



วารสารธรรมเพื่อชีวิต

JOURNAL OF DHAMMA FOR LIFE

ISSN: 2822-048X

<https://soo8.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/dhammalife/index>

Original Research Article

Study on Purchasing Behavior of Tampons and Influencing Factors via Mobile E-Commerce in Jiangsu, China

Dongmei Xie¹ and Thanakorn Thanathanchuchot^{2*}

ARTICLE INFO

Name of Authors:

1. Dongmei Xie

Faculty of Business Administration and Accounting, Pathumthani University, Thailand.

Email: xie.dong@gmail.com

Corresponding Author*

2. Thanakorn Thanathanchuchot

Faculty of Business Administration and Accounting, Pathumthani University, Thailand.

Email: thanakorn@gmail.com

Keywords:

Mobile E-commerce; Buying Decision; Influencing Factors

Article history:

Received: 15/10/2023

Revised: 03/02/2024

Accepted: 15/03/2024

Available online: 20/03/2024

How to Cite:

Xie, D., & Thanathanchuchot, T. (2024). Study on Purchasing Behavior of Tampons and Influencing Factors via Mobile E-Commerce in Jiangsu, China. *Journal of Dhamma for Life*, 30(1), 142-149.

ABSTRACT

Most girls will have menstrual period every month. From the end of the last century to the early days of Taobao, most female consumers can only go to the supermarket to buy sanitary napkins or similar products. Due to the differences in Chinese and Western cultural differences, Chinese female consumers are when the cashiers check out, they even feel shy because they buy sanitary napkins. With the rapid development of mobile e-commerce, consumers no longer have to face the awkward situation before. Without leaving home, they can choose their own sanitary napkins and similar products according to their preferences easily. Due to the excessive demand for women's morality and the subjective prejudice against tampons, only a few shopping malls have publicly sold tampons in China. Therefore, it is still mainly selling online platforms.

Therefore, this paper takes mobile e-commerce as background, combines relevant literature and materials, and analyzes the interview method and questionnaire survey method to study decision process and influencing factors of the current consumer when purchasing the tampons through the mobile terminals. Research plan launched on November 2022, with a period of about five months. According to the research, the decision-making process of Chinese consumers when purchasing tampons through mobile terminals is as follows: Problem Recognition, Information Research, Alternative Evaluation, Purchase Decision, Order Process, Parcel Reception, Post-sale Service, Post-purchase Evaluation, Repeated Consumption. And have 10 independent variable factors that affect the decision-making process, which are: personal factors, Reference Group, Price, Culture, Brand, Ease of Use, Website Design, Orders' Privacy Protection, Security while Online shopping and Merchants' Profile & Credibility. In the end, according to the results of this paper, we made suggestions on the market status and consumer concepts to adjust and improve to better meet the needs of Chinese female consumers.

Introduction

E-commerce is a series of business activities with information network technology as the medium and commodity exchange as the center (Shen Hongmin, 2011). The main features are flexibility, simplicity, personalization. With the continuous innovation of technology, Spider can capture consumer data and preferences on the APPs, so as to meet the needs of consumers to the greatest extent.

"Anytime, anywhere, anyhow" became dominant social consumption behavior. Till June 2022, Chinese mobile users amount reached 1.051 billion (Xinhua News, 2022). Generation Y has the highest frequency of mobile online shopping, reaching 93%. Especially in 2020 to 2022, online retailing becomes an important guarantee in a complex environment.

The global market for feminine hygiene products has witnessed significant transformations in recent years, with a notable shift towards online purchasing behavior, particularly through mobile e-commerce platforms. In China, Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Statistics (2023), this trend is equally pronounced, reflecting the country's rapidly evolving digital landscape and changing consumer preferences. Among feminine hygiene products, tampons represent a segment that has garnered increasing attention, owing to their convenience, effectiveness, and discreetness (Chen, Y., & Li, X., 2020). In Jiangsu, one of China's most economically developed provinces, the dynamics of purchasing behavior concerning tampons through mobile e-commerce platforms present a compelling area for investigation (Zhang, H., & Li, Y., 2018). Understanding the factors influencing consumers' decisions in this context is essential for businesses aiming to capitalize on market opportunities and tailor their marketing strategies effectively.

This research aims to explore the purchasing behavior of tampons and the influencing factors driving such behavior among consumers in Jiangsu, China, with a specific focus on mobile e-commerce platforms (Hu, Y., & Ma, Z., 2019). By examining various socio-economic, cultural, and psychological factors, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into consumer preferences and decision-making processes in the context of feminine hygiene product purchases. This research holds several implications for both academia and industry (Wang, L., & Zhang, Y., 2021). From an academic perspective, it contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer behavior, particularly within the context of mobile e-commerce and feminine hygiene products. By shedding light on the nuances of tampon purchasing behavior in Jiangsu, it enriches our understanding of cross-cultural variations and market dynamics. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study can inform businesses and marketers about effective strategies for promoting tampons through mobile e-commerce channels in Jiangsu, thereby facilitating market penetration and enhancing profitability. Moreover, the insights gained can aid policymakers and public health organizations in devising initiatives to promote women's health and hygiene awareness in the region.

Objective

This research aims to explore the purchasing behavior of tampons and the influencing factors driving such behavior among consumers in Jiangsu, China.

Theoretical Framework and Principles

Menstrual products are indispensable daily necessities for most women. In 1989, Tampax tried to enter Chinese market but failed because of cultural differences. It didn't enter again until 2017, however it was only sold online. In December 2022, the tampons penetration rate in Europe has exceeded 70%, United States is 40%, and China is only about 2%. This is closely related to ideology. So we would provide improvement suggestions based on research results to better meet the needs of Chinese consumers and tap potential customers. In addition, we hope that Chinese women can obey their own thoughts.

The styles and brands of tampons sold online becomes diverse. Shi Chaoguang and Wang Kai (2011) believe that consumers have different purchasing behaviors from traditional process when faced with many choices. When consumers use social Apps, they will be exposed to many Ads or from colleagues and friends. This will stimulate consumers' shopping desire. Meanwhile, consumers will search more information for comparison to make purchase decisions. After package receives, they will check whether it meet expectations. If it's satisfactory, consumers will willing to make repeated purchases. On the contrary, consumers may complain or stop trying anymore.

Zhu Peng (2017) found through scenario simulation and questionnaire that consumers can be affected by many factors when consuming on mobile, such as network speed, store's reputation. Based on the research conclusions of scholars, here concludes influencing factors of tampon purchase via mobile are: Personal Factors, Reference Group, Prices, Culture, Brand, Ease of Use, Website Design, Order Privacy Protection, Security While Online Shopping, Merchants Profile & Credibility.

Hence, with the 10 independent variables and combined with decision-making process, this paper initially designs research model as shown in Figure 1-1.

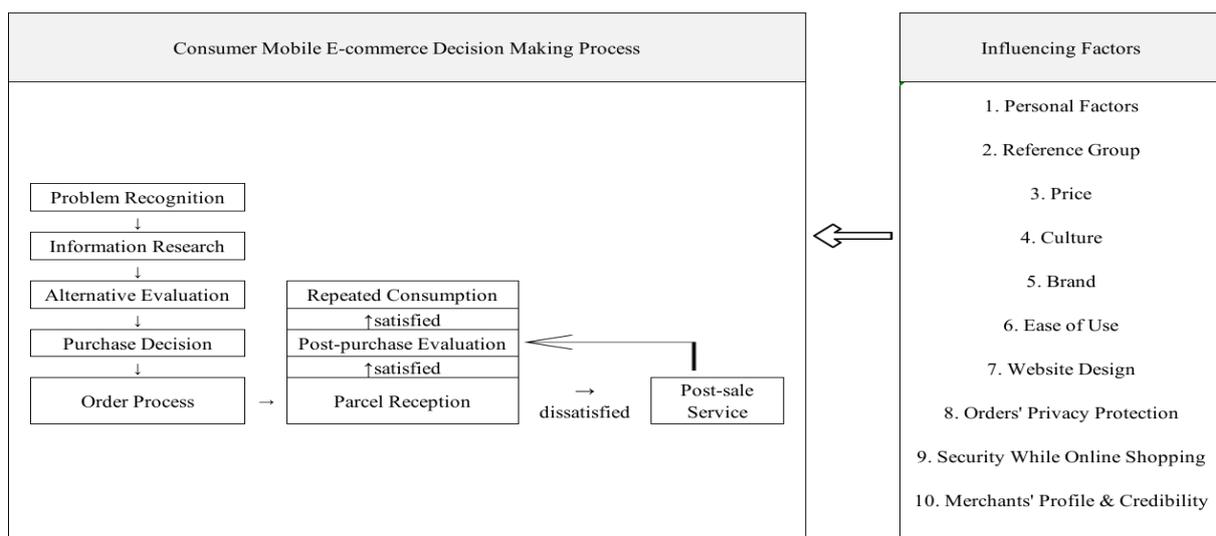


Figure 1 Model of Tampons Purchasing Behavior and Influencing Factors

This study takes Jiangsu Province(China) as population sample, the latest population is 85.054million (Liang Xiaohan, 2020). Methodologies are interview and questionnaire. In accordance with Taro Yamane method, final sample size should be 400pcs. Besides, select 5 online consumers to participate interview. All questions have been evaluated by experts in related study field before publishing.

Interview is a research method to understand psychology and behavior of the interviewee by conversation between interviewer and interviewee. Combined with theoretical knowledge, questions are designed for each link in decision-making process model.

Questionnaire is a method for formulating questions in a designed way for statistics and surveys (Liu Jun, 2006). In this study, the influencing factors of tampons purchase behavior will be used as independent variables to design a survey. The questionnaire has three parts. The 1st part is personal information of respondents, including gender, age, education, occupation, income. The 2nd part involves related issues such as online shopping frequency. The 3rd part is the key of research, divided into independent variables and dependent variables, which are represented as X and Y. There are 10 independent variables, each variable and corresponding questions are designed according to relevant periodicals and literatures. Moreover, it uses Likert scale to measure questions, total score of each respondent is used to explain his attitude or different states on this scale (Qi Lebin, 2006).

Research Methods

1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the purchasing behavior of tampons and the influencing factors in the context of mobile e-commerce in Jiangsu, China. The qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews to explore in-depth insights from participants, while the quantitative aspect utilizes questionnaire surveys to gather data from a larger sample, allowing for generalization and statistical analysis.

2. Data Collection Methods

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a select group of participants, including female consumers in Jiangsu, China, who have purchased tampons through mobile e-commerce platforms. These interviews will delve into participants' decision-making processes, experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards purchasing tampons online. The interview questions will be designed to cover various aspects such as motivations for purchase, factors influencing choice, preferences, and challenges encountered.

Questionnaire Surveys: A structured questionnaire will be administered to a broader sample of female consumers in Jiangsu, China, who have purchased tampons through mobile e-commerce platforms. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended questions designed to gather quantitative data on demographic information, purchasing behavior, influencing factors, satisfaction levels, and preferences. The questionnaire will be distributed electronically, ensuring convenience and accessibility for participants.

3. Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy will involve both purposive and convenience sampling techniques to ensure the inclusion of participants who have relevant experiences with purchasing tampons via mobile e-commerce platforms in Jiangsu, China.

Interview Sampling: Participants for the interviews will be purposively selected based on criteria such as age, socioeconomic background, frequency of tampon purchase, and familiarity with mobile e-commerce platforms. Efforts will be made to achieve diversity in the sample to capture a range of perspectives.

Questionnaire Survey Sampling: The questionnaire will be distributed to a larger sample of female consumers in Jiangsu, China, using convenience sampling methods. Participants will be recruited through online platforms, social media channels, and community groups, allowing for a wider representation of the target population.

4. Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent: Prior to participation in the study, all participants will be provided with detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, risks, benefits, and their rights as participants. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant, and they will have the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality: Participants' confidentiality and privacy will be strictly maintained throughout the research process. All data collected will be anonymized and stored securely, with access limited to the research team members only.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study will be voluntary, and participants will not face any coercion or undue influence to take part. They will have the freedom to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.

Ethical Approval: The research protocol will be reviewed and approved by the relevant institutional ethics committee to ensure compliance with ethical standards and regulations governing research involving human participants.

Research Results

According to interview results, it shows that respondents were influenced by friends, one of the respondents actively searched for tampons online for own needs, while the others purchased the experience out of curiosity. They habitually make comparisons between different online stores, and then place order based on their decisions. They are satisfied with the timeliness of logistics, product quality and service, and have become loyal customers. In addition, interviewees are willing to pay more for products that are healthier. Besides, they are willing to recommend tampons to friends.

To sum up, it is verified that the tampon mobile purchase decision model assumed in Figure 1 is established.

At last received 420pcs surveys and 417pcs are valid, data analyzed by SPSS PRO system. Cronbach coefficient is 0.951 which is greater than 0.8, indicates that the data have high internal consistency and very good reliability. The KMO value of the survey data is 0.958 (KMO>0.7), and the significance probability is 0.000 (P<0.05), which shows the data validity structure of this study is good.

1. Sample descriptive statistical analysis

From the perspective of gender, there're 345 females, 75 males. And age is mainly distributed among 18-40 years old. According to the report, 96% men are willing to buy menstrual products for females, their minds are gradually opening up.

2. Basic situation Descriptive analysis

More than 50% respondents never used tampons, 42.21% respondents have used. Hence, there has great opportunities for tampons market growth.

According to the survey, 81.53% respondents shop via mobile. Mobile has become an inseparable good friend of us.

JD.com is a representative of high-quality and time-efficient online shopping platforms. 57.65% of respondents tend to buy tampons on JD.com. In addition, ladies start to paying more attention on health and comfort. and willing to pay more for high quality products.

3. Influencing factors Descriptive analysis

The analysis show that the respondents are most concerned purchasing safeties and most respondents are still very concerned about the views of the external comments, it still needs time to break the traditional concept.

Correlation analysis refers to the analysis of the relationship between two or more variables. The research results prove that the 10 factors are all significantly positively correlated with purchase behavior of tampons.

To sum up, hypothesis are verified as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Hypothesis test result

Hypothesis	Whether Established
Personal factors will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
Reference group will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
Prices will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The cultures will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The brands will affect the consumption and purchasing behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The ease of use will affect the consumption and purchasing behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The website design will affect the consumption and purchasing behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The privacy protection of the orders will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The security while online shopping will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported
The online shops' profile and credibility will affect the consumption and purchase behavior of tampons in the mobile e-commerce environment.	Supported

Conclusion

Chinese ladies should pay more attention on their own needs and put aside traditional concepts with subjective bias. In the meantime, tampon producers and women associations should design suitable Ads for Chinese consumers. The video can use animation elements, so as not to make ladies feel ashamed when talking about tampons. This study may help tampon producers better understand the Chinese consumption concepts and consuming behaviors. In addition, it's also beneficial to individuals, society, and related organizations on academic performance and business management area.

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