

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Comprehensive Research

Thai consumer buying behavior in products for children through social commerce channels

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-5289

Volume: 02

Issue: 05

September-October 2023

Received: 03-08-2023;

Accepted: 24-08-2023

Page No: 32-37

Abstract

The objective of this study is to explore the purchasing behavior of buyers for infant products via Social Commerce in the Mueang district, Surat Thani province. Furthermore, the research aims to study the factors associated with the buying behavior of infant products through Social Commerce in the same region. The sample group for this study consists of individuals aged 21-60 years, with children aged 0-3 years, residing in the Mueang district of Surat Thani and having experience purchasing through Social Commerce. Data was collected from 400 respondents using interviews. Statistical analyses were applied including frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Chi-Square Test. The research findings revealed that: The most significant group purchasing through Social Commerce is predominantly females aged between 30 and 40 years, with one child, engaged in private business and homemaking, having an average monthly income of 15,001 to 30,000 baht, where both parents are responsible for child-rearing. Personal factors such as gender, number of children, and average monthly income influence the type of product purchased, the person responsible for managing expenses, the value of the product purchased monthly, and the most preferred platform for purchase. The primary motivation for purchasing is the fear of the spread of Covid-19, followed by the reputation of the shop, relationships, and information presentation. Motivation based on trust had the least correlation with purchasing behavior. The study suggests that businesses should emphasize presenting interesting store information and cultivating relationships with consumers. Effective information presentation can attract consumers to view products, while good relationships can facilitate purchase decisions.

Keywords: Buying Behavior, Social Commerce, Children Product

Introduction

With the advancement of technology and evolving lifestyles, people's behaviors have undergone significant changes since the introduction of the internet. The internet now plays a pivotal role in our daily lives, encompassing communication, work, entertainment, and online business. Businesses have shifted from offline to online to align with the changing behaviors of consumers, enabling them to reach their target audience more quickly. A study conducted in 2021 by the Office of Electronic Transaction Development revealed that people spent an average of 12 hours and 5 minutes online every day. A majority of this usage was dedicated to online shopping, with 61.2% of the transactions taking place on the Facebook platform. Most consumers prioritize purchasing from platforms that offer affordable prices, value for money, ease of use, a wide range of product selections, secure and convenient payment methods, and appealing sales promotions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, consumer online shopping behavior leaned towards essential products that support daily living, nutrition, and health. Research showed that products for children ranked fourth in top-selling items. Popular purchases included diapers, toys, pacifiers, and other low-involvement products. Despite the pandemic and declining birth rates, the market for infant products remains high, as parents consistently seek the best for their children.

Data from Bangkok Bank in 2020 reported that the infant product market in Thailand was worth 40,300 million baht. In 2021, this market continued to grow due to modern parents' increased planning and budgeting for child-rearing. Consequently, families today are more prepared for the expenses associated with high-quality products for children. The demand for products that facilitate child-rearing has surged, especially as parents are willing to invest in anything that eases their journey. Additionally, modern parents tend to delay having children or decide to have them only when they are fully prepared. This shift results in an increase in the purchasing power in the infant product market, leading to higher sales per order.

Research Objectives

1. To study the behavior of purchasing products for infants through Social Commerce channels by consumers in Mueang district, Surat Thani province.
2. To examine the factors related to the behavior of purchasing products for infants via Social Commerce channels by consumers in Mueang district, Surat Thani province.

Definitions of Terms

1. Social Commerce: Refers to the sale of products or services through social media via Social Commerce channels. Nowadays, there are various channels on social media that can serve as Social Commerce, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tiktok, to name a few.
2. Consumer: Refers to both male and female individuals, aged 21 – 60, residing in Mueang district, Surat Thani province, who order products through Social Commerce.
3. Purchase Decision: Refers to the final decision of the consumer towards a product that best meets their needs.
4. Infant: Refers to a child from birth up to the age of 3 years.
5. Products for Infants: Denotes products specifically designed for children aged 0-3 years, focusing especially on the needs of this age group.

Literature Review

1. Online Purchasing Behavior

In 2020, Thailand had the highest online purchasing rate in the world, particularly during the outbreak of Covid-19. 94% of consumers purchased through online channels, and 92% believed they would continue to use this platform for future online purchases even after the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. 66% of consumers had bought products on social platforms, with Facebook being the best social commerce channel, followed by IG. The main factor driving consumers to purchase online is the ease of shopping.

2. Customer Data Analysis using the 6W1H Theory

6W1H is a tool for defining general target groups, consisting of Who, What, Why, When, Where, Who, and How. It helps to understand what we want to do, why we want to do it, and how we intend to achieve it. Analyzing consumer data with this tool can significantly enhance the efficiency of our information. It can be adapted as a strategy for Digital Marketing, resulting in better sales outcomes based on the

analyzed data.

3. Services in Social Commerce

Social Commerce refers to the ability to purchase products or services within social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LINE. As many businesses have already established marketing on these platforms, each platform has developed systems allowing users to instantly purchase products without leaving the platform.

4. Motivational Theory

Studies on consumer needs and understanding aim to push towards achieving objectives and outcomes related to societal living.

5. Technology Acceptance

Consumer acceptance of innovations and technology is known as the acceptance process, which discusses individual behaviors in society that reflect the acceptance and implementation. It is divided into 5 steps (Sunisa Pharatrasi, 2020): 1) ^[14] Awareness: The initial step leading to acceptance or rejection of an idea. 2) Interest: The phase where one begins to take interest and seeks more details, gaining knowledge about new methods. 3) Evaluation: A stage where one evaluates the benefits of trying out the technology or method. 4) Trial: The phase where one tests to see if the results and benefits are as anticipated during the evaluation stage. 5) Acceptance: The step where, after trying out and realizing the benefits, one fully accepts the innovations.

6. Infant Product Market

While the number of newborns has decreased by 2%, the purchasing power per mother hasn't decreased but has increased. Factors influencing purchasing decisions of modern mothers include quality and safety, reliable information, product diversity, and price and value for money.

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach, collecting data from a sample group using questionnaires via Google Forms. The study uses purposive sampling, selecting specifically parents with children aged 0-3 years. The sample group for this study consists of residents from the Mueang district, Surat Thani province, who have previously purchased products through Social Commerce. Out of a sample size of 400 individuals, derived from Roscoe's formula, which indicated a sample of 384 individuals, the researcher chose a total sample size of 400 participants. This ensures sufficient and appropriate data for accurate research analysis. Statistical tools used for data analysis include descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and inferential statistics, specifically the Chi-Square test.

Research Results

1. Analysis of the Motivational Factors in Purchasing through Social Commerce. The study results are as follows:

Table 1: Showing motivational factors in purchasing products

Motivations for Purchasing Products through Social commerce	\bar{x}	S.D.
Motivation from Store Reputation	4.35	.618
Motivation from Store Relationship Establishment	4.35	.618
Motivation from Store's Presentation of Information	4.55	.555
Motivation from Trustworthiness	4.03	.606
Motivation from Sales Promotion	4.13	.637
Motivation from System's Ease of Use	4.67	.552
Motivation from Technology Acceptance	4.80	.444
Motivation from Fear of Covid-19 Spread.	4.53	.648

From the table 1, it is found that: The primary motivation for purchasing products via Social Commerce is the acceptance of technology, with a mean (\bar{x}) of 4.80 and a standard deviation (S.D.) of 0.444. This is followed by the motivation of the system's ease of use, with a mean of 4.67 and an S.D. of 0.552, and then the presentation of store information, with a mean of 4.55 and an S.D. of 0.555.

2. Analysis of Purchasing Behavior for Infant Products through Social Commerce.

From the research, it is found that of the 400 respondents from the sample group, the behavior of purchasing products for infants through Social Commerce is as follows: The products most often purchased by parents via Social Commerce are toys that promote developmental growth, accounting for 60%. The majority of the purchasers, or 95.8%, are parents who manage the expenses for purchasing

products. The main influence on purchasing decisions comes from family members, making up 59.8%. The majority of packaging chosen is twin-packs, representing 43.0%. The preferred method of payment is cash on delivery, which is 66.8%. The platform most used for purchases is Facebook, taking up 52.8%. The peak purchasing times are between 08:00 and 20:00, with 52.2% of purchases made during these hours. Most purchases via Social Commerce are made 1-2 times a month.

3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 suggests that personal factors relate to the behavior of consumers deciding to buy products for infants through Social Commerce channels of the respondents. The hypothesis was tested using the Chi-Square Test. The results are summarized in table 2:

Table 2: Chi-Square analysis of the relationship between personal factors and the behavior of consumers deciding to buy products for infants through Social Commerce channels.

Consumer Behavior	Personal Factors											
	Gender		Age		Number of Children		Occupation		Average Income Per Month		Person Responsible for Childcare	
	Chi-square	Sig.	Chi-square	Sig.	Chi-square	Sig.	Chi-square	Sig.	Chi-square	Sig.	Chi-square	Sig.
Products Selected through Social Commerce												
Baby Bottles and Nipples	.590	.443	.423	.810	.966	.326	5.285	.071	2.66	.875	1.034	.596
Diapers, Infant Clothing	2.466	.116	1.461	.482	1.019	.313	.106	.949	7.367	.025*	.105	.949
Ready-to-use Diapers	11.131	.001*	16.817	.000*	1.937	.164	5.348	.069	7.305	.026*	2.530	.282
Developmental Toys	5.266	.022*	2.462	.292	7.395	.007*	6.588	.037*	2.205	.332	3.490	.175
Wet Wipes, Powder, Wheat, Cotton Buds	.391	.532	1.962	.375	.289	.591	1.578	.454	.906	.636	2.782	.249
Car Seats, Baby Strollers, Baby Cribs	.351	.554	2.195	.334	.004	.950	4.346	.114	1.509	.470	4.488	.106
Infant Formula	.802	.371	1.222	.543	2.947	.086	1.180	.554	4.207	.122	1.382	.501
Baby Bottle Sterilizers	.005	.942	5.128	0.77	1.585	.208	8.554	.014*	2.051	.359	1.118	.572
Products for Cleaning Baby Bottles and Nipples	.111	.739	.266	.875	.385	.535	1.378	.502	3.344	.188	.286	.867
Medical Supplies/Topical Medications, Mosquito Repellent Products	.161	.688	.314	.855	.825	.364	8.021	.018*	3.944	.139	1.478	.477
Body Cleaning and Skin Care Products	2.171	.141	1.365	.505	.091	.763	1.132	.568	4.152	.125	4.567	.102
Baby Laundry Detergent	7.597	.006*	2.195	.334	.861	.353	1.403	.496	3.716	.156	5.504	.064
Who manages the expenses for purchasing products?	7.038	.008*	12.114	.002*	4.742	.029*	3.198	.202	7.640	.022*	13.217	.001*
Who influences the decision to purchase products?	18.011	.000*	7.017	.135	5.978	.050*	2.727	.604	1.728	.786	1.812	.770
Largest packaging size of the product purchased per time.	5.452	.065	1895	.755	1.329	.515	4.010	.405	11.502	.021*	5.029	.284
Average value of product purchases per month	6.724	.010*	.606	.739	12.606	.000*	5.922	.052	16.587	.000*	2.470	.291
Which payment method do you use most often to purchase products?	0.70	.792	.338	.844	.106	.744	.183	.913	2.700	.259	4.090	.129
Which platform do you prefer to shop on the most?	35.281	.000*	13.301	.010*	20.569	.000*	9.114	.058	10.155	.038*	17.292	.002*
The most frequent time period you shop for products	26.834	.000*	4.576	.101	2.501	.114	10.224	.006*	11.664	.003*	5.833	.054
Frequency of purchasing products through online channels.	.278	.598	1.987	.370	7.781	.005*	1.324	.516	1.302	.522	2.240	.326

Note: Sig = 0.05

From Table 2, the results of the analysis on the relationship between personal factors and the consumer behavior in deciding to purchase products for infants through Social Commerce channels reveal that personal factors such as gender, age, number of children, occupation, and average monthly income have a relationship with the type of products chosen. However, the responsibility for child-rearing does not relate to the type of products chosen. Gender is related to the consumer behavior in terms of products chosen through Social Commerce, including ready-

to-use diapers, developmental toys, infant laundry detergent, the person managing purchase expenses, influencers in purchase decisions, average value of monthly purchases, the most preferred platform for shopping, and the most frequent time for shopping.

Hypothesis Test 2: The motivation to buy products is related to the behavior of consumers deciding to purchase products for infants through Social Commerce channels as responded in the questionnaire. The hypothesis was tested using the Chi-Square Test, and the results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Results of the Chi-Square analysis on the motivation to buy products and the behavior of consumers deciding to purchase products for infants through Social Commerce channels.

Consumer Behavior	Motivation in Purchasing Products							
	Reputation	Relationship Building	Presentation of Information	Trust	Sales Promotion	Ease of System Use	Technology Acceptance	Fear of Covid-19 Spread
	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Products selected through Social Commerce								
Baby bottles and nipples								*
Diapers, infant clothing	*	*					*	
Ready-to-use diapers								
Developmental toys	*	*				*	*	
Wet wipes, powder, talcum, cotton buds								*
Car seats, baby strollers, baby cots								
Powdered milk								
Baby bottle sterilizers				*				
Cleaning products for baby bottles and nipples								*
Medical supplies/ointments, mosquito repellent products	*	*	*		*			*
Body cleaning and skin nourishing products							*	*
Baby laundry detergent	*		*					*
Who manages the expenses for purchasing products?								
Who has the most influence in the product purchasing decisions?							*	
What is the largest package size of the product you purchase at one time?	*	*				*	*	*
What is the average monthly expenditure on products?								
Which payment method do you use most often when purchasing products?								
Which platform do you prefer to purchase from the most?						*		
What time period do you most frequently shop for products?			*	*	*	*		*
How often do you purchase products online?	*	*						

Note: Sig = 0.05

From Table 3, the results of the analysis on the relationship between the motivation to purchase products and the consumer behavior in deciding to buy products for infants via Social Commerce channels show that the primary motivation for purchasing mainly stems from concerns over the spread of Covid-19. This is followed by the reputation of the store, engagement, and presentation of information. Meanwhile, the motivation based on trust has the least correlation with the purchasing behavior.

Discussion

From the study on personal information, it was observed that the majority of respondents were female, accounting for 74.5%. This could be because mothers are typically more concerned about the essential needs of their children and tend to exhibit greater discipline in purchasing goods compared to males. Most respondents were aged between 30 to under 40 years. This age range is significant as it represents the

working age and career advancement period. It is also when most individuals contemplate starting a family and financial planning. This aligns with the concept regarding the decision-making process in purchasing products, based on the six reasons for trying Social Commerce. Social commerce is analogous to a marketplace with awaiting customers. Most social media users are aged between 18 and 34 years. This age group primarily spends its time on social media and online shopping. The majority have one child and their predominant occupations are business owners and homemakers. Their average monthly income mostly ranges from 15,001 to 30,000 Baht. This is consistent with the research of Amonwan Sri Thong (2018), where the majority of respondents were females aged 31-40 years, self-employed, with an average monthly income of 10,000 - 20,000 Baht, and most of those responsible for child-rearing were the parents themselves.

From a study on motivation in purchasing through Social commerce, it was found that the majority of respondents were primarily motivated by technology acceptance. This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, suggesting that technology acceptance is a factor leading individuals to various changes related to technology in three aspects: behavior, attitudes towards technology, and ease of technology use. Next in line is the motivation from the system's ease of use, resonating with services on Social commerce platforms. Many businesses are already marketing on these platforms. Consequently, each platform has enhanced their system to allow users to purchase products instantly without having to leave the platform. The motivation related to presentation of information aligns with McGuire's Motivation Theory, which emphasizes motivation resulting from observation through symbols, signs, impressions, emotions, attitudes, and the desire to emulate admired individuals. People tend to admire inspiring figures or celebrities and wish to emulate them. The fear of the spread of the Covid-19 virus is consistent with online purchasing behavior. It has been mentioned that in 2020, Thailand had the highest online shopping rate globally, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak. 94% of consumers made online purchases, and 92% still consider this method for future shopping, even if the Covid-19 outbreak ends. The motivation from a store's reputation and relationship is consistent with the research by Natchaphat Thonglamlul (2018) which states that word-of-mouth for online stores found that factors influencing recommendations for online baby products among modern mothers consisted of two factors: store reputation and reasonable pricing. The motivation in terms of sales promotions aligns with marketing stimuli. Stimulants in marketing promotions, such as discount promotions, giveaways, frequent product advertisements, etc., if marketers can understand consumer needs and can tailor marketing stimuli to match the desires of customer groups, can effectively stimulate consumer desire leading to eventual purchasing behavior. The least influential motivation is the trust factor.

From the study on consumer behavior in purchasing baby products through Social Commerce, it aligns with the analysis of customer data using the 6W1H theory to determine the general target group, consisting of: Who: Who are the customers? What: What do the customers want? Why: Why do the customers need to buy? When: When do customers purchase? Where: Where do the customers buy from? Who: Who participates in the decision-making

process? How: How do the customers make their purchase? Understanding these factors allows us to know what we want to achieve and why, in order to adapt them into marketing strategies. The predominantly chosen products are diapers, baby clothes, ready-to-use diapers, developmental toys, medical products/ointments, mosquito repellents, and baby laundry detergent. Typically, the expense management for these products is managed by fathers and mothers. The primary influence in purchasing decisions mostly comes from the family. This aligns with the concept regarding the purchasing decision process as a behavior where consumers consider selecting products, relating both psychologically and physically, over a certain period. These activities lead to purchasing behaviors that may influence others. The most common package size for a single purchase is usually a twin-pack. The average monthly spending on these products is less than 3,000 baht. The most frequent payment method is cash on delivery, consistent with the baby and mother product market which suggests that cash on delivery is the most popular payment method, followed by mobile banking, and then credit/debit cards. The most preferred purchasing platform is predominantly Facebook, aligning with the online purchasing behavior indicating that 66% of consumers have purchased on a social platform, with Facebook being the top social commerce channel, followed by Instagram. This is due to recent surveys finding that 81% of Facebook and Instagram users utilize these platforms primarily for buying and selling. The most frequent shopping time is between 08:00 AM and 08:00 PM, with the frequency of purchase being 1-2 times per month.

Conclusion and Suggestion

From the study of motivations to purchase products through Social Commerce, it was found that the primary motivation for making a purchase largely stems from concerns about the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The next major factors include the reputation of the store, the relationships established, and the presentation of information. Stores selling baby products via Social Commerce should prioritize providing compelling product information to attract and engage consumers. This will encourage them to browse and inquire more about the products. It is essential to be responsive, answer queries promptly, provide comprehensive information, and maintain a good relationship with consumers to facilitate easier purchasing decisions.

Upon studying the behavior of purchasing baby products via Social Commerce, the top five most purchased products online are: developmental toys, ready-to-wear diapers, baby clothes, wet wipes, talcum powder, cotton wool, and products in the milk bottle and nipple category. The data suggests that the most purchased items relate to learning and developmental stimulation for children. Following that are disposable products or those which require frequent replacements as the child grows, such as clothing and milk bottles. Marketers can utilize this data for promotional campaigns, creating engaging advertisements to inspire and motivate consumers to make purchases. Online purchasing behaviors primarily consist of bundle pack purchases through Facebook between 08:00 am to 08:00 pm, made by the age group of 30-40 years, predominantly women. This data can be employed to promote bundled or set products over individual items, making purchase decisions more straightforward. It also allows for targeted marketing on specific platforms to better cater to the new-age mothers and

fathers. Furthermore, the frequency of product orders is generally 1-2 times per month. This data can be combined with sales promotions to entice easier purchasing decisions. For instance, if the majority of customers place orders around D-day and Pay-day, this data can be utilized to enhance sales during these periods.

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