FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' PURCHASE DECISION OF PRIVATE LABELS IN A RETAILER IN THAILAND



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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' PURCHASE DECISION OF PRIVATE LABELS IN A RETAILER IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research are to study the key factors influencing customers' purchase decision of private labels in Retailer A. The factors were price consciousness, quality consciousness, brand consciousness, risk perception and store image. This research used qualitative approach by conducting the in-depth interview from twenty respondents who have been purchased private labels from Retailer A.

This study revealed that "price consciousness" was considered as the most influencing factor on customers' purchase decision of private labels in a retailer in Thailand. On the other hand, there are negative impact of quality consciousness, brand consciousness and risk perception. However, store image have not influencing on both private labels image and perceived quality.

KEY WORDS: Private Labels / Store Brand / House Brand / Retailer / Consumer Behaviour

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, retailers are not only selling manufacturer or national brand product but are also selling their own private label brands. Private labels are also known as store brands, retailer brands or house brands. Private labels are defined as a brand owned by a retailer or wholesale distributor which has the right to sell or distribute the brands exclusively in its own retail outlet (Herstein and Gamliel, 2004). Meanwhile, national brands or manufacturer brands refer to a brand owned by the manufacturer that sell or distribute nationally. Private labels have been positioned as low price and good value for money. Private labels price are normally cheaper than national brands about 10 - 30% (George Baltas, 1997). Therefore, their major selling point are price advantages (Zeithaml, 1988).

Private labels have been flourishing in developed regions such as Europe, North America and Australia which have the higher market share than the developing market (Nielson, 2014). The report shows that Switzerland still maintains its position as the country which has the highest share of private labels value shares at 45%. However, private labels struggles to gain consumer trust in developing regions like Asian and the Middle East because consumers are strongly loyal to national brands.

In Thailand, retailing industry has developed from a traditional to modern trade for over 40 years. Hypermarket has been a key player in retail sector, Euromonitor International (2009d) reported that hypermarkets in Thailand reached 64 billion USD with a total of 163 outlets in 2008, a growth of 37 and 34 percent in terms of sales and number of outlets since 2005, respectively. The hypermarket sales are driven by three major multinational retailers which are Tesco Lotus, Big C and Carrefour. These retailers also sell their own private labels by offering low price to price consciousness consumers (Reutterer and Teller, 2009; Shannon and Mandhachitara, 2008). In Thailand, private labels market is still small which has only 1% of market share (Nielson, 2014).

This research focuses on private labels in Thai market by choosing one leading retailer in Thailand as a case study. The researcher uses wording of "Retailer A" to refer the retailer in this case study. The company background of Retailer A is described below.

Company Background: Retailer A is a British retailer company which known as one of the world's leaders in retail business that operates in 12 countries across Europe and Asia. Retailer A has been operating in Thailand since 1994 and has become the biggest retailer in Thailand, employing over 50,000 staffs nationwide across 5 different store formats (Extra, Hypermarket, Department store, Talad, Express). Retailer A provides a wide range of product categories such as fresh food, prepared foods, grocery and non-food including household goods, electronic appliances, toys, stationery and apparel. In addition, Retailer A also offers retail and financial services including bill payment, visa credit card, personal loans and insurance broker.

Retailer A has developed several types of their private labels under different private labels brands. For example, "Retailer A Every Day Value" or "Koom-ka" is a fit for purpose product and offering at cheapest possible price. The wording of "Koom-ka" is a Thai language which means to real value for money. "Retailer A" is the price sensitive product segment that has a similar quality to national brands but offering at lower price. "Retailer A Finest" is the premium house brands product that emphasizing on quality. As for Apparel product, Retailer A creates its flagship exclusive clothing brands as "F&F" and "Assign". F&F is an international fashion brand from the UK which offering wide range of fashion, modern design and high quality outfits at reasonable price for any lifestyle while Assign is a simple style or easy to wear outfits with affordable price that value for money.

1.1 Problem Statement & Research Objectives

Private labels are dominant in developed regions such as Europe, North America and Australia. Unlike Asian region, private labels are slowly growth in the market because Asian consumers are strongly loyal to national brands. In addition, retailers have not invested enough in marketing private labels to persuade consumers to trust its brand and quality. As a result, these caused private labels struggles to gain consumer trust in Asian region (Nielson, 2014). The private labels share declined in Asian region. In Thailand, Nielson (2014) reported that YTD2013/2014 private labels dollar share only 1% and also declined by -2.8% from year 2010. Thus, the researcher is interested in finding out why the private labels are struggling in Thailand even though the leading retailer like Tesco Lotus started developing and selling private labels as a core strategy when they first operated business in the country since 1998.

The purposes of this research are to study the key factors influencing customers' purchase decision of private labels in Retailer A. To understand what are the factors which drive Thai consumer preferences toward private labels.

1.2 Scope of Study

The scope of study is to determine consumer's perception towards private labels and examine what are the key factors that influencing customers' purchase decision of private labels. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with Thai consumers who have been purchasing private label products from Retailer A. The sampling size of twenty respondents are taken from those private labels consumers in Bangkok area.

1.3 Expected Benefits

This research aims to help retailers or wholesale distributor to understand the key factors influencing customers' purchasing decision of private labels. This study will benefit retailers or wholesale distributors who aim to develop private labels in order to maximise sales, profits and also strengthen brand loyalty to their stores. This research will provide the recommendations that can help to develop the right strategy and product range to serves customer's needs.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter described literature review in the area of private labels overview, determinants of purchasing decision and conceptual framework.

2.1 Private Labels in Retail Business

Private labels refer to a brand owned by a retailer or wholesale distributor which sell or distribute under their own brands through their own store (Baltas, 1997). Traditionally, private labels have been positioned as low price and good value for money. However, private labels try to improve their quality while continuing to offer products at lower price in order to lessen the low quality perception (Richardson et al., 1996). According to Nielsen (2014), 71% of global consumers stated that the quality of private labels has improved over time. However, price is still important to most consumers and it is the primary driver of purchase intention of private labels as there're 70% of respondents stated that they purchase private labels to save money.

The retailers use private labels to increase business in term of sales and profitability as well as strengthen their store's image and customer's loyalty. Ram and Eugene (2007) stated that private labels help retailers to differentiate themselves from other retailers and also enhance the store's image and store loyalty. In addition, some private labels are no longer perceived as category killers or cheap alternative to national brands, but are comparable to nation brands (De Wulf et al., 2005).

In the global market, a study of Nielsen (2014) reported that private labels have been flourishing in Europe especially in Switzerland and U.K. that have highest private labels share 45% and 46% respectively. In addition, the perception of private labels show strong positive image in Europe region as almost 70% of respondents trust the private labels in term of good value for money and also consider it as a good alternative to national brands. In contrast, Nielsen (2014) found that private labels have

been growth slowly in Asian market because low investment in marketing to persuade customers to trust and ensure its quality while the Asian customers are likely more trust and strong loyalty to national brands. The Asian respondents feel too risky to waste money when trying private labels instead of buying national brands. They are more trust in national brands rather than private labels although they have to pay extra price.

2.2 Determinants of Private Labels Purchasing Decision

2.2.1 Price consciousness

Price conscious consumers are defined as the consumers who are focusing on price as the most important factor in their decision to purchase (Burton et al, 1998). According to price conscious consumers are usually seek for the low prices, the high price conscious consumers pay more attention to low price than those who are low level of price consciousness. Traditionally, private labels price are lower than leading national brands and they have been positioned as low price and good value for money. A study of Raju et al. (1995) stated that private labels have a well performance in product category where consumers are more price conscious. Another study also stated that price conscious consumers who tend to pay low price have a positive attitude towards purchasing private labels (Burton et al., 1998). In addition, price consciousness also has a positive and significant relationship with private labels purchasing (Baltas et al., 2007). Thus, the attractiveness of price is a major reason to purchase private labels.

2.2.2 Quality consciousness

Quality conscious consumers are focusing on quality as one of key important factor while making the decision to purchase private label brands. According to private labels positioned itself as lower price than national brands, private labels are normally perceived as inferior quality. Many studies stated that the private labels have a negative impact on purchasing because of low quality (Steenkamp and Dekimpe, 1997; Erdem et al., 2004). There're many research found that private labels are more successful in product categories where private labels quality are similar to national brands. When private labels quality are significantly different from national brands, consumers tend to choose national brands instead of private labels in order to reduce perceived risk of that purchase (Semeijn et al., 2004). Private labels purchase intention is higher when the quality is indifferent between private labels and national brands (Dick et al., 1995). Additionally, Erdem et al. (2004) stated that the quality conscious consumers tend to buy private labels when only they perceived private labels position as high quality alternative to national brands. These findings show that there is a negative influence between quality conscious and private labels purchase.

By contrast, the research of Verhoef et al. (2002) argued that the improved in the quality of private labels has influenced more positive consumers' attitude towards private labels. So, the quality gap between private labels and nation brands is decreasing and private labels are not perceived as inferior quality.

2.2.3 Brand consciousness

Brand-conscious consumers are focusing on brand as an important factor in purchasing decision. Brand-conscious consumers are defined as those who favour to purchase renowned and highly advertised national brands (Sproles and Kendell, 1986). Private labels consumers are usually price conscious or variety seekers who do have a stable brand selection and less brand loyal (Baltas, 1997; Garretson et al., 2002). Price gap has also impact to buying behaviour, when the price between private labels and national brands is narrowed, these consumers can easily switch to national brands (Putsis and Cotterill, 1999).

National brands are perceived as less risk and higher quality whereas private labels are commonly perceived as high risk, low quality and poor image (Goldsmith et al., 2010). Therefore, consumers often use the brand name to measure and evaluate product quality (Richardson et al., 1994) and also reduce risks (DelVecchio, 2001).

2.2.4 Risk perception

Perceived risks are considered as a critical that influences consumers' intention to purchase private labels (Batra and Sinha, 2000; Bettman, 1973; Dunn et al., 1986). Private labels tend to perceived as higher risk due to their inferior quality and low reliability. Many studies stated that the greater the perceived risk, the lower the consumer purchasing intention on private labels (Dunn et al., 1986; Erdem et al., 2004;Richardson et al., 1996). Perceived risk is classified as three aspects which were function risk (product malfunctioning, undesirable attributes), financial risk (wasting money) and social risk (social objections). A study of Dunn et al. (1986) concluded that consumers consider private labels as most risky on performance measures compared to national brands whereas financial is considered as least risky. However, social risk is less important for private labels purchasing (Mieres et al., 2006). Consumers would rather choose national brands as their choice to avoid negative consequences such as uncertainty and adverse consequences (Baltas, 1997).

Even though retailers have been developing the private labels by improve their positioning and appearance such as quality, packaging in order to be perceived as an alternatives brand for consumers, but private labels are still perceived as riskier purchase alternatives to national brands (Mieres et al., 2006). When switching from national brands to private labels, the uncertainty quality is the main factor for consumers' making decision (Batra and Sinha, 2000).

2.2.5 Store image

Store image or retailer image has significant influence on consumer perception of private labels (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; De Wulf et al., 2005; Kapferer, 2008). Martineau (1958) defined the concept of store image as how consumers perceived the store by determining both functional attributes and psychological qualities. The key factors that determine retailer's image include quality of products, product assortment, services provided, physical facilities, layout, and internal environment (Grewal et al., 1998; Anselmsson et al., 2007).

The positive perception of store's image also influences a positive attitude toward consumers' purchasing decision on private label (Wu et al., 2011). Store image have influencing on both private labels image and perceived quality. Vahie and Paswan (2006) stated that a better store images leads to a greater perception of private labels including brand image and quality perception (Semeijn et al., 2004; Beristain and Zorrilla, 2011).

2.3 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework in figure 1 was developed from the review of previous studies. This conceptual framework demonstrates the key factors influencing on purchase decision of private labels into five aspects which are price consciousness, quality consciousness, brand consciousness, risk perception and store image. The researcher used this conceptual framework to examine customer's purchasing decision of private labels in Retailer A in order to examine their consumer behaviour.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provided information about the used methods in this study. The research design, population and sampling size, process of data collection and data analysis were discussed in this section. The researcher used qualitative research methods in this study and the primary data were collected from in-depth interviews.

3.1 Research Design

This research used qualitative research to collect the primary data. Qualitative research is a type of scientific research which provides complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993) qualitative research is defined as, "primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories." Qualitative methods generally aim to understand the experiences and attitudes of people of their social context or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). It provides information about behaviours, beliefs, values, opinions, emotions and the relationships of individuals.

This research used the qualitative research because they provide more flexibility than quantitative research. According to the questions of qualitative research are mostly "open-ended" questions, therefore they provides the opportunity for participants to respond in their own words, spontaneous express their opinions rather than choosing from fixed responses.

3.2 Population and Sampling

In this research, the target population were consumers who purchase private labels in Retailer A. The sampling size are twenty respondents who have been purchasing private labels from Retailer A. The sample group has the age range between 20 - 60 years old. Due to the limitation of time and resources, the sample group of this research will be focused only consumers in Retailer A for Bangkok area. The researcher provided the private label product samples to the respondents in order to ensure they correctly understood about the private labels. This research will use purposive sampling which is one of the common sampling methods used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling is the method that being used for identifies participants based on selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Merriam, 2009).

3.3 Data Collection

The primary data in this research were collected from in-depth interviews because this method provides a useful insight information and context in a given research topic. The researcher can use the in-depth interviews to explore an individuals' experiences, beliefs, values, feelings and perspectives of an issue (Denzin et al., 2000). The interviewee is given the opportunity to discuss spontaneously about experiences, behaviour and beliefs in relation to the research topic. This interaction is called as "non-directive" or "informant interview" which means the interviewee's perceptions that guide the conduct of the interview.

This research conducted on a one to one interview by using the "open-ended" questions to ask the participants because the interviewees are not necessary to choose the fixed responses but they are free to respond in their own words, so the interviewees have the opportunity to response more elaborately and the researcher also gains more insight and useful information as well (Denzin et al., 2000). Additionally, probing questions were used to collect data during interview. Most of probing questions begins with "why" and "how", so the researcher could obtain more specific or in-depth information from the respondents by using probing questions. The list of interview questions are provided as table below.

Factors	Questions
Price	- How important of price is on your
	purchasing decision of private label
	products?
	- Why do you think that price is primary
	reason of purchasing private label
	products?
	- Why do you willing to pay higher price
	for national brands?
Quality	- What do you think about the quality of
	private label products?
	- Why do you perceive differences in
	quality between national brands and
, 10 7	private label brands?
	- Why do you think that private label
	products offer a low quality? (Please give
	an example)
Brand consciousness	- Why do you consider brands in
	purchasing decision?
	- Why do you think that purchasing well-
	known brands is better than private label
	brands?
	- How do you think about the risk and
	quality between well-known brands and
	private label brands?
Risk perception	- How do you feel when purchasing a
9	risky product?
	- Why do you think that the purchasing
10	private labels are risky? (Please give
	example)
Store image	- How do you feel about the store
	image/environment?
	- Do you agree that a better store images
	leads to a greater brand image and quality
	perception? If yes, please explain

 Table 3.1 The list of interview questions

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is one of research methods that used to analyse text data, it involves with the interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The purpose of content analysis is to provide knowledge and

understanding of the phenomenon in a given research topic (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). The qualitative data were collected into both written and non-written forms which are reflective note taking and audio recording, these data need to be condensed (summarized), grouped (categorized) or restructured as a narrative to support meaningful analysis (Dey, 1993).

Data coding process is to organize the data that are collected in qualitative research into content categories (Weber, 1990). Coding is the process of examining the raw qualitative data which in form of words, phrases, sentences and then making the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names. Coding data helps to reduce the complexity of the information obtained, which make it easier to search any patterns that will be used in the research.



CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the result of data which were collected from the in-depth interviews with twenty respondents who have been purchasing private labels of Retailer A in Bangkok area. The result of data was divided into two parts which were demographic characteristics profiles and factors influencing on purchasing decision of private label products.

4.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents

This study was collected data by using in-depth interviews from twenty participants who have been purchasing private label products of Retailer A in the past two months. Demographic characteristics of the respondents were summarized in Table 4.1. Around 70 percent of the respondents were female. The age range were 20 – 30 years old (50 percent) and 31 - 40 year olds (40 percent). A total of 90 percent of the respondents held a bachelor's or master degree. As for occupation, employee in private firms accounted for 70 percent of total respondents. In total, 60 percent of the respondents earned monthly incomes between 20,001 – 40,000 baht.

Table 4.1 Demographic background of respondents classified by gender, age range,
marital status, education level, occupation and income range

Demographic Background	Quantity	Percentage
Gender		
Female	14	70%
Male	6	30%
Total	20	100%
Age range		
20 - 30	10	50%
31 - 40	8	40%
41 - 50	1	5%
51 - 60	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Demographic Background	Quantity	Percentage
Marital status		
Single	14	70%
Married	5	25%
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	1	5%
Total	20	100%
Education level		
High school graduate	2	10%
Bachelor's degree	12	60%
Master's degree	6	30%
Total	20	100%
Occupation	2	
Business owner	1	5%
Employee of private firm	14	70%
Employee of government/state		
enterprises	4	20%
Housewife	1	5%
Total	20	100%
Income range (baht/month)		
10,000 - 20,000	5	25%
20,001 - 40,000	12	60%
40,001 - 60,000	2 5	10%
More than 60,001		5%
	20	100%

Table 4.1Demographic background of respondents classified by gender, age range,marital status, education level, occupation and income range (cont.)

4.2 Factors Influencing on Customer's Purchasing Decision of Private Label

The objective of this research was to examine the customers' perception towards private label products, their experiences and factors influencing on purchasing decision. The in-depth interviews were collected from 20 respondents who have been purchasing private label product from Retailer A in Bangkok area. The researcher used data coding techniques to organize and analyse the collected data.

The results show that price consciousness contributed significantly to the purchase decision of private label products because most of respondents (18 out of 20

respondents) considered low price as the first reason for their making decision, followed by quality (14 out of 20 respondents).

4.2.1 Price consciousness

There are 18 out of 20 respondents have chosen price as the primary factor for purchase decision of private labels products. They usually purchased private label products because the selling price was normally lower than national brands. They agreed that purchasing private label products will help them to save their expenses, get more products or quantity when spend at the same certain amount of money. Furthermore, some products are not necessary to require high quality, so purchasing private label products at cheaper price is good alternative choice for them to save their money. More respondent's opinions are described below.

"I bought private label products because they offered lower price than branded products. Normally, price of private label products are cheaper than branded products around 10 - 30 percent, so I can save the expenses from the price gap between private label and branded products."

"Price is a primary factor that I considered when purchase household goods. According to I have low income (10,000 - 20,000 baht per month), so I choose private label products which offering at low price to save my money."

"I purchase private label products because the price is much cheaper than branded products. If I have limited budget, I prefer to choose private label products because I can get more products or quantity when spend at the same certain amount of money."

"Price is important for me when making purchase decision. I purchase private label because some products are not necessary to spend higher money to purchase branded products. I feel that the quality of some products are not much different, so it's better to get a cheaper price."

"I prefer to purchase private label products in some categories in order to save money because some products are not necessary to consider the quality or not require high quality such as hand towel, plastic-ware and stationery products.

"As I'm working at restaurants, I can reduce cost of ingredients by purchasing private label products such as oil, fish sauce and sugar. In my opinion, I think the quality and tastes are not much different from branded but the price is much cheaper than branded products. So, it's better to choose private label products in order to save the cost."

From the result of interviews, the researcher found that most of respondents considered price as primary factors for their purchasing decision of private label products. This finding is compatible with the previous study which found that most of respondents who have been purchasing private labels are price consciousness consumers who focus on paying low price (Burton et al, 1998). The attractiveness of price is a major reason to purchase private label products because consumers can save money, cost, get more products and quantity.

4.2.2 Quality consciousness

Quality is another factor that respondents considered when making purchase decision of private label products. There are 14 out of 20 respondents stated that they considered quality before purchasing private label products. From the interviews, the researcher found that many respondents perceived private label products as low quality from their perceptions and experiences. Some of respondents can be seen as below.

"I am not trust in quality of private label products because the retailers can't produce products by themselves so they have to outsource the manufacture. Even though private label products are produced from the same factory as the branded products but I still not trust the quality and prefer to choose branded rather than private label products. In my opinions, I think the raw materials, ingredients or production processes of private label products might different from branded products because the retailers have to reduce cost."

"I think that the manufacturer will not produce private label products to have similar or equal quality as their branded products because the manufacturer should avoid cannibalization in the same product category."

"I perceived private label product as inferior quality because I believe that low price caused to low quality."

"From my experiences, I used to try some products such as dish washing liquid, floor cleaning liquid and air-freshener. I found that the quality of private label products are lower than branded to products. For example, I need to use more quantity of dish washing liquid to get the same effect as branded products. In addition, the floor cleaning liquid and air-freshener give off a fragrance in short period of time."

"I used to try some foods such as canned tuna and fruit jam, the tastes were not good because low grade of raw material."

"I perceived private label products positioning as low quality because package design are similar to branded products which make it feel like a copycat. Therefore, I didn't trust the quality of private label products but if the retailers develop their package design to differentiate themselves from branded products, it might attract me to purchase."

This finding is in line with previous study which stated that the private labels have a negative impact on purchasing because of low quality (Steenkamp and Dekimpe, 1997; Erdem et al., 2004). Most of respondents perceived private label products as low quality. The respondents used both extrinsic and their personal experiences for quality evaluation. Therefore, they did not purchase private label products when perceived inferior quality. As a result, it was assumed that consumers who are quality conscious are less likely to purchase private label products.

4.2.3 Brand consciousness

Brand reputation is another factor that was found in this research. Respondents mentioned as following examples.

"I'm familiar with branded products because long-established and high reputation".

"I choose branded products because it represents to high quality standard of that particular product."

"Brand is a key factor in my purchase decision because I trust the quality of the branded products which I normally used."

"Many branded products are advertised through various channels such as TV, radio and internet. So, I feel that it makes me feel trust and perceive as higher quality than private label products which are not highly advertised and not well-known for Thai consumers." "I think purchasing branded products are better than private label products because it has higher quality and lower risk. For example, I do not need to worry about the quality. If I purchase private label products that provide unexpected quality, it's might wasting money if I have to repurchase another product to replace the previous one."

"I prefer to purchase branded instead of private label products because more varieties of products such as flavour, colour, scent, and shape while private label product might have less variety."

From the interviews, respondents think that purchasing branded products are better than private label products because branded products are perceived as higher quality and less risk. This findings is compatible with the previous studies which stated that consumers often use the brand name to measure and evaluate product quality (Richardson et al., 1994) and also reduce risks (DelVecchio, 2001).

4.2.4 **Risk perception**

From the interviews, respondents considered perceived risks as a critical factor that influences their purchase intention to private label products. Some example from respondents can be seen as below.

"I'm not confident in private label products because it perceived as low quality and low reliability. I feel that it's risky in term of wasting money, inefficiency, short product life time, unsafe and allergy."

"I avoid purchase private label from electronic appliances because it perceived as high risk and unsafe. I consider on safety rather than saving money. So, I'm willing to pay higher price for branded products to reduce risk."

"I do not use private label in health and beauty (HBA) products because it may cause to allergy."

This interview has found that almost all respondents do not purchase private label products in the categories that they perceived as higher risk. This finding is in line with the previous studies which found that the greater the perceived risk, the lower the consumer purchasing intention on private labels (Dunn et al., 1986; Erdem et al., 2004;Richardson et al., 1996). In addition, they are willing to pay higher price for branded products to reduce risk (Baltas, 1997).

4.2.5 Store image

From the interviews, there are 17 out of 20 respondents did not agree that the store image have influencing on both private labels image and perceived quality. Some example from respondents can be seen as below.

"I don't think product quality has anything to do with store image but quality should be decided from the product itself."

"In my point of view, store image does not involve with perception of brand image and quality. I think that a better quality leads to a greater perception of brand image for private label products.

This finding is irrelevant to previous study which stated that store image have influencing on both private labels image and perceived quality. In addition previous study also mentioned that a better store images leads to a greater perception of private labels including brand image and quality perception (Semeijn et al., 2004; Beristain and Zorrilla, 2011).

This finding show the different view point as most of respondents think that the perception of quality should be decided from the product itself. Some of respondents suggest that the retailers should focus on improving quality in order to have a greater perception of brand image. UNIA

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CHAPTER V RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Practical Implications

This study attempted to determine consumer's perception and understand what are key factors influencing customer's purchase decision of private labels in Retailer A. From the findings, price consciousness contributed significantly to customer's purchase decision of private label products. On the other hand, there are negative impact of quality consciousness, brand consciousness and risk perception. The result shows that poor quality restrains consumers from purchasing decision even if private labels offer a low price. In addition, consumers prefer to purchase national brands and use brand name to avoid risk and to ensure quality. In term of risk perception, the result shows that private labels are perceived as high risk due to its quality. However, store image have not influencing on both private labels image and perceived quality.

The findings of this research will help retailers to better utilise private labels to maximise sales, profits and enhance their brand loyalty. This research will provide the recommendations which can help retailers to develop the right strategy and product range to serves customer's needs as following. Firstly, price is considered as the most important factor for purchasing decision. Most of customers decided to purchase private labels because it offering low price compared to national brands. Therefore, the retailers should set price structure to significantly cheaper than national brands and communicate this major selling point to their customers in order to capture customers who are price consciousness. Next, product quality is another important factor that customers consider when making purchase decision. The interview result shows that the respondents did not satisfy with the quality. They will buy once if price is cheap but quality is not good. The retailers should improve their quality in order to reach consumer's satisfaction. The customers will switch to purchase private labels when they perceive the quality is similar to national brands. In addition, the retailers should develop packaging by designing new packaging instead of copycat in order to appeal customers and differentiate from nation brands and other retailers. In term of brand awareness, the retailers should introduce advertising in both offline and online marketing communications. Lastly, it would suggests that the retailers should offer a warranty for those product that seemed to have high risk in order to ensure its quality and reduce perceived risk for their customers.

5.2 Limitations of the Study & Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations in this study are small sample size and interview location. First, the sample size are small as there are twenty respondents to conduct in-depth interview. Therefore, it would suggest that the future research should collect more sampling in order to give the study's result more integrity. Second, the research data were collect through in-depth interview from only two locations in Bangkok area because of time constraint. The future research should conduct interview from both urban and rural areas to obtain more respondent's experience and perception toward private labels.

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Appendix A: The interview guide

Introduction: This interview is the part of research in order to study consumer's perception towards private labels in Thailand. Private labels refer to a brand owned by a retailer which sell under their own brands through their own store. Private labels have a wide range of product categories such as fresh food, prepared foods, grocery and non-food including household goods, electronic appliances, toys, stationery and apparel.

Objective: To examine what are the key factors that influencing customers' purchase decision of private labels.

2. Male

2. Married

 \Box 2. 31 – 40 years old

4. 51 - 60 years old

Length of interview: 20-30 minutes approximately.

Section I: Demographic questions

- 1. What is your gender?
 - □ 1. Female
- 2. What is your age?

□ 1. 20 – 30 years old

□ 3. 41 – 50 years old

- 3. What is your marital status?
 - □ 1. Single
 - □ 3. Divorced/Separated/Widowed
- 4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
 - \Box 1. High school graduate \Box 2. Bachelor's degree
 - □ 3. Master's degree
- 5. What is your occupation?
 - □ 1. Business owner
 - □ 2. Employee of private firm
 - □ 3. Employee of government/state enterprises
 - □ 4. Housewife

6. Please specific your range of personal income per month?

□ 1. 10,000 - 20,000 Baht	□ 2. 20,001 - 40,000 Baht
🗖 3. 40,001 - 60,000 Baht	□ 4. More than 60,001 Baht

Section II: Interview guide questions

1. How important of price is on your purchasing decision of private label products?

2. Why do you think that price is primary reason of purchasing private label products?

3. Why do you willing to pay higher price for national brands?

4. What do you think about the quality of private label products?

5. Why do you perceive differences in quality between national brands and private label brands?

6. Why do you think that private label products offer a low quality? (Please give an example)

7 Why do you consider a brands in purchasing decision?

8. Why do you think that purchasing well-known brands is better than private label brands?

9. How do you think about the risk and quality between well-known brands and private label brands?

10. How do you feel when purchasing a risky product?

11. Why do you think that the purchasing private labels is risky? (Please give example)

12. How do you feel about the store image/environment?

13. Do you agree that a better store images leads to a greater brand image and quality perception? If yes, please explain

14. What is the most factors that you consider when purchasing private labels? (Rank from 1-3)
Appendix B: Consent Form



The consent of an interviewee on participating in interview research

I am willing to be an interviewee for this interview research conducted by

-- Theeraporn Pothipat --

I hereby, knowing that I will be one of 20 interviewees to do this research project named Thematic Paper that has designed for gathering information on the academic purpose.

- I am willing to do this research and understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I can withdraw and discontinue interviewee at any time that I feel uncomfortable with the question without penalty.
- I can deny answering to any question that I feel uncomfortable to answer or to end the interview.
- 3. I was informed that this interview will last around 10-15 minutes. I allowed writing a note using a tape record and also using subsequent dialogue which I understand that all these purpose will keep only for the term project and keep to standard data of policies that protects the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
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- 5. I have read and understood the above condition provided to me and if I have not understood any condition clearly, I have got explanation from the interviewer in Thai

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Interviewer's signature

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Jittra Sawangsai

Interviewee's signature

25/10/15

ชีกกรณ์ (พริฟิกก)

Interviewer's signature

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Interviewee's signature

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Interviewee's signature

26/ 10 /15 Date

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26/10/2015 Date



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28/10/2015

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Wimon Pong Knetkan

Interviewee's signature

28/10/58

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28/20/2015

Date



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Interviewer's signature

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Interviewer's signature

30/ 10/ 2015 Date



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32/20/2015

Date

REPLYRY INSTRACT

Interviewer's signature

31/10/2015

Date



I am willing to be an interviewee for this interview research conducted by

-- Theeraporn Pothipat --

I hereby, knowing that I will be one of 20 interviewees to do this research project named Thematic Paper that has designed for gathering information on the academic purpose.

- I am willing to do this research and understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I can withdraw and discontinue interviewee at any time that I feel uncomfortable with the question without penalty.
- I can deny answering to any question that I feel uncomfortable to answer or to end the interview.
- 3. I was informed that this interview will last around 10-15 minutes. I allowed writing a note using a tape record and also using subsequent dialogue which I understand that all these purpose will keep only for the term project and keep to standard data of policies that protects the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
- 4. I was informed by the interviewer that this research has been reviewed and approved by Dr.Pornkasem Kantamara, a professor at College of Management, Mahidol University. To question of this research paper may contacted through Dr.Pornkasem Kantamara.
- I have read and understood the above condition provided to me and if I have not understood any condition clearly, I have got explanation from the interviewer in Thai as well.

Jan.

Interviewee's signature

31 Oct 58

รี่ทุกรณ์ โพริพ์ณบ์

31/10/2015

Date

Date



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Cumpanit.

Interviewee's signature

31 Oct 15

Date

JUDIA INDIAN

Interviewer's signature

3/ 10/2015

Date



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Gentry

Interviewee's signature

32 / 20 / 58 Date

รี่งาภรณ์ โพริศัณภ์

Interviewer's signature

31/10/2015

Date



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31 Oct 15 Date

รี่ภากรณ์ โพชิฟสมบ

Interviewer's signature

31 10 2015

Date



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Chanakorn.

Interviewee's signature

31 10 115

Date

รี่ภากรณ์ โพธิพ์ณบั

Interviewer's signature

31/10/2015



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W.

ชี้ภายน์ โพชินณบั

Interviewee's signature

Nov 4,2015 Date

Interviewer's signature

4/11/2015 Date