

## Understanding Student-Consumer Behaviour of Purchasing the English as a Foreign Language Course

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### Abstract

Marketing draws attention to the fact that an institution should identify and understand consumers to have a long run in competitive conditions. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course providers aims to satisfy their consumers' needs and desires in the educational segment. Studies have found a certain number of influencing factors contributing to students' choices; therefore, this study aims to identify factors leading to students' desire to purchase an EFL course in the Vietnamese market. This study employs the **Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model (1978)** to examine the student decision-making process by exploring their motivations, behaviour, decision-making factors, evaluation, and outcomes of the purchasing process. The participants were 24 students aged 18 to 25 who experienced an English course at an English centre. Using semi-structured interviews was the primary method to understand students' behaviour. The interviews were recorded to be transcribed. Transcripts were coded qualitatively by thematic analysis (**Braun and Clarke, 2006**). The results revealed significant attributes for each stage; as career prospects, Facebook media, word of mouth, teacher, and staff. This study is a foundation for potential marketers investing in the educational context as EFL providers.

**Keywords:** Consumer behaviour, EKB model, EFL course.

### 1. Introduction

In the context of current global integration, English is the most commonly used common language in international trade transactions, as a bridge between countries, not only for relations and cooperation but also for educational purposes. There are conditions to graduate in a foreign language in Vietnam, but the essential thing is English. Society is increasingly developing; life is well-off, parents and students all think of investing in foreign language knowledge for a future career, send them to English Language Centres to increase their language roots.

With that situation, the greater the market potential, the more competition in the industry is inevitable. The competitive market among English centres requires each centre manager and operator to analyze and understand their centre's competitiveness, and more importantly, their consumer behaviour.

Consumer behaviour is a fundamental customer process in marketing; therefore, understanding consumer behaviour will provide valuable information about the effects on the target audience. This helps businesses understand the customer's motivations, priorities, and decision-making patterns throughout the buying process. It also assists understand how customers feel about products and whether that behaviour aligns with their product. In education institutions, marketing is challenging than other types of businesses since consumers cannot inspect before purchasing since it provides professional services or courses (**White et al., 1991**).

Rare research focused on consumer behaviour in education, mainly students as target consumers. This study fills in the gap to explore primary attributes for each stage using the **Engel, Kollat, Blackwell Model (1978)**, including five stage processes.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review is divided into two parts: "consumer behaviour" and the consumer behaviour model.

### **2.1 Definitions of Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour has always been of great interest to marketers. Many previous studies have found that consumer behaviour may help explain the buyers' behaviour, prevailing motives and factors influencing consumer attitudes, and the consumer decision-making process. This paper uses the terms "consumer" and "consumer behaviour" throughout the research paper; therefore, it is essential to define them.

The definition formed by **Walters (1974)** describes a consumer as an individual who can buy goods and services offered for sale by any marketing organisation to satisfy their personal or household needs, wants, or desires. According to **Schiffman et al. (1997)**, there are two major types of consumers: private and organisational. A personal consumer refers to an individual who buys and consumes goods or services for the sole purpose of personal or family use. On the other hand, corporate consumers purchase goods or services for the organisation to function, including profitable and non-profitable organisations, government organisations, and institutions. However, this paper will focus only on the individual, personal consumer, who purchases products or services for private and household use.

Several different definitions of the term "consumer behaviour" have been adopted in the study of decision-making, drawing on differing researchers' points of view. **Solomon et al. (2006)** defined consumer behaviour as the process whereby individuals or groups decide to buy, consume, dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. **Walters (1974)** takes a similar approach in defining consumer behaviour. He argued that consumer behaviour is the study of individuals deciding whether to buy, when to purchase, where it takes, how, and from whom to purchase goods, services or products. Consumer behaviour is that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services, and ideas (**Schiffman et al., 1997**) and further explained in their definition the consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make their choice on consumption-related products by spending their available resources, namely money, effort, and time.

Another definition of consumer behaviour in this section, by **Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1978)**, stated that "those actions directly involved obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions". In conclusion, contemporary definitions of consumer behaviour provided above are similar in scope. Therefore, all listed above definitions are accepted in this paper because the concept of consumer behaviour is fully described.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1 The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell Model

According to **Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1978)**, consumer behaviour examines the decision-making process of consumers, which includes five essential phases: problem recognition, search, alternative evaluation, choice, and outcome. Problem recognition appears when a person sees a discrepancy at any given time between the ideal situation and the actual condition. When problems are recognized, the consumer starts the internal search to look for information, and if the internal investigation does not provide enough information, the external search is activated. Once pieces of data have been received enough, the consumer proceeds to evaluate the data. This phase is affected by two factors known as environmental influence and function of personality and lifestyle. Personality and lifestyle are described as a system of persevering characteristics, activities, hobbies, and views. At the same time, environmental influence includes the presence of social impact on decision-making and drive to meet these pressures and current income status, economic conditions, and many other factors. After evaluating the information, the consumer actively makes a choice which is followed by two outcomes. The first is satisfaction; it brings a positive effect to consumers and leads to future purchases. The remaining outcome is dissonance (also known as dissatisfaction), leading to unchosen products in consumers' futures.

The **Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell** model (also referred to as the EKB model) is employed to identify a plethora of influencing factors and intimate the broad relationships between elements in consumer decision making of purchasing the English as a language course. Initially developed in 1968 by **Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell**, this model has its origin in decades of work on consumer behaviour and has undergone numerous revisions. However, this paper used the 1978 version to explain the consumer decision-making process and how choices are made while selecting from a list of alternatives available. The EKB model is widely regarded as one of the most influential works in consumer behaviour (**Schiffman et al., 1997**). Consumers in the purchasing process go through five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, choice, and outcomes (**Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell, 1978**). This five-stage decision-making process model is applied when buying decisions are more complex. These stages of decision making are further clarified below.

**Problem recognition** is the first stage in decision process behaviour. This is a perceived gap between the ideal state of affairs and the present state that is significant enough to stimulate the decision-making process. This process is more complicated than motivation and may involve many variables, including perception, learning, attitudes, personality traits, and other reference-group effects. There are two principal determinants of problem recognition: motives and information and experience. Motives are permanent tendencies to strive for specific goals. Hence, it is thought to be "ideal" for individuals at

any given time. However, the arrival of new information may make the actual situation may differ from the “ideal”; then problem recognition occurs to restore disrupted balance. Sometimes problem recognition happens as a result of novelty, as the customer attempts to effect change just for the sake of change. Marketing effects also can trigger problem recognition when dominant motives are activated by appeal utilized. When the current state is considered to be insufficient, the problem is recognized. Changes in circumstances (income, family life cycle, financial aspirations) are one key factor. Marketers can also demonstrate that the current solution is insufficient by emphasizing the advantages of improved items.

The next stage of the model is **an alternative search**. It is a process of the customer seeking information to discover the advantages and disadvantages of numerous alternatives to satisfy a problem that had been recognized in the first stage. On the other hand, search represents the motivated decision to seek new inputs. The consumer's perceptions of the benefits and costs associated influence whether or not a search occurs and to what extent. The amount and suitability of current information, the ability to recall that information, the perceived risk, and confidence all influence the perceived benefit. The information sources used differ from person to person and situation to situation. In terms of marketer-dominated information sources, media advertising is an important source that customers may access to inform. The impact on influencing beliefs and attitudes might be significant, predisposing the consumer to purchase later; the remainder of marketer-dominated triggers in the context of retail stores. Individuals shop a lot, and that point-of-sale is a valuable source of information. Point-of-sale display, bundles, price, and personal selling are some of the specialized methods. Attraction, conversion, and sales power metrics were investigated and demonstrated how retailers and manufacturers might use this data to improve the effectiveness of point-of-sale communication. In terms of nonmarketer-dominated information sources, the process of exchanging information between customers is called interpersonal communication. In that case, the individual who gives information and influences others is called opinion leadership. He may be positive if encouraging others to buy items or negatively prevent others from buying things .

After receiving the information, the buyer enters the alternative **evaluation stage**. Numerous variables appear and influence this process. Initially, new information is brought into memory in the form of knowledge and experiences. Then it has an impact on two significant variables: belief and evaluative criteria. Evaluative criteria are the standards and specifications given by manufacturers to evaluate their products. On the other hand, beliefs represent knowledge that connects a particular product or brand to evaluative criteria. A change in beliefs will cause a shift in attitude, which is a learned tendency to respond consistently favourably or unfavourably to a given alternative. An attitude is thus a positive or negative judgment of the implications of using a specific product or brand. Following that, a shift in attitude results in a change of intention. The change of intention will result in a behaviour change, and the outcome will be whether or not to purchase the product. Therefore, changing attitude is a reasonable marketing aim, and the key to strategy is to modify the belief framework that underpins the attitude. Belief, attitude, and intention were the variables that described a consumer's knowledge, evaluation, and propensity to act about a product or brand. As such, they are a significant determinant of choice.

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In both a retail shop and an in-home shopping setting, **choice** (selecting and purchasing an alternative) is investigated. Intentions and unexpected circumstances are the two drivers of choice. This inevitably leads to the topic of the so-called "unplanned purchase," which is a very typical occurrence in retail purchase behaviour. Unplanned purchasing is defined as a purchase made without first recognizing an issue or forming a purchasing intention before visiting the store. Unplanned purchases have been recorded in massive quantities, which might be dependent on two factors. The first claim is that customers are exposed to new in-store influences. The second argues that incomplete assessments of purchasing intentions are used, resulting in data that is potentially inaccurate. Exposure to a different option is the most crucial factor in brand substitution. In Kollat seminal research on unplanned purchases, he aimed to separate the elements of consumer sensitivity to this sort of behaviour, and he discovered no economic, demographic, or psychographic differences between those who made an unplanned purchase and those who did not.

The last phase of the consumer decision process is the **outcomes**. The most important results are post-choice dissonance (the question that the right decision was taken) and satisfaction versus non-satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined as a judgment that the selected option is consistent with one's past assumptions about the alternative. An evaluation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction gets established in long-term memory and can influence brand beliefs and attitudes if there are good outcomes in purchase and usage. Post-choice uncertainty is motivated by the understanding and the idea that other options offer desirable qualities. Post-decision dissonance is limited to long-term problem-solving scenarios. Indeed, avoiding such delays might be a motivator for developing purchase habits. In reality, there's not much a marketer can do to influence or profit from a post-decision reevaluation of alternatives. This process occurs due to events before the purchase; hence it has no bearing on marketing strategy.

### 2.3 Previous research studies

**Moogan et al. (1999)** employed the decision-making behaviour to understand further the problem recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternatives stages in the process. Accordingly, the objective was to extend the student decision-making process in Britain; therefore, 19 students from the sixth form of a high school and 45 pupils in the control group were chosen. The participants were to be followed throughout the basic five-stage process of the consumer buying decision process to evaluate their consumption behaviours and post-consumption feelings or expectations over some time. The findings obtained from this study revealed many variables influencing the decision-making process. The applicants follow the sequential stages from problem recognition to evaluating alternatives using parents and teachers' advice throughout the five steps. Once students decided to continue their academic careers (problem recognition), they accessed the information search stage, seeking different types of information from many sources. UCAS directory book is a frequent source of information followed by word of mouth by talking with the careers officers or teachers and assessing the institutions' prospectuses. Then at the evaluation of alternatives stage, students usually incorporated discussion with subject teachers, parents, and friends. Factors that mainly impact this evaluation stage were those of the course content, the reputation, the location of the university, and social considerations.

**Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2012)** employed a qualitative study to explore motivations, behaviour, decision-making factors and evaluation of purchasing process for EFL services. Thirty students

participated in this study to answer five research questions. The findings highlighted the need for English for work in the future; primary sources from friends and relatives, especially word of mouth, were the most critical factor; teacher reputation attribute showed significance in the evaluation stage; staff in the reception desk was considered a positive impact on students' decision.

### **3. Aims and significance of the research**

#### **3.1 Aims of the research**

This study aims to understand consumer behaviour when purchasing an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course in the Vietnamese market. Based on the student choice model, the study aims at exploring motivations, behaviour, decision-making factors, and evaluation of the purchasing process for the EFL service.

#### **3.2 Significance of the research**

The results contribute to understanding consumer behaviour, considering that consumer behaviour plays a vital role in purchasing products based on the consumer decision process model (**Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell, 1978**). This study investigates the students' decision-making process for EFL students by exploring their motivations, behaviour, decision-making factors, and evaluation of the purchasing process. Thus, course providers that apply the findings from the result of this study will know the consumer as students better by acknowledging such things as the relative importance of various information sources, the criteria used to evaluate alternative brands, and so on, which helps design product, price, channel, and selling strategies.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1 Research Questions**

1. Why do students learn the English language?
2. What sources of information are used to arrive at a decision?
3. What factors are used by students to assess alternatives? Which are most influential in motivating a purchase intention?
4. How do students make their decisions of purchasing the English as a Foreign Language course?
5. Is choice followed by satisfaction or by doubt that a correct decision was made?

#### **4.2 Research design**

A qualitative method was employed to understand consumer-student behaviour that may influence purchasing decisions in each stage regarding EFL courses. For qualitative research, a semi-structured interview was carried out in this present study. A purposeful sampling technique was applied to select only students who experienced studying courses at an English centre. Purposeful sampling allowed us to identify and select groups of individuals that have experienced a phenomenon of interest (**Cresswell Plano Clark, 2011**).

### 4.3 Participants

The total population was 24 students from various universities (18 years old to 25 years old) in Can Tho.

### 4.4 Research instruments

A semi-structured interview with four questions on the student's purchasing of an English course is used in the study. Researchers adopted a series of questions based on five research questions developed by **Engle, Kollat, and Blackwell (1978)** to understand consumer behaviour better. The five interview questions cover different stages that students may go through while making a buying decision: problem recognition, alternative search, alternative evaluation, and choice.

### 4.5 Data collection procedures

This current study employs purposeful sampling techniques. Researchers emailed participants the specific time and location of the interview. At the beginning of the interview, the researchers gave participants an information sheet and consent form to let them know the nature and scope of the study. Twenty-four students were purposefully invited to have in-person semi-structured interviews. This stage took around 15 minutes for each person. Researchers then asked participants for permission to record the entire interview process. Interviews were transcribed into English for transcription coding. Two coders were coded transcription using thematic analysis, agreed 90 per cent.

## 5. Results

### Question 1. Why do students learn English language?

A total of 24 transcripts was analysed using thematic analysis. Data was conceptualised into three themes as career prospects, the subject required and communication purposes.

#### Career prospects

19 out of 24 students addressing learning English were to get a well-paid job with 79 per cent. Student 23, for example, is currently a third-year Commercial Law student who took a few English courses at different centres, said:

*“My most important motivation is fear of unemployment. Later, many people graduate with good degrees, and they are all my competitors. So I have to do something better than them. That was the motivation that helped me find the course at the centre.”*

Student 18, junior majoring in International Business, mentioned:

*“Usually, for marketing companies, partners not only come from Vietnam but also different nations. They will often send contracts in English, and I also have to communicate with them. I can't use Vietnamese.”*

#### Subject – material required

Seven students, with 29.1 per cent pointed out that English is a compulsory subject at school. One respondent recalled,

*"I can easily achieve success and help me find a lot of information relevant to my major. My major is International Business so the information about the subject is mostly in English."*

Another response from participant 8-a second-year English majored student:

*"I studied English because it is a compulsory subject in school. I studied to have basic knowledge before I went to class. I found English very good because I could interact with many people. Reference material in English is more informative, with information from the source."*

### **English for communication purposes**

6 out of 24 students said they learn English to communicate with foreigners or make friends and get other impressions. Two respondents stated that:

*"I feel that English is a tool to improve myself, and I use English to communicate with my Korean friends", and "I will be able to interact with many foreigners and English is a tool for me to communicate with them and I will understand them better, and they also know more about me."*

### **Question 2: What sources of information do students use to learn English?**

There were 22 students (91.6 per cent) who claimed they look for information using word of mouth advertising (through friends, parents, teachers, and relatives). Student 5 mentioned:

*"I think the information from friends is better because my friends are already had the experiences so it would be more reliable, it also helps me imagine what the centre is like easier."*

Also, another student gave his opinion as follow:

*"At first, it was my mother who made it for me. Later, I felt it for myself and my older cousins. They studied very well, and they studied at many different English centres. They gave me advice, and I learned a few more things, then I feel like I'll go to any place that suits me."*

In addition, 20 out of 24 students indicated that information through the media, but they did not seek any advice from friends or relatives. Comment on this issue:

*"I knew this centre first, so I went to the centre to ask for advice. If I don't know, I'll search on Facebook."*

Similarly, another student mentioned:

*"I searched on Facebook. For example, if I wanted to learn IELTS, I would find information about IELTS. I would ask about the courses."*

### **Question 3. What factors are used by students to assess EFL courses?**

The specific main deciding factors in assessing EFL courses were teacher, course syllabus, tuition fees, class size, facilities, environment, and reputation.

#### **Teacher**



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21 out of 24 students (87.5 per cent) pointed out that teachers were the most influencing factor to their decision-making process of purchasing an English course. Most of them required teachers to be friendly, enthusiastic and motivating them to study English. Student 19 said:

*"I hope teachers will enthusiastically answer questions for students and share with students how to learn and how to teach."*

Another response from Student 6:

*"I think teachers make up more than 50 per cent in helping me to acquire the lesson. For example, teachers at this centre not only teach me but also show me the effective way to study English, and they inspire me to reach my target."*

### **Course syllabus**

16 out of 24 students focused on the course content in the syllabus. Many of the students were looking for the quality of course content and express their expectations for the course syllabus as:

*"I care the most about the curriculum, the course content of an English centre. I think an English centre needs to provide different contents of the course to meet consumers' demands. For example, as I want to improve my speaking and writing skills, I tend to choose the centre that provides the course I need."*

Student 23 stated that:

*"When I am starting to look for a course, the price is also an important factor, but what I am interested in the most is the content they will teach me. Before every course, I will ask about the teaching plan."*

### **Tuition fees**

Students are also influenced by the tuition fee factor, with 33.33 per cent of all replies from the participants (8 out of 24 students). Students compare centres' tuition fees to consider whether or not to purchase an English course. They tend to choose centres having a reasonable price to their income. One student remembered that:

*"First of all, I will find out how many centres are in Can Tho city. If I find it suitable for the price and many people recommend it, I will study."*

### **Class size**

Four students (16.67 per cent) think that the fewer students in the classroom, the more productive the class will be. As participant 24 stated that:

*"Before, I didn't care much, but now I realize that if the class has 30-40 students, it will be difficult for the teacher to teach, so too many students are not good."*

### **Environment**

For 2 participants, the modern learning environment is also an essential criterion as it brings positive energy for them to study. As student 24 mentioned:

*"Most important is the environment there. I feel energetic and motivated to go to the centre."*

Only one student was influenced by the reputation of the centre (4.16 per cent).

#### **Question 4: What selection is made from the available English language centres?**

13 out of 24 students (54 per cent) went to the English centre they wanted to study to get more advice from the staff. Student 1 mentioned:

*"I need to go to the consultative counter for further information and find out the suitable course for me. I also want to know the teachers and the textbooks in that centre."*

Other responses from Students 2 and 11, respectively:

*"The counsellors were enthusiastic. They pointed out the things that I need to improve." And "I think the centre will provide more reliable information than what friends recommend."*

Ten students (41 per cent) decided to buy the course by consulting with many people who have experienced it and then went to the centre to register. A student stated that:

*"If only one or two people told me that information, then the trust is under 80 percent; the rest I will find by myself."*

Sixteen students also made comparisons of two or more existing centres during this period. The students who participated in the interviews mainly compared tuition fees and the centre's output. Also, many students have studied and experienced at two centres and since then found the more suitable centre for them to continue their studies. Participant 12 shared her opinion:

*"I consulted another centre, but this centre's tuition fee was quite good, and I found teachers and friends were sociable, so I studied there."*

Another opinion about this issue:

*"Studying English at the first centre was kinda boring for me. I think it should be a fun environment for children to study, but they didn't have that, so I moved to this centre. I think Can Tho University will be a good place for those kids who want to study, but not for me."*

One out of 24 students, (5 per cent) did not go through this stage; after receiving advice from his friends, she went to the centre to register. "I will ask for advice from those who have already studied whether to study or not; the next step is to register," he said.

#### **Question 5. Is choice followed by satisfaction or by doubt that a correct decision was made?**

At the final stage, the consumer produced views and judgments regarding the experience, whether it was excellent value for money, and if the characteristics that brought them to the institution were justified. When asking about students' satisfaction after spending time taking the courses at the centre, students, in general, were pleased with the lessons they were receiving (17 students). With 5 out of 17 students who were very satisfied with their money, they took the classes. It was highlighted by one of the students saying:

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*"Yes, I am satisfied on the first day. The teachers are amiable, and they let us get to know each other right in the first lesson. Making learning easier, we can also communicate more easily."*

Although there was a general sense of pleasure, several students raised specific unsatisfying points. There are 3 out of 24 students were not satisfied, and 4 out of 24 were completely unsatisfied with their courses. Most of them mentioned the teaching method was tedious, and some teachers' attitude was not appropriate. For a specific example, one student said:

*"I am not satisfied. Some teachers give assignments, and then they explain how to do it, and that is it. That I can do it myself." or "There are many things that I don't feel delighted with, but it also depends on the course and the teacher. If I studied with a certain teacher, I would get used to the way they teach, but when I changed to a higher level, the teacher changed. Then, I started getting acquainted with another teacher, while the course only lasted for about three months. I only took one class a week; it took me a month to get used to it."*

### **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

The finding of this study shows that the EKB model did contribute a practical model with regards to the five stages through which the EFL students would proceed. Once the EFL students in the study recognized the importance of English (problem recognition), they went through the phases of information search, then deciding what EFL courses to consider, followed by which one to apply.

Based on the EKB model, this stage may be shaped by many variables such as internalized social influence, marketing efforts, and motive activation. Among these, motive activation serves as the primary determinant of the ideal state. The study shared the same result as Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2012). Over 70 per cent of students realized that they needed English language skills for employment prospects. In terms of motivation, Vietnamese EFL students in this study fall into three categories. The majority of them view English as a tool for more attractive employment opportunities. Some learn English for educational purposes, studying further at the graduate and doctoral levels, while others use English to communicate at a certain level of proficiency. Although the needs for learning English differ from student to student, career tendency seems to be a dominant motivation making students find EFL course providers. In the Vietnamese market, with the growth of international businesses and trades, the ability to communicate in English has become a vital key to getting a better job in the tourism and hospitality industries and many other enterprises. Hence this finding suggests that EFL course providers should address this issue by designing the courses to satisfy consumer-students' needs.

The second stage entails gathering information on the current English centres in Can Tho. During this phase, the two primary sources of information identified are the media and word of mouth reputation. According to the findings of the interviews with 24 participants, the majority of them sought input from both of these primary sources in the first place. However, many of them trust information gained from friends and relatives more when it comes to belief. Advertising in the media is only for reference purposes regarding the course and pricing. Nevertheless, Facebook should be addressed to increase marketing strategies because it revealed as a significant type of media for reference source. The importance of word of mouth advertising is evident, so focusing on building an institute's informal

word of mouth reputation is essential. This is consistent with Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2012) when word of mouth is an important determinant in educational context. However, they remarked that word of mouth advertising is thriving at the preliminary stage. After this stage, most participants sought out complementary sources at the reception desk. They also emphasized the importance of friends and relatives in deciding to buy a course at an English centre, so the marketer should focus on word of mouth and another factor that is viral promotional strategies. Overall, marketer-dominated sources (advertising, personal selling, and point-of-sale influence) are significant in giving information at the early stages of decision processes, but nonmarketer-dominated sources (word of mouth advertising) are the most effective.

After receiving information from the above phase, participants come to the third phase - evaluation. In this phase, the critical feature considered by the students is teacher. This is confirmed with Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2012). There are no tools to evaluate teachers, so all participants rely on belief to make intentions. However, besides the view from word of mouth information, many participants also consider buying an English course by criteria such as course syllabus, tuition fees, class size, facilities, environment, and reputation. Among the factors on the evaluation criteria, the course syllabus is the factor that most participants carefully evaluate because most of them want to learn a course with the best content. Moreover, the tuition fee is also a factor that many participants consider due to their money to buy the course depending on their family and income. This study also finds that teacher, course syllabus and tuition fee are the most critical factors, while other aspects are less vital for participants in the evaluative phase.

The fourth stage is choice. Since 54 per cent of students frequently analyze and evaluate the attitude of the staff toward them and the benefit they will obtain if they enroll at the centre. This implies that time and effort may be put into the training and development of such employees, allowing them to deliver superior services.

Outcomes are the final phase in the procedure. Positive thoughts for positive attitudes emphasize the significance of this stage. That is, students that have a good mindset enrol in more courses. This, in turn, leads to a favourable word of mouth reputation for the institute, a technique that has been highlighted as critical in this respect.

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