

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the results, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further study.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This section summarizes the objectives, subjects, materials and procedures of the study.

##### **5.1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The research was to find out the factors that make farmers buy rice seeds at the rice seed center as well as to investigate the channels of communication which can best reach rice seed customers and to identify the personal factors influencing their decisions to buy rice seeds at the Ratchaburi Rice Seed Center.

##### **5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures**

###### **5.1.2.1 Subjects**

The subjects of the study were 120 customers who came to buy rice seeds at Ratchaburi Rice Seed Center between December 2008 and January 2009.

###### **5.1.2.2 Materials**

The questionnaires were distributed to collect primary data from customers visiting the center between December 2008 and January 2009. The questions were basically designed to study both the channels of communication which can best reach the customers and factors influencing rice seeds customer buying decisions at the center. There were three major parts in the questionnaires. The demographic part was designed to collect the personal data of the respondents which included age, gender, education, residence, rice field area, and also work experience. The second part was designed to examine the best channels of communication for customers to get information from the center. The final part was to find out the respondents' opinions on the factors influencing their rice seed buying decisions.

### **5.1.2.3 Procedure**

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents who came to buy rice seeds at the center during December 2008 and January 2009. After asking the respondents to complete the questionnaires and return them immediately when they had finished answering all questions, the researcher waited for their completed questionnaires in order to ensure that one hundred percent of the questionnaires would be returned and to give the researcher a chance to explain any questions that the respondents might not understand. All of the completed questionnaires were verified for completeness before further processing.

The SPSS program was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used. The results were presented in frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

### **5.2.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents**

The majority of respondents (81.7%) were male. Most respondents (51.7% and 35.0%) were 26-45 years and 46-60 years old respectively. Most respondents had primary and secondary education at 66.7% and 20.0% respectively. The respondents are mostly in Ratchaburi province at 82.5%. Most respondents (85.0%) live near the center, less than 50 kilometers. The average rice field area of the respondents was 28.3 rai. Most respondents (55.8%) had rice growing experience of more than 20 years.

### **5.2.2 Channels to Access Information**

The majority of respondents (80.0%) knew about the center from their friends, whereas none of them knew about the center via newsletters and website. Most respondents said that they never got the information from website, mobile clinic, and newsletters. However, 59.2% of the respondents accessed the information via radio.

### 5.2.3 Factors Influencing Customers' Rice Seed Buying Decision

In terms of product quality, most respondents thought that good quality rice seeds with a high germination rate (mean = 4.72), no weeds (mean = 4.67), no seed borne diseases (mean = 4.53), high productivity (mean = 4.52), and the varieties of rice seeds (mean = 4.33) were the most influential factors for customers when deciding to buy rice seeds. Furthermore, the discount (mean = 4.40) and the reasonable price (mean = 4.38) were the most influential factors when buying rice seeds. The ease (mean = 4.65) and the convenience going to the center (mean = 4.62) were the most influential factors which lead to customers' buying decision. The advertising via newsletters (mean = 4.44) was the most influential channel of communication while the advertising via website (mean = 2.40) was a less influential channel of communication. Most respondents strongly agreed that good sales service (mean = 4.76), recommendations from agricultural extension officers (mean = 4.65), and good after-sale services (mean = 4.46) were the most influential factors on their buying decision.

## 5.3 DISCUSSIONS

### 5.3.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The majority of respondents were male, middle-aged, had a primary education, and had rice growing experience of more than 20 years. This was similar to the result of Weerapan Pecharwut (วีระพรหม เพชรอาวุธ, 2547) which revealed that most farmers were male, aged 48.17 years, had a primary education, and had a rice growing experience of 28.29 years. However, the average rice field area of the respondents is 28.3 rai which is more than that in the study of Weerapan Pecharwut (วีระพรหม เพชรอาวุธ, 2547) which was 18.35 rai. Regarding residence, the respondents are mostly in Ratchaburi province and the distance from their home to the center is less than 50 kilometers. This is probably because the time of collecting data was the starting period of the rice growing season in Ratchaburi Province. So, there was a lot of demand for rice seeds in Ratchaburi and also in Petchaburi.

### 5.3.2 Channels to Access Information

The majority of respondents knew about the Ratchaburi Rice Seed Center from their friends. The finding was obviously consistent with what Weerapan Pecharwut (วีระพรรณ เพชรอาวุธ, 2547) and Jakkrapan Niranrungreung (จักรพันธ์ นรินทร์รุ่งเรือง, 2545) found. Weerapan found that rice growers got the information about the source of rice seed selling from their neighbors. This finding was also the same as Jakkrapan's reporting that most farmers got advice from their neighbors and their community leaders. Talks among friends were considered interpersonal media, supporting the concept of marketing communication in which a personal communication channel, when someone associated with buyers has a great effect on their purchasing decisions, especially when the products are expensive. This finding was also consistent with Kotler's (2003) that reference groups such as family or friends were considered one source of data when buyers want to gather information to make a purchasing decision. Their suggestions, therefore, could influence buyers' perceptions which influence the buying decision process. Furthermore, this finding was related to what Sheth and Mittal (2004) had mentioned, that word of mouth is a very powerful form of communication and can influence people when it is more credible. Most respondents said that they never got the information from website, mobile clinic, and newsletters. On the other hand, more than a half of respondents did access the information via local radio. This finding showed that the possible way to connect to the customers was local radio. As for some other media, there were some obstacles for the respondents for example, they didn't have knowledge about how to access the Internet, they are not interested in mobile clinics or any exhibitions, and they didn't get the newsletters from the center, or they got them but they cannot read fluently. So listening to the radio was the easiest way to get useful information. For the information type, most respondents wanted to know about the new variety of rice and its outstanding characteristics. This finding is similar to both Jatuporn (จตุพร วรธยากร, 2532) and Wutthichat's findings (วุฒิชาติ สุนทรสมัย, 2546) emphasizing that farmers used more information about products from accepted sources and they rely significantly on the product quality.

### **5.3.3 Factors Influencing Customer Decisions on Buying Rice Seeds**

#### **5.3.3.1 Result of Product Factor on Buying Decision**

For product factor, most respondents thought that good quality rice seed with high germination, no weeds, no seed-borne diseases, high productivity, and the varieties of rice seeds were the most influential factors for them when deciding to buy rice seeds. The finding was consistent with what Walker (1990) had stated that the concern about product is its quality. In many situations customers are prepared to pay more for reliable and quality products. Also, this finding was correlated with the result of Wuttichat sonthornsamai (วุฒิชาติ สุนทรสมัย, 2546) who found that products were the most influential marketing mix factor influencing the purchase of a product.

#### **5.3.3.2 Result of Price Factor on Buying Decision**

For price factor, the customers knew that buying rice seeds from the rice seed center is cheaper than buying them from other private companies or other distributors. From the study, the reasonable price was an important factor when customers decided to buy rice seeds. This finding was consistent with Kotler's (Kotler, 2003) that price is one of the factors that can influence the customers whether to buy the product or not. Moreover, the price must suit the overall product quality.

#### **5.3.3.3 Result of Place Factor on Buying Decision**

For place factor, the distance between home to the selling place was a less influential factor. It is because many customers consider product quality as the primary factor. They are not concerned whether the shop is near their home or not. This is consistent with what Seri Wongmonta (เสรี วงษ์มณฑา, 2542) had stated that product was the most important factor which customers considered first. Moreover, it is not necessary to have distribution channels in many places to serve the customers. It depends on the product type. However, the location is more important. The place should be convenient to reach. Besides, the ease and the convenience of going to the center were also influential.

#### **5.3.3.4 Result of Promotion Factor on Buying Decisions**

Usually, when the customers buy rice seeds at the rice seed center for more than 5,000 baht, they will get a 5% discount. From the study, the participants thought that the discount was the important factor affecting their buying decision. According to Kotler (2008), the discount is considered a type of promotion which is related to the research of Wuttichat sonthornsamai (วุฒิชาติ สุนทรสมัย, 2546) finding that promotion was the most influential marketing mix factor.

For the channels of communication to convey the promotion information to the customer, the advertising via newsletters was the most influential channel of communication in the farmers' opinions. The possible reason is newsletters can be kept as a source of information. They can read it any time they want. Though less influential, radio which can also reach customers, but they have to jot down the information by themselves and most of the time they cannot access the program.

#### **5.3.3.5 Result of Service Factor on Buying Decisions**

For service factor, most respondents strongly agreed that good sale service, recommendations from agricultural extension officers, and good after-sale service were the most influential factors on buying decisions. This finding was consistent with Walker's (1990) saying that personal service is an important part of the company service strategy. Even when a product itself does not meet expectations, excellent personal service can redeem the situation. Also, this finding was correlated with the study of Jatuporn Wattayagorn (จตุพร วรรณชยากร, 2532) finding that the recommendations and knowledge obtained from the agricultural extension officers were the important factors which influenced the farmers' decisions.

Such findings were also consistent with Sheth and Mittal's (2004) that buyers are looking for good services before and after they make their selections. Moreover, they want their purchases to be convenient, not too time-consuming, and in a time and place that fits their schedule.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

In this study, it was found that most respondents were male, middle-aged, had a primary education, and had rice growing experience of more than 20 years. At present, the local radio is the only channel of communication which can best reach rice seed customers and lead to the buying decision process. But the respondents want to get more newsletters in the future. Beside the personal factors, the reference group is also an important factor influencing their buying decision.

The most influential factors on rice seed buying decisions were good quality products, reasonable price, convenient place, advertising in newsletters or local radio and good service.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 This research found that most respondents were in Ratchaburi. It was not distributed to other four provinces which were the main area of responsibility for the center. Therefore, further studies should be done by collecting the data from those provinces. The personal factors can be analyzed in a more concrete way.

5.5.2 This study was conducted in December and January. Another study should be done in some other periods to get the information on demand and to find out the factors influencing buying decisions at certain periods.

5.5.3 This study was conducted only at Ratchaburi Rice Seed Center. The results can be used to develop marketing strategies of the center to enhance sales. However, there are 23 other Rice Seed Centers under the Department of Rice, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. So the findings of this research cannot represent the whole situation. Thus, further study should also be done at other centers to get the information that fits each center.