

**How health-conscious trend effects
Consumption of Organic and Functional food
In Thailand**



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**HOW HEALTH-CONSCIOUS TREND EFFECTS
CONSUMPTION OF ORGANIC AND FUNCTIONAL FOOD IN
THAILAND**

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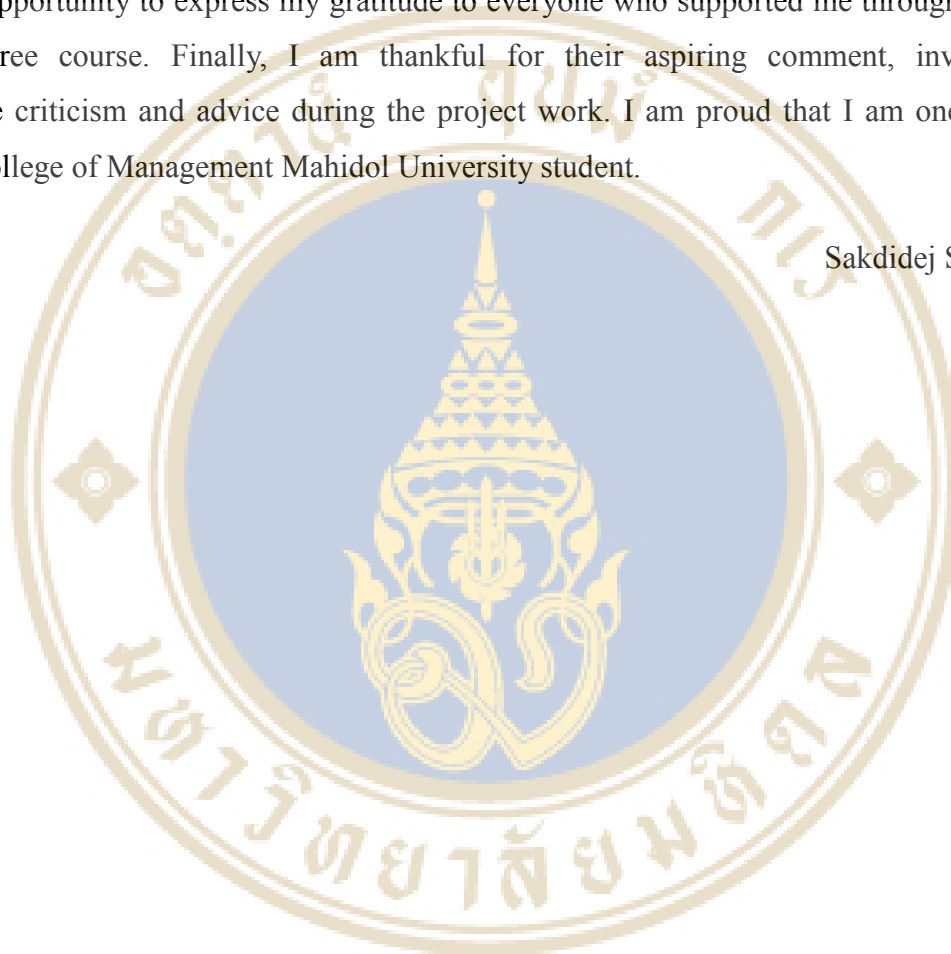
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HOW HEALTH-CONSCIOUS TREND EFFECTS CONSUMPTION OF ORGANIC AND FUNCTIONAL FOOD IN THAILAND

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ABSTACT

Now a day health conscious trend plays an important role on stimulated consumption of healthy products. Many firms rush into this industry with new products and new implication techniques to gain consumers attention and market share. Even Thai people have high awareness in health conscious trend and have positive attitude toward healthy products, but the consumption rate of these products are lower than other countries.

This paper conducts a qualitative research with in-depth interview to consumers which provides insight of consumer perception and consumer behavior toward healthy products, organic, and functional foods. The result shows that there are correlative relationship between health conscious trend and consumer behavior. Health conscious trend stimulated positive attitudes to consumers which enhance purchasing decision among consumers.

The primary aim is to examine the factors of health consciousness that influence food consuming behavior of Thai consumer to help firms to understand and develop new implication in the future.

KEY WORDS: Organic foods / Functional foods / Consumer behavior

38 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past, foods were primarily recognized for their essential nutrients for normal body activity and function. During the past two decades, however, consumers have switched from an emphasis on satisfying hunger to an emphasis on the promising use of foods to promote well-being and to help reduce the risk of disease (Niva, 2007, Bogue & Sorenson, 2001). Today, there is a consensus that eating the right foods extends life expectancy and improves the quality of life.

Nowadays, health-conscious trend is becoming an increasingly important to consuming food behavior of customers, both personal and societal value. Organic and functional food market has grown rapidly than before. The market growth considerably as a result of consumers increase interest in concerning on health issue.

According to the World Health Organization, health is more than the absence of illness and disability: it is a state of well-being (World Health Organization, 1986) Health is characterized by multidimensionality, and its construct includes physical, social, emotional, mental, spiritual and behavioral aspects from the subjective view of an individual (Schumacher, Klaiberg, & Brahler, 2003). This mean health is one of the frequently mentioned motivations when consumers make their food choices (Steptoe, Pollard, & Wadle, 1995; Lappalainen, Kearney, & Gibney, 1998).

Comparing to traditional food industry, organic and functional food have another mental factors or personal motivation as the motives for consumption organic and functional food. All foods are functional to provide energy and nutritive value necessary to maintain human life. Functional food is food that given an additional function, related to health-promotion or disease prevention by adding new ingredients or more of existing ingredients. Another kind of food that is usually perceived as being healthy and fulfills the criterion as being “better for me” (Pech-Lopatta, 2007) is organic food.

A functional food is a food given an additional function by adding new ingredients or more of existing ingredients. Mostly natural or processed food that contains known biologically active compounds which, when in defined quantitative and qualitative amounts, provides a clinically proven health benefit, and thus is useful in preventing, managing and treating chronic diseases.



Figure 1.1 An example of Functional food.

Around the world functional food industry has strongly growth of market share in many countries. The global market of functional food and drink value is estimated by BCC Research that the global market of functional food industry will reach 176.7 billion in 2013 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.4%. Specifically, the functional food sector will experience 6.9% CAGR. According to Leatherhead, functional food and beverage sales reached US\$25.3 billion in 2011, up from 2010's US\$24 billion. This figure, which is limited to products making specific functional health claims, marks a 31.5-percent increase from sales in 2007. (Celeste S., 2012).

Table 1.1 Global functional foods market by region, 2007 – 2011.

Table 1: Global Functional Foods Market by Region, 2007-2011				
	2007 ^e (USD, millions)	2011 ^e (USD, millions)	% change 2007-2011	% share 2011
Japan	7,125	9,750	36.8	38.6
US	6,215	7,850	26.3	31.0
Europe	5,590	7,290	30.4	28.8
Australia	310	410	32.3	1.6
Total	19,240	25,300	31.5	100.0

Source: Leatherhead Food Research
Not including energy and mood enhancing foods and beverages

For the organic food definition, organic food is a food that produced by using methods for organic farming in general organic farming responds to site-specific farming and crop conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

**Figure 1.2 An example of organic food.**

In spite of the slowdown in the global economy, international sales of organic products continue to rise. Organic Monitor estimates organic food & drink sales reached almost 63 billion US dollars in 2011. The market has expanded by 170 percent since 2002. Demand for organic products is mainly in North America and Europe; these two regions comprise more than 90 percent of sales. (Frick and Bonn, 2013).

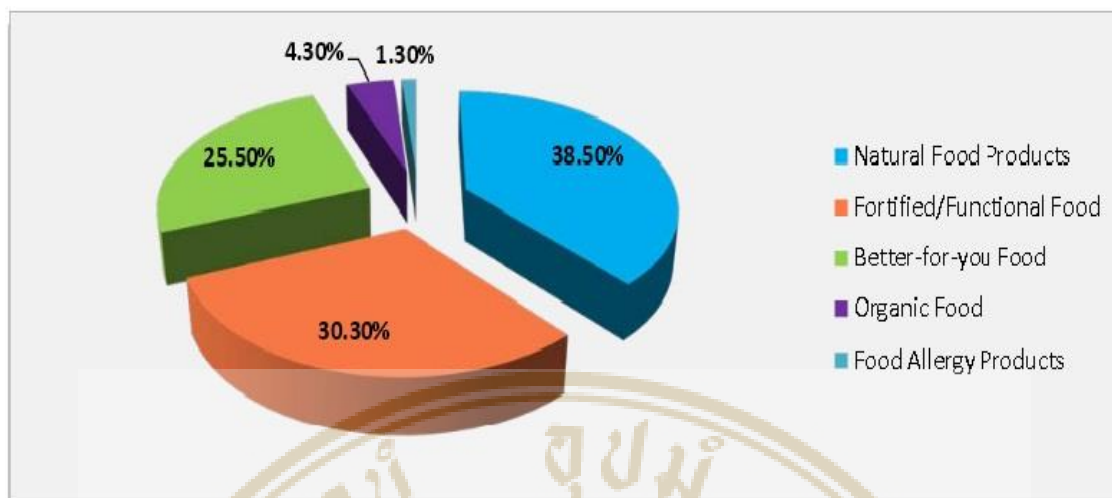
The data was collected from 162 countries. The leading countries for organic agricultural land is Australia, Argentina, and US. The leading countries of producing organic food are Indian and Mexico. The biggest organic market size is US at US\$ 29 billion, followed by Germany US\$ 9.2 billion, and France US\$ 5.2 billion.

Table 1.2 A summary of Global Organic agriculture in 2013

The World of Organic Agriculture: Key Indicators		
Organic Agriculture 2013: Key Indicators and Leading Countries		
Indicator	World	Leading countries
Countries with data on certified organic agriculture ¹	2011: 162 countries	
Organic agricultural land	2011: 37.2 million hectares (1999: 11 million hectares)	Australia (12 mio. hectares, 2009) Argentina (3.8 mio. hectares) US (1.9 mio. hectares, 2008)
Share of total agricultural land	2011: 0.86 % ²	Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (35.9 %) Liechtenstein (29.3 %) Austria (19.7 %)
Further, non-agricultural organic areas (mainly wild collection)	2011: 32.5 million hectares (2010: 43 million hectares; 2009: 41 million hectares)	Finland (7 million hectares) Zambia (5.9 million hectares; 2009) India (4.5 million hectares)
Producers	1.8 million producers (2010: 1.6 million producers; 2009: 1.8 million producers)	India (547'591), Uganda (188'625, 2010), Mexico (169'570)
Organic market size	62.9 billion US dollars (2010: 59.1 billion US dollars; 1999: 15.2 billion US dollars) Source: Organic Monitor	US (21 billion euros or 29 billion US dollars), Germany (6.6 billion euros or 9.2 billion US dollars) France (3.7 billion euros or 5.2 billion US dollars)
Per capita consumption	2011: 9.02 US dollars ³	Switzerland (177.4 euros or 250.4 USD), Denmark (161.9 euros or 225.7 USD) Luxemburg (134.3 euros or 187.3 USD)
Number of countries with organic regulations 2011	86 countries (2010: 84 countries)	
Organic certifiers 2010	2012: 576 certifiers (2011: 549; 2010 532)	South Korea, Japan, USA
Number of IFOAM affiliates	1.1.2013: 766 affiliates from 117 countries	Germany: 96 affiliates; India: 46 affiliates; China: 40 affiliates; United States: 33 affiliates; The Netherlands: 31 affiliates

Source: FiBL and IFOAM; for total global market: Organic Monitor; for number of certifiers: Organic Standard/Grolink.

Thailand is a high potential market as growth of market share in health-conscious products in past few years, with demand on quality Thai consumers are paying more attention to a healthy diet. There is growing awareness of functional ingredients such as herbs, fibers, collagen, L-carnitine, minerals, vitamins, omega fatty acids, and probiotic. In 2012 consumer expenditures on health and wellness foods grew to US\$4.7billion. Natural food products occupy the largest market share at 38.5%, followed by fortified/functional food (30.3%), after that is better-for-you food (25.5%) and organic food (4.30%).



Source: National Food Institute

Figure 1.3 A summary of market share on healthy products in Thailand 2013.

For the organic market in Thailand, export market of organic food will expand to US, Europe and Japan, but mainly focus in ASEAN and China market. Thailand organic food export this year has grown 20% year on year from 3,000 million baht (US\$ 100 million) as same as domestic market value but with lower growth rate of 10%. Local manufacturers and farmers are supports by government and Ministry of commerce on pushing new marketing and promotional activities such as the Organic Day with Lemon Farm and Family Network Foundation to promote this products to Thai consumers.

1.1 Problem Statement

Even though organic and functional food have high awareness in health-conscious trend among Thai consumer, but some variables that influences consumer on perception or purchasing healthy products are difference between organic and functional food. Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies that focus in detail on different health related aspects and behaviors as predictors for consumption organic and functional food. Understanding consumer behavior will enhance benefit to both firms and consumer.

1.2 Research Question

What are major variables that influenced consumer to purchase organic and functional food products?

1.3 Research Objective

The primary aim is to examine the factors of health consciousness that influence food consuming behavior of Thai consumer, which is considered by consumer who have experience in organic and functional food product. The research will including attitude, perspective, purchase frequency, and satisfaction in functional foods and in Thai market.

1.4 Research scope

This research will include;

- Consumer behavior in consuming organic and functional food
- Motivation factors that influence on purchasing
- Purchase frequency of consumer

1.5 Benefit to firms

In Thailand, organic and functional food industry experienced rapid growth in past several years and has high positive of expanding in the future. Consuming those kind of products is influenced by many factors. Understanding consumer behavior factors in this area will benefit to both firms and customers. Firms can develop new products, services, and marketing campaigns that suitable for target group and increase customer satisfaction in the future.



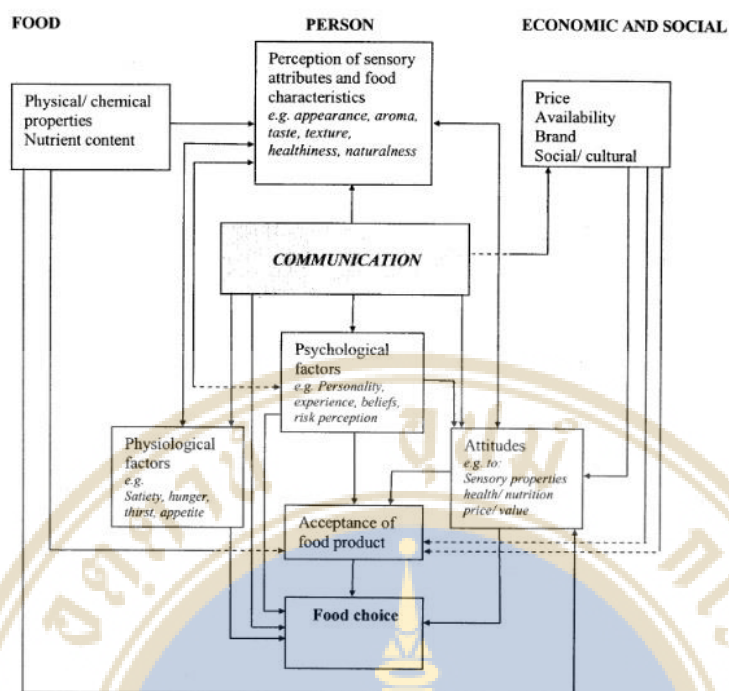
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The approach in finding theory and literature to support this topic is based on these areas, factors that influence on consuming organic and functional food are discussed below.

2.1 Consumer behavior

Food choice behavior is driven by the optimization of both nutrition and enjoyment derived from food choices. However, food choice is not just one dimensional, but a complex human behavior influenced by many interrelating factors. Those influences are described in the Universal Food Choice Model (Shepherd, 1990). Three dimensions that influenced consumer's food choice on decision-making process. The first one are attributes of the food, the second one are factors that related to person, and the third one are purchasing environmental factors. Perception of the sensory attributes of food, psychological factors, attitudes, acceptance and physiological factors belong to them.



Source: Shepherd 1990, revised

Figure 2.1 The framework of three dimensions that influenced consumer's food choice on decision-making process. Those influences are described in the Universal Food Choice Model (Shepherd, 1990).

2.1.1 Physiological

Appearance of the product, aroma, taste and texture are examples of the perception of sensory attributes. Satiety, hunger, thirst and appetite are part of the physiological factors which are regarded as being less relevant for the requested analysis of consumers' behavior related to functional food.

2.1.2 Psychological

Personality, experience, mood and beliefs form the psychological factors like previous experience of the food can have a direct influence of the food can have a direct influence on the perception of sensory attributes. Communication through the government, medical doctors, food companies or other sources can influence psychological factors applying to the consumer.

2.1.3 Attitude

An attitude is defined as a kind of psychological tendency that is articulated by assessing a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). The affective, cognitive or behavioral responses resulting from the attitude relate to the process of evaluation (Frewer, 2003). Attitudes exist towards price or value of a food product, health or nutrition. They cannot directly be observed, but can be inferred from observable responses to questionnaires or interviews (MacCorquhal and Meehl, 1948).

An individual's attitude towards consuming a product is one of the most important variables that explain the choice of consumers across products and services, including food (Honkanen et al., 2006). Past research has demonstrated that positive attitudes towards functional foods have a great deal of influence on the intention of consumers to consume products (Weinstein, 1982; Voon et al., 2011; Golnaz et al., 2012). Zey-Ferrell and McIntoch (1992) asserted that purchase and consumption intentions are significantly predicted by attitude rather than by economic and demographic factors. More than two-thirds of the respondents in UK have been found to purchase functional foods because of their positive attitude about the concept of functional foods (Catho and Morris, 1995). A positive attitude towards functional foods has been shown to be related to the awareness and knowledge of the health benefits of these foods (Labrecque et al., 2006; Verbeke, 2005).

2.1.4 Food Acceptance

Psychological factors and attitudes lead to the acceptance of food. A person's attitude has a direct influence on food acceptance and food choice (Poulsen, 1999). Food acceptance can be used as a measurable concept closely related to food choice. Acceptance refers to an individual experience, feeling or an emotion with a hedonic aspect (Cardello and Schutz, 2000). Food acceptance can be verbally operationalized as a measure of rated pleasantness or liking (Pilgrim, 1957).

2.2 Socio-demographic characteristics

The numerous researches found in the literature concerning the role of demographic characteristics as predictors of consumer behavior with respect to functional foods. While Verbeke (2009) found that socio-demographics play a minor role in the acceptance and perception of functional foods among consumer, many studies have shown that demographic variables, such as gender, age, education, social class, and socio-economic standards influence attitude and purchase behavior (Herath et al., 2009; Bogue et al., 2005; Anttolainen et al., 2001; Niva, 2006; Rezai et al., 2012).

2.3 Perception and Communication

Health consciousness is one of the important factor among consumer. An increasing in allergy in children (Sakai and Kasuke, 2005), the scandals in food (Storstad and Bjorkhaug, 2013) and the increasing concern about negative long-term effects of biotechnological applications in agriculture on health and environment (Rimal et al., 2006) have affected the interest in healthy foods and healthy consumption of consumer. Consumers having health concerns are motivated by good quality of life, and they also engage in healthier behavior to prevent illness (Michaelidou and Hanssan, 2008). Although the enhanced health benefits attracted consumers' attention, concern on the artificial ingredients and effectiveness of the health benefits have formed negative attitudes toward functional products. Understanding consumer' perception and the way to communicating organic and functional food products toward this issue are important to both firms and consumer. The main factors that influenced consumer's perception lay in the following areas: Food carrier and functional ingredients, Health claim, Nutritional knowledge, and Sensory appeal.

2.3.1 Food carriers and functional ingredients

Perceptions of carriers for functional food are found to have influence on consumers' acceptance. Consumers see products that are intrinsically healthy as

credible carriers of functional food. In contrast with some studies noted that perceived fitness between carriers and functional ingredients is also important. For examples of enrichment of Omega-3 and Vitamins were found to generate positive attitude and perception.

2.3.2 Health claims

Health claims are essential messages to convey product health and nutritional benefits to consumers. The persuasive impact of health claims differs depending on the levels of personal involvement with the issues stated in the claims (e.g. the relevance to consumers' personal health or a person close to them been diagnosed with the disease or the nutrition problem in question). The effects of framing methods (e.g. enhanced function format versus disease risk reduction format) vary by health benefits.

2.3.3 Nutritional knowledge

Nutritional knowledge has been shown to have a great influence on dietary behavior. Consumers with high level of nutritional knowledge had an increased likelihood to choose functional food than those with low nutritional knowledge. Moreover, two types of nutritional knowledge were defined including attribute-related knowledge (e.g. "soy has important phytochemicals") and consequence-related knowledge (e.g. 'soy will help lower risk of heart disease'). Food companies and practitioners are suggested to link food attributes with personal health consequences when communicating functional food benefits to consumers.

2.3.4 Sensory appeal

Despite the health benefits offered by functional food, it is worth mentioning that sensory characteristics are always one of the main determinants of food acceptance. Previous studies suggest that consumers are hardly willing to compromise on the taste of functional foods for eventual health benefits. In addition to the areas mentioned above, food and drink manufactures are also suggested to develop strategic approach to address different consumers' needs and concerns with respect to their lifestyle characteristics.

In addition to the four factors mentioned above, the variants among consumers with regard to their psychographic characteristics, values and beliefs, and lifestyles also need to be considered when identify targeting consumers for new products.

2.4 Purchasing behavior factors

Health concern of consumers is such a crucial motivating factor that many of the studies have indicated as the reason for both purchasing organic foods (Lockie and Lyons, 2002; McEachern and McClean, 2002; Nadali and Ay, 2008) and inspiring the intention to buy organic foods (Smith and Paladino, 2010). Furthermore, health can be accepted as the strongest predictor for attitude, intention to buy and frequency of buying organic foods (Magnusson et al., 2003).

A typical buying process leads the consumer through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior (Kotler, 2000). During the evaluation of alternatives, food selection is not only based on sensory properties of food, but also on verbal information about the food such as description on the packaging, advertisement in the media, advices or recommendations from third persons.

Finally, in the case of a purchasing process it is assumed, that a consumer intends maximizing his utility from buying and consuming good given his limited budget (Verbeke and Viaene, 2001). The study of consumers' attitudes and expectations regarding functional food and their willingness to pay for such products was developed on this theoretical background.

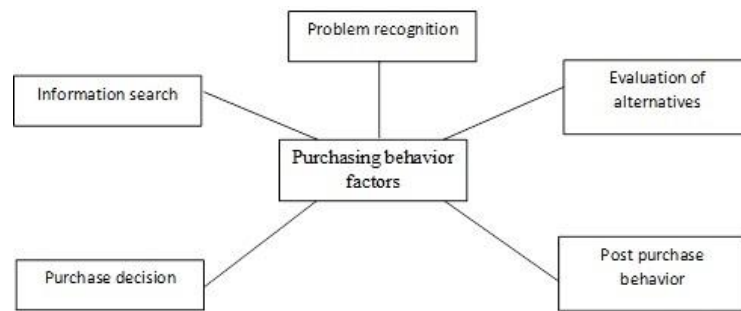


Figure 2.2 The framework of purchase decision and post purchase behavior (Kotler, 2000).



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology is outlined. The research approach and data collection of this study are described.

3.1 Research Method Outline

This study will take in form of a qualitative analysis method. This method can provide valuable information of the consumer behavior, consumer perspective, and factor that really impact to organic and functional food products.

The qualitative research will conduct an open-end questions to gain deep information which difficult to gain from other method and tools. Interviewee can express what they really think, and related idea in their own perspective. In addition, this method will make researcher understands the relationship of each factor that influence consumer clearly.

So the qualitative research is required to investigate or collect information in this study. The result data will come from real consumer as this research conduct questionnaires base on interviewee who experienced in organic and functional foods market.

3.2 Data collection

The data from this study will collected from 15 consumers who have been consuming organic food or functional food products more than 2 year. The reason for focusing on this consumer group because it would help this research to explore and

understanding what are major variables that influenced consumer to purchase organic and functional food products.

The data collection method will developed an open-ended questions on various topics. Socio-demographic data will be used to compare between groups of consumers as it plays a minor role in the acceptance and perception of functional foods among consumer.

3.3 Research question

The questions to be used for interview are developed from several previous research with different topic such as a study of Consumer behavior in consuming organic and functional food, Motivation factors that influence on purchasing, Purchase frequency of consumer. The question are shown as below.

3.3.1 Demographic and Socio demographic Data

This part will focus on demographic and Socio demographic characteristics such as age, gender, Education Level, and income

3.3.2 General Question

1. Are you a health conscious person?
2. Do you consume healthy food products such as organic food or functional food products or both?
3. How long have you been consume organic and/or functional food products?

3.3.3 Physiological

This part will focus on an appearance of the product, aroma, taste and texture are examples of the perception of sensory attributes.

1. In your opinion what is the most attractive attributes in these products? (E.g. tastes, aroma, appearance).

3.3.4 Psychological

This part will focus on customer experience, attitudes, and satisfaction.

1. Why you decide to consume organic food and/or functional food products?
2. How do you think about health conscious trend in Thailand?
3. Which factor influence you the most to consume organic food and/or functional food products?
4. When did you start noticing and buying organic food and/or functional food products, and what were reasons?
5. Does adoption of organic and functional foods change your lifestyle or consciousness about healthy living?
6. Do you have it with your meal, and “what %” of overall food intake is organic or do you have specific categories portion?
7. Do you have any obstacles when purchasing these products or what are the factors holding you back from buying organic foods?

3.3.5 Perception and communication

This part will focus on Health claim of products advertisement and Nutritional knowledge.

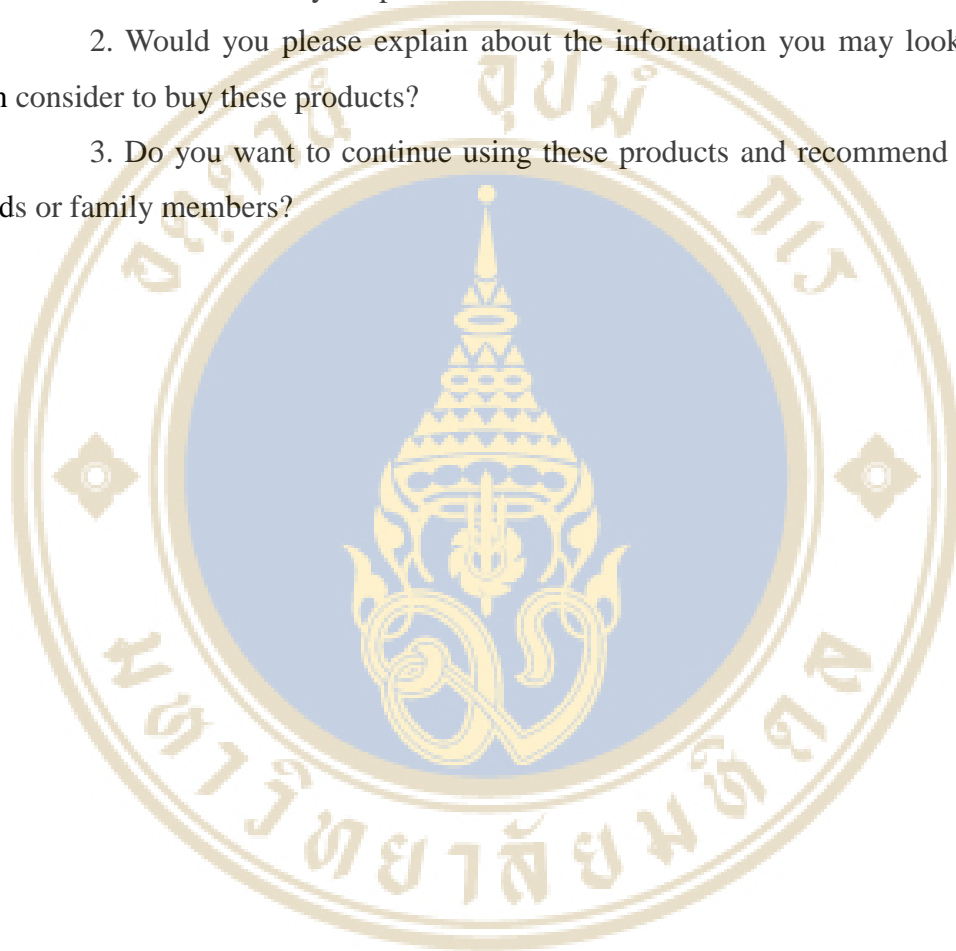
1. Do you have positive attitude or negative attitude on organic food and/or functional food products? Why?
2. What communication on these products affects to you the most? (E.g. Food carriers, functional ingredients, and health claim).
3. What is your opinion or perception about organic food or functional food values as benefit and price of organic food and functional food products are not equal to general food category?
4. Would you please explain about the information you may looking for when consider buying these products?

5. Do people generally believe the claims of organic food, or are they skeptical about the claims?

3.3.6 Purchasing behavior factors

This part will focus on buying process: problem recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase decision and post purchase behavior (Kotler, 2000).

1. How much do you spend on each transaction?
2. Would you please explain about the information you may looking for when consider to buy these products?
3. Do you want to continue using these products and recommend to your friends or family members?



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDING AND RESULTS

This chapter report's finding of the study on various factors that influence people to consume organic food and functional food products. Health conscious trend in Thailand plays an important role to influence people by creating awareness and motivating people to concern on health issues. In this study has two main factors which are psychological influence and communication influence. The other factor is marketing influence which will help this study to improve and develop new products, and new marketing strategy according to the research.

4.1 Psychological Influence

Even though health conscious trend focus on health issues, but people perceive it differently. For instances, interviewees consume this products because concerning on their body, avoidances of sickness, and family and friends' recommendation. Many interviewees consume both products and also consume other healthy products such as fruit juice, mineral water, and non-GMO products to maximize their health.

Table 4.1 The summary of the product consumption amongst healthy food products category. Consumers in this research consumed more than one categories in order to maximize their health.

Products	Respondents														
	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15
Organic Food	X	X			X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Functional Food/Drink	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X				
Supplement	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		X		X
Other healthy products	X	X			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	

Most of the interviewees indicated that factor that influence them to consume organic food and/or functional food products are benefit of these products. Most attractive attributes are its benefit. They see some other choices as a part of marketing point of view.

All interviewees indicated that they have been continue consuming these products for more than one year. Interviewees started noticing and buying organic food and/or functional food products by themselves. Most of interviewees in this research had health problem issues and were given recommendation from doctor and specialists to take some vitamin and other supplements.

Another concern is that when asking “does adoption of organic and functional foods change your lifestyle or consciousness about healthy living?” Many interviewees mentioned that health conscious trend affected their lifestyle a little. Interviewees adapted themselves by added organic food or functional food products in small portion to consume with their meal. They also had specific portion on consuming when asking “what percentage of overall food intake is organic or do you have specific categories portion?” Consumers who consume these products understand benefits and are aware of side effect of these products. They consumed by only specific portion according to specialists’ recommendation and the products description. For instance, one of the interviewee who concern on weigh and body mentioned that in each meal she will had 70% of vegetable, 20% of protein, and 10% of carbohydrate. Organic vegetables and fruits were replaced with regular vegetables but will not exceed the portion of vegetables in one meal.

The recommended daily intake of energy for normal Thai people is around 2,000 kilocalories. Daily energy needs for each individual is different depending on the body, sex, age, illness, work activities, which require this model into consideration as well. The figure is a tool that helps to explain and understand the dietary commandments to put into practice by establishing a. A "flag-tipped" shows the portion of the food in each category. Note that the base area is on the top highlights to eat more and below of the flag told to eat less as needed.



Figure 4.1 The figure of recommendation of regular consumption for Thai people in one day.

One respondent adapted her consumption by consume 70% of vegetable, 20% of protein, 10% of carbohydrate, and avoid eating fat. Organic vegetables and fruits were added up to mix with regular vegetables but will not exceed the portion of vegetables in one meal. At the end she added organic vegetables only 10 – 20% of regular vegetables.

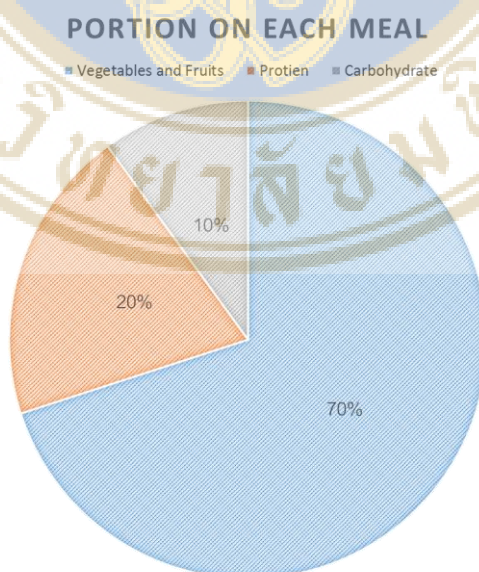


Figure 4.2 An example of regular consumption percentage on each meal of respondent that focus on weigh and body shape control.

4.2 Perception and Communication influence

Interviewees' attitude for organic food and functional food products are quite positive. They also have high expectation on the result before consume these products. The reason is that many interviewees have experienced with close-relevant products. So they trusted in products, brand, nutrient benefit, and have high food acceptance in organic food and functional food products.

Interviewees also expressed that they satisfied with the result of products' benefits. Even though the prices of organic food and functional food products are more expensive than regular foods, interviewees tend to consume these products as they concern on nutrient benefit regardless the prices, when asking on value as benefit and price issue all of interviewees agreed that these products provide values more than the prices they paid.

Some of interviewees indicated that even they could not see the results of these products improving on their body at the moment, they still continued consuming the products by the expectation on long term benefit. They also stated that they were looking for the product that they can trust as it may affect to themselves and their families.

4.3 Purchasing and Marketing influence

According to purchasing behavior theory a typical buying process leads the consumer through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior (Kotler, 2000). In this topic interviewees had their own purchasing behavior as below.

4.3.1 Problem recognition

Problem recognition on health issues stimulated a high consumption rate on healthy products. Most interviewees consumed these products because they wanted to avoid their health problem. This research interview provides that many consumers are proactive to health issues. They keen to avoid this problem at the beginning. Interviewees had specific portion according to specialists' recommendation and the

products description. They also seek other methods to keep themselves strong and healthy by working out at fitness.

4.3.2 Sources of information

Sources of information before consuming were recommendation from doctor or specialists, and through journal or articles on health magazines. Moreover, many of interviewees searched for the information about other health concern issues in advance, after that they will evaluated and compared before they purchase. They were looking for benefits and also side effect of the nutrient ingredients inside the foods. Interviewees avoided to consume unknown products or the products with unclear description.

4.3.3 Evaluation and purchase decision

Evaluation and purchase decision of respondents may affected by the brand of the products. Brand awareness play an important role when consumers evaluated products in the same category. Interviewees may tried new products if product is one of the brand that they use to consume or has recommended by their friends.

4.3.4 Post purchasing behavior

Post purchasing behavior from organic foods and functional foods consumers is strongly consistent in particular brand that they have used, consumers continued purchasing products as they perceived these products as foods or supplementary foods that give benefit to their bodies. Positive attitudes and high food acceptance generate post purchasing from exist consumers and product trial from new consumers.

4.4 Consumers' Experience

After collecting interviewees' data the research found out that there are several issues in consumers' experience when purchasing these products. The obstacles and experiences are describe below.

4.4.1 Purchasing rate

The purchasing rate of consumers spent on each transaction are around 500 - 2,000 THB., while they purchased supplementary products are around 1,000 – 3,000 THB. Supplementary product perception from consumers quite different as they perceived supplementary product contains more nutrient and vitamin than organic foods and functional foods, they also perceive that organic food and functional foods are just one in a food category.

4.4.2 Amount of consumption

The amount of each consumption is low. Consumers may add some organic foods or functional foods to consume with their meal, but only in a little amount of portion. Consumers tend to go for supplementary products when they need nutrient benefit such as vitamin or mineral rather than consuming organic foods as they perceived it in the long term benefit.

4.4.3 Store Location

Consumers had obstacle of finding the same products that they used to consume in another area and stores. This research interview found out that consumers is strongly consistent in particular brand that they have used. They sometimes purchase new brand within the same product category, but they prefer to purchase the one that they used to consume.

4.4.4 Information

The obstacle that prevent consumers to purchase these products is information on each product, unclear description made consumers confused and too much nutrient benefits on one side made negative effects on consumers. Respondents stated that they may not consume product that promote too much nutrient benefits as it looks unrealistic. Respondents searched the information in advance before purchasing, they may need some recommendations from seller for furthermore questions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

These chapters inform the general result and findings of the thematic paper with an implication and suggestions for the future research. This Thematic also discuss the setting research and the limitations of thematic, which may limit to the research.

5.1 Conclusion

After launched qualitative research interviewed with experimental respondents there are correlative relationship between health conscious trend and consumer behavior. Health conscious trend stimulated positive attitudes to consumers which enhance food acceptance and purchasing decision among consumers.

The finding implies that they are willing to try or adapt their habits and lifestyle toward this trend. Consumers seek information in many areas such as nutrient benefits, brand reputation, prices, and evaluation before making decision. Even consumers had information on nutrient benefits on particular product category consumers still require more information and confirmation of product benefits from salesperson in store as during the interview they stated that they were looking for products that they can trust. Family and friends influenced consumers to purchase the product by recommendations and word of mouth. They trialed with a little amount at the beginning before adopted themselves to consume these products regularly.

Source of information that interviewees used to search are from friends, doctor/specialist, internet, and health magazine. They chose information sources based on reliable of each information, then they may choose to match within their health concerning issues and lifestyle.

Demographic plays a minor role for this topic as many of interviewees purchased these products for themselves and families. Healthy body and sickness avoidance are considered the most important factors for consumers. Adding too many

nutrient benefits also influenced consumption but required a good communication with reliable information and clear description.

It confirmed Shepherd frameworks in chapter two of three dimensions that influenced consumer's choice on decision making process. However the finding also showed that the perception among healthy food products quite different. Supplementary product perception is higher than organic foods and functional foods as they perceived supplementary product contains more nutrient and vitamin, while organic foods and functional foods just provide the amount of nutrient benefits as same as general foods. This affected directly to consumption rate and sales amount of these products. Moreover consumers tend to consume according to dietary commandments of daily intake of energy. This will give limitation to consumption rate as they follow the dietary commandments instruction.

5.2 Recommendation

The research provides information that has significantly important for the organic food and functional food business. The recommendations are collected from the consumers' point of view when experienced with organic food and functional food products. Business firm may conduct new marketing strategy with these recommendations.

5.2.1 Marketing implication

Firstly, consumers have positive attitudes toward health conscious trend and also healthy products. Consumers having health concerns are motivated by good quality of life, and they also engage in healthier behavior to prevent illness (Michaelidou and Hanssan, 2008). However these products benefits are perceived lower than supplementary products even product description on nutrient benefit confirms that some of them almost as the same. One of the reason is that most of consumers perceive that organic food and functional foods are just one in a food category.

In order to generate high growth on sale and consumption, firm should not focus on consumers to change their consumption behavior or habits, but offer other

choices for them, by encourage people to add organic foods and functional foods with their meal in small portion, after that encourage on replace some nutrient ingredient in ordinary foods to organic foods or functional foods. This recommendation is follow the consumption on each meal of consumers.

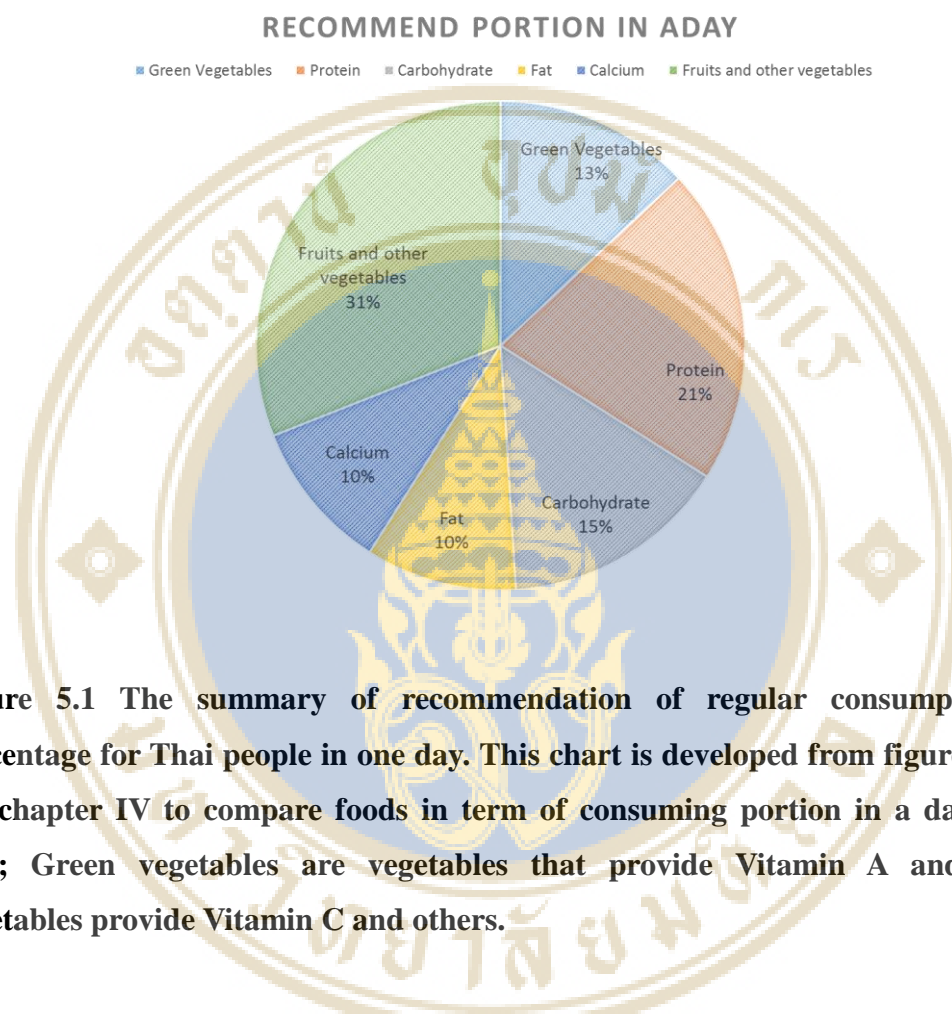


Figure 5.1 The summary of recommendation of regular consumption in percentage for Thai people in one day. This chart is developed from figure 4.2 on the chapter IV to compare foods in term of consuming portion in a day. Note that; Green vegetables are vegetables that provide Vitamin A and other vegetables provide Vitamin C and others.

Firm may adapt their marketing strategy to encourage people to consume according to this pie chart. With variety of products and nutrient ingredients, consumers can choose suitable one to fit with them.

Secondly, the information that firm should provide must have consistent with the product benefit and clear problem recognition. According form Kotler theory of a typical buying process leads the consumer though five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior (Kotler, 2000). This theory can be applied on this topic. Firm might promote product in term of benefit and avoiding health problem issues. Even most of

health conscious trend consumers learned and adopted themselves to prevent health problem issue, they still require a clear information and product description on nutrient ingredient issue. In addition, salesperson is important factor as they encourage consumers to purchase by providing useful information.

Firm require to invest in their employees. Training on nutrient knowledge would provide benefit to both firm and consumers. Trust and reliable are two important factors when consumers seek information, product must has clear description and should not advertise it with unrealistic features and benefits.

Thirdly, many consumers had the same problem on finding the same products in another areas and stores. Available in relevant products in term of product benefit and product category may not convince consumers to purchase as it different in brand and perception. This research interview found out that consumers is strongly consistent in particular brand that they have used as they trusted it. Firm should invest on expanding and distributing products in many areas in the future.

Finally, for firm that intends to promote new products in organic and functional food category firm might build brand image and brand awareness of its own brand as from the interview research showed that consumers have consistent in brand and its relevant products. It is very important toward consumers' perception that organic foods and functional foods must have brand that similar or relevant to friend's recommendation that they could trust. In other words, the prices factor has less impact on organic food and functional food consumption. Consumers preferred to choose the best choice for their health. Firm may launch promotion or discounting price to promote sale in some occasional.

Additionally, some interviewees concerned that the product they consume is organic and contain enough nutrient ingredients as description or not, moreover they would like to know the process of growing organic foods and manufacturing functional foods so firm could has some advertisements on these process.

5.3 Limitation

There are several obstacles and limitations in this thematic paper which are,

Firstly, only 15 interviewees have been done which has age range about 24 – 30 years as demographic and socio-demographic play a minor role for this topic.

Secondly, the research required in-depth analysis of more than one year experienced consumers in both organic foods and functional foods which focus in product category but not company brand.

Lastly, interviewees may influenced by the brand of the product which difficult to measure.

5.4 Future Research

This thematic emphasizes the need of future researchers who would like to do the marketing research in other areas such as product category and brand awareness among consumers toward health conscious trend in Thailand. This research focused on consumer behavior and factors that influenced consumers to consume organic food and functional food products.

Moreover this research limited to organic and functional food products which are small fractions of health conscious trend and healthy products in the market, future research may include this as reference on the research which may be relevant in business environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview

Respondent 11

1. Are you a health conscious person?

-Yes, if I have time I will do exercises and cook by myself.

2. Do you consume healthy food products such as organic food or functional food products or both?

-Yes, I take many kind of vitamin. I chose food for vitamin inside the food as well.

3. How long have you been consume organic and/or functional food products?

-For more than five years.

4. In your opinion what is the most attractive attributes in these products? (E.g. tastes, aroma, appearance).

- Appearance and easy to carry.

5. Why you decide to consume organic food and/or functional food products?

-I consume them for several purposes. Firstly, it is for repairing my body. Secondly, it is for taking care of my skin.

6. How do you think about health conscious trend in Thailand?

- It keep increasing.

7. Which factor influence you the most to consume organic food and/or functional food products?

-I want to take care my body. I have some health problem and I don't have enough sleep.

8. When did you start noticing and buying organic food and/or functional food products, and what were reasons?

-Friends' recommendation. I also search information by myself.

9. Does adoption of organic and functional foods change your lifestyle or consciousness about healthy living?

- Not at all.

10. Do you have it with your meal, and “what %” of overall food intake is organic or do you have specific categories portion?

- I sometimes consume with my breakfast, but I don't know exactly amount.

11. Do you have any obstacles when purchasing these products or what are the factors holding you back from buying organic foods?

- No, I can buy these products through Watson Store or other stores near my place.

12. Do you have positive attitude or negative attitude on organic food and/or functional food products? Why?

- Neutral. After that my life style and work hour influenced me to consume healthy products as I don't have enough time to sleep.

13. What communication on these products affects to you the most? (E.g. Food carriers, functional ingredients, and health claim).

- Ingredients. I focus on Vitamin that I should consume daily. If I had enough of Vitamin C from this product then I will not consume other products to get Vitamin C.

14. What is your opinion or perception about organic food or functional food values as benefit and price of organic food and functional food products are not equal to general food category?

- It's Ok. I think these products are good for me.

15. Do people generally believe the claims of organic food, or are they skeptical about the claims?

- Some are unrealistic, but the products that I have used are quite good. I already know the product ingredients and nutrients before I buy.

16. How much do you spend on each transaction?

- Around 600THB - 800 THB.

17. Would you please explain about the information you may looking for when consider to buy these products?

- I require more information on new products or suggestion for other product category.

18. Do you want to continue using these products and recommend to your friends or family members?

- Yes, I recommend the product that I use to my mother, we also share these product together.

Appendix B: Interview

Respondent 9

1. Are you a health conscious person?

- Yes I am

2. Do you consume healthy food products such as organic food or functional food products or both?

- I do consume both products but prefer to take organic food more than functional food products.

3. How long have you been consume organic and/or functional food products?

- I have started to seriously consuming organic food for 1 year. However, I consumed organic food and functional products from times to times depending on my mood.

4. In your opinion what is the most attractive attributes in these products? (E.g. tastes, aroma, appearance).

- Most attractive attributes are its benefit. I see some other choices as a part of marketing point of view.

5. Why you decide to consume organic food and/or functional food products?

- I easily get sick and usually eat unhealthy food. Consuming organic food might keep up my body function and immune system to be normal and steady.

6. How do you think about health conscious trend in Thailand?

- I have seen the trend heavily boomed for 1-2 years, but within 2014, people are more conscious in eating healthy food and exercise more in Thailand.

7. Which factor influence you the most to consume organic food and/or functional food products?

- Relevant to answer number 6 - its benefits is the only factor influence me to consume organic food.

8. When did you start noticing and buying organic food and/or functional food products, and what were reasons?

- I usually buy them all the time. It is just an amount of buying.

9. Does adoption of organic and functional foods change your lifestyle or consciousness about healthy living?

- Yes it does.

10. Do you have it with your meal, and “what %” of overall food intake is organic or do you have specific categories portion?

- 70% vegetable/20 protein/10 carb = per portion (when I cook for myself)

11. Do you have any obstacles when purchasing these products or what are the factors holding you back from buying organic foods?

- Distribution places are limited and price are sometimes holding my purchasing decision.

12. Do you have positive attitude or negative attitude on organic food and/or functional food products? Why?

- Positive attitude – planted and use non-pesticide/ hydroponic vegetable/normal fertilization

Negative attitude – uncertain if those organic food is GMO or not

13. What communication on these products affects to you the most? (E.g. Food carriers, functional ingredients, and health claim).

- Beneficial ingredients

14. What is your opinion or perception about organic food or functional food values as benefit and price of organic food and functional food products are not equal to general food category?

- If you meant the equality between its benefits value and price among other food category, my opinion is it is normal because it can give you higher potential and more ingredients in nutrition which is healthy for human body. So I will purchase at defined store that is trustable store such as “Doi-Come” and “Royal Project”

15. Do people generally believe the claims of organic food, or are they skeptical about the claims?

- What did they claim? For being healthy? – I don’t know about the other people but because organic food has evidence and reference in various research so I do believe in its claim.

16. How much do you spend on each transaction?

- It varies as it depends on seasonal products corporate with price offered.

17. Would you please explain about the information you may looking for when consider to buy these products?

- Several times an advice from doctor as well with family and friends' recommendation

18. Do you want to continue using these products and recommend to your friends or family members?

- Yes, I do and will do. However, I will recommend to those who are interested in consuming healthy product or having some similarity of lifestyles.

