

A SURVEY OF CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION:
A CASE STUDY OF JPM LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS CO., LTD.

A MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
CHAYANITT THANASANSOPHON

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University
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AN ABSTRACT
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This research aimed at evaluating the level of satisfaction of the customers with the distance-learning English language courses at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. The samples were 95 students and the research tool was a questionnaire. The data was analyzed by the statistical methods of percentage, mean and standard deviation. The research findings revealed that the students were satisfied with the JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. in terms of products, places, promotions and prices at the means of 3.83, 3.74, 3.50, and 3.43 respectively. However, at the time when this research was undertaken, most of the informants were studying at the beginning level and could not effectively self-study English on their own. The factors about clear explanations, friendly interaction with their personal tutors and technical support staff, as well as sales representatives indirectly affected the respondents' satisfaction and loyalty to JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd.

การสำรวจความพึงพอใจของลูกค้า:
กรณีศึกษาบริษัท เจพีเอ็ม แลงกวิจ โซลูชั่น

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
ชฎานินฐ์ ธนสารโสภณ

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
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ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ศิริริษา บุญยสงวน

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความพึงพอใจของผู้เรียนหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษด้วยวิธีการสอนทางไกลของสถาบันภาษา เจพีเอ็ม แลงกวิจ โซลูชั่น ที่มีต่อการเรียน การสอน และการให้บริการของบุคลากร โดยพิจารณาจากส่วนประสมทางการตลาด ซึ่งประกอบด้วย ผลิตภัณฑ์ ราคา การจัดจำหน่าย และการส่งเสริมทางการตลาด ทั้งนี้กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้แก่ ผู้เรียนจำนวน 95 คน เครื่องมือในการวิจัยได้แก่ แบบสอบถาม สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้เรียนมีความพึงพอใจต่อผลิตภัณฑ์ การจัดจำหน่าย การส่งเสริมการตลาด และราคา ในระดับคะแนนเฉลี่ย 3.83, 3.74, 3.50 และ 3.43 ตามลำดับ แต่เนื่องจาก ในขณะที่เก็บข้อมูล ผู้เรียนส่วนใหญ่กำลังเรียนอยู่ในระดับต้น และไม่สามารถเรียนภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตัวเองอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ดังนั้น จึงพบว่าปัจจัยเรื่องการจัดข้อมูลที่ชัดเจนของเจ้าหน้าที่ มนุษยสัมพันธ์ที่ดีของอาจารย์ เจ้าหน้าที่และพนักงานฝ่ายการตลาด ส่งผลทางอ้อมต่อความพึงพอใจและความภักดีของลูกค้าต่อบริษัท เจพีเอ็ม แลงกวิจ โซลูชั่น อย่างเห็นได้ชัด

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication Program and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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..... Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Associate Professor Chaleosri Pibulchol)

May, 2008

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

In business environment, customer satisfaction is one of the key concepts in order for an organization to succeed. Failure to recognize customer satisfaction could probably result in bankruptcy. Walker (1990) suggests that customers are the core for business organizations. It is essential to offer the products that meet the needs of the customers, either in quality, efficiency or personal service. Managers, therefore, must start to recognize that improving quality of their products or services to satisfy their customers' demand is not a matter of choice, but a priority of the organization.

In other words, ensuring customers' satisfaction is important to the long-term survival and profitability of a business and a key to a sustainable and competitive advantage.

Cochran (2007), an authority in customer service, confirms that business is nothing without its customers. He adds that understanding that an organization exists for no other reason than to meet customer needs and expectations is also needed to develop proactive methods for understanding the likes and dislikes of each customer. Generally, a long list of competitors is lining up and waiting for an opportunity to capture the market in order to satisfy these customers.

Customer satisfaction affects the company's revenue because if the customers are happy with products, the company increases its profitability. Companies should listen to the voice of the customers (VOC) to pinpoint which activities and which processes affect customer satisfaction. The product value will definitely be added if the products serve customers' needs. Consequently, customer service performance processes should be assessed and evaluated in order that companies can design their service quality management

strategies to meet or even exceed their customers' needs as well as to improve their performance system (Brown, 1995).

Thailand has been considered one of the fastest growing economies in South East Asia and its business people have to cope with today's highly competitive environment. Though this may be good for customers, it poses a high risk to many companies, not being able to retain current customers and to acquire new ones. Business people in Thailand need to be able to use English efficiently as a means to do business with multinational companies. This results in an increase in the number of businesses offering English language programs nationwide, run by both local and international firms.

At present, various international companies have their branches in Thailand and there is a great need for their employees to be efficient in the English language. Many e-learning software and language centers have been introduced to serve language training needs. Technology used for language learning enhances traditional learning methods. It offers greater challenges to students to improve their skills as well as their knowledge of a particular subject. Modern language teaching methods enable each student to acquire the skills and then blend them with the technology.

English language teaching can be implemented in two ways: traditional education and distance education (The basics of e-learning, 2001). Firstly, traditional classroom education serves a valuable role for children and young adults, while there are many benefits to face-to-face interaction and while maturity and self-discipline are still developing. Moreover, the classroom is often necessary for supervised practices or for team-building activities that could not readily take place without face-to-face contact. Secondly, distance education is different from education delivered in the classroom in many respects besides the lack of proximity. Education in the classroom is traditionally developed and delivered by one person. This teacher may or may not have extensive

training in how to teach. In many universities, for example, a professor can be an excellent researcher but have little knowledge about how to plan and deliver a lecture. On the other hand, distance education separates the development and delivery processes. Development and delivery processes may be done by different people, or many people may be involved in different capacities such as multimedia experts and technical support people. Even in the case of asynchronous courses, distance education may be delivered on a web site without human intervention or assistance.

Generally speaking, classroom teachers are beneficial in terms of face-to-face interactions between teachers and students. Nevertheless, the limitations of this method are that the teaching schedule must be fixed and groups of students should exist for the classes from the very beginning. Person-to-person learning is advantageous in terms of allowing an opportunity to practice the language individually although high tutoring fees might be a limitation of this method. To blend the benefits of self-learning and tutoring feedbacks, the e-learning method has been introduced. This method is considered an advantage in terms of flexibility and frequency. However, a disadvantage of this method is the limited opportunity in practicing the four language skills (The basics of e-learning, 2001).

JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. is one of the many Thai companies offering English teaching to companies in the country. JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. was launched in November, 2004. It acquired JPM English Solutions Co., Ltd. franchise from JPM English Solution Multimedia (Thailand) Limited. Its corporate customers range from large multinational companies to independently owned Thai companies. The company's aims and commitments are to provide its customers with the best product together with the best possible help and support to improve language proficiency (JPM English Solution Co., Ltd., 2006). Amongst its advantages, JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. has been

authorized to use the Vektor Language System (VLS) to run the self-study e-learning language courses, as well as providing academic help from the company's tutors via telephone.

The Vektor Language System operated by JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. comprises self-study courses and personal tutors. A self-study or personal course includes a learner's guide, a CD-ROM, and an assignment schedule. Personal tutors include the support staff who contact the learner via e-mail and telephone. Learners take language courses via CD-ROM and submit spoken and written assignments to tutors via telephone and e-mail. Then, assignment feedbacks are sent to the learners via fax and e-mail.

With the Vektor Language System, learners are placed into one of the nine levels to start according to their ability, starting from level 1: Foundation to level 9: Executive. To give a clearer picture of how Vektor English levels are, a table regarding the levels equivalents to the scores of IELTS, TOEIC and TOEFL is shown below.

Table 1: Vektor's English Levels in Comparison with Important Standardized Tests

VEKTOR'S ENGLISH LEVEL	VEKTOR'S CLASSIFICATION	IELTS	TOEIC	TOEFL
9	Executive	9	930+	650+
8	Proficiency	8	860-930	625-650
7	Advanced	7	780-860	600-625
6	Operational	6	650-780	550-600
5	Upper Intermediate	5	550-650	500-550
4	Intermediate	4	430-550	400-450
3	Lower Intermediate	3	320-430	-400
2	Beginner	2	220-320	
1	Foundation	1	Less than 220	

Students who enroll in Vektor's English courses will be assessed in terms of their language proficiency in order to rank them in the proper levels as described above. Upon completion of the courses, they are goaled in fluent and accurate language performance to

communicate well and deliver good services for the satisfaction of foreign customers within the company.

In terms of business performance, the lower profitability has recently been clearly observed at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. According to JPM's Corporate Director, the number of students in 2007 was down by 15% compared to that in 2006. In other words, it is interesting to study if JPM Language Solutions' problem regarding the decrease in the number of continuing corporate clients and eventually a slow of its demand is associated with customer satisfaction.

Consideration of course tuition fees and the assessment of product values are based on the course length and learning process. According to JPM's Corporate Director, students have to register for three levels for the price of 16,000 baht with a year's validation. In this package, students must study three levels, each of which covers 10 assignments and one final test. During this process, a personal tutor has to make phone calls to the student to explain lessons, give feedbacks to assignments and answer the student's questions. The average consulting time lasts 20 minutes per assignment. Hence, a student who regularly contacts his/her tutor is capable to finish their levels in 35 hours. The courses are priced at 445 baht per hour.

Previous studies on business issues, however, have often focused on the assessment and evaluation of employees' or teachers' performance and its effects on students or clients. While there were some common customers satisfaction studies done, researchers either concentrated on a company product or its image. Only a few customer satisfaction studies emphasized factors affecting customer satisfaction.

The results of this study would be useful to both the researcher and JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. The researcher as a tutor would gain information about the customers' opinion whether they found the English distance learning with JPM beneficial and worthwhile.

Meanwhile, JPM Language Solution Co., Ltd. would also get valuable data from its corporate clients regarding its products and management. Additionally, the findings, in general, would benefit not only JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. but also all other businesses offering similar educational services in the market.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To examine the satisfaction of corporate clients' with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd.
2. To identify the factors affecting JPM Language Solutions corporate clients' satisfaction focusing on the marketing mix elements.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be useful to JPM Language Solution Co., Ltd. as follows:

1. The JPM language courses would suitably be designed to serve the needs of customers.
2. The information about factors affecting JPM Language Solution corporate clients' satisfaction gained would enhance the company to develop its management and give better services in a highly competitive market.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study aimed at surveying the satisfaction of JPM Language Solutions' customers; therefore, it was scoped as follows:

1. Customers' satisfaction in this study referred to the respondents' satisfaction with the company's products, prices, places and promotions.
2. The informants of this study were limited to the employees of five organizations in Thailand who had enrolled in JPM's Vektor Language System (VLS) courses at the time this study was conducted. They are:
 - 1) Department of Highways (DOH)
 - 2) Foremost
 - 3) Syngenta Seeds and Crop Protection Limited
 - 4) Ministry of Labor (MOL)
 - 5) Ministry of Culture (MOC)
3. The data was obtained from the informants who took/were taking the courses with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. from July 2007 to February 2008.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Customer satisfaction is a pleasant feeling which customers get when a company's product, price, place and promotion meet their expectations.

Teacher/Tutor refers to foreign and Thai teachers at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. who give instruction and training to clients via telephone.

Vektor Language System (VLS) is a self-study multimedia system developed by the Vektor Multimedia (United Kingdom).

Products refer to the Vektor Language System used in JPM Language Solution Co., Ltd., being supported by sales representatives and support staff.

Prices refer to the tuition fee and the product values of e-learning English courses.

Places refer to the students' access to JPM's e-learning English courses.

Promotions refer to the channels of approaching JPM's product to customers.

In summary, this research aimed to investigate the customers' satisfaction with a company that runs e-learning language courses with authorization of VLS, a self-study multimedia system from the United Kingdom. The researcher who has been working for this company was interested in studying the satisfaction of the students as customers with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the review of related articles and studies on customer satisfaction influencing clients on their decision in buying a product. It comprises five sections: 1) definitions of customer satisfaction, 2) theory of customer satisfaction, 3) consumer behavior 4) factors affecting customer satisfaction, and 5) previous studies on customer satisfaction.

2.1 Definitions of Customer Satisfaction

Many experts in customer behavior have offered various definitions of customer satisfaction, as illustrated below.

Customer satisfaction with a product or service refers to the favorability of the individual's subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences associated with using or consuming it (Hunt, 1977). According to theories of buyer behavior (Engel, Kollat & Blackwell, 1973; Howard & Sheth, 1969), customer satisfaction is based on a cognitive process in which consumers compare their prior expectations of product or service outcomes, for example, product performance and other important attributes, to those actually obtained from the product or service.

Meanwhile, Oliver (1997) states that satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service provides a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfillment. He also adds that satisfaction with a product or service is a concept that requires experience and use of the product or service. Individuals who pay for a product or service but do not use the product will not be able to show (dis) satisfaction of a product or service.

For Hom (2000), satisfaction is a feeling and it is a short term attitude that can readily change in some circumstances. Satisfaction with a product or service resides in the user's mind and it is different from observable behaviors such as product choice, complaining, and re-purchase.

To conclude, customer satisfaction refers to the extent to which customers are happy with a product and service provided by a business and customers are generally satisfied with the product or service which meets their expectation.

2.2 Theory of Customer Satisfaction

An interesting theory on customer satisfaction is presented by Surveyz.com (2007). Satisfaction involves the following three psychological elements: cognitive, affective and behavioral.

1. Cognitive Element

The cognitive element is defined as an appraisal or conclusion that a product is useful (or not useful), fits the situation (or does not fit), exceeds the requirements of the problem/situation (or does not exceed). Cognitive responses are specific to the situation for which the product is purchased and specific to the consumer's intended use of the product.

2. Affective Element

The affective element of customer satisfaction involves consumer's attitude towards a product resulting from any product information or experience. It is also meaningful to measure the affective element to learn about a consumer's attitude towards a product although s/he has never used it.

3. Behavioral Element

The behavioral element reflects the consumer's experience with other issues associated with the product, for example, customer service and an intention to repeat that

experience. Consumers often think of dissatisfaction as being synonymous with regret or disappointment while satisfaction may be linked to ideas such as, "It was a good choice" or "I am glad that I bought it." When phrased in behavioral response terms, consumers indicate that "purchasing this product would be a good choice" or "I would be glad to re-purchase this product" (Surveyz.com, 2007).

Satisfaction is, therefore, results of a product-related experience and reflects the overall opinion of a consumer's experience with the performance of the product. Satisfaction can also influence post-purchase or post-experience actions such as word of mouth effects and repetition of purchase behavior. Additional post-experience actions might include search behavior, changes in shopping behaviors and trial of associated products.

Surveyz.com (2007) indicates the relationship of expectations with customer satisfaction. Expectations, according to Surveyz.com, are beliefs that a product or service containing certain attributes, features or characteristics will produce certain outcomes of certain anticipated levels of performance based on previous cognitive, affective and behavioral experiences. Customers' expectations are often seen as related to satisfaction and can be measured by the following criteria (Surveyz.com, 2007):

- 1) Importance: This refers to the value of the product or service fulfilling the expectation,
- 2) Overall effect-satisfaction expectations: These mean liking or disliking of the product or service,
- 3) Fulfillment of expectations: The expected level of performance is compared with the desired expectations. This is "predictive fulfillment" and is a customer's specific index of the performance level necessary to be satisfied with a product or service offered by the manufacturers.

4) Expected value from use: Satisfaction is often determined by the frequency of use. If a product or service is not used as often as expected, the result may not be as satisfying as anticipated.

In sum, the degree of customers' satisfaction is measured by product recognition, customers' attitude towards a product, customers' experience with the products, as well as customers' expectations of product values.

2.3 Consumer Behavior

On this topic, consumer behavior is defined, followed by a buying behavior model of which the framework will partly be used to analyze the customers' satisfaction in this study.

Since the emergence of "consumerism" of President John F. Kennedy with his Declaration of Consumer Rights in 1962, which includes the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to redress, and the right to make choice, marketers in each country have become more concerned about consumers and paid more attention to the study of consumer behavior because consumers are businesses' profits (Ward, Daniel & Wartella, 1995). Meanwhile, Loudon and Bitta (1998) define consumer behavior as the decision process and physical activity that an individual engages in when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods or services.

Model of Buying Behavior

The starting point for any understanding of a customer's behavior is to study the stimulus-response model. A stimulus is any unit of input to any of the senses that will induce a person to response or initiate a certain kind of behavior. The stimulus can be classified into internal stimulus, which might be called "the black box" and external stimuli which

are the buying motives. In marketing, the external stimulus is composed of two portions, namely marketing stimuli and other stimuli. (Kotler, 2000; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

The relationships between external stimuli, internal stimuli and buyers' decision are shown in the following table:

Table 2: The Relationship Between Stimuli and Buyers' Decision

External Stimuli		Internal Stimuli (Black Box)		Buyer's Decision
Marketing Stimuli	Other Stimuli	Buyer's Characteristics	Buyer's Decision process	
• Product • Price • Place • Promotion	• Economic • Technological • Political • Cultural	• Cultural • Social • Personal • Psychological	• Problem recognition • Information search • Evaluation • Decision • Postpurchase behavior	• Product choice • Brand choice • Dealer choice • Purchase timing • Purchase amount

2.3.1. External Stimuli

An external stimulus comprises marketing stimuli and other stimuli.

2.3.1.1 Marketing Stimuli

Marketing stimuli or marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that a firm uses to achieve its marketing objective in the target market. These tools are classified into four groups and named as the four Ps of marketing, comprising products, prices, places and promotions (McCarthy; cited in Kotler, 2000:15). The marketing variables under each P are shown as follows:

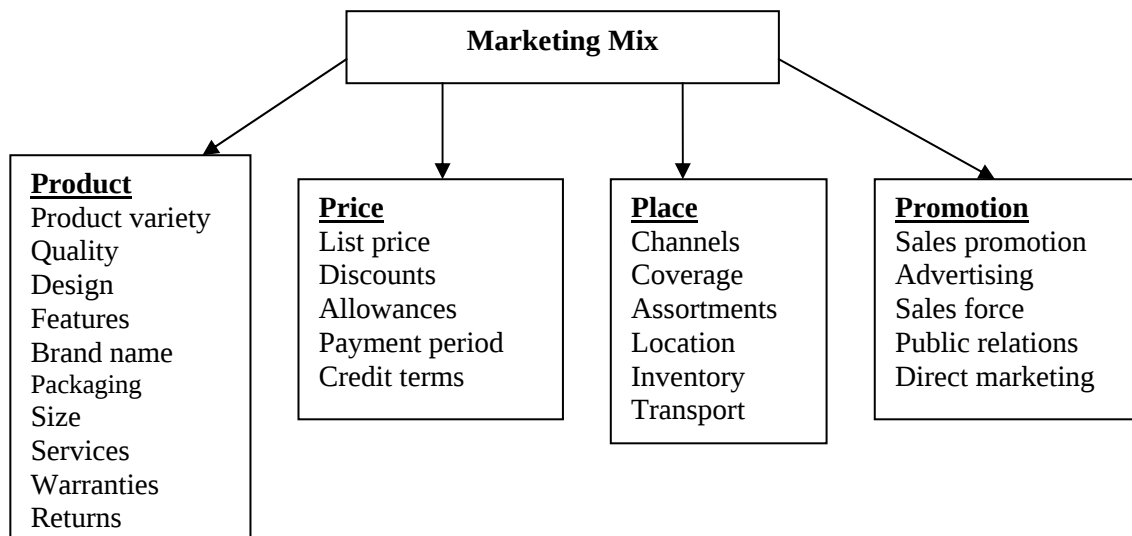


Figure 1: Marketing Mix (Kotler, 2000:15)

Figure 1 shows the four components of marketing mix. Illustrations of the factors contributing to each component are given. Details are as below:

Products

Products are any offering that can satisfy a need or want. The major types of basic offerings are goods, services, experiences, events, people, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Kotler, 2000). Products are actually a complex, multidimensional concept and can be defined broadly enough to include such things as services, programs and attitudes or basically anything offered to the target market which satisfies customer needs. It involves all tangible and intangible aspects of the goods or services (Hutchens, 1998).

Tutorial schools are service business serving intangible products to students. Consequently, products in tutorial schools could be interpreted as the knowledge transferred by the tutors, tutorial curricula, textbooks, learning materials, atmosphere in the tutorial class, reputation of the tutors, the brand name of the tutorial school etc.

Prices

Prices as a component of marketing mix are strictly revenue to the seller, and costs to the buyer. In addition, prices can be defined as the amount of money that buyers are willing to pay for a product (Wongmontha, 1999). Prices can be changed quickly, unlike product features and channel commitments. The most common mistakes of pricing are it is too cost-oriented; prices are not revised often enough to capitalize on market changes; and prices are not varied enough for different product items, market segments, and purchase occasions (Kotler, 2000). Since pricing is quite important for any business, how to set the right price is the first concern before launching a product into the market. Kotler (2000) suggests that the customers' demand and competitors' prices should be taken into account. The customers' assessment of the products' uniqueness or how its features may be differentiated from others can be used to establish a ceiling price (Kotler, 2000). Cohen (1988) also suggests three concepts for making a decision on pricing which are penetration pricing, meet-the-competition pricing, and price skimming. These three basic pricing strategies are summarized in the following figure:

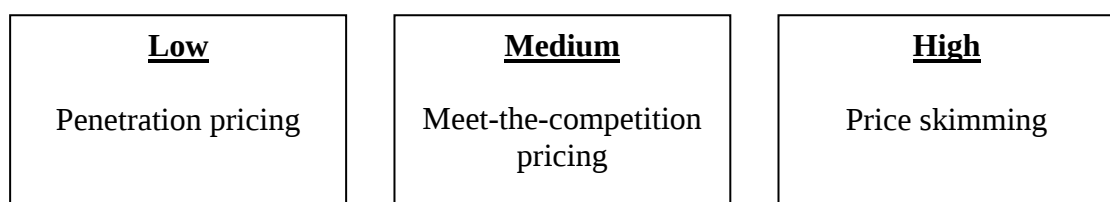


Figure 2: Concepts of Pricing Decision (Cohen, 1988:462)

The first strategy is penetration pricing. It is a strategy of which the price is initially set low in order to capture a possible large market. Then, the price can increase once the product has been established in the marketplace. This type of pricing is used for products in the introductory stage of the life cycle of a product to enable it to gain a foothold in the market.

The second strategy is meet-the-competition pricing, a strategy of which the price is set similarly to that currently offered by competitors.

The third strategy is price skimming, a strategy of which the price is set at a high level since the company has a substantial competitive advantage over its competitors. This type of pricing structure works very well for products that are in high demand, where there are few competitors, or when the product is in the growth stage of its life cycle. However, the high price tends to attract new competitors into the market, and the price inevitably falls due to increased supply (Business Bureau-UK, n.d.; Friesner, 2001b; Cohen, 1988).

Places

Places are where the product is sold and how it reaches the marketplace. It is also known as channels or distributions. There are many types of distributions such as wholesalers, retailers, agents and the Internet. The place or distribution channel depends on the types of product being sold, which directly influences how they are distributed.

With regards to this study, places for tutorial schools can be interpreted as location, and various activities a tutorial school undertakes to make the products and services easily accessible to the target customers. It may include the physical setting such as the layout of desks and light, sound and temperature in the classroom. Location for a tutorial school includes the traveling time, costs and convenience to students to reach the school (Business Bureau-UK, n.d.; Friesner, 2001b).

Promotions

Promotion embraces all actions which help to communicate and promote the products to the target market. It includes all of the tools for marketing communication. The promotion can be implemented by a combination of various methods called promotion mix that comprises 1) personal selling, 2) sales promotions, 3) public relations, 4) direct

marketing, and 5) advertising. Each individual component of the promotion mix is explained in more detail as follows:

Personal selling is an effective way of managing customer relationships through sales people who act on behalf of the organization. It entails face-to-face interaction for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring the order. Activities such as sales presentations, sales meetings, incentive programs, samples, fair and trade shows all involve personal selling.

Sales promotions are the component of promotion mix which includes several techniques such as premiums, sampling, exhibits, a policy of buying one and getting one free, coupons, rebates, etc., to encourage trial purchase of the product or service. Meanwhile, public relations are programs to establish, promote or protect a company's image or its product. The programs also include seminars, charitable donations, sponsorships, speeches, company magazines, events and so many others.

Direct marketing focuses on consumers being reached by means of catalogs, mailings, telemarketing, electronic shopping, e-mail, TV shopping, etc. Meanwhile, the last element of the promotion mix that is non-personal presentation and is used to develop attitudes, create awareness, and transmit information in order to gain a response from the target market is advertising. Advertising can be implemented through newspapers, magazines, journals, television, websites, posters, brochures, leaflets, billboards, etc. (Friesner, 2001b; Kotler, 2000).

Sometimes in the tutorial school business, the school entrepreneurs employ a promotional approach as a means to attract students. The promotion may be in the form of lower pricing for early application, free-hour learning, or premium distributions such as notebooks, and tape cassettes, etc.

To recap, the marketing mix plays a key role in products, prices, places and promotions, stimulating customers' needs so as to reach the set marketing goals, resulting in stimulating customers to make a buying decision.

2.3.1.2 Other Stimuli

The factors that affect customers' decision-making is not only the marketing stimuli but also the external environment or other stimuli, which consists of a number of factors with varying degrees of influence at different stages in a product life or a company's development. On the other hand, it can affect consumer buying behavior, and decision-making, which will ultimately influence the company's later decisions. The external stimuli can be broadly categorized as 1) economic, 2) technological, 3) political, and 4) cultural. These are factors beyond anyone's direct control.

Economic stimuli speak of income, employment, prices, interest rate, savings, debt, and standard of living of the nation. Not only does it affect the purchasing power of the customers, but also the way people do business. For example, when Thailand faced the economic crisis in 1997, the effects were felt not only in the financial and corporate sectors but also in society in general. Many of the workforce were made unemployed which meant loss of wages and opportunities. Thai families continued to make expenditures on necessities such as their children's education and basic health needs but they had to manage their household budget by cutting back on luxury purchases. According to the Thai Farmers Research Center (1998), some families limited the budget for their children's tutorial study to one where the children could choose only one subject or only at one tutorial school (Kotler, 2000; Thai Farmers Research Center, 1998; World Bank Office, 1999).

Technology affects human life and reshapes our way of living in terms of ease and comfort. Technology is a major driving force of globalization. Firms can use technology to gain a competitive advantage and be innovative in the ways they communicate

with their customers. Technology means more convenience with less time and effort, while the product can be produced cheaply and of better quality. For example, the advent of personal computers and the Internet has created the possibility to study or be tutored via the Internet enabling students to find coaching anytime anywhere.

Political influence greatly affects the regulation of businesses and the spending power of consumers (Friesner, 2001a; Kotler, 2000). The government's policies to either support or strictly control can direct the way a business is run in a country. The government's policies on education regulate the university entrance exam system and control over the tutorial business operations. For example, no expansion of tutorial schools was possible at one time in the past because the government made a decree forbidding the establishment of any new tutorial schools. The government tried to limit the number of tutorial schools because they were seen as unnecessary. However, the situation has changed into a positive way. New tutorial schools have been set up. Currently, tutorial schools are regulated under the office of the Private Education, Ministry of Education.

Cultural stimuli are defined as the sum total of learned beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and customs that serve to direct the consumer behavior of members of a particular society. Culture also determines what is acceptable in terms of product advertising, what people wear, how people communicate, eat, live, and travel (Brown, n.d.; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). For instance, Thai families usually try to place their children in well-renowned schools since they believe that these institutions will provide a strong academic background for their children. Thai students have become more education-conscious, seen in an increase in competition to enter highly accredited schools and also in a higher demand for tutorial classes. The cultural beliefs, values and customs of tutoring will continue to yield customers' satisfaction of tutoring schools

To conclude, the customers' economic status, technological advancement, political situations and cultural background are totally involved in stimulating internal needs of any particular customers. Consequently, the background of customers should be analyzed to design how the products should be developed and how the marketing mix should be integrated to call for customers' purchase.

2.3.2 Internal stimuli

Whereas the external stimuli are visible factors motivating buyers to think and make a decision on product and service, the internal stimuli are the buyer's consciousness and are what producers or sellers cannot know or expect.

The internal stimuli or the buyer's black box is composed of the buyer's characteristics and the buyer's decision process.

A) The Buyer's Characteristics

The components of the buyer's Black Box are factors that shape the buyer's characteristics and influence the consumer's buying behavior. They include (1) cultural, (2) social, (3) personal, and (4) psychological factors.

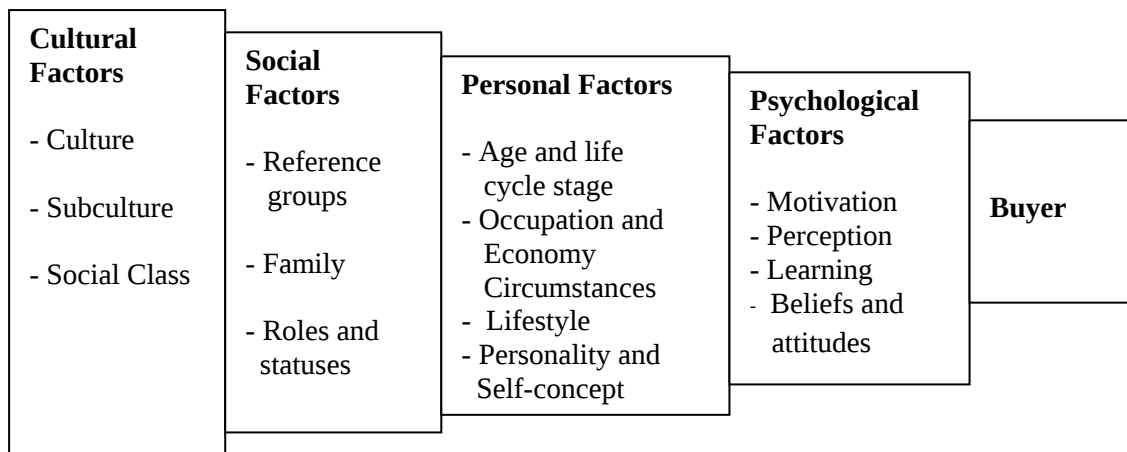


Figure 3: Major Factors Influencing Buying Behavior (Kotler, 2000:161-175).

1. Cultural Factors

Cultural factors embrace culture, subculture and social class. Culture is the most fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behavior. Each ethnic group has a certain culture. The set of values, perceptions, preferences, and behavior a person acquires is through the family and other key institutions. Culture is a society's personality. Meanwhile, subculture is a segment of culture. For example, Thai culture contains subculture of religions, ethnic groups and geographic locations. It is difficult to succeed in producing a product universally acceptable to various groups due to their own specific cultures and subcultures.

Another component of cultural factors is social class. Social class has been defined by research scientists in the United States into six categories as follows: (1) the upper or old families; (2) the lower-upper or those that are newly arrived (in class); (3) the upper-middle or those who are mostly the professionals and those more successful in business; (4) the lower-middle or those who are the white collar salaried class; (5) the upper-lower, or those who are the basic wage earners skilled worker group; and finally (6) the lower-lower, or those who are the unskilled labor groups (Cohen, 1988). Social classes reflect income, occupation, education, and area of residence. Social classes determine, to some extent, the types, quality and quantity of products that a person buys or uses (Cohen, 1988; Kotler, 2000).

2. Social Factors

Social factors influence consumer behavior. Social factors are composed of reference groups, family, social roles and statuses.

Reference groups are individuals or groups of people to whom a person refers to and uses as a point of reference in the process of making his or her own judgments. These groups influence a person's attitude and action regarding purchasing decisions. In general, a reference group's influence is very strong when the consumer has little or no direct knowledge about the attributes of a certain product or service. Reference groups come in several different forms and with varying degrees of influence. The degree to which a reference group will affect a purchasing decision depends on an individual's susceptibility to the influence of the reference group and the strength of his or her own involvement with the group. Primary reference groups are those with a great deal of influence on a person such as family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Secondary reference groups tend to have a somewhat less influence; they are groups such as members of the club and trade union. A group that a person does not belong to can also influence a person. They are aspirational and dissociative reference groups. The aspirational reference group refers to those group one would like to join, whereas the dissociative reference group includes people that an individual would not like to be like. Reference groups sometimes create pressures for conformity, which may affect actual product and brand choices.

However, members of the family include one's parents, siblings, spouse and children. In countries where parents live with their children, mutual influence can be considerable. In some countries, it is likely that the husband has freedom to make decisions on large purchases, whereas the wife acts as the family agent on buying food and clothes. Joint decision making is often made on taking care of educational expenses for the children.

Finally, the roles and status of a person also affect the buying behavior. People with different roles and status are likely to live differently. For example, a company's senior executive would drive a luxurious car, wear expensive suits, travel by air and buy brand name products (Cohen, 1988; Merenski, 1999; Perner, n.d.; Kotler, 2000; Taflinger, n.d.).

3. Personal Factors

Personal factors include buyers' age and stage of life, occupation and economic circumstances, lifestyle and personality.

People at different ages and in different stages of life are likely to have different consumption patterns and different tastes in such things as clothes, food, recreation, music, etc. The occupation of a person can determine consumption behavior as work affects one's income, status, role, and interests. For instance, a student buys stationery, textbooks, and student uniforms whereas computer specialists and engineers buy specialized computers and software programs to help them in their work.

Lifestyle refers to a mode of living, a person's interests and activities. People have different opinions on what is good or bad and what is fashionable and what is not, thus affecting a person's product choice and decision-making. It is purely a personal pattern of living which indicates how individuals live and how they think. For example, most people who buy computers are achievement-oriented. The last factor, personality, refers to a person's consistent behavior and character, and their likeliness to show such traits as workaholics, aggressiveness, ambitiousness, dominance, self-confidence, sociability, and adaptability (Brown, n.d.; Cohen, 1988; Perner, n.d.; Kotler, 2000).

4. Psychological Factors

There are four major psychological factors, namely motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes.

Motivation is an internal energizing force that orients a person's activities towards satisfying a need or achieving a goal. Human needs create motivation in persons in order for them to react or respond. Perception is the process of selecting information, then organizing and interpreting it to produce meaning. Information inputs are the sensations received through the five senses. How the motivated person actually acts is influenced by his or her perception of the situation.

In the case of learning, if students feel that they can pass the university entrance exam without tutorial classes, they will not seek any help outside. Otherwise, they will seek help from tutorial schools. However, attitude are also a composite of a person's beliefs, feelings and behavioral intentions toward an object in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way. If a person has a positive attitude toward something, s/he is likely to access it rather than keep away from it. Changing attitudes is generally very difficult; therefore, many companies try to make products that fit into attitudes, rather than try to change people's attitudes (Brown, n.d.; Cohen, 1988; Perner, n.d.; Kotler, 2000).

B) The Buyer's Decision Process

The purchase decision process is a series of steps or stages a consumer passes through in making a decision to buy products and services. The process consists of five stages: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) alternative evaluation, (4) purchase decision and (5) post-purchase evaluation.

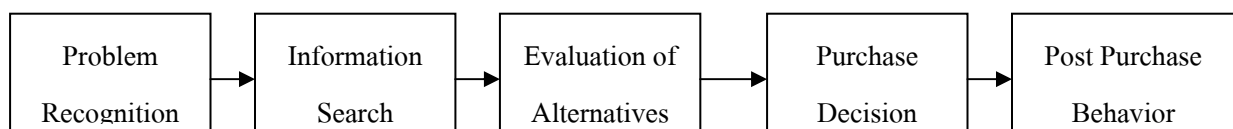


Figure 4: Model of the Consumer Buying Process (Kotler, 2000:179)

At the first stage, the process with problem recognition can be triggered by internal or external stimuli. The problem recognition starts when a buyer is aware of a problem or a need.

The next stage, information search, serves to clarify the options of the consumer. Kotler (2000) notes that the consumer receives information about a product from commercial sources or the marketer's dominated sources; however, the most effective information comes from personal sources. Commercial information normally performs an informing function, and personal sources perform a reasoning or evaluation function (Brown, n.d.; Merenski, 1999; Kotler, 2000)

Then, evaluation of the alternatives begins with a consumer's evaluative criteria examination. The consumer needs to set criteria for evaluation which will assess the products and weigh up the alternatives. Several options need to be evaluated in order to look for benefits in each product and determine whether these satisfy the needs since each product perhaps carries its own distinctive attributes. If the buyers are not satisfied with the overall choice, they will then return to the search phase (Brown, n.d.; Merenski, 1999; Kotler, 2000).

Meanwhile, the purchase decision involves judging the alternatives and is often influenced by seller characteristics and the incentives provided by sellers at the point of purchase. When buyers choose to buy one of the alternative products, they generally do so due to the brand, package, preferred store, method of purchase, quantity and timing of purchase. However, there are two factors which can interrupt the buying process, the purchase intention and the purchase decision. These are attitudes of others and unanticipated situational factors. Therefore, preferences and even purchase intentions are not completely reliable predictors of purchase behavior (Brown, n.d.; Merenski, 1999; Kotler, 2000).

The last stage is post-purchase behavior. Consumers are generally satisfied or dissatisfied after using or purchasing a product. The greater the closer between the buyer's expectations and the perceived performance of the product, the higher the buyer's satisfaction. To reduce a lack of cognitive satisfaction, some sellers offer warranties and after-sales communication. They do this since dissatisfaction can create bad publicity due to word of mouth advertising. Word of mouth can take place face-to-face, or in a telephone conversation or in the context of a chat group on the Internet (Brown, n.d.; Merenski, 1999; Kotler, 2000).

To summarize, evaluation of satisfaction repeatedly happens at various steps of buying process ranging from evaluation of the best alternatives to solve recognized problems and evaluation of the purchased products to justify whether they could meet pre-purchasing expectation.

After a breakthrough of various buying processes, the last step of buyer behavior is buyer's decision.

2.3.3 Buyer's Decision

When a buyer decides to buy a product, the factors used to make this decision are (1) product choice, (2) brand choice, (3) dealer choice, (4) purchasing timing, and (5) purchase amount. For example, if a buyer would like to buy food for breakfast, product choices are milk, instant noodles, or bread. If s/he decides to choose milk, then which milk brand would s/he like to buy? Maybe s/he chooses to buy a leading brand, s/he then has to decide where to buy the product, for example, from a department store or from a retail store close to her/his place. The next step is when to buy the product, in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the evening, and finally, how many bottles of milk s/he will buy.

To recap, buyers' decision is derived from external and internal stimuli which arouse them to be satisfied with their choice of products and finally customers make purchasing decision based on product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchasing timing and purchase amount.

2.4 Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a judgment made by the customer, before buying a product. The most popular view of customer satisfaction in the academic and business world is that customer satisfaction is the judgment created from the comparison of pre-purchase expectations with post purchase evaluation of the product or service experience (Chakrabarty, 2003). Customer satisfaction can result from any dimension, whether or not, it is quality related and its judgments may arise from non-quality issues e.g. needs, equity, perceptions of 'fairness' and required experience on the service or provider (Chakrabarty, 2003; Howard & Sheth, 1969).

Factors affecting customer satisfaction of any particular products include price, products and services, and company image.

Price

Price is the amount of money or the number of goods, asked for or given in exchange for something else. Pricing is the manual or automatic process of applying prices to purchase and place orders, based on factors such as a fixed amount, promotion or sales campaign, specific vendor quote, price existing on entry and others (Giese, 2000).

The price of products and services should be marketable depending on the type of business a company has. Also pricing should be based on the quality of the product. Consumers tend to buy products and services regardless of the price, when they know that they will be satisfied and have a money-back-guarantee. The most common reason

of customer retention is suitability of price of products and services and their capability in buying. Customers check prices first before they purchase any products or services (Brown, 1995).

Products and Services

A product is anything that can be launched to a market and that might meet people's needs. A product may refer to a single item or unit, a group of equivalent products, a grouping of goods or services, or an industrial classification for the goods or services (Wikipedia, n.d).

Products and services are unique in terms of brand name and quality. These factors contribute to the profitability of a company and can attain a high level of customer satisfaction because of the uniqueness of the products and services they have experienced.

Brand image or branding is sending a strong consistent image. The differentiation creates an image that sticks in customers' minds. This differentiation based on unique customers' wants, needs, and values will result in strong branding and sales. Thus, researching and creating an accurate portrait of the targeted clients/customers is essential in creating the brand image of a product (Gordon, 2006).

Regarding quality, some elements of service quality if improved, improve customer satisfaction; however, other elements may not. Johnston (1993) identified 18 determinants of service quality, suggesting that certain actions such as increasing the speed of processing information and customers, satisfied customers while improving the reliability of equipment lessened dissatisfaction (Chakrabarty, 2003).

Overall, the need for service and product standards to be assessed and raised is undeniable as both are strong drivers of customer satisfaction. As Walker (1990) simply puts it,

“We all have daily experience of being a customer – buying a newspaper, getting a carpet fitted, having a haircut, eating in a canteen and so on. In each situation we make a judgment about the service. We also decide whether or not to continue to do business with the service provider. If we are not pleased, we sometimes complain but usually we just decide to go somewhere else next time” (Walker, 1990:3).

Company

A company is, in general, any group of people united to pursue a common interest. The term is thus synonymous with association, but more often it is used specifically to identify associations formed for profit, such as the partnership, the joint-stock company, and the for-profit corporation. A company is not necessarily a corporation, and thus may not have a separate existence from its members (Walker, 1990).

A company must have good promotional strategies in order that their products and services can be established. Promotional strategies can consist of advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct mail, personal selling, message and media strategy.

To sum up, proper pricing, quality products and services and a good company reputation drive a customer to keep coming back to a company for more. Consequently, the effective integration of marketing mix is contributed to customer satisfaction and the improvement of company's performance.

2.5 Previous Studies on Customer Satisfaction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in assessing current levels of customer satisfaction with products and services as well as in explaining the processes through which customers arrive at such judgments as observed from a number of studies both local and overseas which has been done particularly in educational and service businesses.

2.5.1 Local Studies

Suprakarn (2006) conducted a study on customer satisfaction towards tutoring business through studying expectations and actual response from tutoring schools. The study included factors influencing decision for selecting a school. The samples of this study were 400 high school students who were studying in tutoring schools in Amphu Muang Udonthani. The findings were as follows:

1. The students were not satisfied with the services provided by tutoring business; their expectation level exceeded the services they received.
2. Decision making was mostly affected by the reputation and quality of personnel, followed by a variety and attraction of courses.
3. Students' education level, parents' income, parents' education level and parents' occupation were found relating with decision making factors for the tutoring school selection.

Sasinud (2005) studied and compared customer satisfaction towards Nanaya Pharmacy by means of a questionnaire. The samples totaled 280 customers. The majority of customers were female, aged between 20-29 years old. Their education level was lower than a bachelor's degree. They worked in office with a monthly income range of 10,001-15,000 baht. The average number of family members was four. The customers' visit to Nanaya Pharmacy was 2-3 times a month. Various statistical techniques were utilized such as percentage, mean score, standard deviation and Chi-Square. The findings revealed that customers' satisfaction of Nanaya Pharmacy was at a high level. The aspects that customers found most satisfactory were products and places, followed by prices and promotions.

Rarin (2002) conducted a study on the factors that influenced parents' selection of international schools for their children. The objective was to examine the marketing mix factors in relation to international school selection of the parents. The findings revealed

that factors while influenced the parents' choice of an international schools for their children were people, processes, physical evidences, prices, products and places respectively.

There were several issues in the marketing mix factors that Thai parents were more concerned than expatriate parents when they made a decision to place their children in international schools. These factors included background of the schools, learning equipment, school bus-service, accreditation of the school, location of the school, classrooms and surroundings, learning activities and the knowledge of teaching staff.

Another similar study was done by Sirin (2002) she studied the marketing mix factors influencing students' selection of tutorial school in Bangkok for preparation for the university entrance examination. The findings revealed that those factors, which influenced students' selection on tutorial schools, were not only product factors, such as the reputation of the tutor and the reputation of the tutorial school, but also the price factor. Low tuition fees had a high statistical relationship with tutorial school selection. Also, promotional factors, such as discount, premium and gifts, and guarantees, also affected the students' choice of the tutorial schools.

2.5.2 Overseas Studies

Foreign studies on customer satisfaction are various. One of them was conducted by Argos and Cadbury Companies (2007) by means of questionnaires. It was found that customers were satisfied with the companies at a very high level. The main reason for this was because the companies emphasized market research and marketing as tools to find out what customers wanted. These companies believed that knowing what their customers' needs made them tailor everything to please the customers e.g. providing the goods that customers wanted, in the packaging that they liked and at retail outlets which were easily accessible. This survey cited many factors which led to high levels of customer satisfaction including:

- Products and services, which were customer-focused, resulting in high levels of value for money spent.
- Customer service, giving personal attention to the needs of individual customers.
- After-sales service, following up the original purchase with after-sales support such as maintenance and updating, for example, in the updating of computer packages.

Enterprise-Rent-A-Car, a car rental company (2007), was named repeatedly as number one in customer satisfaction in the car rental industry. Taylor, the company's founder, realized the need to measure customer service in the company. The first interview survey was in 1994. The company found that satisfied customers were three times more likely to use its business again. The survey showed that customer satisfaction had a direct influence on repeating the business, which means it had a direct impact on sales and profits. By 1996, Enterprise-Rent-A-Car had become the number one car rental business in North America. Taylor saw that the challenge was for the business to stay there. To make sure that Enterprise-Rent-A-Car provided superior customer service, the company measured its customers' satisfaction. The company's index, the Enterprise Service Quality index (ESQi), depended on two simple words: completely satisfied. The company made a survey of its customer satisfaction with each local brand by interviewing their customers on the telephone. The results revealed that hundreds of thousands of customers were completely satisfied with their last experience with Enterprise-Rent-A-Car.

A research conducted by Black Box Investing (2007) on the Hershey Company, noted that Hershey was established years ago and still a successful company because their reputation and credibility were built upon safe and high quality products that were marketed responsibly. They marketed their products truthfully, responsibly and by the means that were appropriate for their intended audience.

Ventana Research, (Andrews, n.d.), known as a leading business intelligence and performance management research and advisory service firm in the United States, showed that 79% of the companies rated improving customer satisfaction as the first priority. According to Ventana, competition in business world got tougher and customers were becoming harder to win. Keeping customers happy and satisfied with a particular company was not easy.

The Ventana Research Study showed that 42% of the international companies were using outbound telephone call-based surveys to study customer satisfaction, 32% were using Web-based questionnaires, 25% were using mail-in surveys, and 15% were using an interactive voice response (IVR). Accordingly, customer satisfaction surveys helped a company in the following areas:

- Measured customer satisfaction levels
- Improved customer satisfaction levels
- Improved customer retention
- Pinpointed areas for process improvement
- Gathered market intelligence regarding opinions, trends and competitors
- Tested new products, services, offers and pricing
- Generated a targeted list of potential new customers

A study by Hallowell (1996) was on customer satisfaction in relation to loyalty. This research was similar to that by Parasuraman et al (1994). Both studies concluded that service satisfaction and satisfaction with price were elements in the overall satisfaction measurement.

Levesque and McDougall (1996) comprehensively analyzed the effects of service quality, service features and customer complaint handling on customer satisfaction in the

Canadian retail banking sector. Their findings suggested that satisfaction determinants in retail banking were driven by a number of factors including service quality dimensions (Chakrabarty, 2003).

A review of the previous studies, therefore, suggests the importance of customer satisfaction in keeping a business successful in a globally competitive market. The positive and negative effects of customer satisfaction were shown. It was always challenging to survey the practical impacts of the level of satisfaction or non-satisfaction of customers and their relation to related influential factors to the success of a business enterprise.

In summary, this chapter reviewed the framework of analyzing the customers' behavior, detailing the socio-cultural background of customers, introducing the marketing mix used as the promotional tools arousing customers to make buying decisions. Studies on customer's behaviors explored the marketers' point of view on how to employ suitable marketing stimuli to obtain customer's recognition for any particular products. The marketing mix is, therefore, used by the researcher to design a questionnaire surveying the customers' satisfaction in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents information about the respondents of the study, the research tool, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Respondents

The target population for this research consisted of five organizations taking JPM's Vektor Language System (VLS) course/s between July 2007 and February 2008 with the total number of 130. Below is the list of the organizations and the corresponding number of students enrolling during the time of the study.

1. Department of Highways (DOH)	50 students
2. Foremost	34 students
3. Ministry of Labor (MOL)	20 students
4. Ministry of Culture (MOC)	14 students
5. Syngenta Seeds and Crop Protection Limited	12 students

All the returned questionnaires were used as data for this study. Out of the population of 130, only 95 sent the completed questionnaires back.

3.2 Research Tool

A self-administered questionnaire designed with references to documents, textbooks and studies related to the objectives of the study were used as a research tool.

On the cover page of the questionnaire, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire itself consisted of seven main parts.

3.2.1 Information about courses and levels of the courses: The respondents were asked about the training courses and the course levels that they took.

3.2.2 Products: The informants were asked about their satisfaction with Vektor's textbooks, supplementary teaching materials, training course packages and tutors at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd.

3.2.3 Prices: The respondents were asked about the appropriateness of the VLS course packages compared with the prices paid.

3.2.4 Places: The questions in this part were to measure customers' satisfaction with the access to the language courses offered by JPM Language Solution Co., Ltd.

3.2.5 Promotions: This part surveyed the promotional channels which mostly drew customers' attention and product recognition.

3.2.6 Problems and suggestions: In this section, the informants were asked about the problems that they encountered while learning English at JPM Language Solution Co., Ltd. The respondents also had a chance to present their suggestions on improving JPM's courses.

To design a reliable questionnaire, the researcher asked for approval of the content and format of the questionnaires from four people, three specialists on related matters, business issues and questionnaire design and the researcher's project advisor. The questionnaire was adjusted according to their recommendations and the revised questionnaire was used for the study.

3.3 Research Procedure

3.3.1 Data collection

The questionnaire was distributed to 130 respondents through both postal and electronic mails from July 2007 to February 2008. Completed questionnaires were requested to be sent back to the researcher by e-mail or fax. Only 95 respondents sent the questionnaires back.

3.3.2 Data analysis

The data gained from the questionnaires were analyzed. The 5-point rating scale, ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied was used for the analysis (Likert scale, 2006). The criteria and meaning of the rating scale is presented as follows:

Very Satisfied	=	4.21 – 5.00
Satisfied	=	3.41 – 4.20
Neutral	=	2.61 – 3.40
Dissatisfied	=	1.81 – 2.60
Very Dissatisfied	=	1.00 – 1.80

The respondents' score for each question was tallied, recorded and analyzed by using the SPSS program (Statistical Package for the Social Science 2007), version 12.0 for statistical analysis (SPSS, 2007). Basic statistics, including mean and percentage, were used in the data analysis.

3.3.3 The data gained were presented in forms of tables and plausible explanations for the results were attempted.

In brief, the total numbers of the population for this study were 130; however, only 95 of them (or 73%) returned the questionnaires. The data, obtained from 95 completed questionnaires, were analyzed, using the SPSS program and the findings were shown in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reveals the findings of the study. The results of the analysis of data gained from the questionnaire are presented, comprising five parts: general information about the informants, products, prices, places, and promotions. Plausible explanations for the results are later attempted.

4.1 General Information

In this part, the general information about the informants was presented. The number of informants, their status, their proficiency level and the courses they took with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. are shown in tables 3 to 5.

Table 3: Data about the Informants

Studying at JPM (July 2007-Feb 2008)	Number of Respondents (percentage)
Yes	50 (52.6%)
No	27 (28.4%)
Not indicated	18 (18.9%)
Total	95 (100%)

As shown in table 3, the total number of the informants was 95. Over half of the respondents were studying with JPM English Solutions Co, Ltd. at the time the study was conducted, accounting for 52.6%. Twenty-seven respondents, accounting for 28.4%, used to study with JPM English Solutions Co, Ltd. while 18 respondents did not answer.

Out of 95 informants, only 41 indicated in the questionnaire the information about their proficiency level and the courses they took or were taking at the time the study was conducted. Regarding proficiency levels, JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. offers nine levels of English courses comprising: Level 1: foundation, Level 2: beginner, Level 3: lower intermediate, Level 4: intermediate, Level 5: upper intermediate, Level 6: operational, Level 7: advanced Level 8: proficiency and Level 9: executive. The data was illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Number of the Respondents Took / Were Taking Each VLS course and their Proficiency Level (More than one answer is possible)

Course \ Level	1		2		3		4		6		Total N	
	Foundation		Beginner		Lower Intermediate		Intermediate		Operational			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Business English	21	51.2%	12	29.2%	5	12.2%	2	4.8%	1	2.4%	41	100%
Writing	7	17.0%	6	14.6%	1	2.4%	1	2.4%	0	0%	15	36.5%
Conversation	12	29.2%	10	24.3%	3	7.3%	2	4.8%	0	0%	27	65.8%

Note: N = 41

Table 4 shows a list of VLS courses and the number of the informants who took / were taking the courses at different levels at the time they filled in the questionnaire.

It was found that the largest number of the respondents taking Business English course was at the foundation level (21 out of 41 students), followed by those at the beginner level (12), the lower-intermediate level (5), the intermediate level (5), and the operational level (1) respectively.

About the writing course, 7 out of 41 students were at the foundation level while 6 were at the beginner level. Only one student each was at the lower intermediate and intermediate levels.

Regarding the conversation course, the largest number of the respondents was at the foundation level (12 students), followed by those at the beginner level (10), the lower-intermediate level (3), and the intermediate level (2) respectively. However, JPM's students did not take upper intermediate, advance, proficiency, and executive at the time to collected the data.

The table below illustrates the number of VLS courses that the sample group of 95 took or were taking at the time the research was done. It partly conveyed the information of how satisfied the informants were towards VLS courses.

Table 5: Number of VLS Courses Respondents Took / Were taking

Number of Courses	Number of Respondents (percentage)
1	7 (7.3%)
2	17 (17.8%)
3	17 (17.8%)
Not indicated	54 (56.8%)
Total	95 (100%)

Table 5 shows that 7.3% or only 7 of the total respondents (95) took or were taking one VLS course. Meanwhile, 17.8% or 17 of them equally took or were taking two and three VLS courses.

4.2 Products

The products of JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. were surveyed in the aspect of the contents of the courses, the CD ROM, the personal tutors and the courses length and are presented in table 6.

Table 6: The Respondents' Satisfaction toward *Products*

Satisfaction Level													
Criteria Item	Very Satisfied 4.21-5.00		Satisfied 3.41-4.20		Neutral 2.61-3.40		Dissatisfied 1.81-2.60		Very Dissatisfied 1.00-1.80		$\overline{X} \pm S.D.$		Degree of Satisfaction
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1. The levels of difficulty of the courses are in line with your language ability.	21	22.1%	40	42.1%	26	27.4%	8	8.4%	0	0%	3.78	.889	Satisfied
2. The content in the textbooks and supplementary materials covers the course syllabus.	20	21.1%	42	44.2%	30	31.6%	3	3.2%	0	0%	3.83	.794	Satisfied
3. The content in the textbooks and supplementary materials is updated with business situations	16	16.8%	41	43.2%	29	30.5%	9	9.5%	0	0%	3.67	.868	Satisfied
4. The CD-ROMs used in this course are practicable and easy to access	18	18.9%	36	37.9%	27	28.4%	14	14.7%	0	0%	3.61	.960	Satisfied
5. A personal tutor's instruction showed that he/she was knowledgeable in the subject matter.	29	30.5%	56	58.9%	10	10.5%	0	0%	0	0%	4.20	.612	Satisfied
6. A personal tutor covered all the topics listed in the assignments.	22	23.2%	56	58.9%	17	17.9%	0	0%	0	0%	4.05	.642	Satisfied
7. A personal tutor called you to give instruction as scheduled	30	31.6%	51	53.7%	14	14.7%	0	0%	0	0%	4.17	.663	Satisfied

Table 6: (continued)

Satisfaction Level														
Item	Criteria	Very Satisfied 4.21-5.00		Satisfied 3.41-4.20		Neutral 2.61-3.40		Dissatisfied 1.81-2.60		Very Dissatisfied 1.00-1.80		$\overline{X} \pm S.D.$	Degree of Satisfaction	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
8. A personal tutor provided you opportunities to practice the language tasks.		29	30.5%	52	54.7%	14	14.7%	0	0%	0	0%	4.16	.657	Satisfied
9. You felt more relaxed talking with the tutor in English when compared with face-to-face communication		32	33.7%	45	47.4%	18	18.9%	0	0%	0	0%	4.15	.714	Satisfied
10. A personal tutor encouraged you to speak English with the tutor.		22	23.2%	56	58.9%	17	17.9%	0	0%	0	0%	4.05	.642	Satisfied
11. A personal tutor provided clear and full explanations to you in a friendly manner whenever you had a language problem.		31	32.6%	49	51.6%	14	14.7%	1	1.1%	0	0%	4.16	.704	Satisfied
12. A personal tutor provided meaningful and timely feedback to you.		18	18.9%	54	56.8%	22	23.2%	1	1.1%	0	0%	3.94	.681	Satisfied
13. The time you spent on taking a course/with JPM was adequate for you to communicate effectively.		0	0%	2	2.1%	23	24.2%	54	56.8%	16	16.8%	2.11	.711	Satisfied
14. You acquired the skills needed to improve your English ability while attending this course		14	14.7%	55	57.9%	25	26.3%	1	1.1%	0	0%	3.86	.662	Satisfied
15. The knowledge gained from this course met your professional needs		13	13.7%	47	49.5%	34	35.8%	1	1.1%	0	0%	3.76	.695	Satisfied
Total												3.83	.073	Satisfied

Note: N = 95

Table 6 shows that the mean of the respondents' satisfaction with products is at a satisfactory level ($\bar{X} = 3.83$).

It was found from the study that the respondents were satisfied with the personal tutor as being knowledgeable at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.20$), followed by that about the tutor's calls to give instructions to learners ($\bar{X} = 4.17$). The findings also revealed that the two issues that the respondents found the least satisfactory were the content in text books and supplementary materials being not updated with business situations ($\bar{X} = 3.67$) and the CD-ROM used in the course being impracticable and not easy to access ($\bar{X} = 3.61$). It can be observed that these two issues are still highly rated in terms of satisfaction

It is plausible to explain that most respondents were satisfied with JPM's product ($\bar{X} = 3.83$). It can be seen from the average point of satisfaction with the personal tutor that the needs for training of the respondents, the contents of textbooks, the access to CD-ROM and the course length stood at 4.11, 3.81, 3.76, 3.61 and 2.11 respectively. The excellent performance of personal tutors seemed to affect the higher level of product satisfaction. Additionally, the majority of respondents (56.8%) lamely agreed that the time they spent on taking a course with JPM was adequate for them to communicate effectively. Therefore, the personal tutors were observed as being in need for one-on-one interaction to improve spoken and written commands of English.

4.3 Prices

The prices of JPM's courses were surveyed in terms of course values and are illustrated in the table below.

Table 7: Respondents' Satisfaction toward *Prices*.

Satisfaction Level														
Criteria Item	Very Satisfied 4.21-5.00		Satisfied 3.41-4.20		Neutral 2.61-3.40		Dissatisfied 1.81-2.60		Very Dissatisfied 1.00-1.80		$\bar{X}$ ±S.D.		Degree of Satisfaction	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
The amount of money spent for a course was reasonable	9	9.5%	35	36.8%	40	42.1%	10	10.5%	1	1.1%	3.43	.846	Satisfied	
Total												3.43	.846	Satisfied

Table 7 shows that, the respondents' satisfaction toward *prices* are at a satisfactory level ($\bar{X}$ =3.43). They considered the amount of money spent for a course reasonable.

This table shows that 35 and 40 respondents or 36.8% and 42.1%, rated the JPM pricing at the satisfactory and neutral levels respectively. Only a few of the respondents (9.5%) indicated that the prices for JPM courses were at the very satisfactory level.

4.4 Places

The places in the research were mainly focused on the accessibility of JPM courses, especially, the access to course media and the interaction with support staff and personal tutors. The following table shows the findings on this issue.

Table 8: Respondents' Satisfaction toward *Places*.

Satisfaction Level													
Criteria Item	Very Satisfied 4.21-5.00		Satisfied 3.41-4.20		Neutral 2.61-3.40		Dissatisfied 1.81-2.60		Very Dissatisfied 1.00-1.80		$\bar{X} \pm S.D.$		Degree of Satisfaction
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1. The approach allowed you to study at your convenience.	19	20.0%	46	48.4%	29	30.5%	1	1.1%	0	0%	3.87	.733	Satisfied
2. You could ask for a tutor's advice during office and post hours.	12	12.6%	40	42.1%	41	43.2%	2	2.1%	0	0%	3.65	.726	Satisfied
3. JPM's support staff answered your calls politely and quickly and passed your messages to your personal tutor.	9	9.5%	50	52.6%	35	36.8%	1	1.1%	0	0%	3.71	.650	Satisfied
Total											3.74	.580	Satisfied

Table 8 indicates that the average satisfaction of the respondents toward places is at a satisfactory level ($\bar{X} = 3.74$).

The findings on *places* revealed that the respondents were satisfied most with the JPM's approach which allowed them to study at their convenience ($\bar{X} = 3.87$), followed by JPM's support staff's answers to learners' call politely and quickly including their assistance in conveying the messages to learners' personal tutor ($\bar{X} = 3.71$), and learners' ability to ask for a tutor's advice during office and post hours ($\bar{X} = 3.65$) respectively.

4.5 Promotions

The promotions of JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. were evaluated on how effectively the personal selling or the public media have been used to inform targeted customers of the English courses.

Table 9: Respondents' Satisfaction toward *Promotions*.

Satisfaction Level													
Item	Very Satisfied 4.21-5.00		Satisfied 3.41-4.20		Neutral 2.61-3.40		Dissatisfied 1.81-2.60		Very Dissatisfied 1.00-1.80		$\bar{X} \pm S.D.$		Degree of Satisfaction
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from your HRM department.	15	15.8%	45	47.4%	31	32.6%	4	4.2%	0	0%	3.75	.771	Satisfied
2. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from our website.	3	3.2%	36	37.9%	46	48.4%	10	10.5%	0	0%	3.34	.709	Neutral
3. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from our brochures	2	2.1%	38	40.0%	47	49.5%	8	8.4%	0	0%	3.36	.667	Neutral
4. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from visits of our sales representative at your company.	16	16.8%	38	40.0%	36	37.9%	5	5.3%	0	0%	3.68	.816	Satisfied
5. The amount of information you received from our promotional channels was adequate.	6	6.3%	28	29.5%	56	58.9%	5	5.3%	0	0%	3.37	.685	Neutral
Total											3.50	.540	Satisfied

From table 9, the respondents' satisfaction toward promotions is at a satisfactory level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$).

The respondents were satisfied most with the service of JPM's Human Resources Management (HRM) staff in keeping the learners informed of the language courses offered ($\bar{X} = 3.75$) whereas their satisfaction with the information gained from JPM's website was at the lowest level despite the fact that the mean was still high ($\bar{X} = 3.34$).

This implied that the respondents at beginner to lower-intermediate levels prefer a two-way communication with sales representatives and course guidance personnel. Their language ability is probably not fluent enough to read English-language websites or brochures introducing English language courses.

4.6 Problems and Suggestions

In this section, the outstanding problems in taking VLS courses were presented based on the open-ended opinions given by 37 respondents.

In terms of products, it was found out that the respondents needed time to interact orally and to do written assignments with their tutors. Therefore, face-to-face interactions between respondents and tutors were highly required by most respondents.

In terms of places, the respondents indicated in the questionnaire that the program were difficult to access due to the password validity and computer problems. JPM's support staff should have informed the customers to firstly access the program within seven days after they had got the password to avoid the problem.

In terms of promotions, only two respondents complained that sales representatives did not present clear information on product features, course syllabus and pricing.

In summary, most informants were satisfied with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. Since they took / were taking beginners' courses, they found friendly and informative conversations with their personal tutors, service coordinators and sales representatives satisfactory.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The research has been conducted to examine the satisfaction of corporate clients with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. and to identify the factors affecting JPM Language Solutions corporate clients' satisfaction with a focus on the marketing mix elements. The samples consisted of 95 respondents. The data gained was analyzed and presented in terms of statistical mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that most respondents felt satisfied with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. regarding products, places, promotions and prices respectively. However, most of the respondents who studied at the foundation level suggested that clear explanation, friendly interaction with their personal tutors and technical support staff as well as sales representatives mostly contributed to their satisfaction and loyalty to JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd.

In this chapter, the conclusion, limitation of the study and suggestions for further studies were presented.

5.1 Conclusion

Ability to communicate effectively in English is currently essential for international business communication. English language training is very much needed. However, most employees might not have enough time to take language classes. Therefore, distance learning programs in the English language have been introduced to lessen the problems of a lack of time for classroom language learning. In this study, the researcher surveyed the level of customers' satisfaction on the distance learning program in English. The participants of the Vektor courses offered by JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. were purposively

used as a case study to evaluate the level of satisfaction in terms of products, prices, places, and promotions.

With regard to the overall level of satisfaction, 50 out of 95 respondents or 52.6% were attending English language courses at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. when this study was conducted. Additionally, the number of the informants who took / were taking two and three English language courses at JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. equally stood at 17.8% or 17 respondents. However, it was found out that the majority of the students taking business English, writing, and conversation courses, amounting to 51.2%, 17.0%, and 29.2% respectively, stood at foundation levels. The respondents could not effectively study English on their own because of their limitation of English knowledge. Personal tutors, therefore, play an important role in their learning of the English language.

Apart from the overall assessment of the customers' satisfaction, this research investigated the level of customers' satisfaction in terms of the 4Ps of marketing mix: products, prices, places, and promotions.

With regard to *products*, the questionnaire was designed to assess the respondents' opinions on (1) the content of textbooks, (2) the accessibility of CD-ROM which was used as teaching aids, (3) the personal tutors, (4) the course length, and (5) the training needs of the respondents. At the macro level, the mean score of the JPM products stood at 3.95 with the Standard Deviation of 0.496. This suggests that most respondents were likely to be satisfied with JPM's products. However, the mean score of satisfaction with the personal tutor, the training needs of the respondents, the contents of textbooks, the accessibility of CD-ROM, and the course length stood at 4.11, 3.81, 3.76, 3.61 and 2.11 respectively. It could plausibly be that the excellent performance of personal tutors mostly affected the higher level of product satisfaction. Likewise, the largest group of respondents (56.8%) indicated that the time they spent on taking a course with JPM was

sufficient in order to be able to communicate effectively. Therefore, it is plausible that personal tutors were an integral part for building one-on-one interaction and improving the respondents' speaking and writing proficiency of English. The importances of personal tutors on customers' satisfaction found in the study were in compliance with that of Supakarn (2006) and Sirin (2002). Both of them carried out a study on customers' satisfaction towards tutoring business through studying expectations. The findings of their research revealed that decision making in choosing a tutorial school was mostly affected by the reputation and quality of personnel, followed by a variety and attraction of the courses.

In terms of *prices*, the findings revealed that the mean score of the satisfaction with JPM pricing stood at 3.43 with the Standard Deviation of 0.84. It is possible that most respondents were satisfied with JPM's products. However, it was outstanding that 35 and 40 respondents, which accounted for 36.8% and 42.1%, respectively rated the JPM pricing as good and fair respectively. It could plausibly be generalized that nearly 80% of the respondents were reluctant to say that the prices of the JPM language courses were reasonable. Reasonable pricing is probably one of the important factors in selecting of a language school. These findings are in accordance with those of Rarin (2002) and Sirin (2002) that lower prices, with discounts and premiums, could be used to persuade the students to make decisions of any language courses.

Regarding *places*, the degree of customers' satisfaction from three perspectives: accessibility of JPM's products or CD-ROM, interpersonal interaction with support staff, and degree of advice given by the private tutor. The mean score of customers' satisfaction toward *places* stood at 3.74 with the Standard Deviation of 0.580. It seems that most respondents were satisfied with JPM's *places*. However, the average scores of the respondents' satisfaction of CD-ROM, JPM's support staff, and its personal tutors stood at 3.87, 3.71, and 3.65 respectively. Such findings suggested that personal communication

and human contact played important roles in the success of Vektor English Language Teaching.

Regarding *promotions*, each respondent was asked how satisfied s/he was with the communication done by HRM Department staff, with the information from JPM's website, with JPM's brochures, or with JPM's sales representatives. The two highest mean scores were found in the category of HRM Department ($\bar{X} = 3.75$), and JPM's sales representative ($\bar{X} = 3.68$). This can be implied that students at the foundation to lower-intermediate levels preferred a two-way communication. Customers enjoyed communicating with sales representatives and course guidance personnel. The respondents' limited language proficiency appeared to prove an obstacle to studying via JPM's English-language websites or brochures. Similarly, the knowledge received from JPM's promotion channels was found satisfactory, with the mean score of 3.37. It repeatedly showed that a two-way communication could probably be the best promotional channel of the language courses for beginners.

In summary, most respondents were satisfied with the products of JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. However, at the time when this research was undertaken, most respondents were studying at the beginning level. Hence, clear and detailed information and a friendly interaction with their personal tutors and technical support staff as well as sales representatives probably had the most positive effect on their satisfaction and loyalty to JPM language school.

5.2 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study is open to improvement in several ways, some of which are considered here.

1. This study focused only on the distance language learning proposed by Vektor System, which mostly emphasized telephone interaction and e-mail feedbacks. Further studies might include exploring of the e-learning system with a one-on-one interaction with the support of advanced IT equipment like web-camera or video conference.
2. The respondents' answers were primarily collected from a rating-scale questionnaire. Not much data was gained from the open-ended questions. It is suggested that classroom observation and in-depth interviews should be conducted to gain more reliable answers.
3. The participants in this case study consisted of 95 students. Additionally, the length of the data collection of this study was limited to one month. It is suggested that the period be extended to two to three months in order to enhance the longitudinal element of the research design. Future studies might include a wider range of participants to substantiate the research results.

Although the researcher found some problems in her study, she is still confident that studies on customers' satisfaction were useful to a company or an organization because of the following reasons (Infosurv. Inc., 2007):

- Customer satisfaction studies or surveys can identify areas of a business that do not meet customer expectations. Not only are customer satisfaction surveys quick and inexpensive to produce, they are also guaranteed to yield invaluable results.
- Companies can then use the data to implement and revise policies and procedures.
- Customer satisfaction surveys can be an important first step towards achieving the

ultimate goals of exceptional customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. They also provide a foundation in which customer relationships can be built.

- Customer satisfaction surveys encourage clients and customers to give business vital feedback on issues that can affect customer retention, including overall satisfaction, product-specific satisfaction, brand perception, pricing, timeliness of delivery, customer service satisfaction, returns and exchange process satisfaction, and interest in new products and service.

The following topics about customers' satisfaction for further studies are recommended:

1. A study of customer satisfaction on JPM distance-learning English language courses at different levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.
2. A study of customer satisfaction on JPM distance-learning English language courses of different language skills: business English, reading, writing, and conversation.
3. A comparative study of customer satisfaction with the Vektor distance - learning system offered by JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. and the STOU distance-learning system proposed by Sukhothai Thammathiraj Open University.
4. A comparative study of customer satisfaction with the distance learning programs offered by Sukhothai Thammathiraj Open University and those of Ramkhamkaeng University.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
COMPETENCE CHART

Competence Chart

English

LEVEL	VEKTOR COURSES	PRESENTING	REPORTED SPEECH	WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	SOCIAL LANGUAGE OR CONVERSATION SKILLS	PLANS AND SCHEDULES	MANAGEMENT SKILLS	LISTENING - UNDERSTANDING	GATHERING INFORMATION (INPUT)	GIVING INFORMATION (OUTPUT)
		Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker	Native Speaker
9	English Level 9	Can make a formal business presentation organize a presentation make formal and informal speeches in a business environment	Can report main points of a meeting/work project conduct detailed interviews	Can write business correspondence, such as presentation material and reports: handouts, reports, abstracts, summaries	Can interact in a foreign environment with the ease of a native speaker	Can work in an international project group applying meeting procedure, to formulate decisions and make precise plans	Can effectively organize and manage international speakers chair a meeting	Can listen to speakers of mixed nationalities with no difficulty	Can has no difficulty in getting information from any source: telephone, reports, meetings scan & digest written material	Can is at ease giving information in all professional situations, only difficulties in social or personal areas
8	English Level 8	Can give after-dinner speech and informal speeches of thanks present findings of reports surveys etc.	Can understand and report earlier conversations-including telephone conversations report the collective views of a group	Can write meetings correspondence, such as agenda and minutes questionnaires and surveys	Can play host to business contacts and colleagues participate in informal discussions and state viewpoint	Can participate within a group to decide on a course of action make detailed plans	Can initiate effective interventions in a discussion including defending and criticizing procedures and results	Can listen to two or more native speakers when not directly addressed & follow the discussion	Can get detailed info. from native speakers on job & general topics perceive certain nuances of meaning in voice tones	Can readily give explanatory information evaluate why and for what reason
7	English Level 7	Can make speech of introduction and thanks present itinerary of a trip present recommendations & evaluations of activities	Can understand and report opinions and impressions of a native speaker understand nuances of a native speaker	Can write letters and invitations: letters of enquiry letters of confirmation letters of complaint letters of adjustment circular letters	Can carry on a conversation with a native speaker tell and understand some jokes	Can plan within a group disagree and propose alternative means of carrying out a plan	Can state own ideas but has difficulty defending them against opposition	Can follow native speakers on non-professional subjects begin to pick up nonverbal inferences	Can get all information needed for survival in the English speaking environment interview native speakers on general subjects	Can sustain a conversation about the job or personal tastes with a native speaker
6	English Level 6	Can present a plan for a project present a job description	Can deliver messages clearly and succinctly, face to face and over the telephone	Can write job application communication: application forms, form filling personal statements, job advertisements, covering letters, speculative letters, letters of acceptance or rejection	Can act as guide to a visitor issue invitations and make suggestions	Can discuss a detailed plan with a native speaker discuss alternative arrangements	Can state requirements in detail lead a small group to get elementary jobs carried out	Can sustain listening even when meaning is lost, going on to pick up thread understand passages of technical and general English	Can read articles & newspapers for general meaning understand statements of personal views understand main facts from a normal telephone conversation	Can give adequate information about job give necessary info for plans and arrangements
5	English Level 5	Can introduce him/herself present prompted by graphics	Can understand and report a sequence of actions understand and report simple arrangements	Can write long business communication: memoranda, facsimiles emails, schedules, notices	Can sustain "cocktail party chatter" order a meal and respond to suggestions	Can confirm, postpone or cancel an appointment	Can give directions to get a job done propose a simple idea	Can listen to short situational dialogues in colloquial language and extract general meaning	Can sustain chain of relevant questions read work brochures	Can state personal likes, preferences and expectations
4	English Level 4	Can describe people, places, things and actions explain simply how something works	Can report simple statements using past tense and reported speech	Can write short business communication: telephone messages, catalogues, price lists, order forms, orders	Can respond to introductions and invitations respond to offers of food and drink	Can make simple appointments understand and deal with simple plans	Can express wishes and give simple directions	Can understand simulated dialogues understand simple information from native speakers	Can with preparation, ask for basic information over phone read technical instructions	Can give factual & explanatory information in answer to simple questions communicate simple future intentions
3	English Level 3	Can describe ongoing activities from a series of pictures	Can report facts using reported speech	Can fill in detailed personal information on forms- job title, nationality etc.	Can ask and respond to basic questions	Can state time & place for appointments	Can control a machine from a mixture of written and spoken instructions make simple requests	Can understand simple sentences and extract basic information	Can follow simple instructions ask simple questions	Can give factual information dealing with time & place relate simple past facts
2	English Level 2	Can describe the relationship & position of objects in a picture	Can report simple habitual actions	Can fill in limited personal information on forms- name, birth date etc.	Can perform introductions give basic greetings	Can knows calendar dates, 12 and 24 hour clock	Can control a machine from written graphic instructions	Can understand simple phrases	Can prepare simple information questions	Can present and give basic facts on a subject which is familiar
1	English Level 1	Can name limited objects and actions	Can report simple facts	Can write name and address	Can give name and very basic greetings if prompted	Can knows days of the week, months of the year, time of day	Can knows the names of office equipment	Can react appropriately to simple commands differentiate which language is being spoken	Can knows the meaning of wh- question words (what, where, when, why, etc.)	Can give correct YES/NO answers to simple questions
		Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner	Absolute Beginner

APPENDIX B :
QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to survey the level of satisfaction of JPM Language Solutions' corporate clients in relation to the marketing mix. Please be assured that all information will be kept strictly confidential.

Part 1: Course/s and Level Information

Are you presently studying with JPM English Solutions Co., Ltd.?

____ YES ____ NO

Below, please indicate all VLS courses that you have completed or are presently taking. Indicate the completion date for the completed courses. Put no date for any course in progress.

VLS Business English	Date Completed	VLS writing	Date Completed	VLS Conversation	Date Completed
-----Level 1	-----	-----Level 1	-----	-----Level 1	-----
-----Level 2	-----	-----Level 2	-----	-----Level 2	-----
-----Level 3	-----	-----Level 3	-----	-----Level 3	-----
-----Level 4	-----	-----Level 4	-----	-----Level 4	-----
-----Level 5	-----	-----Level 5	-----	-----Level 5	-----
-----Level 6	-----	-----Level 6	-----	-----Level 6	-----
-----Level 7	-----	-----Level 7	-----	-----Level 7	-----
-----Level 8	-----	-----Level 8	-----	-----Level 8	-----
-----Level 9	-----	-----Level 9	-----	-----Level 9	-----

Directions: Please read each question and put a check mark in the blank of your choice. Please evaluate JPM Language Solutions' products, prices, places and promotions of service delivery and promotions to help us better serve you and your company in the future.

Part 2: Product: Vektor Language System (VLS)

How satisfied are you with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. in terms of the following items?

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1. The levels of difficulty of the courses are in line with your language ability.					
2. The content in the textbooks and supplementary materials covers the course syllabus.					
3. The content in the textbooks and supplementary materials is updated with business situations.					
4. The CD-ROMs used in this course are practicable and easy to access.					
5. A personal tutor's instruction showed that h/she was knowledgeable in the subject matter.					
6. A personal tutor covered all the topics listed in the assignments.					
7. A personal tutor called you to give instruction as scheduled.					
8. A personal tutor provided you opportunities to practice the language tasks.					
9. You felt more relaxed talking with the tutor in English when compared with face-to-face communication.					
10. A personal tutor encouraged you to speak English with him/her.					
11. A personal tutor provided clear and full explanations to you in a friendly manner whenever you had a language problem.					
12. A personal tutor provided meaningful and timely feedback to you.					
13. The time you spent on taking a course/s with JPM was adequate for you to communicate effectively.					

Continued

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
14. You have acquired the skills needed to improve your English ability while attending this course.					
15. The knowledge gained from this course met your professional needs.					

Part 3: Price

How satisfied are you with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. in terms of the following items?

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
16. The amount of money spent for a course is reasonable.					

Part 4: Place

How satisfied are you with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. in terms of the following items?

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
17. The approach allowed you to study at your convenience.					
18. You could ask for a tutor's advice during office and post-office hours.					
19. JPM's support staff answered your calls politely and quickly and passed your messages to your personal tutor.					

Part 5: Promotion

How satisfied are you with JPM Language Solutions Co., Ltd. in terms of the following items?

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
20. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from your HRM department.					

Continued

Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
21. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from our website.					
22. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from our brochures.					
23. You were well informed of JPM's language courses from visits of our sales representative at your company.					
24. The amount of information you received from our promotional channels was adequate.					

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

Part 6: Problems and Suggestions

1. What problems did you find while taking JPM's English course/s?

2. What suggestions can you offer to help make JPM programs better?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION.

VITAE

VITAE

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