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A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BABY BOOMER’S PREFERRED SHOPPING WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that affect baby boomers’ shopping well-being and investigate the influences on positive word of mouth. Data was collected in 2012 from 292 baby boomers (47–65 years old) who were shopping in Bangkok metropolitan region shopping centers, Thailand. We used factor analysis as an analysis tool to confirm the underlying shopping well-being dimensions and employed multiple regression analysis to quantify the relationship between those factors and shopping well-being, and also the relationship between shopping well-being and positive word of mouth. The study found that socialization and autonomy dimensions had a positive impact on both shopping well-being and positive word of mouth significantly. This information is useful for mall developer as a first stage to diagnose the baby boomers’ shopping behavior and to develop strategies in order to enhance the efficiency of service and meet the need of baby boomer shoppers.

KEYWORDS: Shopping Well-Being, Baby Boomer, Socialization, Autonomy, Word Of Mouth

1. INTRODUCTION
Importance in seniors issue has received attention from Thai society for a long time. This is because of the respect, honor seniority, and grateful, which is regarded as amorality and continuously indoctrinated in Thailand. Despite the addition of the values, in the last 2 decades issues relating to seniors are becoming important and has been growing an interest. The federal government had the preparation aged society. It is the one of the strategic plan of the National Economic and Social Development. The government plans the official policy for the elderly, because of changes in the population structure of the country. Thailand confronted with a situation of rapidly increasing of elderly. The current number of elderly is growing every year. Since 2010, elderly has accounted for about 11 percent of the total population. By the definition of the United Nation, the country that has the population aged 60 years and over for more than 10 percent of the country’s population, that country
considered to be in the aging society. Therefore, Thailand was already in an aging society. The understanding of population trends is important to business these days. Evident from the feasibility study of a project, It all started from a study of population trends (Demographic). This is because of population trends be indicative of market behavior, which is going to change in the future. If a developer looks at the changes in the population, he might found the opportunity of the market direction or trend more precisely. The study is targeting on the baby boomers generation, which the purchasing power is enormous, and the number is likely to account for a majority of Thailand population (Wattanagate, 1999). This is important for a retail business and also other businesses. Therefore, this research will focus on studying and understanding on the behavior of baby boomers, because the current business has been targeted at the baby boomers, such as DKSH Company Limited has manufactured toothpaste for people aged 40 years and over because they have the powerful, stable in terms of wealth and employment. The first reason that DKSH developed the toothpaste for people aged 40 years and over was the subject of oral health problems of the aged 40+ who are experiencing health problems such as gum inflammation, decreased saliva volume scurvy, etc. The second reason is demographic and economic. Population trends aged 44-62 years that be called baby boomers had a proportion of 13-14% of the total population and they are a group of high-income people and many of them have their own business. (Positioning Magazine, October 2008) Also tourism business has a format specific to the elderly include beauty and spa industry. That program will focus on the anti aging. Furthermore, residential business develops the design and focuses on the comfortable of elderly living. So this research will study the shopping well-being of baby boomers at the shopping center. The research will enable the result to develop a marketing plan and develop appropriate strategies for managing the baby boomers in order to enhance the shopping center’s performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Behavior of the Baby Boomers

As a result of the improvements in health care and nutrition, whether the food or advanced treatment, the composition of the elderly population have grow significantly. The people live longer and staying healthier, both physically and mentally. (Sonnenberg, 2000); (Cabrini Pak, 2006); (McKay, 2008) As times have changed, so have the techniques employed to reach out to the matures. The elderly do not want to see themselves represented as feeble, vulnerable
grandparent types. These days the elderly are different from the past, because they were educated, save money, and focus on health care. As the first baby boomers approach retirement, the matures are becoming more difficult to stereotype and less tolerant of condescension. Marketers seem to have taken notice. To capture value from the age 50+ market, managers will have to master new skills and lead the transformation of products and strategy to adapt to a changing marketplace. (Cabrini Pak, 2006) There are several researches and articles that have summarized the shopping behavior of the baby boomers. Aging people love to interact with people. They love to talk to the sale person or service person. Shopping is not only a need, but it is also a chance to socialize with friends. Shopping is a good way to spend leisure time with family and friends. (Sonnenberg, 2000); (Fleming, 2004); (Smith, 2006); (Myers and Lumbers, 2008); (Gilboa and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2010); (Anna-Maija, 2011)
Baby boomers like the convenience and want staffs are available to assist and help them when they need. The location of shopping center should near their accommodation or office, and easy to access. (Swinyard and Rinne, 1994); (Fleming, 2004); (Carpenter and Moore, 2005); (Myers and Lumbers, 2008); (Thomas & Peters, 2009; (Underhill, 2009); (Anna-Maija, 2011). Safety is a value and quality of life for baby boomers because of they confront numerous biological changes as they age. These changes in mobility, flexibility, elasticity, strength, vision and hearing can have a major impact on how seniors interact with businesses and their products and services. Hearing and vision can be corrected with lighting and signs consistent with a larger media include the size of text in a menu. (Underhill, 2004); (Smith, 2006); (Myers & Lumbers, 2008); (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2010) These are important factors to affect the businesses, its products, and services. The purchase of baby boomers’ shopping is not goods or services, but to gain experience from the purchase of goods and services. They are spending freely. (Myers & Lumbers, 2008) When they went shopping, the equipment in the shopping center have to maintain in a good condition and the goods on the shelve are easily access. (Swinyard & Rinne, 1994); (Littrell et al., 2004); (Pettigrew et al., 2005) How to reach the customer – baby boomers group, newspaper, magazine or website should use these ways to communicate. Another channel is word-of-mouth, because this group often meet friends and exchange ideas with friends, which is the preferred way to communicate. By the way, the attitudes and behavior of people in each group will vary according to experience and events of the past. Each age group will be able to tell that what they do, and how do they feel. In marketing, it is an approach that will help us to understand the population in each group and be able to tap into the market. A study by researchers
interested in a population age of 47-65 years, which is situated in the baby boomers cohort that born between AD 1946 to 1964. (Carpenter & Moore, 2005)

(Hedhli et al., 2011) studied about the well-being at the mall as a shopper’s perceived impact of a shopping mall in contributing to satisfaction in important life domains resulting in the mall contributes significantly to one’s overall quality of life. The factors are derived from retail mix and influenced shopping well-being in the feature of the functionality, convenience, safety, leisure, atmospherics and self-identification. Then, he studied the relationship between shopping well-being, loyalty and positive word of mouth in the mall. For this research, there are 5 main constructs that effected on shopping well-being of baby boomers that derive from the behavior of baby boomers as follows;

Functionality: Functionality in this study includes 7 factors that show the effectiveness and reliability of product quality and durability and customer service. These features are consistent with the needs of the baby boomers because when presenting the product or service, the most important to baby boomers is quality. Do not try to impress them with low prices or discounts. The human aspect was the one of the determinant of a shopping well-being for baby boomers. Baby boomers deemed the responsibility of shopping center management is to ensure that staff members working on the service area are efficient, courteous, and friendly. They expressed the staff to be sincere. (Sonnenberg, (2000); Pettigrew, Mizwerski & Donovan (2005); Carrigan, Szmigin, & Wright, (2004); Littrell, Paige, & Song, (2004))

Convenience: A study by (Kaufman C.F., 1996), customers can choose the shopping center from opening time and traveling distance to the mall. The theory about the retail location says most customers tend to choose a shopping center near their house (Kaufman CF, 1996). This is correspond to the behavior of the baby boomers, who tend to shop in the shopping center not far from the house or work place (Fleming, 2004); (Myers & Lumbers, 2008), but also have many customers who spend more time at home a little and use a modern transportation system that makes travel easier. Thus, customers can choose a shopping center near the office or a group of friends and doing activities. (Loudon D.L. and Bitta A.J.D., 1993) found that most customers love the convenience and do not waste time to find parking (Loudon DL & Bitta AJD, 1993), (Underhill, 2004) Customers are always looking for a place that can fully meet their needs. The center is divided into several categories to focus on different customer groups. The shoppers tend to prefer shopping at a well-located, so the shopping center
management must focus on creating satisfied customers by a mixture of shops to meet the needs of the customer. (Ahmed et al., 2007)

Safety: In general, the shopping center is more safe than walk on the streets. If an event occurs, it will make customers feel much worse. There are several ways to use or share the added security to the shopping center. Notice how some of the shopping center security and safety procedures in place to protect customer's awareness. Customers of the shopping center to be aware and be careful with the defense that might occur. Points have been very careful such as the car park of the shopping center is the most vulnerable to crime, the layout of the parking area will be clear and easy to recognize. The shopping center should be provided the security guards and security cameras at various points. (Underhill 2004) The safety factor is another one that is important for baby boomers. Further, the aspects of ageing that is another issue involved with the safety because of their changes in mobility, flexibility, elasticity, strength, vision and hearing etc. The older people tend to be shorter than younger people, both because of the tendency for people lose height with age. The example in the store and/or supermarket, being shorter can make them very difficult to reach products located on higher shelves or in deep freezers etc. (Pettigrew, Mizwerski & Donovan, 2005)

Socialisation: Behavior of the baby boomers who like to interact with others and prefer to talk with staff and they use the shopping center to socialize with others and sit in coffee shops on the one hand shops and manage a goal-oriented trip to the mall on the other hand. There was considerable recognition that shopping is not just about buying necessities, but that it is an important means of socialisation. This was particularly the case for those living alone, but importantly, shopping was seen as a way to spend leisure time with friends and family. While the importance of the physical exercise gained from a shopping trip was noted, it was the mental stimulation from social interaction that was prioritized. (Sonnenberg, 2000); (Fleming, 2004); (Underhill, 2004); (Smith, 2006); (Myers & Lumbers, 2008); (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2010)

Autonomy: The behavior of the baby boomers found that they must decide on their own every time they are spending their own purchasing decisions because today’s they think of themselves as decision makers. Planning and shopping on their own. They do not want to depend on the decisions of others. The way to approach them was provide promotions that offer choices or opportunities to make educated decisions or suggest an alternative but the decision by themselves. Make them in control. Educate them up front, driving them to a decision. This can mean they were free to do what they want and need to do something with
that time. Further, today’s older generation felt freer to spend than has been the case in the past. On the whole, better-off consumers expect to continue to spend money on themselves, unlike their parents who had been preoccupied with inheritance, again evidence of a shift in the mindset of a generation from conservatism to a more confident individualism. (Sonnenberg, 2000); (Myers & Lumbers, 2008); (Michaelson et al., 2009)

2.2 Shopping well-being
To define or give meaning to the word "well-being" is not easy because it has a broad scope. Each definition varied according to the way of life and the pursuit of success in their lives and societies. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated the definition of well-being: the man was in excellent health because of the presence of the body completed mental and social health. However, there are many institutions and organizations with education and health indicators to include an organization called the New Economics Foundation in England that educated the well-being indicators by the name of National Accounts of Well-being. The model was built on two headline measures which capture personal well-being and social well-being, reflecting crucial aspects of how people experience their lives. Personal well-being had broken down into five main components with a number of subcomponents: emotional well-being (positive feelings and absence of negative feelings); satisfying life; vitality; resilience and self-esteem (self-esteem, optimism and resilience); and positive functioning (autonomy, competence, engagement, and meaning and purpose). Social well-being made up of two main components: supportive relationships, and trust and belonging. (Michaelson et al., 2009). In addition, the study analyzed the health of the University of Bath in England, with the objective to analyze the social and development policy in the practical study by (White, 2009), which measured the well-being into three areas: 1) Material assets include welfare and living standards 2) Relational be divided into two areas: social - social relationships, and access to utilities and human - a positive attitude towards life and personal relationships, and 3) Subjective is divided into two sides, one is the recognition of their status (material, social and human positions) and the other side is the value of cultural ideals and beliefs. These are consistent with research of (Ramsey and Smit, 2002) that developed a model of changes in a rural community well-being. The model conceptualizes four interrelated dimensions of rural community well-being: physical, psychological, social, and economic.
From the concept of well-being, bring it to combine with shopping so can define the shopping well-being is a pleasure to enjoy the good feelings that result from the purchase and use within the shopping center. That can fulfill the needs and desires of the consumer - psychological, physical, and social.

2.3 Word of Mouth
Word of mouth is the importance role of consumer behavior because this would result in the purchase of consumer by convey the experience of others (satisfaction or dissatisfaction after purchase). (Chanachaipawawatt) The customer will tell from one person to another person, which information can spread quickly. However, how to reach baby boomers is to communication via newspapers, magazines or website and using word-of-mouth. It is also another channel for baby boomers and often meet to exchange ideas with a group of friends. (College of Management, 2009)

There are many researches in the past studying about the word of mouth behavior of the elderly. (HU, 2005) studied the relationship between satisfaction in a restaurant when the seniors came to use a service and word of mouth. The objective of HU (2005) was to investigate the senior citizens’ perceptions of the restaurant’s services and their purchasing behaviors among three restaurant sectors (quick service, casual dining, fine dining). And another research, ROSS (2005) studied satisfaction of elderly tourists (domestic and international senior tourists) planning to visit. It is a measure related to the destination satisfaction of the attractions (such as that are associated with sociability needs in regard to family and friends, cultural contacts, entertainment and nightlife, and to retail experiences) and intended to come back again and willing to recommend the destination to the other person to visit. (ROSS, 2005)

Based on literature review, the hypothesizes are as follows;
H1: Functionality in the shopping center has a positive and direct influence on shopping well-being.
H2: Convenience in the shopping center has a positive and direct influence on shopping well-being.
H3: Safety in the shopping center has a positive and direct influence on shopping well-being.
H4: Socialisation has a positive and direct influence on shopping well-being.
H5: Autonomy has a positive and direct influence on shopping well-being.
H6: Shopping well-being has a positive and direct influence on positive word of mouth.
3. The Methodology and Model

The questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section is to screen the respondents who must be the baby boomer aged between 47 – 65 years old and evaluate the nature of shopping center dimension consisting of functionality, convenience, safety, socialization and autonomy. The second section is to evaluate shopping well-being. The third section is to evaluate positive word of mouth, and the last section is to determine the demographic background of the respondents. Data was collected from 292 baby boomers shopping in shopping center located in Bangkok metropolitan region.

Factor analysis (principal axis and varimax rotation) was used as an analysis tool to confirm the underlying dimensions. An analysis of the Eigen values for the nature of shopping center suggested that five factors exist under the nature of shopping center dimension consisting of functionality (FUNC), convenience (CONV), safety (SAFE), socialization (SOCI) and autonomy (AUTO). The total variance extracted by the three factors were 69.53 percent (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.850, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant at p = 0.000 level). Reliability analysis was conducted to evaluate the multi-item scales of each the nature of shopping center dimension, shopping well-being and positive word of mouth. The Cronbach alpha results listed in table I were all the retained items and offered strong support for the reliability of five nature of shopping center dimensions derived from the factor analysis.

Table I: Reliability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functionality (FUNC)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience (CONV)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety (SAFE)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization (SOCI)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy (AUTO)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping well-being (SWB)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive word of mouth (WOM)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple regression was employed to quantify the relationship between for the nature of shopping center dimensions consisting of functionality, convenience, safety, socialization, autonomy and shopping well-being. The results showed that two independent variables together explain 69 percent of the variance ($R^2$) in shopping well-being, which is significant at F value 132.958. Among these two dimensions, an examination of the t-value indicates that autonomy (6.984) and socialization (8.984) contributes as good predictors to shopping well-being.
Simple regression was used to test the positive word of mouth as the dependent variable and the shopping well-being as the independent variable. The results showed that shopping well-being explains 41 percent of the variance ($R^2$) in positive word of mouth, which is significant at F value 59.624 with t-value of 7.722.

Results are shown in Table II. The model confirmed the positive and direct influence of two natures of shopping center dimensions on shopping well-being and also shopping well-being on positive word of mouth. Therefore, H4 – H6 were accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of shopping</td>
<td>Socialization (SOCI)</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>8.984</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>center</td>
<td>Autonomy (AUTO)</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>6.984</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Shopping well-being</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>7.722</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word of mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figure below is the final research model showing the results of regression analysis.

Figure I: Research model

4. The findings

The dimensions of the nature of shopping center consist of functionality, convenience, safety, socialization, and autonomy. The study found that two dimensions of nature of shopping center in the research model have a positive impact on shopping well-being significantly.
Moreover, The shopping well-being also has a positive impact on positive word of mouth. It is interesting by “autonomy” which emerged as the most important factor affecting shopping well-being in the study rather than the core function of the nature of shopping center - functionality, convenience and safety.

5. Summary and Conclusions

In summary, two dimensions of nature of shopping center have a significant impact on shopping well-being, which is a mediating variable to positive word of mouth. The researches in the past focused only on the general dimension of shopping center related to satisfaction. This research concerns more about factor that related with baby boomers. The first factor, which effected the shopping well-being, is socialization. The behavior of baby boomers like to interact with others, so their shopping are not only shopping needs. It is to meet people and association with others. The second factor was autonomy. Baby boomers will decide everything by themselves so the sale person should offer and / or suggest goods or services as a choice to them for making the decision. This study has implications for shopping center or retail developers and management manager in order to pay attention to maintain a good relationship with their customers in the group of baby boomer, and also focuses on the emotional marketing to increase customer well-being and positive word of mouth. These will lead to long term and sustainable benefits. The business marketing tried to respond the customer demand. This research presented the baby boomers like to interact with others. Spending is not only shopping needs. It is to meet people and association with others. Furthermore, baby boomers would like to make a decision by themselves so the staff should offer a choice to the baby boomers customer or advise them to decide. These are some of the marketing strategic plan from the research result.
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