

**HOW POKEMON TCG MADE A SUCCESSFUL DEBUT IN
THAILAND**

The image features a large, faint watermark of the Mahidol University logo in the background. The logo is circular, with a blue center containing a golden emblem of a traditional Thai building. The outer ring of the logo contains Thai text. Overlaid on this watermark is the author's name.

PITCHAKORN PONGPAMORN

**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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entitled
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HOW POKEMON TCG MADE A SUCCESSFUL DEBUT IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the key successful factor of how Pokémon TCG enters and sustain itself in Thai market. Information for the study will be taken through interviews on five different persons. Four interview from the players and one from the store retailer. Another method for obtaining the information will immerging the author in the game for experiences.

Finding from the research shows that collectible card games are favor through by translation and adjustment to meet locals demand. In the research there are many barriers found from the game industry and can be fixed through recommendation and conclusion within this paper.

KEYWORDS: Pokémon TCG / Collectible Card Games / Adjusting to local market / Building a sustainable community

35 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pokémon Background

Long ago when I was still a kid I would wake up every Saturday and Sunday morning to watch the cartoon on channel 9. The cartoon was Pokémon, and it was about a kid name Satoshi (Ash Ketchum) adventuring with his companion Pikachu to becoming the Pokémon Master. The term Pokémon Master in Satoshi view was to catch all the Pokémon in the world. So there was a very famous motto “Gotta Catch’em All” that made the Pokémon franchise very popular among kids. According to the animation, to catch a Pokémon you need to beat them first and throw Poke balls at them to attain them. This was the meaning behind the word Pokémon that actually was a short term for Pocket Monster; you can store Pokémon inside your Pocket with a Poke Ball.

The history of the Pokémon franchise has been established more than 20 years ago, from it first release until the today. Pokémon was built by Satoshi Tajiri, as a kid he was fond of catching insects and tadpoles near his home in Tokyo. Satoshi wanted others kid to experience the same excitement he had as a kid in catching insects and therefore he came up with the idea of putting this into practice. He and Ken Sugimori formed their own studio call Game Freaks to start designing creatures and coming up with concepts to Tajiri ideas. Together they tried to sells their ideas to Nintendo and after many failed attempt they manage to finally get funding from Nintendo to start spending six years development to the games that would become the world new trend. Game Freaks develop a total of 150 Pokémon and released to the public and gain modest sales. After some time one of the team developers, Shigeki Morimoto, designed the 151st Pokémon called Mew to be added to Pokédex. Unfortunately the team decided to keep this Pokémon hidden from public and it almost made them go bankrupt. Although Game Freaks made the wrong decisions, they finally decided to put Mew into the game and announced to give out the legendary

Pokémon to 20 winner of the Pokémon contest. The contest received a large amount of entrants, and the sales of the Pokémon games quickly increased. Due to high sales, Pokémon Red and Green were swiftly followed up with Pokémon Blue, which had improved graphics and sounds.

Following up the success of the game, Media Factory released a Pokémon trading card game with their own sets of rule, which was carved from the same concepts as the game. A total of 102 cards were released for the first set in 1996. Not so long after the success of the release of the Pokémon trading card game first set, the next expansion started releasing out. The game quickly gain popularity among both kids and adult due to people were already familiar with the Pokémon franchise and the game was easy to pick. The games still retains the same concept as to collecting all the Pokémon and fighting others player to gain more experience. New features were constantly added to Pokémon trading card game as newer version of the original Pokémon game was released. Wizards of the Coast, a producer of hobby games owned by Hasbro, translated the game and bring it to North America. As new trend swarm the western world, kids all over the country were addicted to the game and their parents were emptying their wallets for Wizards of the Coast. The Pokémon market reached its highest height, every TV commercial, newspaper and cars design like a Pokémon were all over the US. Kids were playing Pokémon TCG at the school yards every recess and made the school banned Pokémon from school grounds. Wizard of Coast were getting lots of sue from parents that they were introducing gambling to their kids, a mother complained that she lost 2,000 dollars to her kid to buy him cards to complete his deck. But these entire legal law suites didn't stop the Pokémon phenomenon. The game became the best seller game among kids and at Toy R Us the game flooded the store.

The first World Championship was held in Seattle on August 2002, by Wizard of Coast and gained lots of participation. From this competition Nintendo decided to buy back the game and started holding the competition every year from 2004. The championships are stage each year with standard formats, which allows only Pokémon card set released during that year in the competition. Although old Pokémon card are illegal in completion, they still have value because they can't be find any more in the market. A card from the first edition the Holographic Shadowless

Charizard card was sold at a price of 12,000 dollars. Another expensive card was the Pikachu illustrator cards that were awarded to the winner of Japan's art competition. It was sold to a price of 90,000 dollars and only six copies of it are being seen in the world.

1.2 Pokémon Release into Thailand

Recently the fever of Pokémon trading card games has been translated in to Thai version and finally release in Thailand on January 2019. The official distributor for Thailand in charge of the game is True Company, which signed a contract with Nintendo to bring in the game. True Company was also the distributor for Pokémon Go, an AR app games on phone that also created a new phenomenon in Thailand during it released. True made a huge opening, "Pokémon Trading Card Game First Impact Challenge" at Thailand E-sport Arena. The event was held at The Street on the 5th floor, with preleased Thai translated Pokémon card sold. In the event there were many fans of Pokémon, that can bought and trade Pokémon cards within the event to participate a battle with Top class player.

On February 1st 2019, Pokémon cards are sold in many card stores all over Bangkok and in 7-Eleven. The cards are sold in a pack of 6 cards for 49 baht, where it is called a booster Pack, and sold as a starter pack with 60 cards enough to play a game at 189 baht. Pokémon cards released in Thailand with a total of 300 different cards and divided into two boxes, A and B. One box has 60 booster packs and sold at a price of 2,700 baht. In each box there is a chance of obtaining 6 RR cards and 2 SR or UR cards, these cards are what makes player invest so much money to open booster packs or boxes to find them. Some cards can be sold as high as 2,100 baht in Facebook group and there people who are willing to buy them. The reason behind this might be because True announced that these cards set would be limited and if they are all sold out they won't reprint them. Within a week after the released date of the game a card store near Satriwithaya School has sold over 20 boxes of Pokémon TCG. Still people keep demanding for more, making boxes and booster pack to run out rapidly. Luckily True had stored up large stocks of the card and kept the market flowing. Right now three weeks have passed since the release date of the Pokémon TCG in Thailand and

people are still collecting, trading and buying more cards. The cards sold at 7-eleven stores in Bangkok have to restock twice already since the released date, and these fever will keep going on. True has announced that they will release the 2nd set of the Pokémon TCG on April 2019, which made people thrive more to collect all the cards currently released.

1.3 Research Objective and Scope

The author of this paper has curiosity of what makes player willing to invest money in buying and collecting Pokémon cards. This paper is written to let readers understand what Pokémon TCG is and what makes the game so popular. Research and analysis in this paper will help find out ways to manipulate people to buy extravagant things. The author will be analyzing and discussing on how Pokémon TCG makes its debut in Thailand, by using culture and behavior of Thais.

To do research on the subject, in depth interviews will be taken with players and card store owners to gain knowledge with what made them fascinated about the game. The interview will focus on question, such as their background and their knowledge through their view of Pokémon TCG. There will be interviews on 5 persons, who can be divided into 4 players of different generation (X, Y and Z) and from a retailer owner that sells Pokémon TCG. Other than doing research from qualitative method, the researcher will also immerse himself in the game to experience the thrill and observe other player behavior towards the game. Also collect data base on previous Pokémon TCG events in the US to use as a comparison and backup data to come up with conclusion on the question.

1.4 Benefits from the Research

Business owner can use the analysis on the success of Pokémon TCG in finding multipliers to grab consumer attention. The paper serve as a guideline in predicting what expectation customer might have towards your product.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this paper will be consist of two parts to give out the basic of Pokémon TCG mechanics and to give a brief overview of the concept from key factors of a business. There will also be some theory and formula that author study in Decision making skilled used in the paper.

2.1 How to play Pokémon Trading Card Game

First of the game is about two players battling together with a deck of exactly 60 Pokémon cards. The players can build their deck with not more than 4 same cards and must use the allow cards currently released in that year to play. The game is a turn base game, where each player takes turn to play their cards and try to knock out Pokémon of the opposing player by using abilities or skills. To land powerful move, Pokémon needs energies and Pokémon TCG consist of 11 different types of energies.

2.1.2 Cards Information



Figure 2.1 Parts of a card

The cards use in playing the game can be categorized into three major types as follow:



Figure 2.2 Pokémon Card

The most important card in the game Pokémon card, where player needs to put down a basic Pokémon first and evolves into other stages as the game progress. One Pokémon can be positioned in front for fighting and up to five more can be put as a reserved call the bench. When a Pokémon dies the opposing player that knocks it out gets to draw one prize card. There are special Pokémon call GX with stronger power and abilities, but the drawback is if this Pokémon dies the opposing player gets to draw two prize cards.



Figure 2.3 Trainer Card

Trainer cards are item, support and stadium that can be help to use your Pokémon gain advantage of the game or to disrupt other people hand. During a player turn they can play as many item as they want, but can attached only one item to a Pokémon. The support card can be played only once during a player turn and after playing it goes into the discard pile. The stadium cards once played will stay in the game and takes effect until it is destroy. Each player must play a different name stadium card and when play will overwrite the previous stadium card in game and the cards goes into the discard pile.



Figure 2.4 Energy

There are ten different energies types, as follow: grass, fire, water, lightning, psychic, fighting, darkness, metal, fairy, special. Each Pokémon attacks use different combination of energies cards, but we can attach energy to a Pokémon once per turn. When a Pokémon dies all the energies attached to it gets discarded with it.

2.1.2 Different type of Cards rarity

Pokémon cards have different rarity and the price of each card is according to it rareness:



Common

Uncommon

Rare



Rare Holo

Rare Ultra

Rainbow rare

Figure 2.5 Card Rarity

2.1.3 Gameplay and winning condition

The game can be won with fulfilling any of the three conditions;

1. Picking up all of your prize cards
2. Knock out all of your opponent's Pokémon in play
3. Your opponent's has no more card in their deck at the beginning of their turn

Setting up the game

1. Throw a D6 dice and the player with the higher number get to decides which player to go first.
2. Shuffle your 60-card deck and draw the top 7 cards.
3. Check if you have a basic Pokémon in your hand.
 - If you do you may lay your active Pokémon and your benched Pokémon faced down
 - If you do not have a basic Pokémon in your hand you must reveal your hand and you may shuffle your hand back into your deck. Then draw 7 more cards, if you still don't have a basic Pokémon, repeat the process. Each time you do this your opponent gets an extra card at their start
4. Once ready put the top 6 cards face down as your prize card
5. Both players reveal their laid-out Pokémon and start the game.

Game phase

1. Draw a card
2. Do any of the following action:
 - Put a basic Pokémon onto your Bench as many as you want, but not more than five
 - Evolve your Pokémon
 - Attach an energy card from your hand to a Pokémon, once per turn
 - Play a trainer card with rules stated

- Retreat your active Pokémon, only once per turn, where you have to discard the amount of energy stated on the Pokémon card
 - Use abilities
3. Attack and your turn ends.

2.2 SWOT Analysis

The most important tools for business to be successful and gain competitive advantage are having a good strategy. Coming up with a strategy is applying your strength against your weakness. To do that is looking at things in other perspective differentiating you from others. Most company nowadays failed to understand that a success from one company wouldn't be the same success they will get. So copying same established strategy is not a good strategy. When creating a strategy the business should have a connection between all the steps and each steps should linked to the business goals. We need to know what we are doing not just planned action without knowing the direction. Many businesses tend to think that they would set up their strategy according to goals, but that isn't enough. They must also know how to execute those actions from their strategy also.

Before beginning of building a strategy, a business should analyzed its market first and see what their competitors are. Then they should look at their potential and opportunities to sales their product according to the market demand. Business must know what their consumer wants to achieved, and with that information, the business creates a shortcut for their consumer. Using good business strategy will add as a multiplier boost their product in letting consumer achieved their goals.

Analyzing the situation and SWOT analysis can be adapted for use with the organization or the production of product. If the analysis is being use from the organization down to the product, it will help provide more accurate information.

SWOT analysis is divided into two aspects, internal and external. For internal analysis it is use to look at the organization weakness and strength. As for external analysis the organization opportunity and threat can be define.

Strength- the strong or the outstanding point of that makes a product has higher value than other competing products in the industry. Business can highlighted their product strength to use in gaining advantage over their competitors

Weakness- is the negative factors that oppose your strength. These factors must be taken into consideration to know what you need to improve to gain competitive advantage. Product weakness can be learned through customer feedback and using them to help improve that product.

Opportunities-are external factors that will help contribute to your success. Analyzing opportunities will help see the trend to grow in your product and see which direction you should take. Opportunities act as a guidance to let business know their target group of customer for their product, by helping them invests the right resources to produce the right product for their customer.

Threats-are external factors that gives negative impact causing a business difficult to operate. Due to threats are external factor, it is hard to prevent and control it. What we can do with threats is preparing and predicting what impact will it cause to us. This will help us mitigate the problem that might arise from threats.

2.3 Marketing Plan

After coming up with a marketing strategy that summarizes the overall strategic approach, the company needs to execute its action plans. Action plans for the company is the most crucial part in helping company implement and coordinates its activities across departments effectively. It specifies:

- Target market to be pursued
- What specific actions are to be taken with respect to each of the 4 Ps.
- Who is responsible for each action.
- When the action will be engaged in.
- How much will be budgeted for each action.

2.4 Simple Rules (Ph.D. Rath Dhnadirek):

$$\mathbf{x + y = z}$$

; where x is the existing resource / capability that enables us to achieve something.

y is what we should do and compose of the λ (is the action/option that leads us to much more valuable results) and the x^+ (the extend resources and efforts).

z is the result we want to achieve in the future.

2.5 Market Targeting and Strategic Positioning

An important aspect of marketing is deciding which buyers to target and how to position firm's product for each market target. Through effective targeting and positioning a company can gain sustainable organizational performance. Company decision of target in the market identifies the people or organization the company wants to put its product towards.

2.5.1 Targeting Strategy

Deciding a good market target is one of the most challenges company's management will face. It is required for company to study its product market, its capability and resources and their market competitors. Many companies are using market segmentation, because consumers are becoming differentiated in their wants and needs. Microsegmentation usage in business is becoming popular to help them in coverage of vast target groups. For new emerging business focus more on a boarder target and uses macrosegmentation, resulting in a few segments.

Targeting and positioning strategies consist of 1) identifying and analyzing the segments of a product, 2) deciding which segment the company wants to target, and 3) designing and implementing a strategy for each target chosen by the company. (David W.C. & Nigel F.P., 2003)

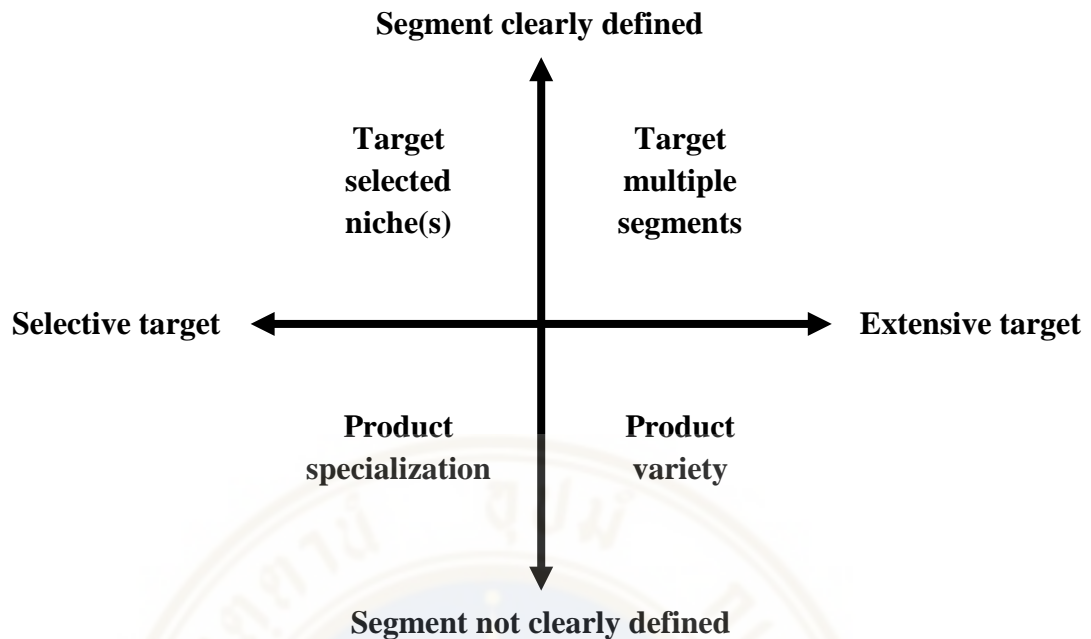


Figure 2.6 Marketing Targeting Approaches

2.5.2 Circumstances that has effect on Targeting Decisions

When businesses are determining a market a target, they will need to analyzed customers, competitor positioning, and the financial and market attractiveness of the segment. Businesses need to decide target by selecting from a single segment, a few segments, or all or most of the product segment. So criteria effecting those decisions are:

- Stage of product-market maturity.
- Extent of diversity in preference.
- Industry structure.
- Capabilities and resources.
- Opportunities for competitive advantage. (David W.C. & Nigel F.P., 2003)

2.5.3 Emerging Markets

Most emerging market will have to face the uncertainty about customer acceptance that leads to how large will the market be. Opening a new market requires lots of general analysis about the customer rather than doing research and developing

the product. Consumer's diversity will be slim because they are not yet familiar with the product. So it will be difficult in determining the direction and growth of the market in the future.

In dealing with limitation in emerging market, business owners should learn and analyzed the following:

Buyer diversity – buyers on new product will likely be similar and often have limited segments. So business owners might decide to use a broad segment such as price of the product to be high, medium or low. Surveys needs to be conducted on consumer to help see where price they are willing to pay for the product. If the chosen segment has a fluctuated product price, an alternative way is to use a price average or selecting from a typical group of user.

Industry Structure – knowing about the industry development will play an important role on growth and direction of your product. The industry develops by rate of customer satisfaction on your product and their future expectations.

Resources and capabilities – business selling new product in the industries will likely have the competitive advantage, because they have the differentiation strategy captured. So cost of production is critical in determining your company's growth. The business can choose to go with high cost of production and produce superior product to the existing ones. Another route the business can take is choosing to sell a lower price of product but has a competitive quality compare to the existing one.

2.5.4 Positioning Strategy

Determining the product positioning will help the company see the overall company's value, brand image and specialty in their product. Positioning products also linked to the business strategy, which focus on the buyers in the market. Positioning strategy includes the product, supporting activities, distribution channel, price and promotion (David W.C. & Nigel F.P., 2003).

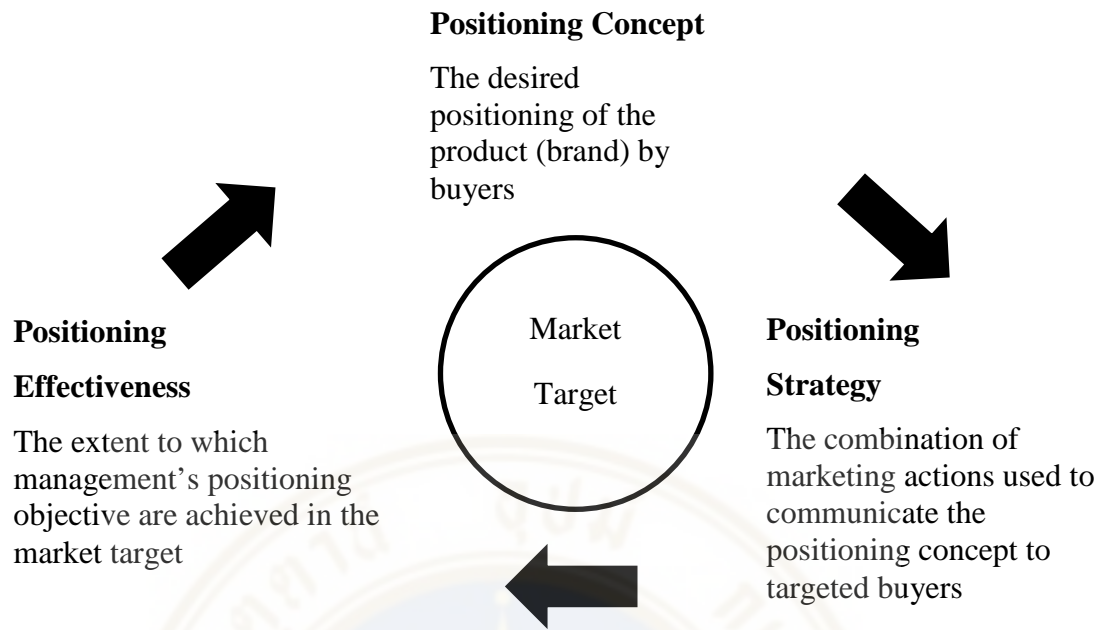


Figure 2.7 Strategic positioning cycles

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Research methodology in this paper, the author uses articles, interviewing and immersing himself in the Pokémon TCG to gain knowledge for the analysis. The first pieces of data to the puzzle was from, interviewing those who were the playing the game. Next we interview the retailer of the Pokémon TCG card shop in Thailand, and see his opinion in choosing the market. To compare if the information received was relevant, research on articles concerning the success of Pokémon TCG sold in the US has also been observe. Lastly to really understand the fascination and the fun behind the game, the author himself learned and plays the actual game.

3.1 Interviewing Details

The conducted interview was made on 4 different people, on both new players that just learned the game and old players that had played the game before it was translated into Thai. The second part of the interview was focus on the seller side, by interviewing with a retailer owner. The store owner claims that she sold 60 boxes of Pokémon TCG within the first two weeks after the release dates. The objective of this is to gain insight of player's motive towards the game. Interviewee information on their thoughts toward the game will use to do STP analysis of Pokémon TCG. This will allows us to learn the key that Pokémon TCG try to add value to their product, by applying the concept of simple rules. The first group is the experienced player, where most of the question will be focus on how they build up their own reputation with the game. Understanding this will teach us what value is added to the game that makes some card prices in the game high and some low. It will also let us learn the motivation behind players in playing the game and what keeps them on going. The second group is focus on the new players, who just started playing and learning about the game not so long after the release of the game in Thailand. Interviewing them will

help us learn how True Company uses media, such as Facebook to grab people attention. Also understand the concept of how brand image of Pokémon in people mind draw people to try out other products of their franchise.

The people being interview are mixed of different genders and background knowledge of the game. Due to confidentiality, the interviewee names are made up, but their ages, gender and background are from real interview:

3.1.1 Experienced Player

Interviewee #1: **Mai**

Age: 32 years

Gender: Male

Interview Duration: 30 minutes

Background: Mai is a full-time office worker in an airline business. He has been playing Pokémon TCG for 5 years and had competed in many competitions. He usually play every day after his work to test out his deck and takes a whole day on Saturday in reading the cards meta and coming up with new card combinations. Although he is not in one of the top players he has experience in playing the game and gives us insight on why each card prices are set that way. He wanted to achieve recognition as a pro-player and be able to qualify in the world championship.

Interviewee #2: **Num**

Age: 40 years

Gender: Male

Interview Duration: 30 minutes

Background: Num is a married man, but has no kid. He owns a small business of construction and designing house interior. He proclaim that he started playing the game before it was release in Thailand, where he learned about it through his foreign customer living in Thailand. The game was very easy to catch and learned when he first started playing the game. With the game constantly releasing new Pokémon card sets with new features added to the game consistently, made him constantly keeping in touch with the game. He talks that about the game in the US as

very high competition game and would like Thai sponsor to also invest in it too. If possible he would like to have a career path as a professional Pokémon TCG player.

3.1.2 New Players

Interviewee #3: **Ploy**

Age: 27 years

Gender: Female

Interview Duration: 30 minutes

Background: Ploy is an administration at Betagro and has average salary. She says that the price of a booster pack isn't that high. She also told the author that she loves the idea of being able to buy the game at a 7-eleven convenient store near her home. The game was easy to learn and design of Pokémon in the card is quite cute for her. Translation of the game into Thai, made her try out the game, because most game she used to play are in other language and it causes difficulty to learn them. She likes the idea that the game lets people joins together as a community and makes an open discussion. She also wanted to be able to buy other cards game accessories in Thailand and let True Company be the official provider. This in her mind will make the game more interesting.

Interviewee #4: **Top**

Age: 29 years

Gender: Male

Interview Duration: 30 minutes

Background: Master degree student at Chulalongkorn University in the major in Entomology. He played the game because it made him feel like a kid again. The game was fun and easy to learn for him. He likes the way the game let people trade cards together. Although he only plays the game for casualty, he still likes the idea of seeing the game becoming an E-sport. He also stated that the other fun thing about the game is making it a Gash, giving it an excitement in seeing what cards he will get. The one thing he felt should improve from the game is the range of cards currently available, because after collecting most of the card it's starting to become bore for him.

3.1.3 Card game Retailer

Interviewee #4: **Lek**

Age: 43 years

Gender: Female

Interview Duration: 1 hours

Background: Lek owns a card store near Satriwithaya School and has always been a fan of Pokémon. She says that she has already known the game since it was still selling in the US. She tried to bring in the game to sell at her store, but failed because most prices were quite high. The game was in English and only small group of people formed a community to play the game. The only place people joins to play the game is at famous card store, which wasn't her store. So when she heard the news that Pokémon TCG was going to release in Thailand, she decided to bring in the game to sell at her store. To her surprise, even though she didn't do any media commercial to inform customer that her store was selling the game, people still come to buy cards at her store. She told that True listed the entire game store that are selling Pokémon TCG in and advertise it on the official game Facebook page. So advertising her store for her lets players near her store knows about it and she was able to sell the game. In the first week she sold 20 box and 10 starter set, which was selling better than other cards game in her store. When people comes into the store they always look around for Pokémon TCG and old players who use to play other collectible card games at her store start switching to play Pokémon TCG.

3.2 Interview questions

For experienced players:

1. How did you begin in playing the game of Pokémon TCG?
2. What made you invest your time and money in playing the game Pokémon TCG?
3. What do you need to win and be a strong competitor in the game?
4. How to build a strong Pokémon deck to beat other players?
5. What is your mindset when playing the game and your strategy in winning?
6. What improvement do you suggest to distributor of Pokémon TCG in Thailand should do to the game?

For new players:

1. Do you know what Pokémon is and how did come to know it Pokémon?
2. What is your first impression of Pokémon and what comes to your mind when you hear the word Pokémon?
3. What do you find fascinating and fun about the game?
4. Why did you choose to start playing the Pokémon TCG?
5. What if the Pokémon weren't translated into Thai, will you still play the game and why?
6. What do you feel about the card prices sold on the market?
7. Where are you buying Pokémon TCG?
8. How much are you willing to invest to collect the cards you want?

CHAPTER IV

FINDING ANALYSIS

4.1 Insight from Pokémon TCG player

Pokémon Card release into Thailand Game Market Opinion

Since I was a kid about 20 years ago, it was the first time I saw Pokémon game appearing on Gameboy advance, a handheld portable game, which was very popular during the 2000s. A few months later, Pokémon figures, candy, anime and card game were released into the market. However, it was not that successful during that time until it appears again in 4 Feb 19, which skyrocketed its popularity compare to other collectibles card game in the market. Even though other card such as magic the gathering and Yu-Gi-Oh were very famous card game in Thai culture for so many years now has been dominated by the release of Pokémon card games within week. In my opinion as a player and a collector, I believe the reason behind this is:

Language barrier: Although we have English as secondary languages in our society, but not many Thai can use the language fluently. The previous Pokémon card game has come in the form of English language and was not successful because there was no official distributor to sponsor or judge in clearing the game language translation. So, it is only limit to only few groups of people who are really hardcore fan of the game to try to learn and understand the game. Therefore, the game only retains a small group of communities in Thailand. Compare with other card game that has big sponsor like Wizard of Coast and Namco to help clear the language barriers in game rules and card abilities that appeared in English form.

However, as the Pokémon card game have been released since 4th February 2019, there was an official distributor, True Company, which translates the game into Thai language making the game more accessible to Thai teenagers and kids. The game also had official judge and sponsor to support the game competition giving players a clear understand of games rules, by presenting them on their Facebook page and websites. Given that Pokémon was already a famous brand in Thai culture which

makes no surprise for people to easily become interested in the card game being released.

Communities: Aside from language barrier, communities in social worlds such as Facebook became the center of this card game in communicating to player. Card game needs large communities to support its life span of staying in the market, for the purpose playing, selling, or trade card between players. Game organizer also needs streams of fan players and customer to stay in their market in order to promote special events and arrange tournament in keeping game rolling. As long as the game communities could stand firm, the game will be everlasting.

Collector and Gold digger: Every nature of card game always includes randomness, which doesn't guaranteed players to certain cards the want from booster packs. Pokémon TCG introduce rare, super rare, ultra-rare and hyper rare for within each booster that has different it values in the community according to the card rarity in obtaining it. Individual card has it owns price that fluctuate depending on the card supply and demand from player. Other factors such as pro-league and major tournament also have an impact on card price and most wining deck will jack up cards' prices in the market. People want to win and their ideas of deck building come from winning cards example they see in tournaments. Buying a booster pack at 7-eleven for 50 baht gives you the chance of getting a hyper rare card that could be sold more than 2000 baht in the market. It's a lottery model that lets people gamble to buy, sell, and trade cards in order to gain as much benefit as possible from these cards. Some people even invest in buying carton or boxes to increases their chances in getting rarer cards. There are also collectors, who bought it for speculation and wait for the cards production to be discontinued in the market so that they could sell the card at much higher price in future. In the history of this card game the oldest and most famous card was the; Charizard first edition, which was sold at 6000 USD to a collector.

Competitive: Card game system these days are not like the old days that uses strong cards with strong power speed to dominate other cards, it also including tactics and good strategy for player to win. The same goes for Pokémon TCG that lets you feel like a trainer controlling your Pokémon and planning your next move. The charming point about the game, is it center only on playing Pokémon your deck to

create tactics you have laid out in the game works. There are more than a 1000+ Pokémon in the game and you can choose your favorite Pokémon to play and actually built a deck around it. The game allows you to focus with different Pokémon combo and let you uses supporting card to make your Pokémon stronger. This makes game very competitive among players, because the intensity of the game makes you think of ways to keep Pokémon alive, while knocking out other players Pokémon. How you make your Pokémon shine is purely up to your play style.

Price: As mention earlier the price to Pokémon booster pack is quite cheap compare with another card game. A booster pack is only 50 baht, while other cards games booster like Magic the Gathering 100 baht per booster. Adjusting the price for the card games brings in wider range of customer group, from monthly workers to kids in school.

4.2 Segmenting-Targeting-Positioning analysis

Segmentation- True first release Pokémon TCG into Bangkok, because the highest dense of population and the most city with highest money flow is there. The city had the most 7-eleven stores compare to other city, and this is True major distribution channel for the game. The company decision to use 7-eleven as means of distributing their product, made it very easy for customer to get access to it. Unfortunately most 7-eleven don't have the product on the shelf, but behind the payment counter near the cigarettes and whisky bar. This was a problem to customer wanting to buy cards packed at a convenient store near their home, as to they have to always ask the clerk to buy one. From this issue the author has analyze the reason for doing so, and it is because True still not paying and investing that much attention to the product. As future improvement, I'd recommend that the products should be put on shelves where people could easily access it.

Pokémon TCG is categorizing in the collectible card games industry. The product sales size isn't large compare to the sales statistic in the US, where the market share was very big in the card gaming industry. Research papers have shown that Pokémon TCG has become very popular in the US and most shelves at Toy R Us are filled with them, in the past. This is an acceptable trend that we might see the game

being released in Thailand will go through. The reason to this is the game starts off as a brand new game to most Thais and people are in the process of testing and trying. But with the game already been released and played worldwide for a long time, the distributor didn't need to do much research and they could just use the game brand to sell their product.

The current top collectible card games competitors to Pokémon TCG currently in Thai market is Magic the Gathering, Yu-Gi-Oh, and Final Fantasy. All these games have been in Thailand for a long period and are very well known in the industry. To tackle with this Pokémon TCG saw a flaw in these game that, their language were all in English. Correlating research from the ministry of education, which points out that most Thais are not that good in English, so translating the game into the native language will gain more interest from people in Thailand. The game was also easy to learn didn't take much time in playing a game. This was suitable to Thai's lifestyle of easy going and don't want to spend too much time on something.

Targeting- Pokémon TCG focus on two group of customer, the group of people who are fan of Pokémon and the other as people who loves card games. The first target groups are mostly new players who know nothing about card game but played the game due to their fascination in Pokémon. Targeting this group enable Pokémon TCG to add new customer to their products and use their already well know product as a value. The reason why Pokémon TCG has the exact same details and all the Pokémon from the actual game was that it helps people feel that the cards they are collecting is the actual Pokémon they loved. Pokémon TCG tries to find

The next group Pokémon TCG target is player playing other collectible cards game, by targeting this group they will have to be compete with other collectible cards games. So the way Pokémon TCG competes with other collectible cards game already in Thailand, is by focusing on the culture of Thai people. For cards game to attract Thai player, the game is best to be in Thai language. Thai people needs to understand clearly what each cards do and the best way to communicate that to them is translating the card to Thai.

Next the price of the game should be affordable, and Pokémon TCG setting it price to be 49 baht per booster pack will increase its customer rage to include

kids also. Doing this the game is able to gain market share in the collectible cards game market with wider range of customer.

Positioning- Pokémon TCG position themselves in Thailand as a kids' toy and a competitive sports game. The can be both played in casual and intense competitive. Younger generation players played the game is for fun and enjoy in trading cards or exchanging talk with their friend. Pokémon TCG is easy to learn, which helps the game attract kids to buy and collect their cards. Also the game uses friendly drawing of Pokémon that is already familiar among kids. As already mention the price to open a booster pack is affordable for kids and they are sold at 7-eleven. So this helps the card game become easily accessible toward kids.

On the other hand putting the game can also be play in serious manners, with prize and competition between players. The card game isn't just for fun, but it also adds in depth details where people can actually planned their strategy and played the card competitively. There are combinations to cards, and different technique can be brought up during the play. So the game can also position itself in e-sport and makes it competitive. Each Pokémon cards has its own set price in the market, which makes the card valuable. So hardcore collector will be looking to find and collect Pokémon cards.

The figure below shows the position of Pokémon TCG in the collectible card game industry compare to other card games like Magic the gathering, Yu-Gi-Oh, Vanguard, and Keyforge. In the Y-axis is a comparison between cards game that are play as a competitive game and playing just for fun. In the X-axis it shows how easily the game is accessible and it target group of customers, whether the game exclusive for certain group only or inclusive for all group.

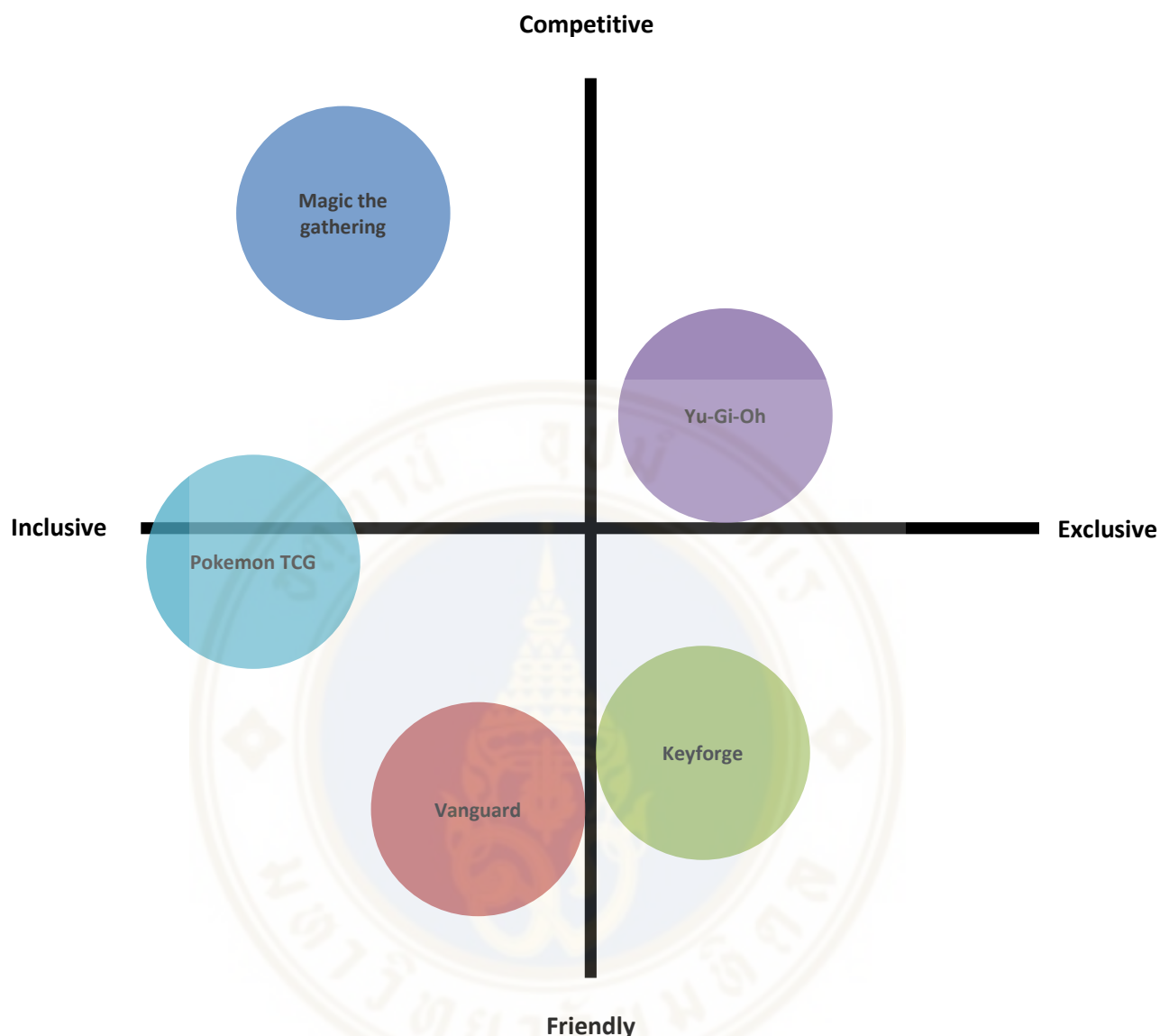


Figure 4.1 SWOT analysis

4.3 SWOT Analysis

Strength - Pokémon cartoon has been with Thai people for long time and has built strong relationships with them. The cartoon has its own characteristics and its brand value has been imprinted to consumers mind. Pokémon TCG is easy to learn compare to other cards game, making able to target people of all ages. The cartoons on the cards are variety and a mixture of cool and cuteness at the same time, it enable the game to attract unlimited gender rage of customers. Most people playing the game

know what the Pokémon in each card are, which makes them more fascinated in the game. The game uses random system to give people excitement in surprising them what card they will get. The price of the booster pack is reachable for students in school and the box price isn't too high for general office worker. The game setting the right price to attract the right group of people is what makes it strong compare to their competitors, which has a much higher price.

The game has already been well known and played in the US makes it able to retrain a concrete community that has already been built. So bringing the game and making it official in Thailand makes it community expand in to a new country and growing it even stronger.

Weakness- Due to most games has short life span; the game might lose it market in the future. Pokémon TCG is collectible cards game and if the game wait too long to release the next set, people might get bored. Timing is very crucial for the game and how True plans to do market with the game is still a mystery. So not managing the next card set release date will definitely cause the game to fail in the market.

Opportunities-Other Pokémon TCG accessories like card box, game play mat and card sleeves, could be brought from Thailand to be sold officially in Thailand also. Currently most of these accessories mention are being brought in and selling at high price. Pokémon TCG in Thailand can keep the game going, while expanding their products to other field.

Threat- Government getting strict in gambling might cause the game to be view as a gamble. People might start banning the game due parents might see it as a bad influence toy towards their kid. The way Pokémon TCG is dealing with this issue is making the game into a community and pushing it towards e-sport. Doing so makes the game more as a sport and the producer is also giving back to the community.

4.4 Simple rule

All players playing the game want to be a winner and want to be praised by other on how good they are at the game. Player tries to find new ways and techniques of gaining advantage of other players through combination of cards. This is

the z that people want to achieve from the game. The x is current set of cards released in Thailand and good combination of these cards will lead to a win in the game. The game uses Facebook to post different card combination of the game, to help gives player ideas on how they should play their deck. Player seeing this will make them want to try out new combinations of cards and makes them go out find search for the recommended Pokémon. This is the y which acts as a multiplier to make people want to buy and collect more Pokémon cards. Examples of the post are below:



Figure 4.2 Deck Built in Facebook

On Facebook they also explain the mechanic of this deck and show people how strong the deck is. So giving people new solution to win the game makes them want to try it out and gives them a reason to go out and try finding the cards listed in the deck list. From this people either have to open more booster pack or directly buy the cards from other players. This adds more value to the cards and let Pokémon TCG be able to sell more booster packs.

Lastly setting price for each card, through Facebook helps makes the card valuable. Also making the cards limited, causes disruption in demand and supply. Collectors behavior towards the cards will makes them wanting and trying to find in order to collect the rarest cards as possible.

4.5 Pokémon TCG Market share

The charts below are based on interviews with retailers, distributors, and manufacturers. It shows the top 10 collectible card games ranking in Spring 2018

Table 4.1 Top 10 Collectible card game

Top 10 Collectible Card Games Ranking – Spring 2018		
Rank	Franchise	Publisher
1	Magic: The Gathering	Wizards of the Coast
2	Pokémon TCG	Pokémon USA
3	Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG	Konami
4	Marvel and DC HeroClix	WizKids
5	D&D Fantasy Miniatures	WizKids
6	Cardfight!! Vanguard	Bushiroad
7	Force of Will	Force of Will
8	Dragon Ball Super	Bandai
9	Pathfinder Battles	WizKids
10	Star Wars Destiny	ANA/Fantasy Flight Games

The Pokémon Company announced that in year 2017 the game has a market share in Europe of 82%. The total sales for the game in 2018 for Pokémon TCG were 25.7 million dollars in the world.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The paper was written to demonstrate old product entering a new market and gaining new customer. The idea behind this paper is to study how successful products in is able to expand into new market region and compete with the existing brand. The paper was also made about the willingness of customer to buy extravagant goods, due to trends and social culture. People will buy products that can trigger their mind in thinking that the products bring them value. In this case Pokémon TCG helps people feel of becoming young again and let them choose to build deck around their favorite Pokémon. The cards aren't just pieces of paper, because there are well-established market prices of each card.

Looking into Thai culture and behavior, we can use it as an advantage to sells product at the right price, place and time. For Pokémon TCG as an example, the game translating the language into Thai, is suitable for Thai players, because they need to know in depth what each cards does. As we can see from previous cards game like Magic the Gathering or Yu-Gi-Oh the game rules not clear, due to the language use isn't the native language. Adjusting the price of the booster pack, box and starter deck is also a good strategy for the game. True did a great job in setting reachable price for Thai people in all ages, which helps the game to sell out easier compare to other current card game. So if you are looking to get large volume of sales in the market and making profit through selling them, it is very crucial to set the right price of your product according to customer average salary.

In making the game official in Thailand, helps True to be able to sells it at 7-eleven. Compared to other collectible games competitors that are sold only in certain card game store, Pokémon TCG is very accessible this way. The game is fast pace and people don't need much time to play the game, making it a good leisure activity for people.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATION

Overall Pokémon trading card game being brought into Thailand was a big hit and gain lots of players' attention in the gaming industry. Further improvement and planning to the game in order to retain it in the market should be made as follow:

Retaining its community; as already mention card games depend on community of players to keep it alive. So, promoting the game through special events and arranging official tournament will keep people in the community interacting with the game. The decision in releasing new set of card needs to take into consideration of people willingness to wait, not upon the profit the company makes, or else it might leave the player disappointed.

Bringing the game to online; most game nowadays is online because people don't have enough time to meet up with other players and play. Online games have become very popular and use fewer budgets in production of the game. Pokémon TCG in Europe and US has already implemented the online system to the game and the game is a big hit. Each booster pack bought has a code that lets you bring the cards into its online system and therefore lets you be able to play your deck online also. So Thailand should also have this system to get more time from people to spend playing Pokémon TCG and thus increasing their sales.

Releasing game accessories and bundling pack for the game. Most card games need lots of accessories that players like to collect, such as; card sleeves, deck box; playmat; dice and many more. So, selling these products is another way of introducing new product into the industries. The randomizing system of player getting cards from the pack could lead to player frustration and choosing to buy cards straight of other players selling the cards. So, the market would be focus only on players selling their card and not wanting to buy new cards from the distributor. In order to fix this issue, the company can add bundles where the buddle include popular cards and card set to increase their sales.

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