

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF
CONSUMERS: A CASE OF PLASTIC CHAIRS**



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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF CONSUMERS: A CASE OF PLASTIC CHAIRS

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ABSTRACT

The study aims (1) to explore the factors influencing consumers' decisions when purchasing plastic chairs and (2) to examine whether demographics play a role in decision making of plastic chair purchasing. These results can help companies or plastic chair industry to outline their product development and marketing strategies. Qualitative research methodology was applied in the research. Six persons participated in the in-depth interview. These participants hailed from different areas such as Thawi Wattana, Talingchan, and Bangkok Noi.

The results revealed that participants evaluated plastic chairs based on quality, acceptable price range, design, and brand with regards to consumers' perspectives. Demographic background did not impact any aspect concerning plastic chairs. Surprisingly, participants revealed their methods plastic chairs are based on their personal experiences.

KEY WORDS: Purchasing decisions/Plastic chairs

23 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide population now grows by 1 billion about every 12 years. The 20th century began with 1.6 billion and by the end of that century, those two numbers had simply reversed to 6.1 billion (2010 World Population Datasheet, 2010). In March 2014, the world population was estimated at 7,153,835,500 (The world population is as recorded on March 18, 2014). Population Reference Bureau (PRB) (Population Reference Bureau, 2013), which is a private, nonprofit organization that informs people around the world about population, health and the environment for research or academic purposes, published “2010 World Population Datasheet” and analyzed the forecasted population between 2010 and 2050. By 2050, the most populous countries, such as India and Nigeria, are forecasted to increase by 30-100% of their population as of 2010. In 2000, Thai population was recorded as 60,916,441 and by 2010 it grew to 65,981,659 (“Statistic of Thai population in 2000 and 2010”). Changes in population are caused by several factors such as innovative technology, technological advancement in fertility treatment, immigration, better medical facilities, more hands to overcome poverty, healthcare information or education, decline in the death rate, and innovation in medical healthcare (“7Billion, how your world will change”). As a result, these factors indicate changes in the number of birth and death rates.

The increment in population number significantly impacts *the shortage of resources* in addition to satisfying unlimited wants with limited resources. Likewise, ***Malthusian's principle***, which was introduced by *Thomas Robert Malthus*, revealed that human population grow exponentially (doubling with each cycle) while raw materials/natural resources grows arithmetically (by the repeated addition of a uniform increment in each uniform interval of time). An international study warned in 2008 that the world was heading for an "ecological credit crunch" far worse than the current financial crisis because of the overuse of the natural resources of the planet (Climate change endangered habitats, 2008). Humans were using 30% more resources than the

Earth could replenish each year, leading to deforestation, degraded soils, polluted air and water, and dramatic decline in numbers of fish and other species, as reported by the Living Planet. Consequently, overpopulation not only impacts the depletion of natural resources such as food, water, and forest, but it also affects social problems resulting into conflicts and wars, rise in unemployment, and high cost of living (“Overpopulation”). Since the natural resources is limited to supply unlimited needs, humanity has developed alternative resources to substitute their needs such as plastic – which was introduced when the environment was devastated.

In 1839, plastic was accidentally discovered by *Charles Goodyear* in the process of *Vulcanization* – making rubber more durable. In 1846, *Charles Schonbein*, a Swiss chemist, unexpectedly discovered how to produce the plastic polymer known as *Celluloid*. In 1909, *Leo Baekeland*, a chemist, created *Bakelite*, which is the first true synthetic polymer that could be molded and shaped into a solid object. In the 1930s, *Wallace Carruthers*, a chemist from DuPont, invented *Nylon*. Since World War II, the pace had picked up and a number of plastics had been created and continually used every day (“Who invented plastic?”). Nowadays, plastic has become an important part in everyday lives. Materials made from plastic became familiar and tended to be taken for granted as they occur every day and all around us, for example, in clothing, pens, food wrappers, and chairs. Thus, it is sometimes hard to believe that plastics had only been commonly available for about the last one hundred years. These plastic products have enormously impacted the quality of lives (“Plasticbook”).

Plastics make it possible to manufacture well-designed, beautiful products from the very many different types of plastic materials that are commonly available today. It can be shaped in different designs by applying the same skills used for timbers and metals and it is easy to make it colorful. Plastic has many advantages such as warmth, vibrancy, light, clean, and durable. For this reason, plastic significantly impacts Thai economy and industry because it is related to other business industries such as petroleum, packaging, food processing, automotive, electrical and electronics, garment, furniture, construction, etc. There are about 130,000 employees in plastic industry. Exports amounted to THB112,380 million, the number 1 exported product in 2001 (Plastic Market Analysis, 2011). Also, the number of establishments was about 477 in 2000 and 2,912 in 2002. These numbers showed the dramatic increase by 512%

of new entrants. As a result, Statistics for Manufacturing, which were established in 2000 and 2002, reported the revenue growth in manufacturing of rubber and plastic products grew 49% in 2000 (*Statistics record*, 2000).

Meanwhile, the revenue of furniture industry was \$1,143 million and \$1,250 million in 2012 and 2013, respectively (Growth of furniture industry, 2013). The numbers indicated that the furniture industry was also growing as well as the plastic industry. Both plastic and furniture can together make more benefits in usability by combining furniture products with plastic product and bring about furnitures such as plastic chairs, plastic tables, plastic cabinets, etc. In addition to plastic chairs, it is more convenient for consumers to choose or select because it can be flexibly matched with different decorative styles compared with other products. Plastic chairs can be used for almost anything. People sit on chairs, lounge on chairs or even put something on chairs. People match chairs with the decoration, instantly change the ambiance easily move them to new places. Even though plastic chairs create pollution and harm the environment, plastic technology has now developed the use of recycled plastic instead of original downstream petrochemical material.

The significant growth in manufacture of plastic products indicates the high competition in the Thai market as well as the development of innovative technology. These factors result in lowering production cost and their price setting strategies. The trend of plastic chairs is interesting to focus on because it integrates both usability and useful life of the chair and its plastic features. Consider stool chair which is a kind of chair that could be seen in households and business establishments. Stool chair is one of the earliest forms of seat furniture. It consists of a single seat, without back or armrests, on a base of either four or more legs. A stool is distinguished from chairs by their lack of arms and a back rest. Variants exist with any number of legs from one to five. Some people call these various stools “backless chairs”. Stool chair is usually produced using plastic as shown in Figure 1.1 Stools made from plastic. For example, noodle restaurants normally use plastic stool chair with their business because plastic stool chair is easy to clean and move.



Figure 1.1 Stools made from plastic or Plastic chairs

Hence, understanding the approaches that can influence consumers to choose the products in the competitive market should be considered to help the new entrants or current businesses to compete or operate more effectively with the best adjustments to satisfy consumers' needs. Specifically, this research purposes to study stool chair that is made from plastic which would be mentioned as "plastic chair" in further research detail. As a result, this thematic paper is aimed to understand which factors influence consumers in Bangkok to choose plastic chair in addition to assisting the plastic chair manufacturers in Bangkok to make decisions in their marketing efforts to better adjust their products to fit consumers' preferences.

Hence, this study purposed (1) to find out whether demographic background impact consumers when considering plastic chair aspects such as quality, price, design, and brand and (2) to identify key factors that can impact consumers who live in Bangkok, Thailand to make decision in plastic chair purchasing. Finally, this study could help indicate the direction for product development and marketing so that the company can deliver exactly what consumers want and need.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

When developing a durable product such as plastic chair, insights on what aspects of the products are most important to consumers are useful. This helps ensure that the resulting product design meets and delivers the aspects that are important to consumers. For example, consumers tend to choose plastic chair which is colorful. Attractiveness is important for consumers and the company should consider it as an aesthetic value for consumers. Therefore, in developing a product, it will be beneficial to focus on the product aspect which is most important for consumers in buying the product. In order to do so, knowledge about the importance that consumers attach to different product aspects is needed.

During the last ten years, the approaches that influence consumers to choose products have been studied. Those studies revealed the difference aspects that affect consumer behaviors in choosing goods.

2.1 Past Studies

Durability

Durability was studied by Franklin (2012). The study shows that respondents look for durability in furnitures. Likewise, the study by Creusen (2010), who is from the Department of Product Innovation and Management, Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Delft University of Technology, Delft, Netherlands, found that females give more importance to durability than males do in contrast to the study of Burnsed and Hodges (2013), which indicated that the majority of male participants preferred durability.

Functionality

Functionality was found in Creusen (2010) study. The study revealed that older people indeed paid more attention to functionality aspects. Moreover, people with lower education find functionality more important than higher education. Meanwhile, the lower social class was found to make use of more functionalities as a practical purchase criteria and to value goods more for their functionality and practicality. Functionality is more important to females, older people, and those with higher income, nevertheless, males use more of the functional criteria than females. While education is often included in determining social class, the lower social class is found to make use of more functionalities. Men have a more functional orientation in choosing clothing and furniture. On the other hand, Burnsed and Hodges (2013), who were from Department of Retailing, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, USA, studied that functional value responses were recorded for both male and female participants.

Ease of use

Creusen (2010) also found that females and older people attached more importance to ease of use; however, education has no effect on the importance of use. The study revealed that importance of ease of use increases with age and is higher for people with a higher income level.

Quality

Quality concern appeared in Creusen (2010) study that older people indeed paid more attention to quality. Likewise, higher educated people and higher income people were found to attach more importance to quality. As a result, importance of quality increased with educational level because education leads to more informed judgments. Performance, and reliability/quality, however, were more important to females. Nonetheless, both Burnsed and Hodges (2013) also studied quality. According to their study, quality was mentioned as a key factor influencing participants' value perceptions. Moreover, the majority of male participants preferred quality in contrast to Creusen (2010)'s study.

Aesthetic aspects

The study, which was conducted by Franklin (2012), indicated that respondents prefer grey color alike for single color furnitures. In addition, females were more sensitive to the colors than males. Moreover, Creusen (2010) found that females attached more importance to aesthetics than males, The study did not find any effect on the importance of aesthetic because of age. No relation between educational level and importance of aesthetic was found, the same was true between income level and importance of aesthetic aspect. According to Burnsed and Hodges (2013) study, it indicated that design/style was the most important attribute for home furnishings.

Symbolic/ Self-expressive

Creusen (2010) studied about symbolic aspects and self-expressive aspect. The results indicated that females pay more attention and attached more importance to expressive aspects in buying products. Moreover, females have a traditionally more expressive in choosing clothing and furniture. Symbolic aspects were indeed found to be more important for young people, but for socially significant products only. Higher class people are found to pay more attention to taste and self-expression in buying products as well as high income level. Conversely, people with higher education attach less importance to symbolic aspects in purchasing products. Men tend to buy instrumental items, while women tend to buy symbolic and self-expressive goods.

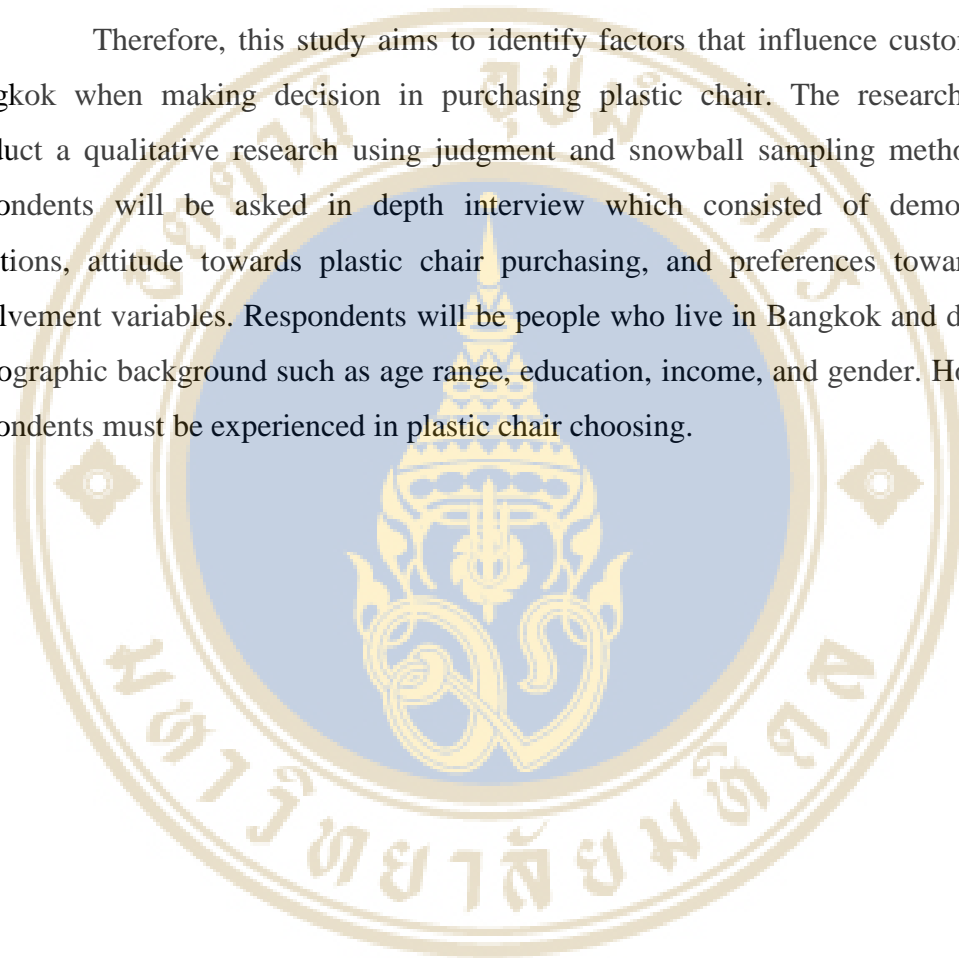
Overall, the past studies mostly used qualitative research as a research methodology that conducted as a depth-interview (Burnsed and Hodges, 2013). Samples were surveyed local people only in USA (Williams, 2002), Europe (Creusen, 2010), and India (Franklin, 2012). The sample consisted of different demographic background such as age, gender, income, and education or experiences in plastic furniture and durable product purchasing. In order to find what aspects that influence customers to buy plastic molded furniture, durability, functionality, ease of use, quality, aesthetic aspect, and symbolic/self-expressive were studied.

However, those past studies did not directly experiment plastic chair as a main objective of their research. Hence, the results from previous studies cannot interpret factors that influence customer to purchase plastic chair in Bangkok as same as the results in earlier studies. Moreover, culture contexts of sample are different due

to Thai culture is less time-oriented than Western culture so that, it cannot be summarized that aspects of intention to purchase between Thai and Western culture will be similar. To summary, the study of factors in Thai culture toward intention to buy plastic chair should be considered for further study.

2.2 Framework

Therefore, this study aims to identify factors that influence customers in Bangkok when making decision in purchasing plastic chair. The researcher will conduct a qualitative research using judgment and snowball sampling method. The respondents will be asked in depth interview which consisted of demographic questions, attitude towards plastic chair purchasing, and preferences toward high involvement variables. Respondents will be people who live in Bangkok and different demographic background such as age range, education, income, and gender. However, respondents must be experienced in plastic chair choosing.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study aims to provide an insight into the relative importance of product aspects for different consumer groups. This study seeks to identify aspects which can influence customers to make decision in plastic chair purchasing.

3.1 Research Design

This study is to find out the consumer preferences when to buy plastic chair. As far as consumer behaviors change related to preferences shift, understanding valuation in what consumer determines as an important key of plastic chair purchasing is an advantage. An exploratory and descriptive research methodology is taken in this study so that, the research can explore the motivation factors that attracted consumers in plastic chair purchasing. Likewise, the research could help to assure that finished product design matches to aspects that are important toward consumers. Also, cross-sectional research methodology was applied in this study. In addition to discover purchasing factors that consumers concern, qualitative approach is conducted in this study.

3.2 Data Collection Methodology

The population

According to the methodology, qualitative research is developed to study people who currently consume plastic chair for usability. Usages of plastic chair could be different such as to sit, to put things above, to use in business etc.

Sampling

The judgment sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit the depth-interview participants. Consumers who purchase plastic chair were selected based on researcher's judgment so that, participants can answer the questions as a specific purpose. Small samples of plastic chair consumers convenient selected in Bangkok, Thailand.

According to sampling method, qualitative research with the structured interview was applied to explore key aspects of plastic chair purchasing decision. Therefore, the researcher recruited participants with various backgrounds (gender, education, income, occupation, and age).

Data Collection

Data Collection was conducted with consumers of plastic chair about their perception, feelings, behaviors, and attitudes regarding their experiences with plastic chair purchasing regard to their shopping and purchase experiences. The questions ranged from the participants demographic background, experiences in plastic chair purchasing, attitudes about aspects in plastic chair purchasing such as aesthetic, durability/quality, and brand, brands comparative, and what participants value toward product aspects.

Initial questions were demographic questions which were developed as a questionnaire so that, the interview would be easier for the participants to fill in. Further detailed questions interviewed by the researcher related to motivation of purchase, plastic chair purchasing experiences, and attitudes about plastic chair. The semi-structured schedule of questions for the depth-interview was open-ended, allowing for the participants to elaborate on each question. Upon the completion, different aspects of plastic chair were presented. Participants were given to choose two different aspects of plastic chair which they preferred. After the participants selected, the researcher will indicate the differences of sample plastic chairs. Additional questions were asked up to the participants responses.

The depth-interview, which lasted approximately 15-20 minutes was audio-tapped, demographic questionnaire, and researcher's notes with participant consent and later transcribed for accuracy and analysis. Lastly, this study will finally

develop to find out what aspects are important in plastic chair purchasing of consumers, who live in Bangkok. Meanwhile, the result will bring about to plastic furniture company to make decision in product development to be ready toward consumers' preferences.

3.3 Instrument

The depth-interview was transcribed verbatim and then used for the development of the thematic interpretation. General trends and patterns were examined relative to participant's plastic chair consumption choices. Following the process outlined by Creusen (2010), the research began with cauterization, in which participant responses to five consumption aspects dimensions - *aesthetic aspects*, *symbolic aspects*, *functionalities*, *ease of use*, and *product quality*. Then, depth-interview was used to explore aspects or perspectives that have an effect on plastic chair purchasing to consumers.

According to Burnsed and Hodges (2013), opened-ended questions approach is developed to conduct qualitative interviewing so that, the respondents are capable to elaborate on each question independently. Moreover, opened-ended questions and depth-interview is encouraged participants to reveal their beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions toward plastic chair. This study then developed to conclude the analysis as the following questions:

- How much do you pay for a plastic chair?
- What is the average useful life of plastic chair that you buy?
- Why do you buy plastic chair for usability?
- What do you concerns when select plastic chair?
- Why is it (concerns) important in plastic chair purchasing?
- How can you examine that the plastic chair resolves your concerns?

In addition, during the interview, real plastic chairs were used. Participants were given to determine two plastic chairs with aesthetic/design, durability/quality, and price differences. The differences between those plastic chair

would not be informed to the participants. The opened-ended questions were applied repeatedly as below questions:

- Which one do you prefer? Why?
- What perspectives of the plastic chair that you like/dislike on each?
- What come up to your minds when you consider plastic chair?

3.4 Data Analysis

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher followed a content analysis procedure. The data was collected as semi-structured included questionnaire for demographic background and depth-interview for asking questions. The deductive approach was brought in this study to look for similarities and differences among depth-interview participants.

In this case, the content was analyzed in two levels: descriptive and interpretative. For descriptive, the collected data was studied the differences and similarities. Participants were giving information and key drivers to the researcher about what influenced them to purchase plastic chair due to their experiences. Contents from participants would be grouped into several key factors by evaluating from the interview records. For example, if 1st participant mentioned quality from his/her interview, quality was recorded as a 1st key factor. Later, if another participant expressed the same thing as other participants mentioned, those factors were also recorded. On the other hand, if the researcher could not match participant's opinion with the record, the new mentions would be noted as another key factor. Last but not least, each answer from participants would be counted as once when they opined which would be the key factors that influenced participants to purchase plastic chair.

Meanwhile, for interpretative, the differences and similarities were used to identify the relationship between demographic and plastic chair purchasing aspects toward participants perspectives. This step was studied whether demographic impacted purchasing aspects. Finally, the aspects were interpreted reasons behind the aspects which were important to participants. These results could be used in product development of plastic chair business included marketing strategies.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the analysis of depth-interview, several perspectives emerged. Each dimension and its respective themes from a part of the complete interpretation of what participants value in regards to their plastic chair purchasing aspects were studied. Specifically, participants were different in backgrounds and demographic such as gender, occupation, age, income, and education.

4.1 Observation findings

Plastic chair is normally found everywhere. It can be used in both business and household usage. Places, where normally noticed to have plenty of plastic chairs, were typically in noodle restaurants or A la carte restaurants. In this study, several types of restaurants were visited. In case of restaurant, it should be located next to streets or main roads where were easily to spot. Later, restaurants were observed and there are located in different areas such as Thawi Watthana, Talingchan, and Bangkok Noi, respectively. There are all districts of Bangkok city. Additionally, not only restaurants were studied, regular resident was examined for individual usage which was mentioned in later parts of this study.

4.2 Demographic profiles of respondents

Briefly, 6 participants were interviewed, whereas, 4 participants were females and 2 participants were males. The participants' occupation included owners of noodle restaurants and an individual. Considering sizes of restaurant, there consisted of 2 small sizes, 2 medium sizes, and 1 large size of restaurant which were investigated.

According to 5 participants who owned noodle restaurants, there were 3 participants who highly passed from high school while other participants were graduated from university. The age range was approximately about 50 years old and the average income was about THB50,000 per month. For an individual participant, s/he worked as employee in International Company and university was her highly education. Participants' demographic backgrounds were shown as below Table.

Table 4.1 Participants' demographic background

| Participant Number | Gender | Age (Years Old) | Highest Education | Occupation | Income | Resident Area |
|--------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Female | 57 | University | Selling noodle | >THB40,000 | Thawi Watthana |
| 2 | Female | 48 | High School | Selling noodle | >THB40,000 | Thawi Watthana |
| 3 | Female | 66 | University | Selling noodle | <THB20,000 | Talingchan |
| 4 | Male | 36 | High School | A la carte | THB20,001-THB40,000 | Bangkok Noi |
| 5 | Male | 53 | High School | Selling noodle | THB20,001-THB40,000 | Talingchan |
| 6 | Female | 25 | University | Programmer | THB20,001-THB40,000 | Thawi Watthana |

4.3 Factors leading to plastic chair purchasing decisions

The results of depth-interview were explored to which factors that influence informants to purchase plastic chair such as *quality*, *price*, *design*, and *brand* and results of depth-interview were shown as the below:

Quality/Durability

Most informants opined that when they were considering and choosing plastic chair, comfort and quality were the key factors that influenced them. Significantly, according to the depth-interview, durability and quality were stated together when informants searched for plastic chairs.

Participant 1 - *“Quality is the most important. If we buy only cheap plastic chair, we are probably needed to replace again which would cost us more.”*

Participant 6 - *“Strong and durable plastic chair are important.”*

Furthermore, all informants indicated the ways to consider quality of plastic chair such as stretchers, seat area, plastic pellets grade were needed to consider.

Participant 1 - *“When I choose plastic chair, I’ll sit on it and make it sway so that, I can know whether it inclines and the chair becomes weak later.”*

Participant 1 - *“I bought plastic chair long time ago to use with my restaurant. It was broke down few days later. My customer, who was chubby, sat on it. Then, the chair legs were broke down.”*

Participant 3 - *“I prefer plastic chair which has stretchers because it will help the chair legs to not breakdown.”*

Participant 4 - *“We have to sit on the plastic chair and sway it to see whether it break down. When you sit on it you will feel comfortable and it must not subside or sway. I always choose the plastic chair that made from A grade plastic. Stretchers should fit to your feet when you put your feet on it.”*

Including, quality and durability of informants’ perspectives referred to **how difficult of plastic chair to be broken down.**

Participant 2 - *“I prefer quality. Even though I bought plastic chair which was cheap last time, I had limited budget. In the future, I will look at quality when I buy plastic chair.”*

Participant 2 - *“If we examine plastic chair and feel like it will be broke down, this mean plastic chair is not made from good plastic grade.”*

As a result, an intention to purchase plastic chair was observed with **quality**. An informant who bought low quality of plastic chair mentioned that she intended to buy new plastic chair which is more durable and qualitative in the future. The result revealed that there were no different between male and female in durability and quality perspectives in plastic chair purchasing. All informants agreed that quality and durability were the most important when considered purchasing plastic chair. No different of age range, income, and education toward quality and durability plastic chair were discovered.

In contrast to past studies, durability (Franklin, 2012) and quality (Creusen, 2010) were unrelated showed in the investigation. For studies of **durability**, Franklin's (2012) study revealed that respondents searched for durability furniture. Meanwhile, Creusen (2010) observed that female gave more important to durability than male. On the other hand, Burnsed and Hodges (2013) reversed that male participants looked more to durability. For **quality**, Creusen (2010) found that older and higher income people were attached more importance to quality, meanwhile, education leads to more informed judgments. Moreover, performance and reliability/quality were more important to females. Conversely, Burnsed and Hodge (2013) expressed that males more referred to quality.

Significantly, the result from literature compared with this study was completely different. In this study, durability and quality were stated together when informants opined towards quality. Moreover, in this study, quality was referred to strength and its durability. Furthermore, this study demonstrated that demographic did not impact plastic chair purchasing aspects.

Price

Further, informants attached price with quality of plastic chair. Giving that, informants evaluated price of plastic chair due to its quality.

Participant 1 - *“If price is high followed by high quality, I am okay. Likewise, low price products will have low quality.”*

Participant 4 - *“Price is not important to me while, quality is the most important because my revenue is more than the cost that I have to pay for the chair. If the chair has longer usage life, an average cost of the chair will be cheaper otherwise, we have to buy more and the cost will be expensive.”*

However, budget was stated as another key support in making decision.

Participant 3 - *“I consider my budget when I search for plastic chair.”*

Participant 6 - *“set price range that is acceptable to me. If the price of plastic chair is not more than price that I’ve set, I will buy it.”*

Eventually, fair/good price in term of informants’ perceptions was referred to **the price that is reasonable and acceptable based on product qualification**. The price according to informants’ purchasing histories was reported as below Table:

Table 4.2 Informants' purchasing history (Price Report)

| Participant Number | Price |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1 | THB60-THB120 |
| 2 | THB80-THB130 |
| 3 | THB65-THB110 |
| 4 | THB100-THB180 |
| 5 | THB90-THB150 |
| 6 | THB100-THB200 |

Significantly, acceptable price range could be calculated based on past purchasing so that, the acceptable price range was approximately THB80 – THB150.

In essence, price was not important toward plastic chair purchasing. According to the depth-interviews, it was observed that there were no different between male and female on price concerns. Similarly, education, occupation, income, and age were explored no differences in the result. Furthermore, limited budget can affect consumers concerns on purchasing decision as reported by 2 informants. These

informants opined they set reasonable price range for their budget. For example, Participant - 6 reported she examined plastic chair and determined what the price should be. If the real price was over than the range, she will not buy it. However, concerns of limited budget influenced the different patterns in consumer behaviors.

According to Burnsed and Hodges (2013), fair/good price was observed as a key factor influencing value perceptions of consumers toward the plastic chair. Moreover, price also has a direct impact to consumer preference of plastic chair purchasing. Given that, this study explained somehow different from the past studies because informants opined that price was important to their decision in purchasing plastic chair nevertheless, if the price was in acceptable price rage, they determined to buy those chair anyway. Expressively, acceptable price range was exposed in this study while, the past study indicated to only fair/good price which was varying to measure.

Design

Although, informants mentioned several opinions toward design aspect, plastic chair's design and its color were noticed among informants.

Participant 3 - *“I do not care about design or color. Anyway, I prefer plastic chair which the seat is wider including stretchers because it helps chair balancing.”*

Participant 1 - *“I also consider plastic chair design. Plastic chair with strong stretchers is good.”*

Participant 4 - *“Whatever designs are acceptable but it must have stretchers.”*

Additionally, an informant opined that she does not concern about design and color; however, she also considered stretcher on plastic chair which can support the chair likewise, other informants stated that stretchers were important. This revealed that **design of plastic chair referred to its structure such as having stretchers.**

Participant 1 - *“I like the color which makes the plastic chair look clean.”*

Participant 4 - *“Colorful and clean plastic chair is preferable.”*

Participant 6 - *“Bright color is what I look for gloomy with dark color is acceptable.”*

Color was attached to design aspect. Informants opined that when choosing color, it depended on buyer preferences and emotions. White and clean colors were preferred; however, it was personal preferences. Similarly, informants who graduated from university opined that plastic chair should have well structure such as stretchers as same as informants who graduated from high school opined. Namely, males cited clean color looked good alike what female noticed. Regarding to design, there were no different between age, gender, occupation, income, and education.

To demonstrate, Franklin (2012) explored that grey or single color can attract consumer. Meanwhile, females tended to be sensitive to the color than males which was the same conclude as (Creusen, 2010). Besides, demographic was not affected to design/aesthetic aspect. In the same way, this study showed that demographic did not impact to design aspect either. In addition, informants mentioned that color and aesthetic aspect related to buyer preferences.

Brand

Brand typically applied to luxury or specialty products, anyhow, it was found in plastic chair aspect as well. In this study, some informants stated that brand made him/her ensure quality was examined so that, brand was found to play a role of perception toward quality.

Participant 2 - *“I think brand is also important. It helps me to make sure that the product has quality.”*

Participant 3 - *“Brand is not important to me.”*

However, informants cited that brand was not necessary for them in plastic chair purchasing. They always check and examine plastic chair by themselves. If experience against the plastic chair brands was good, they would choose to buy those brands again in the future.

Participant 4 - *“Brand is not important to me because I always sit and test its quality. If I have to come back to purchase again, I will repurchase those.”* Interestingly, the only informant cited that brand had impact on plastic chair repurchasing decision because brand marked value and quality on the product perception. Hence, most informants revealed that demographic differences: age, gender, education, income, and occupation, were observed no different in plastic chair purchasing against brand perception.

Notably, in past studies, brand aspect was explained as symbolic or self-expressive studied by Creusen (2010). It indicated that female pay more attention and attached more importance to expressive aspects in buying products such as clothing and furniture. In addition, symbolic aspect was found to be more important for young, high class, and high income people. In contrast to this study, the result was dissimilar. Most informants mentioned that they were not interested neither brand nor symbolic/self-expressive and demographic were not related to both brand and symbolic/self-expressive.

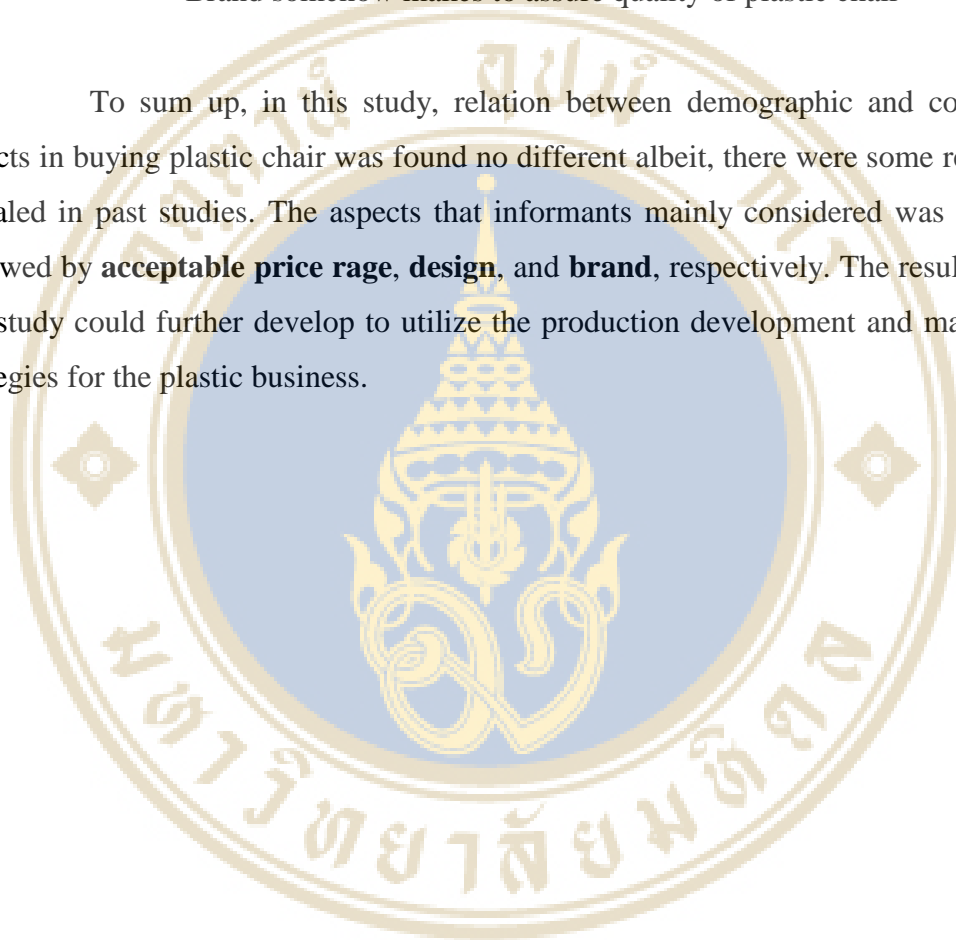
Consequently, the depth-interview helped to accumulate major aspects of informants, who currently use and buy plastic chair, factors considering when consumers purchased plastic chair included quality, price, design, and brand. Comparing to past studies, the study explored that demographic did not lead to critical different in purchasing plastic chair unless, purchasing decision related against situation such as limited budget or buyer preferences.

Surprisingly, according to the interview, the researcher has explored that all informants were well-known about plastic chair indicated that they normally consumed plastic chair for their business or household. Most of informants expressed their individual experiences towards how to choose plastic chair as shown as the following techniques:

- Quality plastic chair can have long usage life

- Grade of plastic is important
- Plastic chair should have strong stretchers
- Design of plastic chair is referred to its structure such as stretchers
- Plastic chair body should be thick
- Color depends on buyer preferences
- Price depends on budget and quality of plastic chair
- Brand somehow makes to assure quality of plastic chair

To sum up, in this study, relation between demographic and consumer aspects in buying plastic chair was found no different albeit, there were some relations revealed in past studies. The aspects that informants mainly considered was **quality** followed by **acceptable price range, design, and brand**, respectively. The results from this study could further develop to utilize the production development and marketing strategies for the plastic business.



CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the factors which influence consumers in Bangkok, Thailand for plastic chair purchasing from qualitative perspective. The purpose of this study was (1) to analyze the demographic background whether it play roles in purchasing plastic chair aspects: quality, price, design, and brand and (2) to identify key factors that impact consumers who live in Bangkok, Thailand to make decision in plastic chair purchasing.

5.1 Conclusion

A thematic interpretation of the data revealed that the factors influencing participant to purchase plastic chair were quality, acceptable price range, design, and brand, yet desires and wants were more salient than needs. The result revealed that participants identified criteria were important for the plastic chair based on their experiences. However, demographic background did not have any effect on plastic chair purchasing aspects. In other words, different demographic background: gender, age, income, education, and occupation did not involve in decision making when consumers purchase plastic chair.

Based on finding, it noticed that consumers search for plastic chair that attached with quality, acceptable price range, design, and brand. The conclusion of key factors to purchase plastic chair was identified as following points:

- **Quality** - A plastic chair which is made from A grade plastic so that, it will have long life usage
- **Acceptable price range** - Consumers have set their acceptable price range as a threshold to considering the plastic chair. In this case, acceptable price range was studied from informants buying profile. As a result, price range was approximately THB80 – THB150

- **Design** - Stretchers is a component of plastic chair that consumers mostly concerns while, color is not necessary because it depends on buyer preferences
- **Brand** - It is not an important key factors that can influence consumers to choose plastic chair

Finally, the result reversed that price was the first aspect that participants would concern when their budget was limited. Even if participant weighted important on quality, design, and brand, price was also affected their decision-making because if the price was higher than their budget, participants could not afford to buy those plastic chair so that, price would influence participants to buy plastic chair that had lower price by ignoring quality and design aspects.

5.2 Recommendation

Although the findings of this study are market specific, it has important implications for the plastic chair producers industry. Overall, this study provides product developers, manufacturers plastic chair industry, and marketer with a greater understanding of the plastic chair consumers. Understanding consumer evaluations of plastic chair is important. Consumer evaluations offer manufacturer effective tools for accurately diagnosing the needs and wants of the target consumer to which they market. Moreover, by knowing how consumer evaluates the aspects during purchasing decision, marketers can perhaps influence the development of future criteria. Furthermore, manufacturers and retailers of specific brands of plastic chair would benefit from having a better understanding of the importance and ranking order of the evaluative attributes, since perceived value varies across consumers and is a tradeoff of the salient give-and-get components of product.

A greater understanding of what the plastic chair purchasing consumer values would provide a point of departure for predicting behavioral intention. Marketers and retailers could focus their marketing strategies on these values; thereby better suiting that which motivates their consumers. In summary, if a plastic chair producer places priority on quality, then it would be advantageous to the seller to

incorporate these values when targeting consumer. Thus, based on this study, if plastic chair producers follow key aspects that had been explored in this study: quality, price, design, and brand, it would help company to increase sale and create reputation toward the plastic chair. As long as demographic background do not implicate toward key aspects of plastic chair purchasing decision, company then can spend less resources to match plastic chair with demographic requirement. This will indeed assist company to run business efficiency

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The findings of this study provide insight into what is important to plastic chair purchasing and extended the literature research. There are limitations that could be addressed in future research. This study was focused only Bangkok, a city of Thailand. The sample size was only 6 participants which was small and probably could not represent population in Bangkok. It would be fruitful to expand the sample to larger and beyond Bangkok such as whole country which can help to investigate the differences in other aspects of plastic chair purchasing. The time spent on this study was limited to 6 weeks and interviewed only once while, aspects of consumers could be change over time. Hence, the future research is needed to examine consumer decision-making with regard to variety of plastic products, as well as research that considers the channels that consumer use when shopping for these plastic products. This study provides a much needed qualitative foundation for understanding the plastic chair consumer; however, more empirical research is needed which focuses on theories and applied to the decision-making process specifically with regard to consumers of plastic chair.

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APPENDIX A: Demographic Questionnaire



วิทยาลัยการจัดการ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล

แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้เป็นการจัดทำขึ้นโดยนักศึกษาปริญญาโท บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล โปรดใช้เวลาของท่านในการกรอกแบบสอบถามให้เสร็จสมบูรณ์ ผลของการตอบรับนั้นไม่มีถูกหรือผิด เพียงแค่ตอบตรงตามทัศนคติของท่านมากที่สุด โดยข้อมูลแบบสอบถามทั้งหมดจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับและนำไปใช้ประโยชน์ในทางการศึกษา เท่านั้น ทั้งนี้ทางคณะผู้วิจัยขอขอบพระคุณทุกท่านเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่กรุณาสละเวลาให้มีส่วนร่วม ในการตอบแบบสอบถามมา ณ โอกาสนี้

1. กรุณาระบุเพศของคุณ

- ชาย
 หญิง

2. โปรดเลือกระดับการศึกษาสูงสุดของคุณ

- ต่ำกว่ามัธยมศึกษา
 มัธยมศึกษา
 ปริญญาตรี
 สูงกว่าปริญญาตรี

3. โปรดเลือกช่วงอายุของคุณ

- น้อยกว่า 23 ปี
 23 – 40 ปี
 มากกว่า 40 ปี

4. โปรดเลือกอาชีพของคุณ

- ค้าขาย
- ข้าราชการ/ พนักงานรัฐวิสาหกิจ
- แม่บ้าน
- ประถมศึกษา/นักศึกษา
- อื่นๆ _____

5. โปรดระบุรายได้เฉลี่ยโดยประมาณของคุณต่อเดือน

- น้อยกว่า 20,000 บาท
- 20,001 – 40,000 บาท
- มากกว่า 40,000 บาท

6. โดยปกติแล้วคุณซื้อเก้าอี้พลาสติกที่ไหน

- ห้างสรรพสินค้า
- ในตลาด
- ร้านเฟอร์นิเจอร์
- ร้านขายของพลาสติก
- อื่นๆ _____

7. ราคาเก้าอี้พลาสติกโดยประมาณ _____ บาท

8. อะไรที่คุณคำนึงถึงเมื่อเลือกซื้อเก้าอี้พลาสติก

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

9. โดยปกติแล้ว อายุการใช้งานของเก้าอี้ที่คุณใช้ผู้มีอายุเฉลี่ยประมาณเท่าไร

ขอบคุณท่านเป็นอย่างยิ่งสำหรับความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถามฉบับนี้
คณะวิจัยมีความยินดีในผลการตอบรับของท่าน