

**UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS
PREMIUM OPTICAL LENS BRANDS IN BANGKOK**



AKSORN PADUNGKIATSAKUL

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PREMIUM OPTICAL LENS BRANDS IN BANGKOK**

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on
12 July, 2020



.....
Miss Aksorn Padungkiatsakul
Candidate

.....
Assoc.Prof. Vichita Ractham,
Ph.D.
Advisor

.....
Assoc. Prof. Sooksan Kantabutra,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

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

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

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Aksorn Padungkiatsakul

UNDERSTANDING FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS PREMIUM OPTICAL LENS BRANDS IN BANGKOK

AKSORN PADUNGKIATSAKUL 6149084

M.M. (ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGEMENT)

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. DR. VICHITA RACTHAM,
Ph.D., RONALD SURACHAI THESENVITZ, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. SOOKSAN
KANTABUTRA, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

As spectacle lenses are part of people who have a vision problem's everyday life, this research paper aims to understand customers the decision-making behavior of Thai people towards buying a pair of spectacles lenses.

This zeroes in on two major factors including visual and tactile inputs to classify the most significant input on consumers' purchasing decisions. This research used a qualitative approach and the data was collected by an in-depth interview.

Interviews were conducted with 25 Thai participants that have purchased premium spectacle lenses. This study reveals that most of Thais put more emphasis on the quality of products and services from the store, rather than the emotional or feeling. Most of interviewees told that Physical need and service quality is related to the premium spectacle lenes, followed by promotion and social factors. The study can further help optical shop owner to understand the nature of Thais when buying premium lenses for their vision.

KEY WORDS: Buying behavior/ Retail mix/ Eyewear/ Spectacle lenses

24 pages

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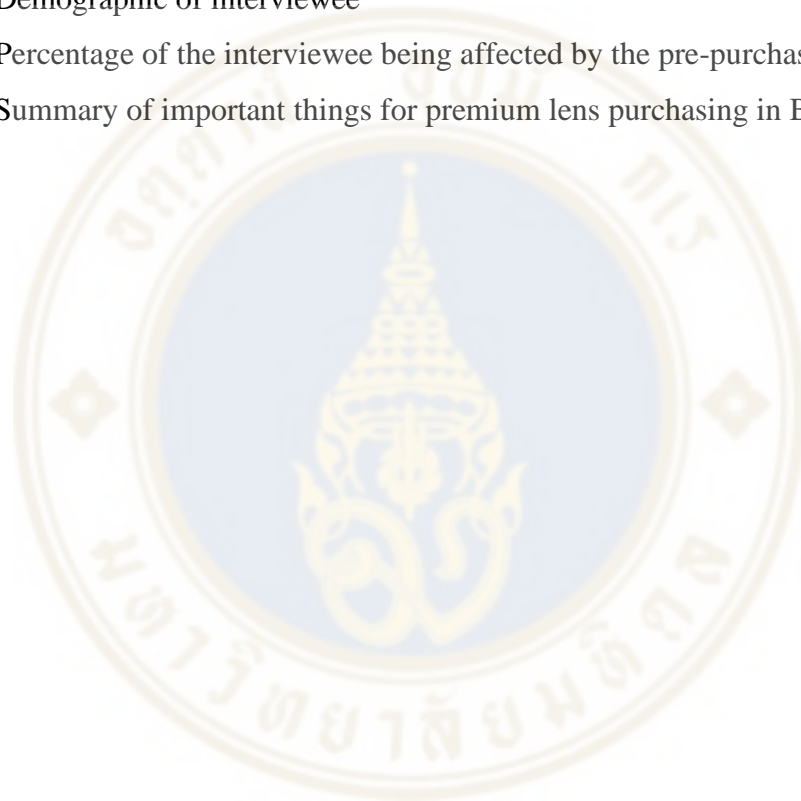
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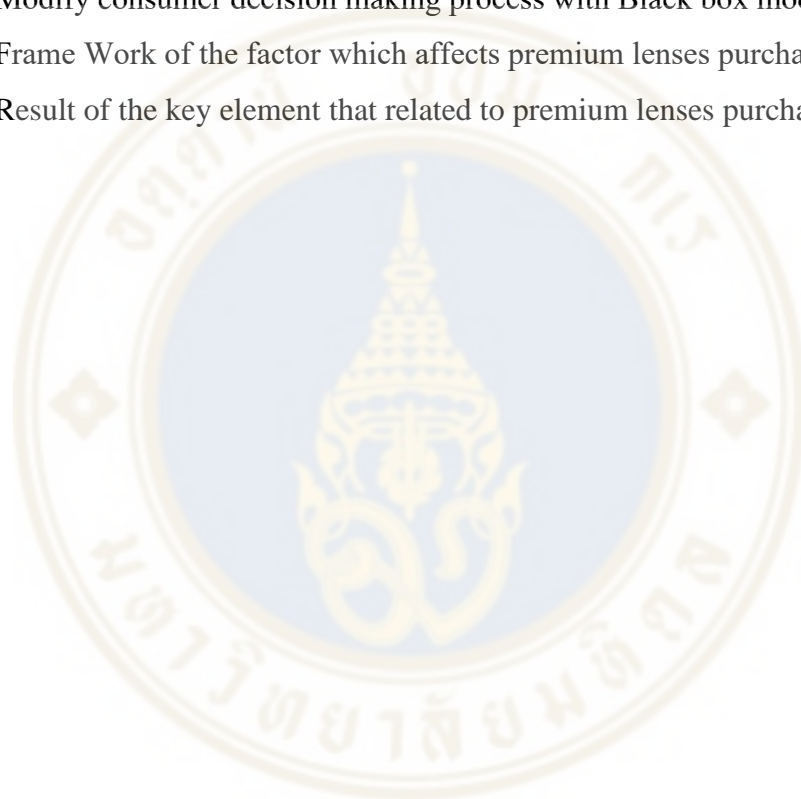
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Optical industry in Thailand

The global vision industry value is 95,000 USD or 3 trillion Baht while the overall Thailand optical market is worth 10,000 million. Euromonitor forecasts that the optical industry in Thailand will continue a compounded annual growth rate of 5%, and push sales to reach \$13 billion in 2021 (LUO, 2017). Prescription lenses and optical frame generate approximately 60% of the total market's profit contribution whereas sunglasses and contact lenses contribute only 40%. Due to the rising number of optical stores in Bangkok, the optical lenses market in Thailand is becoming increasingly competitive. There are 3,808 optical shops in Thailand (DBD, 2020) which mostly belong to Thai companies and are usually a family-run business. The biggest share in the market is chain stores, namely Top Charoen, KT Optic, and Better Vision.

Table 1.1 Number of optical chain store (Nalisa, 2019)

Shop Name	Number of shops
Top Charoen	1,937
KT Optic	200
Better Vision	117

The optical retail industry presents several players, and the competition is high across local distributors, eye care optical centers, independent optician stores, and online stores. Recently, as a result of significant growth in the online sector and the aggressive expansion of multinational businesses, local optical shops are severely affected. In 2015, OWNDAYS, a Japanese optical chain store opened its first branch in Thailand. Following the rapid expansion, it currently has 24 branches across the

country, in which 12 branches are located in Bangkok. OWNDAYS also launched a new concept brand in 2019 namely Sevendays Optic. Offering the budget-friendly fashionable eyewear, (Just222, 2019) it introduces one price concept for eyewear frame with the prescription lenses to the market. In other words, customers only pay the price shown on the glasses' price tag, no extra cost for the lenses and this include all range of prescription (2020). From the consumer point of view, a fixed price concept with fewer choices of lenses may be easier to understand.

On the contrary, traditional optical shops usually have a wider range of eyewear frames. The price varies from 1,000 baht to more than 30,000 baht. These shops also have a variety of brands and types for prescription lenses with starting prices as low as 500 baht to as high as 100,000 baht. The price of lenses depends on the quality and clarity of lenses as well as lenses coating, weight, and clearness. Though having more options might satisfy customers who clearly understand their needs, some customers might find too many product choices confusing. When customers purchase the glasses, they have to pay for spectacle frames and prescription lenses. For the frame, customers can make a decision based on the brand and design that they like i.e. Dior or Gucci. While customers do not need a further explanation of what is Dior or Gucci, they need to wear the lenses to learn the differences, comfort as well as clarity of each lens type. Branded spectacle lenses like ZEISS or Nikon is expensive with price ranges from 3,000 baht to 100,000 baht. They are different from the low-price lenses as the materials and technology used for production are of higher quality. Though it is very difficult to make customers understand the technology or the design behind the clear plastic pieces that are invisible to the eyes, some customers still prefer to purchase the premium lenses.

1.2 Problem statement

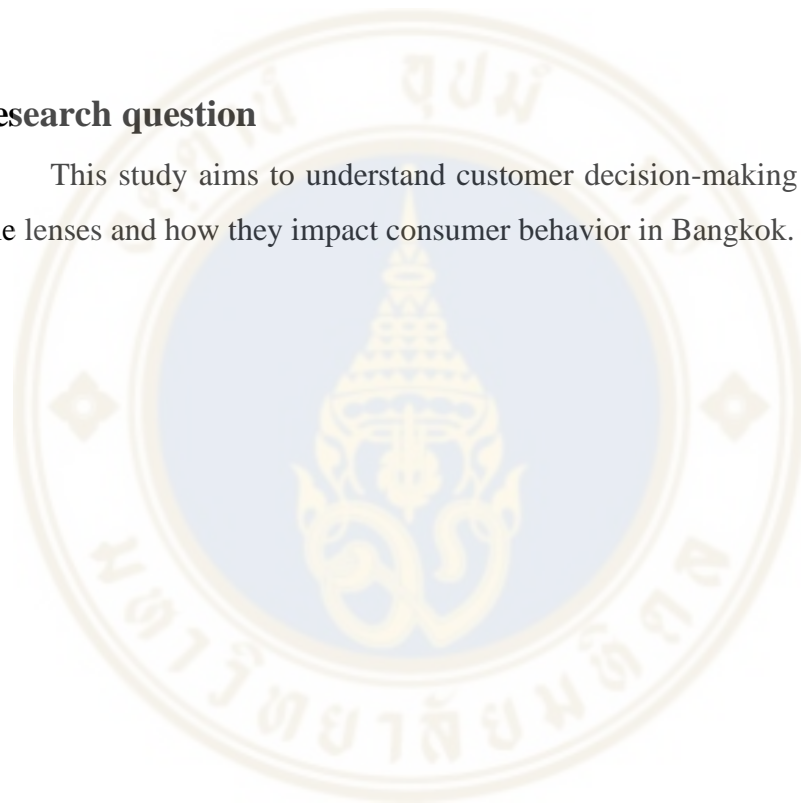
Spectacle lenses product is an invisible product that needs more effort to sell compared to the spectacle frame. However, some customers are willing to pay more for lenses. This research aims to understand customer decision-making behavior to buy spectacle lenses product in Bangkok.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The researcher would like to take a closer look at the factors that affects the spectacle lenses purchase decision making. In particular, researcher will look at the perception and experience of consumers who have purchased spectacle lenses over 5,000 baht and explore the reason behind the factors. To sell the premium lenses, shop owner needs to know and understand the factors that affect the lenses purchasing decision.

1.4 Research question

This study aims to understand customer decision-making behavior to buy spectacle lenses and how they impact consumer behavior in Bangkok.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The refractive error issue is one of the most common vision problems in Thailand and almost the number one common cause of blindness globally (Holden et al., 2016). Refractive error can be explained as the eye condition that occurs from the light rays is not focused on the retina, creating a blurred image in the eyes. There are 4 common types of refractive errors which are long-sightedness (hyperopia), short-sightedness (myopia), astigmatism (the light rays are focused only one meridian) and presbyopia (Progressive loss of ability to see up close which happened to everybody age over 40 years.) (Brown & Turner, 2020). The treatment goal of refractive error is to improve the customer's visual acuity and visual comfort. There are three treatment methods for refractive error, specifically refractive surgery, eyeglasses, or contact lenses (Benjamin, 2007 #30). The Refractive surgery method is required to be done in the hospital and conducted by an ophthalmologist, but eyeglasses and contact lenses are usually prescribed in the optical retailer. In order to correct the refractive error by eyeglasses, spectacle lenses and spectacle frames are required. Spectacle frame is the part that holds the prescription lenses in front of the wearer's eyes so the customer can see through the lenses clearly and comfortably.

2.1 Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior has several dimensions. It is a result of the dynamic system which connects many processes i.e. perception, information, motivation, and human behavior. As this connection based on consumers integrating with products or services, the seller presents the image to society which is relevant to the process of purchasing decision making. Since consumers purchase to satisfy their own needs and want, the decision process is influenced by several factors including personal, social and, economic factors. While there are many models available for investigating

consumer behavior, the researcher will follow the most appropriate guideline to acquire understanding about the personal factors, social factors, and the economic factors.

There is a high volume of consumers for optical goods since the optical product could satisfy many types of visual needs. The expectation for the products is also high as it is easy to access information and the customers with high educational background usually have more sophisticated preferences. They often remember important experiences and pay attention to various optical products launched in the market. The previous study found that consumers conducted online research during the pre-purchase stage, listed the option from internet information, and were careful about online opinions and recommendations (Roman, 2017).

2.2 Purchasing decision-process

The purchasing decision process is based on customer action during the process (Langeard, 1981) which contains three major stages:

- pre-purchase
- purchase
- post-purchase.

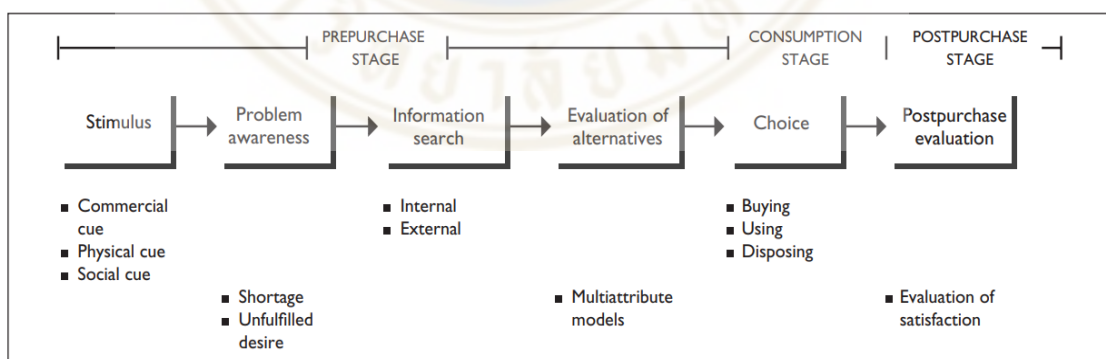


Figure 2.1 Consumer decision process model (Hoffman & Bateson, 2010)

2.2.1 Pre-purchase

This process refers to all activities that happen before purchasing a product or service. During the pre-purchase stage, customers make their purchasing decision based on their experience and the information they received (Lovelock, 1996). As the pre-purchase decision-making process can be affected by several factors i.e. circumstances, consumer attendance etc., it is considered a complex process as customers require time for decision-making. This stage consists of 4 steps which are stimulus, problem awareness, information search, and evaluation alternative (Fisk, 1981). There are also some other factors that play an important role in this phase i.e. consumer experience, consumer knowledge, and perceived risk (Byrne, 2005).

2.2.1.1 Stimulus: It is a motivation from both external and internal factors that create needs i.e. impulse buying, physical need (e.g. thirst), or external stimuli (e.g. marketing campaign).

2.2.1.2 Problem awareness: When consumers recognize the problem and create needs, they will respond to external stimuli such as the marketing mix. It occurs when consumers notice that they need something to satisfy or solve the problem.

2.2.1.3 Information search: Optical goods are a combination of service and product. In the optometric industry, intangible product (service) including eye examination, lenses consultation, and optical dispensing (Moss & Shaw-McMinn, 2001). The existing study shows that consumers search for information about services concussions more than physical products (Alba & Hutchinson, 2000). They believe services are more uncertain and possessed higher perceived risk because they are intangible, inconsistent, and expensive (Wirtz & Kimes, 2007).

In general, consumers do not only search for information from the internet, but also search through personal information sources i.e. family, friends, and colleagues (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). They trust people they know over other information sources because those people do not get benefits from their purchase and they are the ones that have experiences with the products. For instance, one of the research highlights that family is a powerful and trustworthy information source. Consumers take advice from families when they are going to buy a retirement service as they perceive this source as

more reliable than professional advisors (e.g., financial planners) (Rickwood & White, 2009).

2.2.1.4 Evaluation of alternative: During the process of information search, consumers will create their choice for consideration. After they have learned about the characteristics of the product and service that they are considering, the expectations are created (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004). The service aspects such as quality, price, brand, and convenience, are the important attributes that customers are using for evaluation and choice comparison before decision making. The process of evaluating alternatives helps lower consumers' sense of uncertainty and risk associated (Paswan, Spears, Hasty, & Ganesh, 2004). After the evaluation, customers will make the decision and proceed onto the purchase stage which might take place immediately or might affect the post-purchasing stage.

The consumer will search for alternative solutions that can solve their problem. When consumers have collected all the information they need, they will evaluate the options they are considering.

For eyewear products, during the pre-purchasing stage, the consumers are influenced by many factors i.e. salesperson, online information, media advertising, and merchandise at the storefront. (Hoffman & Bateson, 2010).

Table 2.1 Customer expectation from optical store. (Intelligence, 2015)

Customer expectation	Percentage
The salesperson (optician, optometrist or ophthalmologist consulted)	52%
Online information evaluations (Information search)	25%
PR actions, media advertisement (Stimulus stage from external factor)	8 – 10%
The display or merchandise in the optical retailer and storefront.	13%

2.2.2 Purchase

The purchase stage is an outcome of the pre-purchasing stage. During this stage, consumers will purchase one of the alternative choices.

2.2.3 Post-purchase

The post-purchase stage is the last period of the service. After purchase and consumption, consumers will evaluate the product and service quality in several dimensions such as perception and satisfaction (Brady & Robertson, 2001). In the optical shop process, this stage occurs after the customer purchased and wore the spectacle frame and lenses. Consumers who are satisfied with product and service will reflect in repeat purchase, positive word of mouth and recommendation. (Swan & Oliver, 1989)

2.3 Black box model

The Black Box model is one of the models of consumer behavior. It shows the interaction of stimuli, consumer characteristics, and responses that occur in the consumer's mind. The model is composed of three parts which are stimuli, transformer, and responses. Stimuli are external factors including marketing mix and others. The marketing mix is external factors produced by business firms whereas the environmental factors are generated by economic, social, political and cultural factors (Furaiji, Łatuszyńska, & Wawrzyniak, 2012). The buyers' black box also incorporates their characteristics such as attitude, motivation, perception, lifestyle, personality, and knowledge. These internal characteristics are brought into buying situations and affect decision-making process.

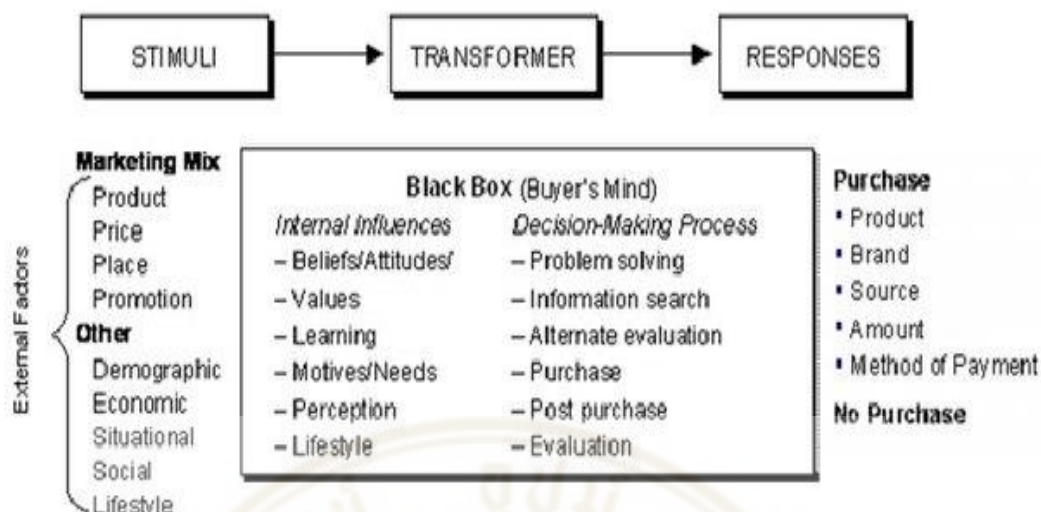


Figure 2.2 Black box model (Kotler et. al 2004)

2.4 Modify Consumer decision-making process with Black box model

Black Box model and Consumer decision making are two parts of the consumer behavior concept. These models possess the similarities that can be connected. The 3 stages of consumer decision-making model include pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. Similarly, Black box model's external stimuli and buyer's black box can be considered as pre-purchase process while response is the purchase process. External stimuli are consisted of the marketing mix and other environmental factors. The marketing mix can be referred as commercial cue in the stimuli stage of the decision-making model; other environmental factors are social cue. Internal influence of the Buyer's black box is the problem awareness and physical cue in the stimuli stage. The Decision-making process in the buyer's black box is the same as information research and alternative evaluation.

As this study aims to understand consumer decision-making behavior that related to premium lenses purchase, it will focus on the pre-purchase process. The pre-purchase process is crucial as it allows businesses to create a reason to buy to support consumers' needs and influence the purchase-decision (Hoffman & Turley, 2002). The pre-purchase process may take place before or during the product acquisition after the consumers have developed negative or positive feelings to the product (Levitt, 1981),

and lead to purchase or non-purchase decision-making. As this process is affected by external stimuli and buyer's black box which consisted of many factors, this paper will investigate the factors that impact the spectacle lenses purchase decision.

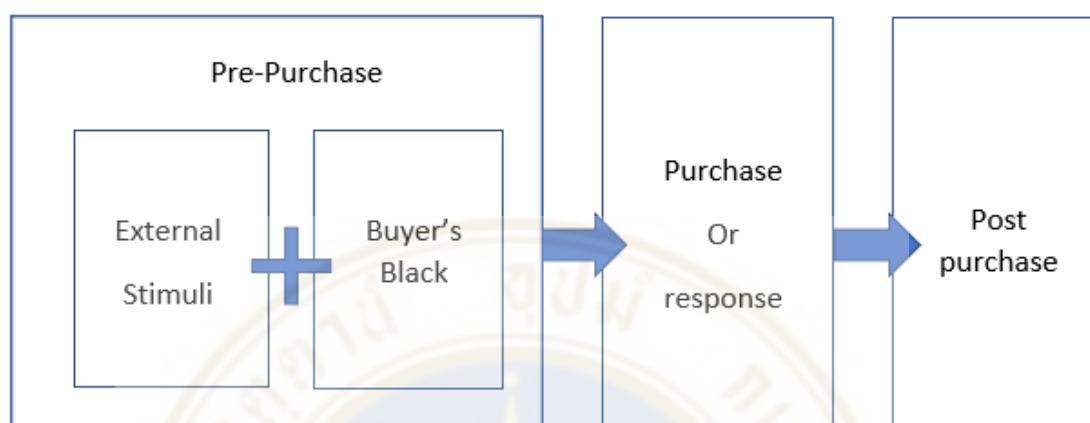


Figure 2.3 Modify consumer decision-making process with Black box model

2.5 Framework

2.5.1 Promotion

Recognized as the marketing mix factor. In the Study on Buying Behavior in Shopping Malls (Joseph, 2019), it was highlighted that the product quality is the main factor that influenced the respondents while shopping, followed by price and promotion. The research by Polixenia Aurora Roman also found that 36% of interviewed trust the recommendation lenses gave from the optician and 27% admitted promotional activities influence their lenses choice (Roman, 2017).

2.5.2 Perceived quality

The optical goods are not a typical tangible product (spectacle lenses and frame, contact lenses) (Raajpoot, 2002). As consumers need to go to the store, take the eye examinations and dispense the lenses before making a purchase decision, spectacle lenses products are categorized as an intangible service-product. The perceived quality

of the optical shop includes three constructs: quality of product (Johns & Tyas, 1996; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 1999), atmospherics (Bitner, 1992), and service aspects (Brady & Robertson, 2001). Store image is another way to present the products' quality for customers who have to make a buying decision for the goods they do not know about their brands. Store image reflects the retailer concept which can affect the perceived quality of products and influence the consumers' decision where to shop.

As consumer are less willing to take risks, they usually take time and think twice when choosing the private label product (Jaafar, Lalp, & Naba, 2012). Similarly, customers who would like to purchase the lenses cannot see any difference between each lenses until they wear it. Therefore, perceiving quality is one of the important factors that consumer usually considers when making purchase decision.

2.5.3 Physical needs

There is a large number of people who leads an inactive life. They are characterized by predominantly indoor activities and less outdoor experiences, and their eyesight focusing especially on short distances (Roman, 2017). In addition, the city lifestyle has increased the heavy usage of digital devices. By using several digital device screens simultaneously, apart from the eyestrain occurred when the eyes take extra effort to maintain focus, this behavior also generates visual fatigue which sometimes can be associated with migraines, ocular itching, eye pain, and blurred vision. In other words, these problems signal the importance of having a clear and comfort vision, as well as maintaining a healthy eyesight (Fylan, Grunfeld, Turvey, & Desallais, 2005). Since spectacle wearers usually take the eye examinations annually, they do not wait until they cannot see clearly or until the optical shop launch a promotional discount to buy the new one. As they also think the healthy eyesight is essential (Fylan et al., 2005), most of the spectacle wearers believe the eye examinations and spectacle lenses change can maintain their eye health. It is undeniable that the changing lifestyle in the digital era has brought about the increasing need for the corrective glasses due to the rising requirement for visual needs (Roman, 2017).

2.5.4 Social

The role of social influence is to explain how others affected one's emotions, opinions, or behaviors. Therefore, the understanding of social influence theory was very important in various fields of study. It is broadly involved in sociology, psychology as well as marketing (Dahl, 2013).

The concept of social influence was mentioned as the normative belief and used as the subjective norm in the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory described how to predict a person's behavior at a specific time and place by using linking between belief and behavior. Normative beliefs affected the perception of social pressure and belief related to others who were important whether it was suitable to perform one's behavior. It also linked to the subjective norm which was the perception of behavior influenced by one's important people (e.g. friends, family, spouse, doctors, teachers, celebrities).

Social influence is also evident in the social facilitation concept. In terms of food intake, many scholars study how social influence leads to higher consumption of food. That means the presence of others could increase the amount eaten in meals. The paper stated that people would eat more if they were in an enjoyable environment, such as friends or family (Anderson, 2013), and consumed less when they were eating alone (Clendenen, Herman, & Polivy, 1994).

Family and friends seem to be the crucial social influencers. Since they have a very close relationship with an individual, they can primarily influence the beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior of an individual. As family forms a particular behavior pattern of family members through a process starting from childhood, different family can have different culture, attitudes, rules, and norms, resulting in different consumer behavior of each family's members. Similarly, friends can also influence consumer behavior by creating a point of comparison for a specific or general value, attitude, or guideline. In term of consumer behavior, friend could be represented as the reference group (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014).

2.5.5 Emotional factor

Emotional factor is a part of the Motive factor. The act of buying a particular product is a result from the buying motive. It is the pressure behind purchasing behavior

based on both psychological and physiological wants. The emotional factor is those which effaced buying decisions by the feelings of the heart that dominates overhead and mind to satisfying needs (Pillai, 2010). This factor is defined as the process that impacts our experimental and consumer experiences (Ekman, 2003). For example, when we sense something that important to our well-being is happening, the physical and emotional change will occur and begin to deal with the specific situation (Suelin, 2010). Emotions are described as reactions to particular situations, people or things, with their specific nature (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1990). Basically, after consumers' sense are triggered, the emotions are created (Herz, 1996). Emotions get involved with the consumers during the pre-purchase stage, they like shopping because spending money makes them feel empowered (Pooler & Pooler, 2003). The particular emotional factors can influence purchasing decisions. They can impact consumer's decision-making even when their financial situation is in the insecure stage. Emotion can also change the response to the price level. The product price might have less impact on the decision when consumers experience positive emotions with the product, thus it has a significant impact on transactions. In short, emotions can be a reason for purchasing decision and sometimes, they are even stronger than logical aspects (Lambert, 2001).

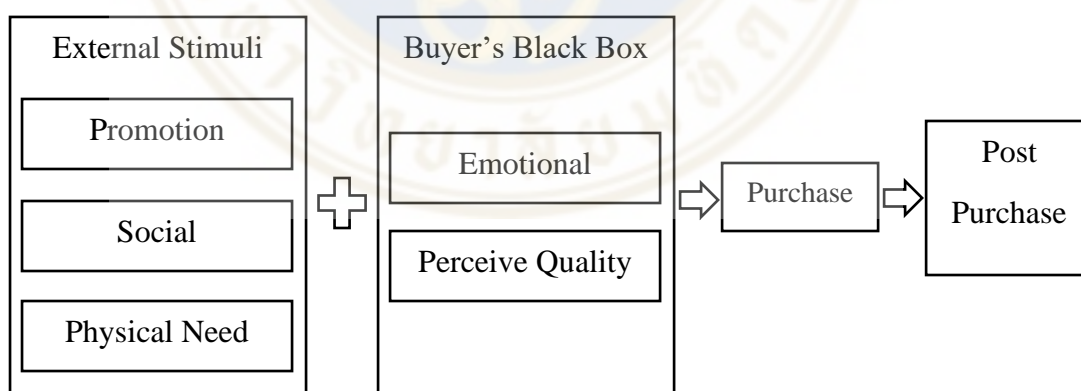


Figure 2.4 Frame Work of the factors that affects premium lenses purchasing.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides description on the research methodology which comprises of research approaches, data sampling, and tools of data collection and data analysis. This paper explores the elements that related to the premium spectacle lenses buying behavior. To carry out this study, a qualitative research design was employed to understand reasons behind consumers' purchasing decision. The aim of using qualitative approach in this study is to provide detailed narrative of perceptions and experiences to ward purchasing factors in spectacle lenses.

This study used in-depth interview (one-on-one interview) as a tool of data collection. The interviewees were selected based on purchasing experience with criteria: purchased premium spectacle lenses for more than 5,000 baht. The interviewees were from Bangkok and surroundings, where the premium optical retail store located. A total of twenty-five in-depth interviews were collected via a phone call. Each interview lasted 30 minutes approximately. The information was collected in the form of informal conversations and open questions. The interviewee explained the experience in-depth, shared ideas and facts that they experienced personally. The questions used for the interview were detail-focused and flexible (semi-structured) (Kvale, 1996). The interviewees were encouraged to demonstrate based on their own experiences and ideas.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1 Demographic

A total of 25 persons who purchased lenses above 5,000 Baht (48% female, 52% male) participated in the interview. 90% of the interviewees were under 40 years old, and 10% were older. Most of the younger interviewees purchased lenses between 5,000 – 8,000 Baht whereas all of the interviewees aged over 40 purchased over 10,000 Baht. The average spending of all of the interviewees was 7,936 Baht. The Interviewee' data is presented in Table 4.1

Referred to the framework, the five-factor in the pre-purchase stage of the consumer decision-making model was separated into external stimuli and the buyer's black box. External Stimuli are the factors that come from outside such as the marketing mix and Social. Internal stimuli or buyer's black box are Personal needs, Perceived quality and Emotional.

Pre-purchase planning and decision making: Consumer decision-making includes both choosing and finding alternative choices. From Table 4.1, it is clear that the personal needs factor is the most effective in consumer behavior. Receiving 96% of resonance points, the personal need is perceived as the first reason that motivated the interviewees to look for the new glasses.

4.2 Physical need

Being aware of needs is the first stage of consumer decision-making. The need in this situation is perceived as poor vision quality. 96% of the interviewees addressed that the reason for blurry vision is the prescription change, degenerate quality of the lenses and spectacle frame damage. As the core product of the corrective glasses is improving visual quality for the wearer, they are most likely to purchase the new lens if there are problems that cause unclear vision.

Table 4.1 Demographic of the interviewees

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Price
1	Arisa	Female	27	6,000.00
2	Fiew	Male	27	8,000.00
3	Hyune	Male	28	5,000.00
4	Boat	Male	28	5,500.00
5	Pawitra	Female	28	5,000.00
6	Sabai	Female	28	7,000.00
7	Pettie	Female	28	5,000.00
8	Lookmhu	Female	28	6,700.00
9	Fern	Female	28	5,000.00
10	Golf	Male	29	6,000.00
11	Moji	Male	29	5,000.00
12	Aom	Female	30	5,200.00
13	Nut	Male	30	25,000.00
14	Nut	Female	30	5,000.00
15	Eve	Female	31	5,400.00
16	Namjai	Female	31	5,000.00
17	Oat	Male	31	5,100.00
18	Hut	Male	32	5,200.00
19	Wee	Male	32	5,800.00
20	Iff	Female	32	5,500.00
21	Chai	Male	33	18,000.00
22	Jube	Female	39	8,000.00
23	Keng	Male	44	10,000.00
24	Aui	Male	45	10,000.00
25	Pop	Male	50	20,000.00

According to 80% of the interviewees, the main reason for buying new lenses is the blurry vision that occurs when prescription changes or lenses quality decreases. 36% of them will buy the new lenses with new frames if the spectacle frame is broken. There is one interviewee who has not been affected by this factor as he buys glasses often. Thus, he usually changes the glasses before the lenses become degenerated or his prescription become changed. The rest of the interviewees usually buy new eyeglasses once a year.

Table 4.2 Percentage of the interviewee being affected by the pre-purchase element

Pre-purchase factor	Percentage of interviewee
Physical Need	96%
Emotional	44%
Perceived Quality	96%
Social Stimuli	92%
Promotion	60%

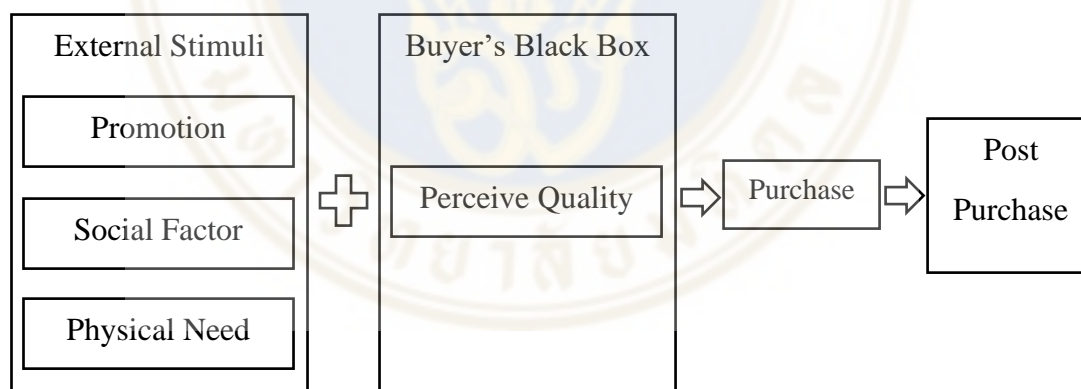


Figure 4.1 Result of key element that related to premium lenses purchasing.

4.3 Promotion

The results show that only 60% of the interviewees think the promotion and discount has a significant influence on their decision making. Half of them search for

the information about lenses, look for the frame style, and evaluate the shop's quality from the shop's website before going to the physical store. Only 44% of them search for the shop's promotion. The majority of the interviewees mentioned that they feel good if the shop has a discount promotion. Some interviewees will consider buying immediately if the optical shop has a discount promotion. Some of them will even choose more expensive products if they receive discounts from the store's promotion. One of the interviewees expressed that he will make a purchase during the discount period only. He thinks that if the store can sell products at a discounted price, it means that the normal price is too expensive. All of the interviewees affected by the store's discount promotion are younger than 40 years old. There are only two interviewees who responded that promotions do not affect their purchase at all. They explained that corrective lenses are one of the health care products and their vision is important. Therefore, they prefer to use the best quality products for their eyes. Based on 36% of the interviewees, the shop's official website is important to them as they find the stores that provide knowledge about eyes and lenses, helping them to choose the products before visiting the store are more trustful than the shop's websites that provide only promotions or discounts. They may read some articles from the shop's official page on Facebook, but the shop needs to have a website as well. Therefore, the findings suggest that the visibility of the shop in the online environment is also essential in the views of consumers.

4.4 Social

According to the interview results, there are two subsidiary factors including the Internet information and Friends and Family. Most of interviewees are influenced by the social which divide to two groups. The first group is strongly influenced by friends and family who are satisfied with their corrective glasses. The interviewees usually ask their friends and family where to buy the optical products, then search through the Internet for the review. The second group of the interviewees research about spectacle lenses type and brands, and search for high quality optical retails from internet review. The results also show that some of participants are influenced by both the

Internet information and friends and family. They mostly search for the review on lenses brand, lenses model and good service optical shop after receiving a recommendation from friends or family. Moreover, thirty six percent of the interviewees also search for the information from the store's official website and lenses brand's official website, they believe the official websites is a reliable source. Still, most of them believe in their friends or family's experience than the information from the Internet. The majority of the interviewees expressed that they trust information from friends and family more than information from the Internet since those people have real personal experiences and do not get any benefits from the shop. Only few people trust information from the lenses brand's official website more than their surrounding people as they think the official website can give them more information in details.

4.5 Perceived quality

The optical retail shop has three constructs including product attributes, service expected (sale person or optician, many steps of eye check process), and atmosphere (modernity and variety of instrument, nice and clean shop). The results indicate that product quality is significant for most of the customers. All of the interviewees have a minimum requirement for their lenses i.e. lightweight, blue light filter, and durable coating. They prefer brands they can recognized as they feel that brands can guarantee the quality of the products, though only a few people are specific about the brands. The interviewees who already have a specific brand in mind usually have high prescriptions and very sensitive to the vision. They believe that their preferred brand can give them a better vision, while other brands cannot.

4.5.1 Service quality

Service quality is another important factor for interviewees' buying decisions. Service quality includes employee's service mind, knowledge, and skills. All of the interviewees mentioned that the service mind is one of the most important factors that affect purchase decision-making. Several interviewees said if the employee is not friendly and acting in disregard, they will consider not buying at the shop. They prefer friendly and attentive staff as they make them feel being cared for and paid

attention to. As they need the staff to help them choose both the frame style and lenses type, the staff should possess the knowledge about the lenses so they can give a suggestion that meets customers' needs. For example, Jube said "Optician would show all of the lenses choices that meet my needs. He explained both benefits and disadvantages of each of them and didn't force me to choose the expensive one." Some interviewees also said that if the staff cannot provide a reasonable answer, they will not buy lenses from the shop. The majority of the interviewees agreed that if the staffs are able to answer all of their questions and do not hard sell, they will trust them and buy the lens they suggest.

Another part of the service quality is the eye examination. 24% of the interviewees mentioned that they like to take time during the eye checking. They think many steps of eye checking means the examiner is paying attention to their vision and giving them the best-corrected prescription. 16% of the interviewees prefer optometrist over opticians to take care of their vision and need a primary eye health check at the optical shop. The atmosphere has an effect on some interviewees as 24% of them prefer a clean and neat place with a nice scent while 27% of them prefer the shop that has a wide range and modern instrument for eye checking. The interviewees feel that the proper instrument can make everything more accurate, even though they do not know what it is used for.

4.6 Other factors that can be considered

4.6.1 Location of the shop: More than half of the interviewees said if there is more than one choice, they will consider buying from the location that is close to their office or their home as it is more convenient and easier to access. Referred to the retail mix strategy, there is six-component including price, merchandise, communication, store design, customer service, and location that drive sales. Good store location should have a magnet to draw traffic in to. Magnet is referred to as a crowded point for retail, it can be school, study canter, office building, department store, and village or living area (Kuo, Chi, & Kao, 2002).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study examines the elements that influence the buying behavior of Thai people on spectacle lenses. All participants live in Bangkok, Thailand and have spent over 5,000 baht for the spectacle lenses purchasing the optical retail stores.

5.1 Conclusions

Referred to the interview results, the important reason that cause consumer making decision to purchase premium spectacle lenses can be concluded in Table 5.1

Table 5.1 Summary of important things that related to premium lenses purchasing in Bangkok

Aspects	Result
Physical need	Important
Promotion	Important
Social	Important
Emotional	Not important
Perceived quality	Important

Four main elements that motivate Thai consumers to buy premium spectacle lenses are Physical need, Promotion, Social, and Perceived quality. Though the lens is only a part of an eyewear product, consumers regard it as the most important part as it has a direct effect on their vision. The results show that consumers usually

need time to think before purchasing this kind of products and use logic more than emotional. After acquiring insight regarding the importance factors that influence customers' purchasing decision towards premium spectacle lens through questions based on theories from many respected authors and existing research, some interesting ideas have been developed and presented in the open discussion about the overall results and analysis. In this research, five key elements were identified from the interviews with consumers that have purchased premium lenses. Ranked by order of importance, from the result, factors that related consumers' decision for buying premium lens are Physical need, Perceived quality, Social, Promotional and Store location respectively. The result can be divided into two types: External stimuli, and Buyer's black box. Physical need is the most significant factor that drives consumers' needs to buy a new pair of lenses. The second most significant factor is Perceived quality. As the product causes a direct visual effect to consumers, the consumers want to purchase the best thing that they can afford. Many of the interviewees said if lenses are expensive, they will choose the lower price frame to get the lenses they need so the total price is not over their budget. This indicates that customers who prefer to buy premium lenses usually give priority to the lens's quality before the spectacle frame. Another part of perceived quality can be referred to the service quality. Since the shops also deliver optical services, the quality of salesperson, optician, and instrument technology is necessary and cannot be overlooked. The promotion also affects some customers. It is found that the customers prefer the shop that promotes themselves online, so they do not have to walk around the department store to find the shop. Lastly, social is the least important factor that influence customers' buying decision. The prominent social is word of mouth which occurs when their friends and family experience good products and services.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 The theoretical contributions

The theoretical contributions from this study are to find relationship between influencing elements and premium spectacle lenses purchasing decision in Bangkok. The study findings indicate that optical shops owner should focus on

professional basis as perceiving quality is the most importance. Besides, they should promote social which is the first element that make consumer recognize their store.

5.2.2 The managerial implications

For the managerial implications, according to the results on purchasing premium spectacle lenses' owners of the optical stores should focus on three things specifically perceived quality, promotion and social influence. They should compare their store to competitors nearby and improve the store's environment to build professional image by install new technology equipment. Furthermore, the optical store owner can develop staff's knowledge by training and keep update new information. Apart from creating a Facebook page, they also should establish further online communication channels with customers as the consumers tend to trust the official website more than the social media. Moreover, the optical store owners can take advantages of online channels such as blogs, web pages that consumers use for gathering information from the reviewers on spectacle lenses products and where to buy to create more brand awareness and drive buying intention. In addition, the owner can create refer friends' campaign such as special discount for next purchase or double side referred program, referrer get stores credit and referee get the discount.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This research has several limitations. Firstly, the time limitation prevented the researcher from receiving more sample result. Thus, the finding in this study cannot represented to all Thai consumers as a whole. Secondly, as the interview was conducted based on the researcher and participant's convenience within a short period, the interviewees might find themselves being restricted which can lead to the lower accuracy and reliability level (Fisher, 2004). Lastly, since the questions used in this research were translated from English version to Thai version, some of the questions might be misinterpreted and cannot capture all of the original meaning.

5.4 Further research

Future research should conduct both qualitative and quantitative research to be more deeply understand the factors that influence spectacle wearers' behavior and really understand the pain point. In addition, future research should expand to the whole country research. Moreover, from this research spectacle wearers usually repurchase at the same store, further research should explore the factor that cause spectacle wearers try new optical store.



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