

Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Image Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior of Cosmeceutical Products

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ABSTRACT

Abstract—This research aimed to study integrated marketing communications and brand image affecting consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products. The sample group consisted of 400 consumers who have used and are using cosmeceutical products living in Bangkok, selected from the population using multi-stage sampling method. Data was collected using the generated questionnaires with the validity and reliability tested. The statistics used in the analysis were mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient and Multiple regression analysis. The results of integrated marketing communications affecting consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products revealed that sales by employees, public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing had a statistically significant effect on consumers buying behavior of cosmeceutical products at 0.05 level with a predictive power of 63.9 percent. In addition, the results of brand image affecting consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products revealed that brand identity, brand attributes, attitude, benefits, and brand association preferences had a statistically significant effect on consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products at 0.05 level with a predictive power of 49.28 percent.

Keywords— Brand image, Buying behavior, Cosmeceutical products, Integrated marketing communications

INTRODUCTION

Cosmeceuticals are products that combine cosmetic and/or medicinal properties. It is a new type of product in the cosmetic industry. Nowadays, consumers are increasingly becoming popular with cosmeceutical products. This makes cosmeceutical products tend to grow rapidly. Especially natural cosmeceuticals products, which are products that do not contain synthetic ingredients (e.g. odors, colors, additives, stabilizers, solvents, etc.) It also requires no radiation, no use of contaminated or genetically engineered raw materials and not using animal testing.

The future of the Thai cosmetic or herbal cosmetics market has a bright prospect both in the domestic market and the international market because it was supported by natural trends and environmental protection. Thai herbal cosmetic manufacturers must rely on their strengths in terms of diversity and abundance of herbal raw materials as well as pushing for Thai herbs to be known and accepted by foreigners even more. The foray into the international cosmetic market requires a strong production and marketing base in the country first in order to be able to compete with the cosmetics of the big companies by penetrating a specific market or niche market will be successful.

The cosmetic market has always been growing, in 2020, the cosmetics market in Thailand worth more than 300 billion baht has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 epidemic and faces a 4.5% contraction, the lowest in history. Due to the past economy, consumers' purchasing power has contracted, but consumers still buy beauty products and cosmetics to support the market expansion. Estimated the trend of the cosmetics market this year will grow at least 3%, this is a recovery again. Coupled with the pre-market situation at the beginning of the year, there was a huge growth in foreign orders, creating a value of 6,000-7 billion dollars. But 2021 will be the first to experience a contraction. As for the trend this year, it is expected to grow again because in the first quarter the trade was very good. Because consumers are reluctant to spend without leaving the house. As for cosmetics exports, there has been growth from the US, Europe, China and ASEAN among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Nowadays, consumers use cosmetics widely, causing cosmetic products to be sold and more and more competitive with both standard and non-certified products. Cosmetics are therefore an important product that is in demand among consumers, especially women. Therefore, there was intense competition and the company was interested in investing in this business. Due to the fact that there are many cosmetic brands at present, consumers will have to decide to buy according to new marketing strategies that attract customers' attention. The past

cosmetic expansion is quite high, especially pharmaceutical companies has tried to meet the needs of different groups of consumers, so what should be considered for consumers is to choose products according to the needs of the target group. These are important strategies and consumers will decide to buy cosmetics is therefore a marketing tool that focuses on products, prices, distribution channels, and marketing promotion.

Marketing communication is a strategy to promote business to customers to receive information and help to increase sales or the frequency of consumption of products, especially for beauty or to build confidence in personality. At present, cosmetics are considered important and necessary for people of all genders and ages, whether they are newborns, young or old, causing cosmetic manufacturers and importers to have a lot of market competition to make their products reach consumers as much as possible. Marketing promotion is therefore an important channel for customers to buy products and keep them from changing. Important marketing promotion factors will be the medium of marketing communication, which is the marketing promotion mix consisting of: (1) Advertising to provide consumers with information and understanding; with the purpose of purchasing and providing goods; (2) Sales promotion in order to create an attractive product style It stimulates the customers to create demand and interest in purchasing products. (3) Public relations are to present news about the product. (4) Sales by sales staff was a face-to-face sales model and (5) Direct marketing awareness/direct marketing promotion to customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Marketing communication is important for marketing to help increase market share and profits as well as make a difference and stand out for their products (Suwunniponth, 2017).

From the above reasons, therefore, the researcher is interested in studying Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Image Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior of Cosmeceutical Products in order to use information for business operations and formulate marketing communication strategies of cosmetic products to meet the needs of consumers further. The purpose of the study was to study the perception of marketing communications in cosmetic products among consumers, the behavior of consumers in purchasing cosmetics, and the relationship between perception of marketing communication and consumer's cosmetic purchase frequency behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) are tools of marketing communications that use all forms of communication that are appropriate for that consumer group or to what consumers are exposed to (Schultz, 1993). Kotler & Armstrong (2017) defines integrated marketing communications as planning marketing communications to communicate directly and indirectly with consumers to understand the brand as well as to create a good relationship with consumers. The methods used in unified marketing communications such as advertising, promotion and public relations and introducing various types of communications are combined to provide the clearest, coherent and most impactful communication through various information. Integrated marketing communication consists of 5 components as follows:

1. Advertising means providing information that is a motivational communication through various types of advertising media to motivate or persuade the target consumer group to behave in accordance with the content that is conducive to the advertisement to facilitate the purchase or use of goods and services. However, advertisers or sponsors are requested to pay for the media and the use of different types of media that can send to bring information to the audience thoroughly within a short period of time.

2. Personal Selling means a form of communication from the sender to the receiver directly and it may be referred to as interpersonal communication. The message sender will be able to recognize and evaluate the message from the recipient immediately. Selling by salespeople is a very important medium.

3. Sales Promotion is a short-term tool to induce the purchase or sale of a product. It is an incentive of special value that motivates a sales agency, distributor or the final consumer with the aim of for immediate sales or as a tool to stimulate demand, which used to support advertising and sales by using salespeople. It can arouse interest resulting in a trial or purchase by the final customer or other persons in distribution channels.

4. Public relations is the communication of the organization with various groups that affect the success of the organization. Whether it is a seller of production factors, shareholders or customers, with the objective of creating a good attitude, belief and image for the organization or product, as well as to educate on a particular subject or correct any errors in any matter.

5. Direct Marketing means the company communication to the target customers directly in order to receive a response or purchase a product. Direct marketing is not just about direct mailing or order catalogs, but involves a wide range of activities including database management, direct sales, telemarketing and direct response advertising through direct mail marketing, the Internet and other print or television media. Some companies do not use other marketing channels other than independent sales channels to sell products directly to their customers.

Related Works

Related research was used to define the conceptual framework and research hypothesis. The research of Chaiprasit (2012) studied the influence of reference groups on purchasing decisions of men's makeup in Bangkok. The hypothesis testing showed that the marketing communication tools in the form of product display were classified as the activities that influenced the purchasing decision of the highest consumers, followed by direct marketing activities, public relations, personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and the use of mobile media, respectively. In addition, Thongrod (2012) conducted a study on perception of integrated marketing communication that affects the purchasing behavior of cosmetic makeup of adolescent girls in Bangkok. The results of the LISREL corroborative component analysis revealed that the perception of integrated marketing communication affecting the purchasing behavior of cosmetic makeup of adolescent girls in Bangkok which depends on advertising, promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, and public relations, respectively. Thanacharoenkit (2017) studied factors affecting consumer's buying decisions of facial cream in Bangkok Metropolis. The results found that gender age and education had affected to purchase a product which different. The differences of gender effected a property featured the cream absorbs quickly, age effected required to staff with knowledge which different, and the differences of education was affected the decide on price and quality of different. Including a study by Thanusin and Sawang (2021) on integrated marketing communication and brand image affecting consumer buying decision of Eucerin cosmeceutical skincare in Bangkok. The results of the study found that demographic factors such as gender, age, educational level, occupation, marital status and income differently influenced consumers' decision to purchase cosmetic products in Bangkok. The factors of integrated marketing communication were sales by employees, public relations, direct marketing, and the promotion aspect affects the decision to buy cosmetic products of consumers in Bangkok. As well as, brand image factors such as attitude aspect, benefit aspect, brand association aspect, and attributes aspect affecting consumers' decision to purchase cosmetic products in Bangkok with a statistically significant level of 0.05.

From the literature review, concepts, theories and related research, it can be concluded that online marketing innovation consisting of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth have influenced the satisfaction of purchasing through social media platform. The theoretical and related work mentioned above were used to model the relationship model of the variables in this study as illustrated in the research conceptual framework.

METHODS

The population and sample consisted of consumers who have used and are using cosmeceutical products living in Bangkok, which the exact number is unknown. Therefore, the sample size was determined by using Cochran's sample size formula (1977) by specifying a confidence level of 95%. The sample size was 385 people, but the researcher increased it to 400 people to prevent mistakes and then multi-stage sampling method was used.

In this study, the researcher created a questionnaire as a tool, by studying theories, concepts, thesis paper and related research as a guideline for creating a questionnaire to cover what needs to be researched. Checking the quality of the tool by taking the questionnaire created and revised to find the confidence of the questionnaire using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. It is determined that the reliability of the alpha coefficient should be greater than 0.7 or greater than 70.00% to be considered reliable. The values are between 0.841 and 0.956, indicating that this questionnaire has a reliability that can be applied to the sample group. In this regard, the researcher has analyzed the conformity index and the IOC value of all questions exceeds 0.6, so it can be used as a questionnaire. The statistics used in the data analysis are descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics was used to test research hypotheses by using Independent Sample t-Test, One-Way ANOVA, and Multiple Regression Analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive results

The results of the research can be concluded that the sample group is consumers who have used and are using cosmeceutical products living in Bangkok, total of 400 samples. Most of them are female, age between 31-40 years old, marital status, educational level at the bachelor's level, worked as employees of private companies, monthly personal income between 30,001-45,000 baht.

The results of the analysis of the integrated marketing communication factors revealed that the integrated marketing communication factors affecting the purchasing decision of the consumer's cosmeceutical products in Bangkok. Overall, it's at a high level, sales by employees were at a high level, followed by advertising and direct marketing, promotion and public relations, respectively.

The results of the analysis of brand image factors was found that brand image factors affecting consumers' decision to purchase cosmeceutical products in Bangkok, the overall level was at a high level. The aspect of brand attributes was at the high level, followed by brand identity aspect, benefit aspect, attitude aspect, brand association preferences aspect and the strength of brand linkage aspect, respectively.

Hypothesis testing results

The hypothesis testing on demographic factors revealed that gender, age, educational level, occupation, marital status and income differently affect consumers' decision to purchase cosmeceutical products in Bangkok. It was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The hypothesis testing results showed that sales by employees, public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing had a statistically significant effect on consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products at 0.05 level with a predictive power of 63.9 percent. The predictors with the highest multiple regression coefficients were sales by employees ($\beta=0.357$), followed by direct marketing ($\beta=0.226$), public relations ($\beta=0.209$), and sales promotion ($\beta=0.184$), respectively. Whereas the factors that did not affect consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products was the aspect of advertising which is inconsistent with the research hypothesis.

The hypothesis testing results of brand image affecting consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products showed that sales by employees, direct marketing, public relations, and sales promotion had a statistically significant effect on consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products at 0.05 level with a predictive power of 49.28 percent. Whereas the factors that did not affect consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products was the strength of brand linkage which is inconsistent with the research hypothesis. The predictors with the highest multiple regression coefficients were brand identity aspect ($\beta=0.243$), followed by brand attributes ($\beta=0.201$), attitude ($\beta=0.198$), benefits ($\beta=0.171$) and brand association preferences ($\beta=0.155$), respectively.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Conclusion and discussion

The results of hypothesis testing on demographic factors revealed that gender, age, educational level, occupation, marital status and income differently affect consumers' decision to purchase cosmeceutical products in Bangkok. This is because most consumers are now paying more attention to health care and focusing on taking care of themselves in terms of appearance, personality, and also paying attention to beauty in order to have a good personality and to build self-confidence. Individual characteristics that are separated into different groups will have different skin care needs, for example, people with an older age will have more skin and facial problems or each occupation has a variety of work characteristics and occupations that require communication with other people or working with other people. Therefore, the need to take care of one's own skin and facial skin is important, as well as different ages and educational levels show the body of knowledge, life experience, analytical thinking differentiate things, the ability to access information, and apply it in different ways of living and making decisions in order to find the best and suitable things for themselves in different ways. This is in line with the research of Thanusin & Sawang (2021) and Thanacharoenkit (2017) which the study found that different demographic characteristics affect the purchasing decision of skin care products of consumers in Bangkok area differently.

The results of hypothesis testing on integrated marketing communication factors was found that most of the respondents gave the most importance to sales by salesperson aspect. This is because employee sales were a two-way process of communicating with consumers. Therefore, sales by salesperson are able to give advice on skin

problems or defects on the face and recommend cosmeceutical products according to consumer expectations in an instant and comprehensive manner, as well as customers trust more than other integrated marketing communications. Belch et al. (2005) also discussed that demographic factors are the basic characteristics that marketers take account for market segmentation because the characteristics of consumer can be clearly seen. This is consistent with the research of Khumsup (2012) found that the integrated marketing communication factor in the aspect of sales by salesperson affect buying behavior of cosmeceutical products.

The results of hypothesis testing on brand image factors affecting consumer buying behavior of cosmeceutical products revealed that most of the respondents gave the most importance to brand associations aspect. This is because after consumers have used cosmeceutical products, consumers are satisfied due to cosmeceutical products able to meet their needs and expectations until they are favored and delivered consistently affecting buying behavior. This is in line with the research of Thanusin & Sawang (2021) studying the topic of integrated marketing communication and brand image affecting consumer buying decision of Eucerin cosmeceutical skincare in Bangkok, the result was found that the favor factor of brand linking influencing the brand image of a cosmetic product. As well as, the research of Tangpradit (2017) studying the topic of building brand value through brand personality brand image influencing facial cosmetic purchasing behavior in Thailand, the results showed that brand image in the aspect of brand attributes has a positive effect on the perception of the brand's value which directly affects the buying behavior of consumers. The brand will be able to expand the customer base wider. able to meet the needs of consumers and reach the target group clearly (Aaker, 2010).

Recommendations and future work

Recommendations obtained for applying the research results were that entrepreneurs are able to use the research findings as supplementary information in formulating and creating marketing strategies as a guideline for market segmentation based on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education level, occupation, marital status, and different income of target customers. In addition, from the results of integrated marketing communication factors, entrepreneurs should focus on employee sales, which must focus on training salespeople to be active and willing to present attractive cosmeceutical products. It should focus on encouraging employees to have good human relations and developing salespeople to be able to give advice on skin problems and be able to recommend products that meet customers' needs. Moreover, from the results of brand image factors, entrepreneurs should focus on the identity of the brand linkage because most consumers buy cosmeceutical products based on their outstanding properties/benefits. Therefore, entrepreneurs should focus on research, development, and product performance testing in order to ensure the safest and most effective products. As well as, packaging should be designed to be attractive and suitable for different product groups in order for consumers to be able to distinguish each product group. Including the issue of product development to have features and benefits that are outstanding and clearly visible in order to create a unique identity and create strengths for cosmeceutical products.

For further research should be studied in conjunction with other relevant or expected factors influencing buying behavior in order to gain more insights covering all dimensions. In addition, it should study in other population groups or other areas to get wider and more comprehensive information and compare the differences of each area.

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