

Marketing Mix (product, price, place, and promotion)	Do you shop more when they have promotions?
	What kind of promotion do you like?
	What kind of media can reach you?
Salesperson	Does a salesperson affect your considerations in choosing skin care products?
	Do you think a female or male salesperson is more suitable for selling skincare products for men?
Male Beauty Blogger & Celebrity	Do you think that beauty bloggers have any influence on your purchasing- decisions?
	Do you think celebrity have any influence on your purchasing decisions?

APPENDIX B : Interviewee's profile

Interviewee	Mr.N	Mr.D	Mr.T	Mr.S	Mr.C	Mr.W
Age	24	27	32	35	25	37
Education	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Master's degree	Ph.D.
Occupation	Business Owner	Business Owner	Company Employee	Government Employee	Company Employee	High vocational Certificate
Status	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Married
Media	T.V.	Social Media	Magazine	T.V.	Social Media	T.V.