

CAN MARKETING PROPOSITION BASED ON VALUES IN THAI SOCIETY AFFECT CONSUMERS' FEELING?

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ABSTRACT

This paper study positive relationship between important levels of value factors in Thai society and overall effect on psychological feeling such as confidence and less anxiety. Data of 198 samples were collected from Thai citizen in city center area of Phuket. Inferential statistics were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. The analysis found that each type of value factor had different positive effect to the overall effect on psychological feeling. Face factors ($\beta = 0.225$), family factors ($\beta = 0.054$), friendship factors ($\beta = 0.117$), fortune factors ($\beta = 0.275$) and future benefit factors ($\beta = 0.207$) affect the overall effect at the statistical significance level of 0.01 with 37.9% predictive power and a predicted error of 0.578. Therefore, generating marketing propositions based on these values should be crucial to media, especially nowadays less controlled online channel.

Keyword: Thai value; marketing proposition; communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, Thai style marketing was mentioned in marketing and business magazines. Later, it also appeared in some academic and textbook for undergraduate students in Thailand.



The concepts were originally from a sale manager, and later were detailed and made well-known by [1] as 4F “Thai style marketing”, which indeed capture a lot of attention from marketing practitioners and lecturers for some time but not long. The reason for this might be that it cannot be fitted in to marketing concepts such as 4P and STP. However, it is hard to ignore, because the concept seems to go along well with what going on in Thai society. There have been many evidences of marketing practices of business projects related to the 4F concepts for the past twenty years such as luxury marketing, family value marketing, friendship marketing and faith marketing. Many marketing propositions have referred to them in media, prints and online channel to capture consumers’ attention. Values and beliefs are a part of culture generated by human being living in a society. Some people which cannot avoid behaving in accordance with values and beliefs of their living society, could result in anxiety, worriedness and lack of confident psychologically. In the opposite way, one person can expect or feel intangible benefits in return from the way other people respond to them when one conforms to value, norm and belief in own culture. Therefore, filling a gap or making a link between marketing mix theories and Thai style marketing in practice should be made in order to educate marketing learners and practitioners similar to what McCarthy did for 4P [2] and others did for 7P and 10P.

1.1. Modification to Marketing Mix

In fact, the direction of this modification to marketing mix concept is not totally new from nowhere. The answer of modification is actually hidden in marketing principles such as Kotler’s ‘value creation’ and ‘potential product’ [3]. Furthermore, in [4] also mention to the factors affecting consuming behavior model such as social factors including reference group, family, social role and status can also affect consumers’ decisive thinking and action on a certain product. If marketing planners understand what their customers really want for their product to benefit psychologically, they can simply use what marketing guru have given us so far in generating marketing plans. But, learners with less experience of consumers’ behavior in any particular market may need to be given a clear point for strategic analyses. This means putting a new P to traditional marketing mix 4P or the other P concepts if appropriate. The research could provide a new link between Thai style marketing and marketing mix strategy by transforming them to a new fifth marketing mix factor called “Psychological benefit”. By

doing this, a marketer plans to connect or link effectively an intangible benefit of product to customers' beliefs and values in their mind or perception by generating marketing proposition for the linkage. Once a customer buys and use the product in accordance to his/her value or beliefs, it should reduce his/her worriedness and anxiety or even increase his/her self confidence in their living. The outcome of this process is the generation of Psychological benefit to customers. Marketing planners should come up with a set of proposed statement related to consumers' value and beliefs for the fifth marketing mix. This is similar to what marketers have to do with four other P for launching and managing every product to suit desire of targeted consumers.

1.2. 4F Thai Style Marketing

The researcher was aware of the knowledge gap between product's value creation and psychological benefit. And how could psychological benefit relate to the values and beliefs in Thai society? Therefore, the focus is to study and analyze document, theoretical concepts in management and marketing that can be used to build a framework for the research. The aim of the study is to achieve a broad perspective enhancing knowledge of psychological benefit by applying Thai style marketing concept consisting of belief and value factors of Thai consumers. In [1] gave these beliefs and values in the form of '4F' due to the behavior of Thais in seeing these importantly in their mind and way of life. Four F factors are consisting of: 1. 'Face' means enhancing feeling proud of oneself or own look or given priority and reputation 2. 'Friend' refers to enhancing friendship or similar attitude among friends or group member. 3. 'Family' means enhancing family love and warmth. 4. 'Fortune' means enhancing belief in superstition. The concept was presented in almost the same way as the marketing mix [5] or 4P [2], but cannot be linked to the concept of the marketing mix, Therefore, it has not been widely known internationally. The exploration of concepts and practices over the Thai style marketing revealed more evidences and suggest a new value factor, which can be described as follows

Beliefs on face (fame or looks) were defined as creditability, faithfulness and reputation in Chinese cultural values according to [6]. There was also a term 'Face maintenance' [7] or 'Family Face' [8] being studied on the influence of cultural values. Therefore, the term 'Face' must have been known and interested by researchers on Asian culture. On marketing practices

there were evidences in press. For example, the construction of large entrance or doors of expensive housing projects was in order to emphasize the reputation or personal image which affects the social appearance of the residents [9]. Another example is the image of educational business institutions that affects the social appearance of the students [10]. Social status and honor were also found and affect consumers' decision in purchasing products [11] and services from other businesses, such as food, clothing, birthday parties, a cremation and wedding ceremonies as called "Status consumption" [11].

Beliefs on fortune there are still many entrepreneurs and scholars who bring these beliefs and superstitious into line with modern or contemporary innovations of products and services. By enhancing the perception of a psychological value to consumers in accordance with widely accepted belief in a niche or particular consumer market. The commercial usage of knowledge called "Zodiac product concept" was evidenced as a patent in the US according to [12]. There was also a research [13] on "Astrology: Its Influence on Consumers' Buying Patterns and Consumers' Evaluations of Products and Service...a survey of 239 college student subjects, we find that odd (e.g., Aries, Gemini) and non-water (e.g., Leo, Virgo) signs are positively associated with consumers' impulsive buying tendencies. The results also suggest that consumers born under water signs (e.g., Cancer, Scorpio) are more likely to show favorable evaluations of services than are those with non-water signs". Another research [14] on the role of various superstitious beliefs in consumers' information processing and evaluation of brand logos show the importance of superstitious beliefs to psychological feeling of consumer as a practical implication that "Marketers should study and understand consumer superstition when attempting to build consumer-friendly, culturally-robust, and trouble-free brands in the marketplace". There also have been many evidences came out from Thai researches, for example, the beliefs and behavior of buying jewelry matching the birth zodiac of people in the Bangkok by [15]. The result show consumer's beliefs are related to the behavior of buying jewelry in matching the zodiac sign of people's birthdate in Bangkok. The research found that the belief of consumers has a relationship with the person involved in the decision making to buy jewelry that matches the birth sign. Also, the consumer's beliefs are correlated with the number of times a jewelry-related gemstone is purchased per year. Furthermore, the study of capital and space: A case study of the formation of the five row talisman in Bangkok by [16]

found the five-row talisman can reflect the beliefs of believers in the Talisman, for security, business or career advancement, protection of travel dangers, economic security, beauty and so on. By understanding these meanings, they reflect on the way people live in the modern society. Due to the fact that living in competition is a part of the modern world of capitalism with unstable life in various occupation. As a result, tattoos and fetishes have become a significant contributor to the way people live again. Thus, it can be said that these findings are consistent with the results of our previous pilot study. It is enough to conclude that the beliefs of Thai consumers from cultural foundations may change over time, but can also come back more or less into cycles, when people feel insecure in their way of life.

While, beliefs on friends and family does not directly be studied in consistent research. However, there are evidences of widespread use by marketers as follows. Beliefs related to family love and care affect many businesses to create marketing materials or proposition to inspire customers caring a family concern by spending on certain products or businesses such as food business, entertainment business and health products [17-18]. While faith in friends has inspired many businesses to create friend and friend campaign, buzz marketing, social networks such as search campaigns or add friends in the fan page by *100 Pipers* [18-19] and Kasikorn Bank [18-20] respectively. Moreover, the social media such as Line [21] where the product can attract consumers to communicate with friends as well as individuals in the family and in the same organization. It is an innovation that meets the mental needs of the people in Thai society to have the top users in Thailand. The beliefs and values exist in society in various ways. Products and services were created as a tool, which sometimes cannot prove its properties according to its specifications. But, it can reduce the anxiety of the consumer as a psychological benefit, mainly.

1.3 Fifth F Element

However, the concept of 4F seemed to ignore a recent appearance of a marketing proposition related to future benefit. For example, if there is a product or thing that its value can be higher return in the future, customers must not miss a chance to own it as investment now. Otherwise, he/she will waste such an opportunity in a life time to own limited edition of products. This kind of proposition also has impact to feeling of consumers living in the world with capitalism. It is a modern day value in Thai society. Therefore, final element "Future returns"

are sometimes understood or called to be a future investment. The beginning of widely exploitation of the concept is to emerge in the era of direct sales or network marketing, which often pits the success of individuals or money by stimulating business interests to gain followers. The phenomenon is widespread popularity of multi-level marketing business. Without real value products businesses can become aggressive and become illegal pyramid schemes or “endless chain share” [22] without real results or unsubstantiated earnings claims. It can be a marketing strategy that is at risk for lack of business ethics. Marketers must be careful when applying future return concepts to market proposition. The future benefit is needed to add into the research framework to be the fifth F of the Thai style marketing concept due to the importance level in social value nowadays.

The usage of these five F or types of marketing proposition have been widespread by entrepreneurs and practitioners in digital form. Internet access are now available through various types of platforms such as website, social media network, application' with multiply expansions. Entrepreneurs doing business via Internet are free to post marketing proposals that are not controlled and thoroughly investigated by the public sector. Therefore, entrepreneurs can create or try to create marketing proposals aimed at raising awareness to create anxiety or lure consumers. It can encourage a response to buy products and services or get involved, which results in making a purchase. The result of research could provide a new link by taking 5F factors of Psychological benefit concept to fulfill in a new marketing mix strategy. Therefore, the research framework of the study must be aimed to study the relationship between independent variables, including the face factors, family factors, friendship factors fortune factors and future benefit, and the dependent variables on the overall effect on psychological feeling of consumers in Central district, Phuket.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research has focused on values and beliefs of Thai consumers living in Phuket, where the population originally come from many different parts of Thailand and is considered to have lifestyle of urban area. The sample can be chosen conveniently in public places such as university, hospital and sport center. The questionnaire contained two parts. The first part consisted of demographic sample attributes such as a participant's gender, age, education

background and level of monthly income. The second part of the questionnaire was devoted to the key issues of the study questions regarding factors such as face, family, friendship, fortune and future benefit were measured using six items for each factor. Later, overall effect on psychological feeling (the independent variables) was later added using three items. Each item of these constructs was phrased in the form of a statement in measuring a participant's views on each statement. In all these measures, a Likert-type scale of 1-5 was employed. A score of 1 indicates "strongly disagree" with the statement whereas a score of 5 indicates "strongly agree" with the statement [23]. The respondents were asked to rate a list of 30 behaviors related to Thai social value classified into 5 groups according to the proposed research framework. The readability and the quality of the questions in the instrument was improved in the early stage. Early attempt to test the important level of these factors were implemented as follows. A preliminary research questionnaire was developed to gain empirical data from the population in Phuket Rajabhat University at the sample size of 225. The instrument was tested for reliability at the result of 0.8. The results of the preliminary or pilot study on the importance of Thai beliefs that affect psychological benefits through five elements: face, family, fortune and future returns. It was found descriptively that each factor has a significant level of importance. It is found that the sub-factors in each factor are important for purchasing decisions at medium level up. The overall average of each factor was at a high level as follow: Face at 3.49, Family at 3.61, Friendship at 3.63, Fortune at 3.42 and Future benefit at 3.45 [24]. The result can be concluded that sampled Thai consumers give importance to beliefs related to five different factors during their purchase decision making. Although, important level of these beliefs can be fluctuated throughout time or disappear from time to time.

Later, the questions on overall effect on psychological feeling such as confidence and less anxiety as the dependent variable which was also measured using three items, was added the questionnaire on the third phase of data collection. The respondent rated on a scale of 1 (not at all affected) to 5 (very much affected) [23]. A total of 33 items were assessed in the second part of the instrument.

2.1. Data Collection

Data for the research has been collected continuously by three major occasions. The first one was the pilot study with the data collection of 225 questionnaires conducted to lecturers and

undergraduate students at the Faculty of Management Science, Phuket Rajabhat University. Later, 243 questionnaires more were conducted in the university to weekend mature students. Finally, 198 questionnaires with added dependent variables were conducted at public places nearby the university, Central District, Phuket. The total number of individual respondents was 666.

2.2. Data Analysis

In order to explore the construct validity of the scale, EFA was carried out using a statistical program in order to group correlated variables together [25]. The EFA analysis of the draft scale consisted of 30 items were carried out on 666 combined data collection instruments and 198 data collection instruments. The result shows the same pattern of correlations among observed variables of independent constructs on both set of instruments [26]. All 30 items of independent variable had factor loading greater than 0.50. They were classified in to five factors or constructs with achievement of eigenvalues greater than one, which can be considered as significant. All 3 items of dependent variable on 198 data collection instruments also had factor loading greater than 0.50. The dependent construct with achievement of eigenvalues greater than one can be considered as significant.

Although, the higher number of 666 data case show better result according to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy at 0.924 and 0.852 for the 198 cases. However, both set of data with KMO more than 0.8 indicated that either of the sample set was adequate for factor analysis [27]. Bartlett's test of Sphericity is significant at $0.000 < 0.05$, which mean the variables are correlated in general. The data can be used for regression analysis [26]. Therefore, the similar outcome of the comparison suggested that the further analysis by regression could be able to be completed with the lower number set of data which had questions on dependent variables. Next, internal consistency reliability of each construct 198 data collection instruments was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha. The resulting alpha values ranged from 0.851(Face factor), 0.845 (Family factor), 0.843 (friendship factor) 0.892 (fortune factor), 0.826 (future benefit) and 0.873 (psychological feeling) which were above the acceptable minimum (0.60) suggested by [31]. Total value of Cronbach's alpha of all 33 variables were 0.916.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents on 198 data collection instruments were female at 71.2% with undergraduate education at 74.2%, aged between 21-40 years at 87.9% and household income less than 20,000 baht (USD 600 per month at 41.9%). The result of regression analysis by enter method can be reported as follows.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the value factors in Thai society

Value Factors in Thai Society	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level of Importance
Face factor	3.30	0.735	Very
Family factor	3.64	0.759	Very
Friendship factor	3.55	0.650	Very
Fortune factor	3.28	0.876	Fairly
Future benefit factor	3.44	0.669	Very
Total	3.44	0.502	Very

From Table 1, it is found that the value factors affecting is very high. Family, Friendship, Future benefit, Face and Fortune respectively.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of the factors on the overall effect on psychological feeling

Overall Effect on Psychological Feeling	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level Importance
Effect on general psychological feeling (worriedness)	3.67	0.800	very
Effect on self-confidence if comply with beliefs	3.52	0.792	very
Effect on purchase	3.46	0.841	very
Overall effect on psychological feeling factor (Y)	3.55	0.723	very

From Table 2, it is found that the general psychological feeling (worriedness) has the highest level of importance to consumer. However, all variables still very important.

Correlation coefficients between the independent and the dependent variables were tested by using the Person's Correlation Coefficient analyzed the value factors influencing to the overall effect on psychological feeling of consumers in Central, Phuket. Every independent variable had a relationship with Factor Y, so we can select all independent variables to be calculated

for regression equation.

Table 3. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of value factors influencing the overall effect on psychological feeling positively of consumers in Central district Phuket

Model	SS	df	MS	F	p
Regression	39.092	5	7.818	23.397	0.000 ^a
Residual	64.159	192	0.334		
Total	103.250	197			

a. Predictors: (Constant), m6e, m6d, m6a, m6b, m6c

b. Dependent Variable: mcc

From Table 3, the results of variance analysis of multiple regression analysis confirmed that the independent variables, including the face factors, family factors, friendship factors fortune factors and future benefit influencing the dependent variables on the overall effect on psychological feeling of consumers in Central district, Phuket. The significant value of the equation was found to be at 0.000 within the statistically significant level at 0.01.

Table 4. Results of the multiple regression analysis of value factors positively influencing the dependent variables on the overall effect on psychological feeling of Phuket consumers in Central district

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Coefficients		Coefficients	t		p-Value	Tolerance
	B	Std. Error	β Beta	t	p-Value	Tolerance	VIF
ma (Face)	0.221	0.063	0.225	3.510	0.001	0.790	1.265
mb (Family)	0.052	0.064	0.054	0.814	0.417	0.724	1.381
mc (Friendship)	0.130	0.077	0.117	1.691	0.092	0.680	1.471
md (Fortune)	0.227	0.051	0.275	4.430	0.000	0.842	1.188
me (Future benefit)	0.224	0.078	0.207	2.880	0.004	0.625	1.601

Coefficients^a

a. Dependent Variable: mcc

$R = 0.615^a$, $R^2 = 0.379$, Constant = 0.650

From the Multiple Regression Analysis with the Enter method, it was found that the independent variables or five factors had a fair relationship to the overall effect on psychological feeling with $R = 0.615$. These five variables can explain the overall effect on psychological feeling at a 37.90% or 37.90% forecast power, with a predicted error of 0.578. It was also found that not all value factors are significant at the level of 0.000 (Sig = 0.000), which mean that only three factors can predict the overall effect on psychological feeling significantly. The best predictor variable is fortune factors affecting the overall effect on psychological feeling with the coefficient of regression at 0.227. This is followed by the future benefit factors with regression coefficient of 0.224, face factors with the regression coefficient of 0.221. The friendship factors with regression coefficient of 0.130 and the family factor with regression coefficient of 0.052 did not have a significant influence to the overall effect on psychological feeling due to $p\text{-value} > 0.01$. The regression equation was constructed as follows.

Y (Overall effect on psychological feeling) = 0.650 + 0.221 (Face) + 0.052 (Family) + 0.130 (Friendship) + 0.227 (Fortune) + 0.224 (future benefit)

Multicollinearity checks were carried out by examining Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) or Tolerance or Eigen Value. The criteria of examinations are as follows: Variance Inflation Factor or appropriate VIF should not exceed 4. If so, the independent variables are correlated [28]. Eigen Value; if Tolerance < 0.2 (2012) or Tolerance < 0 [29] indicates the multicollinearity problem

From the results of Table 4, it is found that the lowest tolerance value is 0.625 which is not lower than 0.2 or the highest VIF is 1.601, which is less than 4. Therefore, the independent variable is unrelated or not encounter multicollinearity problem.

4. CONCLUSION

Finally, the research results from Table 4 showed that not all factors significantly influence the overall effect on psychological feeling. A significant relationship between the value factors in Thai society and overall effect on psychological feeling can be found at least 3

value factors. Although family and friendship factor have positive relationship, but both do not have a real impact on the overall effect on psychological feeling.

It is obvious that face factor, fortune factor and future benefit factors are positively correlated or influence the overall effect on psychological feeling of Phuket consumers in Central district. These factors seem to reflect self-sumptuous of consumers as hidden needs. It means that consumers give more importance to own concern rather than families and friends when it come to the overall effect on psychological feeling. Marketers, entrepreneurs and proposition designer could enhance building market proposition surrounding these beliefs and social value of consumers almost similar to the recommendation for the concept of “status consumption” [11]. Giving right information via marketing proposition related to self-interest or value such as fortune, future benefit and face should stimulate anxiety when a proposition match or suit a consumer’s hidden needs. Positive psychological feeling such as confidence, occur after the consumer response to the marketing stimulation.

On the other hand, the left out factors such as family and friend, should not be ignored from further study because both factors are given mean score at high important level descriptively. Although, both factors cannot obviously stimulate consumers’ psychological feeling such as anxiety, due to the regression analysis. There have been many usages of the concepts in marketing propositions of many products such as souvenirs and gifts. Both factors also be related the influence of interpersonal relationship according to the study of [30] on family influence and the study of [8] on personal taste and family face in luxury consumption. Future research could be conducted to generalize the concept and solve the matter on the factors. The statement of each variable for each factor in the research instrument could be adjusted and tested more at wider environment such as Bangkok. To suggest practical implication of the research, these values and beliefs which can be observed in various activities of Thai society should be used in the making of marketing proposition as another P (psychological benefit) of marketing mix strategy. Suggested academic advancement is to add the concept to marketing principle lesson and to monitor learners’ response to its application and benefit when they do a marketing plan.

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