

**THE CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATION TOWARDS
SALESPERSONS IN DEPARTMENT STORES**



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Thematic paper
entitled
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SALESPERSONS IN DEPARTMENT STORES**

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.....
Mr. Kanokchai Likitapiwat
Candidate

.....
Asst. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.
Advisor

.....
Assoc. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

.....
Duangporn Arbhasil,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

.....
Ronald Surachai Thesenvitz,
Ph.D.
Committee member

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Kanokchai Likitapiwat

THE CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATION TOWARDS SALESPERSONS IN DEPARTMENT STORES

KANOKCHAI LIKITAPIWAT 5949140

M.M. (MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASST. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., RONALD SURACHAI THESENVITZ, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to understand the expectation of customers to salespersons during department store visit. The study emphasized on pre-purchase phase to understand the interaction and linkage of customers and employees in order to create the good shopping experience. Additionally, the data were collected through online questionnaire survey from 114 respondents who stayed in Thailand.

The findings of this research show that the customers expected salespersons to help them if they come to the store as the utilitarian shopper. However, the customers would feel uncomfortable and did not expect assistance from salespeople when they are hedonic shopper. Finally, the customers were still seeking for help from salespersons even that product was the low-involvement product.

KEYWORDS: Customers' Expectation / Salespersons / Pre-Purchase / Thailand
/Department store

31 pages

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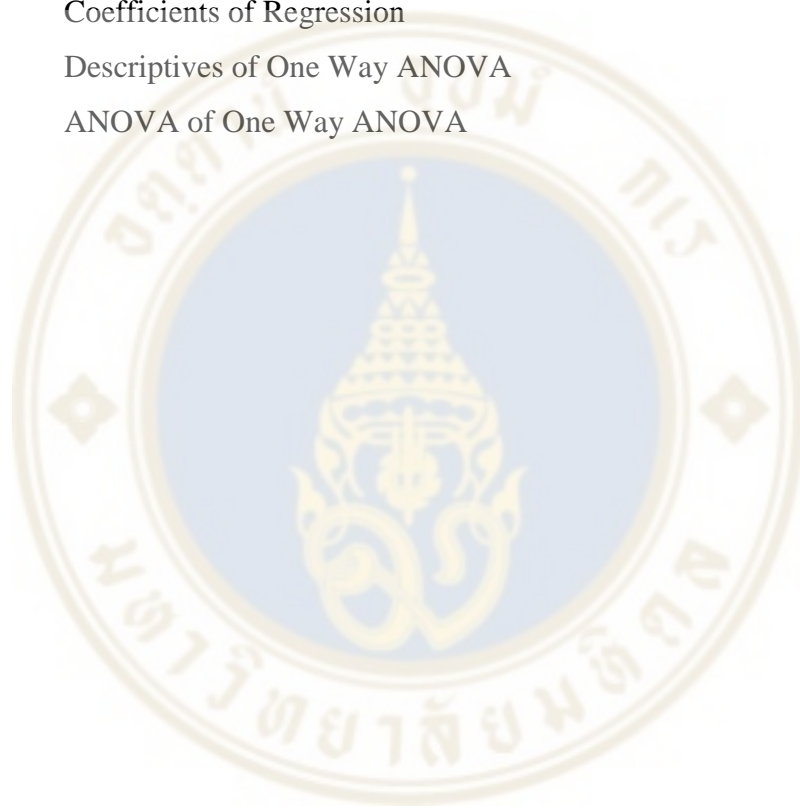
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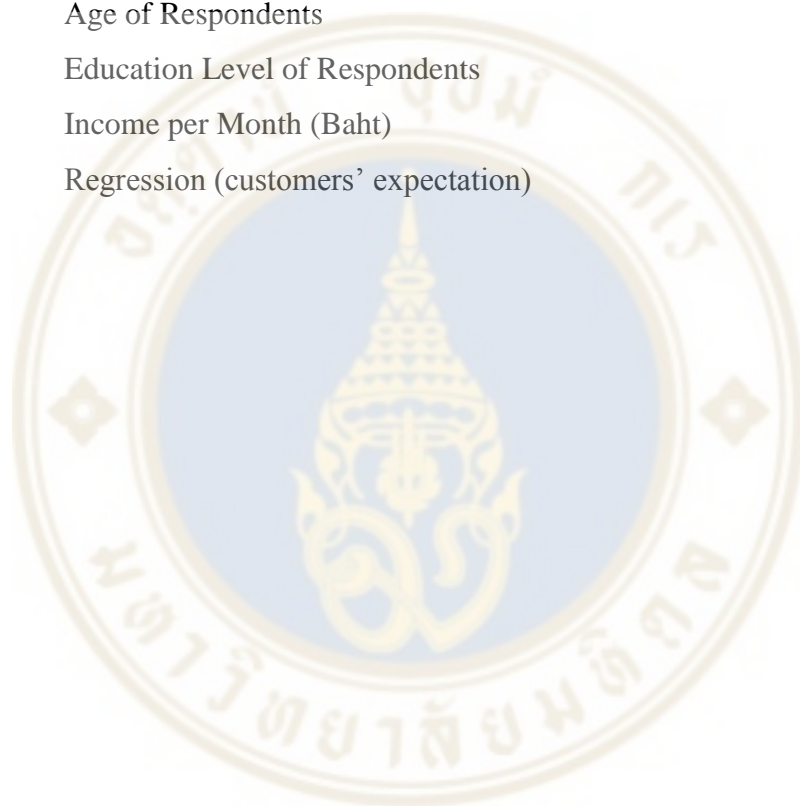
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In retailing businesses, the intense competition forces many retailers to improve in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantages, and one of the important areas is to understand what really influences customers' value perception on their stores (Kerin, 1992). In the retail context, a shopping experience is an interaction between customers and store practices (physical surroundings, staff and services) (Kerin, 1992; Donovan, 1982). A store shopping experience is a significant factor that could create value for customers when they receive it.

Kerin's (1992) literature supports that the shopping experience of customers, whether unpleasantness or pleasantness at the store, can influence customers' satisfaction with the store visitation and also purchase intention. Customers' satisfaction will occur when they have a positive emotional response to specific consumption that they experience. Nevertheless, the negative emotional could also happen if customers feel that they are dissatisfied with the retail store because of some reason (Goff et al., 1997; Swan and Oliver, 1989). These variables such as salesperson assistance or individual encounter can affect customers' attitude and behavior that they have for retail stores (Ridgway et al., 1990; Bitner, 1990).

Additionally, Hare's (2003) study showed that improving the shopping experience and satisfaction can be done by offering additional service or salesperson assistance to customers. Academic evidences demonstrate that salespeople can increase overall customer satisfaction (Szymanski, 1988), if salespeople can tailor their presentation to match with each customer's needs (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). However, there is still no extant research indicating how salespeople could always make customers satisfied with their services.

According to Jones (1999) some customers enjoys shopping without the presence of aggressive or overbearing salesperson. However, some customers appreciate to have salesperson nearby and help when they want to ask about products. Consequently, customers are difficult to predict without understanding their motivation or expectation to the product or retail stores, and it is hard for salespeople to provide extraordinary service.

Service failures from salespeople tremendously reflect the potential threat to the retail stores or company. It could affect the relationship between store and customer, and in some literature mentioned poor salespeople assistance is one of the reasons of customer-switching behavior (Chang, 2006; Keaveney, 1995). Customers are different from one to another, and salespeople need to provide service to them even though they do not like to encounter with those customers who are difficult to handle or associated. Hence, it is necessary for both salespeople and stores to acquire a knowledge about how to provide "right" service to each individual customer (Chang, 2006).

In several previous research, the focus of customers' satisfaction studies was heavily addressed at post-purchase phase. Nevertheless, pre-purchase is also an important aspect to understand customer satisfaction (Simintiras et al., 1997; Taylor and Burns, 1999). The strategies and practices that develop based on merely post-purchase aspect might not be enough for retailers to create customers' satisfaction. Hence, the understanding of related pre-purchase may be new area for retailers to explore and build strategies or practice to sustain customers' satisfaction even before they start to purchase goods in the retail stores. Moreover, the research that relate to customers' expectation is still not comprehensive enough in Thailand or even Asia. Therefore, this research will develop from the Thai consumer behavior which will useful for the retail stores or company to improve their performance both staffs and company.

1.1 Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to enhance managerial understanding of customers' satisfaction in view of customers' expectation on salespeople assistance during pre-purchase phase by addressing these following questions:

- What motivate degree of customer expectation to accept assistance from salespeople?
- How much do customers need assistance from salespeople during the store visit?

1.2 Research Objectives

(i) To study the interaction between salespeople and customer that could affects shopping experience of customers.

(ii) To investigate the importance linkage between salespeople assistance and shopping experience.

(iii) To obtain the method or strategy that can help retail stores create pleasant shopping atmosphere and increase the relationship between customer and store.

1.3 Potential Output

This study intends to provide the knowledge that retailers could adapt in the Thailand context which will help company and staffs understand more about their customers. The research will provide insight of customers that can be used to develop the practical strategy or method for retailers in order to create pleasant shopping experience to their customers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The factor that could affect customer shopping experience on retail store consist of several elements, that retailers need to manage to achieve financial or marketing goals. There are controllable factors such as merchandise, location and supply chain, as well as uncontrollable factors such as Macroeconomic and political (Grewal et al., 2009). However, salespeople are another critical component as a role of boundary spanners to deliver what the retailers have to their customers (Widmier and Jackson, 2002). In addition, there is an academic finding that if a company wants to be successful, it must start from understanding what customers expect from salespeople. The retailer needs to ensure that the salespeople could meet or better yet exceed those expectations from customers (Goff et al., 1997). Therefore, the focus of this review is to discuss the articles related to theory or conceptualization on the degree of customers' expectation on salespeople assistance and how it relates to the desirable counselling from salespeople.

Retailing in Thailand

In the past retail companies in Asia played a crucial role as intermediaries to enable the flow of goods and services from suppliers to consumers, but they only added a little value to themselves. However, as the economic and market evolve the retailers change to modernization era, and the retailer become an active agent that holds crucial value chain and bargaining power (Howard, 2009). Similarly, in Thailand, the retailing industry has changed quickly that the retailers have to adjust their practices in order to success (Feeny et al., 1996). The improvement of the Thai retail store has changed tremendously from the traditional shop-house belong to a family that sell variety of goods into the department store or convenience store that have several branches over Thailand (Feeny et al., 1996).

Behavior of Thai consumer

According to Fenny et al. (1996), Thai consumers reflect a sense of relaxation as they usually spend their free time by shopping. Shopping malls and department stores will be a place full of customers during the weekends. The spending behavior of Thai people will be heavily spending at the beginning of the month as they just have received their salary. However, Thai consumers gradually change their behavior by using credit cards and promotions from the retailers that offers to stimulate the sales.

Salespeople

Salespeople are the personal selling that contact and interact with buyers. They are assigned as a source to add values to the store or the company (Belk, 1974). Salespeople usually involve with the customers' acquisition process by providing them with related product information in order to guide or assist them as they expected (Goff et al., 1997). Additionally, the focus of salespeople is not merely generating sales but also reaching out to customer and sustain long term relationship with them (Douglas et al., 2016).

2.1 Theoretical foundation

2.1.1 Hedonic and Utilitarian shopping

Evidence of the importance of the shopping motivation has illustrated that the level of a customer's interest in a salesperson depends on certain customer characteristics (Homburg and Stock, 2005). The motivation of customer to shop primarily drives by hedonic or utilitarian value (Kim, 2006; Babin et al., 1994). A high utilitarian value means that the customers want to find or acquire product to help them solve with their problem caution (Jones et al., 2006; Babin et al., 1994). As a result, consumers who buy or use a product based on utilitarian needs reflect a sense of task-oriented that they intend to accomplish the task with caution (Chan, 2003; Babin et al., 1994). In another word, they will behave carefully and efficiently to hire or buy the product to deal with their problems.

In contrast, not all customers always seek for the shopping experience that have to satisfying in term of functional, product-oriented or economic need. The hedonic value involves more with the emotion or feeling that can be positive or negative rather than try to solve the problem or task (Babin et al., 1994; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Hence, the customers' hedonic value reflects the subjective meaning of customers that they pursue the experience by attach their emotional or psychological, rather than using cognitive or rational to process (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

McDonald et al., (2000), mentioned about the novelty seeking behavior of customer which is the reflection of hedonic shopping motivation. The results of this qualitative research show that hedonic consumption acts of customers sometimes solely based on imaginary or what they desire the situation or reality to be (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Refer to the example of McDonald et al., (2000), in the study one of his sampling mentioned in the dept interview about the customers' curiosity of the western product in Vietnam, and the sampling eventually decided to visit and observe promptly after work without purchasing anything.

2.1.2 High and Low product involvement

The product involvement is another motivating condition, which defined as "the perceived personal relevance of a product to an individual, based on inherent needs, values and interests" (Utpal, 1997). The finding of Quester and Smart (1998) evidence that the purchasing intention of a customer depends on the level of product involvement which influence on the process of product selection. The class of involvement creates the interaction between customers and employees of the company. In another word, the more importance of a product or service for customers, the more assistance needs from employees (Batt, 2000: Homburg and Stock, 2005).

The degree of product involvement also significantly interacts with the product information and product knowledge that customer intentionally performs (Bei and Widdows, 1999). Nevertheless, there is an academic evidence that indicates the purpose of the information search is not because customers are active learners or eager to know about the product/service function. Instead the level of uncertainty and risk that they perceive such as the financial or physical risk do trigger customers to proceed further information search on products (Chaudhuri, 2000).

The low product involvement usually is not a concern to customers as it rarely creates a high risk or trouble to them. In the low involvement situation, the customers are usually unwilling to exert a great deal of effort, because a poor decision has minimal consequences to them (Gordon, 1998; Hawkins and Hoch, 1992). On the other hand, high involvement reflects personal relevance or importance to the customers that generate high arousal which drives customers to need to process information (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984).

2.2 Hypotheses Development

2.2.1 Utilitarian shopper

The extant research shows that utilitarian shoppers as the efficient individual shopper usually need to have a sufficient understanding of the product before their shopping trip (Haas and Kenning, 2014). The utilitarian shopper perceives a shopping as a task that they have a list of the desire product so they could complete with a minimum amount of time wasted (Moorthy, et al., 1997). The utilitarian shoppers usually walk into a store with a clear understanding of the product and perceive themselves as knowledgeable about the product (Kennedy et al., 2001). Thus, I presume that utilitarian shopper will have high expectation on assistance from salespeople.

Hypothesis 1: Utilitarian shopper will have high expectation about assistance from salespeople.

2.2.2 Hedonic shopper

In contrast, hedonic shoppers often enter a store without preparing any information or shopping task that they have to finish. They will decide their decision-making process without any referral information, and also having little consideration about time limit in store (Haas and Kenning, 2014; Xia and Monroe, 2004). As a consequence, the customers with hedonic motivation tend to be more flexible and expect lesser performance from salespeople.

Hypothesis 2: Hedonic shopper will not set high expectations on salespeople and reject assistance from them.

2.2.3 Product involvement

Similarly, the high involvement products stimulate customers to search the information as if they make wrong decision it will cost consequences. The buyers also expect salespeople to have the information in details and presents a clear indication of uncertainty. (Pieters et al., 1998; Ponder et al., 2006). The customers want a signal to increase certainty or at least gain confirmation to what they have thought (Urbany et al., 1989).

Hypothesis 3: The more important the product (high involvement) the stronger customers expect and accept the assistance from salespeople.

Conversely, the low product involvement usually does not cost terrible consequence if they make a wrong decision.

Hypothesis 4: The lesser important the product (low involvement) the weaker customer expect and does not value the assistance from salespeople.

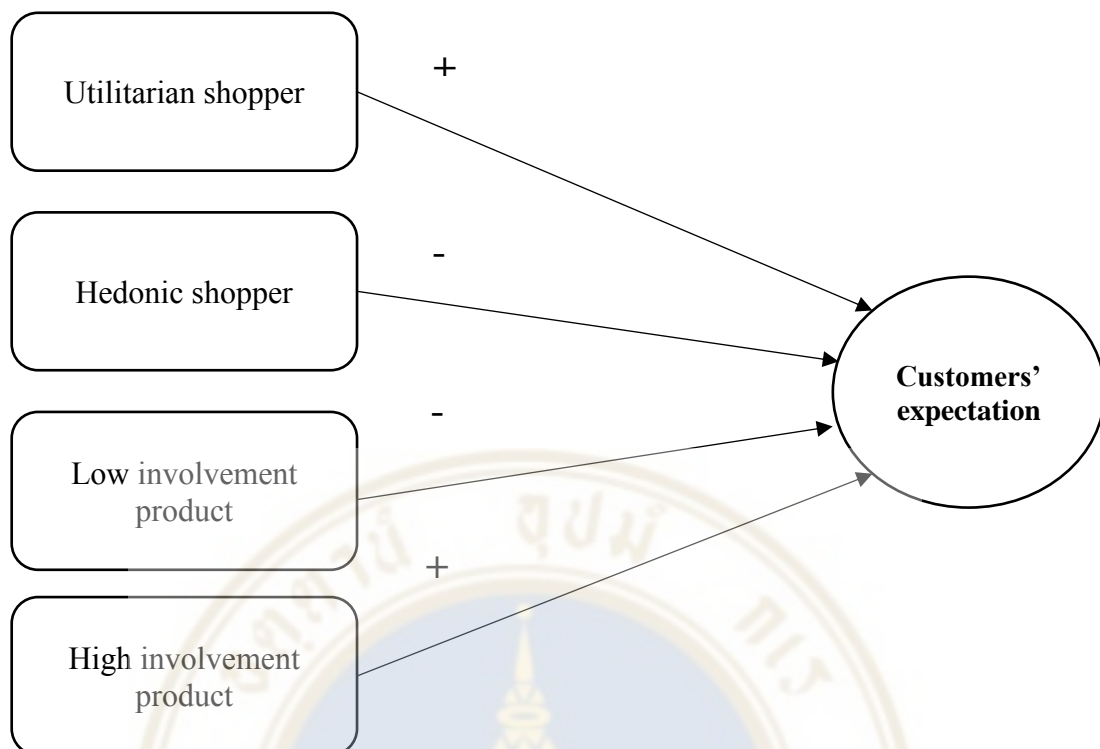


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework.

Figure one presents the conceptual framework of the motivators that influence customers' expectation on salesperson. As Figure 2.1 reveals, this research will investigate four individual motivators that set customers' expectation on salespeople assistance in the store, which are utilitarian shopping and hedonic shopping value. The other two factors are high involvement and low involvement, which also study to find the degree of expectation and willingness to receive assistance from salespeople as well. Hence, this conceptual framework would use to study and analyze in order to confirm four hypotheses in the earlier section.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research was selected for this research as it could use to measure and confirm (or disconfirm) hypotheses. The intention of this research was not to explore in order to gain in-depth understanding or refine hypotheses, but rather to measure the concepts and hypotheses from previous section. The quantitative tool that most fit with this study was questionnaire study, as it is quick and inexpensive method to cope with time and budget limitations of this study.

The survey was distributed out through online form to 120 participants which make it easier for both researcher and respondents. The researcher could collect data more efficiency and did not have to go field experiment as the online survey did not create negative emotion to some participant which may affect the answer of the questionnaire. On the other hand, the respondents had more flexibility to answer the survey which may contribute the quality of the answer as participants are ready to think and fill the answer.

3.1 Description of the Sample

This study was conducted by using convenient sample as this study involved with the retail shopping in Thailand which most people already had experienced. Nevertheless, the certain criteria had determined to keep this research in the scope. The sample of study is represented by 120 participants randomly chosen working adults who ranged in age from 23 to 65 in Thailand, and mainly purchase their goods in department stores.

Those respondents who under 23 were not suitable for this study because they might not buy some certain product, especially expensive goods (high involvement) by themselves yet. In contrast, the respondents' age 23 to 65 were our sample as they already had a job and income to involve with several product categories.

The motive of choosing participants that had experienced with department store because the context of this research related to various type of products which department store contains several stores and products in one place.

3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaires survey regarding to the motivators that affect degree of customers' expectation and lead to the acceptance of salespeople assistance. The questionnaire defined into four parts to measure each variable (utilitarian shopper, hedonic shopper, high-product involvement and low-product involvement) and contain 35 questions in total.

Part 1: Screening questions: (1 question)

The respondents may forget about their opinion or it might be a difficult for participant to recall their overdue past experience. Hence, this section was designed to screen only respondent who have recent experience with the service in department store by applied nominal scale to the questionnaire. This would assist the researcher to collect more precise information for the research.

Part 2: General questions: (5 questions)

In this section, the questions sorted out the reasons that respondents chose to visit department store, and also gave a sense of the overall idea that this research related to the service in department store. The questionnaire mainly applied the intervals and used four-points Likert scale into this part which contained:

1 - Disagree Strongly 2 - Disagree 3 - Agree 4 - Strongly Agree

Part 3: Specific questions: (25 questions)

The questions mainly designed according to the constructs (utilitarian shopper, hedonic shopper, high-product involvement and low-product involvement). However, the question did not put in the sequence according the constructs.

The constructs were not stated on each section of questionnaire which could bias the respondents' answer. The questionnaire contained four-point scale to express the degree of agreement or disagreement. This was to avoid participant over select natural as an answer. Moreover, the degree of frequency was used to sort out the information about customers' perception on salespeople which considered this question as dependent variable questions. This part involved frequency and agreement Likert scales which are:

1 - Disagree Strongly 2 - Disagree 3 - Agree 4 - Strongly Agree
 1 - Never 2 - Rarely 3 - Occasionally 4 - Very Frequently

Part 4: Demographic questions: (4 questions)

The intention of this part was to understand more about respondents such as their gender, age, education and income. This also would be an element that could use in the analysis. Thus, the questions were multiple nominal scale for respondents to choose.

3.3 Data collection procedure

The questionnaire survey was put in Google form, the free online platform for creating a survey. After the survey created, URL link was distributed to the 120 samples via email and social media channel. The participants could easily fill in the answer anywhere with their personal device such as laptop or smartphone. The survey took about 10-15 minutes for respondents to fill the answer, and researcher had received the answer notification when participants complete the survey. All survey results were downloaded as Excel data, and proceed analysis with SPSS.

3.4 Data preparation and statistical procedures

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 18.0 was used to enter the data from excel and detected the error before used it for data coding and analyzing. The data was screened the respondent out and keep only the participants that fit with this research.

Take for instance, there were respondent under 15 was erased from the data, and also the respondents who did not have the recent experience with department store were also eliminated from the data.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter the data from the questionnaire survey was used to analyze through SPSS. It is used to discuss the finding and together with the confirmation of hypotheses from the literature review section. The information and answer were collected from 120 people in total, but only 114 people were eligible for this research.

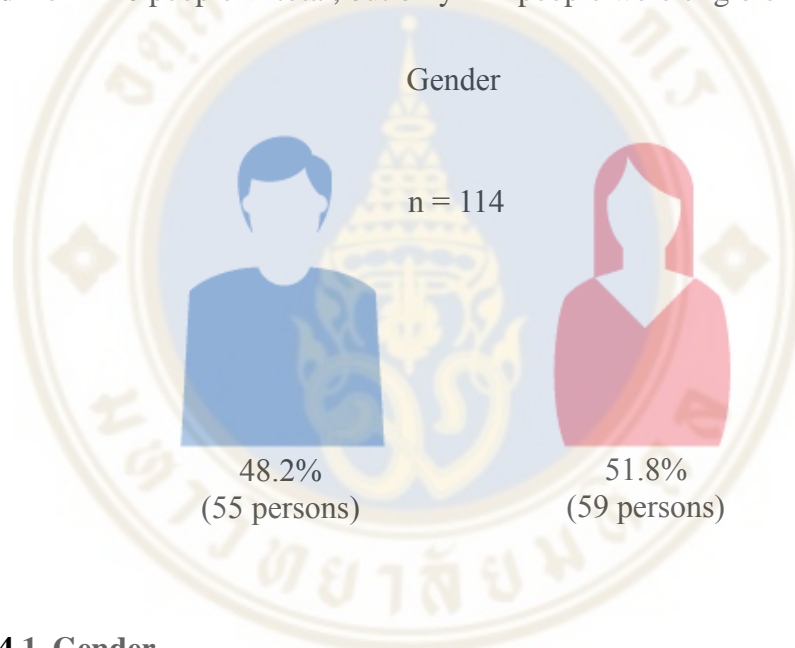


Figure 4.1. Gender

4.1 Respondents Profile

The figure below illustrated the demographic information such as gender, age, education and monthly income (Baht) of 115 respondents. The figure 4.1 shows that the respondents from total 114 people 48.2% of answers were from male, and 51.8% were from female. The proportion of the respondents is almost equal, but the majority of respondents are still female which is 59 women.

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS IS 26-35 YEARS OLD

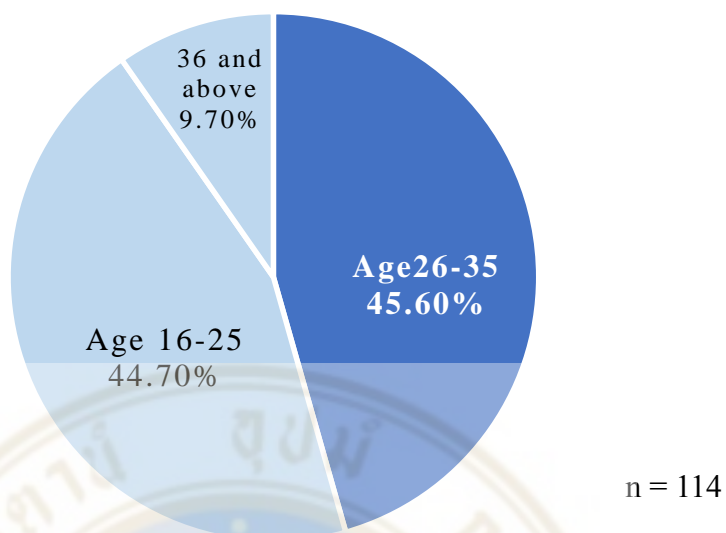
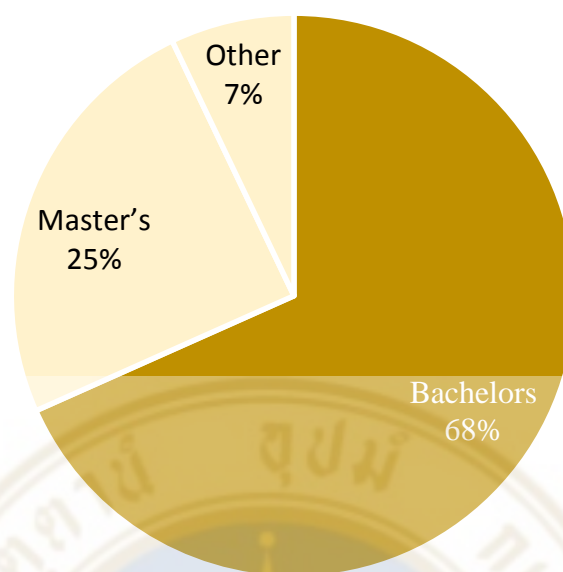


Figure 4.2 Age of Respondents

The age of respondents in figure 4.2 contains with several ranges from 16 to above 56 years old. However, the majority of information were gathered from respondents who age around 26 – 35 years old. It represents 45.6% or 52 people from 114 respondents of this research.

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS ARE BACHELORS



n = 114

Figure 4.3 Education Level of Respondents

The respondents of this questionnaire in figure 4.3 vary in term of education level from below Elementary, High school, Bachelors, Master's and PhD. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents were from Bachelors which accounts for 68% or 78 people from 114 respondents.

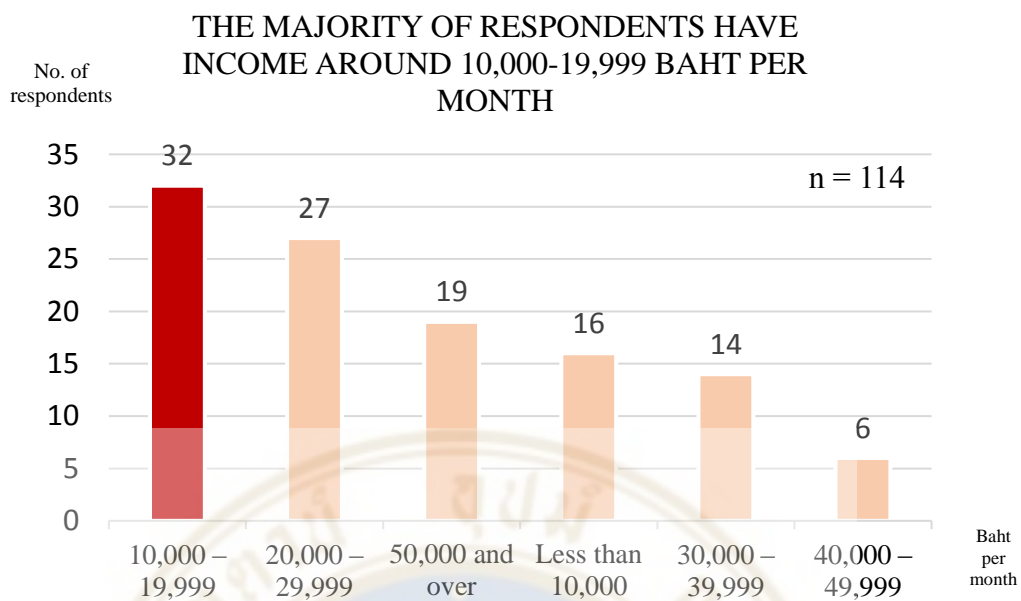


Figure 4.4 Income per Month (Baht)

In figure 4.4, it shows that most respondents were from samples who has an income around 10,000 – 19,999 baht per month. This income range may not seem high enough for respondents to purchase diverse types of products especially expensive or luxury products. Nevertheless, the financial options are available for respondents who earn 10,000 – 19,999 baht per month. Take for instance, using a credit card or their own money saving.

4.2 Main finding

4.2.1 Regression

The questions of each construct (Utilitarian shopper, Hedonic shopper, Low-involvement product and High-involvement product) were used in the factor analysis to filter for the questions from each construct that working. Subsequently, the questions from factor analysis were used for create new compound variables in order to run the regression. The results of the analysis are used for the hypotheses confirmation.

Table 4.1 Model Summary of Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.425 ^a	.181	.151	.551

Table 4.2 ANOVA of Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.313	4	1.828	6.011	<u>.000^a</u>
	Residual	33.152	109	.304		
	Total	40.465	113			

Table 4.3 Coefficients of Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.683	.449		3.748	.000
	Utilitarian shopper	.349	.089	.364	3.932	.000
	Low involvement product	.344	.136	.246	2.540	.012
	Hedonic shopper	-.286	.097	-.270	-2.939	.004
	High involvement product	-.080	.092	-.083	-.868	.387

The regression analysis has done through the compound variables from factor analysis. In the table 4.1 shows the results of adjusted R square which is 0.15, and in table 4.3 shows that there are three variables out of four that are significant as the - significant value is smaller than 0.05. The three variables are “Utilitarian shopper” at $p = 0.000$, “Low involvement product” at $p = 0.012$, and “Hedonic shopper” at $p = 0.004$.

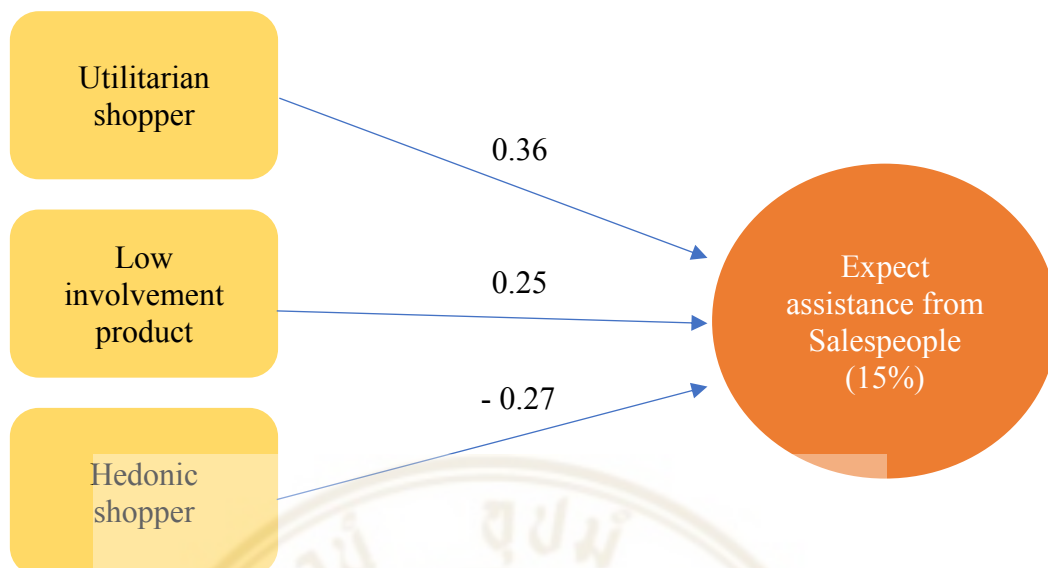


Figure 4.5 Regression (customers' expectation)

The results from regression analysis demonstrates in figure 4.5 that 15 people out of 100 people will expect assistance from salespeople. This results also reveal that attention must be fastened on key factors to utilitarian shopper, low involvement product and hedonic shopper in order to increase expectation of customers.

The “utilitarian shopper” variable could increase the expectation of customers on salespeople by 0.36. As a result, the increasing of shopping as a task would make customers expecting salespeople to help them. Furthermore, “low involvement product” variable also increase customers’ expectation by 0.25. This illustrates that the customers still need an assistance although those products might be low involvement products. In contrast, hedonic shopper variable could create negative affect to the customers’ expectation by - 0.27. As a result, it could be interpreted that the higher the customers are hedonic shopper the lower the expectation on salespeople would occur.

4.2.2 One-Way ANOVA

Table 4.4 Descriptives of One-Way ANOVA

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
						Utilitarian shopper	Never		
	Rarely	55	3.1152	.39267	.05295	3.0090	3.2213	2.33	4.00
	Occasionally	53	3.1069	.42879	.05890	2.9887	3.2251	2.00	4.00
	Very Frequently	4	3.5833	.21517	.10758	3.2410	3.9257	3.33	3.83
	Total	114	3.1213	.41321	.03870	3.0447	3.1980	2.00	4.00
Hedonic shopper	Never	2	2.3750	.17678	.12500	.7867	3.9633	2.25	2.50
	Rarely	55	3.2227	.54363	.07330	3.0758	3.3697	2.00	4.00
	Occasionally	53	2.9340	.54188	.07443	2.7846	3.0833	1.25	4.00
	Very Frequently	4	2.8750	.72169	.36084	1.7266	4.0234	2.00	3.75
	Total	114	3.0614	.56596	.05301	2.9564	3.1664	1.25	4.00

Table 4.5 ANOVA of One-Way ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Utilitarian shopper	Between Groups	1.143	3	.381	2.308	<u>.080</u>
	Within Groups	18.151	110	.165		
	Total	19.294	113			
Hedonic shopper	Between Groups	3.373	3	1.124	3.769	<u>.013</u>
	Within Groups	32.822	110	.298		
	Total	36.195	113			

In addition to the regression analysis, One Way ANOVA also shows utilitarian shopper is interested in salespeople when helping them during shopping. In contrast, hedonic shopper tends to reject assistance from salespeople.

As the overall mean score shows that utilitarian shopper scores higher than utilitarian which is 3.12 versus 3.06 for hedonic shopper. Additionally, the Sig. value of hedonic shopper is 0.013 which is significant, but utilitarian shopper is 0.08. Although, the Sig. value of utilitarian shopper should lower than 0.05 to be accepted by academic, it is still acceptable for 0.08 as the business practice they accept Sig. value which is lower than 0.09.

4.2.3 Hypotheses Confirmation

Moreover, the results from regression also confirm the hypotheses of this research. According to table 3, 4 and 5, customers who is the utilitarian shopper prefers the assistance from salespeople. Therefore, *Hypothesis 1* is true, that utilitarian shopper will have high expectation on salespeople to assist them during the shopping. The results also show that it is true for *Hypothesis 2*. It indicates that if customers are hedonic shopper, they would not prefer salespeople's assistance. This support *Hypothesis 2* that customers will not set high expectation and reject assistance from salespeople.

On the other hand, the results of the analysis demonstrate that customers still want assistance from salespeople even though those products are low involvement, which the results are adverse from the hypothesis. Hence, this study shows that *Hypothesis 4 is false*. The only hypothesis that could not confirm by this research is the *Hypothesis 3*, which the analysis was not reveal that this variable is significant.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussion

The main purpose of this research is to understand what motivates customers' expectation to accept salespeople's assistance. It is also to study the right proportion of service that would create satisfy shopping experience to customers. The conceptual framework that gained from literature review indicated that there are 4 factors which contributes customers 'expectation on salespeople's assistance. They are utilitarian shopper, hedonic shopper, high product involvement and low product involvement.

However, the results from this research points out that not all constructs could affect the expectation of customers. The results from regression which used four compound variables to proceed shows that, there were only three out of four variables which are utilitarian shopper, hedonic shopper and low product involvement that significant to create an effect on customers' expectation to sales assistance. The results of the study demonstrate that the utilitarian shopper would prefer assistance from salespeople when they shop in the department store. This also confirms that *Hypothesis 1* is true, that utilitarian shopper will expect assistance from salespeople.

As well as, *Hypothesis 2* that is also true. According to the research results, hedonic shopper tends to avoid and would feel uncomfortable to receive help from salespeople. Thus, it supports the hypothesis that hedonic shopper will not set high expectation and reject on salespeople assistance.

The last variable that reveals the effect on sales assistance acceptance is the low product involvement. *Hypothesis 4* states that customers would not value salespeople assistance if the product is low involvement product. However, the study illustrates the converse results that customers still prefer salespeople's assistance although the product is low involvement product. As a result, this study explains that the customers would receive salespeople's assistance if they are utilitarian shopper or when they want to purchase the low involvement product. Nevertheless, the retailers should treat hedonic shopper carefully as they do not usually seek for help from salespeople.

5.2 Contribution of Study

The results from this research will be beneficial to the retail store to improve or develop their marketing strategy. This study does highlight the potential variable that could create impact on customers' shopping experience. It will help retailers eliminate unnecessary in order to save cost and improve what they still lack to create customers' satisfaction. Moreover, this research tends to focus on customer satisfaction during pre-purchasing. This means that the store could build the excellent shopping experience and customers' satisfaction even before they decide to purchase the product.

5.3 Recommendations

According to the search finding, utilitarian shopper and hedonic shopper are the priority for retailers or manager to improve. There are several areas that retail store could improve to satisfy both types of shopper such as service training, proper information provided and service standard. The prior practical improvement is to educate salespeople to become customer-oriented. The salespeople knowledge and professionalism are very crucial for salespeople to acquire. This could be done by training session to teach about how to approach customers.

Take for instance, the simulation situation by let salespeople learn to observe their customers and analyze whether they should approach and provide information the right away or start with nice a greeting and leave some distance. This will give them hands-on experience rather than just trying to sell the product as much as they could perform. This will help retail store reduce customers discomfort by proper approaching.

However, to provide training session to every salespeople is very expensive and might not be applicable for every retail store. Take for instance, the low-involvement product such as stationary shops. According to the research results the customers still need assistance from salespeople although those are low product involvement. The store could just let salespeople experience the product by really using them and learn about the product by themselves. This will help them understand more about the product so they could provide proper assistance or suggestion to their customers when the customers need them. It will also save budget from the official training which is unnecessary or not worth to spend for some businesses.

Next, the personal space is very sensitive and it difficult for salespeople to offer right amount of service. The majority of customers who are hedonic shopper do not like salespeople to intervene their shopping. The recommendation for this problem is to let customer tell us whether they need an assistance or not. This could be done by applying some button to call for a service on the product shelf. The button will show on the screen like a service button on an airplane which tells salespeople when and where customers need help without interrupting their shopping experience.

The last recommendation is about the service standard. This is also helpful for the retail stores that focus on cost leadership or low-involvement product. It is difficult for some retailers to provide extra services because it adds up more cost to the shop. Thus, the stores might create a pattern for the salespeople to follow so it will be easier for salespeople to follow, especially if the store has many branches. The pattern might be for example the 10 steps on how to approach customers correctly so this could replace expensive training and become standard to follow in the company. Additionally, as the standard of service is an important factor to achieve customers' satisfaction. The retailers should maintain their standard, once customers recognize the excellent service, they will expect the same standard or better service.

5.4 Limitations

Due to the time and budget constraint, it limited a potential to access all Thai population so the majority of sample were collected from convenient respondents who lives in Bangkok. Therefore, the research might not comprehensive enough to represent the perspective from Thai customers. Moreover, this research only focuses the motivation variables in the department store, so this research might not suitable to apply for other retailing sector expect department store. In addition, the finding from this study looked at the overview perspective which it did not go in depth to the store types.

5.5 Future Research

The results of this study still do not reveal the potential output of high product involvement variable. As a consequence, there is an opportunity to go in detail and study for high product involvement construct. Furthermore, the service that most retailers try to provide is hardly estimate the right proportion for each individual customer. In addition, the edge of online shopping and technology are extending to customers in the new generation. Thus, there is an opportunity to find out whether customers still need assistance from salespeople, or the customers are fine without human interaction service.

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