

The Influencing of Young Consumers Shopping Style on Attitude toward the Environmentally Friendly Food Products in Thailand

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Abstract: This research purposes to examine the relationship between the youth consumers shopping style (perfectionism, brand-consciousness, impulsiveness, confusion over choice and habitual consumption) with their attitude toward environmentally friendly food products in Thailand whereas they live in different societies and geographically. The results found that young consumers who have eaten environmentally friendly food products are different. Young consumers who live in the land fulfill of quality and quantity of these products, such as Chiang Mai Province have perfected, impulsiveness and habitual consumption shopping style differentiate from Songkhla Province. On the other hand, young consumers who never eaten the environmentally friendly food products are similar in each kind of shopping style. Furthermore, shopping style of young consumers who have eaten these products, associated with attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products.

Key words: Young consumer, shopping style, environmentally friendly food products, brand-consciousness, confusion over choice

INTRODUCTION

In current, human cannot refuse the climate changed which is increasing the violence while many diseases are increasing, even though the medical technology is developing also (Cherian and Jacob, 2012; Haws *et al.*, 2012). Thus, those are effects to have the cause of imbalance of the natural resources. Beside human over takes advantages by using the natural resources, they are also to destroy the natural by using synthetic chemical in every process of their life, including the agricultural process for growing the food plants such as body soaps, cosmetics, agrochemical products, herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilization. Thereby, food production is the one important example that shows the relationship between human and natural health.

Otherwise, many researchers found the cause of human diseases are based on food that person's intake because the producers use more chemical synthesis on the process of food production than past time (Arnocky *et al.*, 2007; Babiak and Trendafilova, 2011; Thapa and Rattanasuteerakul, 2011). While people are more take care of their health and environmentally healthy, consumer's attitude and purchasing behavior are changed (Albayrak *et al.*, 2011; Armstrong *et al.*, 2005; Bhaskaran *et al.*, 2006; Borin *et al.*, 2011; Chen, 2009; D'Souza *et al.*, 2007; Eertmans *et al.*, 2005; Ghaddar and Naoum-Sawaya, 2012; Gilg *et al.*, 2005; Kaiser *et al.*, 2007;

Mostafa, 2007; Zabkar and Hosta, 2013). Nonetheless, this group of people is a segment of initial market for new environmentally friendly food products, such as the safety food or the organic products because they try to find the best quality of food to their health (Cherian and Jacob, 2012; Choi, 2012; Gronhoj, 2006; Grunert *et al.*, 2012; Mostafa, 2007).

However, the new health products market in Thailand is increased and distributed, especially in the central region of Thailand. Not only the elderly are more takes care of their health but the younger is, also increasing to purchase the healthy fresh food products which called the environmentally friendly food products, for instance the safety food as rice, vegetables, fruits and so on or the organic products rice, vegetable, meat, egg and the processing organic products (Arttachariya, 2010). So, the healthy products are purchased by many levels of life cycle depending on life style or shopping, style, cognitive and attitude of consumers (Arttachariya, 2010; Carrillo *et al.*, 2012; Chakrabarti, 2010; Chen *et al.*, 2011; Cherian and Jacob, 2012; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Nie and Zepeda, 2011; Saleki and Seyedsaleki, 2012; Samarasinghe, 2012; Wray-Lake *et al.*, 2010).

Moreover, Thailand is the land of agriculture. Many areas can be grown many kinds of food plants, however the geography of some area is suitable in different kinds of these. For example, the North of Thailand has a 3 seasons and the climate is cool that is more appropriate

for growing the food plants as vegetables and fruits whole year than the South of Thailand. Meanwhile, the South of Thailand is close to the ocean and has only 2 seasons, so that the food plants can be grown in some month of year (GreenNet, 2010). Therefore, these are initiation of this research question that motivate about how does the relationship between shopping style of young consumers and their attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products? And how does different of young consumers shopping styles among 2 regions?

Literature review

Environmentally friendly food products

The environmentally friendly food product definition:

Many researches are called environmentally friendly products as eco-friendly or Green, it refers to any product or service that is harmless to the atmosphere, surroundings or environment (McPeak *et al.*, 2010; Mifflin, 2013). Some researchers define the environmentally friendly products means the product related to healthy, green, purchasing options of eco-friendly goods that are good for people, animals and the environment. Besides the researchers gave the definition of this, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has defined the environmental goods and services industry, as the process of goods and services production that can be measured, prevented, reduced environmental damage for instance, water, air and soil, as well as waste, noise and ecosystems (Monkelbaan, 2011). The environmentally friendly products include cleaner technologies, products and services that reduce environmental risk from chemical synthesis, minimize pollution and resource use (Mifflin, 2013; Monkelbaan, 2011). Although, however many kinds of environmentally friendly products connect to human life, they are less important than food products because food products affect directly to healthy. Hence, in this study emphasize on the environmentally friendly food products that they are kinds of food products using the food safety production, such as food safety and organic products. These are environmentally harmless at some stage of their life cycle (production/processing, consumption, waste disposal) than conventional products (DEQP, 2013; Mifflin, 2013; Monkelbaan, 2011). Therefore in this research, environmentally friendly food products means the fresh food and the processed food are controlled the plant by the Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) standard. This is also, including the organic agriculture which is grown without the chemical synthesis products, for instance safety rice, organic rice, safety vegetables, organic vegetables, organic fruit juice.

Table 1: Comparison 2 types of agricultural standards (GreenNet, 2010)

Types	Standard	Fertilizes	Insecticides	Herbicides
Organic agriculture	Organic agriculture Natural agriculture	Not allow	Not allow	Not allow
Food safety	Safe from chemical synthesis	Allow	Allow	Allow

Classification of environmentally friendly food products:

The environmentally friendly food products in Thailand are divided by 2 types following an agricultural standard as shown in Table 1; the organic and the food safety standard. Those contain the fresh food and the processed food such as organic vegetables, safety vegetables, the organic coconut oil and so on (GreenNet, 2010).

Shopping style

Shopping style's definition: Style or lifestyle refers to human behavior, specially in marketing side relates with consumer behavior (Nie and Zepeda, 2011). For this research, is denoted lifestyle with food consumption behavior that considers following inventory of consumer decision-making styles (Frewer and Miles, 2003; Jansson *et al.*, 2010, 2011; Sui, 2011). Thus in this research, the shopping style refers to the consumer behavior that have many characteristics. The characteristic based on Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) that was first developed by Sproles and Kendall and defined as mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach in making consumer outcome. The CSI contain 8 characteristic of outcome or result of consumer making decision, such as the perfectionist and high-quality conscious consumer, brand conscious and price-equals-quality consumer, novelty, fashion conscious consumer, recreational, hedonistic consumer, price conscious consumer, confused by over choice consumer, impulsive and careless consumer and finally, habitual, brand-loyal consumer (Jensen, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2009).

Consumers shopping style categorization: Characteristics consumer behavior can be explained with 8 central decision-making dimensions that influence a consumer's decision-making behavior, originally identified in a literature review carried out by the same 2 researchers mentioned earlier. As personality and lifestyle of consumers have the power to influence consumers attitudes, this research will group the consumer decision-making style with characteristics of the innovator based on the innovation decision adoption process, specifically in regards to organic products that are related to health and environmental benefits in Thailand.

This research considers the following inventory of consumer decision-making styles to be relevant (Frewer and Miles, 2003; Jansson *et al.*, 2010, 2011; Sui, 2011).

Perfectionism: It is characterized by a consumer's search for the highest or very best quality in products. Respondents scoring high on this dimension could be expected to be careful, systematic or comparative shoppers.

Brand-consciousness: Consumers who are oriented towards buying the more expensive, well-known national brands, believe that a higher price means better quality. They also prefer best-selling, advertised brands.

Confused by over choice: This trait characterizes consumers who are confused about the quality of different brands and by the information available. High scorers on this characteristic have difficulty making choices.

Impulsive: Characterizes novelty seekers who find seeking out new things pleasurable. Novelty seekers are likely to shop less careful and more impulsively and are less sensitive about price.

Habitual: Consumers who have favorite brands and stores and have formed habits in choosing these, repetitively.

Young consumers in Thailand: The young consumers refer to the generation Y or Gen Y who was born during 1977 and 1994. In marketing strategy, generation Y or young consumers are influencing into the market. Furthermore, Gen Y grew up with tried and trusted established brands while this generation is now calling out for products of their own (Regine, 2011). The young consumers grow up and prompt to consumption in the market. Specially in 2010, Thailand has the amount of young 20-30 years old around 9 millions (IPSR, 2010). In Thailand, young consumer can be acted as a leadership in family for getting new products and information, especially they have more power to purchase and diffuse the word of mouth about information of products even though some young consumers do not have an income (Teerachote *et al.*, 2013).

Hypotheses: For the referencing from the exiting literatures, it is thus hypothesized that:

- H₁: Young consumers who have a perfectionism style, live in Chiang Mai Province would differ from Songkhla Province
- H₂: Young consumers who have a brand-consciousness style, live in Chiang Mai Province would differ from Songkhla Province
- H₃: Young consumers who have an impulsiveness style, live in Chiang Mai Province would differ from Songkhla Province

- H₄: Young consumers who have confuse over choice style, live in Chiang Mai Province would differ from Songkhla Province
- H₅: Young consumers who have a habitual consumption style, live in Chiang Mai Province would differ from Songkhla Province
- H₆: A perfectionism style does not have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products
- H₇: A brand-consciousness style does not have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products
- H₈: An impulsiveness style does not have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products
- H₉: A confuse over choice style does not have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products
- H₁₀: A habitual consumption style does not have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Collection process: A convenience sample of the total amount of young consumer respondents is 269 samples that include the young consumers who had consumed the environmentally friendly food products have 153 samples and the young consumers who had never consumed the environmentally friendly food products have 116 samples.

Measures: This research use the deductive approach to examine the differences between the shopping style of consumers who is in a range between 20-30 years old and attitudes toward the environmentally friendly food products while the young consumers live in different areas. This area has a different condition as the climate and geography. Descriptive statistics for the study is Chi-square that was used to determine the relationship between the young consumers shopping style and attitudes toward the environmentally friendly food products by looking forward a significant. This also had comparison the young consumers who lived in different area with the independent t-test calculations.

The 67 questions survey instrument and the 7-point Likert scales were used in all measures. They either ranged from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree and use the SPSS for data analysis.

RESULTS

The shopping style of young consumers in differences area: Independent t-tests were conducted to examine the differences of young consumers who live in different areas. The results for young consumers who have

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of variables for young consumers who have consumed and have never consumed the products at Chiang Mai and Songkhla

Variables	Have consumed				Have never consumed			
	Chiang Mai		Songkhla		Chiang Mai		Songkhla	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
A perfectionism style	5.40	1.08	4.61	1.16	5.26	1.15	5.05	1.35
A brand-consciousness style	4.55	1.36	4.37	1.20	4.48	1.42	4.87	1.28
An impulsiveness style	5.06	1.06	4.60	1.12	5.04	0.97	5.08	1.06
Confuse over choice style	4.74	1.23	4.50	1.06	4.92	1.00	5.05	1.14
An habitual consumption style	5.11	1.12	4.55	1.12	5.23	0.97	5.04	1.31

consumed the environmentally friendly food products, showed that compared between young consumers shopping style at Chiang Mai and Songkhla scored that the young consumers shopping style at Chiang Mai differs from the young consumers shopping style at Songkhla significantly in a perfectionism style, $t = 4.34$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000, $p < 0.05$; an impulsiveness style, $t = 2.61$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.10, $p < 0.05$ and a habitual consumption style, $t = 3.04$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003, $p < 0.05$. In contrast, the young consumers shopping style at Chiang Mai is not differentiate from Songkhla significantly in brand-consciousness style, $t = 0.86$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.390, $p > 0.05$ and confuse over choice style, $t = 1.29$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.198, $p > 0.05$.

Furthermore, young consumers who have never consumed the environmentally friendly food products, showed that compared between young consumers shopping style at Chiang Mai and Songkhla scored that the young consumers shopping styles at Chiang Mai are not differentiate from Songkhla with significantly in a perfectionism style, $t = 1.85$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.068, $p > 0.05$; an brand-consciousness style, $t = -1.51$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.134, $p > 0.05$; an impulsiveness style, $t = -0.20$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.844, $p > 0.05$; confuse over choice style, $t = -0.63$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.527, $p > 0.05$ and a habitual consumption style, $t = 0.83$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.407, $p > 0.05$. The descriptive data of young consumers at Chiang Mai and Songkhla are shown in Table 2.

Significant predictors of the relationship between shopping style and attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products: For the Chi-square test, the result of the relationship between young consumers shopping style and attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products found that at Chiang Mai, young consumers who have a perfectionism style, Sig. (2-tailed) 0.008, $p < 0.05$ and an impulsiveness style, Sig. (2-tailed) 0.038, $p < 0.05$ have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products. Meanwhile at Songkhla, the young consumers who have a perfectionism style, Sig. (2-tailed) 0.038, $p < 0.05$, a brand-consciousness style, Sig. (2-tailed) 0.010, $p < 0.05$

Table 3: Chi-square of variables for young consumers who had consumed and never had consumed the products at Chiang Mai and Songkhla

Variables	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			
	Had consumed		Have never consumed	
	Chiang Mai	Songkhla	Chiang Mai	Songkhla
A perfectionism style	0.008	0.038	0.435	0.124
A brand-consciousness style	0.057	0.010	0.217	0.695
An impulsiveness style	0.038	0.055	0.576	0.182
Confuse over choice style	0.146	0.021	0.235	0.299
An habitual consumption style	0.619	0.062	0.148	0.456

and confuse over choice style Sig. (2-tailed) 0.021, $p < 0.05$ have a relationship with the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products.

On the other hand, young consumers who have never consumed the environmentally friendly food products were not have any shopping style to relate to the attitude toward the environmentally friendly food products. The detail of data of young consumers at Chiang Mai and Songkhla are shown in Table 3.

DISCUSSION

This study shows 3 main points that the result is useful for the marketing. First of all, the geographic has an indirect effect to the lifestyle of young consumer who interesting consumption the health products, as the environmentally friendly food products that the lifestyle to display on the shopping style (Jevsnik *et al.*, 2008; Ko *et al.*, 2009) of young consumers. For example, Chiang Mai where is more kinds with the food plants and crops than Songkhla has the climate and suitable land to grow more kinds of food plants. These effect to the Chiang Mai Province has young consumers who have a perfectionism style, an impulsiveness style and an habitual consumption style difference from Songkhla.

Second for the areas or the geography of land does not have any effect in shopping style of young consumers who have never consumed the environmentally friendly food products because they, lack of interesting to more take care their health.

CONCLUSION

Finally, some kinds of shopping style related to attitudes toward the environmentally friendly food products for younger consumers who have consumed these products only.

In summarizing, shopping style of young consumers was influenced to attitudes toward the environmentally friendly food products while the geographic has the influencing differentiation of shopping styles of young consumers also.

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