

**FACTORS AFFECTING LOWER MIDDLE INCOME
PEOPLE TO DECIDE TO PURCHASE
A SMARTPHONE.**



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entitled
**FACTORS AFFECTING LOWER MIDDLE INCOME
PEOPLE TO DECIDE TO PURCHASE
A SMARTPHONE.**

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FACTORS AFFECTING LOWER MIDDLE INCOME PEOPLE TO DECIDE TO PURCHASE A SMARTPHONE.

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, smartphone has become an essential part of daily life and became an important tool of communication. From the 2013 research, a 3G smartphone are sold over 8.1 million units, 80% growth from 2012. The overall smartphone market in 2013 has increased 30% from year 2012. The statistical data shows 41.4% of the lower-middle income people, the major population of Thailand who has revenue between 5,001-15,000 baht, would like to occupy smartphones but they could not due to their limited purchasing power. This research studies which factors affect lower-middle income people to buy a smartphone. The target is a person whose salary is lower than 15,000 baht, acquire smartphone, and live in Bangkok and Vicinities. This research finds 92.4% of the sample thought that worthiness and warranty, convenience of distribution channel are the two most important factors. However, this research could not answer that the factor affect lower-middle income people to buy a smartphone is influenced by society, famous people who use smartphones. So smartphone companies should improve and develop concordantly with all of factors such as brand, price, product features, distribution channel and promotion in order to meet the demand of lower-middle income customers and gain competitive advantage to compete with the others.

KEY WORDS: Lower middle income, Smartphone, Consumer behavior, Making decision

40 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Strategic Important

In today's modern world, technology has become an essential part of human lives within the past 8-9 years. Mobile phones have taken a crucial role in modern society, becoming a tool through its forms of communication and networking capabilities. As a result, technology continues to grow and is constantly developing; for some people, mobile phone is another important factor of their lives and it is indispensable. In this era of globalization, the mobile phone has evolved into a new pocket sized computer called smartphones; with functions similar to regular mobile phones, but smartphones have been optimized and geared toward entertainment, for example: video games, music players, personal camera and video recorded. They can be communicated in various forms of messages such as short message service (SMS) and multimedia messaging service (MMS). Moreover, smartphones can send and receive information through an internet connection. That plays a major role in education and learning through the use of World Wide Web and placing information to the world by just one click on your phone. It can be noted that this present era can be called as the era of digital communication by modern technology and the use of various social networking media. Through the use of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Line, Whatsapp, and Instagram, smartphones can support multiple functions and interconnected applications to create sources of entertainment. From the consumers demanding of smartphones, a lot of companies want to increase market share in this product by adding new innovations and functions into the smartphones to increase consumers' interests. Also they have recognized the importance of manufacturing and developing smartphones even more so to meet the demands of the modern business men, students, workers and casual user.

Kasikorn Bank Research Center indicated that in the year 2013 mobile phones that supported 3G were sold over 8.1 million units with 80% growth compared to the year 2012, which drove the overall mobile phone market in 2013 to increase by 30% from the year 2012 and pushed the mobile services market in the year 2013 to grow by 14.2% with total market capitalization of more than 210,000 million baht, the growth in 2012 was worth 188,000 million baht.

Low income people is a group that has income lower than \$2,000 U.S. per year or lower than 64,000 baht per year which is equivalent to lower than 5,333 baht per month, lower middle income people is a group that has income between \$2,000-\$7,250 U.S. per year or 64,000-232,000 baht per year which is equivalent to 5,333-19,333 baht per month; level of income model is shown below (Felipe, 2012). The statistical data from the National Statistical Office of Thailand, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology about percentages of Thai people by average total monthly income from all over the country in 2011 indicated that Thai people with an income lower than 15,000 baht represent 50.1% of population in Thailand. From the statistical data shows that lower middle income people represent high percentage of population in Thailand, which is 41.4%, percentage of Thai people by average total monthly income, Whole Kingdom: 2011 is shown below. Lower middle income people are a group of people who are limited to purchase necessary or unnecessary products and services. “A social class is a group of people who have the same social, economic, or educational status in society. To some degree, consumers in the same social class exhibit similar purchasing behavior” (Saylor.org, 2013).

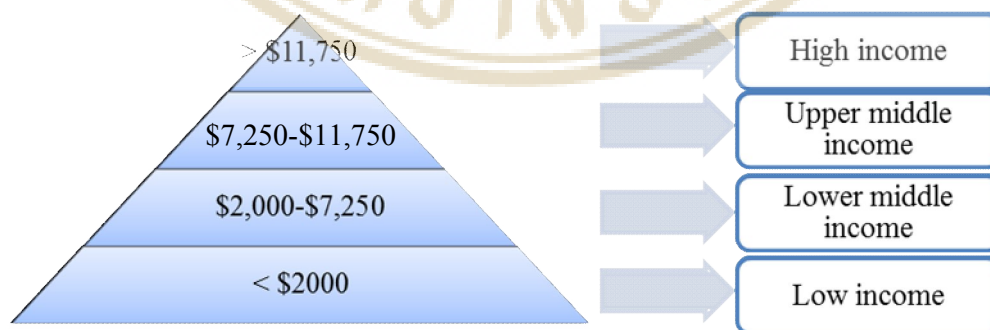


Figure 1.1: Level of income model (Felipe, 2012).

Table 1.1: Percentage of Thai People by Average Total Monthly Income, Whole Kingdom: 2011 (National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 2011).

Rank of Total Monthly Income	No. of Percentage	Percentage of Income Level	Level of income
Less than 500	0.5%	47.4%	Low income
500 - 1,500	3.3%		
1,501 - 3,000	18.2%		
3,001 - 5,000	25.4%		
5,001 - 10,000	30.5%	41.4%	Lower middle income
10,001 - 15,000	10.9%		
15,001 - 30,000	8.1%	8.1%	Upper middle income
30,001 - 50,000	2.2%	3.2%	High income
50,001 - 100,000	0.8%		
More than 100,000	0.2%		
Total	100%	100%	

1.2 Research Statement and Its Importance

Due to lower middle income people have limited income or purchasing power, they might have a lot of burden of expenses which make them feel they could not purchase unnecessary products, but still would like to have those items. Therefore, I would like to study in which factors affect lower middle income people to want to own the smartphone and what they are willing to do to fulfill those needs.

1.3 Research Question

This research focuses on “what factors that impact on decision making of lower middle income people to decide to purchase a smartphone?”

1.4 Research Objectives

Due to lower middle income people represent 41.4% of population in Thailand (National Statistical Office, 2011). They have thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors that are different from other income groups. If marketing companies of smartphones know what factors impact in making decision to buy a smartphone of this group, they could improve and develop their products and services in order to serve the group and make them feel satisfied. Then the company would get more market share.

1.5 Research Scope

From the research topic, I would like to study factors that impact lower middle income people to decide to purchase a smartphone. The target is a group of people who have money on an income lower than 15,000 baht, which is a minimum wage, acquiring a smartphone, and living in Bangkok or Vicinities.

1.6 Expected Benefit

- To know the factors that could impact to lower middle income people to decide to purchase a smartphone which include both internal and external factors.
- To know that lower middle income people thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors towards smartphones.
- To help smartphone companies to improve and develop their products in order to satisfy lower middle income group which represent a high percentage group of Thai population.
- To help smartphone companies to improve and develop their strategic marketing plan in order to influence lower middle income group which present a high percentage group of Thai population.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEWS & PROPOSED FRAMEWORKS

The purpose of literature review is to go over the main points of current knowledge as theoretical. In this chapter we will discuss the existing literature about consumer behaviors, which are included brand, social influence, price, product features, place, and promotion.

Theoretical Foundation & Hypotheses Development

Consumer Behavior

“Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals or groups buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experience to satisfy their needs or wants”(Kotler et al.2008). Consumer behavior is the study of what, why, when, where, and how individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impact that these processes have on the consumer and society (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 2004). “The behavior that consumers display in search for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product and services that they expect will satisfy their needs” (Bello, 2008). The concept of consumer behavior is a wide range of studies about the decision making processes of the consumer towards creating decisions in order to purchase something as product or service that they want or need at the time, which are impacted by customer’s value, experience and social status.

Generally, before the customers will decide to buy products or service, they will pass through five stages of buying decision process to reach their buying decision, which is based on the field of consumer psychology theories. Process includes of needs recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior (Kotler et al. 2008). In the first stage, consumers are aware of the problem or demand for product or service which divided in internal

and external stimuli, internal stimuli such as hunger, thirst, etc. and external stimuli is caused by the activation of the marketing mix (4P's) such as watching products in the advertising and then feeling to purchase. In the second stage, they will find out for the information to support their decisions and the sources of consumer information are personal sources, commercial sources, public sources and experiential sources. In the third stage, consumers will evaluate alternatives by determining the criteria such as brand, price, customer service, etc. In the fourth stage, consumers will enter to the stage of making a purchase which making decision has to decide in the following as brand decision, vendor decision, quantity decision, timing decision and payment-method decision. The last stage, customer satisfactions will arises when customers compare what actually happened with expectation, if the value of the goods or services that they received, it matches with their expectation or higher than the expectation, customer will satisfy and then they will repeat to buy it again or has word of mouth (Modal, 2011). A buying decision process model is shown below.



Figure 2.1: A buying decision process model (Kotler et al. 2008)

Consumers don't necessarily go through all the buying stages when they're considering purchasing a product or service. At times they skip stages 1 through 3 and buy products on impulse, as a result purchasing a product with no plan or consideration. Impulsive buying presents a concept called level of involvement; Level of involvement includes 3 levels as low-involvement products are usually inexpensive and pose a low risk to the buyers if they make a mistake by purchasing them. High-involvement products are carrying a high risk to the buyer if they fail, are complex, or have high price tags/ Limited-involvement products fall somewhere in between low and high-involvement products (Saylor.org, 2013).

The factors that might affect to buying decision process; brand will have direct impact in buying decision process as when people recognition their needs then they will have the first idea into their mind which is brand awareness, the higher rate of brand awareness will lead to people first thinking of the brand. Social influence also take important part in buying decision process as when people are starting to search for information they will search information from people around them (friends, family etc.). Product feature, price, distribution channel and P\promotions are all affect to customer when they evaluate their alternative, they will compare each brand's price, product features, promotion and convenience to buy their product. From all of the above, we can conclude that above factors might affect to buying decision process.

2.1 Brand

Brand is the most powerful asset for a company. It could be represented a product and service of company to consumers. Brand is not just names and symbols but it can identify one business from others (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). The brand name of product could influence to consumers to evaluation, making decision and subsequently (Khasawneh and Hasouneh, 2010). When customers are satisfied in products and services, they would generate and provide word of mouth to the other and it will lead them to be interested and chosen the brand (Azad and Safaei, 2012). Most of companies are uncompromising to build their brand name to be strong in order to create credibility, increase value added, retain competitive advantage to the company and protect copying from competitors. Brand is one of the main components in which customers consider before making decision to purchase a product or service; it could alter customer's perception in terms of thinking, change feeling or expression, and brand also could build good or bad relationship between companies. Customers can also use brand identification by demonstrating their social class in society. Moreover, brand equity is the most important asset which brand's owner attempt to create; it means that brand has value in the customer's mind. Customers have a positive attitude towards the product and brand equities have 4 components: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand association. These components affect how the consumer makes a decision to purchase an item. Additional, research

from Telenor Asia Pte Ltd. (2013), Indicate that Thai customers emphasize on brands of smartphones is the most important factor when compared with others 18 factors.

Hypotheses 1: Brand positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smartphone.

2.2 Social Influence

People grew up and lived in a society as social animal; they interact with each other for better solutions. Social Influence mean behavior of one person or group influences others by affecting their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors which intentionally or unintentionally. At the times, people are not conscious of social influences, since they are so penetrant (Klobas and Clyde, 2001). For consumer's, behavior is influenced by social factors, such as the consumer subculture, which is a group of people within a culture who are different from the dominant culture but has something in common with one another such as common interests, vocations or jobs, religions, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and so forth, family, and social roles and status (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Nelson and McLeod (2005). The media is also one of the factors as reference that a consumer identifies with and wants to join which companies. Quite often, celebrities are hired to endorse their products to appeal to people's reference groups. The consumer's social class is also one of the social factors in which the consumer is in the same social class, exhibiting similar purchasing behavior. Depending on various factors, consumers might listen and believe in different social groups, perhaps to those who are more professional in certain fields are called opinion leaders. Moreover, social influences are also concerned about learning skills, knowledge and attitude in each person which relevant for consumption (Nevenzahl and Secunda, 1993). Many researchers have found that the social influences could cause an affect when the consumer makes a decision purchasing (Mourali, Laroche and Pons, 2005). People tend to be easier influenced by the word of others. Also some researches show that customer's purchase smartphone in order to widen the social networking, and want to stay connected with their friends, family and working groups (Tuominen, 2011). Moreover, many customers purchase smartphones

in order to get acceptance of certain group of people (Bodker, Gimpel and Hedman, n.d)

Hypotheses 2: Social influence positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone

2.3 Price

Price of product is related to product's cost, so price could represent the quality of product, if the price is higher, the perception on the quality of the product is also higher, on the other hand if the price of product is lower, the perception of its quality is also lower, in which the price is the key concern and influence people make before a decision (Scitovsky, 1945). The level of price is found to be a positive effect in behavioral intentions mainly because price establishes brand image in the sight of the consumers (Aaker, 1991). The customers are wiliness to pay more for the benefits of product or service (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). On the other hand, price and need are negative correlation. Need tends to be reduced when a product price is higher than range of acceptable and vice versa (Dodds, 1991). Price is the critical factor requiring consideration with a limited budget on purchase intention (Erickson & Johansson, 1985). Different people have different attitudes on the value of money. Some of customers perceive for a higher price because their perception is focusing on high quality, image and status, nevertheless other customers against to purchase a product based on utilitarian value, with the consumer is relying on the price perception, they may search for a lower prices to get the best value (Kunal et al., 2010).

Hypotheses 3: Price positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smartphone

2.4 Product Features

Features are an attribute of the product to meet the satisfaction of the consumer's needs and want to go through the owning of the product, usage, and utilization for a product which provides features, including hardware and software (Kotler et al.2008). If a product has different features from the competitor; it will be

attractive to customers, and gain competitive, the appearance of a product could influence consumers' behavior easily because product's appearance could catch consumer's sight and get one's attention. Some categories of product might not be differences between products, so the appearance of a product could make different from the other and create customer satisfaction by visually. The most successful example is the case of Macintosh and Apple which their products look appealing to a consumer with the snow-white industrial design and distinct from the competitor, which shapes the appearance of Apple products for years (Liao and Yu-Jui, 2012). The mains usage of the smartphone and the lifestyle benefit are search, web site, map, social network, applications, photo, music and video.

Hypotheses 4: Product features positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone

2.5 Distribution Channel

● Distribution channel is a place for exchange system of product or service with money, product etc., it is convenient place for consumers to access. So a distribution channel could support for exchange in term of facilitate the time, location and volume between the buyer and seller. Each product would have different distribution channel so it could be easily to purchase. Moreover, the number of branches and locations could influence to purchase product and service as well.

Hypotheses 5: Distribution channel positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smartphone

2.6 Promotion

Promotion pushes communication activities to publish information of all 3 elements as product, price and place to the target market. Communication is provided in order to inform a customer, it also could help stimulate or induce demand and purchasing decisions. There are plenty forms of communication methods such as advertising, public relations, sales organization, viral advertising, personal selling, sales promotion etc. Each method, a marketer makes might use to provide information

in vary parties about the product and service (Needham, 1996). Moreover, marketers might create communications that aim to create a dialogue with the potential customers based on their needs and lifestyles (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1993).

Hypotheses 6: Promotion positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone

According to the above literature, we hypothesized that following factors may have an impact on decision making of lower to middle income to purchase a smartphone.

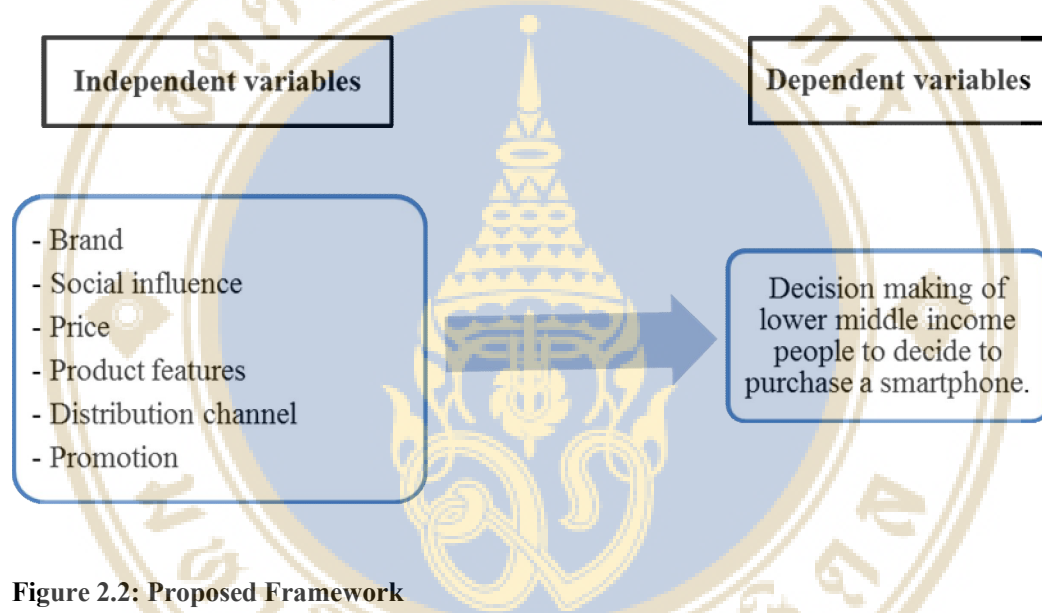


Figure 2.2: Proposed Framework

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting

In order to get information about factors affecting lower middle income people to purchase a smartphone as I mentioned in previous chapters, to the target respondents for this study must have following characteristics;

- People who have a revenue between 15,000 baht
- Acquire / Possess smartphone
- Live in Bangkok and Vicinities

Sample & Data Collection

This study use quantitative research approaches. By providing questionnaire to 66 people who have qualification as stated above

Rational for using this method is to get a larger number of samples of information from target respondents, resulting in a better and more accurate indication with limited timeframe.

I prepared the questionnaire following in appendices.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

We collected the data from providing questionnaire 66 samples and focus on peoples who have total revenue lower than 15,000 baht, acquire/ possess smartphone, and live in Bangkok and Vicinities.

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

4.1.1 Gender of Samples

In Table 4.1, sample size is 66; there are female 51.5% and male 48.5% which are not quite different in term of percentage of gender of the samples in this study.

Table 4.1 Gender of Samples

Gender	Number of Samples	Percentage of Samples
Female	34	51.5%
Male	32	48.5%
Total	66	100%

4.1.2 Age Range of Samples

In Table 4.2, there are samples' age ranges from 21-30 years old; represent 81.8% of total samples which are included by 28 samples of female and 26 samples of male, which this age ranges is the majority of the samples in this study. Follow by the number of samples' age range from 31-40 years old; represent 18.2% of total samples

which are included by 6 samples of female and 6 samples of male. Besides, this study does not contain an age range; from less than 20, 41-50 and More than 50 years old.

Table 4.2 Age Range of Samples

Age Range	Gender		Total	Percentage of Age Range
	Female	Male		
Less than 20	0	0	0	0%
21-30	28	26	54	81.8%
31-40	6	6	12	18.2%
41-50	0	0	0	0%
More than 50	0	0	0	0%
Total	34	32	66	100%

4.1.3 Occupation of Samples

In Table 4.3, there are employees; represent 86.4% of total samples which are included by 46 samples who have age range 21-30 years old and 11 samples who have age range 31-40 years old, which this occupation is the majority of the samples in this study. Follow by the number of samples who are business owner or freelance; represent 9.1% of total samples. The last group of occupation is government officer or state enterprise employee; represent 4.5% of total samples.

Table 4.3 Occupation of Samples

Occupation	Age Range		Total	Percentage of Samples
	21-30	31-40		
Government officer/ State enterprise employee	2	1	3	4.5%
Employee	46	11	57	86.4%
Business owner/ Freelance	6	0	6	9.1%
Total	54	12	66	100%

4.1.4 Education level of Samples

In Table 4.4 shows the Education levels of samples, there are Bachelor's Degree; represent 84.9% of total samples which are included by 49 samples who have age range 21-30 years old and 7 samples who have age range 31-40 years old, which this education level is the majority of the samples in this study. Secondly, 13.6% of total samples is vocational study. Lastly, 1.5% of total samples presents education level in high school or vocational certificate. Besides, this study does not contain the samples that have education level in primary school and Master's Degree.

Table 4.4 Education level of Samples

Level of Education	Age Range		Total	Percentage of Samples
	21-30	31-40		
Primary School	0	0	0	0%
High School/ Vocational certificate	0	1	1	1.5%
Vocational diploma	5	4	9	13.6%
Bachelor's Degree	49	7	56	84.9%
Master's Degree	0	0	0	0%
Total	54	12	66	100%

4.1.5 Marital Status of Samples

In Table 4.5, 87.9% of total samples represent single status, included by 49 samples who have age range 21-30 years old and 9 samples who have age range 31-40 years old, which this marital status is the majority of the samples in this study. Follow by the number of samples who are married; represent 10.6% of total samples. Lastly, the group of marital status of samples who divorce or widowed; represent 1.5% of total samples represent, the group of divorce or widowed.

Table 4.5 Marital Status of Samples

Marital Status	Age Range		Total	Percentage of Samples
	21-30	31-40		
Single	49	9	58	87.9%
Married	4	3	7	10.6%
Divorce/ Widowed	1	0	1	1.5%
Total	54	12	66	100%

From providing questionnaire 66 samples and focus on peoples who have revenue lower than 15,000 baht, acquire smartphone, and live in Bangkok and Vicinities. The demographic data analysis of the samples in this study has found that the majority of the samples are not significant in gender, age range between 21-30 years old, working as employees, which have education level in Bachelor's Degree and single.

4.2 The Result of Study

This study would focus on factors affecting low middle income people (<15,000 baht) to decide to purchase a smartphone. Beginning with questionnaire asking about consumer behaviors which are included brand, social influence, price, product features, distribution channel and promotion. The questionnaires are following;

1) The sample questions have to rate 1 to 5 by

- (1): Strongly Disagree
- (2): Disagree
- (3): Moderate
- (4): Agree
- (5): Strongly Agree

2) The sample questions have to choose the answer where they think it suits them the most.

3) The sample questions have to rank by importance: 1 to 5 from (1): The most important, (5): The least important

As the limited of time in this research, we would use sum of percentage of each variable scaling and mean score to explain the result.

4.2.1 Brand toward Buying Decision

From the consumers' perspective, "brand" is a symbol of quality and belief. Brand is one of the main components which customers concern before making a decision to purchase product or service; it could create customer's perception in term of thinking, feeling and expression to that brand. Reputation and longevity of brand could create customers' confidence and influence customers to be the first trial or repeated purchase. Moreover, brand could also create image, behavior and life styles also.

The first question is aiming to measure the degree of the brand factor toward buying decision of the samples about reputation of smartphone brand. We found that 75.8% of total samples agree that reputations of smartphone brand are influenced on their buying decision. The second questions are aiming to measure the degree of the brand factor toward buying decision of the samples about longevity of brand. We found that 53.0% of total samples are moderate about longevity of brand as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Measurement of Brand toward Buying Decision

Brand	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Reputation of Brand	37.9%	37.9%	21.2%	3.0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	75.8%		21.2%	3.0%		
Longevity of brand	7.6%	27.3%	53.0%	9.1%	3.0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	34.9%		53.0%	12.1%		

The Third questions aiming to measure that which smartphone brand that the samples currently use the most. We found that 66.7% of total samples currently use Apple brand. Secondly, 21.2% of total samples currently use Samsung brand. Thirdly, 6.1% of total samples currently use Nokia brand. Fourthly, 3.0% of samples currently use Sony brand. Lastly, 1.5% of total samples currently use BlackBerry and LG brand. Besides, HTC and Acer brand is not currently used by the samples in this research as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Smartphone brand that the samples currently use.

Smartphone brand	Number of Samples	Percentage of Samples	Total of Percentage
Apple	44	66.7%	100%
Samsung	14	21.2%	
Nokia	4	6.1%	
Sony	2	3.0%	
BlackBerry	1	1.5%	
LG	1	1.5%	
HTC	0	0%	
Acer	0	0%	

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 could support the hypothesis 1 states that brand positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone in term of reputation of brand.

4.2.2 Social Influence toward Buying Decision

Due to people grew up and lived in a society as social animal so it makes them have to interact with each other. Behavior of one person or group could influences others by affecting their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behavior which intentionally or unintentionally. Often, people are not conscious of social influences, since they are so penetrant. Social influences could effect when the

consumers are making decision on purchasing which people tend to be easier influenced by the word of others.

The first question is aiming to measure the degree of the social influence factor toward buying decision of the samples about a lot of user who are famous peoples in social. We found that 37.9% of total samples are moderate about a lot of famous peoples use a smartphone that impact them to their buying decision and 34.8% of total samples agree and 27.3% of total samples disagree as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Measurement of Social Influence toward Buying Decision

Social Influence	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
A lot of famous peoples use	19.7%	15.2%	37.9%	12.1%	15.2%	100%
Sum of Percentage	34.8%		37.9%	27.3%		

The second questions is aiming to measure that who is the most important influencer could affect the samples' buying decision. We found that the 1st rank is the samples itself with 87.9% of total samples. Secondly, the 2nd rank is friends of the samples with 43.9% of total samples. Thirdly, the 3rd rank is also friends of the samples with 42.4% of total samples. Fourthly, the 4th rank is a salesman with 54.5% of total samples. Lastly, the 5th rank is a celebrities and opinion leaders with 69.7% of total samples respectively as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Measurement of Social Influence by influencer toward Buying Decision (rank by importance)

Influencer	Rank by importance					Type of Influencer
	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	
Yourself	87.9%	7.6%	1.5%	0.0%	1.5%	Internal Influencer

Salesman	3.0%	16.7%	19.7%	54.5%	7.6%	External Influencer
friends	4.5%	43.9%	42.4%	6.1%	3.0%	
Families	4.5%	28.8%	22.7%	24.2%	18.2%	
Celebrities	0.0%	3.0%	13.6%	15.2%	69.7%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 could not support the hypothesis 2 states that social influence positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone even the smartphone user who are famous peoples in social and the 1st influencer who impact to the samples' buying decision is the samples itself.

4.2.3 Price toward Buying Decision

Price of product is related to product cost so price could represent the quality of product. Price of product and quality of product are positive correlation. Price is the key concern and influence people before making a decision. Price could establish image of the brand in the sight of the consumers. On the other hand, price and need are negative correlation. Need tends to be reduced when a product price is higher than range of acceptable and vice versa. Moreover, payment method is also one of the factors that could impact customer before making a decision.

The first question is aiming to measure the degree of the price factor toward buying decision of the samples about worthiness of smartphone. We found that 92.4% of total samples agree that worthiness of smartphone is the most in price factors that influences their buying decision. The second questions are aiming to measure the degree of the price factor towards a buying decision of the samples about installment payments. We found that this is the least price factor that the samples would concern with 53.0% of total samples agree that installment payment factor that influences their buying decision. The third questions are aiming to measure the degree of the price factor towards a buying decision of the samples about a variety range of smartphone price. We found that 62.1% of total samples agree that variety range of smartphone price factor that influences their buying decision. The fourth questions are aiming to

measure the degree of the price factor on a buying decision of the samples about smartphone can resell in good price. We found that 57.6% of total samples agree that smartphones can resell in good price factor that influence their buying decision as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Measurement of Price toward Buying Decision

Price	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Worthiness	62.1%	30.3%	6.1%	1.5%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	92.4%		6.1%	1.5%		
Installment payment	22.7%	30.3%	36.4%	4.5%	6.1%	100%
Sum of Percentage	53.0%		36.4%	10.6%		
Variety range of price	18.2%	43.9%	31.8%	6.1%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	62.1%		31.8%	6.1%		
Can resell in good price	25.8%	31.8%	31.8%	4.5%	6.1%	100%
Sum of Percentage	57.6%		31.8%	10.6%		

The fifth questions aiming to measure the degree of the price factor toward buying decision about budget for buying smartphone of the samples. We found that budget for buying smartphone between 10,001 - 20,000 baht is the most range of their budget with 56.1% of total samples. Follow by the budget between 20,001 - 30,000 baht with 34.8% of total samples as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Budget for Buying Smartphone

Budget (Baht)	Number of Samples	Percentage of Samples	Total of Percentage
Less than 10,000	5	7.6%	100%
10,001 - 20,000	37	56.1%	

20,001 - 30,000	23	34.8%	
More than 30,000	1	1.5%	

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.10 and Table 4.11 could support the hypothesis 3 states that price positively correlates to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone in term of worthiness, installment payment, variety range of price and can resell in good price, and budget for buying smartphone between 10,001 - 20,000 baht which is moderate price.

4.2.4 Product Features toward Buying Decision

Product features could create the satisfaction of the consumers' need and want through the owning of the product, usage, and utilization for a product which product features, including hardware and software. The appearance of a product could influence consumers' buying decision easily because product's appearance could catch consumer's eye. Some categories of product might not be differences between products as usage, and utilization etc., so the appearance of a product could make different from the other and create customer satisfaction by visually.

The question is aiming to measure the degree of the product features factor toward buying decision of the samples. We found that 89.4% of total samples agree that product appearance, durable, product function and product size of smartphone is the most product features factor that influences their buying decision. Followed by the product's qualification and various applications of smartphone factors that influence their buying decision with 87.9% of total samples agree. The last product features factor toward buying decision of the samples is easy to connect with other devices with 78.8% of total samples agree as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Measurement of Product Features toward Buying Decision

Price	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Product appearance	42.4%	47.0%	10.6%	0%	0%	100%

Sum of Percentage	89.4%		10.6%	0%		
Durable	43.9%	45.5%	10.6%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	89.4%		10.6%	0%		
Product's Qualification	37.9%	50.0%	12.1%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	87.9%		12.1%	0%		
Product function	54.6%	34.8%	10.6%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	89.4%		10.6%	0%		
Various application	62.1%	25.8%	12.1%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	87.9%		12.1%	0%		
Easy to connect with other devices	51.5%	27.3%	18.2%	3.0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	78.8%		18.2%	3.0%		
Product size	42.4%	47.0%	10.6%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	89.4%		10.6%	0%		

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.12 could support the hypothesis 4 states that product features positively correlated to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone in term of product appearance, durable, product's qualification, product function, various applications, easy to connect with other devices and product size.

4.2.5 Distribution Channel toward Buying Decision

Distribution channel is a convenient place for consumers to access for exchange product or service with money, product etc. Distribution channel could support for exchange in term of facilitate the time, location and volume between the buyer and seller. Moreover, the number of branches and location could influence customer buying decision to purchase product and service as well.

The first question is aiming to measure the degree of the distribution channel factor toward buying decision of the samples about easy to buy and convenient of smartphone. We found that 92.4% of total samples agree that distribution channel which is easy to buy and convenient of smartphone is the most

distribution channel factor that influences their buying decision. The second questions are aiming to measure the degree of the price factor toward buying decision of the samples about product in stock. We found that 89.4% of total samples agree that if product is in stock they could receive it immediately and it can influence their buying decision. The third questions are aiming to measure the number of distributors toward buying decision of the samples. We found that 78.8% of total samples agree that many distributors of smartphone factor that influences their buying decision. The fourth questions are aiming to measure the participant in event of distribution channel toward buying decision of the samples. We found that this factor is the least distribution channel factor that the samples would with 54.6% of total samples agree as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Measurement of Distribution Channel toward Buying Decision

Distribution Channel	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Easy to buy and convenient	50.0%	42.4%	7.6%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	92.4%		7.6%	0%		
Product in stock	47.0%	42.4%	9.1%	1.5%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	89.4%		9.1%	1.5%		
Many distributors	48.5%	30.3%	18.2%	1.5%	1.5%	100%
Sum of Percentage	78.8%		18.2%	3.0%		
Participant in event	25.8%	28.8%	34.8%	9.1%	1.5%	100%
Sum of Percentage	54.6%		34.8%	10.6%		

The fifth questions aiming to measure the degree of the distribution channel factor toward buying decision about distribution channel that the samples always buying smartphone. We found that the samples chose service center ex. iStudio/ Samsung mobile shop/ Nokia shop and network provider shop ex. True shop/

Dtac shop/ AIS shop the most for buying smartphone with 40.9% of total samples as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Distribution Channel that the samples always buy.

Distribution Channel	Number of Samples	Percentage of Samples	Total of Percentage
Service center ex. iStudio/ Samsung Mobile Shop/ Nokia Shop	27	40.9%	100%
Dealer/ Distributor ex. Jaymart/ Blisstel Shop/ TG Fone	7	10.6%	
Network provider shop ex. True Shop/ Dtac Shop/ AIS Shop	27	40.9%	
Private Mobile phone shop	3	4.5%	
Online shopping	1	1.5%	
Overseas	1	1.5%	

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.13 and Table 4.14 could support the hypothesis 5 states that distribution channel positively correlates to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone in term of distribution channel is easy to buy and convenient, product in stock, many distributors and participant in event, and the samples chose service center and network provider shop are the most distribution channel for buying smartphone.

4.2.6 Promotion toward Buying Decision

The main objectives of the promotion are intended for stimulating sales of the company and recommend their products to customers. Promotion as having bundle sales and providing discount and premium could induce demand and purchasing decisions of customers. Promotion is a communication activity which serves lots of

communication methods such as advertising, public relations, viral advertising, personal selling, sales promotion etc.

The question is aiming to measure the degree of the promotion factor toward buying decision smartphone. We found that 92.4% of total samples agree that product warranty of smartphone is the most promotion factor that influences a customer's buying decision. Follow by the sufficient service center, after sales service and having bundle sales with Internet package with 84.8%, 78.8% and 59.1% of total samples agree respectively. Lastly, the least promotion factor of the sample is getting discount and premium with 54.5% of total samples agree as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Measurement of Promotion toward Buying Decision

Promotion	Percentage of Samples					Total of Percentage
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
Sufficient service center	51.5%	33.3%	15.2%	0%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	84.8%		15.2%	0%		
After sales service	45.5%	33.3%	16.7%	4.5%	0%	100%
Sum of Percentage	78.8%		16.7%	4.5%		
Product warranty	63.6%	28.8%	6.1%	0%	1.5%	100%
Sum of Percentage	92.4%		6.1%	1.5%		
Bundle sales with internet package	22.7%	36.4%	27.3%	6.1%	7.6%	100%
Sum of Percentage	59.1%		27.3%	13.7%		
Discount and premium	30.3%	24.2%	34.8%	6.1%	4.5%	100%
Sum of Percentage	54.5%		34.8%	10.6%		

Therefore, the above results as Table 4.15 could support the hypothesis 6 states that promotion positively correlates to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone in term of sufficient service center, after sales service, product warranty, having bundle sales with internet package and getting discount and premium.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this research is to find the factors that impact lower middle income people on making decision to purchase a smartphone. The factors were measured in this research are brand, social influence, price, product features, distribution channel and promotion. Not only factors above but the research could also measure lower middle income people thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors toward the smartphone. Moreover, the research could help the smartphone companies to improve and develop their products and their strategic marketing plan in order to influence lower middle income people group which present a high percentage group of Thai population.

Nowadays, communicating is developed rapidly along with smartphones. A lot of people need to acquire a smartphone in order to communicate with others when other people are using one. According to National Statistical Office, (2011), found lower middle income group is 41.4% of Thai population who have limited income and purchasing power. Moreover, they might have a lot of other expenses which constrain them to purchase unnecessary products but they still would like to have it. Therefore, this research studies about the factors which influence lower middle income people on purchasing smartphones.

This research found that 92.4% of total samples thought that worthiness, warranty of smartphones and convenience of distributing channel are the most important factors concerned.

On the other hand, this research did not support the hypothesis 2 states that social influence positively correlates to a probability of lower middle income consumer to buy a smart phone even the smartphone user are famous people in society and the most influencer that influence the samples' buying decision is the samples themselves. In our opinion, the result did not go along with our prediction; it might be

because of the education level of samples, mostly Bachelor's Degree; 84.9% of total samples. Level of education of each person might help them to think, gather information, analyze pros and cons etc. before deciding to purchase products or services. If customers have knowledge about product that they would like to buy, it might help to support their decision making. In addition, customers could search product information via internet that helps them to make a decision by themselves.

5.2 Contribution

This research is studied in order to measure the factors which impact lower middle income people to decide to purchase a smartphone based on customer behavior theories. The result of the research quite harmonizes with the theories.

5.3 Managerial implication and suggestion

While the time is changing, thoughts, attitudes and behaviors will be adaptive; the human needs are also changing. In order to provide smartphones which satisfy lower middle income people, the smartphone companies should know their thoughts, attitudes and behaviors toward the smartphones currently. From the research found that all of factors as brand, price, product features, distributing channel and promotion should be improved and developed concordantly with each other because there are a lot of smartphone companies in the market so the customers have more choices. If smartphone companies could influence and meet the lower middle income people demand then they could make the competitive advantage to compete with the others.

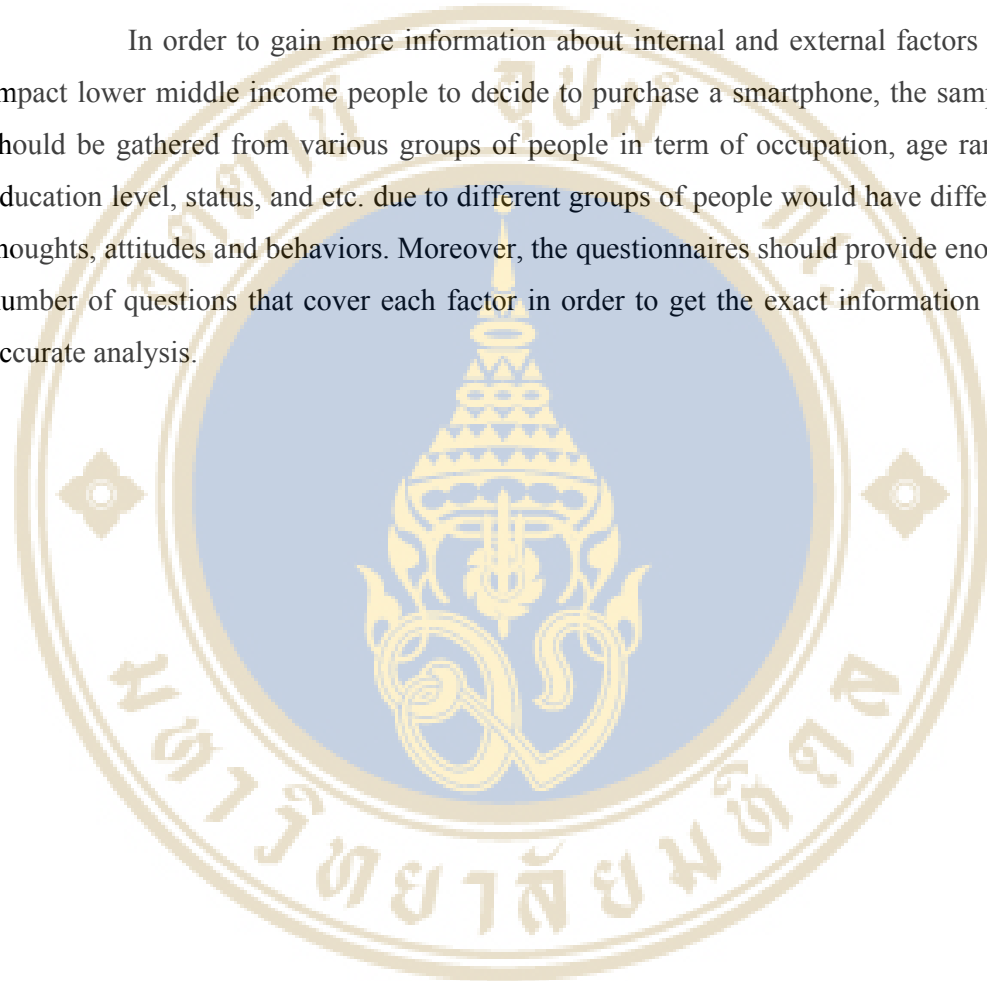
5.4 Limitation

A limitation of this study is time constrain. This limitation causes the researcher an insufficient sample size of samples to provide a high prediction power. Due to small sample size (66 samples), generalization should be done with cautions.

Second, questionnaires methodology might not get in-depth information about thoughts and attitudes of samples. Future study may consider having in-depth interview with the samples.

5.5 Future research

In order to gain more information about internal and external factors that impact lower middle income people to decide to purchase a smartphone, the samples should be gathered from various groups of people in term of occupation, age range, education level, status, and etc. due to different groups of people would have different thoughts, attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, the questionnaires should provide enough number of questions that cover each factor in order to get the exact information and accurate analysis.



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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire has 3 parts.

Part 1: Demographics

1. Gender

- Female
- Male

2. Age Range

- Less than 20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- More than 50 years

3. Occupation

- Government officer/ State enterprise employee
- Employee
- Business owner/ Freelance
- Others

4. Monthly income

- Less than 9,000 Baht
- 9,000-12,000 Baht
- 12,000-15,000 Baht
- 15,000-20,000 Baht

- More than 20,000 Baht

5. Education level

- Primary School
- High School/ Vocational certificate
- Vocational diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree

6. Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorce/ Widowed

Part 2: Factors toward Buying Decision

Please rate 1 to 5 by

- (1): Strongly Disagree
- (2): Disagree
- (3): Moderate
- (4): Agree
- (5): Strongly Agree

7. Product Features

Factors toward Buying Decision	Strongly Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (4)	Moderate (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1. Product appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Durable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Product's Qualification
4. Product function
5. Various application
6. Easy to connect with other devices
7. Product size

8. Price

- | Factors toward Buying Decision | Strongly Agree (5) | Strongly Agree (4) | Moderate (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly Disagree (1) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 8. Worthiness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Installment payment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Variety range of price | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Can resell in good price | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

9. Distribution Channel

- | Factors toward Buying Decision | Strongly Agree (5) | Strongly Agree (4) | Moderate (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly Disagree (1) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12. Easy to buy and convenient | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Product in stock | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Many distributors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Participant in event | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

10. Promotion

- | Factors toward Buying Decision | Strongly Agree (5) | Strongly Agree (4) | Moderate (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly Disagree (1) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 16. Sufficient service center | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Sufficient service center | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. After sales service
19. Product warranty
20. Bundle sales with internet package
21. Discount and premium

11. Brand

- Factors toward Buying Decision
- | | Strongly
Agree (5) | Strongly
Agree (4) | Moderate
(3) | Disagree
(2) | Strongly
Disagree (1) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. Reputation of Brand | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Longevity of brand | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

12. Social Influence

- Factors toward Buying Decision
- | | Strongly
Agree (5) | Strongly
Agree (4) | Moderate
(3) | Disagree
(2) | Strongly
Disagree (1) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 24. A lot of famous peoples us | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Part 3: Decision making

13. Budget for Buying Smartphone

- Less than 10,000 Baht
- 10,001 - 20,000 Baht
- 20,001 - 30,000 Baht
- More than 30,000 Baht

14. Smartphone brand that you currently use

- Apple (iphone)
- Samsung

- Nokia
- Sony
- BlackBerry
- LG
- HTC
- Acer
- Others

15. Distribution Channel that you always buy

- Service center ex. iStudio/ Samsung Mobile Shop/ Nokia Shop
- Dealer/ Distributor ex. Jaymart/ Blisstel Shop/ TG Fone
- Network provider shop ex. True Shop/ Dtac Shop/ AIS Shop
- Private Mobile phone shop
- Online shopping
- Overseas
- Others

16. Influencer toward Buying Decision

Please rank by importance: 1 to 5 from (1): The most important, (5): The least important

- ___ Yourself
- ___ Salesman
- ___ Friends
- ___ Families
- ___ Celebrities