

## **Investigating Consumer Insight by Using Completion Techniques: A Pilot Study of a Motorcycle Accessory Shop in Thailand**

**Chutinon Putthiwani**

Graduate Student, Department of International Business,  
Faculty of Business Administration, Providence University, Taiwan.  
E-mail: chutinonp@hotmail.com; chutinonp@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** With almost ten percent of the world's motorcycles in use in Thailand, this indicates that Thailand is a big market for motorcycle accessories in the world. This pilot qualitative research aims to investigate consumer insight by using completion techniques (sentence completion and story completion). Three respondents were deployed by using accidental sampling. Respondents were recruited to complete questionnaires when they entered the motorcycle accessory shop and were reported as male and at least 15 years old. This research was conducted in a motorcycle accessory shop in the Northeastern part of Thailand due to its prone to deal environment. From the results of the story completion tests, all participants agreed to take part in a promotion which gave a ten percent discount for membership card holders. They came to the motorcycle accessory shop by the recommendation of friends (positive Word-Of-Mouth). Moreover, consumers are satisfied when a seller can give them information or suggestions on motorcycle accessories as well as providing good after-sales service. Notwithstanding, this research is merely a pilot qualitative research, used as a guideline for future study in the motorcycle accessory market. Further research should increase the sample size in order to improve the validity of the research. Quantitative research is highly suggested when dealing with a few hundred or more accessory buyers.

**Keywords:** Completion technique; Sentence completion; Story completion; Motorcycle; Motorcycle accessory; Motorcycle accessory shop

**JEL Classifications:** M31; M39

### **1. Introduction**

Motorcycle is the most common type of motor vehicle, with a tentative number of 200 million in use worldwide, and is one of the most affordable forms of transport in many parts of the world (Wikipedia, 2011). During the 1950s, the US represented about half of the world's motorcycle market (Benjamin, 1993), but nowadays, the motorcycle industry in the US and Europe in recent years has declined (Valera, 2011); and instead, Asia is where 65% of world's moped and motorcycles are ridden (Worldmapper, 2011). The motorcycle is the predominant vehicle in Southeast Asia (Minh et al., 2012). For example, 16.3% of all vehicles in Singapore are motorcycles (Haque et al., 2012), Thailand has more than 17,000,000 motorbikes as of November 2010 (ThaiWebsite, 2011b), and Vietnam (Hochiminh City) where motorcycles represent 80% or more of all vehicular traffic (Minh et al., 2012). Throughout Thailand, there are various brands of motorcycle available. In May 2011, Honda, the world's leading motorcycle producer (Benjamin 1993), had the most sales of 132,868 units (71% of the total market share), Yamaha came secondly with a number of 43,767 units (23% of the market share), Suzuki came thirdly by selling 6,460 units (3% of the market share), Kawasaki had sold 2,500 units, Thailand's Tiger motorcycle sold 207 units, JRD 19 units, and others 1,746 units (Chinamotor, 2011). With almost ten percent of the world's motorcycles in use, this reflects that Thailand is a big market for motorcycle accessories in the world.

There are already some studies on motorcycles. Reeder et al., (1992) conduct research on the attitudes and patterns of young New Zealander motorcyclists; Benjamin (1993) studies the development of Honda to its eminent position in the motorcycle industry; Austin et al., (2010) examine the commodification and popular imagery of the biker in American culture; Minh et al., (2012) explore the maneuvers of motorcycles in queues at signalized intersections; Valera (2011) reports on motorcycling consumption; and, Haque et al., (2012) investigate multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes by using log-linear models. However, there is no research that has concentrated on motorcycle

accessories; especially, the consumer insight of motorcycle accessory shops. As a result, this research will investigate consumer insight by using completion techniques (sentence completion and story completion) as tools.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. The characteristics of motorcycle accessories and motorcycle accessory shops**

A motorcycle accessory is a feature selected by a motorcycle owner in order to enhance safety, performance, or comfort. Motorcycle accessories include spark plugs, brake rotors, pedals, LED lights, motorcycle tires, helmets, motorcycle jackets, motorcycle boots, batteries, motorcycle exhausts, motorcycle seats, motorcycle lights, and etc. A motorcycle plays a role as a functional vehicle that takes motorcyclist from place to place (Valera, 2011). Nonetheless, as the owner of a motorcycle, it is deemed by many to be necessary to enhance the safety, performance, comfort, and even decorativeness of a motorcycle. In fact, motorbike accessories may be supplemented at the factory by the original equipment manufacturer or purchased and later installed by the owner. Valera (2011) even claims that motorcycle manufacturers have developed value-added motorcycles with accessories, such as GPS and ABS braking systems, which have made motorcycles even or more expensive than cars. Nowadays, there are various motorcycle accessory brands offered to consumers such as Fox Racing, Pirelli Tires, Bell Helmets, Scorpion, Joe Rocket, Power Trip, Motocentric, O'Neal Racing, Dunlop Tires, Fly Racing, Michelin Tires, Shoei Helmets, and etc. Figure 1 represents the ordinary motorcycle accessory shop in Thailand.



**Figure 1.** Motorcycle accessory shop in Thailand<sup>1</sup>

### **2.2. Motorcyclist's feelings towards motorcycles and motorcycle accessory shops**

Even though the characteristics of the motorcycle seem appealing, but the motorcycle itself also has some threats. From the study by Valera (2011), the number of motorcycle accidents is increasing with serious injury or even death, particularly of young motorcyclists. This is a major public health problem (Reeder et al., 1992). In the US during the end of the 1950s, print and film media gave the image of motorcyclists as a threat to social order (Austin et al., 2010). In many Asian countries, motorcyclists are the most crash-prone group (Haque et al., 2012). Minh et al., (2012) stated that by 2010, the helmet law was still not enforced in Vietnam. Some countries' governments have

---

<sup>1</sup>This photo was taken with permission from O.W RACING, all rights reserved.

tried to stop people from getting into motorcycling and this coercion encouraged manufacturers to create a whole new industry around motorcycle-related products (Valera, 2011). Although motorcycling has a negative image (road accidents, the environmental impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) (Valera, 2011), the motorcyclist, as the owner of a motorbike, still has passion about his vehicle. In fact, motorcycling is a symbol of the desire for freedom (Austin et al., 2010). Due to its flexibility, a motorcycle may not follow the lane discipline like other vehicles (Minh et al., 2012). This, perhaps, is the reason why a motorcyclist may want to express individuality by decorating or enhancing his motorcycle's appearance/performance by going to the motorcycle accessory shop. As a result, this makes the motorcycle accessory shop one of the main channels for distributing motorcycle accessory products. Furthermore, the motorcycle industry is similar to the car industry but is a decade or more behind (Valera, 2011). Teenagers often do not realize the value of the money since they are still supported by their parents (Putthiwani et al., 2011). We hence assume that given the price of the motorcycle accessories, motorcycle accessory shop owners should regard adolescents as the main target customer group since this kind of customers is ready to spend at any given product price.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research position**

Completion techniques are qualitative techniques that require the respondent to complete an incomplete stimulus situation, comprising of a sentence completion test and a story completion test (Malhotra, 1999). These techniques are indirect procedures; that is, they are different from the laddering technique which is direct (non-disguised) and referred to an in-depth, one-to-one interviewing technique (Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006). The great advantage of completion techniques is that it encourages the respondents to reveal their underlying feelings. That is, in order to know a motorcycle accessory buyer's attitude, completion techniques will be applied to find out the concealed thoughts of a customer. Malhotra (1999) mentions that sentence completion is a technique in which respondents are presented with a number of incomplete sentences and asked to complete them; whereas story completion is a technique where respondents are given a story and obliged to provide the end in their own words. Notably, the sentence completion technique is among the most popular personality assessment instruments nowadays (Holaday et al., 2000). Furthermore, this research aims to gain consumer insights towards motorcycle accessory shops. Thus, the research approach employs qualitative techniques in the form of sentence completion and story completion and intends to explore consumer's mind. To this end, the two research objectives are as follows:

- 1) To investigate consumer insight prior/during/after buying motorcycle accessory products from a motorcycle accessory shop
- 2) To use consumer insight as a tool to instigate a strategic marketing campaign and promotions for motorcycle accessory shops

#### **3.2. Case selection and data collection**

The questionnaire contains three sections. The first two sections include both the sentence completion technique and the story completion technique and the last section asked about the respondents' demographics. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix. Three respondents were selected by using accidental sampling. Reeder et al., (1992) reported that more males than females are riders, so male respondents were recruited to complete the questionnaires when they entered the motorcycle accessory shop. It was established that they were male and aged 15 or more (since 15 is the minimum age for riding a motorcycle legally). The time spent purchasing motorcycle accessories was not measured or counted because people perceive and use time differently (Putthiwani and Kincart, 2011). Respondents were asked to complete questionnaires by themselves since the results of the sentence completion test will be more accurate and informative when respondents work on the test independently (Holaday et al., 2000). The research was conducted in a motorcycle accessory shop in the Northeastern part of Thailand due to its prone to deal environment. All respondents were asked for permission. They were also notified that this research was part of an academic research and their identities were kept confidential. Thai was the medium of the questionnaires, and all participants agreed to participate in this research. After the surveys, respondents were thanked. For the final stage, the questionnaires were analyzed to find consumer insights.

#### 4. Findings

Our participants were encouraged to share their insight on motorcycle accessory products. Table 1 is a summary of respondent profiles (promotion 1 is an immediate 1,000 baht discount and promotion 2 is a ten percent discount for a membership card holder).

**Table 1.** Respondent profile

<b>Respondent number</b>	<b>Age range (Years old) change to be exact number?</b>	<b>Source of money earned</b>	<b>Frequency of buying motorcycle accessory/Buying only from favorite shop</b>	<b>Product bought/ Preferred promotion</b>
1	16-19	Part-time Job	Twice a year/Yes	Accessory/2
2	16-19	Part-time Job	Twice a year/Yes	Accessory/2
3	16-19	Parents/Guardian	Twice a year/Yes	Pedal/2

All of three respondents are in the age range from 16-19 years old. Our respondents earned money from part-time jobs or from received it from their parents. They buy motorcycle accessories twice a year and are loyal customers, in that they buy motorcycle accessories only from their favorite shop. Two of our participants bought accessories for decorative purposes, whereas the others bought to enhance motorcycle performance. From the results of the story completion tests, all of them agreed to promotion 2 (ten percent discount for membership card holder). The summary of respondents' major insights is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Summary of respondents' major insights

<b>Incomplete Sentences</b>	<b>Insight</b>
• I knew Shop Moto	⇒ By the recommendation from friends
• I decorate my motorcycle	⇒ Because I think it will look cool
• The atmosphere/impression of Shop Moto	⇒ So small
• The service of Shop Moto	⇒ Seller gave good suggestions
• After I bought motorcycle accessories from Shop Moto, the service of Shop Moto	⇒ Good service
• I like Shop Moto	⇒ Because of good service

Customers came to motorcycle accessory shop as a result of recommendations from friends (positive Word-Of-Mouth). Motorcyclists decorated their motorcycles because they pondered that it will look fashionable. They satisfied when the seller could give them information or suggestions on motorcycle accessories as well as providing good after-sales service. As a result, when motorcycle accessory shoppers satisfy with their favorite motorcycle accessory shop, it will certainly increases consumer loyalty.

## 5. Discussions and Conclusions

When a motorcyclist talks about relationship with his motorcycle, feelings always play an important role; he goes from smiling to jumping to arguing and even crying (Valera 2011). This proves that sentence completion tool and story completion tool are suitable for research dealing with attitudes, feelings, emotions, and so on. Holaday et al., (2000) also claim that a sentence completion test can provide unique information about respondents that cannot be gained by other tests since semi-open ended questions give broader responses than other traditional tests.

For a motorcycle accessory owner, understanding consumer insight is likely to improve the managerial and the marketing strategy. This research also shows how the consumer ponders the price of motorcycle accessories. Putthiwani and Ho (2011) stated that a product category such as vehicles or computers has a higher profit margin than garment products, and a seller is thus obliged to discount this kind of product. Since motorcycle accessories are vehicle-related products, a seller is obliged to discount the price of the product when a customer asks. The story completion section also requires the real-life customer to state what he thinks about price and promotion in the scenarios given by asking him to assume the behavior of someone else. For motorcycle accessory manufacturers, understanding consumer preference towards motorcycle accessory products can help them establish a strategy for managing markets in Thailand. By doing proper marketing, it will bring fame and loyalty to a manufactured brand; in contrast, undue marketing practice will bring excessive consumption and tragic results (Ho et al., 2011). For research limitation, sentence completion technique has additional problems with reliability as it depends on the correlations between the respondent's personality and the researcher's experience, insight, and knowledge of the dynamics of behavior (Holaday et al., 2000). Thus, the results are not always generalizable. Moreover, this research is merely a pilot qualitative research, used as a guideline for future study in the motorcycle accessory market. Further research should increase the sample size in order to improve the validity of the research; for example, survey more buyers and even more motorcycle accessory shops. Quantitative research is highly suggested when dealing with a few hundred or more accessory buyers.

## References

- Austin, D.M., Gagne, P., Orend, A. (2010). Commodification and popular imagery of the biker in American culture. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 43, 942–963.
- Benjamin, C. (1993). Honda and the art of competitive manoeuvre. *Long Range Planning*, 26, 22–31.
- Chinamotor (2011). Thailand sold 858,000 units motorcycles from January to May of 2011, up 14%. [Online] Available: <http://www.thaiwebsites.com/cars-thailand2.asp#brands> (November 22, 2011)
- Haque, Md. M., Chin, H.C., Debnath, A.K. (2012). An investigation on multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes using log-linear models. *Safety Science*, 50, 352–362.
- Ho, S.-H., Putthiwani, C., Lin, C.-Y. (2011). May I continue or should I stop? The effects of regulatory focus and message framings on video game players' self-control. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2, 194–200.
- Holaday, M., Smith, D.A., Sherry, A. (2000). Sentence completion tests: A review of the literature and results of a survey of members of the society for personality assessment. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 74, 371–383.
- Malhotra, N.K. (1999). *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall International.
- Minh, C.C., Sano, K., Matsumoto, S. (2012). Maneuvers of motorcycles in queues at signalized intersections. *Journal of Advanced Transportation*. 46(1), 39-53.
- Putthiwani, C., Ho, S.-H. (2011). Buyer success and failure in bargaining and its consequences. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1, 83–92.
- Putthiwani, C., Kincart, A. (2011). Effect of increase in allotted time on game playing performance: Case study of an online word game. *International Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, 1, 231–233.
- Putthiwani, C., Vogler, D.M., Zhu, J., Kincart, A. (2011). Exploring consumer's insights in a unique Thai language course characteristics: The application of conjoint analysis technique. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1, 107–114.

- Reeder, A.I., Chalmers, D.J., Langley, J.D. (1992). Motorcycling attitudes and behaviors. I. 12 and 13 year old adolescents. *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health*, 28, 225–230.
- ThaiWebsite (2011a). Age of passenger cars, pickups, motorcycles and public buses in Thailand (November 2010). [Online] Available: <http://www.thaiwebsites.com/cars-thailand2.asp#brands>
- ThaiWebsite (2011b). Car manufacturing, domestic sales and exports from Thailand. [Online] Available: <http://www.thaiwebsites.com/cars-thailand.asp>
- Valera, D.B. (2011). Motorcycling consumption: A first look at peer-to-peer motorcycle renting. *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, 7. Retrieved from [http://ijms.nova.edu/Fall2011/IJMS\\_Rndtble.Varela.html](http://ijms.nova.edu/Fall2011/IJMS_Rndtble.Varela.html)
- Veludo-de-Oliveira, T.M., Ikeda, A.A., Campomar, M.C. (2006). Laddering in the practice of marketing research: Barriers and solutions. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 9, 297–306.
- Wikipedia (2011). Motorcycle. [Online] Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motorcycle>
- Worldmapper (2011). Mopeds and Motorcycles. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/worldmapper/display.php?selected=32#>

**Appendix: Excerpt from questionnaire (Sections I and II)**

The name of the motorcycle accessory shop here was replaced with “Shop Moto” in order to protect its identity but appeared in the original questionnaires when surveyed, in order to give the respondents some ideas when answering the questions. Moreover, the medium used in the questionnaire is Thai; but, the questionnaire below was translated back in English to make the readers here see what the questions in the questionnaires really asked. The currency used in questionnaire is Thai baht (1 USD = 31.2020 baht, as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011).

**Questionnaire**

**Section I**

The incomplete sentences below will ask about your thoughts or attitudes towards customers who are willing to buy motorcycle accessories. You are allowed to fill in your answer according to what first comes to your mind.

1. I knew Shop Moto.....
2. I decorate my motorcycle.....
3. I came to Shop Moto to buy.....
4. The atmosphere of Shop Moto.....
5. The service of Shop Moto.....
6. After I bought motorcycle accessories from Shop Moto, the service of Shop Moto.....
7. I like Shop Moto.....

**Section II**

Please give the conclusion to the story given below:

Anucha usually comes to Shop Moto to buy motorbike accessories. His monthly allowance gained will be consumed for his motorcycle decoration. His motorbike is considered as decoratively unique and beautiful. After buying motorbike accessories from Shop Moto for a while, one day he spent money for buying accessories for 5,000 baht. Luckily, the shop owner today had a promotion by giving him a discount for 1,000 baht. Thence, he had to pay only 4,000 baht. Next month, Anucha comes to the shop and buys accessories for 5,000 baht as last time. But however, the shop owner changed the promotion. Thus, today he receives a membership card (ten percent discount) and can be used anytime but there is a date for expiration.

Nonetheless, Shop Moto owner tells Anucha that he is still uncertain whether he will certainly use this promotion campaign or not. Therefore, he asks Anucha for the suggestion. As a membership card holder, Anucha pays only 4,500 baht. It is a dilemma for him whether he will come here again or not. Let say, if the shop still uses the membership card system, he will be able to come to the shop whenever he wants to. If he comes once a month and spend 5,000 baht each time, he will get 6,000 baht discount. But if the shop uses the previous promotion campaign, it will be great for Anucha also. But one big obstacle is that, when the semester starts, he will not have time to come to the shop that often. By buying motorcycle accessories twice a year, he will get only 2,000 baht discount. By tomorrow, he will go to Shop Moto and tells the owner which promotion he prefers. If you were Anucha, which promotion campaign you prefer? Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....