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Factors Affecting Customer's Purchase Decision on "Chapter" E-Publication Purchase in Thailand

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Abstract

Purpose: While physical book industry is declining, E-Publication industry is developing. New format of E-Publication is out in the form of Chapter E-Publication. However, with limited capital, it should be considered whether investing in Chapter E-Publication platform would be wiser, or other traditional platforms should be pursued. This research aimed to discover the factors affecting customer decision making on Chapter E-Publication, as well as whether customers would considered repurchase the same story in different formats in Thailand. Research design, data and methodology: Using quantitative surveys from 396 respondents who experienced purchasing Chapter E-Publication who lived in Thailand, descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were done. Results: From the analysis, the researcher found that there were five factors that affected the purchase decision of Chapter E-Publication, which are Price, Perceived Ease of Use, Customer Review, Trust, and Perceived Usefulness, respectively. The result could be explained that 71.2% (R2 = .712) of the variation affect in purchase decision of the Chapter E-Publication. In addition, people also had tendency to purchase another format of the publication for the collection purpose. Conclusions: Few recommendations were made for publisher and platform owners to take into consideration for way to survive and maintain long-term sustainability with the customers.

Keywords: Chapter E-Publication, E-Book, Physical Book, Purchase Decision, Intention to Purchase

JEL Classification Code: M11, M31, M50

1. Introduction

Electronic reading has been booming in the publishing industries, with fast growing on many channels (Renear & Salo, 2003; Vasileiou et al, 2009). As the access to the technology increased, as well as the lower investing capital, the trend of physical publication has been down-hill since everyone tends to shift to online channels (Boonthong, 2020.) It is further stated that the rise of Covid-19 pandemic even accelerated the phenomenon; many publishers closed, and even Association of Publisher and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT) had announced to arrange online book fair along with the physical book fair. The pandemic forced a large group of population, including those who never engaged to digital platform before, to enter the online market. (Pigabyte, 2021) According to Alvaro Del Pozo, Vice President in International Marketing of Adobe, Digital channel will be the main marketing channel

that would be consistency used even post-pandemic and will be the generator to help with the business growth.

Nattawut Puengcharoenpong, CEO & Co-Founder of Ookbee, has developed his business from e-book products, and now owning several digital platforms such as Tanwalai, Joylada, and Fiction Log, which accounted of 10 million users in total, that share the characteristic of "Professional User Generated Content (PUGC)", like YouTube that develop platforms for the content creator to generate their income. He saw the market trend of "User Generated Content", since more people owns the smartphone and have access to the internet, which they can also create their own content. (Sae-Ngow, 2020) He made the statement of "We need to understand that Gen Y and above are the market that have money but not time, while the younger generations have time, but not money." That is why Mr. Nattawut now developed many of his platform, not offering only "Whole Book E-Publication", but also selling the content with cost per "Chapter."



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While many previous studies have confirmed the positive relationship on the factors such as easiness to use and price and the decision to purchase "Whole Book" or "Complete Book" E-Publication (Jubanjong, 2017; Kiatjaroonsiri, 2019), it is coming under question whether the same would apply to the "Chapter" E-Publication, which are mostly available for the fictional genre, and whether the customers would repurchase the complete book upon the completion of the story.

1.1. Research Objectives

The research objectives are to study the factors related and affecting with Customer Decision Making on "Chapter" E-Publications Purchase, as well as to study the Customer's Purchase Intention on "Complete Book" after the full version of "Chapter" E-Publication Purchase is available.

2. Literature Review

2.1. E-Book/ E-Publication

E-Books have since brought evolutionary experience to the book publishing industry, offering the "affordance" to overcome the physical limitation of printed book using information technology (D' Ambra et al., 2017). Unlike other innovations, which took many years to be accepted by the public, E-Book seemed to take short span of time to be accepted and adopted into the society. Wilson (2016), however, raised the point that E-Book took after the long development of computers and portable devices such as tablets, prior to its popularity, as the concept and performance of E-Book is wholly dependent on the devices' development. E-Book demand, according to Wilson (2016), is also driven by the social necessity such as technological development demands, or readily accessibility function of E-Book, as well as pressure from the high cost of necessary textbook for students.

2.2. Chapter -E-Publication

Chapter – E-Publication, such as Joylada application, is accessible only on mobile devices or PC, and required the internet access. Under the fictional genre, a novel is divided into several chapters, containing text of many formats, such as story, chat room, and even connecting itself to the GIF or YouTube Video, which could not be found on printed, or even the "traditional version" of E-Publication (Kanthawong et al., 2021). While this is the User-Generated Content (UGC), the platform also provide channel for "Writer" to gain income, and therefore lead to more sustainable traffic on the platform. Normally, Chapter-E-Publication would be available on such platform business, which like Amazon for e-commerce business, Airbnb for real estate business, applies for the publication business (Moazed, 2020).

2.3. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to as an influential shopping tendency and shopping process that is controlled by the consumer themselves (Rook & Fisher, 1995). The enjoyment could stimulate the environment and stir up the impulse to act (Zhang et al., 2020). As Chapter E-Publication in this context mostly apply to the fictional genre, which written mainly for entertainment purpose, "Enjoyment" may be the key factors, topping up with other factors as appeared in this research, that stimulate the purchase intention of the whole book publication once the Chapter E-Publication is completed.

2.4. Customer Review

Customer review refers to the previous customers' comment on the product or brand, in this case, may apply to the platform where the E-Publication is located, or even in the E-Publication itself. The customer reviews affect directly on the online transaction (Guo et al., 2016). Online review is considered electronic word-of-mount (eWOM), that could increase or decrease the diffusion of business within the market (Plotkina & Munzel, 2016). As a part of information search, the customers may look for the previous consumer's review as the alternative to get the first evaluation of the product or service they are interested in. Many studies as mentioned by Plotkina & Munzel (2016) confirm the positive result that positive customer review increase the higher purchase intention.

2.5. Media Richness

Daft & Lengel (1984) developed the theory that the media richness is differed by "the ability of information to change understanding within a time interval." Face to Face, as easiest communication method, is considered richest, while others may be limited by the amount of message that could be transferred (vocal, gesture), or the amount of time required for feedback (email, text). Using richer media would suit more on the complicate matters, while lean media would be better for the less complicated task. Lim & Benbasat (2000) saw that media richness has positive effect



on perceived usefulness. Lai & Chang (2011) found that media richness is a significant factor that contributes the intention to use e-book readers.

2.6. Perceived Ease of Use & Perceived Usefulness

Davis (1986) mentioned Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use as the two indicators that led to technology's (such as E-Publication) recognition, with Perceived Usefulness could improve the user's performance and experience, and Perceived Ease of Use is the belief on using less effort to utilize the product. Davis (1986) further stated that Perceived Ease of Use could affect Perceived Usefulness, where if the platform is easier to use, it is perceived to be more useful to the users.

2.7. Price

Price refers to the value setting for the product or service. Customers developed their internal reference prices after checking through various sources (Saricayir, 2018). It is stated further that if

customers have positive perception on price, it will increase the likelihood to buy. E-Publication, as displayed on Meb market, Thailand's top E-Book market, always mentioned the price "xx percent lower than cover page price", which is the price of sales in the physical bookstores. In addition, for the normal "Chapter" E-Publication, normally it would cost within one digit of Thai Baht per chapter, which unless it is complete, it would be harder for customer to determine the price between purchased chapter by chapter vs. purchase the whole (E-books).

2.8. Trust

Online Trust differs from Offline Trust mainly on physical distant between buyer and seller (Yoon, 2002), as well as limited feedback and learning capability (Eccles & Nohria, 1992). With the increase access capability of consumer to the internet, they are now offered with various choice when it comes to online purchase. This caused "Trust" to become one of the key factors that could lead to online purchase (Herath & Wijesundara, 2008).

Figure I: Conceptual Framework



3. Research Hypothesis

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The researcher developed seven hypotheses based on the conceptual framework, which were summarized as followed.

H1: Customer Review affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H2: Media Richness affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H3: Perceived Ease of Use affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H4: Perceived Usefulness affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H5: Price affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H6: Trust affects purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.

H7: Chapter E-Publication Purchaser in Thailand has intention to purchase the completed version once it is available in the store.

4. Research Methodology

The research is conducted using a quantitative approach via online survey to collect the data from people who have experience purchasing the "Chapter" E-Publication on the online platform in Thailand.

Prior to distributing 396 questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pretest sample of 35 respondents to test the reliability of the questions. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The reliability test was later conducted through the Statistics program, which provided the Cronbach's Alpha. After that, the descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses.



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4.1. Result of Reliability Test

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Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Customer Review	.704	Reliable
Media Richness	.728	Reliable
Perceived Ease of Use	.902	Reliable
Perceived Usefulness	.898	Reliable
Price	.737	Reliable
Trust	.731	Reliable
Purchase Decision	.803	Reliable
Intention to Purchase a Completed Version	.881	Reliable

Table 1: Summary of reliability in each variable for pre-test (N = 35)

As Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha of all eight variables are more than .70, it implied that the questions of the variables are acceptable.

5. Result of the study

From the total of 396 respondents, it was shown that majority of the respondents use more than one E-Publication platforms. Counting those accumulated more than 10 percent are users of Joylada (18%), Kindle (17.9%), Dek-D (17.7%), and Fiction Log (10.6%). The remaining six platforms have less than 10% users of the respondents. In term of years of usage on the first platform they have ever used, majority of people have been using the platform for 5-

Table 2 – Model Summary from Multiple Regression Analysis

8 years (51.3%), 1 - 4 years (37.6%), less than 1 year (9.1%), and above 8 years (2%).

The respondents 77.8% would repurchase the complete version of E-Publication in other format if they already purchase the Chapter version. Respondents were provided with multiple choices and could answer more than one reasons, which include for collection (60.9%), for read in different situation (24.6%), and forget than I already have a set (14.6%).

The correlation shown that the value of all independent variables (Customer Review, Media Richness, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price, and Trust) had strong relationship with the Purchase Decision as Independent Variable of those who have purchase Chapter E-Publication in Thailand, with Price having the highest correlation level at .793. Similarly, it also showed a strong relationship that those who purchase Chapter E-Publication also has Intention to Purchase a Complete Book later, with correlation level of .710.

In Table 2 below, the Adjusted R Square was value of .711, meaning that 71.1% of the variable affect the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication for those who has experience purchasing from the platform in Thailand. While Table 3 contain .000 significant level, for reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.846ª	.715	.711	.29667	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Media Richness, Perceived Ease of Use, Customer Review, Perceived Usefulness, Price

Table 3 – ANOVA from M	Aultiple Regression Analysis
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Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	86.056	6	14.343	162.959	.000ª	
	Residual	34.237	389	.088			
	Total	120.293	395				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Media Richness, Perceived Ease of Use, Customer Review, Perceived Usefulness, Price

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

As for Table 4, the Adjusted R Square value was .503, meaning 50.3% of the variation affect the Intention to Purchase a Complete Book for those who has experience purchasing a Chapter E-Publication from the platform in Thailand. While Table 5 contained .000 significant level, meaning the researcher could reject null hypothesis.



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Table 4 – Model Summary from Single Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.710 ^a	.504	.503	.42845	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Purchase Decision

Table 5 – ANOVA from Single Regression Analysis

ĺ	Model		Model Sum of Squares da		Mean Square	F	Sig.
	1	Regression	73.584	1	73.584	400.858	.000ª
		Residual	72.325	394	.184		
		Total	145.909	395			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Purchase Decision

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to Purchase

In the Table 6 (H10 – H60) below showed the significant value, or "p-value" to examine the statistically significant on Purchase Decision of a Chapter E-Publication or not. The significant value of the of Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price, and Trust are less than .050, meaning they have statistically significant affecting the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication. However, the significant value of Media Richness was more than .050, which means there was no statistical significantly affecting the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication. In addition, from the Standardized Beta Coefficient of the five statistically significant independent variables in Customer Review, Perceived Ease of

Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price, and Trust are .172, .177, .112, .302, and .164, respectively.

Moreover, Table 6 (H7o) also represented the Single Linear Regression Result. The significant value of the of Purchase Decision on Chapter E-Publication was less than .050, meaning it had statistically significant affecting the Intention to Purchase a Complete Book after Purchase Chapter E-Publication. In addition, from the Standardized Beta Coefficient of the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication as the independent variable was .710



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Table 6 – The Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Significant Value	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Result
H10: Customer Review does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E- Publication Readers in Thailand.	.001	.172	Fail to accept
H2o: Media Richness does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E- Publication Readers in Thailand.	.836	.010	Accepted
H3o: Perceived Ease of Use does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E- Publication Readers in Thailand.	.000	.177	Fail to accept
H4o: Perceived Usefulness does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E- Publication Readers in Thailand.	.037	.112	Fail to accept
H5o: Price does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.	.000	.302	Fail to accept
H6o: Trust does not affect purchasing decision of Chapter E-Publication Readers in Thailand.	.001	.164	Fail to accept
H7o: Chapter E-Publication Purchaser in Thailand does not have intention to purchase the completed version once it is available in the store.	.000	.710	Fail to accept
Note: Significant value < 0.05, Hypothesis	rejected		

The second round was summarized in Table 7 and Table 8 by excluding Media Richness. The Adjusted R Square was .712, which could explain that 71.2% of the variation affect the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication for those who has experience purchasing from the platform in Thailand. It could be explained by the five independent variables in this research, including Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price, and Trust. However, there were another 28.8% of the variation affect in the Purchase Decision of those who have experience purchasing Chapter E-Publication in Thailand, which could be explained by other independent variables. While Table 26 contain .000 significant level, meaning the researcher could reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis

Table 7 – Model	Summary from	Single Regression	Analysis (2nd Round)
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Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.846ª	.715	.712	.29631

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price



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Table 8 – ANOVA from Multiple Regression Analysis (2nd Round)

	Model		Model Sum of Squares df		Model Sum of Squares		Mean Square	F	Sig.
	1	Regression	86.052	5	17.210	196.024	.000ª		
		Residual	34.241	390	.088				
	Total		120.293	395					

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

In the Table 9 below shows the Multiple Linear Regression Result. The significant value, or "p-value" to examine whether there are any statistically significant on Purchase Decision of a Chapter E-Publication or not. The significant value of the of Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Price, and Trust are less than .050, meaning they had a statistically significant influence that affect the Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication for people who have experience making a purchase on platform in Thailand.

In addition, from the Standardized Beta Coefficient of the five statistically significant independent variables in Customer Review, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness,

Price, and Trust are .176, .178, .114, .304, and .165, respectively.

 Table 9 – Multiple Linear Regression Result (2nd Round)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	В	Std. Error	Beta	Т	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Customer Review	.157	.043	.176	3.691	.000	.322	3.101
Perceived Ease of Use	.178	.049	.178	3.613	.000	.299	3.340
Perceived Usefulness	.106	.049	.114	2.188	.029	.267	3.747
Price	.310	.054	.304	5.715	.000	.258	3.876
Trust	.157	.045	.165	3.452	.001	.318	3.144

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision of Chapter E-Publication

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out and examine the factors affecting purchase decision of Chapter E-Publication, and later to study the customer's purchase intention on the complete book after the full version of Chapter E-Publication is available. From the result above, Price, Perceived Ease of Use, Customer Review, Trust, and Perceived Usefulness are the five independent variables that could affect purchase decision of the Chapter E-Publication, respectively.

Firstly, Price was considered as the strongest factors influencing Purchase Decision of Chapter E-

Publication of those who live in Thailand. It was clear from the questionnaires that the respondents perceived the price of Chapter E-Publication as affordable, at the reasonable price, which could be purchased by public, and is cheaper than another format such as physical book. Thus, the price could be lowered. And the discount statement set by Meb Corporation, as well as the price set by other Chapter E-Publication platforms are viewed positively by their customers. In this sense, since majority of respondents are those who have used the platforms for 5-8 years, it is in line with Jarutian (2016)'s findings, that frequent readers (customers) do not have price sensitivity, topping up to the



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fact that the price of Chapter E-Publication is low, it's easier to make purchase decision.

Secondly, Perceived Ease of Use was the second strongest influential factor of Purchase Decision on Chapter E-Publication. The respondents responded positively that the platforms are easy to use with guideline, and the purchasing steps are not complex. This corresponded to Davis (1986)'s statement that Perceived Ease of Use could led to technology recognition, which improve users' performance and experience.

Thirdly, Customer Review was the third strongest influential factor of Purchase Decision on Chapter E-Publication. Customer Review got the highest mean score on the statement that the respondents would look for when choosing which online platform to use, and that it impacts whether they would choose to make a purchase of the content. This was in line with Guo et al., (2016) that it impacted the online transaction, and Plotkina & Munzel (2016) that positive customer review could increase the purchase intention.

Trust was the fourth strongest influential factor of Purchase Decision on Chapter E-Publication. The trust in payment security and personal information was appeared crucial for the respondents, while trust that platform could deliver service up to the expectation came a slightly below. Considered no actual human seller involved in the payment process, this corresponded to Mohseni et al., (2016) that the company should put emphasis on this aspect since there was a minimal human interaction in the online transaction.

Lastly, Perceived Usefulness was considered the last influential factor of Purchase Decision on Chapter E-Publication. Respondents confirmed the platform improve their performance in story searching and making any payment. This corresponded to Shin (2011), where his research reported the impact the tendency to use such technology if the users perceived it as useful to them, and the other way round if it was not useful. In this case, the respondents perceived the platform as useful to them, thus continued to make purchase on the platform.

While Media Richness features the comments of other readers and other features not available on physical book, making it more appealing to respondents, which was in line with Daft & Legel (1984), the regression analysis determined it insignificant factors, and thus the researcher re-run the analysis again without this variable, confirming no more insignificant variables appeared. There were few reasons we could conclude from this on why Media Richness was being an insignificant variable: there might be some error in sampling procedure from the convenient and snowball sampling, which was mainly based on subjective judgement. In addition, it might be due to majority of stories are still using the descriptive approach and less likely to have other links, illustration, and the chat type story format were not well-known on other application beside Joylada. Thus, this might not be considered or put on much weight in the mind of the respondents.

Separately, as we also studied on the intention to purchase a complete book after purchasing Chapter E-Publication, we found that 77.8% of the respondents tended to purchase a complete book, with the main reason to be kept as collection.

6.1. Recommendation

From the Discussion and Conclusions, the researcher would like to offer some recommendations to the publisher or those who would like to publish their own stories in the Chapter E-Publication platforms as follows:

Firstly, the publisher should be considerate when determine the pricing. Considering all the cost, it should be a proper price in the market, making sure people of all age could be able to afford to pay easily. If the publisher would publish the story in other forms, then it should be taken in consideration whether the price would be cheaper in the chapter version or not, as it could influence the cost-center customers to choose whatever the cheapest, despite being granted the access to the content before the complete book.

Secondly, the publisher should consider uploading the stories on the platform that was easy to use and considered useful by both the publisher and the readers. From the platform owner's perspective, it would be recommended to improve the platform according to the customer feedback, since doing so would retain the current users, and attract new reader to use platform.

Thirdly, the publisher should carefully select the transcript with positive feedback from the reader to sell. If it was a self-publishing author, the story might need to be adjusted according to the customer feedback. The customer review on either story, author, or publisher as a brand may influence the reader to follow the story, author, or publisher



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for the future stories after one story is finished, and it could contribute to a sustainability of the company.

Fourthly, it was important to maintain the customer trust. By keeping the standard of the platform, and content quality, as well as keep payment process transparent and secure could boost up customer trust, and therefore encourage them to make the online payment. The customer would remain on the trusted platform for a long period of time, as it displayed on the result of the questionnaires that more than 50% of respondents use the platform for at least 5-8 years.

Fifthly, while media richness was not significant, this may be due to its key feature of being able to display other features that were unavailable on physical book are not widely known. Thus, keeping an eye on the trend and be able to react as soon as the new technology emerge would give the publisher an advantage compares to its competitors.

Lastly, referring to the intention to purchase a complete book after purchase the chapter version as a collection, the publisher should emphasis on the illustration and book appearance, as well as other premium or short stories that might give more value to the complete book version, whether it was the E-Book or physical book. This was not only targeting the people who will purchase another version of the story, but also for the target group who would not prefer to purchase a chapter version as well.

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