

Factors Affecting Decisions Concerning Pet-Related Service in Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aims to study: (1) things that consumers want in pet malls; (2) information sources of consumers; and (3) criteria that consumers use to decide when choosing pet-related services. This is a quantitative research using questionnaire as the research instrument. Statistics used in the research are frequency, percentage, means, purposive sampling and accidental sampling. There were 400 participants in this research.

The research findings are as follows. (1) The things consumers wanted the most in pet malls were activities for pets, convenient parking spaces and reliable animal hospitals. (2) Information sources that were used the most were Facebook and the Internet, respectively. (3) Criteria that consumers used when choosing pet-related services were divided into two parts. (3.1) Pet hospitals – It was found that factors affecting hospital selections with the most average scores were treatment reliability, good services, and a team of competent physicians. (3.2) Pet shops – It was found that the top factors consumers considered when choosing products or services were quality of products and services, interesting and reasonable products, and reliable brands.

Keyword: pet malls, pet shops

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Introduction

Currently, the growth rate of business in selling products and services connected with pets in Thailand goes against economic trends. This indicates the increasing popularity of raising pets in Thailand. This is observable from the market value of pet-related businesses in Thailand with the continuous increase rate in relationship to the number of households. This is consistent with the results of the survey by the National Statistical Office. According to the findings, the number of households that raised the dogs and cats constitutes 20 percent of all households. The number of households in Bangkok Metropolitan area as of December 2013 totaled 2,593,827 households. Therefore, 20 percent of the total number of households i.e. 518,765 households raised the dogs. The numbers of one up to more than 10 dogs at most were raised per household. Besides, the number of households in Bangkok Metropolitan area and its vicinity has increased steadily. This can be observed from the increasing number of housing development and preference of the population for separation as nuclear family more and more. Thus, the number of pet dogs has increased steadily. The objectives of raising are diverse such as watching over the houses, looking after the property, raising for company until becoming important members of the families. The current behavior of the raising persons has changed, that is to say providing care attentively as children, descendants. As a result, the owners are willing to pay for their pets more and more, including the costs of food, health care, medical care, vaccinations and care for living conditions of pets. Consequently, the pet-related businesses have grown steadily in line with the market value figures connected with the pets approximating 22,000 million baht at present. The average growth is about 10-15 percent per year. The pet food market has the most market share worth 10,000 million baht, followed by pet-related service businesses with a total value of 7,000 million baht. In addition, there is also a business of selling pet products worth more than 5,000 baht. Obviously, the market value of over two billion baht makes many operators interested to invest in pet business. (Source: Major operators in pet business (2014) by Cavicorn Research Center)

Therefore, it is interesting to study the things wanted by the consumers to be available in the Pet mall, sources of information that reach the consumers and the factors that make the consumers buy goods and services. The objective is to serve as information for the use of entrepreneurs in business operations, which will cause success in investment.

Research Objectives

1. Study the things wanted by the consumers to be available in the pet mall.
2. Study the media whereby the consumers receive information on products and services related to pets.
3. Study the factors used by the consumers for the decision to select pet-related services.

Methodology

This study is characteristic of quantitative research by using the questionnaires with reliability already tested as a tool for data collection. The purposes are to describe the characteristics of the population and use the findings to plan investment in the businesses further. The details of the study are as follows.

Conceptual Framework of Research

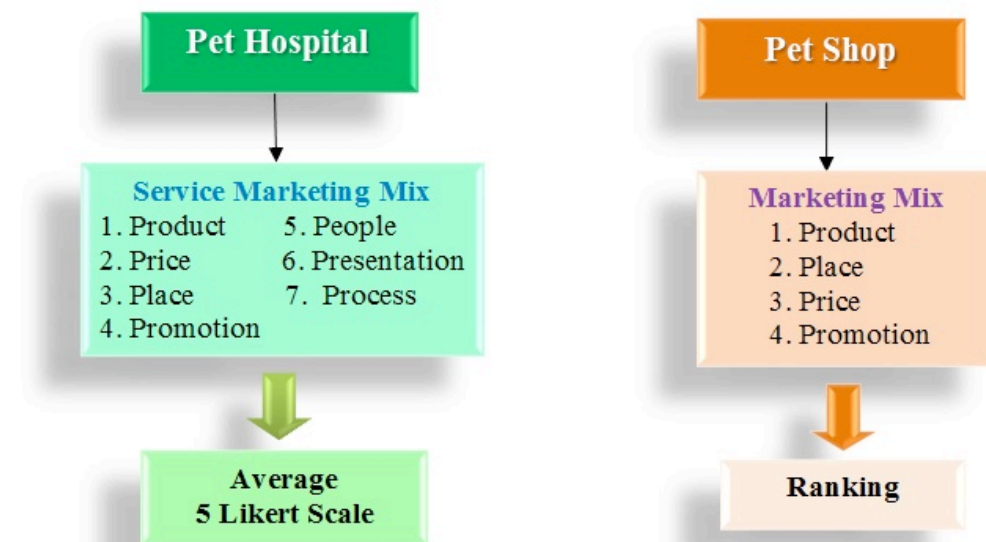


Figure 1 Pet-related businesses

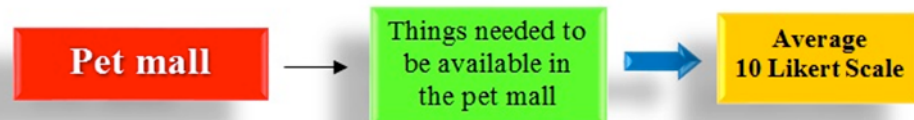


Figure 2 Things wanted by the consumers to be available in the pet mall

• Population and Representative Sample

The population in this study was the population in Bangkok Metropolitan area and its surrounding provinces, which had pets and had ever used pet-related services. The number of population in Bangkok Metropolitan area totaled 5,689,200 people (registration statistical system June 2016). The sample size was determined by the finished table of Yamane (1993) at the reliability level of 95%, resulting in the sample size with reliability totaling 385 people and additional number of 15 persons. The representative sample totaled 400 people. The method of random sampling was used as follows.

Step 1 Choosing the research sample because this research project is the study to serve as information for the use of entrepreneurs in business operations related to pets, including the pet mall. Therefore, the sample was selected from consumer groups who came at the fully integrated Pet Expo on 29 May 2016.

Step 2 Use of Accidental Sampling and Purposive Sampling by fully handing out 400 sets of questionnaires to the representative sample of people who came to use services as specified.

- **Statistics for Use in Research**

Including frequency, percentage, average, minimum, maximum, standard deviation and hypothesis testing by using Pearson Chi-Square Tests

Research Findings

The data analysis of respondents revealed that the females and males constituted 69.6 and 30.4 percents, respectively. The respondents aged in the ranges of 20-30 years and 31-40 years represented 45.1 and 30.9 percents, respectively. The rest were aged under 20 years, accounting for 9.1 percent, aged 41-50 years, representing 9.6 percent, aged 51-60 years, accounting for 3.9 percent and aged over 61 years, representing 1.5 percent. The educational levels showed the undergraduate level, accounting for 67.4 percent, lower than the undergraduate level, representing 22.1 percent and the postgraduate level, constituting 10.5 percent. As to occupations, the company employees constituted 44.7 percent; the students represented 23.4 percent; the business owners accounted for 13.5 percent; the government officers, state enterprise employees represented 13 percent; the maids and others, including consultants, lawyers, teachers representing 2 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

Media whereby the consumers got information about products and services related to pets: The types of media received by the consumers at the highest and high levels include the media from Facebook and Internet with the averages of 4.26 and 4.10, respectively. The media at moderate level are TV and others, namely the friends, shops and vet clinics with the averages of 3.30 and 2.69, respectively. The media at low level include magazines, radio, leaflets, brochures and newspapers with the averages of 2.39, 1.99, 2.43 and 2.18, respectively.

Results of testing the reliability of the questionnaires: The researcher tested the reliability of the questionnaires on the representative sample with the same characteristics as the population to study totaling 30 samples that had ever used the services of pet hospital and pet mall so as to determine Cronbach's Alpha. The levels of reliability were found to equal 0.749 and 0.936, respectively. It is considered that the reliability of the questionnaires was at high and very high levels. Thus, the 400 sets of participants were applied to the actual sample. The research results are as follows.

The findings indicated that the factors used by consumers for the decision to choose pet-related services include 2 types, namely the services of pet hospital and the shops that sell products and services related to pets.

- Factors used to decide on the hospital for taking the pets to cure: According to the research results, the respondents opined that all factors influenced the decision to take the pets to cure at high level as follows (1) credibility of treatment (average of 4.14, standard deviation of 0.970); (2) availability of good, impressive services (average of 4.11, standard deviation of 0.969); (3) proficient vet team highly expert and experienced (average of 4.05, standard deviation of 0.981); (4) ease of travel (average of 3.94, standard deviation of 1.196); (5) fees for treatment and services that are low and reasonably priced (average of 3.92, standard deviation of 1.048); (6) availability of modern equipment and instruments (average of 3.90, standard deviation of 0.976); (7) convenience and speed of services (average of 3.85, standard deviation of 0.999); (8) clean place with available facilities (average of 3.53, standard deviation 1.128); (9) people's recommendation or word of mouth (average of 3.51, standard deviation 1.151); (10) available service to accept taking care of pets (average of 3.47, standard deviation of 1.221); (11) others, including the availability of shuttle service, specialized doctors for treatment with safety (average of 3.86, standard deviation of 1.170).
- Factors used by the consumers to decide on the shops that sell products and services related to pets: The researcher asked the respondents to rank the factors used in selecting the shops that sell pet-related products and services. The findings indicated that the emphasized factors ranked first by percentage arrangement in descending order include (1) the quality of goods and services; (2) reasonable prices; (3) reliable brands; (4) the sales promotion of interest; (5) communication, sending information and activities organized for the customers regularly; (6) shop location and decoration; (7) available system of membership, point accumulation to be discounts. Each of the factors constitutes the percentage of 40.5, 26.8, 15.1, 12.3, 5.1, 3.7 and 2.7 respectively.

Things wanted by the consumers to be available in the pet mall: The researcher used questionnaires to assess the things wanted by service users in the pet center with the average 10 Likert Scale. The findings indicated that the things wanted by pet customers to be available in the mall at the highest level are as follows: (1) convenient parking service (average of 8.55, standard deviation of 2.051); (2) availability of reliable pet hospital (average of 8.46, standard deviation of 1.984); (3) available activities for pets (average of 8.22, standard deviation of 5.143) and at high level, including (4) availability of pet-related products and services in an integrated way such as pet hospital, Pet shop, Pet cafe, Pet Farm, Pet Spa, Grooming, pet toilet (average of 8.18, standard deviation of 2.129); (5) availability of multi-purpose yard or public park and exercise equipment for pets (average of 8.14, standard deviation of 2.216); (6) service for accepting taking care of and pet health restoration (average of 8.14, standard deviation of 2.095); (7) availability of restaurant that allows the pets and owners to have a meal together (average of 7.95, standard deviation of 2.336); (8) availability of pet lover club (average of 7.93, standard deviation of 2.086); (9) availability of pet training center (average of 7.89, standard deviation of 2.353); (10) being the mall where the pets and the owners can do activities together (average of 7.70, standard deviation of 2.404); (11) availability of swimming pool for pets (average of 7.68, standard deviation of 2.399); (12) available Supermarket for the owners (average of 7.47, standard deviation of 2.391); (13) availability of other shops

to serve the owners in an integrated way for the whole family (average of 7.14, standard deviation of 2.439); (14) available hotel where people and pets can stay together (average of 7.39, standard deviation of 2.595). The things wanted at moderate level include (15) kids' corners such as learning activities, amusement park and playthings (average of 6.38, standard deviation of 2.758).

Discussion

For the findings about the factors affecting the decision to use pet-related services in Bangkok Metropolitan area and its surrounding provinces, there are the issues as remarks which can be used to discuss the study results as follows.

1. Media whereby the consumers got information about pet-related products and services: The findings indicated that the consumers received information from online advertising media, i.e. Facebook and Internet at the highest and high levels, respectively. This is consistent with the current situation where online media become popular with continuous progress and tendency to gain in popularity in the future due to the increasing influence on people and society. Especially, Facebook is a social network, which is used most frequently by Thai people up to 92.1 percent (from the survey on the behavior of Internet users in Thailand in 2015). There were more than 38 million users of Internet (January 2016).

2. Factors used by the consumers for the decision to choose pet-related services, including

2.1 Decision on the hospital to take pets for curing. The findings indicated that all factors influenced the decision at high level. The first three factors with the highest averages include: (1) credibility of treatment; (2) availability of good, impressive services and (3) proficient vet team highly expert and experienced. This accords with the research of Sirada Sakulbueng, Wiroj Jangsombadsiri and Ploypapas Pipatkitibodee (2011). Similarly, an important feature of marketing mix for pet hospital service business is personnel or staff. This is considered to be ranked among the first factors on which the consumers will focus for choosing the service. It was found that such 3 factors mentioned are all associated with the persons. This is consistent with business service that relies on the persons for business operation.

2.2 Decision on the shops that sell pet-related products and services:

According to the findings, the top- ranked factors on which emphasis is placed by arrangement in descending order include: (1) the quality of goods and services; (2) reasonable prices; (3) reliable brands ; (4) sales promotion of interest; (5) communication, sending information and activities organized; 6) shop location and decoration 7) available system of membership. All 7 factors used by the consumers for making decisions were arranged into marketing mix and prioritization in descending order. It was found that the consumers focused on products, pricing, marketing promotion and distribution, respectively. This is consistent with the research of Nittana Tanitthanakorn and Umarin Sreesasiwimol (2011) who found that the products, prices and marketing promotion affect the decision to use services. Furthermore, the current situation involves more intensity of marketing competition. Many new products of pets emerge with both standard and non-standard in the country and abroad, including major and small manufacturers. Besides, the prices of

products differ much, depending on the locations and the distributors. As a result, the consumers in the information era become cautious about checking the quality and product prices primarily for the decision to buy.

3. Things wanted by the consumers to be available in pet mall at the highest level include: (1) convenient parking service; (2) availability of reliable pet hospital; (3) available activities for pets. The above findings indicate that today's society runs into traffic problems. Particularly, parking is an important matter that the entrepreneurs must facilitate. This is because taking the pets to use services needs travel by private car. Additionally, a thing indispensable for the pet mall is the reliable pet hospital. This is consistent with the findings about the factors influencing the decision to choose the hospital for taking pets to cure mentioned above. This is due to being considered as the fourth necessary factor. Observation inevitably revealed that many people use services at the pet hospital where the veterinarians are proficient, renowned for the treatment of diseases with need to queue up, wait for a day. In the same way, the service users also need available activities for pets. It was found that a large number of pet lovers are interested to visit the event or take their own pets to join every time of the pet-related activity organized, which is not being secondary to other fairs. The researcher received information from observation, attending the events at least 5 times in the past two years and following news from Facebook throughout.

Conclusions

The objectives of research into the factors affecting the decision to choose pet-related services in Bangkok Metropolitan area and its surrounding provinces are as follows: (1) Study the things wanted by the consumers to be available in the pet mall; (2) Study the media whereby the consumers receive information on products and services related to pets; (3) Study the factors used by that consumers to decide to choose the services related to pets. The methodology of quantitative research was used with questionnaires. The statistical tools used in the study include frequency, percentage, average, standard deviation and Pearson Chi-Square samples. The methods of Purposive Sampling and Accidental Sampling were used. The questionnaires were handed out to 400 consumers who came at Pet Expo on 29 May 2016.

The research results showed that: (1) the things wanted by the consumers to be available in pet mall at the highest level include available activities for pets, convenient parking facilities, availability of reliable pet hospital. (2) The sources of information, publicity about pets of which the consumers were aware at the highest and high levels include the media from Facebook and Internet, respectively. (3) The factors used by the consumers to decide on pet-related services are divided into two parts which are (3.1) Pet hospital: It was found that all 11 factors had the averages at high level. However, the first 3 factors with the highest averages are reliability of curing; availability of good and impressive services and the vet team that is highly expert and experienced; (3.2) For the shops selling products and general services, it was found that the top - ranked factors taken into account by consumers for the decision to buy goods and services include the quality of goods and services, reasonable prices, reliable brands, and sales promotion of interest.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. It is advisable to study the ability to pay for the expenses related to pets as to whether this is associated with the income of pet owners or not.
2. It is a good idea to study the pet-related business operators in various fields, SWOT Analysis as well as financial and investment analysis.

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