

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROMOTION MIX ON CONSUMERS' DECISION MAKING
REGARDING THE USE OF A THAI MOBILE PHONE NETWORK

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

TIPPAWAN KITTIMAITRI

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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อิทธิพลของการส่งเสริมการตลาดที่มีผลต่อผู้บริโภค
ในการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือของไทย

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

ทิพวรรณ กิตติไมตรี

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

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สารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความสำคัญของการส่งเสริมการตลาด และอิทธิพลของ
การส่งเสริมการตลาดที่มีผลต่อผู้บริโภคในการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ การวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้
ใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างจากนักศึกษาปีที่หนึ่งของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ องค์กรฯ จำนวน 100 คน
ระหว่างวันที่ 17 ถึง 21 ธันวาคม 2551 โดยใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือในการวิจัย ผู้วิจัยนำข้อมูลที่ได้
มาวิเคราะห์และแสดงผลเป็นค่าร้อยละ คะแนน และค่าเฉลี่ย

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ทางตรง การส่งเสริมการขาย การให้ข่าวและประชาสัมพันธ์ และการขายโดยใช้พนักงานขาย เป็นปัจจัย
สำคัญซึ่งมีผลต่อผู้บริโภคในการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการส่งเสริม
การขายมีผลต่อผู้บริโภคมากที่สุด และการตลาดทางตรงมีผลน้อยที่สุดต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภค
นอกจากนี้ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการโฆษณาผ่านโทรทัศน์และการส่งเสริมการขายโดยเสนออัตราค่าโทรศัพท์ใน
ราคาถูก มีบริการเสริมพิเศษเป็นแพคเกจในราคาประหยัดมีผลต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภค สำหรับ
การตลาดทางตรง ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือที่แนะนำการบริการผ่านข้อความทางโทรศัพท์มีผลต่อการ
ตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ นอกจากนี้ในด้าน การให้ข่าวและประชาสัมพันธ์ การให้ข่าวผ่าน
สื่อ เอกสารแจกเพื่อรายงานข่าวสารของระบบเครือข่าย การเป็นผู้สนับสนุนให้กับรายการโทรทัศน์ร่วมกับ
ผู้สนับสนุนผลิตภัณฑ์อื่น และการจัดกิจกรรมพิเศษเนื่องในโอกาสต่างๆ เพื่อโฆษณาสินค้า เป็นเครื่องมือที่
มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภค และผลการศึกษาพบว่า การขายโดยใช้พนักงานขายเพื่อเสนอสินค้าและ
การบริการ ณ ศูนย์บริการและย่านการค้า ตลอดจนการเสนออัตราค่าโทรศัพท์และบริการต่างๆ ผ่าน
ทางโทรศัพท์มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือของผู้บริโภค

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROMOTION MIX ON CONSUMERS' DECISION MAKING
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AN ABSTRACT

BY

TIPPAWAN KITTIMAITRI

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Tippawan Kittimaitri. (2009). *The Influence of the Promotion Mix on Consumers' Decision Making Regarding the Use of a Thai Mobile Phone Network*. Master's Project, M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Project Advisor: Ms. Sopin Chantakloi.

This study was aimed to explore what elements of the promotion mix consumers consider important and to investigate how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. One hundred first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University at Ongkharak were randomly selected to respond to the questionnaires from 17th to 21st December 2008. The data were analyzed by using percentage, points, and mean.

The results of the study revealed that five elements of the promotion mix concerning advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling played important roles in influencing consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. Sales promotion was the most influential element, while direct marketing had the least impact on consumers' decision. Specifically, it was found that advertising through TV commercials and sales promotion offering special subscription rate and special service package at reduced rates were the most influential tools that highly affected consumers' decision. In addition, direct marketing introducing network services via SMS influenced consumers to use a mobile phone network. Also, in terms of publicity/public relations, news of network services in media, press releases, being sponsorship of TV programs and other events with broad sponsor appeal, and production of network specific events were the influential tools on consumers' decision. Finally, personal selling offering products and services at service centers and shopping areas, and telemarketing suggesting network services influenced consumers' purchasing decision regarding the use of a mobile phone network.

The master's project advisor, chair of business English for International Communication and oral defense committee have approved this master's project *The Influence of the Promotion Mix on Consumers' Decision Making Regarding the Use of a Thai Mobile Phone Network* by Tippawan Kittimaitri as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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March....., 2009

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication in everyday life is worldwide. People can contact to other persons around the world by using communication technologies. They use information and communications technology (ICT) to improve the productivity in the workplace, ways of communicating between businesses and with each other, and many other facets of daily activity. The world has become smaller because of the continuously exponential advances in ICT (Information and Communications Technology, n.d.). In the early 21st century, people have created wireless networks and use increasingly more miniaturized electronic equipment such as mobile phones, and laptops to transfer vast amounts of information, so they can interact with each other wherever they are (Lovelock & Wright, 2002, p. 20).

In 1998, mobile phones were a mass media channel of the world and gradually became more deeply integrated into a way of life. Now mobile phones are an important tool for social interaction among people in terms of business and personal matters. According to the number of mobile phones users, the total number in the world was estimated at 2.14 billion in 2005. The user count reached 2.7 billion by the end of 2006, and 3.3 billion by November, 2007. The number shows that the users reach over half the planet's population. This figure is expected to increase to 90% by the year 2010 (Wikipedia, 2008).

In Thailand, communication technology is developing and expanding. Mobile phones are considered to be a human need in the early 21st century. According to Kasikorn Research Center (2005), mobile technologies are omnipresent in everyday life. In 2004, the number of mobile phone users grew steadily and mobile phone subscribers totaled 27.5 million, rising around 24 percent over the year before. In 2005, active mobile phone numbers increased to 32 million, increasing 16 percent or representing 52 percent of the country's population. In 2007, mobile phone users increased by 13.2 percent. The increasing percentage of mobile phone users shows that mobile phone businesses grow continually.

According to Srisap (2007), a specialist in the telecommunications and broadcasting act and regulation in Thailand, Thai mobile phone networks are divided to the stated-owned enterprise group and the private enterprise group. Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) and Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT Telecom) are the state-owned enterprises. The private enterprise group includes Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited (AIS), Total Access Communication Public Company Limited (DTAC), True Corporation Public Company Limited (True Move), Hutchison CAT Wireless Multimedia Limited (Hutch), and Thai Mobile which is a joint venture company of TOT and CAT. Two payment systems of mobile phone networks are provided, pre-paid and post-paid.

As mobile phone network businesses in Thailand continue to grow, the companies meet demands to expand and upgrade their networks. It is inevitable that the increasing participation of mobile phone network businesses has brought some competitive element into the markets (Malisuwan, Kasemsan, Malisuwan, & Phuangthong, 2006). According to Leppäniemi and Karjaluo (2005), the competition in mobile phone networks is becoming

fiercer. The important concern of mobile phone networks is how to increase and retain consumer value. Marketers spend increasing amounts of money on marketing activity, especially, on the promotion mix consisting of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling. Additionally, they asserted that the promotion mix can effectively increase sales and also retain the customer value.

The growth rate and the promotional strategy of mobile phone networks in Thailand are interesting for marketing research. Therefore, several studies have been conducted to explore different aspects of the mobile phone networks in Thailand. For example, Songthanapitak (2003) studied what marketing communication factors focusing on advertising and sales promotion influenced consumers on using GSM mobile phone. The researcher concluded that the advertising through TV commercials, personal media through friends, colleagues and salesmen, and sales promotion by discounting the service charge in each month influenced consumers on using GSM mobile phone.

Furthermore, Lertdechdecha (2004) investigated the visual language used in telecom advertising of Orange telecommunication network on late adolescents. Her study focused on advertising as it is one element of the promotional strategy. The result revealed that advertising played a significant role for mobile phone networks, and teenagers were very much influenced by TV commercials and advertising.

In summary, since mobile phones are an important tool for people to contact with others, they have become more deeply integrated into ways of life. Obviously, mobile phone network businesses continually and rapidly grow, and these businesses are interested by marketers who want to share the mobile phone network market. According to Leppäniemi and Karjaluoto (2005), the competition in mobile phone networks is becoming fiercer.

Therefore, to increase sales and retain the consumer value, mobile phone network providers have been emphasizing the promotion mix, one of the marketing strategies.

According to the rapid growth of mobile phone network businesses, it is very interesting to study the marketing strategy employed by mobile phone networks. Hence, this study is proposed to explore the marketing strategy of mobile phone networks focusing on the influence of the promotion mix that affect the consumers when purchasing a mobile phone network.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the importance of the elements of the promotion mix and its impact on consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.
2. To investigate the influence of the promotion mix on consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network.

Research Questions

1. What elements of the promotion mix do consumers consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network?
2. How does the promotion mix influence consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network?

Significance of the Study

As mobile phone users continually increase, the competitive environment in mobile phone networks has intensified. The findings of this study will reveal what elements of the promotion mix and how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. Understanding of consumers' opinions towards mobile phone networks will be useful for marketing planners of mobile phone networks who want to manage and improve their promotional strategy.

Scope of the Study

This research aims to study what elements of the promotion mix and how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. According to the promotional strategy introduced by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004), five elements of the promotion mix including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling were investigated in this study.

The research instrument was the questionnaire designed by the researcher. During 17 – 21 December, 2008, the questionnaires were randomly distributed to 100 first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) at Ongkharak. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked questions concerning five elements of the promotion mix in order to indicate consumers' opinions on the promotional strategy of mobile phone networks.

Definition of Terms

The terms in this study are defined as follows:

Mobile phone network	An organization that provide their subscribers with access to mobile phones and use of domestic and/or international telecom infrastructure
The promotion mix	Communication by marketers that informs, persuades, and reminds potential buyers of a product in order to influence their opinion or elicit a response and use of the element of promotion: advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2004, p. 16)
Advertising	Any paid form of non-personal communication that mobile phone networks use to advertise their products and services including TV commercials, radio commercials, printed materials, and billboards
Direct marketing	A promotional tool that mobile phone network providers communicate directly with target customers in order to advertise mobile phone networks by introducing their service via short messages (SMS), E-mail, direct mail, and web sites

Sales promotion	Promotions that mobile phone network providers provide extra value to stimulate consumers to make a purchase by offering special subscription rates, special service packages at reduced rates, distributing free sim cards, setting sweepstakes and other prizes, and providing exhibitions, fairs and trade shows
Publicity/public relations	Announcement of mobile phone networks that is not directly paid for by the company including news of mobile phone network in media, press releases, sponsorship of TV programs and other events with broad sponsor appeal, production of network specific events, and charitable donations
Personal selling	A form of person-to-person communication in which a seller of mobile phone network providers attempts to persuade prospective consumers to buy products such as sim cards, pre-paid cards, use services such as mobile to mobile money transfer, ticket reservations, and offer service charge rate and other services over the telephone

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explores the related literature to provide concepts and theories as the guidelines for the current research covering three major sections. First, it serves to establish the significance for this study through studying the definition of consumer behaviors. Second, it provides the marketing mix and the promotion mix used for exploring consumers' opinions. Finally, it examines the related previous research concerning mobile phone networks.

Consumer Behaviors

Consumer behaviors are the study of individual consumers' characteristics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. The study of consumers helps organizations improve their marketing strategies and design strategies suitably for consumers (Perner, 2008). The definition of consumer behaviors focuses on understanding how and why consumers behave. Some quality experts define consumer behaviors as follows:

Peter and Olson (1990) define consumer behaviors as the dynamic interaction of cognition, behavior, and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives (p. 5).

In addition, G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) define consumer behaviors as the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services to satisfy their needs and desires (p. 105).

In brief, consumer behaviors are characteristics of individual consumers such as perceptions, attitudes, and activities. Consumers behave to search for, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services. If they evaluate that they receive according to their expectation, they are satisfied and make re-purchase in the future.

Marketing Mix and Promotion Mix

Marketing Mix

Marketers understand consumer behaviors, the target market's needs, wants, and demands. The marketing mix is tactical marketing tools and the set of controllable for marketers to blend to produce the response it wants in the target market (Kotler, 2003, p. 29). According to Lamp, Hair and McDaniel (2000), the marketing mix refers to product, price, place (distribution), and promotion designed to produce mutually satisfying exchanges with a target market. The marketing mix plays significance for marketers to approach the target market. Each element of the marketing mix is summarized as follows:

Product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption and that might satisfy a want or need. Broadly, product includes tangible and intangible goods. It may involve physical objects, services, or ideas.

Price is the amount of money customers have to pay to obtain the product. In theory, price can be changed quickly according to the four marketing mix elements and price is really determined by the discovery of what customers perceive through the value of the item on sale.

Place (distribution) is concerned with making products available when and where customers want them. It involves all the business activities concerned with storing and transporting raw materials or finished products.

Promotion includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. Promotion's role in the marketing mix is to bring about mutually satisfying exchanges with target markets by informing, educating, persuading, and reminding them of the benefits of an organization or a product.

The marketing manager can control each component of the marketing mix in order to gain advantages over competitors and best serve the needs and wants of a particular target market segment (pp. 44-45).

Promotion Mix

Promotion is one basic element of the marketing mix. The promotion mix is a promotional strategy, designed to inform and persuade customers and potential customers to buy the product or service. The objectives are to increase sales and to increase buyer preference for the product or the service (Stanley, 1977, p. 103). According to G. Belch and M. Belch (2004), the promotion mix plays a significant role in businesses and becomes an integral part of social and economic. Consumers generally experience different kinds of the

promotion mix such as product samples, coupons, contests, sweepstakes, premiums, rebates, and allowances and discounts to retailers. The increasing importance of the promotion mix reflects the efforts of expansion-minded marketers to take advantage of growth opportunities to get into the marketing (pp. 4-5).

However, according to Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2004), the promotional strategy is closely related to the process of communication. Companies should understand the nature of the communication process, particularly in the marketing. They can use the promotional strategy to increase sales effectively. Communication can be verbal, nonverbal, or a combination of both and can be divided into two major categories. Firstly, interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication and word-of-mouth between two or more people. Secondly, mass communication refers to communicating a concept or message to large audiences such as television or newspapers (p. 470). Figure 1 shows elements of communication related to the promotion mix.

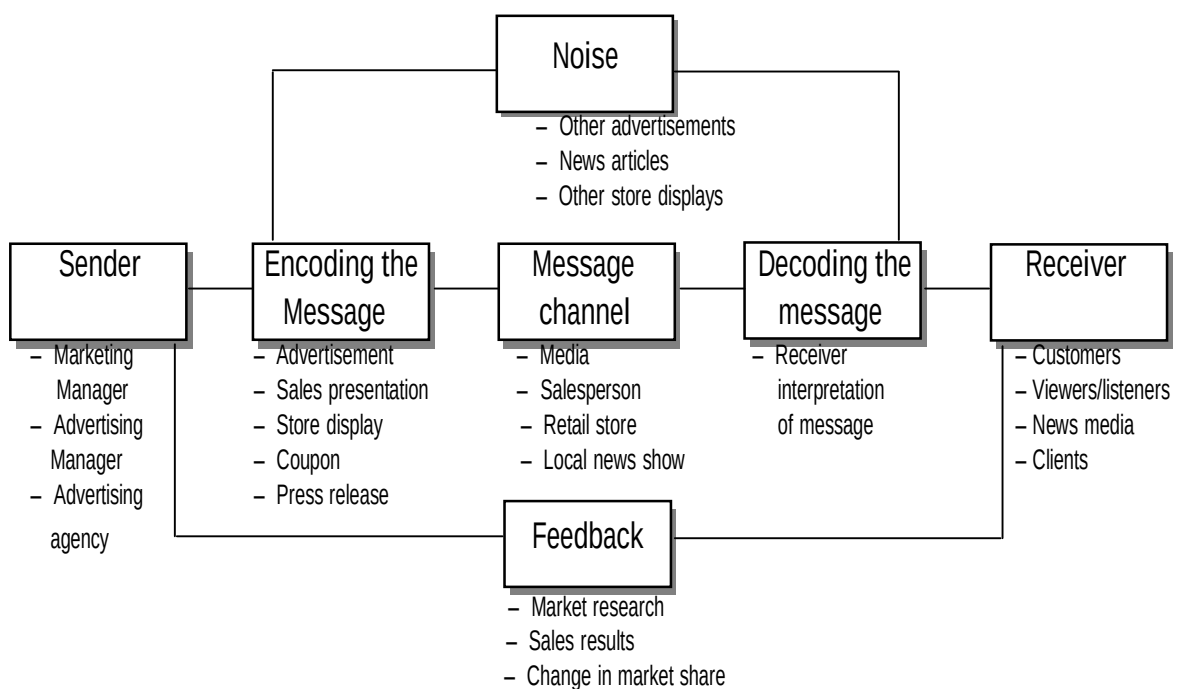


Figure 1 Elements of communication (Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2004, p. 470)

Communication process begins with a sender. The sender is the originator of the message, who may be parent, a friend, or a salesperson. For an advertisement or press release, the sender is the company itself. Encoding is the conversion of the sender's ideas and thoughts into a message, usually in the form of words or signs. Message transmission requires a channel of communication: a voice, radio, newspaper, or other communication medium. Noise may happen in this stage to interfere with, distort, or slow down the transmission of information. The receivers are customers who marketers want to communicate their message through a channel. Decoding is the interpretation of the language and symbols sent by the source. Finally, feedback that may be verbal or nonverbal is the part of the receiver's response communicated back to the sender (Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2000, pp. 470-475).

G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) explained that traditionally the promotional mix has included four elements: advertising, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. Moreover, direct marketing is one element of the promotion mix because in the present day, marketers use it to communicate with their target markets. Each element of the promotion mix is viewed as an integrated marketing communications (IMC) tool that plays a distinctive role in an IMC program (p. 16). Elements of the promotion mix are illustrated in Figure 2.

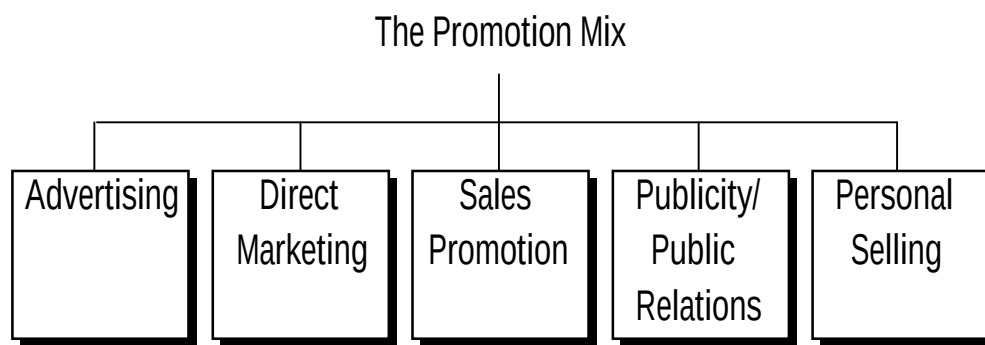


Figure 2 Elements of the promotion mix (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2004, p. 16)

Each element may take on a variety of forms and has certain advantages as follows:

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, p. 494). In addition, according to Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2004), traditional media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, direct mail, billboards, and transit cards (advertisements on buses, taxis, and at bus stop) are most commonly used to transmit advertisements to consumers. However, marketers are finding many new ways to send their advertisements to consumers in new and innovative way, such as with interactive video technology located in department stores, supermarkets, and through the Web sites. One of the primary benefits of advertising is its ability to communicate to a large number of people at one time, but the total cost to advertise is typically very high (p. 467).

Moreover, G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) asserted some significance of the elements of the promotion mix including direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. They explained that direct marketing refers to organizations

that communicate directly with target customers to generate a response and a transaction. A product or service is promoted that the consumer can purchase directly from the manufacturer. Direct marketing is much more than direct mail and mail order catalogs. It involves a variety of activities, including database management, direct selling, and direct-response ads through direct mail, the Internet, broadcast and print media. The advantage of this promotional tool makes sellers can access to consumers who they could not reach through other channel. Sellers and consumers can interact immediately (pp. 18-20).

In terms of sales promotion, it is defined as marketing activities that provide extra value or incentives to the sales force, the distributors, or the ultimate consumer and can stimulate immediate sales. Sales promotion is generally divided into two major categories: consumer-oriented and trade-oriented activities. Firstly, consumer-oriented sales promotion is targeted to the ultimate user of a product or service and includes couponing, sampling, premiums, rebates, contests, sweepstakes, and various point-of purchase materials. These promotional tools encourage consumers to make an immediate purchase and can stimulate short-term sales. Secondly, trade-oriented sales promotion is targeted toward marketing intermediaries such as wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. Some promotional tools used to encourage consumers are merchandising allowances, price deals, sales contests, and trade shows. Sales promotion invites and rewards response quickly but it includes declining brand loyalty (pp. 21-22).

Regarding publicity/public relations, they are non-personal communications regarding an organization, product, service, or idea not directly paid for by the company. It usually comes in the form of announcement about an organization and its products and services. Public relations can be found in news releases, press conferences, feature

articles, photographs, films, and videotapes. This promotional tool is low cost but it is not always under the control of an organization. Negative stories about a company or its products can damage them (pp. 22-23).

G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) pointed out that personal selling is person-to-person communication in which a seller attempts to assist and persuade prospective consumers to purchase the company's products, services or an idea. Unlike advertising, personal selling involves direct contact between buyer and seller, either face-to-face or through some form of telecommunications such as telephone sales. This interaction makes the communication flexibility; the seller can observe consumers' needs and characteristics and adjust quickly. However, personal selling is also the company's most expensive promotion tool (pp. 23-24).

In addition, Saereerat et al. (2000) summarized the elements of the promotion mix and tools of each element as illustrated in Table 1. They explained that the promotion mix is one basic element of 4Ps of the marketing mix including advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity/public relations (PR), and direct marketing. Management marketers play roles in developing and deciding which tools to use and how to combine them to achieve the organization's marketing and communication objectives (p. 170).

Table 1 Elements of the Promotion Mix and Tools of Each Element

Advertising	Personal Selling	Sales Promotion	Publicity and Public Relations (PR)	Direct Marketing
Print and broadcast ads.	Sales presentations	Contests, games, and sweepstakes	Press kits	Catalogs
Packaging outer	Sales meetings	Lotteries	Speeches	Direct mail
Packaging inserts	Telemarketing	Premiums and gifts	Seminars	Telemarketing
Mailings	Incentive programs	Sampling	Annual reports	Electronic
Catalogs	Samples	Fairs and trade shows exhibitions	Charitable donations	Television shopping
Motion pictures		Demonstrations	Sponsorships	Magazine
Magazines		Couponing	Publications	Newspaper
Brochures and booklets		Rebates	Community relations	Radio
Posters and leaflets		Low-interest financing	Lobbyings	Fax mail
Directories		Trade-in allowances	Identify media	E-mail
Reprints of ads.		Trading stamp	Event	Voice mail
Billboards		Tie-ins		Internet
Display signs		Entertainment		
Point-of-purchase displays				
Audio-visual materials				
Symbol and logo				

Source: *Principles of marketing* (Saereerat et al., 2000, p. 170, as cited in Kotler, 2000, p. 351)

To sum up, the promotion mix is one basic element of 4Ps of the marketing mix. Traditionally, the promotion mix contains four elements: advertising, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. In the present day, direct marketing is also one element of the promotion mix. The promotional strategy is closely related to the process of communication because each element of the promotion mix is used to communicate products and/or services to the target group. Therefore, marketers should understand the nature of the communication process, including the sender, encoding, message transmission, noise, the receiver, decoding, and feedback.

Related Previous Research

Several studies have been conducted on mobile phone networks in Thailand. Some research relevant to the current study is presented as follows:

Songthanapitak (2003) studied the attitude and marketing communication factors influencing the decision in using Digital GSM Mobile Phone of Advance Info Service Public Co., Ltd. (PCL). The study was conducted with 400 customers. The research revealed that advertisement media through television, personal media through friends, colleagues and salesmen, and sales promotion by discounting service charge in each month were factors of marketing communication influencing the decision in using Digital GSM Mobile Phone of Advance Info Service Public Co., Ltd.

Thongkrua (2005) compared consumers' decision behavior in buying GSM and DTAC mobile phones in terms of advertising perception and sales promotion. The researcher conducted a survey of 400 respondents, both male and female who used GSM

and DTAC mobile phones in 50 areas in Bangkok. The findings revealed that receiving the media advertising of consumers has influenced the tendency of decision behavior in buying GSM from radio, internet, magazine, and brochure. On the other hand, receiving the media advertising of consumers has influenced consumers in buying DTAC from television. The overall promotion from GSM has influenced the tendency of mobile phone buying more than DTAC. In addition, consumers were satisfied with GSM services regarding service center, service added, officer service, fast services, efficient signal, service charge rate, and call center, whereas consumers were satisfied with DTAC services in terms of call center, service charge rate, customer relation service, service center distribution and efficient signal.

Eljaam (2005) studied customer satisfaction with cellular network performance. The study evaluated several key network attributes commonly surveyed in satisfaction surveys, and also determined the relative impact of each of the variables on satisfaction with network performance. The results revealed that call quality was the highest satisfaction level, followed by network availability, drop calls and coverage. Moreover, multiple regression analysis was applied to examine the effects of each independent variable on network satisfaction and rank relative order of importance. The study concluded that network availability emerged as the most highly correlated predictor to network satisfaction, followed by coverage and call quality.

In conclusion, some previous research had been conducted to survey mobile phone networks focusing on marketing communication factors regarding advertising, personal media, sales promotion and customer satisfaction with mobile phone network performance.

This research differs from the previous research because the research will reveal the influential factors concerning the promotion mix employed by Thai mobile phone networks.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of the research used to assess consumers' opinions on five elements of the promotion mix. Statistical techniques will be applied to evaluate consumers' opinions on the promotion mix. This chapter contains three sections: participants, instrument, and procedures. The details follow.

Participants

The participants of this study were 100 first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) at Ongkharak. Every participant including male and female must own a mobile phone operating by mobile phone networks available in Thailand. The target group was selected to participate in this study according to the following reasons. First, regarding SWU policy, first-year students must study at Ongkharak for the first two semesters, and they must stay at on-campus dormitories during their study at Ongkharak. Generally, the students will need to contact their parents while they are on-campus; they, therefore, individually own at least one mobile phone. Second, since there are some variables, such as age, income, and education, that may affect consumers' decision making, selecting the first-year students as the participants of the study will consequently be able to control some variables in terms of age, income, and education. Finally, at the time of the study, being a

graduate student at SWU, the researcher could conveniently recruit the target group as the sample of the study.

Instrument

A questionnaire was employed as an instrument in this study. The questionnaire based on multiple-choice questions and the standard five-point Likert scale was developed as follows:

The researcher designed the first draft of the questionnaire based on the objectives of the research to explore what elements of the promotion mix and how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. In the questionnaire, the questions were put into different parts according to the research questions.

According to the conceptual model introduced by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004), five elements of the promotion mix was employed to explore what elements of the promotion mix consumers consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

Also, the promotion mix developed by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) was applied to investigate how the promotion mix influences consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network. According to Achyarl (2007), the Likert scale is widely used in survey research of the marketing and often used in questionnaires. The Likert scale is commonly used for opinion polls that are a series of statements where participants are asked to choose their attitude and image. Therefore, the standard five-point Likert scale

was used to explore consumers' opinions on the statements regarding five elements of the promotion mix employed by Thai mobile phone networks. Statistically, the participants' answers to the Likert-scale questions were weighed on the following scales:

5 = Highest, 4 = High, 3 = Moderate, 2 = Low, 1 = Lowest.

To standardize the questionnaire, the researcher had two research experts examine the questionnaire. The feedbacks and suggestions were used to develop a reliable questionnaire. Then the researcher conducted a pilot study to test clarity of the instrument with 20 first-year students at Kasetsart University. Afterwards, the questionnaire was revised according to the pilot survey; any ambiguous wording or unclear statements were clarified and revised. The researcher had the project advisor approve the final draft of the questionnaire before the distribution of the questionnaire for data collection.

The questionnaire used in the study was in Thai because the target group of the study was Thai consumers. However, an English version was provided in the appendices to assist the readers who do not read Thai.

The questionnaire consists of three parts as follows:

Part 1: General Information

The first part gathered the general information concerning the gender of the participants. This assured that the study includes participants of mixed gender.

Part 2: Consumers' Consideration for the Importance of the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

The second part was designed to answer the first research question: What elements of the promotion mix do consumers consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

This part of the questionnaire focused on five elements of the promotion mix. According to the conceptual model introduced by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004), five elements of the promotion mix including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling were explored in this study. The participants were asked to indicate their consideration for the promotion mix when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

Part 3: Opinions on the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

The third part was designed to answer the second research question: How does the promotion mix influence consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network?

This part of the questionnaire consisted of twenty-one statements. According to the promotion mix developed by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004), tools of each element of the promotion mix were asked the participants to indicate their opinion as the following statements.

1. Advertising

1.1 TV commercials

1.2 Radio commercials

1.3 Printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and posters

1.4 Billboards in the public areas

2. Direct Marketing

2.1 Introducing network services via SMS

2.2 Introducing network services via web sites

2.3 Introducing network services via E-mail

- 2.4 Introducing network services via direct mail
- 3. Sales Promotion
 - 3.1 Special subscription rates
 - 3.2 Special service packages at reduced rates
 - 3.3 Free sim card distribution
 - 3.4 Sweepstakes and other prizes
 - 3.5 Exhibitions, fairs and trade shows
- 4. Publicity/Public Relations
 - 4.1 Mobile phone network news in the media
 - 4.2 Press releases
 - 4.3 Sponsorship of TV programs such as game shows and other events with broad sponser appeal such as Euro Football
 - 4.4 Production of network specific events such as “Smart Love” and “Plants for Forests”
 - 4.5 Charitable donations
- 5. Personal Selling
 - 5.1 Sales of products (sim cards, pre-paid cards) by representatives at service centers and shopping areas
 - 5.2 Sales of services (mobile to mobile money transfer, ticket reservations) by representatives at service centers
 - 5.3 Telemarketing sales offering service charge rate and services by sales staffs over the telephone

Procedures

Data Collection

This study used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data collected from literature and research related to this study. During 17 – 21 December, 2008, the primary data were collected from 100 first-year students including male and female regardless of academic majors at SWU at Ongkharak. The convenient sampling was employed in this study. The participants of this study were selected during the lunch time at the main on-campus cafeteria. They must own a mobile phone operating by a mobile phone network available in Thailand. From Monday to Friday, 20 participants were daily randomly selected to complete the questionnaires. Accordingly, at the end of the week, the researcher recruited a total number of 100 participants.

Data Analysis

After receiving all 100 completed questionnaires gathered from first-year students, the questionnaires were analyzed in order to find out their opinions on the influence of the promotion mix. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used as a tool to analyze the data, and the results were presented through descriptive statistics: percentage, points, mean, and standard deviation. In part 1, the percentage was used to present the general information of the participants. In part 2, points were used to represent participants' consideration for the importance of the promotion mix. In part 3, opinions on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks were presented by mean scores. The

researcher adapted the rating scale system introduced by Pisarnbut (2007) to analyze consumers' opinions on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks. Accordingly, in Table 2 the rating scale system was used in order to interpret the participants' opinions on five elements of the promotion mix. Numbers 1 to 5 represent the rating scales in the questionnaire. Range is used to classify the mean scores. Strength of influence is set to measure the influence level on the promotion mix.

Table 2 Rating Scale System

Rating Scale	Range	Strength of Influence
1	1.00 – 1.80	Lowest
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
4	3.41 – 4.20	High
5	4.21 – 5.00	Highest

The findings were presented in tables followed by explanations in Chapter 4. Then discussion and conclusion of the study including limitations and recommendations for further studies were offered in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study sought to explore consumers' opinions on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks with two research questions. The first question investigated what elements of the promotion mix and the second question explored how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. From 17th to 21st December 2008, 100 first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) at Ongkharak were randomly recruited to respond to the questionnaire designed in accordance with the research objectives. The data gathered were analyzed by using Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 and presented in numbered responses (N), percentage (%), points, mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) followed by a descriptive analysis.

The findings are divided into three main parts according to the questionnaire:

- General information of the participants
- Consumers' consideration for the importance of the promotion mix of mobile phone networks
- Opinions on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks

The findings are shown in Tables 3-5, followed by descriptive explanations in the following sections.

General Information of the Participants

Part I of the questionnaire explored the gender of 100 participants at Srinakharinwirot University at Ongkharak to assure that the study included both male and female. The data were summarized and presented in percentage as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 General Information of the Participants

Gender	%
Male	33
Female	67
Total	100

N = 100 participants

As shown in Table 3, 67 of the participants were female, while 33 of them were male. The findings showed that this research included mixed genders of both male and female, and the percentage of female participants was a little higher than that of male's.

Consumers' Consideration for the Importance of the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

Part II of the questionnaire explored the participants' opinions on five elements of the promotion mix based on the conceptual model introduced by G. Belch and M. Belch (2004) including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. The participants were asked to indicate what elements of the promotion

mix they consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network by marking “ 1 ” for the most important element and “ 5 ” for the least important one.

The data were analyzed by the following process. Different points from 1 to 5 were given to each answer according to the level of the importance. Consequently, 5 points was given to answer number one that represented the most important element, 4 points was given to answer number two, 3 points was given to answer number three, 2 points was given to answer number four, and 1 point was given to answer number five representing the least important element. Therefore, if a participant chose sales promotion as number one, then this answer was multiplied by 5 points, and if anyone chose direct marketing as number five, this answer was multiplied by 1 point. Then, the total points of each element were summed up and were ranked from the maximum total points to the minimum one (see table 4).

Table 4 Consumers' Consideration for the Importance of the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

The Promotion Mix	Points
Sales promotion	412
Advertising	390
Personal selling	242
Publicity/public relations	232
Direct marketing	226

According to Table 4, the results showed that the majority of the participants considered that when they made a decision to use a mobile phone network, sales promotion was the most important element of the promotion mix (412 points), followed by advertising (390 points), personal selling (242 points), publicity/public relations (232 points), while direct marketing was the least important element when making a decision to use a mobile phone network (226 points).

Opinions on the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

Part III of the questionnaire investigated the participants' opinions concerning how the promotion mix influences them when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. The data obtained from the responses to twenty-one statements focusing on five elements of the promotion mix. The standard five-point Likert scale was employed to measure the level of the strength of influence. The data gathered in this part were presented in mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) followed by a descriptive analysis. Mean ($\bar{x}$) was used to describe the average degree of the participants' opinions on the influence of the promotion mix of mobile phone networks and interpreted according to the rating scale system introduced by Pisarnbut (2007) (see Table 2), while standard deviation (S.D.) was used to show variation in a distribution of data. The findings of the participants' opinions on the promotion mix were presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Opinions on the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

The Promotion Mix	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Strength of Influence
1. Advertising			
1.1 TV commercials	4.58	.59	Highest
1.2 Radio commercials	3.28	.88	Moderate
1.3 Printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and posters	3.95	.83	High
1.4 Billboards in public areas	3.45	1.02	High
Total	3.82	.58	High
2. Direct Marketing			
2.1 Introducing network services via SMS	3.45	1.06	High
2.2 Introducing network services via web sites	3.33	.99	Moderate
2.3 Introducing network services via E-mail	2.84	.93	Moderate
2.4 Introducing network services via direct mail	2.65	1.06	Moderate
Total	3.07	.75	Moderate
3. Sales Promotion			
3.1 Special subscription rates	4.76	.57	Highest
3.2 Special service packages at reduced rates	4.59	.62	Highest
3.3 Free sim card distribution	3.85	1.02	High
3.4 Sweepstakes and other prizes	3.33	1.12	Moderate
3.5 Exhibitions, fairs and trade shows	3.60	1.01	High
Total	4.03	.57	High

N = 100 participants

Table 5 (Continued)

The Promotion Mix	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Strength of Influence
4. Publicity/Public Relations			
4.1 Mobile phone network news in the media	3.86	.77	High
4.2 Press releases	3.59	.85	High
4.3 Sponsorship of TV programs such as game shows and other events with broad sponsor appeal such as Euro Football	3.52	1.00	High
4.4 Production of network specific events such as "Smart Love" and "Plants for Forests"	3.53	.95	High
4.5 Charitable donations	3.24	1.02	Moderate
Total	3.55	.64	High
5. Personal Selling			
5.1 Sales of products (sim cards, pre-paid cards) by representatives at service centers and shopping areas	3.86	.87	High
5.2 Sales of services (mobile to mobile money transfer, ticket reservations) by representatives at service centers	3.72	.88	High
5.3 Telemarketing sales offering service charge rate and services by sales staffs over the telephone	3.51	1.07	High
Total	3.70	.74	High
Total strength of influence	3.63	.46	High

N = 100 participants

Table 5 presents the participants' opinion on the influence of the promotion mix of mobile phone networks as follows:

Regarding the advertising, four types of media explored were TV commercials, radio commercials, printed materials, and billboards in public areas. The findings showed that advertising through TV commercials was the most influential media that highly affected the participants' decision to use a mobile phone network ($\bar{x} = 4.58$). Additionally, advertising through printed materials ($\bar{x} = 3.95$) and billboards in public areas ($\bar{x} = 3.45$) also highly influenced the participants' decision, whereas advertising through radio commercials moderately influenced the participants' decision to use a mobile phone network ($\bar{x} = 3.28$).

In terms of direct marketing, four tools explored in the study were introducing network services via short message (SMS), web sites, E-mail, and direct mail. The results showed that introducing network services via SMS highly influenced the participants when making a decision to use a mobile phone network ($\bar{x} = 3.45$), while introducing network services via web sites ($\bar{x} = 3.33$), E-mail ($\bar{x} = 2.84$), and direct mail ($\bar{x} = 2.65$) moderately influenced the participants' decision.

Concerning the sales promotion, five promotions investigated in this study were special subscription rates, special service packages at reduced rates, free sim card distribution, sweepstakes and other prizes, and exhibitions, fairs and trade shows. The findings showed that sales promotion by offering special subscription rates ($\bar{x} = 4.76$) and special service packages at reduced rates ($\bar{x} = 4.59$) were the most influential promotions that highly affected the participants to use a mobile phone network. Additionally, free sim

card distribution ($\bar{x} = 3.85$), and exhibitions, fairs and trade shows ($\bar{x} = 3.60$) also highly influenced on the participants' decision; meanwhile, sweepstakes and other prizes moderately influenced the participants when they made a decision to use a mobile phone network ($\bar{x} = 3.33$).

According to the publicity/public relations, five forms of announcement about mobile phone networks were examined. They were mobile phone network news in the media, press releases, sponsorship of TV programs and other events with broad sponsor appeal, production of network specific events, and charitable donations. The results revealed that mobile phone network news in the media ($\bar{x} = 3.86$), press releases ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), production of network specific events ($\bar{x} = 3.53$), and sponsorship of TV programs and other events with broad sponsor appeal ($\bar{x} = 3.52$) highly influenced the participants' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network. Nevertheless, charitable donations moderately influenced the participants' decision making ($\bar{x} = 3.24$).

Finally, considering the personal selling, three tools explored were sales of products by representatives, sales of services by representatives, and telemarketing sales offering service charge rate and services by sales staffs. The findings showed that sales of products by representatives at service centers and shopping areas such as sim cards, pre-paid cards ($\bar{x} = 3.86$), sales of services by representatives at service centers such as mobile to mobile money transfer, ticket reservations ($\bar{x} = 3.72$), and telemarketing sales offering service charge rate and services by sales staffs over the telephone ($\bar{x} = 3.51$) highly influenced the participants when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

In brief, the findings revealed that the overall five elements of the promotion mix highly influenced the participants' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network ($\bar{x} = 3.63$). It was found that four elements of the promotion mix concerning sales promotion ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), followed by advertising ($\bar{x} = 3.82$), personal selling ($\bar{x} = 3.63$), publicity/public relations ($\bar{x} = 3.55$) highly influenced the participants' decision, while direct marketing moderately influenced the participants' decision making ($\bar{x} = 3.07$).

In summary, this chapter presented the results of the study conducted to examine what elements of the promotion mix and how the promotion mix influences consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network, and the findings are summed up as follows:

The findings concluded that the overall five elements of the promotion mix played a significant role in influencing consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network. Sales promotion was the most important element of the promotion mix that influenced consumers' decision making, followed by advertising, personal selling, publicity/public relations, while direct marketing was considered the least important among the five elements. Additionally, the results revealed that sales promotion by offering special subscription rates and special service packages at reduced rates were the most influential promotions. Also, advertising through TV commercials was the most influential media that affected consumers to use a mobile phone network. In addition, personal selling offering products and services such as sim cards, pre-paid cards, mobile to mobile money transfer at service centers and shopping areas, and telemarketing sales offering service charge rate highly influenced consumers to use a mobile phone network. Besides, publicity/public

relations by announcing mobile phone network news in the media, distributing press releases, being sponsorship of TV programs and other events with broad sponsor appeal, and providing production of network specific events highly influenced consumers' decision making. Finally, direct marketing by introducing network services via SMS highly influenced consumers to use a mobile phone network.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter contains four main sections: discussion of major findings, conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies. The details are as follows:

Discussion of Major Findings

The following presents a discussion of the major findings in accordance with the research questions.

Research Question 1: What elements of the promotion mix do consumers consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network?

This study explored five elements of the promotion mix including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. The findings reveal that sales promotion was the most influential element when consumers made a decision to use a mobile phone network, while direct marketing had the least impact on their decision making.

The results of this study regarding sales promotion are similar to those found in Thongkrua's research (2003). Her study revealed that the overall sales promotion from GSM and DTAC had influenced the tendency of mobile phone buying and also induced customers' attention with higher sales volume. Convincingly, Stanley (1977) mentioned that

sales promotion is powerful inducements and devices to persuade consumers to directly purchase a product. Also, sales promotion plays a significant role in increasing the sales of products and consumers. Therefore, it can be concluded that sales promotion was an effective promotional tool in exposing consumers to a product.

Also, the results concerning sales promotion are relevant to what found in Songthanapitak's study (2003). Her study revealed that sales promotion was a factor influencing the decision in using Digital GSM Mobile Phone of Advance Info Service Public Co., Ltd. (PCL). Convincingly, Christ (2009) pointed out that sales promotion not only creates interest in a product, but also make more sales in the marketing. Promotions can build demand by convincing customers to make a purchase as well. Thus, it can be plausibly inferred that sales promotion was the most important element for consumers to consider when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

Regarding the direct marketing, four tools of direct marketing explored in this study were introducing network services via SMS, web sites, E-mail, and direct mail. This study found that direct marketing was the least important element for consumers' decision making. According to the article of Marketing Communications (2008), direct marketing was considered as junk mail in the consumers' perspectives. Supported by Pearson (2008), the disadvantage to direct marketing campaigns is that if they are badly done they can actually make people avoid the product or service instead of buying it. Consequently, it can be assumed that direct marketing might possibly affect consumers' decision to use a mobile phone network.

To conclude, the findings to the first question can be summarized that consumers considered sales promotion to be the most important element when they wanted to use a mobile phone network. One possible explanation is that sales promotion could stimulate consumers' interest in a product. Meanwhile, direct marketing was considered to be the least important element among other elements of the promotion mix since consumers may viewed that information about mobile phone networks in the mail could not attract them to use.

Research Question 2: How does the promotion mix influence consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network?

According to the study, consumers were asked to indicate their opinions on five elements of the promotion mix including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling when they made a decision to use a mobile phone network. The findings regarding each element were presented as follows:

In terms of advertising, the study investigated media used by mobile phone network providers and the findings showed that advertising through TV commercials was the most influential media affecting consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. The findings of the current study concerning advertising media are similarly relevant to Songthanapitak's research (2003). The study revealed that the advertisement media through TV commercial influenced consumers' decision to use Digital GSM Mobile Phone of Advance Info Service Public Co., Ltd. The advertising through TV commercial could approach the group of target consumers easily.

In addition, the findings can be supported by Payakvichien's research (2006) regarding broadcast equipment in Thailand. The major types of media used for advertising campaigns consist of TV commercials, radio commercials, printed materials, outdoor advertising, and movie theatres. The study showed that advertising media affected sales in Thai market, especially TV commercials. With 60 percent of the total media types, TV commercials were the most popular and the largest media that the organizations used to advertise their products and services in Thailand. Also, Clow and Baack (2002) mentioned that television providers have many opportunities for creativity in advertising design. Visual images and sounds can be incorporated together to gain the attention of viewers as well as to persuade consumers. Products and services can be demonstrated on television in a manner.

Consequently, the finding of this study can be plausibly assumed that TV commercials were powerful media influencing consumers in using a mobile phone network. TV commercials could approach a large group of consumers and had creative ads with the interaction of sight, sound, and motion; therefore, advertising through TV commercials had a strong impact on consumers and stimulated them to purchase the product and service.

Concerning the direct marketing, network services introducing via short message (SMS), web sites, E-mail, and direct mail were explored in this study. The results showed that among five elements of the promotion mix, introducing network services via SMS was found to have an impact on consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

One possible explanation to support the findings is that SMS is an effective tool and low cost for promoting services and products. The companies can have success in

promoting their products and services through text messages that persuade consumers to purchase the products and services. Furthermore, SMS can instantly reach out and directly communicate with target group of consumers (Kiya, 2008). It can be plausibly inferred that SMS sent by mobile phone network providers for introducing their network services could be successful to influence consumer to use a mobile phone network. SMS was the method to introduce network services to consumers without any delay. Thus, SMS was the inexpensive way for mobile phone network marketers to promote their products and services across a wide range of consumers.

Regarding the sales promotion, the study explored promotions that mobile phone network providers used to stimulate the ultimate consumers. The findings revealed that special subscription rates and special service packages at reduced rates were the most influential promotions. The findings in terms of sales promotion are similarly relevant to Songthanapitak's research (2003). It was revealed that sales promotion by using discount of service charge in each month was the most useful instrument in order to stimulate consumers to selecting Digital GSM mobile phone of Advance Info Service Public Co., Ltd.

In addition, Clow and Baack (2002) asserted that sales promotion, especially price-off programs are to create new interest in the product to entice buyers, and price-off programs have proven to be successful in increasing sales. It can imply that special subscription rates and special service packages were influential at the point of selecting the services when price comparisons were being made. Additionally, sales promotion could be an effective tool in a highly competitive market, especially price-off promotion could influence and encourage consumers to select a certain mobile phone network over those of competitors.

In terms of publicity/public relations, the forms of announcement about an organization and services were explored. The findings indicated that mobile phone network news in media, press releases, sponsorship of TV programs, and production of network specific events influenced consumers' decision to use a mobile phone network. The findings are well supported by Clow and Baack's assertion on (2002) press releases and news in media. Press releases and news in media can reach all intended audiences by building goodwill and having a higher level of credibility with the public. Clow and Baack (2002) further commented that sponsorship of TV programs enhances and builds the company's image and brand loyalty. Much sponsorship is related to sports, game shows, and music concerts because those are highly popular and can attract large crowds easily. Also, event marketing is one of the keys to successfully link between organization's name and a program and approach customers. Therefore, it is plausible assumed that promotional tool using public relations could stimulate consumers to use a mobile phone network because publicity/public relations created credibility of consumers' image. Consumers generally tended to be less skeptical toward favorable information about a product or service when it came from a source they perceived as unbiased.

Finally, this study investigated personal selling concerning sales of products and services by representatives, and telemarketing sales. The results revealed that products and service sold by representatives and telemarketing offering services influenced consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network. The results can be supported by Clow and Baack (2002) as they pointed out that salespeople have direct contact with customers at the point of purchase, they can have considerable influence on individual purchasing decision. They suggested that effective store employees can influence

consumer attitudes toward the outlet. Importantly, competent, friendly, and helpful salespeople encourage customers to return. From the findings, it can plausibly imply that person-to-person communication by offering services and products could convince consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network. Personal selling was the interaction between a seller and a buyer, thus the feedback occurred immediately. If the feedback was unfavorable, the salesperson could modify the message according to consumers' specific needs or situation in order to stimulate consumers to interest and use a mobile phone network. Also, friendly and helpful salesperson could make impression on consumers to return.

In summary, according to the findings to the second question, it can be concluded that the promotion mix played an important role in influencing consumers when they made a decision to use a mobile phone network; notably, sales promotion was the most influential element on consumers, followed by advertising, personal selling, and publicity/public relations, while direct marketing was the least influential one on consumers.

The findings also revealed consumers' opinions on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks. In terms of advertising, effective TV commercials of mobile phone networks influenced consumers when they made a decision to use a mobile phone network. Concerning the direct marketing, introducing network services via SMS was the effective channels to stimulate consumers to use a mobile phone network. Regarding the sales promotion, offering special subscription rates and special service packages at reduced rates could influence and motivate consumers to use a mobile phone network. Concerning the publicity/public relations, announcing mobile phone network news in media, giving press releases, providing network specific events, and being sponsorship of TV programs were

the effective tools to stimulate the ultimate consumers. In terms of personal selling, sales of products and services by representatives influenced consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. Also, telemarketing sales in order to offer service charge rate and services by sales staffs influenced consumers to use a mobile phone network.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of the promotion mix on consumers' decision making regarding the use of a Thai mobile phone network by investigating two research questions. The first looked at what elements of the promotion mix that consumers consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. The second explored how the promotion mix influences consumers' decision making regarding the use of a mobile phone network.

To answer the research questions, this study explored the influence of the promotion mix on consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. From 17th to 21st December 2008, 100 participants including males and females were randomly recruited from the first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University at Ongkharak to respond to the questionnaires.

Focusing on five elements of the promotion mix regarding advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling, the findings revealed that sales promotion was the most important promotional element that consumers consider when making a decision to use a mobile phone network, while direct marketing was the least important promotional one.

In terms of advertising, the results showed that advertising through TV commercial was the most influential media that highly affected consumers when they decided to use a mobile phone network. Regarding the direct marketing, introducing network services via short message (SMS) influenced consumers' decision. Concerning the sales promotion, special subscription rate and special service packages at reduced rates were the most influential promotions that highly affected consumers to use a mobile phone network. In terms of publicity/public relations, the findings revealed that the organizations announcing their network services news in media, giving press releases, being sponsorship of TV programs such as game shows and other events with broad sponsor appeal, providing specific events influenced consumers to create credibility toward a mobile phone network and make a decision to use. Regarding the personal selling, the findings showed that products or services sold by representatives at service centers and shopping areas and sales staffs offering services over the telephone influenced consumers to use a mobile phone network. This might due to the fact that personal selling was face-to-face communication that a salesperson could somehow persuade consumers to believe in the products' quality and results in their decision to consume the certain product.

Finally, the study showed that the overall five elements of the promotion mix including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling highly influenced consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network. This can imply that the promotion mix plays a significant role in increasing sales and new consumers. Additionally, to reach the target consumers and increase the number of consumers, the promotion mix should be effectively planned for each target group.

Limitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

1. The number of participants investigated in this study was limited to 100 first-year students at Srinakharinwirot University at Ongkharak. Therefore, it may not represent the views of all consumers' opinion on mobile phone networks in general.
2. This study explored the opinions of the first-year students at SWU at Ongkharak. Consequently, the demographic factors in terms of age and education were limited. Therefore, individual different factors were not included in the study and the results could not represent the consumers with different demographic factors.
3. The study employed a close-ended questionnaire focusing on the promotion mix of mobile phone networks. Therefore, it may not yield an in-depth result for the study because the participants were not able to reveal some other factors that might somehow affect their opinions.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the results of this study, some suggestions for further studies are proposed below:

1. Further studies should include a large number of participants in order to gain more insightful results. Also, various customer segmentations in terms of age, income, and education that may affect consumers when making a decision to use a mobile phone network should be explored. Hence, the findings can generally represent the overall consumers.

2. Further studies should employ an in-depth interview with consumers, open-ended questionnaire, and/or an observation in order to effectively capture more consumer personal perspectives on the influence of the promotion mix when making a decision to use a mobile phone network.

3. This study revealed that the promotion mix played a significant role in influencing consumers to purchase products and services. Further research should explore how the promotion mix influences consumers' decision making in other service industries such as airline, hotel, banking, and restaurant. The findings will provide more insights useful for the marketers regarding the promotion mix of different kinds of services in a wider range.

To sum up, further studies in the areas mentioned above, will broaden and deepen understanding of the influence of the promotion mix on consumers when making a decision to purchase products and service. This more complete understanding will be useful to marketers who use the promotion mix for their products and service in order to encourage the target consumers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
ENGLISH VERSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to explore the influence of the promotion mix on consumers' decision making regarding the use of a Thai mobile phone network. Please fill out this questionnaire concerning your choice of a mobile phone network. The information you provide will be very useful for the study. All information will be used only for this study and will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

Part I: General Information

Directions: Please mark **P** in the **r** that applies to you.

1. Gender

r Male

r Female

Part II: Consumers' consideration for the Importance of the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

Directions: Please fill the number of 1 - 5 in the **r** for ranking from the most important to the least important.

Mark "1" for the most important element and "5" for the fifth important element

2. In your experience, what elements of the promotion mix do you consider important when making a decision to use a mobile phone network?

- ☐ Advertising through TV commercials, radio commercials, and printed materials
- ☐ Direct Marketing such as introducing network service via SMS, E-mail
- ☐ Sales Promotion such as free sim card distribution and special subscription rates
- ☐ Publicity/Public Relations through media such as sponsorship of TV programs
- ☐ Personal Selling such as sales of sim cards and sales of pre-paid cards by salespersons

Part III: Opinions on the Promotion Mix of Mobile Phone Networks

Directions: Please mark **P** in the blanks that apply to you.

How strongly does each element of the promotion mix influence you when making a decision to use a mobile phone network?

5 = Very Strongly, 4 = Strongly, 3 = Neutral, 2 = To a Limited Degree, 1 = Not at All

The Promotion Mix	Strength of Influence				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. <u>Advertising</u>					
1.1 TV commercials					
1.2 Radio commercials					
1.3 Printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and posters					
1.4 Billboards in public areas					
2. <u>Direct Marketing</u>					
2.1 Introducing network services via SMS					
2.2 Introducing network services via web sites					
2.3 Introducing network services via E-mail					
2.4 Introducing network services via direct mail					
3. <u>Sales Promotion</u>					
3.1 Special subscription rates					
3.2 Special service packages at reduced rates					
3.3 Free sim card distribution					
3.4 Sweepstakes and other prizes					
3.5 Exhibitions, fairs and trade shows					

The Promotion Mix	Strength of Influence				
	5	4	3	2	1
<u>4. Publicity/Public Relations</u>					
4.1 Mobile phone network news in the media					
4.2 Press releases					
4.3 Sponsorship of TV programs such as game shows and other events with broad sponsor appeal such as Euro Football					
4.4 Production of network specific events such as "Smart Love" and "Plants for Forests"					
4.5 Charitable donations					
<u>5. Personal Selling</u>					
5.1 Sales of products (sim cards, pre-paid cards) by representatives at service centers and shopping areas					
5.2 Sales of services (mobile to mobile money transfer, ticket reservations) by representatives at service centers					
5.3 Telemarketing sales offering service charge rate and services by sales staff over the telephone					

** Thank you very much for your participation **

APPENDIX A

THAI VERSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

แบบสอบถามเพื่อการวิจัย

แบบสอบถามชุดนี้ได้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อสำรวจอิทธิพลของการส่งเสริมการตลาดที่มีผลต่อผู้บริโภคในการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือของไทย ผู้จัดทำขอความร่วมมือจากท่านในการตอบแบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ ความคิดเห็นของท่านจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิจัย ผู้วิจัยจะเก็บข้อมูลที่ได้รับเป็นความลับและขอขอบคุณทุกท่านอย่างสูงที่ได้ให้ความร่วมมือเป็นอย่างดี

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล

คำชี้แจง : กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมาย **ü** ลงในช่อง **r** หน้าข้อความที่ตรงกับความเป็นจริงของท่าน

2. เพศ

r ชาย

r หญิง

ส่วนที่ 2 การพิจารณาความสำคัญของการส่งเสริมการตลาดของระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ

คำชี้แจง : กรุณาระบุลำดับความสำคัญโดยใส่หมายเลข **1-5** ลงในช่อง **r** ตามความสำคัญจากมากที่สุดไปถึงน้อยที่สุด

“1” หมายถึง สำคัญที่สุด และ “5” หมายถึง สำคัญอันดับที่ห้า

2. จากประสบการณ์ของท่าน การส่งเสริมการตลาด มีความสำคัญต่อการตัดสินใจใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือของท่านอย่างไร

- ☐ การโฆษณาผ่านโทรทัศน์, วิทยุ, และสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์
- ☐ การตลาดทางตรง เช่น การส่ง SMS, E-mail แนะนำการบริการ
- ☐ การส่งเสริมการขายหรือโปรโมชั่น เช่น การแจกซิมโทรศัพท์, อัตราค่าโทรศัพท์ถูก
- ☐ การให้ข่าวและประชาสัมพันธ์ผ่านสื่อต่างๆ เช่น การเป็นสปอนเซอร์ให้กับรายการโทรทัศน์
- ☐ การขายโดยใช้พนักงานขาย เช่น การขายซิมโทรศัพท์, การเติมเงินผ่านมือถือ

ส่วนที่ 3 ความคิดเห็นที่มีต่อการส่งเสริมการตลาดของระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ

คำชี้แจง : กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมาย **ü** ลงในช่องว่างให้ตรงกับระดับความคิดเห็นของท่าน

ปัจจัยการส่งเสริมการตลาดต่อไปนี้มีผลต่อการใช้ระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือของท่านอย่างไร

5 = มีผลมากที่สุด, 4 = มีผลมาก, 3 = ไม่แน่ใจ, 2 = ค่อนข้างมีผล, 1 = ไม่มีผลเลย

การส่งเสริมการตลาด	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. การโฆษณา					
1.1 โทรทัศน์					
1.2 วิทยุ					
1.3 สื่อสิ่งพิมพ์ เช่น หนังสือพิมพ์, นิตยสาร, แผ่นพับ, โปสเตอร์					
1.4 ป้ายโฆษณาตามท้องถนนและที่สาธารณะ					
2. การตลาดทางตรง					
2.1 การแนะนำการให้บริการระบบเครือข่ายผ่านทางข้อความโทรศัพท์มือถือ					
2.2 การแนะนำการให้บริการระบบเครือข่ายผ่านทางเว็บไซต์					
2.3 การแนะนำการให้บริการระบบเครือข่ายผ่านทางจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ (E-mail)					
2.4 การแนะนำการให้บริการระบบเครือข่ายผ่านทางจดหมายที่จัดส่งโดยทางไปรษณีย์					
3. การส่งเสริมการขาย					
3.1 มีแพคเกจอัตราค่าโทรศัพท์ที่ถูก					
3.2 มีบริการเสริมพิเศษเป็นแพคเกจในราคาประหยัด					
3.3 การแจกซิมโทรศัพท์มือถือ					
3.3 การลุ้นรับรางวัลจากการใช้บริการ					
3.5 การออกร้านแสดงสินค้าและบริการของระบบเครือข่ายโทรศัพท์มือถือ					

การส่งเสริมการตลาด	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
4. การให้ข่าวและประชาสัมพันธ์					
4.1 การให้ข่าวของบริษัทผ่านสื่อต่างๆ					
4.2 เอกสารแจกเพื่อรายงานข่าวสารของระบบเครือข่าย					
4.3 การเป็นผู้สนับสนุนให้กับรายการโทรทัศน์ร่วมกับ ผู้สนับสนุนผลิตภัณฑ์รายอื่นๆ เช่น เกมโชว์ และโอกาส พิเศษ เช่น ฟุตบอลยูโร					
4.4 การจัดกิจกรรมพิเศษเนื่องในโอกาสต่างๆ เพื่อโฆษณา สินค้า เช่น โครงการสานรัก, โครงการปลูกป่า					
4.5 มีการบริจาคเพื่อการกุศล					
5. การขายโดยใช้พนักงานขาย					
5.1 มีการเสนอขายสินค้า (ซีดีโทรศัพท์, บัตรเติมเงิน) โดย พนักงานขาย ณ ศูนย์บริการและตามย่านการค้าต่างๆ					
5.2 มีการเสนอบริการ (เติมเงินผ่านโทรศัพท์มือถือ, การจอง ตั๋วภาพยนตร์) โดยพนักงาน ณ ศูนย์บริการ					
5.3 มีการเสนอแพ็คเกจอัตราค่าโทรศัพท์และบริการต่างๆ โดยพนักงานขายผ่านทางโทรศัพท์					

****ขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถาม****

VITAE

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