

Business strategy of traditional Thai cotton dress for Generation Z on Mae Fah Luang campus by using Best-Worst Method

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Abstract

Wearing a traditional Thai cotton dress is getting popular, particularly among Generation Z, which has greater access to internet media than previous generations. It is inspired by online communities, soap operas, celebrities, and fashionistas. The study aims to determine which factors of the Marketing Mix (4P) consisting of price, product, place, and promotion influence the purchasing decision of Generation Z groups by using the Best-Worst Method (BWM) proposed for solving the issue of selecting the best strategy. The information was gathered from 400 students at the Mae Fah Luang campus. The results showed that the best factor influencing customer purchasing decisions is a product and the average weight is 0.3038. It shows the products that reflect the wearer's identity and it in line with current fashion trends are of the utmost importance. The second factor is price, which shows an average weight of 0.2817. Customers in Generation z focus on a reasonable price related to a limited income. Therefore, these two factors influence buyers more than other factors.

Keywords

Thai Cotton, Best-Worst Method, Generation Z Customer Behavior, Marketing Mix (4P)

1. Introduction

Nowadays, traditional Thai cotton dress is prevalent, especially in Northern Thailand, to show their ethnicity, and it is also known as folk wisdom which has been inherited for a long time (Pokepedia 2016). Due to the individual identity of Thai textiles. Cotton fiber is a natural fiber made from the cotton plant, and the process of making cotton fiber is to collect cotton balls and fabricate them into bags, hats, or traditional dresses. There are three main varieties of cotton. The first type of cotton fiber is Open-Ended Cotton, which has high tenacity and a low tensile strength due to its low grade, thus the lowest price (Indytshirt 2021). The second type, Cotton Semi, is machine-carded cotton that is softer and more substantial. The third type, cotton Composition, has the best grade and quality compared to Open-Ended Cotton and Cotton Semi (Dochia 2012). It is both the softest and the toughest. Thai cotton traditional dress is returning

to trendy since the mass period drama genre that has influenced the lives of Generation Z in many dimensions, whether the language, food, including Thai cotton traditional dress (Panich 2019).

Consequently, it could be an excellent opportunity to establish a business strategy for Thai cotton traditional dress in Thailand to meet Generation Z's needs. The Marketing Mix or the Marketing Mix are the preferred criterion for analyzing generation Z's consumer behavior and developing the business strategy by using the Best-Worst Method. The Marketing Mix, often known as a marketing management perspective, emphasizes four factors: product (e.g., design or quality), pricing (e.g., sustainable price or related to income), place (e.g., environment or accessibility), and promotion (e.g., innovative promotion). The Best-Worst Method provides the analyzed data to identify which factor is the most successful; this might have been determined by comparing the results (Reazei 2014). The compared and analyzed data can be used to enhance the business strategy. Generation Z was born between 1997 and 2012. (Pew Research Center 2022) Generation Z is distinguished by the effects of growing up in an "always-on" technological environment (Dimock 2019), and Generation Z is innovation-oriented. (Kaihatu 2020) Generation Z is always seeking the quickest Method of purchasing, including online shopping, with a greater emphasis on the best review, looking for the best price, high quality of the product, and having lower royalties than other generations. In addition, there are variances among Generation Z (Kaihatu, 2020), and they always choose products with designs that correspond to their lifestyle. The purpose of this study is to examine the customer behavior of Generation Z in order to expand the Thai cotton traditional dress business strategy on the Mae Fah Luang campus by observing Generation Z's demand based on Marketing Mix and using the Best-Worst Method.

2. Literature Review

The literature review of this study aims to introduce the topics which are significant to this study in order to build a basis for the reader and make them get an in-depth understanding of each topic. They include the topics of Thai Cotton; Generation Z Customer Behavior; Marketing Mix (4P).

2.1 Thai Cotton

Several areas of Thailand produce cotton and cotton-related industries. The process of cotton cultivation consists of cotton spinning by hand, cotton dyeing, and weaving by hand (Phoophat and Sukigara 2016) is cotton planting in the traditional sense (Delate et al. 2021). The cotton hand-spun yarn has different sizes and unique characteristics that will attract consumer groups, both the beauty of the lines and the fabrics that have different properties from machine-woven cotton. (Phoophat and Sukigara 2016). Then the production of textiles is divided into two forms: plain weaves used daily. And intricately woven fabrics for important ceremonies. The everyday fabrics are usually plain cotton woven in black or dark blue with orange or red stripes. Another dark cotton fabric is used for other purposes, shirts such as bags and blankets. The material used for ceremonies and special events is usually fine and delicate. For example, there may be a unique design at the bottom of the women's cylinder skirt with bright colours and intricately woven details (Utiswannakul 2016). Therefore, it is popular with Thais and foreigners. This affects the popularity of consumers who love Thai handicrafts of all ages and times. And the trend is to continue to increase (Karnchanapayap 2021). Generation Z has a growing interest in healthy and sustainable living. Grow organic cotton, for example, by reducing the use of irrigation water. Insect and disease control with organic matter, for example, has led to a massive demand for organic cotton products in the garment sector. This is the most prevalent (Tong and Su 2018). Cotton production has increased dramatically. Therefore, there will be more waste after harvesting and processing. Almost any part of the cotton plant can be utilized using these leftovers. This makes cotton waste both a valuable and low-cost resource because it saves from the existing production methods of recycling and reusing waste from the cotton textile industry (Derek 2017).

2.2 Generation Z Behavior

People born between 1995 and 2012 are Generation Z (Tunsaku 2020). People of Generation Z were born at a time when technology was being developed, and they grew up with electronic devices. Generation Z primarily uses their

smartphones for entertainment purposes. Which is referred to as electronic media, and generation z are related to one another (Pencarelli et al.2018). Therefore, Generation Z consumer behavior research focuses on internet marketing and client involvement. Investigate the platform and marketing approach that will impact Generation Z customers the most. The four main factors that help Generation Z decide on purchasing a product is the Marketing Mix (Marketing Mix) consisting of product, price, place, and promotion. Moreover, this Generation Z tends to have a solid ideas of their own, can analyze which motivations or opinions are helpful or not in online shopping (Tunsaku 2020), and has expectations and concerns about the experience. By buying more products and maintaining good service quality, Generation Z will feel they have benefited and had a great experience. Companies will be able to meet Generation Z and create value for their customers (Risca 2019).

2.3 Marketing Mix (4P)

Marketing Mix strategy (4P)for Generation Z in purchasing traditional Thai cotton dresses consists of products, prices, place, and promotion. Marketing Mix is a critical component of effective design products and the strategy to satisfy the demands of Generation Z.

2.3.1 Product

Each generation has a unique purchase motivation. However, consumers from the same generation tend to have the same perspective on purchasing decisions. For Generation Z (individuals born between 1979 and 2012), material quality and design would be essential first (Paakkari, 2016). To minimize waste in the long term, Generation Z prefers to rent or purchase second-hand products instead of first-hand purchasing. Moreover, Generation Z would buy a high-quality product that can be resold or used in the future based on their environmental conscience (Williams and Hodges 2020).

2.4.2 Prices

The reasonable price for Generation Z should be in the middle of the revenue of Generation Z (Kowalkowski 2017). Furthermore, customers would gain self-confidence in utilizing a product with superior quality and image if the price is higher than the competition since Generation Z is a brand-new generation with significant purchasing power that is substantially different from the previous generation (Rourke et al 2021). Therefore, it is essential to base the selling price on a comparable product produced by an established competitor. (Ouparamai 2021)

2.4.3 Place

Generation Z is the most app-savvy and web-savvy generation, engaging in most daily activities online. Generation Z would directly impact business strategy in the future (Risca 2019). Generation Z expects brands and businesses to offer promotions and product innovations through media platforms. Generation Z purchasing habits are essential for brands to manage, as Generation Z customers increasingly rely on social media that impact overall purchasing decisions. (Weiran 2021). It motivates businesses to improve traditional business models. From the conventional business model to the Internet business model (electronic/e-commerce business model), for example, Shopee. Online shopping tends to be more popular than before among Generation Z. As natives of the digital age, and Generation Z is very technologically oriented. Marketers should offer high-quality websites with attractive layouts and designs. Exploring product information on the website increase a pleasurable online buying experience. (Risca 2019).

2.4.4 Promotion

Generation Z This target audience prefers visual communication to older generations who communicate via text and look for creative content. They are considered the most concrete. Want immediate results and appreciate the brand's communication on social media, primarily through celebrities. They believe it is more reliable as Generation Z grows on the Internet. This consumer may have more persuasion among friends and family members when purchasing. Understanding consumer behaviors related to driving purchases is essential for brands to succeed (Elmira 2021).

2.2.4.1. Create an authentic brand identity

It utilizes brand identity to create value for the Generation Z audience and increase brand relationships. The brand might create value for Generation Z consumers with brand identity to build brand relationships. Reputation is a significant factor that determines brand recognition. Brands need to build their identity to address core values that can be misunderstood by the external ideology essential to the identity of Generation Z consumers. Generation Z's long-term loyalty and patronage will be determined by the companies that best reflect their fundamental beliefs and sense of identity.

2.2.4.2. Prioritize user-generated content

Generation Z behaves differently from other models related to the creation, consumption, and impact of user-generated online content, driven by a desire for identity and a commitment to individuality through opinion leadership. Generation Z draws a large portion of their trust from information generated by their peers, which is different from other generations that have been found to transfer trust based on brand-generated content on social media.

2.2.4.3. Micro-influencer advertisement

Micro-influencer (Micro-influencer has 500 to 10,000 followers) marketing positively affects the purchasing decision of Generation Z consumers. Creative and honest brand communications are the most effective. Micro-influencers are more trustworthy than influencers among Generation Z consumers. Hence, using micro-influencers to develop brand relationships among Generation Z consumers has been successful. Social media represent the Micro-influencer's personalization and interconnection of real-world experience with Generation Z. Marketers should build a communication plan that capitalizes on Generation Z's reliance on digital technologies and encourages the tendency to share videos and photos on social media.

2.2.4.4. Be creative and interactive

Promoting innovative and interactive content is essential and positively affects Generation Z. For example, gaming campaigns with mobile as a reward. In addition, Innovations that could attract clients of Generation Z by implementing an innovative marketing strategy on social media platforms to communicate with Generation Z is better. Innovation and interactions are key design features for communication strategy (Rourke et al. 2021).

3. Methods

This research investigates the factors which might affect the buying decision of Thai traditional cloth in Generation Z these days. This quantitative research conducts the study according to

3.1 Research design

In this quantitative study, data collection began with questionnaires. The questionnaire starts with generic questions about gender, age, education, and knowledge of traditional cotton textiles in Section one. Section two inquires about the Marketing Mix that influences Generation Z's decisions the most. In section three, we collect data from 20 individuals in order to determine Cronbach's alpha and analyze the reliability. And the last one we analyze the data by using the Best-Worst Method, as shown in figure 1.

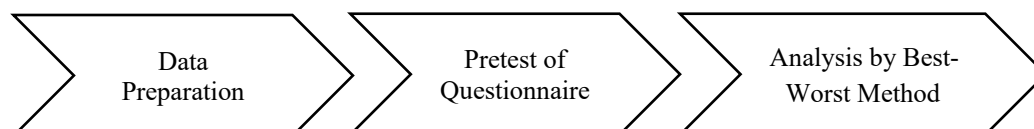


Figure 1. Analysis Approach

Therefore, researchers continue to collect data from 400 individuals using the Best-Worst Method to identify which component of the Marketing Mix has the most significant impact on Generation Z. Subsequently, analyze the collected data to implement the business strategy for Thai cotton traditional dress.

3.2 Sampling and sample size

From our study, we decide that Yamane's sampling method is the most suitable method for this research. Due to the quantitative method, it needs to have an accurate and clear target population and this paper mainly focuses on only students in Mae Fah Luang University or MFU which is 14,732 students. Yamane's sampling method identify our sample size by using this formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \tag{1}$$

N is the number of population (N) and the level of precision (e).

The acceptance of the level of precision at +/-5% or Confident level at 95%

Therefore, our sample size is equal to 400 participants (n).

3.3 Preparing Questionnaires

This questionnaire is provided in two languages, Thai and English. Mae Fah Luang University is an international university. Therefore, the survey will be distributed online using google forms. The questionnaire consists of 2 sections, the first section is general information such as gender, age and education, and the experience of using Thai traditional cotton cloth, The second section evaluates Marketing Mixes (4P) to evaluate the conventional cotton in Generation Z. Section two has fourteen questions using Likert scale.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha result

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Item/Component/Question | 14 |
| Sum of item of the variance | 10,9714 |
| Variance of the total score | 74,5730 |
| Cronbach's alpha | 0,9185 |

Table 1 show the result of Cronbach's alpha for pretest the questionnaire that collecting the small group of sample size from 20 people. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.9185, which means the reliability of this collected data is high. So, this data is reliable. The statistical values are between 0-1, and the criteria are more elevated or equal than 0.9 is excellent, higher or similar than 0.8 is good, higher or equal than 0.7 is good, higher or equal than 0.6 is questionable, higher or equal than 0.5 is poor, and below than 0.5 is unacceptable.

3.4 Best-Worst Method Analysis

Using the Best-Worst Method, a set of options is accumulated for a group of decision criteria to recognize and meet the desired underlying problem objectives. Two standards (best and worst) are compared with other measures to solve a minimax problem (Rezaei 2016). Then weights for the different criteria are developed. The best option is to propose a consistent scale to check the reliability of the comparison (Rezaei 2015). The Best-Worst Method was used in this study and investigated to understand the best and worst factors in Generation Z's decision to purchase the criteria of traditional Thai cotton. The Best-Worst Method is constructed to obtain the attribute weight vectors and consistency

test coefficient based on consistent results with less comparative information and a multi-criteria decision method. Then, multiple alternatives are evaluated for numerous attributes criteria, using the same process and obtaining options with different standards.

This research uses Best-Worst Method (BWM) to analyze the collected data. Because we can find the weight (W_i) which has the most effect on buying traditional Thai cotton in Generation Z in the criteria, in this case, using four factors consist of product, price, place, and promotion. Therefore, there are five steps in the Best-Worst Method (BWM).

Suppose there are n criteria and want to perform a comparison based on these criteria using a scale of 1/9 to 9, the result matrix will be shown in figure 2.

$$A = \begin{matrix} & c_1 & c_2 & \cdots & c_n \\ \begin{matrix} a_1 \\ a_2 \\ \vdots \\ a_m \end{matrix} & \begin{pmatrix} p_{11} & p_{12} & \cdots & p_{1n} \\ p_{21} & p_{22} & \cdots & p_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ p_{m1} & p_{m2} & \cdots & p_{mn} \end{pmatrix} \end{matrix} \quad (2)$$

Figure 2. pairwise comparison matrix

Where a_{ij} represents the relative setting of criterion i to criterion j , $a_{ij} = 1$ shows that i and j are of equal precedence, $a_{ij} > 1$ indicates that i precedes j , where $a_{ij} = 9$ indicates the importance of i to j . j to i denoted by a_{ji} , for matrix A to be reciprocal, $a_{ij} = 1/a_{ji}$ and $a_{ii} = 1$ are required for all i and j . Consider the reciprocal property of the matrix.

To obtain a complete matrix A , n is required $(n-1)/2$ pairwise comparison. It is considered fully consistent if:

$$a_{ik} \times a_{kj} = a_{ij}, \forall i, j \quad (3)$$

And try to make a better understanding of the so-called pairwise comparison, which, in fact, makes the foundation of our proposed method (BWM).

Five steps in the Best-Worst

Step 1. Consider a set of decision criteria. In this case about factor that effect to Generation Z decision buying of That cotton traditional cloth, so the decision criteria is {product (c_1), price (c_2), place (c_3), and promotion (c_4)}

Step 2. Consider the best and the worst. In this step, the decision-maker has to decide what is the best for them (most effective on the decision buying) and the worst for them (least effective on the decision buying).

Step 3. Consider all of the criteria over the best criteria by using a number between 1 and 9 in a matrix way, where 1 refers to the worst and 9 indicates the best criterion that is superior to other criteria. The resulting would be Best-to-Other (BO): $AB = (a_{B1}, a_{B2}, a_{B3}, \dots, a_{Bn})$, where A_{Bj} denotes the preferred alternative of the best criterion B to the criterion J . Thus, $a_{BB} = 1$.

Step 4. Consider all of the criteria over the worst criteria by using a number between 1 and 9 in a matrix way.

The result of this step is the vector of Others-to-Worst (OW) is: $A_w = (a_{1w}, a_{2w}, a_{3w}, \dots, a_{nw})^T$ where a_{jw} indicates the inclination of the criterion j , whereas W The worst criterion W can be inferred as $a_{ww} = 1$.

Step 5. Find the weighted (w_1^* , w_2^* , w_3^* , ..., w_n^*) for each criterion. And comparing them to see which criteria affect the decision buying of people in Generation Z the most. (Rezaei, 2014). For each pair of $w_B/w_j = a_{Bj}$ and $w_j/w_W = a_{jw}$. Therefore, to approach the most satisfying situation, we should reduce the maximum between sets of $\{|w_B - a_{Bj} w_j|, |w_j - a_{jw} w_W|\}$, and the problem can be formulated as follows: $\min \max_j \{|w_B - a_{Bj} w_j|, |w_j - a_{jw} w_W|\}$ subject to

$$\sum_j w_j = 1$$

$$w_j \geq 0, \text{ for all } j \quad (4)$$

Problem (1) can be transferred to the following linear programming problem:

$$\min \xi^L$$

subject to

$$|w_B - a_{Bj} w_j| \leq \xi^L, \text{ for all } j$$

$$|w_j - a_{jW} w_W| \leq \xi^L, \text{ for all } j$$

$$\sum_j w_j = 1$$

$$w_j \geq 0, \text{ for all } j \tag{5}$$

After calculating $(w_1^*, w_2^*, w_3^*, \dots, w_n^*)$ and ξ^L , the appropriate weight is obtained if the value of ξ^L approaches zero. Consistency increases, making comparisons more reliable. The results of the Best-Worst Method will be summarized as shown in topic 4.

4. Best-Worst Results Methodology

The collecting data was gathered through a survey of 400 respondents on traditional Thai cotton cloth purchase and wearing habits, which focused on four factors: product, price, place, and promotion. Using the Best-Worst Method to find the best and worst factor that affects Generation Z's decision to purchase traditional Thai cotton cloth to develop the strategy for this generation. From figure 3, The result of the Best-Worst Method shows the best criteria is a product, and the average weight is 0.3038, consisting of 3 sub-criteria: design of products, raw material, and product qualification. The second criteria are price with a weighted average is 0.2817, which consists of 3 sub-criteria: reasonable price, appropriate with income and appropriate sustainable price. And the third criteria is place the average weight is 0.2078, which includes 3 sub-criteria: an offline store, easy access and an electronic market platform. And the worst criteria is promotion, which has the resemble average weight is 0.2067, which still includes 3 sub-criteria: being inclusive, initiating creative promotion, being direct and advertising through different channels. After calculating $(w_1^*, w_2^*, w_3^*, \dots, w_n^*)$ and ξ^L is 0.1265, which represents the consistency of comparisons. It is very close to zero indicating highly reliable weights. (Table 2)

Table 2. weight of Marketing Mix

| Criterion | Weight | ξ^L^{**} |
|----------------------------|--------|--------------|
| Best Criterion: Product | 0.3038 | 0.1265 |
| Price | 0.2817 | |
| Cronbach's alpha | 0.2078 | |
| Worst criterion: Promotion | 0.2067 | |



Figure 3. weight of Marketing Mix

5. Conclusion

The research studies the purchasing behavior of Generation Z regarding traditional Thai cotton dresses at the Mae Fah Luang campus by collecting the data from questionnaires. Due to the rising demand for traditional Thai cotton dresses, we create the questionnaire about Marketing Mix (4P) to improve the business strategy in the future. For evaluating the data by using Best-Worst Method, the results indicate that the product is the most compelling element of the Marketing Mix for Thai cotton traditional dresses. Generation Z is most passionate about product design; they prefer products with a design that reflects their experiences, high-quality textiles, and a variety of sizes. The second practical component of the Marketing Mix is price, as Generation Z prefers to purchase Thai cotton traditional dresses that have suitable prices with the quality of the product, and the price of the product within their income since Generation Z focuses on worthiness. The third practical component of the Marketing Mix is Place; since Generation Z always seeks the most expedient means of acquiring products, conveniently, the online marketplace platform satisfies their requirements. The last practical component of the Marketing Mix is Promotion. Generation Z prefers straightforward, simple-language advertising and inventiveness while purchasing products. Furthermore, cooperative advertising is necessary. A sub-criterion of cooperative advertising is necessary for the part of the promotion in generation Z. Generation Z prefers to participate in the marketing campaign and satisfy the promotion. For future research, we focus on improving the quality of the product and the design along with controlling the low cost. And also setting the business strategy to create an online channel to sell the product and distribute the information on E-Commerce which is necessary for Generation Z.

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Biography

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