

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

A few decades ago, the majority of Thais were criticized that they did not have a habit of reading or precisely they lacked the love for reading. Some of them read while many others might generally read very little per day. However, recent statistics from the National Statistical Office (สำนักงานสถิติแห่งชาติ, 2548) reported that the rate of reading among Thai citizens aged above 6 is about 69.1% or 40.9 million people from the overall population of 59.2 million. The result of this survey also showed that most of the readers were aged 10-14 and 15-24. Therefore, according to this result, young adults aged 18-30 are a part of the main group who mostly spent time reading and who would be more likely to buy books more than other groups in the society. Their purchasing behaviors and reasons for purchasing are an interesting topic for this research.

The book purchasing behaviors of young adults such as what they buy, where they go to buy, how often they buy, or how much money they spend on purchasing books should be found out in this new survey. Regarding what and where they buy questions, there are some related findings. Nowadays, new types of books have been introduced to the market and have become popular. *Judprakai Wannakum* (ทีมงานจุดประกายวรรณกรรม, 2549) stated that stories about sexual experiences were popular in the market as well as trendy or celebrities' books and sharing experience books. *Manager Online* (ผู้จัดการออนไลน์, 2549) also added that religious books are in trend among Thai readers and agree with the popularity of those three types claimed by *Judprakai Wannakum*. Moreover, the place to buy books of young adults is another question that publishers are uncertain about. Even though there are new big bookstores opened in Bangkok such as Asia Books and Kinokuniya at Siam Paragon (Faylicity, 2550) or Thailand Book Tower, with a nine-floor exhibition providing various books from many publishers (TPA Book Center, 2549), Thai customers, according to Faylicity (2550), are still accustomed to buy at national book fairs due to the discounted prices offered and its environment. Furthermore, Nongluk Laowor (นงศ์ลักษณ์ เหล่าวอ, 2550)

forecasted that cyberspace would become more popular than the customers could even download the books from websites and order more books online. According to these findings and comments, there are no certain answers about the types of books and favorite place that young adults select to purchase, hence, a survey should be conducted to discover the concrete answers.

In terms of reasons for the book purchasing of young adults, many influential factors can affect their purchasing behaviors. Young adults, who are between teenagers and adults, start designing their own lives, yet, are likely to be influenced by others. Even though young adults have their own lifestyles and preferences, reference groups such as family, friends, or their favorite stars may play an important role on their book purchasing behaviors. In addition, the publishers' strategy of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) may attract young adult customers to purchase more. Therefore, the various reasons for purchasing among young adults should be discovered.

Central Bangkok is the place where there are many people having different preferences, lifestyles, and behaviors. Consequently, to conduct the survey of young adults' book purchasing behaviors and the reasons for purchasing around this area will receive different answers and interesting results. Publishers will gain useful information to serve the needs of young adults and form the best strategy to attract them to buy more from the findings of the survey.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focuses on the questions as follows:

- 1.2.1 What are the book purchasing behaviors of young adults in central Bangkok?
- 1.2.2 What are the reasons for purchasing books among young adults in central Bangkok?
- 1.2.3 What are suggestions to improve the book industry?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study consists of three main objectives as follows:

1.3.1 To describe the book purchasing behaviors of young adults in central Bangkok

1.3.2 To discover the reasons for purchasing books among young adults in central Bangkok

1.3.3 To find out opinions of young adults about the books they purchase and some suggestions to improve the book industry.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Definition of the terms of this study is the following:

1.4.1 Young adult: Young-adulthood in this study begins after people turn 18 until they reach 30. The group includes students who study at the last year of high school, or have just graduated from high schools or vocational schools, students in the universities, people who have been working for no longer than ten years or are unemployed who are within the age range.

1.4.2 Central Bangkok: The four main districts in Bangkok or BKK2 areas called Lumpini group (สำนักผังเมือง, 2542), which are Patumwan, Bangrak, Sathorn, and Wattana, will be the target places of this study (see Appendix A).

1.4.3 Books: Pocket books consist of children's books, fables, picture books; youth literature; novels, short stories; business; self-help, how-to, psychology; education (science, maths etc.); health; biographies; educational cartoons; entertaining comics; travel; poems; religion; practice books for exams; language-teaching books; crafts, wood-carving handbooks; trendy, celebrities' books; sharing experience books; books related to one's interest i.e. sports, computers, legal etc. only excluding magazines, journals, and newspapers.

1.4.4 Trendy or celebrities' books: The books that artists, singers, actors, or actresses write for some purposes, for example, telling their biography, revealing techniques of beauty or good health, and explaining how to become a star. The selling point of the books is the writers who are well-known among readers.

1.4.5 Sharing experience books: The books that are written in spoken language or use slang to share experiences to the readers. The writers reveal their own stories about particular subjects, for example, telling their first time of having sex, how they cope with their gallant boyfriends, or expose the life of being prostitutes.

This kind of book is not concerned with language used in the book and often talk about the embarrassing issues such as sex, or secret societies with the surprising titles to catch attention from the readers.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE BOOK PURCHASING BEHAVIORS STUDY

This study aims to understand the purchasing behavior of young adults aged 18 – 30 in central Bangkok which are Patumwan, Bangrak, Sathorn, and Wattana. The research focuses on pocket books only, excluding magazines, journals, and newspapers.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be beneficial to enhance the improvement of the book industry, support good influence in society, and promote good quality books to the Thai book market as well as to render some insights to the body of knowledge about the choice of purchasing books among young adults.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This paper is divided into five chapters: Chapter One is the introduction including the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definition of terms, scope of the study, and significance of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of literature. Chapter Three describes the research methodology used in the study. Chapter Four reveals the results and findings from the data collected from the questionnaire. And the last chapter summarizes the study, and shows the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for further research.