

**GENDER INFLUENCE ON PURCHASE INTENTION
THE CASE STUDY OF THAILAND**

BY

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DEDICATION

....TO MY BELOVED FAMILY....

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to study the influence of the gender in purchase of house in Thailand. In Thailand, the housing industry is on the increased. Houses are sold in many shapes and design such as town house and condominium. There are many factors that influence the consumer to purchase a house in Bangkok. However, each consumer will have the different influence factors in purchasing a house due to different in gender and also different in culture.

Therefore, the purposes of this research were to determine whether the husband or wife have more dominant role in making purchase decision of housing in Bangkok or husband and wife are using the joint decision when purchasing a house. Furthermore is, to examine whether of sales person, price and location will influence the consumer purchase intention on housing in Bangkok.

A total of 200 fully completed questionnaires were use for analysis and the respondents will have the marital status. Therefore, the findings were, husband and wife have different purchase intention and Thais are using joint-decision to make decision which is similar to Singaporean.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the introduction will explain briefly about role of gender in decision making. Problem statement and objectives that led to the conduct of this research are provided. At the end of the chapter a summary of the thesis will be provided.

1.2 Background to the study

Purchase decision making is the one of activity that people always make. People actually make decisions on many things. According to Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, (2004), the family members will have different roles to play when making purchase decision. Sometimes, the decision maker may not be the one who has the purchasing power to purchase that product (Mansumitchai, 2002). Actually, the decision maker can be divided by the genders to male and female. Therefore, there is a when gender different, the perception of consuming the product also different as well. Moreover, the factors that will influence male and female to make purchase decision are also different. For example, to purchase a car, male will choose to emphasize on the engine of the car and the capacity of the car. However, female will emphasize on the feature and design of the car (BusinessThai, 2004). Therefore, we can say that, the purchase decision making will change by the role of genders regard to the product that the consumer is going to purchase (Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, 2004).

Today, we can see that the behavior of the consumers have been changing as a result of factors such as economic development, education, increase in income in the family and also increasing number of working women (Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, 2004). With all those changes will make the role of purchase decision making also change. The consumer will consider in many factors before making purchase decision (Mansumitchai, 2002).

In Thailand, the housing industry is on the increased. Houses are sold in many shapes and design such as town house and condominium. A house is one of the product that consumer needs to think hard before making a purchase. This is because buying a house is a huge capital expenditure. Therefore marketers have to understand, what are the basic factors that would influence consumers in their decisions. Purchasing a house in Bangkok will be based on the two basic factors, first is the location of the house and second is the price (BusinessThai, 2002). Salesperson also plays on important role. The marketers have to know how is efficiency of sale person to motivate or negotiate with customer (Chr, 2007).

Most of the real estate agents will always treat the location as one of the 3 crucial factors in their buying decision of a house (D'Amato, 2008). Moreover, most of the consumers will consider the destination of the city and working place which is nearer to them so location becomes one of the factors that influence the consumer in buying house.

Furthermore, price strategy is also important. Marketer or real estate agent would use the price strategy to divide the social class of the consumers. It means that, The

Characteristic of people whom want to purchase a house in high class housing project villages which sell a house in premium price, mostly will be the one who have high income, high level of occupation, and high educated. (Mansumitchai, 2002)

On the other hand, price is also one of the important factors for the consumers when buying a house. Consumer needs to have enough budgets to choose a house that match their requirement as well. With the economic right now, most of the consumers wish to buy a house with a reasonable price. Therefore, the price of the house also becomes one of the factors that influence the consumers to making the purchase decision when buying a house.

Salesperson is one of the factors and plays a vital role in hosing business because salesperson is the person that could change and influence consumers perceptions, cognitions, decisions and behaviors of consumers (Jayakody & Sanjeevani, 2006)

1.3 Problem Statement

Purchase decision making of family member has long been of great interest to many researchers and practitioners (Zhang, 2007). As mentioned earlier, the family members will have different roles to play when making purchase decisions. Product and perception of male and female family members will influence their decision on purchasing decisions. Changes in the economic environment will also affect the role of decision making in the family as well (Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, 2004).

According to Yang, Ahmed, Ghingold, Ng, Tan, & Teo (2006), had a comparison study between Singaporean family and US family purchase decisions. This research found out that, in Asia country like Singapore, husband and wife will make the joint decision. However, some of the product, husband will have more dominant when make purchase decision. In the Western countries, husband and wife will have an individual purchase decision. Husband and wife will give different idea because of their culture.

Singapore an affluent and modern society exhibit a joint decision making between husband and wife but husband plays the dominant role. On the other hand, the west which is more materialistic and individualistic in their culture does not portray a similar purchasing decision to that of Singapore.

Thailand is also one of the Asia countries. However the role of decision making in Thai family could be defined as, in Thai family, they will respect and allow the seniors or the leader to make the purchase decisions.

Or we can say that, the culture in Thailand made husband always be the leader or the influencer in making purchase decision. Is that truth that, the traditional culture cause husband to be the leader in making purchase decision in Thailand.

Moreover, the purchase decision making between husband and wife in Thailand had been little study on the particularly product as housing. Therefore, when consumers want to buy a house in Bangkok, each consumer will have the difference of purchase intention because it depends on the gender. There is a when the gender is different, the purchase intention and perception of consuming the product also different as well (for buying a house, husband and wife might choose to base on the economic based or social based).

This study would like to investigate the purchase intention and decision making process in Thailand which is a conservative society, rural and living in a collective culture. The objective is to see whether, they are similarities and difference between result from Singapore and the west and the finding from Thailand.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine whether the husband or wife have more dominant role in making purchase decision of housing in Bangkok.
2. To examine whether of sales person, price and location will influence the consumer purchase intention on housing in Bangkok.

1.5 Research Question

Based on the problem statement, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Does each gender have difference dominance in the purchasing decision making of a house in Bangkok?
2. Do the salesperson, price and location influence the consumer purchase intention on housing in Bangkok?

1.6 Significant of the study

This study is significant for the following reasons:

1. This study is considered as marketing research. Therefore, this study will be described as the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis, and distribution of information for the purpose of supporting management in decision making related to the recognition and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing.
2. This study will be useful for marketers of house industry who is going to plan the new housing strategies in Thailand. This study may help the marketer on understanding the preferences, attitudes and behaviors of consumers that, when the consumers want to purchase a house what will they based on? Between economic based or social based. Moreover, this study also helps the marketer to plan about pricing strategy of housing.

3. The researcher believes that this research would help marketers further to understand, what are the basic factors such as sales person role, location and price would influence consumers in their decision.
4. There has been very little research on both gender and purchasing decisions in Thailand. This study will add to the literature in this area. And put usher to marketers on the role of gender in the decision making process that can be incorporate into the marketing strategy of Thailand company.
5. A similar research had been done before about the factor influencing human behavior in purchasing the house. However, my research is unique because no researcher in Thailand has done about specific on gender (husband and wife) determine whether the husband or wife have more dominant role in making purchase decision of housing in Bangkok.

1.7 Definition of Key Term

1.7.1 Purchasing Decision

Purchasing Decision refers to many choices made by a consumer before making a purchase that begins once the consumer has established a willingness to purchase. The consumer must then decide where to make the purchase, which brand, model, or size to purchase, when to make the purchase, how much to spend, and what method of payment will be used. The marketer attempts to influence each of these decisions by offering information that may useful for consumer's evaluation process (Barron, AllBusiness.com, 2000)

1.7.2 Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to a plan to purchase a particular good or service in the future (BusinessDictionary.com, 2010).

1.7.3 Gender

For this study gender means husband and wife in the family.

1.7.4 Salesperson

Salesperson refers to a person employed to represent a business and to sell its products and main activity is selling a product, service, or investment (Answer.com, 2010).

1.7.5 Price

Price refers to method adopted by a firm to set its selling price. It usually depends on the firm's average costs, and on the customer's perceived value of the product in comparison to his or her perceived value of the competing products. Different pricing methods place varying degree of emphasis on selection, estimation, and evaluation of costs, comparative analysis, and market situation. See also pricing strategy (BusinessDictionary, 2009).

1.7.6 Location

Location refers to the "three most important things about real estate"-a popular statement that emphasizes the importance of location with respect to the value of real estate in the city. The value of real estate mostly depends on where it is. However many other elements besides location also affect value, and those who believe that location is the only important factor lack ideas (Barron, 2007)

1.7.7 Real estate

Real estate refers to the modern term for land and anything that is permanently fixed to it. Fixtures include buildings, fences, and things embedded to buildings (Answers Corporation, 2010). However on this research real estate industry is referred to housing industry in Thailand.

1.8 Organizations of the thesis

The research is dividing into five chapters.

- Chapter 1 Deals with the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and definition of the terms.
- Chapter 2 Reviews the literature related to the topic, and presents the theoretical framework related purchase decision making.
- Chapter 3 Explains the methodology.
- Chapter 4 Provides the findings of the study.
- Chapter 5 Discusses the findings and draws up and the conclusion

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the fact of Bangkok, literatures on concept and theory of factors influence consumer behavior, theory of motivation process, decision making process, decision making when buying a house, gender and decision making process, different in culture and purchase intention of house.

2.2 Review of the Literature

2.2.1 Bangkok

According to Bangkok Metropolitan Administrator (2005), Bangkok is the capital city and also has largest population and population density in Thailand. Bangkok is located on the low flat plain of Chao Phraya River which extends to the gulf of Thailand. Bangkok is not the largest area if compare with 76 provinces in Thailand. It has 1,568,737 sq.km. And the total population in Bangkok approximately in year 2008 about 5,710,883 residents (Department of Provincial Administration, 2008). Bangkok is surrounded by Samut Sakhon and Samut Prakan to the south; Nakhonpathom to the west; Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani and Nakhon Nayok to the north, and Chachoengsao to the east. Parts of the surrounding provinces have been included into Bangkok's sprawling Metropolitan area.

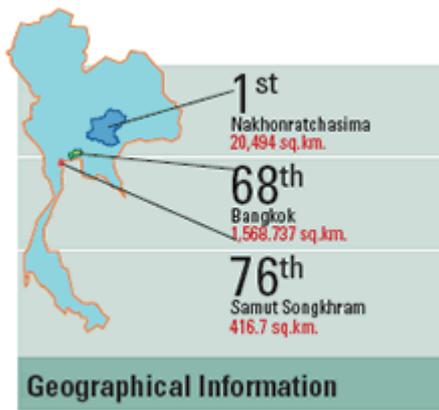


Figure 2-1 Thailand Map

According to Bangkok Metropolitan Administrator (2005), Since Bangkok is a capital city. It's density in population as we can see in the figure 2-2. Most people when looking for the job, the first place that they can think of is “Bangkok”. Most people think that Bangkok is a good place for finding the job, earning money if compare to other provinces. Moreover, business people and the investors when they want to invest on something, they will also think of Bangkok as one of the good place for their investment. Why investor will think of Bangkok at the first place to invest. There are many reasons that people always think of Bangkok.

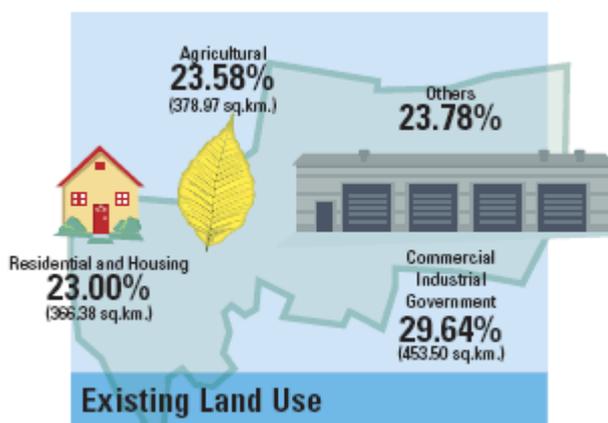


Figure 2-2 Existing Land Use

According to Bangkok Metropolitan Administrator (2005), Firstly, Bangkok is a Capital city. Secondly, Bangkok is convenience in transportation, communication and advance in technology. Since many people are moving inside Bangkok for finding a job or doing investment, then absolutely, everyone also looking for their accommodation to answer their basic needs. Due to the higher population in Bangkok so, the demand of housing also increases in every year. This could be only one factor that can drive people to buy the house in Bangkok. However, there also have some more reasons that drive people to buy the house. For instance, most people think that buying the house is an investment for something worth in their life (Reed & Mills, 2006).

2.2.2 Concept and Theory of factors influence consumer behavior.

According to Rochanawutanon (2005), state that, the marketers emphasize to study about consumer behavior because they want to understand more about what factor can make the consumer want to buy their products and service. Moreover, so many concepts that talks about factors that influence consumer behavior. However, the most interesting concept is come from Philip Kotler.

The factors that can influence consumer behavior are; (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001)

1. Cultural Factors mean the set of basic value, perception, wants, behavior and belief that human absorb and learn from the member of the family and other important institution.
2. Social Factors is the factor that related to human daily life. Contain with an idol group like family or reference group and the social role and also status. For

example, if the consumer is in the celebrity group this consumer will prefer the product that very high quality, branded and expensive products. This is one of the ways that can specify the social class. Therefore, the social factor can influence the consumer behavior.

3. Personal Factors means purchase decision has the direct influence from personal characteristics such as age, occupation, economic, life style and personality.
4. Psychological Factors contain with motivation, perception, learning, belief and attitude means that buying choices of a person are influenced by four major of psychological factors.

2.2.3 Theory of Motivation Process

“Motivation refers to the processes that lead people to behave as they do. It occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy. Once a need has been activated a state of tension exists that drives the consumer to attempt to reduce or eliminate the need.”

According to Rochanawutanon (2005), also state that, motivation is an expression of consumer behavior. That consumer shows how they achieve their goal. Moreover, the motivation has many words that related with the word motivation but they are slightly different in meaning such as need, drive, striving, desire and ambition.

However, motivation has three clear characteristics;

1. Some certain condition that motivate a consumer and drive a consumer to achieve their goals.
2. The expression of a consumer behavior that tries to achieve their goals or we can say that, this is the way that the consumer tries to reduce or eliminate their needs.
3. Achieve the goals. As we can see from the figure below.

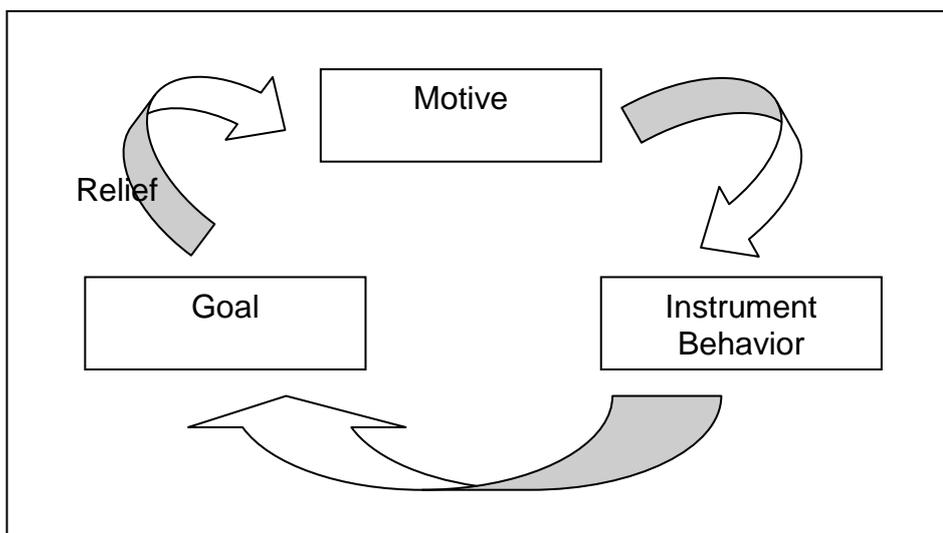


Figure 2-3 Life Cycle of Motivation (Rochanawutanon, 2005)

However, the motivation theory that the most well known and a lot of marketers use for planning marketing strategy is the Psychologist Abraham Maslow. According to Solomon (2007), Maslow developed motivation approach to understand personal growth and the attainment of “peak experiences”. Maslow separated the needs of human into 2 types. One is biogenic need and another one is psychogenic need. These two are the hierarchy of needs that specifies certain levels of motives. Mean that, the level of needs in each level will be attained before the next level then the higher level of need is activated.

Level of needs in the Maslow hierarchy has five levels as;

1. Physiological need is the basic need that every human need to for survival in their life. Such as water, sleep and medicines.
2. Safety is human want to have the security, shelter and protection. As the product like insurance, alarm systems and investments.
3. Belongingness is human want to have an acceptance by others. For example, love and friendship.
4. Ego needs is human want to have prestige, status and accomplishment. As the product like car, furniture, credit cards, stores, country clubs and liquors.
5. Self-Actualization is human want to achieving individual potential.

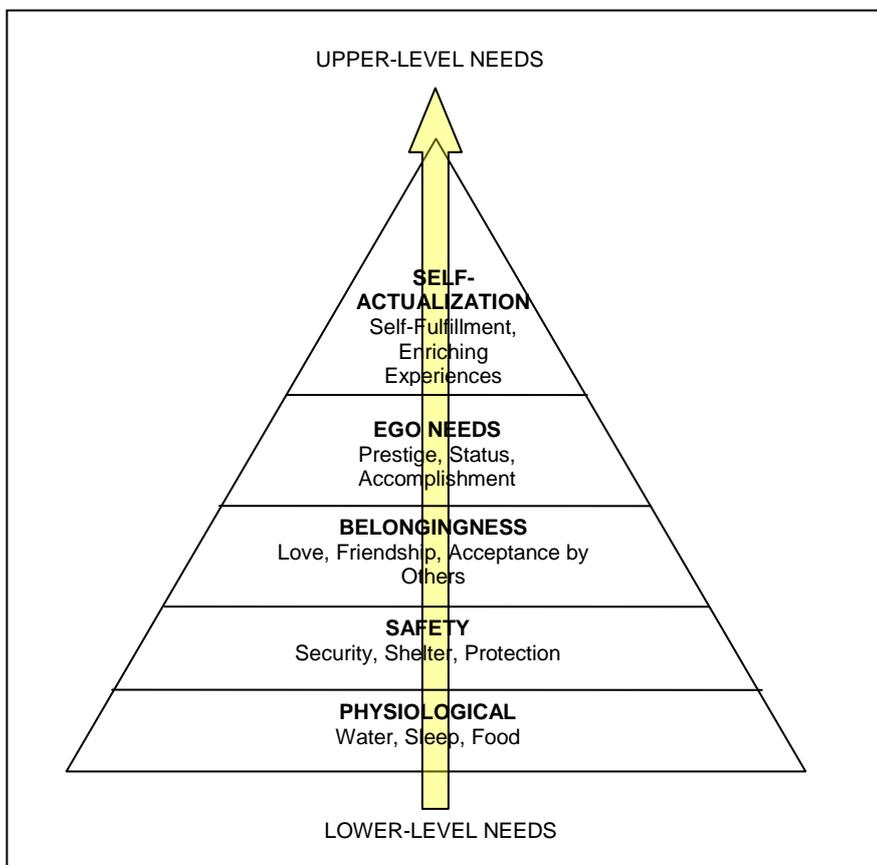


Figure 2-4 Levels of Needs in the Maslow Hierarchy (Solomon, 2007)

2.2.4 Decision making process

Purchase decision making process is an important model for anyone who making marketing decision. Therefore, the marketers should understand the consumer behavior or whole buying process rather than understand only purchase decision because if we focus only on purchase decision, sometime is probably late for the business to influence the choice (Solomon, 2007).

According to Zhang (2007), found that there is a traditional theoretical framework for the consumer purchase decision making. This model is the most recognized model for consumer decision making process since 1960s. This model contains five stages. There are: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior.

The details of each process are shown below;

1. Problem recognition, According to Solomon (2007), “occurs whenever the consumer sees a significant difference between his current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state. He perceives there is a problem to be solved, which may be small or large, simple or complex.”
2. Information search, According to Solomon (2007), “is the process by which the consumer surveys the environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision.”

However, the information search could divide into two stages;

- I. Internal search it comes from consumer prior experience, culture of living and each of consumer will have their own degree of knowledge about the product in their memory.

II. External search it comes from marketer dominate sources or information to consumer by advertisement, friends, company website and sale person.

3. Evaluation of Alternative, at this state will have much of effort goes into a purchase decision making. It means that, consumer will compare the several models in the store in terms of reputation and available features.

4. Product Choice, at this state the consumer must make a choice from available alternatives.

5. Post-purchase behavior is the final state of purchase decision making process that consumer buy the product and start to use.

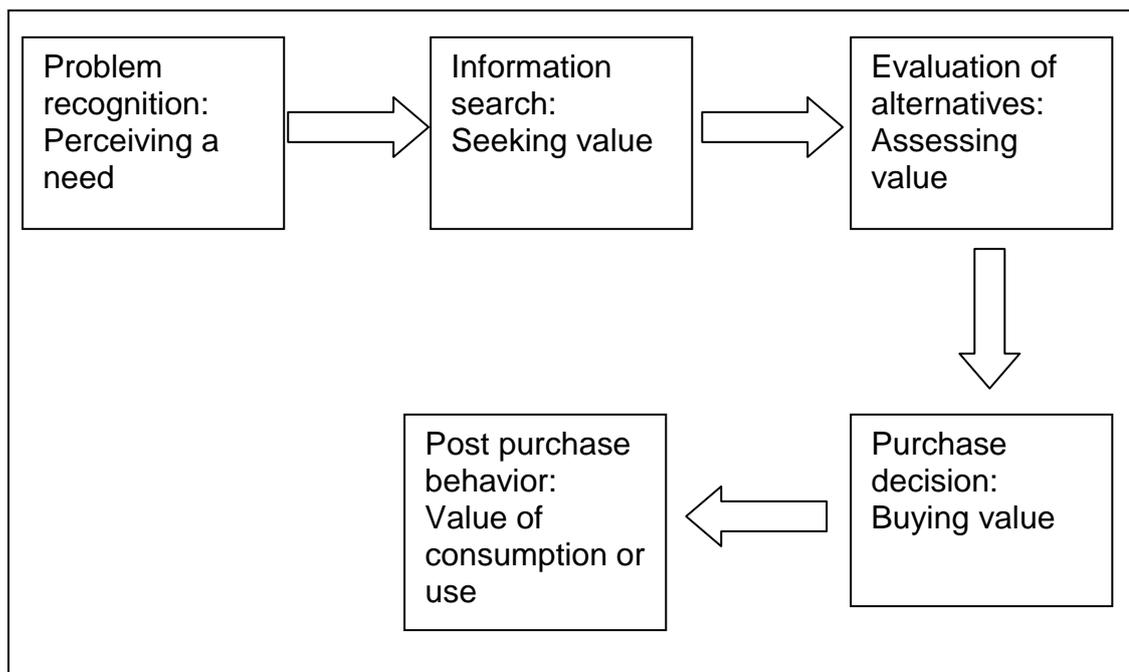


Figure 2-5 Traditional theoretical consumer purchase decision model (Zhang, 2007).

2.2.5 Decision making when buying a house

According to Rochanawutanon (2005), stated that, House has the special characteristic so with the special characteristic make house different from other product. Even though, some house will have the same style, same size but they will located on different location. Another characteristic is house can consider as the fix asset product, can use in long term beside that, they are high price. Therefore, some family could buy only one house in their life. With the special characteristic of the house, make consumers see and consider carefully when they want to make the purchase decision when buying a house. There are many factors that consumers have to consider when making purchase decision such as, financial status and also other conditions. However, as house is a basic product of human need, if we refer to Maslow hierarchy of needs we can see that human need the self-preservation and shelter. House also can be benefit to the house ownership as providing shelter for everyone in the family. Moreover, house is an investment for the owner –occupier (Reed & Mills, 2006).

2.2.6 Theory of Gender when making the decision

According to Solomon (2007), an important component of a consumer's self-concept is sexual identity. Sexual identity can define as gender (male and female). Both male and female also believe that, the way that they behave (speak) or consume (dress) will not have any conflict with their culture. However, when the time changed, the culture change, these gender roles will also do change by time over. However, it is very unclear that different gender will have the different consumption.

Therefore, many marketers have done a lot of research on gender, to see whether male and female will have any same or difference in consuming the products.

According to Solomon (2007), one of the researcher observe when comparing the food preferences of male and female. A researcher found out that, female eat more fruit but male are more likely to eat meat. Moreover, different gender will consume different quantity of the food. Female will eat smaller amount if compare with male maybe because of the differences in biology.

According to Dr.Krithika (2005), said that, with the comparing gender between male and female across four countries as Thailand, Singapore, Australia and USA, found out that, when making purchase decision males will make the decision faster and more efficient than females. Because of, males are playing more leader role than females and also have the different characteristic if compare with females. The characteristic of females are preferred to negotiate intellectual and compromise will make them slower than males when making the decision.

However, males characteristic are, do not like to ask for advice and consult from other people. Therefore, other people will less dominant to males in purchasing the product. Once males think that, the product is fascinated enough then he is willing to pay for that product (Dr.Krithika, 2005).

2.2.7 Gender and Decision making process

The process of decision making has been studied so long with the role of husband, wife and product (Henthorne, La Tour, & Hudson, 1997). According to Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah (2004), said that gender is made up of norms that reinforce between male and female. Moreover, family could consider as an important decision-making unit (Ndubisi & Koo, 2005).

We can divide family in two categories. One is traditional family and another one is modern family. According to Ndubisi & Koo (2005), said that, there are slightly different between the modern and traditional family. Traditional family, husband will be the people who find money to support their families but wife will stay at home to take care their children and be the housekeeping. Therefore, we can conclude that, traditional family, male is the leader of the family and will be the decision maker most of the time or we can say that, male dominant the purchase decision making when buying the product (Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, 2004).

On the other hand, according to Ndubisi & Koo (2005), said that, the characteristic of modern family is high degree of joint participation in sharing the tasks and making decision. Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah (2004), supported that, we can define non-traditional or modern family as an equivalent distribution of power among husband and wife. However, if compare the power distance in the family between traditional and modern family, the modern family will have the shorter in relationship between parents and children (Ndubisi & Koo, 2005).

According to Ndubisi & Koo (2005), we could define the power in two types. The ability of a person to change the attitudes, view or behavior of other people called as potential power. However, the power real exerted, or we can call as influence. Influence is the result of the active or passive exercise of the power.

Cohesion is also the one of fundamental structural dimension of the family. Cohesion is shown by the degree of harmony in a family, the degree of interest in each other and the coalition dynamics (Ndubisi & Koo, 2005). In order to maintain the decision harmony in the spousal, spouses frequently will respect the reactions and the utilities of their partners, spouses will not only make the decision with their own preferences and power (Su, Zheng Zhou, & Zhou, 2007). For example, female may feel and understand the paid of the male and decide to purchase affordable product. Since the spouses will sacrificed themselves to maintain the decision harmony, (Su, Zhou, Zhou, & Li (2007), stated that in some situation, souses tend to use their decision history to influence their partner to get a “fair sacrificed”.

Su, Zhou, Zhou, & Li (2007), mentioned that, power the influence between genders is the behavior that they act in the family processes. Male might have the “greater aggressiveness in outcome control and deeper concern about distributive fairness”. Female may prefer to make decision together and maintain the harmony between each other. According to Ndubisi & Koo (2005), divide the family type in to four classification as;

1. Traditional type is strong, traditional role-differentiation, autonomic decision-making and coalition formation.

2. Modern type is equal division of power between partners, short power distance between parents and children and using Joint decision-making.
3. Weakly cohesive type is low interdependence, disharmony, Egoistic and individually driven.
4. Strong cohesive type is strong interdependence, harmony, altruistic and consideration for others.

However, according to Livette (2007), argued that sometime the respect between different genders will change due to the role change in the society and idea of husband and wife are not mach then conflicts will occur (Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah, 2004). Livette (2007) also mentioned that males and females may have different decision when making the purchase decision. Males will focus more on certain decisions or tasks but females will focus more on their activities. Females' brain are most likely influence by the empathy but males' brain are most likely influence by understanding and building systems (Livette, 2006).

As in common, housing purchasing does not occur frequently and it is an important decision to get the correct property. According to Livette (2007), said that gender both female and male will involve in the housing purchase decision making. Mainly is because of the reason mentioned earlier and housing purchasing requires a huge amount of cost for most of the purchaser as well.

According to Livette (2007), stated that around 80 percent of the households are using the joint decisions making when they purchase their house. The reason simply, they want to have a comfortable and suited for both or other members in the house.

According to Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah (2004), we could divide the purchasing role structure into two types as follow;

1. Husband / wife dominant in purchase decision
2. Joint decision-making in purchase decision

2.2.8 Different in Culture

The comparison between Singaporean Family and US family purchase decision making process. According to Yang, Ahmed, Ghingold, Ng, Tan, & Teo (2006), said that, the comparison is not only point to the family but also point to the cultures of the country. Therefore, Asia countries like Singaporean family, husband and wife will consider and make decision together but, husband will have more influence when make decision because of the cultures. However, the same Asia country as Japan, because of their strong in culture, the Japanese husband will be the leader in making purchase decision (Henthorne, La Tour, & Hudson, 1997). On the other hand, Western family, husband and wife will have their own purchase decision. Husband may not be the leader of the decision making (Yang, Ahmed, Ghingold, Ng, Tan, & Teo, 2006).

With different country will have different culture as we can see, the majority of purchase decision making in Asian culture, husband always be the leader in making purchase decision. Is that truth that, the traditional culture cause husband to be the leader in making purchase decision within Asian countries.

According to Ndubisi & Koo (2005), stated that, Malaysia is a strong sibling obligations culture. Husband or father is empowered to save the family from harm and look after his family. According to Sidin, Zawawi, Wong, Busu, & Hamzah (2004), were founded that, In Malaysia, not only culture will cause the gender to be leader in making purchase decision but with higher education also cause the gender to be leader in making purchase decision.

Thailand is also one of the Asia countries. However the role of decision making in Thai family could define as, in Thai family, they will respect and allowed the seniors or the leader to make the purchase decisions (Pannavalee & Rafique, 2007).

2.2.9 Purchase intention

Purchase intention can define in to different of term. One of the meanings is, purchase intention is a plan to purchase particular products or service (Monash University, 2009). However, in term of buying roles, purchase intention means “The activities that one or more person(s) might perform in a buying decision. Six buying roles can be distinguished as; (1) initiator, the person who first suggests or thinks of the idea of buying the particular product or service; (2) influencer, a person whose views influence other members of the buying center in making the final decision; (3) decider, the person who ultimately determines any part of or the entire buying decision-whether to buy, what to buy, how to buy, or where to buy; (4) buyer, the person who handles the paper work of the actual purchase; (5) user, the person(s) who consumes or uses the product or service; and (6) gatekeeper, the person(s) who controls information or access,