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**CUSTOMER ATTITUDES AND DIRECT SALES STAFFING
STRATEGIES FOR DIRECT SALES AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS**

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Abstract

The use of fertilizer to nourish the soil will yield high quality and quantity. It will add value to farmers. This article aims to review the literature and conceptual framework related to customer attitudes and direct sales staffing strategies that influence the decision to buy direct sales agricultural products. The results of the study revealed that there were significant variables as the followings: 1) customer attitudes contained knowledge, understanding, feeling, and behaviour, 2) direct sales strategies using direct sales staff consisted of knowledgeable employees, the service staff's clean clothes, polite service, humble and friendly service, good human relations management, cheerful, fast, and continuous service. Moreover, they must understand the needs of customers, and 3) the decision to buy direct sales agricultural products of consumer fertilizer consisted of information perception, problem evaluation, data evaluation, purchase decision and feelings after the purchase. The results of this study will be used as a framework for quantitative data analysis in order to find guidelines for direct sales business which they can apply the tested model to use to determine the appropriate marketing strategy.

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Keywords: Consumer attitude, direct sales strategy, customer decision.



1. Introduction

Thailand, where is suit for agriculture area, has natural resources covering with soil, water and weather factors. The number of population in rural area increase which affected to increasing numbers of planters (Foundwee, Chanlakkana, & Chanlakkana, 2004). Planters use area to plant for a long time which make soil decrease its quality or has a tiny of nutrient. Increasing production among that soil, it can cause the lack of nutrient. So, they should fill fertilizer in order to complete it (Chatjai, & Tansiri, 2012). However, fertilizer under brand Amway that come from product research and development team who focus on product that rely on climate change, such as more drought, weather change, soil lack of nutrient and decrease quality, without water resources, pests, and diseases as a main reason of decreasing production. It was found that fertilizer under brand Amway has quality to develop soil quality to plant and affected to quality of production and make highly income as well. Fertilizer under brand Amway is a product of Amway company of Thailand as a direct sale business which the consumers can order that product from direct agent by membership only (Amway Catalog, 2016).

This research studied attitude of the customers. Schiffman and Kanuk, (2010) argued that attitude or purchase that related with the research of Phuchampha and Yaowapa Phatomsirikul (2013) on title, Personality and Attitudes Affecting Consumer's Decision Making of Cosmetics Products in Pathum Thani province. This research result found that customer attitude (Assaraphan Puchampa, & Yaowapa Phatomsirikul, 2013) found that consumer buying decision consist of 5 stage which are need arousal or problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour.

Phrapatanporn and Wangkananon (2015) found that Marketing communication with direct sale staff who can provide clear information. And they can decide to close the sale immediately to get information to customers when the customer needs. It is important to create customer satisfaction that will that will lead to good image and customer loyalty, which is a good way for customers to buying decision.

1.1. Theory and concept on attitude

Manophamot, and Thongcheen (2013) noted that attitude was paradigm shift that affected to emotional and show that motion by action.

Jariwan Pholpanit, (2013) argued that attitude was inclination of learning that made behaviour with like or dislike to other one.

Schiffman and Kanuk, (2010) found the factor of attitude consist of the cognitive component, the affective component and the conative component.

From the research result of Suwanjamroon (2013) they found that Para rubber planters had attitude toward organic fertilizers in category of product, price and channel of distribution at good levels, whereas planters had attitudes toward organic fertilizers in category of promotion at moderate levels. Moreover, para rubber planters had different attitude towards on marking mix of chemical and organic fertilizers in category of product.

Pholpanit and Phatomsirikul (2013) found that attitude was inclination of learning that make behaviour both with like and dislike to other one while (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010) found that the factor

of attitude consist of the cognitive component, the affective component and the conative component. Manophamot and Thongcheen (2013) noted that attitude was paradigm shift that affected to emotional and show that motion by action.

So that, consumer attitudes mean satisfaction by the tendency to show. Out behaviour of a person interactive reaction to affect a person's positive or negative response to a person, a situation, and a situation in a person's environment. At the same time, the attitude will influence the behaviour and expression of the person. This research was studied the factors of attitude consist of 1) knowledge and understanding, 2) emotional, and 3) behaviour.

1.2. Consumer behaviour

Kaewkeaw and Saomuang (2012) noted that consumer behaviour was began with stimulating demand to the emotional of the consumer and then consumer was affected from any characteristic of the consumer and respond them.

Kotler (2000) argued on consumer behaviour theory consist of relevant factors from person who is in the target market?, What does the consumer buy?, Why does the consumer buy?, Who participates in the buying?, When does the consumer buy?, Where does the consumer buy? And How does the consumer buy?

Nameuen, Thamcharoen and Pongwichai (2014) found that Bio-organic fertilizers were bought from fertilizer shops or dealers near rubber planting areas. The respondents bought one or two tons of organic fertilizers which cost 10,000 - 20,000 Baht. They were bought twice a year and the high demand was in May and July. The respondents made decision by themselves to buy organic fertilizers because of the needs for improving soil structure, preventing soil loss and also increasing productivity.

Boonkwang and Boontue (2013) found that behaviour of planter in Buriram province on using fertilizer showed that the almost of the sampling always use organic fertilizer for soil treatment and they know information from radio television and agriculture journal.

Pholpanit and Phatomsirikul (2013) found that the theory of (Kolter, 2000) on customer behaviour consist of Who is in the target market? What does the consumer buy? Why does the consumer buy?, Who participates in the buying?, When does the consumer buy?, Where does the consumer buy? and How does the consumer buy?

So that, buying behavior refers to the behavior that is expressed in the search for a purchase this research focus to study consumer behaviour to buy directly fertilizer which are 1) target group 2) reason to buy 3) stakeholder to decision 4) time to buy 5) place to buy and 6) how to buy.

1.3. Buying Decision

Kotler and Keller (2012) noted that buying decision consist of 5 stage which are 1) problem recognition 2) information search 3) evaluation of alternatives 4) purchase decision and 5) port purchase behaviour.

Takaewnoi and Phuthamma (2017) found that he overall aspect of the factors of the agriculturists' final decisions on their organic fertilizer purchase was clearly found at a moderate level (= 3.37). Considering each aspect, 1 aspect was found at a high level and 3 aspects were found at a moderate

level. The highest mean of the factor was the products (= 3.74), the channel of distribution (= 3.36) and price (= 3.28). The lowest mean obviously found was the marketing promotion (= 3.04). The agriculturists who have the different age and educational level have indifferent decision on the organic fertilizer purchase in the overall aspect. However, the agriculturalists with different gender, planting size and the average income per year have the different decision on the organic fertilizer purchase in overall aspect with the statistical significance at .05 level.

Acharyaphota and Jaruthaweepolnukul (2017) aimed that 1) motivation factor perception, learning, consistency and attitude, personality and mind set are related with decision level to buy fertilizer of farmer in central region of Thailand, 2) culture factor and society factor are related with decision to buy fertilizer of the farmer in central region of Thailand, and 3) product factor, price, channel to sale and marketing are related with decision to buy fertilizer of the farmer in central region of Thailand.

Phuchampa and Phatomsirikul (2013) found that buying decision of (Kotler & Keller, 2012) argued that buying decision of customer in the market which are 5 stage consist of 1) problem recognition 2) information search 3) evaluation of alternatives 4) purchase decision 5) port purchase behaviour.

So that, buying decision means the buying decision process in direct sales. The decision to buy fertilizer from the direct sales business in Surat Thani province means that the customers have different decision making factors, the decision to buy goods from the popular market or product with ads. Customers with a high average order quantity will make the decision to buy from the product with new products, packaging, pricing and promotions, as well as orders from customers. Customers with a high average order quantity will make the decision to buy from the product with new products, packaging, pricing and promotions, as well as orders from customers this research focus to study the factors of buying decision on directly fertilizer consist of 1) problem recognition 2) information search 3) evaluation of alternatives 4) purchase decision 5) port purchase behaviour.

1.4. Strategy of using direct sales staff theory and strategies to use direct sales staff

Boonmak and Thepparat (2011) aimed that personal selling consist of: 1) staff know and understand on company product, 2) personality of staff with clean uniform of the company, 3) staff has service mind with gentle and humble, 4) staff has good relationship, and 5) service are rapidly continually and understand the emotional of customer.

Pichichatree and Kurit (2012) revealed that almost of the customers aware on marketing communication with systematically that in the holistic are at high level. When consider in each factor, it was found that the consumers aware in high level as well is advertising, marketing, direct sale staff but the middle level is marketing by activities.

So that, Direct sales strategies using direct sales staff means tactics or marketing tools, direct sales strategy services, using direct sales staff. Effectively, there is a standard. We are delighted to be able to offer our customers a new and exciting service in order to attract and impress customers. To achieve the objectives of the organization with targeted marketing this research focus on the factors for direct sale strategy consist of 1) staff know and understand on company product 2) personality of staff with clean uniform of the company 3) staff has service mind with gentle and humble 4) staff has good relationship and 5) service are rapidly continually and understand the emotional of customer.

2. Problem Statement

From in-depth studied with direct sales representative in direct sale business and planter group in Thachana district, Surat Thani province, it was found that a lot of peoples in this area are direct sale and member of direct sale company that make them has more income. The problem was found that almost of the customers have bad attitude with the product of direct sale because they are worry about trickery and convince that make they do not want to interest in any goods production and it affected to can not sale any product. Moreover, customer behaviour was changed because of communication technology and logistic system are comfortable, rapidly and modern that make directly business has more competitor and also to diversity to decision. In addition, direct sale members of this company still without strategy that make reliability to the customers that make almost of the customer are not aware on agriculture product. especially, fertilizer that affected to decision.

3. Research Questions

This research studied attitude of the customers. Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010 argued that attitude are theory of trying to consume an attitude theory designed to account for the many cases where the action or outcome is not certain but instead reflects the consumer's attempt to consume or purchase that related with the research of Phuchampha and Phatomsirikul (2013) on title, Personality and Attitudes Affecting Consumer's Decision Making of Cosmetics Products in Pathum Thani province. This research results found that customer attitudes are important to customer decision. Moreover, Kotler and Keller (2012) presented the theory of buying decision. The decision of buying an item does not instantly take place. Behind the visible act of purchasing an item, stands a buying decision process that smart companies should investigate. Motivation, perception, learning, memory, personality, and attitude play an important role in the unfolding of the decision process that presupposes the consumer's covering of five stages.

Puchampa and Phatomsirikul (2013) found that consumer buying decision consist of 5 stage which are need arousal or problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour. However, researcher was aware on develop conceptual framework of buying decision directly agriculture product of the customer that study content of customer attitude and customer behaviour who aware on fertilizer buying decision of the customer.

In addition, study on the directly business strategy which is as important to direct sale and buying decision of the customers. It makes benefit for persons who would like to be a direct sale under the direct sale company. The productivity of planter can increase their quality of life and also to has benefit to direct sale owner business who apply this information to plan their marketing strategy in direct sale business of fertilizer.

4. Purpose of the Study

To create conceptual framework of the attitude and strategy of direct sale that affected to buying decision fertilizer product of the customer in Surat Thani province. Research methodology was literature review on theory and concept also to related documentary and cover with in depth interview with planter and administrator of directly business company to developing completely research in the future that would

like to study information from planter who use fertilizer in their plant and to study information from planter who use fertilizer in Surat Thani province by studying the quantitative research.

5. Research Methods

This research was reviewed on content that related with the objective cover with concept and theory, and in-depth interview with related business owners.

6. Findings

Figure 1 showed that conceptual framework and strategy of direct sale staff that affected to product buying decision on fertilizer product in Surat Thani province. The independent variables of the study are as followings: 1) personal factors consist of gender, age, education, income, and experience, 2) staffing strategies of direct sale staff consist of staffs knowledge and understanding on company product, personality of staff with clean uniform of the company, staff has service mind with gentle and humble, staff has good relationship, and service are rapidly continually and understanding the emotion of customer, 3) attitude factors consist of knowledge and understanding, emotion, and behaviour. The dependent variables of the study are as followings: 1) buying behaviour consists of target group, reason to buy, stakeholder to buy, time to buy, place to buy, and how to buy, and 2) buying decision consist of 1. problem perception 2. find for information 3. data assessment 4. buying decision and 5. emotion after buying.

The research result showed that direct sales staffing strategies for direct sales agricultural products were: 1) Strategy of direct sale staff which are (1) staff knowledge and understand on company product (2) personality of staff with clean uniform of the company (3) staff has service mind with gentle and humble (4) staff has good relationship and (5) Service are rapidly continually and understand the emotional of customer. 2) Attitude which are (1) knowledge and understanding (2) emotion (3) behaviour, and 3) Buying decision consist of (1) problem perception (2) find for information (3) data assessment (4) buying decision, and (5) emotion after buying.

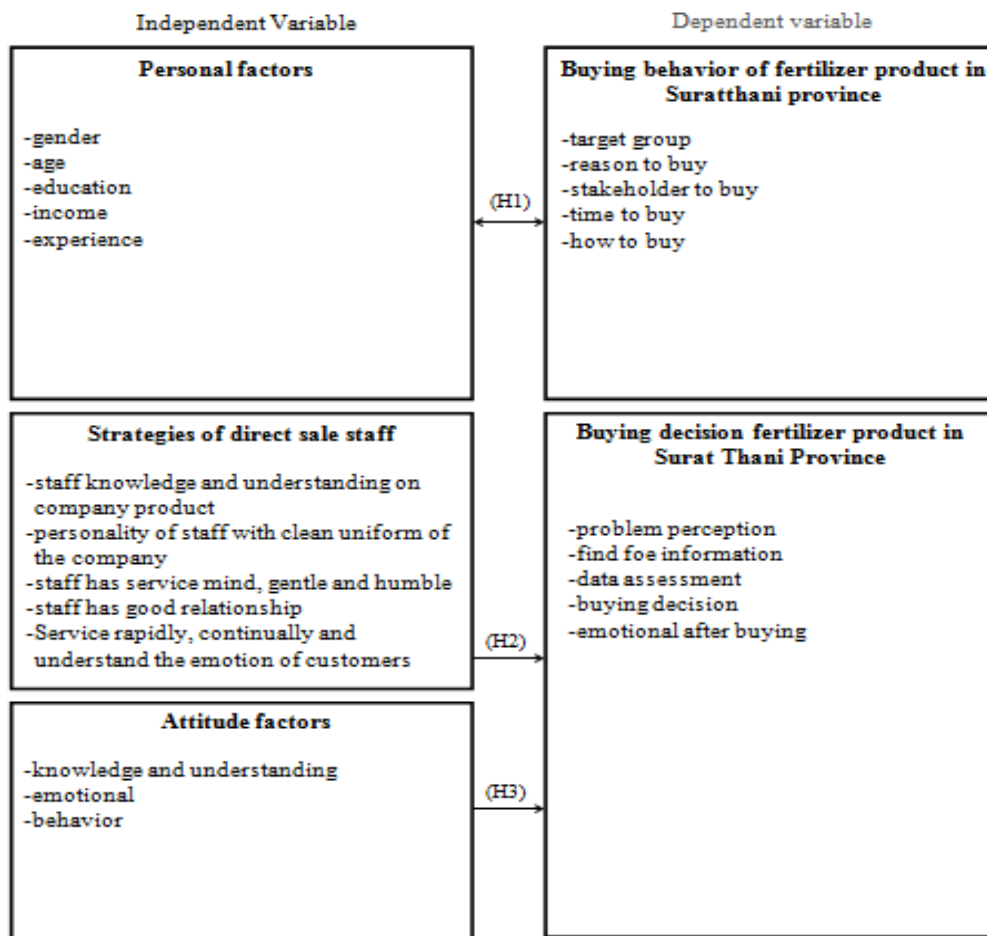


Figure 01. Conceptual framework and strategy of direct sale staff that affected to product buying decision on fertilizer product in Surat Thani province.

7. Conclusion

Conceptual framework and strategy of direct sale staff that affected to product buying decision on fertilizer product in Surat Thani province. Literature reviewed the related research as a framework and understood the main conceptual of the study. There are 3 parts of the study which are as followings: 1) Strategies of direct sale staff which are: (1) gender (2) age (3) education (4) income and (5) experience. The relevant factors are 1) buying behaviour consist of (1) target group (2) reason to buy (3) stakeholder to buy (4) time to buy, and (5) place to buy, 2) Attitude which are: (1) knowledge and understanding (2) emotion, and (3) behaviour, and 3) Buying decision consist of (1) problem perception (2) find for information (3) data assessment (4) buying decision, and (5) emotion after buying behaviour.

7.1. Recommendation for further study

This research just only creates conceptual framework to create the factor to study the attitude and strategy for direct sale staff that affected to buying decision agriculture product that directly are fertilizer in Surat Thani province. This research focused on fertilizer direct sale product in Surat Thani province only. Further study can be: 1) increase the population and sampling more, and 2) study external factor for directly owner business to apply the research result for plan marketing of directly business on fertilizer.

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