

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN HERBAL HEALTH PRODUCT PURCHASING AMONG THE ELDERLY IN BANGKOK

Duangsamorn Rungsawanpho
Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand
Email: duangsamorn.ru@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This research aims to study the purchasing behavior and demand for herbal health products among the elderly. It is a quantitative study with a sample group of 400 individuals aged 60 years and above residing in the top five districts in Bangkok with the highest number of elderly people. A multi-stage sampling method was used, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage statistics. The research findings revealed that the majority of elderly respondents in Bangkok purchase herbal health products because they are natural. They purchase these products twice a month, with health supplements being the most commonly bought type. Family members influence the purchasing decisions, and products are typically purchased from herbal product distributor stores. The expenditure per purchase is between 501 and 1,000 baht, and there is a high demand for products that supplement protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Purchasing, Herbal Health Product

Introduction

Thailand is currently transitioning into a fully aging society, with a steadily increasing proportion of the population aged 60 and above. This shift has brought about changes in various aspects of society, including the consumption behavior of health-related products. As the elderly increasingly prioritize holistic health care and natural products with fewer side effects than modern medicine, herbal products are gaining popularity. Studying the purchasing behavior of herbal health products among the elderly can help entrepreneurs and related parties understand the factors that influence purchasing decisions, such as the source of the products, perceived value and benefits of herbs, as well as confidence in the quality and safety of the products. Additionally, this research can help identify market gaps and opportunities to develop new products that effectively meet the specific needs of the elderly population.

Bangkok, as the capital and a central hub for the country's economy and society, offers a wide variety of access to information and herbal health products. However, the purchasing behavior of the elderly in Bangkok regarding herbal health products still requires further study to understand the factors influencing their purchasing decisions, as well as their needs and expectations related to the use of herbs in their daily lives.

Research Objectives

1. To study the purchasing behavior of herbal health products among the elderly
2. To study the demand for herbal health products among the elderly

Scope of the Research

The research population comprises individuals aged 60 years and above who reside in Bangkok's most elderly districts, namely Bang Khae, Bang Khen, Sai Mai, Chatuchak, and Chom Thong, with a total population of 190,651 (Department of Older Persons, 2022). The research uses a sample group of 400 individuals aged 60 years and above who reside in the top five districts of Bangkok with the highest number of elderly people: Bang Khae, Bang Khen,

Sai Mai, Chatuchak, and Chom Thong. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table determined the sample size. The variables studied include purchasing behavior and the demand for herbal health products. We conducted the research between January and August 2024.

Literature Review

Various factors influence consumer purchasing behavior, including personal factors like age, income, and education; psychological factors like needs, motivation, and attitudes; social factors like culture, family, and society; and economic factors like income and product prices. The buying decision process consists of several stages, from recognizing the need, searching for information, to purchasing and post-purchase behavior. Additionally, digital technology has impacted the transformation of purchasing behavior in the modern era. (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Consumer-centered product development is an important process that helps companies create products that effectively meet market demands. Understanding consumer needs in terms of functionality and emotions is a key factor in product design. Additionally, involving consumers from brainstorming to product testing allows companies to develop products that better align with actual needs. Utilizing insights and market research, such as target group interviews or surveys, is a method that helps deepen the understanding of consumer behavior and needs. (Ulrich & Eppinger, 2016)

Research Methodology

The population used in the research consists of individuals aged 60 and above residing in the Bangkok area, which has the five districts with the highest number of elderly people: Bang Khae with 43,440 people, Bang Khen with 38,353 people, Sai Mai with 37,557 people, Chatuchak with 36,954 people, and Chom Thong with 34,387 people, totaling 190,651 people.

The sample used in the research consists of citizens aged 60 and above residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area, specifically from the top five districts with the highest elderly population: Bang Khae, Bang Khen, Sai Mai, Chatuchak, and Chom Thong. We employed a multi-stage sampling method to determine the proportion of the sample from these districts. This resulted in a sample size of 92 individuals from Bang Khae, 81 from Bang Khen, 78 from Sai Mai, 77 from Chatuchak, and 72 from Chom Thong. We then conducted simple random sampling to achieve a total sample size of 400 individuals.

Three sections comprised the research instrument: Section 1: General information of the respondents; Section 2: Purchasing behavior of herbal health products; and Section 3: Demand for herbal health products. Three experts evaluated the questionnaire's quality for content validity, finding an average Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) ranging between 0.6 and 1.0. We assessed the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which came out at 0.87.

We used descriptive statistics, specifically frequency distribution and percentage, to analyze the collected data.

Research Results

The purchasing behavior of herbal health products among the elderly in Bangkok revealed that respondents chose herbal health products primarily because they are natural, accounting for 28.00%, followed by the reason that they can treat, relieve, cure, or prevent various illnesses, accounting for 24.50%. 44.50% of respondents purchased herbal health products twice a month, while 20.50% purchased them four or more times a month. Health supplements were the most frequently purchased type of herbal health product (29%), followed by herbal sauna, massage, and aromatherapy products (22.75%). Family members had the

greatest influence on purchasing decisions, accounting for 26.25%, followed by the respondents themselves at 25.25%. Herbal product distributors accounted for 22.25% of purchases, while online stores accounted for 22%. The expenditure per purchase was 501–1,000 baht for 45.50% of respondents, followed by 1,001–2,000 baht for 30.25%. The most desired herbal health products were those that supplement protein, vitamins, and minerals, accounting for 27.75%, followed by products for lung and heart health at 22.25%, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The number and percentage of herbal health product purchasing behavior

Herbal Health Product Purchasing Behavior		Frequency (people)	Percentage
The main reasons for purchasing herbal health products	It is a natural product	112	28.00
	It is a chemical-free product	74	18.50
	It is a product that reflects Thai wisdom	50	12.50
	It is a product that is safe	53	13.25
	It is a product that can treat/relieve/cure/prevent various illnesses	98	24.50
	I want to try something new	13	3.25
Frequency of purchasing herbal health products	Less than once a month	18	4.50
	Once a month	58	14.50
	Twice a month	178	44.50
	Three times a month	64	16.00
	Four times a month or more	82	20.50
The most frequently purchased types of herbal health products	Cosmetics, soap, lotion, skin care cream	70	17.50
	Health supplements	116	29.00
	Medicinal drugs	61	15.25
	food	62	15.50
	Sauna, massage, and aromatherapy products	91	22.75
Persons/Factors that most influence the purchase of herbal health products	friends	92	23.00
	family	105	26.25
	Famous celebrities	35	8.75
	Myself	101	25.25
	Product reviews	67	16.75
The most used purchasing channels for herbal health products	Convenience stores, such as 7-Eleven	46	11.50
	Herbal product distributor stores	89	22.25
	Supermarket	80	20.00
The most used purchasing channels for herbal health products (continue)	Department stores, such as Central, Robinson, The Mall, etc.	59	14.75

Herbal Health Product Purchasing Behavior		Frequency (people)	Percentage
	Small retail stores, such as community shops and grocery store	38	9.50
	Online stores	88	22.00
Expenses per purchase of herbal health products	Less than 500 baht	44	11.00
	501 – 1,000 baht	182	45.50
	1,001 – 2,000 baht	121	30.25
	2,001 – 3,000 baht	32	8.00
	More than 3,000 baht	21	5.25
Desired herbal health products to purchase	Protein, vitamin, and mineral supplements	111	27.75
	Relief from insomnia	63	15.75
	Relief from stress and anxiety	58	14.50
	Support for lung and heart health	89	22.25
	Relief from joint/bone inflammation	35	8.75
	Aid in appetite stimulation	21	5.25
	Aid the digestive system	23	5.75

Discussion

The purchasing behavior of herbal health products among the elderly in Bangkok revealed that most respondents chose herbal health products because they are natural. The frequency of purchasing these products was twice a month. The most purchased type of product was health supplements. Family members influenced the purchasing decisions, and products were often bought from herbal product distributor stores. The expenditure per purchase was between 501 and 1,000 baht. The products most in demand were those that supplement protein, vitamins, and minerals. Given that the elderly are increasingly concerned about their health, they place a high emphasis on product quality, taking into account factors such as taste, safety, health benefits, and value for money. (Prajongjai, Kortana, and Saisama, 2024) Additionally, to promote health, consumers avoid behaviors harmful to their well-being and manage their health by consuming herbal products to prevent illness. (Saensaew et al., 2023)

Recommendations

1. Manufacturers of herbal health products should focus on expanding their distribution channels, including both physical stores and online platforms.
2. To build trust and confidence, herbal health product manufacturers should communicate to consumers that their products are made from natural herbs.
3. Manufacturers of herbal health products should continuously develop new products, taking market demand into account as a priority.

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