

# Male and Female Buying Decision Making Processes Seen From BlackBerry Messenger Texts

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## ABSTRACT

This study observes the male and female buying decision making processes seen from BlackBerry Messenger texts. It focuses on the way of how male and female customers make a buying decision in the online shop via BlackBerry Messenger. The data are analyzed by using the theory of the consumer decision-making process by Lamb, Hair, McDaniel (2003) which includes five stages. I found that the female customers have almost two times total more than male customers in the four stages in consumer decision making process. It means, the male decision-making seems to be rational, fast, and attentive for product quality and its function. However, the female decision-making is more emotional, attentive for product surface or outside appearance, and careful for choosing a product she wants to buy. Overall, I know that gender is an important factor that makes the buying processes between both gender groups different.

**Key Words:** Buying Decision Making Processes, Male Customer, Female Customer

## INTRODUCTION

Generally, businesses often involve a meeting between sellers and buyers. People do business by establishing stores, outlets, shops and other places they use to work in. They come regularly to their shops and meet a lot of customers or buyers every day. In this case, if buyers need to buy something, they will go directly to certain stores. They will look at the products directly in the stores or shops. The buyers often ask further details about the products. Then, they choose what products they will buy. If they like it or want it, they will do the purchasing process with the sellers or even do bargaining in the middle of the buying and selling process. The way business occurs is face-to-face between sellers and buyers to do buying and selling process.

However, nowadays, the nature of business has changed. Business does not require a direct meeting between buyers and sellers. It does not only occur face-to-face between sellers and buyers, but also takes place in the virtual world. Shopping today is not limited to visiting stores, shopping malls, and other shopping outlets. The scope of shopping has been extended. Since the time the Internet technology was introduced, the online shopping phenomenon has become a popular way to shop. Online shopping involves purchasing products or services over the Internet. Online shopping is done through an online shop, e-shop, e-store, virtual store, web-shop, Internet shop or online store. All the products in online stores are described through text, with photos and with multimedia files. Many online stores will provide links for extra information about their products.

Online shopping which occurs in the BlackBerry Messenger seems to be more convenient rather than those in *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and other online media. Since most people nowadays have Smartphone which contain BlackBerry Messenger, they just need to open their Smartphones if they want to buy something. They don't need to login to their *Facebook* or *Twitter* account to buy something. In the BlackBerry Messenger Online Shop, the Online Shop owner usually makes a group in BlackBerry Messenger for uploading product pictures together with the details and prices. Then, the owner will invite people in his or her BBM contact to be members of the group. Then, the customers will choose the product they want, order it to the seller, and transfer the money to the seller's bank account. After that, the seller will send the product ordered by the customers through the shipping company until it reaches to the customers' hand.

Here, I analyze the male and female buying decision making processes seen from BlackBerry Messenger texts which happen in my own Online Shop named Tinkerbellsop. The owner of Tinkerbellsop is the seller who does buying and selling processes in the BlackBerry Messenger. So, I as the researcher investigate and know how male and female customers do

shopping in the online shop, especially Tinkerbells shop. Tinkerbells shop itself sells many things for both men and women. Tinkerbells shop provides shirts, T-shirts, hotpants, skirts, trousers, dresses, jackets, bags, shoes, sandals, sunglasses, hats, belts, watches, accessories, dolls, beauty stuffs and tools.

From my observations, male and female customers often do shopping in different ways. The female and male customers in Online Shop is quite different in such a way starting from asking details about certain products, bargaining, making orders until purchasing the products. Male customers often order products in a simpler way rather than females. Female customers seem to be more critical and fussy when they want to buy something in the buying processes in the online shop via BlackBerry Messenger rather than males. Thus, I want to know how gender (male and female customers) affects the way or steps leading to the buying decision at the end of the buying processes.

Here, I will analyze the steps leading to the buying decision made by male and female customers in Online Shop which is seen in BlackBerry Messenger text. The text contains the conversation of buying and selling process between the customer and the seller.

In this research, I would like to find out the differences and/or similarities between the buying decision making processes of the male customers and the female customers in in Online Shop through the online media in Smartphone which is called BlackBerry Messenger.

### **Consumer Decision-Making Process**

The buying and selling process which is leading to the buying decision consist of five steps. It also happens in the Online Shop. These steps focus on how the customers deal with the sellers in the buying and selling process. According to his book *Marketing Management* (2006), Philip Kotler says, "But, consumers do not always pass through all five stages in buying a product. They may skip or reverse some stages." I will explain about the steps in consumer decision making process according to Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2003, p. 110-115).

In their research, Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2003) gave five steps in the consumer decision-making process, so I provided all these steps, but there is no guarantee that the customers produce or follow all of these five steps. It means there are some customers who do not follow these five steps in sequence. The consumer decision making process consists of five steps: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and postpurchase behavior (p.110-115). This process is a guideline for those who want to study the process of how consumers make decisions. Therefore, this guideline does not assume that consumers' decisions will always proceed in order through all the steps of the process.

The first step in the consumer decision making process is **need recognition**. Need recognition here is usually called as **problem recognition**. The consumer decision process generally begins when the consumer identifies a consumption problem that needs to be solved. According to their book *Essentials of Marketing* (p.110-112), Lamb, Hair, McDaniel said that need recognition occurs when consumers are faced with an imbalance between actual and desired states. This is a stage where consumers have a difference between their *actual* state and some *desired* state. The actual state here is a condition where the consumers do not have the products they want or need, while the desired state is a condition where the consumers really want or need to have certain products. Here, there is a gap between these two states, so that the consumers try to recognize their wants or needs. This is a critical stage in the decision process because it motivates the consumer to action whether they will buy the products or not.

The second step in the consumer decision making process is **information search**. Once a need is recognized, people will immediately want to find a product or service that meets the need. In this case, the consumers will try to get information as much as possible. The consumers will ask further details related to the products that they want to buy. According to the book *Essentials of Marketing* (p.112-113), basically there are four main factors that determine whether the customers will do long or short external information search to find the information regarding their needed products. Here, the extent to which an individual conducts an external search depends on his or her perceived risk, knowledge, prior experience, and level of interest in the good or service.

Well, in the online shop, almost all of the consumers want to get information as much as possible before they analyze, evaluate, and later make decisions to buy. They usually ask questions

about features such as sizes, colors, materials, models, brands, and also about prices. They ask those questions in order to get information only. That's why the questions are usually in the form of open questions (5W+1H) like what colors, what sizes, what models are available, how much, and so on.

The third step in the consumer decision making process is **evaluation of alternatives**. It is also called as alternative analysis. In this stage, the consumers will compare all of the alternative choices that they have, so that they can determine which product or service best meets their need. According to the book *Essentials of Marketing* (p.114), I know that after getting information and constructing a consideration set of alternatives products, the consumer is ready to make the decision. The consumers will use their information stored in their memories and the information got from the outside sources to develop a set of criteria. These standards will help the consumers to evaluate and compare alternatives about certain products. So, they can easily compare and analyze the products available that they want to buy. In this case, the consumers begin to narrow the choices of certain products. They can exclude the products that they think those products are not suitable for them.

When the consumers finally get enough information regarding the product that they want to buy, they will go to analyze and evaluate all possible choices. So, they will still continue to ask a lot of questions. Yet, it is different from the second step, because they ask questions in order to make a decision which one they will buy. Here, they will ask questions about features/benefits, prices, delivery cost, and availability. The purpose of asking these kinds of questions is to compare or to analyze in order to confirm and make a decision. That's why the questions are usually in the form of closed questions (yes/no questions) like which one is better, which color is more beautiful, which one is cheaper, is this size bigger than that size, is it long lasting for curling my hair, and so on. When, the consumers ask questions about availability of certain products, it also means that they do comparing. They evaluate the real condition of those products whether it is available now or not with the condition that they want to get them in a quick time or not. Next, when the consumers ask questions about prices, it does not mean that they only want to get the information, but it can be an evaluation or comparison with the others. Comparing prices here have three purposes. First, it can be that the consumers want to compare the price of the same product in another online shop. Second, the consumers want to compare whether that price they consider as appropriate or reasonable price or not. Third, the consumers want to compare whether the price of that product they can afford to buy or not. Here, we can differentiate the questions about price in step two and step three by looking at the context. When the consumers ask that question before they make decisions to buy the products, it usually means it is included in step three. While, the consumers ask that question in the very beginning before they make decisions to buy, it usually means it is included in step two.

The fourth step in the consumer decision making process is **purchase decision**. Once the consumers are satisfied with the information and evaluation, they will soon make a choice. They have to decide *when to buy* and *where to buy*. They will complete all the steps in the buying decision to purchase the products they want to buy. Philip Kotler in his book *Marketing Management* (p.207) says, "In executing a purchase intention, the consumer may make up to five purchase sub-decisions: a *brand decision* (brand A), *vendor decision* (dealer 2), *quantity decision* (one computer), *timing decision* (weekend), and *payment-method decision* (credit card)."

The last step in the consumer decision making process is **postpurchase behavior**. Once the purchase is made, the decision-making process does not stop. The customers will continue to evaluate the product or service while it is being used. If the customers are satisfied with those products and services, they will buy the same products or services for the next time. Yet, if the purchase is not as satisfying as expected, they will make a different choice for the next time. The buyer's satisfaction is a function of the closeness between the buyer's expectations and the product's perceived performance. If performance falls short of expectations, the customer is disappointed; if it meets expectations, the customer is satisfied; if it exceeds expectations, the customer is delighted. Those feelings determine whether those customers will buy that product or service again in the next time and talk favorably or unfavorably about it to other people.

In my research, I use only the four main steps which are need/problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives/alternative analysis, and purchase decision to analyze

the data because I want to see the steps leading to the buying decision made by male and female customers. Thus, I exclude the last step which is postpurchase behavior because that is the step where the customers do the evaluation regarding certain products after they have bought those products. It is about the customers' feelings whether they are satisfied or not after buying the products and whether they will buy those products in the next time or not. Certainly, these feelings do not appear in my data. Thus, I do not analyze it.

## **METHODS**

I took the data from the conversations between the seller and the buyers in the Tinkerbelle online shop through BlackBerry Messenger. The data of my research were taken from the written data of the conversations between the seller and the buyers in the BlackBerry Messenger. The form of the data was utterances. In this research, I used forty respondents consisting of twenty male customers and twenty female customers. I used only twenty male customers and twenty female customers because I wanted to analyze the customers who later bought certain products and did the buying decision making so that the data collection would be valid and reliable. I applied several steps in collecting the data. First of all, I as the seller of the online shop promoted some products by putting the pictures of the products as profile picture in the BlackBerry Messenger. Then, the consumers would look at it and if they liked it or needed it, they would ask further details about the product or even bargain and finally decide to buy the product. Here, they did buying processes with the seller. Then, I chose the customers who later decided to buy the product. It means that not all the customers finally bought the product. Some only asked about the product without having intention to buy it. Thus, the customers who did not buy the products would be ignored. Next, I selected 20 male customers' utterances and 20 female customers' utterances to be analyzed. I did not include the seller's utterances because I wanted to focus on the buyers' utterances to get the reliable and valid data. Here, I analyzed the male and female buying decision making processes seen from BlackBerry Messenger texts. There are three main points which utterances were analyzed and were not analyzed. First, I analyzed the utterances made by male and female customers. I did not analyze the utterances or sentences made by the seller of the Online Shop. Second, I only analyzed the utterances which had signals to the four steps leading to the buying decision whether they were in statement or question form. In this research, I only analyzed the utterances which were included in the stages or processes leading to the buying decision like need/problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives/alternative analysis, and purchase decision. Thus, the other utterances such as giving comments and reasons to buy those products which are not included in those steps were not analyzed. Third, I analyzed the utterances until the fourth step in the consumer decision making which is purchase decision, and the utterances that come after the last step would not be analyzed. Thus, I would give – mark for the utterances which were not analyzed. This is because I want to focus on the main topic of my research which is the male and female buying decision making processes seen from BlackBerry Messenger texts. Thus, the data that I got would be valid and reliable. Moreover, I analyzed each utterance and classify it into the steps in the consumer decision making by looking at the context. It means, I also saw what utterances came before and what utterances came after the utterances that were analyzed. Here, the context becomes one of the important things for me to analyze that data because I cannot analyze each utterance based on what it is said. I have to see the whole context in the buying and selling process, so that later I can determine the steps leading to the buying decision. Later, the calculation of the utterances which are put in tables in the chapter 4 was not counted from each customer, because one customer could produce more than one utterance. The calculation here was based on the utterances produced by the male and female customers.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

From the findings we can know that male customers produce 110 utterances from 20 male customers, while female customers produce 217 utterances from 20 female customers. We can see there is a very huge different amount from the male and female customers. That also makes the buying decision making processes of female customers become longer than males. We can also see from the table above that most of both gender groups firstly spend their times a lot in the stage three as we call it evaluation of alternatives/alternative analysis with the total 183 utterances.

Secondly, they also spend their times a lot in the stage two as we call it information search with the total 74 utterances. Thirdly, they make a buying decision in the stage four as we call it purchase decision with the total 40 utterances. Fourthly, only some of both gender groups who spend their times in the stage one as we call it need or problem recognition with the total 30 utterances. The others just skip the first stage so that there is no utterance produced by them.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, this research is about the analysis of the male and female buying decision making processes seen from BlackBerry Messenger texts. As we know, the male and female customers usually do shopping in different ways. The female and male customers in Online Shop is quite different in such a way starting from asking details about certain products, bargaining, making orders until purchasing the products. Male customers often order products in a simpler way rather than females. Female customers seem to be more critical, attentive, and careful when they want to buy something in the buying processes in the online shop via BlackBerry Messenger rather than males. I would like to reveal how the male and female customers do the buying processes and pass all of the stages in the consumer decision making process. I want to know the differences and/or similarities between both gender groups from the first stage until the fourth stage. I think that is interesting because in this case we can know the way males and females do the buying processes and make buying decisions at the end of the processes.

Here, I use the underlying theory of consumer decision making by Lamb, Hair, McDaniel (2003, p. 110-115). In the consumer decision making, there are five stages in the consumer decision-making process: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and postpurchase behavior. In doing this research, I used the qualitative research. The source of the data was taken from the conversations between the seller and the buyers in the Online Shop through BlackBerry Messenger. The data of my research was taken from the written data of the conversations between the seller and the buyers in the BlackBerry Messenger. So, the form of the data was utterances. In this research, I used forty respondents consisting of twenty male customers and twenty female customers.

There are some similarities and differences in the way male and female customers pass every single stage in the consumer decision making and come to the final stage which is purchase decision. In the **first** stage, the female customers almost always come with the need or problem recognition. However, it is a bit different from the male customers. Here, only a few male customers start their buying processes with the need or problem recognition stage. Yet, not all of the male and female customers always pass this stage; the rest of them may skip the first stage. They go directly to the second or third stage. In the **second** stage, both gender groups ask a lot of questions regarding to the products they want to buy, with a purpose to get information as much as possible. They ask questions about features such as sizes, colors, materials, models, brands, and also about prices. Here, the female customers produce those utterances in more various forms of question rather than male customers. The questions which are asked in the stage two or information search can be various depend on the products that the male and female customers buy. If the products have a lot features, the customers usually ask a lot of questions regarding the features of those products. In the **third** stage, both gender groups ask a lot of questions regarding to the products they want to buy with the intention of evaluating, comparing, analyzing one product with the others. They ask questions about features/benefits, prices, delivery cost, and availability. Here, the questions which are asked in the stage three or evaluation of alternatives/alternative analysis stage can be various depend on the products that the male and female customers buy. If the products have a lot features, the customers usually ask a lot of questions regarding the features of those products with purposes to compare, evaluate and analysis one product with the other products or evaluate it with the other factors for the same product. In the **fourth** stage, both gender groups have similarity in the way of making decision to buy by always mentioning the quantity(s), color(s), model(s), size(s), and brand(s) (if it is available).

From the findings, we can see that gender is an important factor that makes the buying processes between both gender groups different. The female customers usually is more emotional, attentive for product surface such as model, color, and other outside appearances, and careful for choosing a product she wants to buy. That makes the females' buying decision making processes

longer than the males. However, the male customers usually focus on the products' function. If there is no function or benefit that he can get from the product, they will not continue to buy it even that product is interesting and good in the outside appearance. The other factor that makes both gender groups different is because females want to build a good and warm relationship with the seller, even maintain solidarity. So, the buying process here does not only limit on the product, but also the relationship between the buyer and the seller, while the males usually spend a little times in the buying processes. Yet, the male customers usually limit their relationship only on the buying and selling processes.

Last but not least, I encourage all of the readers to have further research regarding the male and female buying decision making processes so there is an improvement towards knowledge. I hope the readers could help me to add some inputs if there are some weaknesses in this research and might begin to have a better research.

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