

# Factors Affecting E-Book Purchase Decisions of Customers in Thailand

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## Abstract

The objectives of the research were to review literatures related to the factors that affected the consumers' decision to buy E-books in Thailand, to promote competition and competitive advantages of Thai printing media industry. Nowadays the printed books become less popular, which makes the publishing industries change their platforms in selling their books in the shape of E-books. The changes were made to accommodate the changing demands. The results acquired from the literary reviews were found that the significant factors affecting the consumers' decision to buy E-books in Thailand were as follows: technological acceptance, electronic service quality, and online consumer behaviors. Based on the results, the conceptual framework was developed on the causal factors that influenced the consumers' decision to buy E-books. Additionally, it was expected that the electronic service quality might be the vital variable among technological acceptance, online consumer behaviors and decision to buy E-books. If the consumers' technological acceptance was high, it was likely that their perception of the electronic service quality was also high, which could in turn have an effect on their decision to buy E-books.

**Keywords:** Decision to Buy, Online Consumer Behaviors, E-books

## Introduction

E-books have become the alternative for those who love reading in the digital age. Readers find it more convenient to read books via electronic equipment, be it tablets, mobile phones or notebooks. In addition, they can choose and buy E-books online by paying a monthly fee. More and more consumers reading E-books are familiar sight on the public transport or in the public places. The trend is expected to rise (Shim, 2021). As the hard cover books become less popular, the publishing houses are required to change their platforms to keep pace with consumers' changing demands. Moreover, E-books cost less than the printed ones. These are the reasons why the E-book market has quickly overtaken the traditional one (Shim, 2021). E-books can be conveniently and quickly downloaded. Furthermore, they are much cheaper than the common books (Nakwanit, 2018).

The literary reviews found that a technological acceptance could affect the consumers' decision to buy E-books at a high level. This was because people around the world had utilized technology in their daily life; hence this factor was highly influential (Tiantanakiat, 2017; Rayasagool & Soontayatron, 2019). It was also found that consumers' decision to buy E-books

was positively related to their online behaviors, which included constant access to the website, online emotion, and online entertainment. It meant that consumers could get access to data and could select the items they wanted anywhere and anytime at will (Prasert, 2021; Fihartini et al., 2021). The factor of the online service quality was another vital one for the consumer to decide to buy E-books (Qulati et al., 2021).

To make the electronic e-book business in the digital age more effective, it is imperative to take into account the following factors which could affect the decision of the consumers: technological acceptance, online consumer behaviors and E-service quality.

### **Objective of the Literary Reviews**

The aim of the study was to review the literature related to the variables that affect the consumers' decision to buy E-books in Thailand. The variables found consisted of technological acceptance, online consumer behaviors and E-service quality.

### **Literary Review**

The study aimed to review literatures related to studies of the variables that affected the decision of the consumers in Thailand to buy E-books. The consumers' decision was based on the well taken analysis. The decision process had five components as per the ideas advanced by Schiffman et al. (2008): problem awareness, information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision and behaviours after buying.

The variables that affected a decision to buy E-books referred to those making the consumers able to consider or analyze to achieve the desired objectives. They consisted of technological acceptance, online consumer behaviours, and E-service quality.

### **Online Consumer Behaviours**

The online consumer behaviours were studied because the Internet is the source of important data on goods. Consumers would usually look for information to reduce potential risks or uncertainty. Individual online consumers would have behaviours directly related to the online service before deciding to buy any items (Buddhakerd & Laohavichien, 2021; Prasert 2021; Fihartini et al., 2021).

Fihartini et al. (2021) found that online consumer behaviours would reflect the use of technological application. The finding was in accordance with the study by

Ridwan et al. (2020) who conducted a study on the use of technology and the observation of behaviors in using electronic technology. They found that technology was closely related to consumers' behaviours in deciding to buy merchandises. They concluded that online behaviours were related to using the website in five aspects: 1) Online awareness included data quality and accuracy. 2) Online emotions were the individuals being motivated by various factors pertaining to good feelings and happiness. 3) Online entertainment was a feeling of relaxation after individuals had used the online service. 4) Continuity was the state in which individuals constantly used the online system. 5) Attitudes towards an online system was an expression of opinions and feelings the person had towards the online buying. The research by Fihartini et al. (2021) found that thanks to the rapid expansion of E-commerce, the Internet was the significant source of data. In addition, there was a positive relation among variables, online consumers' behaviours and electronic service quality.

Roongsathaporn (2020) explained that the online consumer behaviours could be indicated by online cognition, online emotions, online entertainment, flow and online attitudes. The more the online consumers used the online service, the more they were affected by these variables.

### **Technological Acceptance**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was invented by Davis et al. (1989). It was developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action: TRA. The former focused on a study of factors that could affect acceptance or decision to use technology or innovations. TAM could have a direct effect on users' acceptance of technology in the following aspects: perceived ease of use

and usefulness. Three factors could influence behavioural intention: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes. Accepting information technology could lead to an understanding of the influence of the factors that made a person accept technology (Someraan et al., 2021).

Similarly, Jantorn et.al. (2021) held that accepting technology amounted to people's planning to use new technology. In other words, the users were planning and analyzing how to use new technology.

Chu & Chu (2011) described the technological acceptance that the user had to understand technology and know how to use it in order to yield profits to oneself or related activities. Based on the literary reviews, it was found that the consumers at present had a high level of technological acceptance. The reason is that the present world belongs to technology 5.0. Consumers become more interested in new media like application, and as a result their using application was found to be at the highest frequency. It was found that technological acceptance in light of usefulness, risks, perceived ease of use, and attitudes had influenced a decision to buy an item and use the application-based service (Techakasamsuk, 2020; Janthorn et.al., 2021).

The researchers of the present work found a positive relation between technological acceptance and e-service quality. It could be explained that if consumers' technological acceptance was high, their awareness of the online service quality was also high (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Someraan et al., 2021).

The researcher also studied the components of technological acceptance from the research works by Davis et al. (1989), Chu & Chu (2011) and Fayad & Paper (2015) and then framed the components of technological acceptance as follows: perceived usefulness, ease of use, intention to use, perceived risk, attitude toward using technology, and actual use. These six components could be applied to studying the technological acceptance as they were easy to understand, clear and comprehensive.

### **E-service Quality**

Satisfaction gained by customers could not lead to a decision to buy goods or bring about a repeat purchasing (Leecharoen, 2020). The research found that the perceived e- service quality was a vital factor which led to a decision to buy online goods and do it more than once (Leecharoen, 2020; Leecharoen, 2019; Mingcharoen & Lekcharoen, 2020). From the literary review, it was found that a service quality was a significant causal factor contributing to a decision to buy online items. The explanation was that once the customers realized an efficiency of the websites, accurate information and confidentiality of customers' information, they would make a decision to purchase the stuff they wanted. Thus, the service quality was a key concept to evaluate the service recipients. If the service provider could offer the service in line with the needs as required by the receivers or if the service proved better than expected by customers, they would feel satisfied and would decide to use the service again (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

In the present time the E-books have been continuously growing as a result of a technological progress. There is a wide variety of ways in downloading E-books, purchasing and paying. The customers can choose the items of E-books as desired. After choosing the items, they can place the order via iPad, IPhone Android and Mac. Access to data becomes easy, convenient and quick. "E-service quality" thus becomes a standard one can easily get from the Internet (Clark et al., 2008).

The factor of E-service quality is one of variables that could influence customers' decision to buy E-books. With related literatures reviewed, the researchers of the present work would like to propose the following elements of the E-service quality derived from the researches of Parasuraman et al. (2005) and Militina and Achmad (2020). Attention was focused on these elements as they were easy to understand, clear and comprehensive. The service quality could

be described in four main aspects. 1) Efficiency: an online system was easy to use. Users could search for and choose the service they desired conveniently and quickly. 2) Fulfillment: the system could receive the order and send information quickly and accurately. The desired objectives could be achieved quickly. 3) System availability: the system was stable and could be utilized whenever users wanted to use it. 4) Privacy: the online system could keep data on customers confidential.

It can be concluded that the variables affecting the consumers' decision to buy E-books were technological acceptance, online consumers' behaviours and E-service quality. The results of the variable analysis were shown in table 1. A theoretical framework consisted of 15 items. In the present research, the criteria used to evaluate the frequency were based on the theoretical framework of Creswell and Clark (2011).

**Table 1** A summary of the literary reviews on the factors affecting consumers' decision to buy E-books

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Frequency
Enjoyment in reading				*										*							2	
price awareness				*											*			*			3	
e-service quality		*	*	*					*	*	*			*	*	*	*				10	
Perceived benefits	*	*	*			*				*											5	
Satisfaction			*					*													2	
Service innovation					*									*			*				3	
Perceived risks						*								*			*		*		4	
Reliability	*					*															2	
Online consumers' behaviors					*				*	*				*	*	*	*				7	
Technological acceptance					*	*	*			*				*	*			*			7	
Psychological factors		*							*												2	
Attitude factors		*		*																	2	
Marketing strategies									*					*							2	
Social influences			*																		1	
Expected use				*												*					2	

Notes: 1) Tiantanakiat (2017); 2) Nakwanit (2018); 3) Rayasagool & Soontayatron (2019); 4) Mungcharoen & Lekcharoen (2020); 5) Techakasamsuk (2020); 6) Prasert (2021); 7) Jukong (2021); 8) Someran et al. (2021); 9) Leecharoen (2020); 10) Chanton et al. (2021); 11) Buddhakerd & Laohavichien (2021); 12) Parasuraman et al. (2005); 13) Clark et al. (2008); 14) Ridwan et al. (2020); 15) Zhang (2020); 16) Tarmidi et al. (2021); 17) Khorajia (2021); 18) Fihartini et al. (2021); 19) Shim (2021); 20) Vijayanand (2021); 21) Qalati et al. (2021)

## Conceptual Framework

As the literary reviews show, the variables that can affect the consumers' decision to buy E-books in Thailand are technological acceptance, online consumers' behaviours, and E-service quality. The conceptual framework can be created as shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## Conclusion

The literary review indicated that technological progress considerably contributed to consumers' behavioral changes. Online media had a direct impact on the reading habit of the general public. People have changed from reading and buying the printed copies to E-books. Today they can do reading on the electronic screens as information is easily accessible anywhere and anytime. More and more people spend time reading E-books. The number of people who read E-books is expected to rise further. The changes that happen to the printing industries have forced the entrepreneurs and writers to adjust themselves in accordance with the consumers' behaviors. They have developed E-books and explored the factors that can affect a decision by consumers to buy the books in question. The major variables obtained from the literary reviews that can affect the decision to buy E-books are technological acceptance,

online consumer behavior, and E-service quality. The factors in question can help the entrepreneurs understand the behavior of buyers and can be applied by those concerned in order to develop E-books more efficiently.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The present research is based on the literary reviews which are different in terms of samples, areas and industries studied. The further research should be on the qualitative work and the key informants, that is, agencies as buyers, institutes, organizations, groups of writers and the general public. Studying these groups will enable the researchers to know in-depth data and other causes in relation to the variables that can affect consumers' decision to buy E-books.

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