



Marketing Communication Process Affecting Skincare Buying Behavior of Millennials in Thailand

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the causal factors influencing purchase intention and purchasing behavior of skincare products among millennial consumers through digital media in Thailand. The objectives of the study were: (1) to investigate the causal factors affecting purchase intention of millennial consumers toward skincare products through digital media; (2) to examine the influence of purchase intention on the purchasing behavior of skincare products among millennials; and (3) to develop a model of the marketing communication process that affects skincare purchasing behavior of millennial consumers in Thailand. Advancements in communication technology have enabled marketing campaigns to be launched rapidly, with digital media acting as a catalyst that shapes consumer behavior through increased access to information and product offerings. As investment in digital media marketing across industries in Thailand continues to grow significantly each year, understanding how digital communication influences consumer decision-making has become increasingly important. This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with five marketing experts, while quantitative data were gathered using questionnaires from a sample of 400 skincare consumers aged 20–40 years. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to analyze the quantitative data and examine the relationships between variables.

The findings revealed that attitude toward digital media usage, referral groups, and digital media literacy had positive direct influences on purchase intention. In addition, purchase intention had a positive direct influence on purchasing behavior. Furthermore, attitude toward digital media usage, referral groups, and digital media literacy also indirectly influenced purchasing behavior through purchase intention. The results provide valuable insights for beauty product marketers in improving digital communication strategies and selecting appropriate digital



media channels. Additionally, the findings may assist government agencies in developing guidelines for regulating digital media information and enhancing consumer information security.

Keywords: Marketing Communication Process, Skincare Buying Behavior, Millennials

Introduction

Currently, the implementation of marketing strategies has changed until the 4.0 era, which is an era that focuses on using digital media to reach as many target customers as possible by using media for online marketing communications such as E-mails, Google AdWords, and social media, etc., to contact and build relationships with customers (Teera Phan Lothongkam, 2019). Digital media has revolutionized marketing through new presentations in building awareness, providing information and purchasing products as well as accessing customer services through digital media, social media and mobile phone. This is also known as DSMM (Digital, social media and Mobile) to make purchasing decisions easier (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). This has resulted in the growth of digital marketing and consumer behavior in Thailand. Digital Marketing or online marketing directly affect business organizations and consumers. In addition, the business organizations have brought the Internet and electronic media to work together. It can help buyers and sellers communicate and interact with each other more effectively.

The consumers, which can be considered the driving force of growth in all forms of digital marketing, is Millennial, a group of people between the ages of 20 and 40 who are the most powerful group. They have very high purchase of goods and services both in Europe United States and Asia such as Austria, America, Taiwan and Thailand (Wu & Chan, 2011; Seyler, 2017). Kotler et. al (2016) mentioned that consumers in digital era tend to live fast and considerate life. They prefer time saving lifestyle, convenience and speed to access information. This is consistent with Brown & Washton, (2010), who described the characteristics of millennial consumers as people who can adapt to change and can use technology to efficient access to product and service information. When this group of consumers is interested in the product, they immediately search online for additional information such as price, quality information and recommendations from previous users to make their purchase decisions easier. Therefore, communicating with millennial consumers through digital media is the most effective channel today (Wilhelmina and Chere, 2022). It can be seen that the demands and frequency of information consumption today change according to the purchasing influence. Millennials are capable of comparing quality, price, warranty, satisfaction and after-sales service. This leads to their decision making and they will not hesitate to change the brands. This is different from the



traditional form of buying decision process. Business entrepreneurs need to understand the thoughts, attitudes, expectations and motivations of consumers. It is also crucial to understand the purchase decision process in every step, the channels for finding information for decision making and how consumers obtain information (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). This can stimulate the purchase intent and buying behavior of this group of consumers. Therefore, in this study, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) of Ajzen (1991) was applied to study the choice of receiving information of consumers in order to describe how media presentations and types of digital media can drive behavioral intent and drive purchase behavior among consumers. It focuses mainly on the skincare industry due to the interest in budget data for digital advertising that has been increasing steadily within a short period of time. Additionally, the value of the consumption of skin care products is growing against the current situation of the COVID-19 epidemic. TPB has been widely popular, for example, from research by Wilhelmina and Chere, (2022) studying digital marketing strategies that influenced the behavior of Millennials in the United States. It has been used with measuring consumer attitudes towards mobile advertising in Iran. A study was conducted on purchasing natural skincare products influenced by planned behavior in Taiwan and the study of the influence of attitude factors on purchasing behavior and brand loyalty was found respectively.

With the problems and importance mentioned above, it is the main reason why researchers are interested in studying and researching the topic of “The development of a digital marketing model affecting purchase intent and skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand” in order to identify the relationships and compare both direct and indirect influences of attitude towards using digital media, referral group, ability to use digital media buying preferences and buying behavior. According to the literature review, it was found that the factors influencing purchase intent and purchase behavior for skincare products under the context of digital media use have not been studied. In addition, this research is a study arising from planning behavior theory to develop and study empirical variables influencing the prediction of purchasing behavior. The findings of this research will be important to entrepreneurs and marketers in designing presentations and presentation channels. It will have academic benefits such as academics, researchers, students who can use the results from this empirical study to develop integration and continuing academic studies.



Research Objective

1. To study causal factors influencing purchase intent and buying behavior of skincare products of millennial consumers through digital media.
2. To study the influence of marketing communication process on skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand.
3. To create a model of the marketing communication process that affects the skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand.

Literature review and Concepts

The Concept of Purchase Intent

Studies on purchase intent are related to the concept of consumer behavior because it is a continuous process. Buying intent or consumer response is an important factor that can be developed into buying behavior, which is caused by the 5 steps of the consumer buying decision process. In the pre-purchase stage, consumers will evaluate and consider various information received from all channels of product presentation. In this study, a channel for presenting information about skincare products through digital media is associated with perception because of the presentation of skin care products. The purpose is to create awareness and interest among consumers until it becomes a need and purchase intention (Armstrong and Kotler 2020). This is in line with Hansen et al., (2004) who studied the relationship of attitudes on data trust and purchase intent and purchasing behavior in a range of areas such as health, informational and advertising, etc. (Hansen et al., 2004). It can be said that understanding the purchase intent of consumers is important because purchase intent can be used to predict consumer behavior (Hsu et al., 2017).

The Concept of Attitude towards using Digital Media

Attitude is an important concept to study to understand consumers before marketing and presenting marketing information. Attitude is an opinion combined with a person's emotions expressed as positive, neutral or negative. Consumer attitudes can influence purchasing decisions. The consumer has a positive attitude towards the brand. As a result, it is easier to make a purchase than a consumer with a neutral or bad attitude (Armstrong and Kotler, 2020). Furthermore, the experience of using such products also affects the attitudes of consumers.



Attitudes are characterized as positive or negative tendencies of individuals towards things, people, and phenomena. Therefore, in studying consumer attitudes, it is described by referring to what is in the minds of consumers. Marketers will create a positive or positive attitude to consumers, which requires a combination of efforts in many aspects, such as the product, service, reasonable pricing and good marketing promotion. Attitudes can be formed and changed according to various factors and circumstances surrounding them.

Referral group Concepts

Behavioral expressions of a person always influenced by other people within the social system consciously and unconsciously. This other group of people is called the referral group. The important function of the referral group is to establish normative functions, including being a medium for self-evaluation of individuals (Bak, et al., 2022). In addition, Stafford's concept (1966) also describes the relationship between the mechanisms of the referral group and the communication of the product. This contributes to an atmosphere of informal leadership In persuading or clarifying about product information to people in society to agree and agree easily. Informal social influences can direct group members or individuals in society. If a person who is trusted in society has shown that he or she prefers a particular brand to influence other people, other people in society tend to like the same brand and will have the behavior of buying products in the same way.

The Concept of Digital Capabilities

The existence of the Internet has resulted in more choice of communication channels. At the same time, it can also add channels to receive information, motivation and decision-making power to consumers as well (Stokes, 2011). Today's consumers prefer to use online media for information rather than television commercials (Berman et al., 2007). Among the rapidly growing segment of younger consumers (Rappaport, 2007), the amount of digital content produced is approximately three million times that of the total content of all books. However, the rise of digital information will continue in the future. The use of digital media in presenting information along with enhancing the experience of receiving information such as information search Opt-in Assessment of information received and consumer purchasing decisions give consumers a sense of control over their media exposure to information and making their own purchasing decisions (Meera & Gayathiri, 2015). Inevitably, consumers feel that they are valued by the brand affecting long-term consumption and word of mouth. Technological advances play a role in promoting



advertising communication channels called digital media which is a channel that creates opportunities for presentation and reduce the disparity in communication costs. Further, it gives opportunities to small businesses to create awareness and expands the target consumer base more widely.

Concept of Purchasing Behavior

Behavior is anything related to a person's actions or performances such as the purchase of goods and services. consumption of goods (Bak, et al., 2022). There will be a more specific model and involve a person's decision-making process on how to find information before making a decision or what information source to trust. At present, consumer buying behavior can be divided into 2 characteristics through channels and methods. The first one is known as traditional purchases. This is to buy or try the product at the point of sale and purchases. Another one is known as online channels. Consumers tend to rely on using the Internet to search for information and make purchases (Park & Kim, 2003). In this case, digital media plays a greater role in consumers and businesses. Understanding consumer behavior is important in marketing. This is because consumers tend to open up and turn to the internet as a communication tool as well as continuously seeking more information (Vinerean et al., 2013). The consumption process is something that scholars have presented to be used as a guideline for the study of consumption behavior. This is very useful for describing how consumer behavior is sequenced and influenced by what factors. In this study, the concept of consumer behavior in the consumption process by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) and buyer behavior by Armstrong and Kotler were mentioned. (Armstrong & Kotler, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

According to the literature review, it can be concluded that the marketing communication process that affects the skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand consisted of choosing and buying, post-purchase behavior, actual use, and stimulation of purchasing behavior (Kidwell & Jewell, 2003; Chiu et al., 2009; Al-Nahdi et al., 2015; Ogutu et al., 2014; Shin & Hancer, 2016).

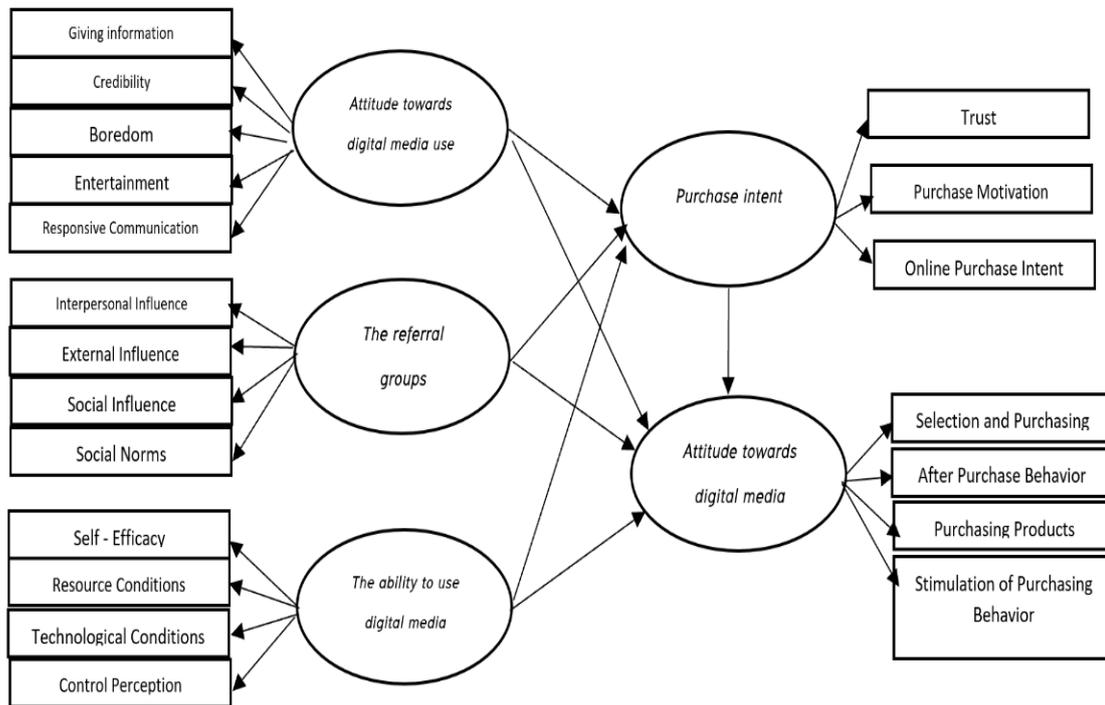


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was implemented as the research design for this study. The design integrated quantitative research and explanatory qualitative research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Initially, relevant literature, concepts, and theories were reviewed to develop a conceptual framework and research model that guided the study.

Following this stage, quantitative data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to the target population. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among variables and to test the proposed research model.

Subsequently, qualitative research was conducted to further explain and support the quantitative findings. In-depth interviews with selected participants or experts were carried out to gain deeper insights into the results obtained from the statistical analysis. The qualitative data were then used to interpret and elaborate on the quantitative outcomes, thereby strengthening the validity and richness of the study’s conclusions.



Instruments and Data Analysis

For the study on the marketing communication process that affects skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand, the instruments were comprised of the in-Depth Interviews with a semi-structured interview.

1. In the Semi-structured in-depth interview, the questions about the components or variables at the first level were prepared. If an interesting issue arises during the interview, a follow-up question will be implemented.

2. Content analysis was used to analyze the data and summarize the content issues or the findings for consideration in constructing the questionnaire.

Research Results

To study causal factors influencing purchase intent and buying behavior of skincare products of millennial consumers through digital media usage

The researcher examined the parameter values with t-value statistics to test whether the obtained parameter values differ from 0. If each parameter value differs from 0, the results obtained reject the main hypothesis (H_0). The Rule of Thumb (Poonpong Suksawang, 2020) described the criteria as follows: The parameter value differs from zero at a significance level of 0.05 when the complete value of the test statistic is greater than 1.96 ($[t] > 1.96$) and a significance level of 0.01 when the complete value of the test statistic greater than 2.56 ($[t] > 2.56$). The details are as follows:

1. Attitude towards digital media use (ATTI) influenced purchase intent (INTEN): Attitude toward digital media (ATTI) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN), with a t-value of 6.43. which was greater than the statistical value (t-value), which was 2.56, so it can be concluded that Attitude toward digital media (ATTI) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN) at statistically significant level of 0.01.

2. The referral group (SUBNORM) influenced the purchase intent (INTEN). The referral group (SUBNORM) positively influenced the purchase intent (INTEN) with a t-value of 2.00, which was greater than the statistical t (t) -value) was 1.96. It can therefore be concluded that the referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN). It was found that the referral group (SUBNORM) had a significant direct positive effect on purchase intent (INTEN) statistically at the 0.05 level.



3. The ability to use digital media (PDUSE) influenced purchase intent (INTEN). It was found that the ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN) with a t-value of 4.83, which was higher than the statistical value (t-value) was 2.56. Thus, it can be concluded that the ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN) at a statistically significant level of 0.01.

4. Purchase intent (INTEN) influenced purchase behavior (BEHAVE). It was found that purchase intention (INTEN) had a positive direct effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a t-value of 9.49, which was higher than the statistical value T. (t-value) at 2.56. Thus, it can be concluded that purchase intent (INTEN) had a positive direct effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) at a statistical significance level of 0.01.

5. Attitude towards digital media usage (ATTI) influenced purchasing behavior (BEHAVE) through purchase intent with (t-value) at only 0.54. Thus, it can be concluded that Attitudes toward digital media use (ATTI) had a relatively small influence on buying behavior (BEHAVE).

6. The referral group (SUBNORM) influenced buying behavior (BEHAVE) through purchase intent. It was found that the referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive direct effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a t-value of 2.08, which was higher than the value. The statistic (t-value) was 1.96. Thus, it can be concluded that the referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive direct effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a statistical significance of 0.05.

7. Digital Media Efficiency (PDUSE) Influenced Purchase Behavior (BEHAVE) through Purchase Intent. The statistic (t-value) was only 0.49. Thus, it can be concluded that Digital ability to use (PDUSE) had a relatively small influence on buying behavior (BEHAVE).

To study the influence of marketing communication process on skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand

1. Attitude towards using digital media (ATTI) had a positive effect on purchase intent (INTEN). It was found from Table 4.59 that attitude towards using digital media (ATTI) had a positive direct effect on purchase intent (INTEN) with total influence equal to 0.5. This demonstrated direct influence equal to 0.59 and no indirect influence.

2. The referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive effect on the purchase intent (INTEN). It was found from Table 4.59, the referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive direct effect on the purchase intent (INTEN) with a total influence of 0.16 as a direct influence. equal to 0.16 and no indirect influence.



3. The ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive direct effect on the intent to purchase (INTEN). It was found from Table 4.59 that the ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive direct effect on the intent to purchase (INTEN) with total influence equal to 0.15 and the direct influence equal to 0.15 with no indirect influence.

4. The purchase intent (INTEN) had a positive effect on the buying behavior (BEHAVE). It was found from Table 4.59 that the purchase intent (INTEN) had a positive direct effect on the buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a total influence of 0.81 as an influence. The direct influence was 0.81 with no indirect influence.

5. Attitude toward using digital media (ATTI) had a positive effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE). It was found from Table 4.59 that attitude towards using digital media (ATTI) had a positive effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a total influence equal to 0.47. It was an indirect influence at 0.47 with no direct influence.

6. The referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE). It was found from Table 4.59 that the referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) with a total influence of 0.13 and an indirect influence of 0.13 with no direct influence.

7. The ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive effect on purchasing behavior (BEHAVE). It was found from Table 4.59 that the ability to use digital media (PDUSE) had a positive effect on purchasing behavior (BEHAVE) with total influence at 0.12 and indirect influence was 0.12 with no direct influence.

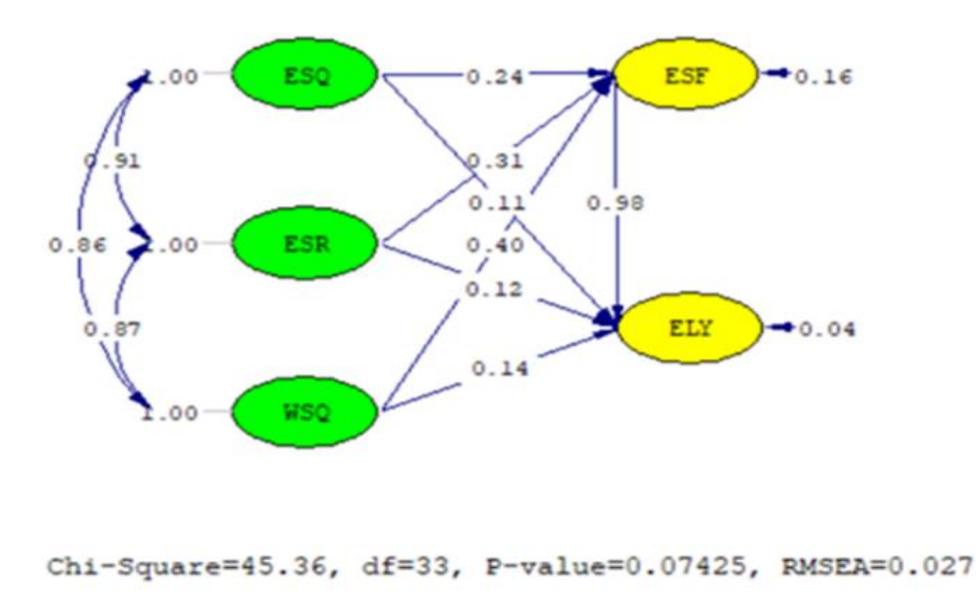


Figure 2 Analysis of Model Consistency Index after Thai Model Modification



To create a model of the marketing communication process that affects the skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand

The results can be used to create a model of digital marketing affecting purchase intent and purchase behavior of skincare products through digital media.

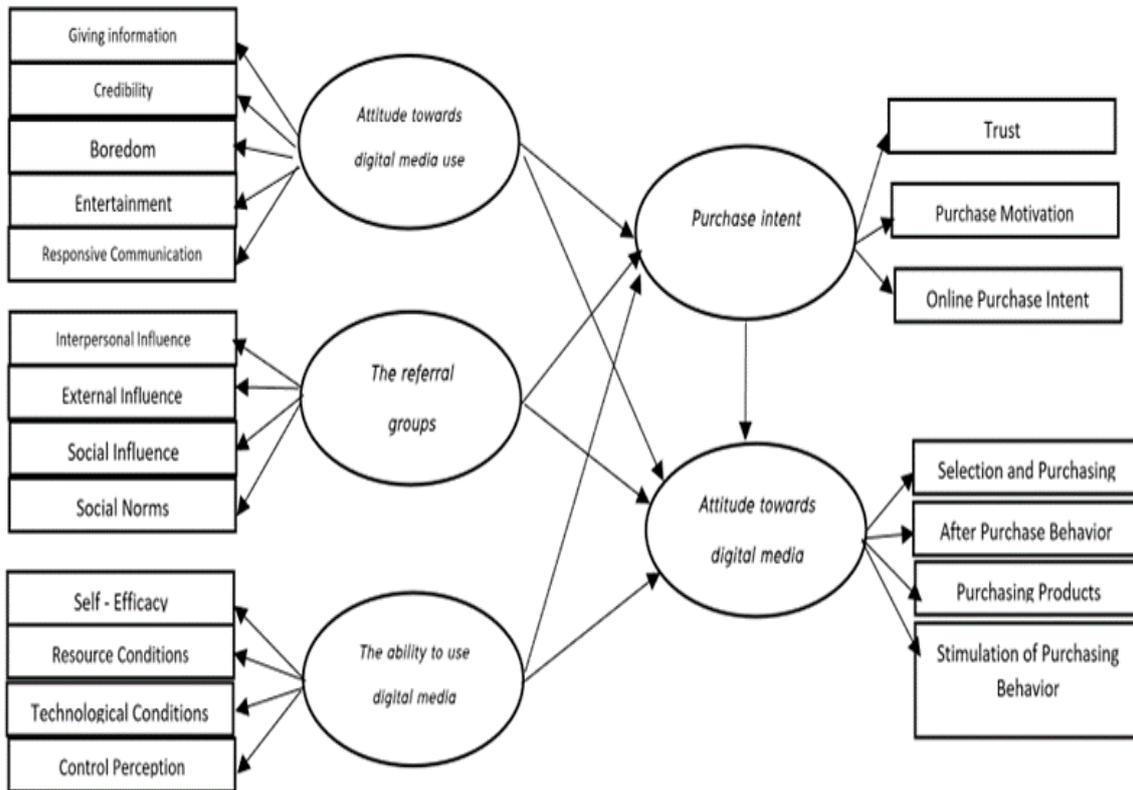


Figure 3 A model of the marketing communication process model that affects the skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand

According to testing the consistency of digital marketing model affecting purchase intent and purchase behavior based on assumptions and empirical data, it was found that the model was consistent with the empirical data. By considering from the statistics used to check the consistency between the model and the empirical data, i.e. qui-square it was equal to 114.05. The degrees of freedom (df) were 160. The probability (p) was 0.94013. Quai-square is therefore not significantly different from 0. It showed the acceptance of the main hypothesis, that is, a model of digital marketing affects purchase intent and purchase behavior that have been developed are in harmony with the empirical data in accordance with the analysis. The result GFI was 0.97, AGFI was 0.96, approaching 1, and SRMR was 0.96. equal to 0.040, which was close to 0. With such details, the results of the analysis showed the harmonization index of a



digital marketing model that affects purchase intent and purchase behavior of skincare products among millennials in Thailand. When considering the reliability of the observed variables, it was found that the reliability of the observed variables ranged from 0.68 – 0.94 with the highest reliability being the ability to use digital media. Perceived Control (PECON) had a reliability value of 0.94, followed by the ability to use digital media. Technology Facilitating Condition: TECON had a precision value of 0.92 and buying intention. The trust (TRU) had a reliability value of 0.92 for the observed variable with the lowest reliability which was the ability to use digital media. Self-efficacy (Self-Efficacy: SELF) had the reliability of 0.68. For the predictive coefficient (R^2) of the internal latent variable structural equation, it was found that the predictive coefficient (R^2) of purchase intent was equal to 0.87 or variables in the model could explain the variance of purchase intent (INTEN). 87 per cent and the forecasting coefficient (R^2) of buying behavior was equal to 0.98 or the variable in the model could explain the variance of buying behavior (BEHAVE) 98%.

The correlation matrix between latent variables found that the correlation coefficient between latent variables was between 0.45 – 0.98. All pairs of variables were in the same direction, i.e. positive correlation. There were 5 pairs of latent variables with very high correlation ($r > 0.8$), namely buying intention (INTEN) and buying behavior (BAHAVE), with the highest correlation coefficient equal to 0.98 ($r = 0.98$), followed by Attitude towards using digital media (ATTI) and buying behavior (BEHAVE) had a correlation coefficient of 0.85 ($r = 0.85$). Attitude toward using digital media (ATTI) and referral group (SUBNORM) had a correlation coefficient of 0.83. ($r = 0.83$). Attitude toward digital media use (ATTI) and purchase intention (INTEN) had a correlation coefficient of 0.80 ($r = 0.80$). Referral group (SUBNORM) and buying behavior (BEHAVE) had a correlation coefficient of 0.80 ($r = 0.80$). Correlation was 0.80 ($r = 0.80$), respectively. For latent variables that had a high correlation ($r = 0.6 > 0.8$), there were 1 pair, namely the referral group (SUBNORM) and the purchase intention (INTEN) with a correlation coefficient of 0.72. ($r = 0.72$). There were 4 pairs of latent variables that were moderately related ($r = 0.4 > 0.6$), namely, digital media usage ability (PDUSE) and purchasing behavior (BEHAVE) with moderate correlation coefficients equal to 0.56 ($r = 0.56$). This was followed by ability to use digital media (PDUSE) and purchase intention (INTEN) with a correlation coefficient equal to 0.55 ($r = 0.55$). Ability to use digital media (PDUSE) and attitude toward using digital media (ATTI) had a correlation coefficient of 0.55 ($r = 0.55$). Ability to use digital media (PDUSE) and referral group (SUBNORM) had a correlation coefficient of 0.45 ($r = 0.45$), respectively.



When considering at the direct influence on the intent-to-purchase variable (INTEN), it was found that the variables were directly influenced by Attitude to Digital Marketing (ATTI), Referral group (SUBNORM), and Digital Media Ability (PDUSE) with direct effect sizes of 0.59, 0.16 and 0.15, respectively, which were statistically significant influence values at the 0.01 level. It was also found that Buying Behavior Variable (BEHAVE) was directly influenced by purchase intent (INTEN) with an effect size of 0.81 which was a statistically significant influence at the 0.01 level. It was also indirectly influenced by attitudes toward marketing digital (ATTI), group reference (SUBNORM), and digital media ability (PDUSE) through intentional purchase (INTEN) with influence sizes of 0.47, 0.13 and 0.12, respectively which were statistically significant influence values at the 0.01 level. This can be concluded as follows: (1) Attitude towards digital marketing (ATTI) had a positive direct effect on intent to purchase (INTEN) at a direct effect (DE) magnitude of 0.59 with a statistical significance of 0.01. (2) The referral group (SUBNORM) had a positive direct effect on buying intention (INTEN) at a direct effect size (DE) of 0.16 which was a statistically significant influence at the 0.01 level. (3) The ability to use digital media (PDUSE) directly affected positive purchase intent (INTEN) at a direct effect size (DE) of 0.16 which was a statistically significant influence at the 0.01 level. (4) Purchase intent (INTEN) had a positive direct effect on buying behavior (BEHAVE) at a direct effect size (DE) of 0.81 which was a statistically significant influence at the 0.01 level. (5) Attitudes towards digital marketing (ATTI), group reference (SUBNORM), and digital media capacity (PDUSE) had a positive indirect influence on purchase behavior (BEHAVE) through purchase intent (INTEN). (Indirect Effect: IE) were 0.47, 0.13 and 0.12, respectively with a statistical significance of 0.01.

Discussion

This research aimed to examine the causal factors influencing purchase intention and purchasing behavior of skincare products among millennial consumers through digital media in Thailand, to study the influence of the marketing communication process on skincare purchasing behavior, and to develop a digital marketing communication model affecting such behavior. The conceptual framework consisted of five key dimensions: attitude toward digital media usage, referral group, digital media usage capability, purchase intention, and purchasing behavior. The discussion of results is presented according to the research objectives and hypotheses as follows.



Causal factors influencing purchase intention and buying behavior of millennial consumers through digital media

The results revealed that attitude toward digital media usage significantly influenced purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 1. This suggests that millennials who hold positive attitudes toward digital platforms tend to have stronger intentions to purchase skincare products through these channels. Digital media allows consumers to access product information, reviews, and promotional content conveniently, which shapes their perception and confidence in purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that consumer attitudes toward digital media play an important role in shaping purchase intention. Studies conducted by Chowdhury et al. (2006) and Cheng et al. (2009) found similar results among consumers in Bangladesh, Taiwan, and China. Likewise, Alalwan (2018) confirmed that positive attitudes toward digital marketing communication significantly increase purchase intention. Furthermore, Ranjbarian (2014) also reported consistent findings, although Laohapensang (2009) noted that attitudes toward digital media usage had only a limited effect on purchase intention in the Thai context. The findings also indicated that referral groups significantly influenced purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 2. Referral groups, including friends, family members, online influencers, and social media communities, serve as an important source of information and social validation for millennials. When individuals perceive that members of their social groups support or recommend certain skincare products, they are more likely to develop stronger purchase intentions. This result is consistent with studies conducted by Cheng et al. (2009), Ogutu et al. (2014), Shin and Hancer (2016), and Alalwan (2018), which found that social influence plays a significant role in shaping consumer intentions across different cultural contexts. Similarly, Cui et al. (2021) suggested that the stronger the perceived influence of a referral group, the greater the consumer's purchase intention. In Thailand, Sukato and Elsey (2009) also confirmed the importance of social influence in shaping consumer decision-making. Moreover, a recent study by Yunjoo, Yeu, and Jeong (2022) in Germany reported similar findings.

Another important factor identified in this research is digital media usage capability, which was found to significantly influence purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 3. Millennials who possess higher levels of digital literacy and technological skills are more confident in navigating online platforms, searching for product information, and evaluating skincare options. Consequently, this ability enhances their likelihood of forming purchase intentions. This finding aligns with Shin and Hancer (2016), who found that digital skills influence consumers' behavioral intentions in online environments. Similar results were also reported by Wilson et al. (2017) in



Indonesia and Dahiya and Gayatri (2017) in India. However, Jusoh and Jing (2019) presented contrasting results, suggesting that digital media usage ability did not significantly influence purchase intention in Malaysia. This discrepancy may reflect differences in digital infrastructure, consumer experience with technology, or cultural factors.

Influence of the marketing communication process on skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand

The results of the study further demonstrated that purchase intention significantly influenced actual purchasing behavior, supporting Hypothesis 4. This indicates that when millennial consumers develop a strong intention to purchase skincare products through digital media, it is highly likely that such intention will translate into actual purchasing behavior. This finding is consistent with the theory of planned behavior, which suggests that intention is a key predictor of behavior. Previous studies by Jusoh and Jing (2019), Cannière et al. (2010), and Dahiya and Gayatri (2017) also confirmed that purchase intention significantly predicts consumer buying behavior. Similar findings were reported in studies conducted in Belgium, India, and Finland. In Thailand, Sukato and Elsey (2009) also found that consumer purchase intention significantly influences buying behavior. Additionally, Qi and Ploeger (2019) reported consistent results in Germany.

Furthermore, the study found that attitude toward digital media usage influenced purchasing behavior through purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 5. This implies that consumers who perceive digital media as useful, convenient, and trustworthy are more likely to develop purchase intentions, which subsequently lead to actual buying behavior. These findings align with the studies of Ranjbarian (2014), Dahiya and Gayatri (2017), and Shadkam (2017), which suggested that positive attitudes toward digital communication platforms can significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior. Consumers with favorable perceptions of digital marketing communication are more likely to respond positively to marketing messages and convert intention into actual purchases.

Similarly, the findings revealed that referral groups significantly influenced purchasing behavior through purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 6. Social influence from peers, influencers, and online communities can shape consumer attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making processes. When individuals perceive that others approve of or recommend certain skincare products, they tend to develop stronger purchase intentions and are more likely to engage in purchasing behavior. This finding is consistent with Ogutu et al. (2014), who found that



social influence significantly affects purchasing behavior in Kenya, China, and India. In addition, Minbashrazgah et al. (2017) found that social expectations and recommendations from referral groups strongly influence consumer purchasing behavior.

Finally, the study found that digital media usage capability influenced purchasing behavior through purchase intention, supporting Hypothesis 7. Consumers who possess higher levels of digital competency are more capable of accessing product information, comparing alternatives, and making informed purchasing decisions online. As a result, they are more likely to engage in online purchasing behavior. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Wilson et al. (2017), Dahiya and Gayatri (2017), and Nizar and Janathana (2018), which found that digital capability plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior in online environments.

Development of a marketing communication model influencing skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand

Based on the quantitative analysis and in-depth interview findings, this research was able to develop a causal relationship model explaining millennial skincare purchasing behavior through digital media. The model indicates that attitude toward digital media usage, referral group influence, and digital media usage capability serve as key antecedents of purchase intention. In turn, purchase intention acts as a mediating variable that directly influences purchasing behavior. This model highlights the importance of digital marketing communication strategies that emphasize positive consumer experiences with digital media, leverage social influence through referral groups and influencers, and enhance consumers' digital engagement capabilities. For skincare brands targeting millennials in Thailand, these findings suggest that effective digital marketing should focus not only on delivering persuasive messages but also on building trust, encouraging peer recommendations, and creating user-friendly digital platforms that facilitate consumer interaction and decision-making. Overall, the proposed model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how digital marketing communication processes influence skincare purchasing behavior among millennials in Thailand.



Table 1 Summary of Expert Opinions from In-Depth Interviews.

Expert	Attitudes toward using digital media that influence purchase intent	Referral groups that influence purchase intent	The ability to use digital media to influence purchase intent.	Purchase Intent Influencing Buying Behavior	Attitudes toward digital media usage, referral groups, and competence influencing purchasing behavior.
Expert 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expert 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expert 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expert 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expert 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Based on in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the causal factors influencing purchase intention and purchasing behavior of skincare products among millennial consumers through digital media in Thailand, to examine the influence of the marketing communication process on skincare purchasing behavior, and to develop a digital marketing communication model affecting such behavior. The findings revealed that attitude toward digital media usage, referral group influence, and digital media usage capability significantly influence the purchase intention of millennial consumers. Millennials who have positive attitudes toward digital media, are influenced by recommendations from referral groups such as friends, family members, and online influencers, and possess strong digital media usage skills are more likely to develop stronger intentions to purchase skincare products through digital platforms. Furthermore, the study found that purchase intention significantly affects actual purchasing behavior. This indicates that when millennial consumers form a strong intention to purchase skincare products through digital media, it is highly likely to result in actual purchasing behavior. The findings also revealed that attitude toward digital media usage, referral groups, and digital media usage capability indirectly



influence purchasing behavior through purchase intention, confirming the mediating role of purchase intention in the consumer decision-making process.

Based on both quantitative analysis and in-depth interview findings, the study was able to develop a digital marketing communication model explaining the skincare purchasing behavior of millennials in Thailand. The model demonstrates that attitude toward digital media usage, referral group influence, and digital media usage capability serve as key determinants of purchase intention, which subsequently leads to purchasing behavior. This model highlights the importance of digital communication channels and social influence in shaping consumer decision-making among millennials. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding how digital marketing communication affects millennial consumer behavior in the skincare market. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers and skincare brands in designing effective digital marketing strategies that emphasize positive digital experiences, leverage social influence through referral groups and influencers, and enhance consumers' engagement with digital media platforms.

Overall, this study contributes to the academic literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior while also offering practical implications for businesses seeking to effectively target millennial consumers in Thailand's rapidly growing skincare market.

Recommendations

The researcher has presented guidelines for conducting further research. The details are as follows.

In the future, the model of digital marketing that affects purchase intent and skincare buying behavior of millennials in Thailand should be applied to verify whether the model is consistent with the empirical data.

Further research on other important factors should be investigated as which is a factor affects the purchasing behavior of consumers in the context of applying technology in marketing. This is because there are many factors related to today's technology that has not been yet studied, such as data science for marketing, big data and personalization marketing.

Data Science for Marketing refers to the application of quantitative and qualitative methods to solve problems related to marketing and predicting outcomes. Data science is about extracting useful information and knowledge from large amounts of data to improve business decisions based on in-depth knowledge and broad data sets including analytical skills.



Big Data is defined as a data set that exceeds the capabilities of conventional database tools to capture, store, manipulate and analyze. It is a new source of information that combines advanced technology and analytical skills. It is interesting to use big data to research and analyze market data. Since it is new information, it can support both academic knowledge and practical application.

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