

Final Research Report

Title: EVALUATING FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMERS' CHOICES OF SUPERMARKETS FOR GROCERY SHOPPING

Researcher Name: HENRY FONJI ACHALEKE



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The opinion in this research report belongs to a researcher, the university does not necessarily agree.)

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EVALUATING FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMERS' CHOICES OF SUPERMARKETS FOR GROCERY SHOPPING

Abstract.

This study aims to investigate factors affecting customers' choice of grocery supermarkets in North East Thailand. 300 participants are surveyed using a questionnaire structured in two sections. Section one captured respondent profile (age, gender, education, monthly Income and family size). Section two contained 42 items linked to 14 factors identified and adapted from previous literature. The data is collected between January and May of 2019 in the provinces of Ubon Ratchathani, Khon Kaen and Si-saket respectively, using a convenience sampling method. A total of 300 respondents participated in this study. 35.5% of the respondents were leases than 30 years old, 27% above 30 but younger than 41 years old, 28% above 41 but younger than 50 and the remaining 8% above 50 years old. Approximately 63% of the respondents are female why the rest 37% are male. 58% of respondents holds a bachelor's degree or higher and 75.3 present reported monthly incomes of 20,000 thousand baht or less. The study employs an exploratory factor analysis to narrow down the factors. From 14 originally identified factors, the authors identify six factors which included Convenience (α =0.93), discounts (α =0.89), stock availability (α =0.78), payment and promotion (α =0.81), children facilities (α =0.84), and prices (α =0.74). These factors combine results in customers' satisfaction. However, combine customers satisfaction, has a less than significant influence on consumers' choice of grocery supermarkets. The finding further reveals that, Education and Income have a significant role in shoppers' store choice with higher incomes more likely to make customer switch from Tesco to Big C. this therefore open up avenues to investigate the value placed on these two shops by consumers.

Keywords

Shoppers- choice, grocery supermarket, presence

Chapter 1 Introduction

Importance and background of research

Recent changes in consumers' taste and preferences have heightened competition amongst goods and service providers. As grocery supermarkets strive to out-compete each other, price wars are becoming less effective as they turn to shrink total revenues and hence profits. Though the reliance on price as quality cue still exist amongst consumers, (Strachan, 1997), the role of price as a quality cue however, continues to diminish as more cues emerge. (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In Thailand as in other parts of the world, increase in competition due to increase in number of actors

in the grocery supermarkets has increase the need for efficient ways to attract new customers while retaining old ones. However, the fact that these stores offer similar or identical products makes it more difficult to differentiate themselves form their competitors. Founded in 1998, Siam Makro Public Company Limited popularly known as MAKRO, was one of the first grocery stores to open its doors to Thai customers. However, by 1993, Central group established Big-C which open its first store a year later. This was closely followed by the establishment of Tesco lotus four years later. The proliferation of other grocery stores has since followed, and the growth of online shopping platforms like Lazada and Shopee which provided customers with the possibility of buying similar products from the comfort of their homes has compounded the competition in this retail sector. To survive, these stores must continuously improve on their services as a means to not only retain old customers, but also attract new ones and hence grow their market share and consequently profits. An examination of the Thai supermarket and grocery chain reveals that wherever you find one of the Big Three, Macro, Big-C or Tesco lotus, the others are just nearby. The proximity of the shops, similarity of offerings and little or no differences between their prices, leaves customers with little to go by in terms of finding difference between them. As argued by (Strachan, 1997), since price has become a less effective quality cue, relaying on it will only have negative effects on the profitability of these stores. By analogy, it can therefore be purported that using other quality cues will be more beneficial to Big-C, Tesco Lotus, Makro, and other grocery chains in the North East of Thailand. This has let to each shop trying to outpace the others in its provision of services such as children facilities, offering continues membership discount, lowering prices and providing different payment options, just to name but a few. With all these efforts, it suffices to ask, does the provision of all these facilities have any effect on the customers' store choice? If it does, to what extent? This study tries to investigate factors affecting consumers' choice of grocery supermarket. The study will be invaluable to the supermarket and consumers alike. Not only will the study provide insight into what leads to consumers' presence of one shop over the other, it will also provide the relationship between one factor and another giving the supermarkets' management information needed to best allocate resources to help increases consumers' store visit. While this may sound as a benefit to the grocery supermarkets, it is also beneficial to customers. By shifting resources to factors attracting consumers, supermarkets will be providing better services and increasing consumers' choice with the hope of increasing satisfaction.

Objectives of research

The main aim of this study will be to examine factors responsible for consumers' choice of grocery supermarkets. More specifically, the study will try to:

- 1) Identify factors affecting consumer choice of supermarkets
- 2) Determine the relationship between these factors
- 3) Propose the best combination of factors needed to increase consumers' store visit.

Expected benefit

This research is expected to provide information beneficial to grocery supermarket and other grocery store in terms of increasing store visit. This information if effectively used can increase not just the number of visit but also positive feedback from consumers and hence customer satisfaction.

Chapter 2 Review literature

Recent literature has focused not only on the corporate, social and financial performance of supermarkets chains (Moore & Robson, 2002) but also on the challenges of management in the retailing industry (Dawson, 2000). As competition continues to heighten amongst major competing supermarkets and retail chains in Thailand, management is constantly in a quest for new non-price competing strategies aimed at not only retaining old customers but also attracting new customers at a faster, easier and cheaper way than competitors do. The complexity of today's retailing environment cannot be over emphasis. The increase in globalization has easy the entry of foreign retailing giant and at the same time the proliferation of online shopping with more variety and low cost is shifting consumer buying patterns. All these changes have had tremendous impact on the customers resulting in an ever-increasing expectation in the services offered by retailers. While price may be a strong determinant of consumers' product choice, the role of price as a quality cue many diminish as additional cues are added (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). However, customers continue to rely on prices as a quality cue in the presence of other extrinsic cues even when there exist a positive link between price and perceive quality (Strachan, 1997), other factors including but not limited to loyalty discount schemes, frequency and availability of special promotion, packing facilities, baby facilities and variety of products play a vital rule not just on consumer perceived quality but also on the loyalty to the shop in question (Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007). In an attempt to understand Korean shoppers and the motivation behind shopping intentions, (Jin & Kim, 2003), perform a topology of discount shoppers and came out with four distinct groups of shoppers as follows; the leisurely-motivated shoppers, the socially-motivated shoppers, the utilitarian shoppers and Shopping-apathetic shoppers. Based on their findings, assumption could be made that by identifying each of these groups of shoppers, store could focus on enhancing capabilities on areas that motivated each group of suppers as a means of attracting in-store traffic from these shoppers. This therefore imply that a store targeting the utilitarian shoppers will or should focus more on improving product assortments and information of the products, while at the same time improving Service convenience, neat/spacious atmosphere, variety of goods, pleasant environment, ease to parking, friendly salespeople, if the intent to attract shoppers from the other three categories. While

this may seam straightforward and clear, its applicability is just as problematic and challenging as the applicability of any other strategy in the service industry. As the retail environment continue to witness tremendous changes, the customers' experience is becoming more important than ever, artificial intelligence will gain more clout, and the rise in consumers' consciousness will continue. While these are global trends, the five most important trends in the retail industry in Thailand include; Strong growth in categories that offer indulgences and experiences, brands and consumer loyalty to brands, increase in women substantial buying power, even in traditionally non-female categories. A new social media driving e-commerce, and the shaping of customer behavior by convenient stores (Aparna Bharadwaj, 2017). These trends while showing expected changes in the retail industry do not encompass the characteristics of shops necessary to take advantage of such changes.

Price and promotion

Price is one of the most important market place cues not only because it is present in every situation, but also because it represents the exact economic scarifies that must be made by consumer in order to obtain a particular good or service. (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993). Based on this reasoning, it is therefore logical to suggest that higher prices will negatively affect consumer's shopping decisions. However, the heterogeneity nature of consumers makes it complex to ascertain the Impact that prices have on consumer perceptions. While higher prices affect consumer purchase negatively (Lichtenstein et al., 1993), it could also act as a valuable determinant of quality. (Bagwell & Riordan, 1991; M. Moore & Carpenter, 2006; Rao & Monroe, 1989). Consequently, the market can be split allowing firms' with significantly higher quality to try and capture high end users at the detriment of low end uses who perceive higher quality to be associated with higher prices (Gardete, 2013). The complexity of price as a marketing cue makes it fundamentally problematic for any business to rely on it as the sole factor affecting consumers purchase behavior. Furthermore, price as a marketing cue is closely associated with promotion in form of discounts, frequency of this discounts and special offers. As many studies (Ataman, Van Heerde, & Mela, 2010; Gázquez-Abad & Martínez-López, 2016; Van Heerde, Leeflang, & Wittink, 2004) have demonstrated, that features associated with consumer-packaged goods, are at least in part responsible for consumers allocation of which item they buy in a given store which invaluably affect the net gain from promotion. Based on this, one can therefore argue that it is in the best interest of management to allocate promotional resources taking into consideration those consumerpackaged goods features which have a higher influence on consumer purchase decision making.

Convenience

The concept of convenience has been viewed differently by different researcher. Early researcher view convenience in terms of the time it takes for a good to be distributed rather than the attributes

of a product, (Bucklin, 1963; Murphy & Enis, 1986). As argued by (Brown, 1990), convenience products will therefore refer to those that require minimal time and mental effort to purchase. Yet other groups of researchers view convenience differently. These groups of researchers based their focus on resources including the time, opportunity and energy given up by consumers in the purchasing process and hence view convenience as an attribute which reduces the price of a product purchased by a consumer (Etgar, 1978; Kelley, 1958; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). A further look at literature shows that shopping convenience can actually be classified into five; decision convenience, access convenience, search convenience, transaction conveniences and after sales convenience dimension be treated separately (Moeller, Fassnacht, & Ettinger, 2009), decision and access transaction become dormant after the purchase is made and the after sales convinces is only activated once and actual sale has been made. From the above it can be purported that the ease to find a store, easy access to public transportation and the ease to get to the store will all result in adequate time serving hence provide customers with convenience.

Discounts

Price discounts refers to a short term reduction in prices offering all customers the opportunity to buy a good or services at a lower than originally stated price (Chen, Monroe, & Lou, 1998) .The idea of discount is built on the Prospect Theory of Kahnemann and Tversky (1979) based on this theory, researchers argue that consumers have different perception of the same information depending on how this information is presented (Isabella, Pozzani, Chen, & Gomes, 2012). This different in perception resulting from the way information is presented is referred to as the framing effect. When presented with a 50-50 chance of gaining or losing an equal amount, we tend to avoid such a choice. This is because the fear of loss is greater than the happiness of gaining (Daniel & Amos, 1979). The way prices are presented, invaluably have an effect on the consumer's perception on of the product and hence buying decision. This occurs in the subconscious and affects all consumers irrespective of weather the have knowledge on pricing and discount strategies or not (Nusair, Yoon, Naipaul, & Parsa, 2010). While price promotion in form of discount may affect customers in different ways such as brand switching, store switching, stockpiling, purchase acceleration, product trial, and more spending (Martínez-Ruiz, Mollá-Descals, Gómez-Borja, & Rojo-Álvarez, 2006), the direction of customers perception will depend on weather the customers had prior knowledge or experience with the brand offering a discounted price (Nusair et al., 2010). It can therefore be argued that stores offering discounts for products sold at original prices in competing stores may well tempt customers to change shopping destination in favour of the discounts. However, this will be no guarantee that the customers will remain loyal to the store after the discounts stops. Hence it is important for marketers to distinguish between switcher discounts and

loyal ones (Chen et al., 1998). As evidence has shown, discounts will inevitably affect customers shopping decision in some way. This therefore makes it important to understand how discounts may affect consumers' choice of grocery stores.

Stock availability

Stock availability refers to having goods on the shovels for customer to pick when needed while majority of stock-out literature suggest that stock-out effect include customers switching to another product, buying the missing item in a competing store, deferring the purchase to a next shopping occasion, or dropping the purchase altogether (Corstiens & Corstiens, 1995), these studies fail to established any meaningful theoretical explanation such customers behaviour (Campo, Gijsbrechts, & Nisol, 2000). However other researchers have argued that though the effects of store and brand switching are rarely seen, they remain very important as the offer serious negative consequences to competitors be it other stores in terms of competing stores or other brands in terms of competing brands (Campo et al., 2000). Based on the above empirical evidence, it can therefore be suggested that stores which offer constant stock availability may have an advantage over stores with constant stock out. This argument is therefore important to be tested hence this study examines the effects if any stock availability may have on customers choice of grocery stores.

Payment and promotion.

Payment is use in terms of available methods of payment at check out of a store while promotion here refers to the promotion of one or more payment methods at a particular store. While some stores predominantly function on cash bases (Makro), others offer a variety of many payment option. It can equally be noticed that while stores like Makro still promote cash payments as the dominant form of payment, changes are being made to accommodate other forms of payment such as specific credit cards or the newly introduced QR-code payment method. While stores like Big-c and Tesco Lotus accept many forms of payments, it is not uncommon to find out that some credit cards offer zero percent interest rate when used at certain stores while others offer much higher rates. (Worthington, 1996), suggested that credit cards as forms of payment may be used either as deferred payment or taking advantage of the interest free periods that these cards offer. Since some shops offers more payment options than others, it can be argued that customers will most naturally frequent shops which offer them a variety of payment options as oppose to those with fewer payment options. It is therefore imperative to understand the effects payment options have on customers' store choice. Canada

Children facilities.

New store models show a consistent allocation of children playgrounds in most supper markets. In Thailand, one can notice that both Big-c and Tesco Lotus provided playgrounds for kids while others like Makro don't. It should also be noted that some of these playgrounds come at an extra cost which parents and guardians must pay before living their children to play there. The idea of an uninterrupted shopping may well be ideal for some shoppers but is this enough to influence a customers' store choice? Children facilities are not in any case limited to a playing area but an entire child friendly environment. This may include Children friendly trollies and Children waiting areas just to name a few.

Conceptual framework

The connections between the different variables as detailed in the methodology are hypothesized in the diagram below. Our expectation is the a priori hypothesis made with variables grouped under particular factors. As such, our analysis should be close to these hypotheses using SPSS-AMOS software. With all these in mind, we will begin by drawing our theory of Shoppers' Choice of Grocery Supermarkets (see figure 1-1.14).

Figure 1 A Factor Analysis of Shoppers' Choice of Grocery Supermarkets with its 14 factors and 42 question items.



Symbolically, the equations of the promotion model can be seen as follows:

 $D = \lambda_1 P + e_1$ $S = \lambda_2 P + e_2$ $F = \lambda_3 P + e_3$ Where: D (disc) represents Regular discounts.

- S (spec) represents Weekly specials.
- F (freq) represents frequent promotions.
- P (promo) represents promotions
- λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3
- P1 Represents the error term of the promotion equation



Where: (inss) represents In stock specials.

(noss) represents No specials out of stock.

(spew) represents Specials I want.

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

- a1 Represents the error term of the advertised special equation
- Figure 1.4: Efficient and accurate operations



Where: (Effop) represents efficient and accurate operations

(fope) represents Friendly operators.

(aope) represents Accurate operators.

(eope) represents Efficient operators.

²³Represents the error term of equation 3

e1 Represents the error term of the Efficient and accurate operations equation

• Figure 1.5: Easy access



Where: (eacp) represents Friendly operators.



(papa) represents Efficient operators.

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

e1 Represents the error term of the Easy access equation

• Figure 1.6: Product availability



- Where: (pro-avai) represents product availability (wess) represents well stock shelves.
 - (priw) represents products I want.
 - (noso) represents no out of stock.
 - λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3
 - p1 Represents the error term of the Efficient and accurate operations equation
 - Figure 1.7: Convenience



Where: (conven) represents convenience

(setf) represents Supermarket easy to find.

(sugt) represents Supermarket easy to get to.

(conl) represents Convenient locations.

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

- c1 Represents the error term of the convenience equation
- Figure 1.8: Cleanliness and hygiene



Where: (clean) represents Cleanliness and hygiene

(hygp) represents Hygienic practice.

(clee) represents cleanliness.

(qufh) represents quality food handling.

- λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3
- c1 Represents the error term of the Cleanliness and hygiene equation



Where: (Highqff) represents High quality fresh food

(gtff) represents Great tasting fresh food.

(hiff) represents Healthy fresh food.

(qiff) represents Quality fresh food .

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

h1 Represents the error term of the Cleanliness and hygiene equation

• Figure 1.10: Consistent, stable, low prices



Where: (conslp) represents Consistent, stable, low prices

(conp) represents Consistent prices.

(comp) represents Competitive prices.

(ledp) represents Low, everyday prices.

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

- c1 Represents the error term of the Cleanliness and hygiene equation
- Figure 1.11: Children facilities



Where: (mupo) represents multiple payment option.

(accc) represents Accept credit cards.

(aabc) represents Accept all bank cards.

 λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3

p1 Represents the error term of the Payment option equation

• Figure 1.13: Membership advantages



- Where: (member) represents Membership advantages (misc) represents Membership discount. (smpr) represents Special membership promo. (mbdi) represents Member bulk buying discount.
 - λ_3 Represents the error term of equation 3
 - m1 Represents the error term of the Membership advantages equation



Where: (quaosisi) represents Quantity of intended shopped items (siit) represents Single items. (bulb) represents Bulk buying. (afit) represents A few items.

- ¹3 Represents the error term of equation 3
- q1 Represents the error term of the Quantity of intended shopped items equation

Chapter 3 Methodology

Sample size

The sample size for this study is determined using three simple steps. First the researcher employed stratified sampling method, dividing the north East of Thailand into three different strata based on their gross provincial product (GPP). Provinces where stratified into three groups; high GPP, moderate GPP and low GPP. From each strata as shown on figure 2 below, a provinces was randomly selected which made the following additional criteria: it does not have the smallest population in the group and it has all three supermarkets understudy (BigC, Tesco Lotus, and Macro). A sample size was then calculated based on the population using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 6% (Charan & Biswas, 2013; Kadam & Bhalerao, 2010) The area selected from the high GPP was Khon Kaen with a population of 1,739,000, then Ubon Ratchathani from the moderate GPP with population of 1,017,000. This resulted in a total population size of 4,490,000 people based on the calculation, approximately 267 questionnaires are needed (Creative Research Systems, 2012). A random sample of 300 is then drawn from the population.

Figure 2 Gross Regional and Provincial Product CVMs 2016 Edition



			POPULATIO	PER
NO.		(Millians of Bobt)	N 2016p	CAPITA 2016m
		(withous of balli)	(1,000 Persons)	ZUTOP (Robt)
			Personsj	(Dalit)
			02	
4		000 570	4 700	440.000
1		263,578	1,739	112,038
2	0102 UDON THANI	194,848	1,260	85,359
3		113,541	539	83,439
4	0104 NONG KHAI	107,524	448	84,465
5	0105 MUKDAHAN	82,064	347	67,103
6	0106 NAKHON PHANOM	70,473	567	73,088
7	0107 SAKON NAKHON	68,647	811	64,759
		moderate GPP	- 10	
8	0108 KALASIN	66,653	918	57,798
9	0109 NAKHON	59,051	2,496	105,618
10	0110 CHAIYAPHUM	54,263	955	61,826
11	0111 YASOTHON	53,069	482	54,047
12	0112 UBON RATCHATHANI	52,501	1,714	66,247
13	0113 ROI ET	44,980	1,072	64,052
14	0114 BURI RAM	41,438	1,251	65,586
	11	Low GPP	11/24	2
15	0115 SURIN	37,812	1,110	63,462
16	0116 MAHA SARAKHAM	26,050	828	65,520
17	0117 SI SA KET	23,463	1,037	64,298
18	0118 NONGBUA LAMPHU	23,407	473	49,443
19	0119 AMNAT CHAREON	23,286	278	59,319
20	0120 BUENG KAN	16,471	350	67,021

Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board

Time and place of collecting data

The data is collected from 300 households in Ubon Ratchathani, Si Sa Ket and Khon Kean. The data collection period span from January and May of 2019 covering 4 months.

Questionnaire development.

The questionnaire in this study is structured into two different sections. Section one captured respondent profile (age, gender, education, monthly Income and family size) and a final questions asking respondents to choose they preferred store between Big-C, Tesco Lotus, and Makro. Section two contained 42 items linked to 14 factors identified and adapted from previous literature. As shown on the table 1 below.

Table 1	Sample items	Number of	Source
Factors		items	
	Regular discounts	1	(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007;
Promotion	Weekly specials	3	Polegato & Zaichkowsky, 1994)
	Frequent promotions		
	No waiting		(Donegan, 1986; Moutinho &
Staffing	Quick service	3	Hutcheson, 2007; Torres, Summers,
	Well-staffed departments		& Belleau, 2001)
	In stock specials		(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2000;
Advertised specials	No specials out of stock	3	Polegato & Zaichkowsky, 1994)
	Availability of needed specials		
	Friendly staff	100	(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007;
Efficient and accurate	knowledgeable staff	3	Zeithaml, 1985)
operations	Efficient staff		
	Easy access to car parks		(Donegan, 1986; Moutinho &
Easy access	Easy parking	3	Hutcheson, 2000)
	Parcel pickup area		
The second second	Well stocked shelves	11A	(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007; Zinn
Product availability	Product variety	3	& Liu, 2001)
	No out of stocks	11	
	Supermarket easy to find	2	(Polegato & Zaichkowsky, 1994;
Convenience	Supermarket easy to get to	3	Zeithaml, 1985)
	Easy access to public	~ 16	
	transportation		
	Hygienic practices		(Donegan, 1986)
Cleanliness and hygiene	Cleanliness	3	
	Quality food handling	21	
	Great tasting fresh food		(Zeithaml, 1985)
High quality fresh food	Healthy fresh food	3	
	Quality fresh food		
NU 20	Consistent prices	1/50	(Donegan, 1986)
Consistent, stable, low prices	Competitive prices	3	-25
	Low, everyday prices	20	
	Children play ground	(1) p)	(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007)
Children facilities	Children friendly trollies	3	
	Children waiting areas	2	
Payment option	Multiple payment option		(Donegan, 1986; Moutinho &
	Accept credit cards	3	Hutcheson, 2007)
	Accept all bank cards		
	Membership discount		(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007)

Membership advantages	Special membership promo	3	
	Member bulk buying discount		
	Single items		(Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2007;
Quantity of intended shopped	Bulk buying	3	Zeithaml, 1985)
items	A few items	2	

Factor Analysis is sometimes seen as an easier way of developing questionnaires. The questionnaire designed in this research is used to measure shoppers' choice of grocery supermarkets. The designing of this questionnaire further breaks down a shopper's choice into specific items. In this case, unmeasured variables which contribute to shoppers' choice of grocery shops. This research, therefore, surveys customers' visitation by evaluating the shoppers' choice of grocery supermarkets. The researcher obtained data on 42 different items from customers' visitations and choice of store. The analysis commences by running a Factor Analysis to narrow down the number of items in this study. Each question item was measured by a 5-point Likert scale.

The process of factor analysis begins with the initial screening of data. At this stage, data is tested or checked for normality and, then move on to the retention of factors and the rotation method is use as well as a reliability analysis. Note that this process is partitioned in three segments, namely: initial checks, main analysis and post analysis (see Figure 2).



Figure 3: Procedure for Conducting Factor Analysis

Figure 2 shows the general procedure for conducting FA with specific details such as screening data, multivariable data analysis, missing values, quality of measurement model and presence of outliers all under preliminary data analysis (PDA); extract factors in the principal component analysis (PCA) or maximum likelihood (ML), orthogonal or oblique rotation for the main analysis; and then Cronbach's alpha and average variance extraction (AVE) for reliability after which biases can be

addressed. Besides the above steps, interpretation of factors, calculation of factor scores and determination of model fit are final steps in this process.

This section shows the theoretical and hypothetical relationships between the measured and latent variables. There are 42 measured variables (also known as observed variables) categorized under 14 factors[®]. These factors are called latent variables. Latent because they are unobserved variables. This justifies the use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as opposed to principal component analysis which presents the relationships between factors and question items all measured variables. Each latent variable is tied to three question items.

Note that CFA is an extension of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and provides more robust construct validity of a scale within and across distinct items. After constructing a CFA model, paths are created linking factors and questions items with errors. A clear understanding of path analysis explained by Streiner (2006) says, PA is a more advanced multiple regressions which permit the use of more than one dependent variable at a time as well as allowing some variables to be both dependent and independent. For instance, payment options predict membership (DV) and membership advantages (IV) influence payment options. Peculiar to SEM, exogenous and endogenous variables are used in place of ID and IV. Path analysis is, therefore, an analytic and more flexible technique.

Path analysis is not just another advanced multiple regressions as it does not only predict models; it formulates complex causal relations. However, to examine the relationships between the 14 latent variables, structural equation modeling (SEM) will be applied. In other words, SEM is an extension of the paths created in CFA and SEM connects latent variables.

When factors are measured, they are called observed, otherwise they are known as unobserved variables. The introduction of SEM is due to the shortcoming of path analysis not being able to connect unobserved variables. In other words, path analysis deals with only measured variables. The use of SEM in this paper is backed by this interconnection between both the latent constructs and the observed variables. In plain terms, SEM combines path analysis with CFA. Since both methods stem from the concept of factor analysis, a brief explanation of it would be imperative. Simply put, factor analysis bundles the question items into smaller groups of factors called latent constructs.

and the second

^{*} The latent (unobserved) variables are promotions and specials, staffing of serviced departments, advertised specials, efficient and accurate operations, easy access, Streiner (2006) provides alternative names for latent variable. That is, factors in factor analysis, latent variables in SEM as well as hypothetical constructs (in personality theory and test construction).

The connections between the aforementioned variables are hypothesized in a diagram. Our expectation is the a priori hypothesis made with variables grouped under particular factors. As such, our analysis should be close to these hypotheses using SPSS-AMOS software. With all these in mind, we will begin by drawing our theory of Shoppers' Choice of Grocery Supermarkets.

Chapter 4 Result

	Gender							
-		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent			
Valid	Male	110	36.7	36.7	36.7			
	Female	188	62.7	62.7	99.3			
	2	2	.7	.7	100.0			
	Total	300	100.0	100.0				

	and the second s					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	67
Valid	20-30	106	35.3	35.5	35.5	
	31-40	81	27.0	27.1	62.5	
	41-50	84	28.0	28.1	90.6	
	50 and above	28	9.3	9.4	100.0	
	Total	299	99.7	100.0		
Missing	System	1	.3			
Total		300	100.0			

Age

	Level of Education								
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent				
Valid	High School	80	26.7	26.7	26.7				
	Diploma	24	8.0	8.0	34.7				
	Bachelor	173	57.7	57.7	92.3				
	Higher Education	22	7.3	7.3	99.7				
	5	1	.3	.3	100.0				
	Total	300	100.0	100.0					
			200						



22

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	-
Valid	Less than 5,000	35	11.7	11.7	11.7	Low
	5,001-10,000	85	28.3	28.3	40.0	
	10,001-15,000	58	19.3	19.3	59.3	
	15,001-20,000	48	16.0	16.0	75.3	
	20,001-25,000	45	15.0	15.0	90.3	
	25,001-30,000	13	4.3	4.3	94.7	
	Above 30,000	16	5.3	5.3	100.0	2
	Total	300	100.0	100.0		

Constraints

Contraction of the

Family Size										
	-	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent					
Valid	1	5	1.7	1.7	1.7					
	2-3	110	36.7	36.7	38.3					
	4-5	150	50.0	50.0	88.3					
	more than 5 people	28	9.3	9.3	97.7					
	4	2	.7	.7	98.3					
	6	1	.3	.3	98.7					
	7	4	1.3	1.3	100.0					
	Total	300	100.0	100.0						

A total of 300 respondents participated in this study. 35.5% of the respondents were leases than 30 years old, 27% above 30 but younger than 41 years old, 28% above 41 but younger than 50 and the remaining 8% above 50 years old. Approximately 63% of the respondents are female why the rest 37% are male. 58% of had a bachelor's degree or higher and 75.3 present reported monthly incomes of 20,000 thousand baht or less.

After conducting factor analysis using a principle Axis factor analysis, 42 items were used with the oblique rotation (also referred to as direct oblimin). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure showed that the sample was adequate for this analysis, KMO = 0.93 which is above the benchmark (Cerny & Kaiser, 1977; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). All KMO values for individual factors were greater than 0.67 (KMO for Convenience, discounts, stock availability, payment and promotion, children facilities and prices were 0.93, 0.92, 0.69, 0.70, 0.71 and 0.67, respectively) which is above the acceptable limit of 0.5 according to Field (2003). An initial analysis was done to get eigenvalues. Eight factors in the data had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 but the six retained factors explained a cumulative variance of 59.0%. The six factors retained could clearly be seen on the scree plot that showed inflexions justifying their retention. The reasons for retaining these six factors were the large sample size and the convergence of the scree plot with the kaiser's criterion on this value. From the factors loadings, the items that clustered on those factors suggest that factor one represents convenience, factor two discounts, factor three stock availability, factor four payment and promotions, factor five children facilities and factor six prices. See summary table below.



Table 4: summary of factor extraction using principle component analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Question19	.710						
Question9	.709						
Question34	.703						
Question33	.697						
Question18	.686						
Question39	.667						
Question32	.664						
Question20	.660						
Question29	.643						
Question14	.564						
Question22	.558						
Question38	.550						
Question25		.711					
Question23		.679					
Question24		.675					
Question35		.658					
Question37		.626				7	
Question40		.583					
Question16		.579					
Question28			.659				
Question27			.628			V	
Question21			.610			- 9	
Question2				.883		8	
Question3				.870			
Question4				.626			
Question1				.608			
Question7					.876		
Question8					.867	1	
Question6					.810	1	
Question10						.762	
Question11						.760	
Question15						.577	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

A reliability analysis was carried out for this data comprising of 42 items and on the factor by factor bases and the result showed items were acceptably reliable with the smallest Cronbach's alpha of

0.74. The subscales for all six retained factors had high reliabilities. Cronbach's alpha for the 42 items was 0.94, but for Convenience (α =0.93), discounts (α =0.89), stock availability (α =0.78), payment and promotion (α =0.81), children facilities (α =0.84), and prices (α =0.74).

Number of items	KMO	Cronbach's alpa				
12	0.93	0.93				
7	0.92	0.89				
3	0.69	0.78				
4	0.70	0.81				
3	0.71	0.84				
3	0.67	0.74				
	Number of items 12 7 3 4 3 3 3	Number of items KMO 12 0.93 7 0.92 3 0.69 4 0.70 3 0.71 3 0.67				

					100 March 100 Ma	
Table 5:	Reliability	/ and	KMO	summary	/ table	

Source: author

Regression

The six factors identified were all combine to predict consumers' choices of shops (Bgic, Tesco Lotus and others). Three models were run with the third model having predictors such as combine satisfaction, education and income. Though the three models were generally fit, model three accounted for the best prediction of the outcome variable (see table 2 below).

Going by model one, grocery shoppers where categorized in three and the effect of the aforementioned predictors were test one by one in succession. Because we are comparing three categories of shops, the conclusions are as follows: beginning with the first model.

Model 1: Combine satisfaction was used to predict the choice of shops. This was to investigate whether the choice of shop showed signs of overall satisfaction in grocery shopping. A shopper who decides to shop in Big C doesn't do so based on the overall satisfaction. Therefore satisfaction is not a significant predictor of choice of shops, b=1.01, Wald $\chi^2 = 1.20$, p=0.214. this was the same case for Tesco lotus shoppers as overall satisfaction failed to be a significant predictor as to weather a hopper choose Tesco Lotus or not, b=-0.46, Wald $\chi^2 = -0.40$, p=0.69.

Model 2: using combine satisfaction and education, the level to which these two variables predicted the choice of shops for grocery shoppers was examined. This is the first hierarchical model which will be compared to model one. Based on the results this model is statistically superior to the first (P=0.0015, LR χ^2 = 17.50) but only education was statistically significant for both shops (, *b=-0.39, Wald* χ^2 =-2.65, *p=0.008 and, b=-0.86, Wald* χ^2 = -3.36, *p=0.001*) for Big C and Tesco respectively. Meanwhile satisfaction wasn't statistically significant (b=1.42, Wald χ^2 = 1.66, *p=0.097 and, b=0.16, Wald* χ^2 = 0.12, *p=0.907*.

Model 3: When compared to the first two models, model three revealed a better model fit (P<0.001, LR χ^2 = 29.54). This model shows the overall amongst the three models. It yields a chi-square and significance we can compare to the previous models. Here, the chi-square revealed the model has improved significantly by adding income as a predictor. Since we are interested in the improvement of this model over the previous ones and this information is given by chi-square for satisfaction, education and income, it shows a significantly predicted weather a consumer chose Big C or Tesco respectively, (b=-0.25, Wald χ^2 = -2.67, p=0.007 and, b=-0.49, Wald χ^2 = -2.55, p=0.011). This implies the odds ratio of income with respect to Big C is 0.78 which means a consumer with a high income is more likely to choose Big C over Tesco (0.61) to put it more clearly a unit increase in income will lead to a change of shop by 0.78. Similarly, education significantly affected consumers preference of grocery shops, (b=-0.32, Wald χ^2 = -2.07, p=0.038 and, b=-0.75, Wald χ^2 = -2.85, p=0.004), for Big C and Tesco respectively.

	Variable	Parameter estimate	Standard error	P-Value	Model fit
	Big C:	ALL		X	P-
	Intercepts	-1.33	1.04		test
	Satisfaction	1.01	0.81	0.214	io d
	Tesco:				ihoc rat 3
Ħ	Inter <mark>cepts</mark>	-1.34	1.47		likel 212 od 0.33
del	Satisfaction	-0.47	1.17	0.689	29- 1-2 (- -2 (- lihc le=(
Mod		2.5	12.5	115	-2 lu Like valu
1	Big C:				
- 1	Intercepts	-1.27	1.07	-	
- 3	Satisfaction	-1.42	0.85	0.097	st
- #	education	-0.39	0.15	0.008	od 5
11	Tesco:	1	IF SY		lihoo 1.76) ratii 001.
2	Intercepts	-0.76	1.70	1 1	likeu -204 pod e=0.
del	Satisfaction	0.16	1.37	0.907	og- 2 (- eliha alue
Mo	Education	-0.86	0.26	0.001	-2 l Like p-vi
	Big C:		0. /	1	
	Intercepts	-1.08	1.13	1.01	36
	Satisfaction	1.67	0.91	0.068	
	education	-0.32	0.15	0.038	
	income	-0.25	0.09	0.007	st
	Tesco:	0.7	70 0		o te
	Intercepts	-0.17	2.00	10	lihoo 8.73) ratii 1.001
ŝ	Satisfaction	0.41	1.59	0.895	llike -198 pod ? <0
del	Education	-0.75	0.26	0.004	og- -2 (: elihc alue
Mor	income	-0.49	0.19	0.011	-2 (Like p-v.

	Table 2: s	summary	of three	tested	models.
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This study aimed to investigate factors influencing consumers' choices of supermarkets for grocery shopping in the North East of Thailand. A sample size of 300 respondents provided insights as to what they considered when marking their choices of supermarkets for grocery shopping this sample was collected from January to May of 2019 in the provinces of Khon Kaen, Ubon Ratchathani and Si Sa Ket respectively. The study originally identified 14 factors hypothesis to influence consumers' choices of supermarkets for grocery shopping. There were 42 items, linked to the 14 factors (see conceptual framework above). Using principle component analysis and the Varimax with Kaiser Normalization method, 6 factors we retained from the original 14. Theses 6 factors (convenience, discounts, stock availability, payment and promotions, children facilities and prices) were then tested for reliability to evaluate the internal consistency in the items us to evaluate each factor. The results showed all six factors had a Cronbach's alpa of 0.74 or above indicating a high reliability

level. Taking into account the key independent variables retained in the factor rotation model, one can detect that in terms of general differentiation across all Supermarkets in the north east of Thailand, the main discriminators are overall satisfaction, the existence of other services (convenience, discounts, stock availability, payment and promotions, children facilities and prices) and value for money (in this case measured by a retained factor that includes low prices, frequency of special promotions and the availability of loyalty discount schemes). This finding are consistent with (Moutinho, 2007). Findings also show that education and income has a significant influence on customers' supermarket choice. This is inconsistent with (Mortimer, 2011) whose finding concluded that income had no significant level of associated effect with satisfaction and hence store choice. However, education is consistent with the same findings as the same study concluded that respondents' age, education and occupation influenced perceptions of price, promotions and cleanliness and there for their store choice. While one maybe more incline to thing that overall satisfaction will significantly influence consumers' choice of grocery supermarkets, the data suggest otherwise. This finding seem to be more probable when you look at their implication from a variety of perspectives. To start with, since customers perceive no difference between Big C and Tesco Lotus in terms of variety and assortment of merchandise and little or no significant difference in prices (Samaipattana, 2003) this could explain why store visit decisions are not significantly based on satisfaction. In addition the fact that the results of this study reveals that customers are significantly likely to switch to Big C if they have high income may indicate a preference based on product quality or other factors not covered by this research which maybe worthy of examination. Conversely a combination of customer pull strategies centered on education and income levels are therefore suggested by this study as a clear part for increasing store traffic. The idea of what work for Big C will work for Tesco no longer hold true. Such strategies will only increase unsustainable competition amongst these two grocery chains, leading to high promotion cost. Hence lower profits.

These findings, present new challenges for future research. There is need for a more extensive measure to be undertaken since findings reveal that customers to a greater extent overlook, convenience, discounts, stock availability, payment and promotions, children facilities and prices when making their store choice. In addition, there may be other influences of store choices outside the scope of this study. For example, males may be more incline to buy some particular products than women and this may have an effect on their store choice. Further studies may be conducted to find out the relationship between satisfaction and repeated in store visit.

This study provides two valuable managerial insights. Firstly, it identifies 6 factors considered by grocery shoppers as important to their satisfaction which include convenience, discounts, stock availability, payment and promotions, children facilities and prices. Secondly it illustrates that

customers find no significant differences between this factors amongst the major stores covered in the study. Therefore, suggesting that grocery shops should find other avenues of attracting new customers. This way, management can effectively allocate resources and avoid wasting money on factors that are not significantly increasing the number of in store visits.

As with most research case studies, this work has its own limitations. The date for this research is collected in three cities in the North East of Thailand and the data may not accurately represent the entire region. In addition, translating the question may have cause some inconsistencies in the understanding of the questions as originally intended by the researcher. Though this problem was mitigated by a two round translation, it goes without saying that the accuracy is not 100% certain. In addition this study tries to predict customer behavior a factor that is constantly changing. This therefore implies that the result of this study are only valid for a short period of time

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Dear shopper

This research aims to evaluate the factors responsible for shoppers' choice of grocery supermarkets. The questionnaire consists of statements to which you have to indicate how much you agree or disagree on a point scale. You should be able to complete the questionnaire in approximately 20 minutes. Although some personal information is required for research purpose, no names are asked. The questionnaire is therefore completed anonymously. Only the researches will see the individual questionnaires. Please complete all the questions.

Part I Personal information:	
1. Gender	
Male	□ Female
2. Age	-
□ 20-30 □ 31- 40	\Box 41-50 \Box 50 and above
3. Education	
□ High school □ Diploma	□ Bachelor □ High education
4. Monthly income	
□ Less than \$5,000 □\$ <mark>5,001-10,00</mark>	0 <mark>0 □⊪10,001-15,000</mark>
□ \$15,001-20,000 □ \$20,001-25,00)0 □ ⊮25,001-30,000 □
□ above \$30,000	
5. Family size	
\Box 1 person \Box 2 - 3 people \Box 4	-5 people
6. Which of these do you shop from	
□ Big C □ Tesco Lotus □	Macro
	JAP V
	. // 3. //

Part II: Based on your shopping experience, how important are these factors when determining the choice of a supermarket?

	Not	Slightl	Modera		Verv
	Import	2 v	tely	Import	Import
	ant	Import	Import	ant	ant
	(1)	ant	ant	(4)	(5)
		(2)	(3)		

A few items					
Accept all bank cards					
Accept credit cards					
Availability of needed specials					
Bulk buying	1				
Children friendly trollies					
Children play ground	1				
Children waiting areas					
Cleanliness					
Competitive prices	100 M	100			
Consistent prices	1				
Easy access to car parks	1				
Easy access to public	11				
transportation	111				
Easy parking	10				
Efficient staff	1	P			
Frequent promotions				107	
Friendly staff		\sim			
Great tasting fresh food	12	20	15		
Healthy fresh food	Dr				
Hygienic practices	JU				
In stock specials	VA	31	11		
knowledgeable staff		-		1	A
Low, everyday prices			1/ 2		
Member bulk buying discount	1	1/1	560 9		// · · · · ·
Membership discount		1/30	Pist		
Multiple payment option	500	20'	- 2°		
No out of stocks	5.7	P			
No specials out of stock	0°5	22 A	Constant of the second		
No waiting		S- Martin			
Parcel pickup area		ET			

Product variety				
Quality food handling				
Quality fresh food				
Quick service				
Regular discounts				
Single items				
Special membership promo		1		
Supermarket easy to find				
Supermarket easy to get to				
Weekly specials		100		
Well stocked shelves				
Well-staffed departments	1			



Dear shopper

This research for evaluating the factors responsible for shoppers' choice of grocery supermarkets.

The questionnaire consists of statements to which you have to indicate how much you agree or disagree on a point scale. You should be able to complete the questionnaire in approximately 20 minutes.

Although some personal information is required for research purpose, no names are asked. The questionnaire is therefore completed anonymously. Only the researches will see the individual questionnaires. Please complete all the questions.



□ Big C □ Tesco Lotus □ Macro

Part II: based on your shopping experience, how important are this factors when determining the choice of a supermarket?

	116-		1	1	1
	Very	Important	Moderately	Slightly	Not
	Important		Important	Important	Important
Promotions and Specials					
Regular discounts					
Weekly specials					
Frequent promotions		201			
	1	1			
Staffing of serviced departments		\sim			
No waiting					
Quick service	116		- Sector		
Well-staffed departments	((_		1		
			M.	har 7	·
Advertised specials—promotions	1. 1	Q 4	-11	C.L.	1000
In stock specials	2			SP	
No specials out of stock	No.	DY.			
Availability of needed specials	$(\land $	5	15	//	
	110		1		
Efficient and accurate operations		-11			
Friendly staff	YC.	L X	1	112	
knowledgeable staff	2	1			A
Efficient staff				1	11
2.2	1		156	"etc.	
Easy access			2° 30	N 4	and the second s
Easy access to car parks	3.	-0	1,00		
Easy parking	5,9	10	50	ALC: NO	
Parcel pickup area	0,	202	and the second s		
		2	and the second se		
Product availability		The second			
Well stocked shelves					

Product variety					
No out of stocks		A.			
		1			
Convenience, trading times, loca	ality				
Supermarket easy to find					
Supermarket easy to get to					
Easy access to public					
transportation					
Cleanliness and hygiene	1				
Hygienic practices					
Cleanliness	1				
Quality food handling	1. 1	10			
	11/		and the second second		
High quality fresh food	111		1		
Great tasting fresh food	SIC		1A		r.
Healthy fresh food	14	n 1	51	71	
Quality fresh food			-11		
		2	211		
Consistent, stable, low prices	12		10		
Consistent prices	111	DC	14		$I\Lambda$
Competitive prices					1
Low, everyday prices	V	\sim			
	1	1		11	
Children facilities			~///	2	11
Children play ground		0.	1.0		
Children friendly trollies			10	$\gamma^{\boldsymbol{v}}$	1
Children waiting areas	32	2	1 . 52		
	29	n 6 "	51	all and a second se	
Payment option	200	5			
Multiple payment option		13	1		
Accept credit cards	The second se	and a strength			
Accept all bank cards					

Membership advantages									
Membership discount									
Special membership promo									
Member bulk buying discount									
Quantity of intended shopped items									
Single items									
Bulk buying	<u> </u>								
A few items									

