

**INDEPENDENTLY LIVING WOMEN'S VALUES AND
CONSUMER PREFERENCES**



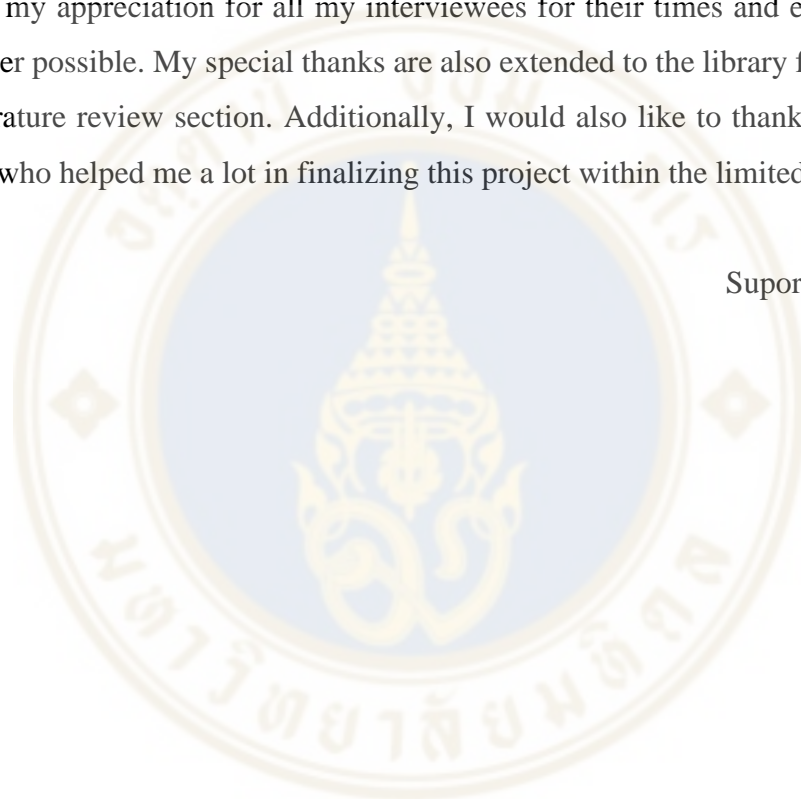
**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2020**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude for my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer for the valuable guidelines and all the suggestions for my paper, also providing me the opportunities to explore the topic. Secondly, I would also like to express my appreciation for all my interviewees for their times and efforts in making this paper possible. My special thanks are also extended to the library for their helps on my literature review section. Additionally, I would also like to thank my parents and friends who helped me a lot in finalizing this project within the limited time frame.

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a research on individual living women's values and customer preferences in Thai context. With the global change of growing population toward more of an individual household, this affect family life cycle, values, norms and therefore would affect consumer behavior. The qualitative method is used for this research on 10 interviewees.

Like in other context as found in the literature review, upbringing and change of norm influences this change, additionally among the interviewees, the work location is a strong influence. While financial factor supports the decision making for independent living, in Thai context not only financial independent but also financial support play the role. With a change in lifestyle, it provides one with more autonomy, privacy and much preferred lifestyle. Price also play a significant role when come to shopping for independent living women, since the cost of living as an individual is high. Privacy and security are main keys for habitation selection. For more accurate insight on the topic, further research could be conducted.

KEY WORDS: independent/ living/ women/ value

31 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the U.S., the majority of adults are living single. In 1950 single American adults accounted for 22 percent. Today, it accounts for more than 50 percent, in which 28 percent of those are living individually. Solo inhabitants are cluster together in the urban area; they are mostly women at about 17 million and men at about 14 million, which 15 million are middle-aged adults. (Klinenberg, 2014)

Referring to Euromonitor International, globally, the quantity of one-person households is increasing significantly at the rate of 33 percent, from 153 million to 202 million in 10 years, from 1996 to 2006. (Klinenberg, 2014) Even though both men and women showed similar changes toward living more independently, in this particular research, the focus will be on women.

As for reasons, the population in women is higher than men, as in 2006 in the U.S., at the age of 19 and above, there are 110 million women compared to 104 million men. In the workforce, women though count for 47% of all workers, but 51% in higher-paying professional, indicate that women have higher purchasing power over men. (Miller, 2007) Additionally, as referred from U.S. Census Bureau data, in 2008, 58% of females live alone, compared with 42% of males. While women continue to make up the majority of single-person households at 57%. (Miller, 2008)

As for in Thailand, according to research on Living Arrangements of Never-Married Thai Women in a Time of Rapid Social Change by TAN Joo Ean, since back in 1970 to 1990, the number of Thai unmarried women increased both in the age range of the early 30s and early 40s. Additionally, the rate of independent living women also increased, though at a lower rate. (Tan, 2002)

Moreover, from the population perspective, Thailand population also showed a similar pattern of higher population in women over men at 51.3% to 48.7% in 2020. (Thailand Demographics, 2020) Additionally, women in the workforce in Thailand show a high number of women in management positions, on the top three of

Asia Pacific, suggested that Thai women have a significantly high purchasing power. (Grant Thornton, 2017)

These altered family life cycle phenomena caused by a change of the personal value and social norm, which suggest a shift of consumer behavior pattern. How could businesses adjust to the transition to be able to capture this target, especially for living or lifestyle-related products, like household products, furniture, residential dwellings, or other kinds of a product? For instance, will only a smaller size of the product work for them. As we can see, many businesses are now trying to adapt to this social change. For instance, M.K. restaurant, a family perceived restaurant created single-seater pots to attract the solo customer or a small cooking electric appliance that provides various functions in a small portion suitable for single dwellers.

1.1 The scope

- To understand the perception of a good quality of life in single independent women's perspective and their values and preferences, which affect their choice of the living environment and quality of life.
- To understand the factors that influenced the personal value and consumer behavior of single living women.

Moreover, from those understanding in their values and preferences of single living women on their living environment, the related businesses, like household products or real estate, can use that information gained as advice to target this specific customer group.

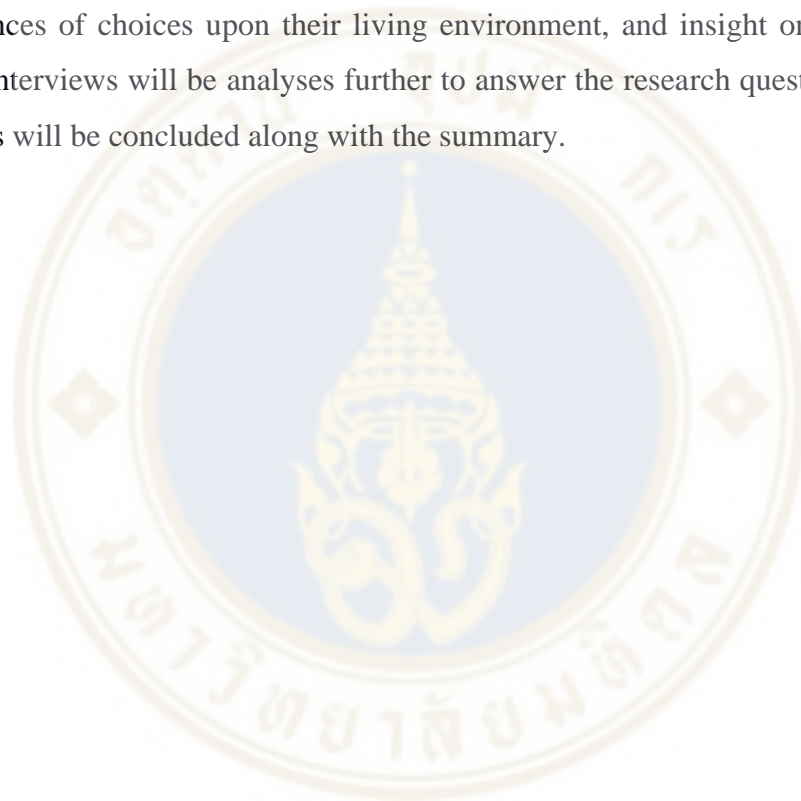
The context of this study will focus on single independent living women based in urban areas and women who are seeking opportunities to live independently in Bangkok.

1.2 The questions

The interviewee will be asked upon the personal value of independent living women and women who are thinking to live independently in the future, elements, or

environments that support or foster those women to be able to live independently and also to live with a quality of life and personal values affect consumer behaviors.

In this paper, the information will be gathered upon the influences, values and the impacts both positive and negative on the choice of living independently in women, the effects of personal value on consumer behavior, and similar research on the area of living preference of single living women in other areas. Then, the interview with several independent living women and women who are thinking of living independently in the future will be conducted to provide information about their personal values, preferences of choices upon their living environment, and insight on their behavior. These interviews will be analysed further to answer the research questions. Lastly, the findings will be concluded along with the summary.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past, it seemed strange to living alone. Today it has become more and more widespread since people can afford to do so with the economic wealth and social security from welfare. As Klinenberg referred to an Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter from the book, *Capitalism, Socialism and democracy* that all men and women would prefer to live "of comfort, of freedom from care, and opportunity to enjoy alternatives of increasing attractiveness and variety." Moreover, referring to contemporary wisdom as mentioned by Klinenberg, the search for happiness and success is more about open to new chances or possibilities in being able to seek the best rather than committing to another person. By having freedom, flexibility, and personal choice. (Klinenberg, 2014) which also associates with Glick mentioned, that individual "can do as they please in their home and know where to find everything." (Glick, 1994, p.446)

In recent decades, young adults have values living alone as a step of growing up to adulthood. Though, it is suggested that many of these young adults are brought up to do so, growing up with one's room. Since 1980, the average U.S. household had one bedroom per child. It has become quite a mandatory need for all household since. Additionally, as a child, they spend more time alone with the norm of both parents working. By 2005, roughly around 10 to 15 million American children under sixteen routinely spend time after school or summer vacation without parental surveillances. (Klinenberg, 2014)

As illustrated in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark, the Scandinavian modern democratic welfare state countries, where the government provides quite adequate social welfare and support. People live independently at a higher rate than in other countries compared—the higher rate of single living at roughly 40 to 45 percent. For family culture-oriented countries like Japan, the rate of single households stands at 30 percent and higher in the city area. Though, the fastest growth of individual

households goes to China, India, Brazil, which align with their economic growth. (Klinenberg, 2014)

In Thai socio-cultural context, marriage plays a significant scene in women's life; by the norm, women tend to live in with their parents until they marry. Still, between 1970 to 1990, the rate of never-married Thai women grew, from 9 to 14 percent in women aged 30-34 and from 3 to 8 percent in women aged 40-44. The numbers of single women are the highest in Bangkok, and the lowest in the northeast region. For Thai women, tertiary education is a reliable indicator; women tend to stay unmarried when having higher education, three times higher than those with primary education or no education. From the research, there is an indication suggested that not only the change in social and cultural context, having economic independence had given women more alternatives to be able to live by oneself. (Tan, 2002) This statement upon financial freedom also aligns with Klinenberg mentioned in his book about the British sociologist, Anthony Giddens, that at the moment when women gained her own economic independence, they will be less attached to traditional financial or social constraints. (Klinenberg, 2014) Additionally, this also aligns with research in Australia, that single people with a college degree are more likely to own a residence than others. (Darab, Hartman, & Holdsworth, 2018)

2.1 The Impacts of single living

It is arguing whether living alone is an excellent way to assure oneself or risk jeopardizing one's life. Glick also specified similar agreement that there are pros, cons, and tradeoffs to living independently, one can do what as one please, but a network is needed to be built, to avoid loneliness or unfortunate incidents. (Glick, 1994)

On the positive side, living alone provides room for an individual to pursue values, freedom, self-realization, find the meaning or the purpose of life and gain personal control, as stated by Klinenberg. Additionally, for women, single living grants them time to cultivate in her creativity and create her creative comfort as Sharon Marcus, literature scholars quoted by Klinenberg. Additionally, solo dwellers have their ways to reconnect with others by engaging in social life. Especially in a subculture, finding and sharing with others like oneself. (Klinenberg, 2014)

As stated in *Going solo*, people who have good physical, emotional, and financial health are more likely to have a good quality of life by meeting their balance than people who are not. For those with the stabilities, independent living gives them privacy, restoration, and inner-self-development. Though, for those who are not, this living lifestyle could lead to 'defensive individualism' as Sandra Smith, a sociologist called. (Klinenberg, 2014)

As mentioned in the research upon other researchers (Pinquart, & Sorensen, 2000) suggested that within women, life satisfaction is affected more by social interaction and lessen in socioeconomic than men. Gender differences do not profoundly affect the well-being of independent dwellers. (Gaymu, & Springer, 2012)

Referring to examples of individuals interviewed by Klinenberg, Phil, a 40s years old journalist who spent almost the last 20 years as a single household, stated that he values privacy and time to recharge after a long day. He also stated that he enjoys the serenity of living alone; it increases his creativity, hence becoming a better journalist and more engaging with others. Amy, another individual who is living alone, informed that since her career is highly socially interactive with all kinds of creative people, she is fond of having a peaceful home by herself. In Amy's interview, she stated that she moved in by herself as soon as she could afford so, as she felt that her previous shared habitats created negative results in her life. Having her own place, made Amy regain her autonomy and self-control. (Klinenberg, 2014)

On the other hand, as early as 1856, the author of *Wicked Architecture*, Walt Whitman, stated that solo living instead would make men more selfish and vulnerable, and women lonely, hysterical, and depressed. As well as other consequence words he listed, "listlessness; emptiness; sloth; nerves, dyspepsia; flirtations; prodigality; vain show." Also, as argues in many sociology books in U.S. history, which included *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, *The Fall of Public Man*, *The Culture of Narcissism*, *Habits of the Heart*, and *Bowling Alone* that a fall in community life results in poor health, failing schools, distrust, and happiness. Jacqueline Olds and Richard Schwartz warned that the increase of aloneness and the shift in the U.S. to social isolation is weakening their health and happiness. (Klinenberg, 2014)

Another side of the interview in Klinenberg's book, Greg, once a drug addict who recently been through a heart attack said it would be nice to have people around.

However, with the domestic problem he has with his family decades back, it seems impossible. Greg is now living in a shelter, alone. He tried making a relationship in the shelter and using them for social support, though he also feared that it would lead him in the wrong direction again.

Another example of Mary Ann, who lived alone for a decade and by 2007 at the age of 79 years old, died alone two weeks at the hospital after she called herself an ambulance. She did not have anyone by her bedside. (Klinenberg, 2014)

Referring to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as described in 5 types of needs.

- *Physiological needs*, the strongest need, the need of breathing, food, drink.
- *Safety needs*, when the physiological needs are met, the need for security arise.
- *Love, belonging needs*, by giving and gaining love, affection, and a sense of belonging to overcome loneliness.
- *Esteem needs*, to feel stable, having self-respect, and gaining respect from others to feel confident and being value, not feeling inadequate or worthless.
- *Self-actualization needs*, when all those needs are met, people will urge to do what they felt they are born to be.

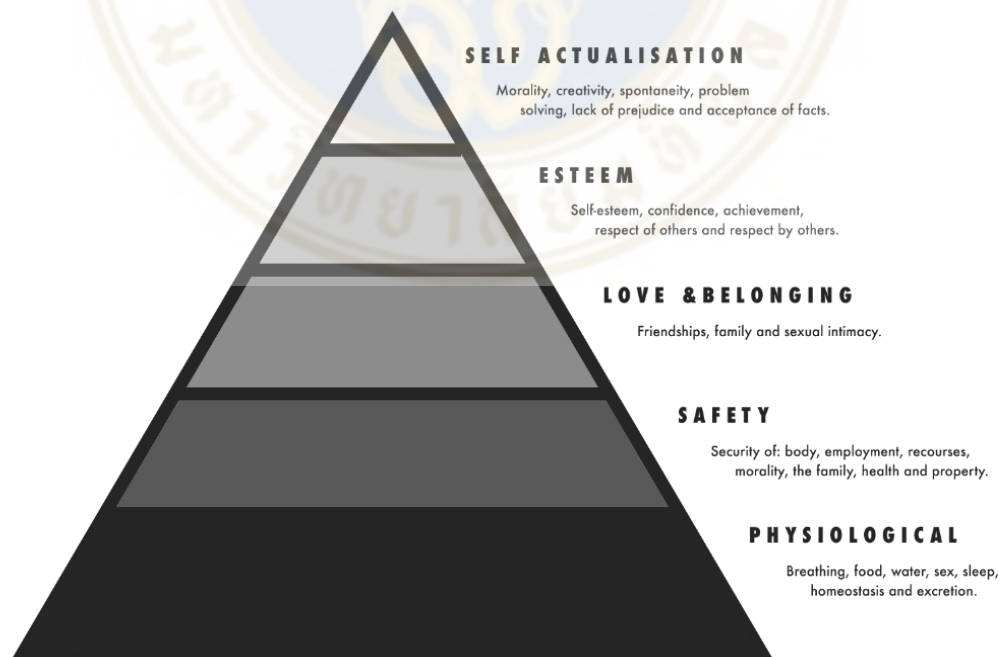


Figure 2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

As claimed in research took in Europe on how does living alone or with a partner influence life satisfaction among older men and women in Europe. (Gaymu, & Springer, 2012) In general, the studies shown that good health, adequate financial status, and a positive family network shape the well-being of a person.

We can imply that those people who are having positive effects of solo living is already achieved a basic level of physiological needs and safety. Living alone would foster them for love and belonging need with the people they choose, family, friends, or their own subculture society whenever they urge to. Independent living, as stated also provide dwellers the space to develop and find oneself to achieve esteem and self-actualization need. On the other hand, people who could not meet the physiological or safety needs before living alone would find it highly problematic to have a good quality of life.

2.2 Personal value impact on consumer behavior

Personal values are considered as a significant factor influencing human behavior. Consumer behaviorists have suggested the use of personal values to explain attitude toward and the purchase of specific classes of products. As referred to in the research by Pitts and Woodside (Howard, 1977), "his model describes that terminal values choice among product classes and instrumental values guide choice among brands." (Pitts, & Woodside, 1983, p.38)

From both pieces of research, it is found that strong relationships were found between values and consumer choice criteria. (Pitts, 1983) and "values are centrally held cognitive elements which stimulate motivation for the behavioral response." (Vinson, Scott, & Lamont, 1977, p.49)

In selecting a product, most customers determined the satisfaction in their own evaluation of their reflected image before developing the intention to buy. As referred by Torsten Lihra and Raoul Graf that many authors explain the consumer purchase process in sequential steps, which are activation, browsing, configuring, deciding, purchasing, and post-purchase evaluation. Firstly, the phase begins with the recognition of needs where consumers see a problem, a gap between the current state

and the desired state. Then the customer begins to gather information needed to make a decision. The larger the purchase, the more information is required. After acquired enough information, the decision is made; the criteria of choice-making vary from simple to complex.

Additionally, the prior experience influenced the decision as well. Then the consumer purchases and evaluate the experience after use. Though, the time spent in each step varies among consumers. (Lihra, & Graf, 2007) As shown in the diagram below with an example of a customer.

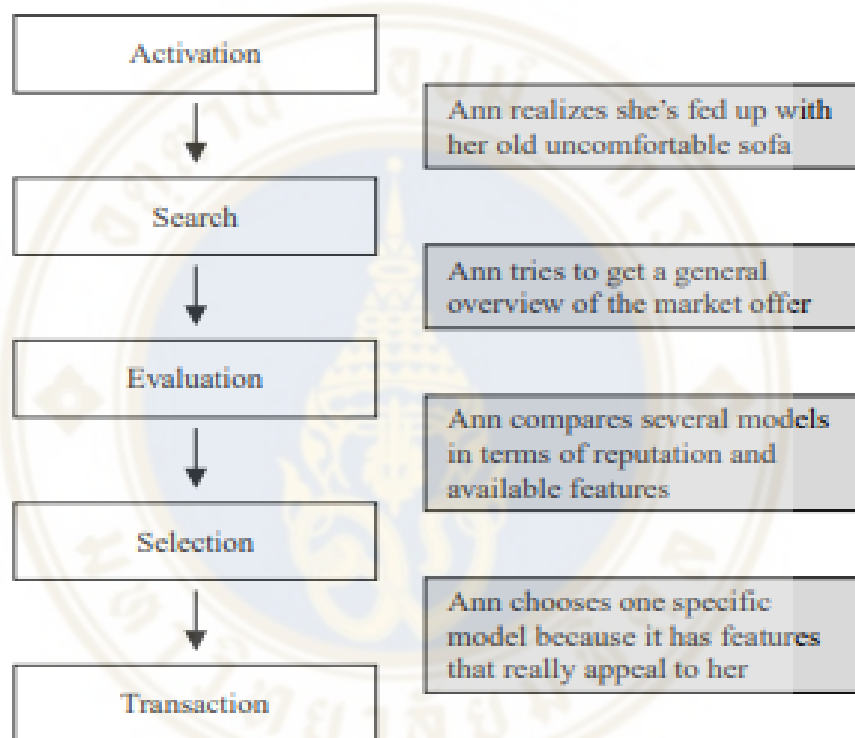


Figure 2.2 Consumer purchase process

For a single-person household, they are likely to share similar behaviors, as listed below. (Donthu, 2002)

- *Convenience-seeking*, single consumers usually seek busy life, filling their time with work, exercise, recreation, and other kinds of activities. Time is valuable, and no room for wasted time, singles tend to shop more in convenience stores.
- *Variety-seeking*, single people tend to have a high willingness to try new styles, products, or experiences.

- *Risk aversiveness*, having no responsibility of families, they are less reluctant to risk when compare to non-singles.

- *Price consciousness*, as mentioned above, about having more disposable income, singles are less price-conscious than non-singles.

- *Innovativeness*, having less risk aversiveness and greater variety seeking, their cognitive style is more innovative.

- *Brand consciousness*, isolation in a single-person household suggest that their desire might lead more to brand identification than others.

- *Impulsiveness*, together with having a high sense of variety seeking, a single person displays more impulsive purchasing than others.

- *Television-viewing behavior*, as suggested that singles are more active with alone activities, television is likely to be one of the activities that single engaged more.

As listed above, there are also differences between single by choice and single by chance. People who are single by choice are more likely to engage in more of an active lifestyle, so it is suggested that they are more convenience seeking, variety seeking, risk-averse, not price-conscious, and innovative. While for people who are single by circumstances, it is suggested that they would be less active, indicate more brand consciousness, impulsive buying, and likely to watch more television.

By gender, single women are more likely to shop in a social setting that it is possible to interact with their mates. (Jackson et al., 2011) The statement also agreed with Audrain-Pontevia and Vanhuele that women are more focused on interpersonal affiliation and harmonious relationships. (Audrain-Pontevia, & Vanhuele, 2016)

Between single women and single men, it is shown below. (Audrain-Pontevia, 2016)

- Women are more likely to repurchase than men do.
- Hedonic store attributes are more attractive to women.
- While men are more loyal to the store chain, women tend to be loyal to individuals, like service staff. Women are more likely to interact with staff. Therefore, satisfaction within women is highly relational aspects related.

On grocery shopping research took in the USA, women spend more on promotion also more on preparation, which also aligns with Jackson, that women spend

more time to gain useful information before purchasing over men (Jackson et al., 2011), but make less frequent. The number of items bought, and the amount spent though are similar, household needs and time constraints are also similar between single women and single men. (Tariq, Souza, & Allaway, 2015)

2.3 Related Researches on Housing Preference

2.3.1 Australia

According to research by Sandy Darab, Yvonne Hartman, and Louise Holdsworth which conducted in Australia on the topic of older single women on housing preference. Most interviewees said that living alone provides them autonomy to do whatever they want, which also aligns with Glick mentioned. Some even stated that they have difficulty sharing with others, particularly as they grow older. (Darab, Hartman, & Holdsworth, 2018)

The finding of this research shows that women's preference is security, affordability, and suitable to one's needs. Having good security of the tenure provide ease and lessen emotional damage.

2.3.2 Japan

As for urbanized single women in Japan, referred from the research by Richard Ronald and Lynne Nakano on single women and housing choices in urban Japan. In Japanese culture, traditionally men work and earn money for the family, while "women were expected to marry and thus came under the protection of their husband's corporate benefits." Though with the change of increasing unmarried women in Japan aligning with the global trend, their life course has shifted, and since the pays for women in Japan is considerably lower than men, unmarried Japanese women have limited choices in their living preferences. (Ronald, & Nakano, 2012)

Single Japanese women's housing choices are divided roughly into three categories.

- Single women in the natal home, for those whose natal home is in the perimeter of work, it is likely for them to live with their parents since the cost of renting

or buying a residence in urban areas is high. Living at home provides them with higher chances to spend money on themselves; it is a more convenient and cost-effective decision. According to an interviewee, she stated that she does not have the economic means to move out to live in a sufficient environment as their parents' house, and she is not willing to live less comfortably.

- Single female renters, whose parents' residence is not quite convenient for daily commuting, renting seems to be the best alternative. It is also the best choice for women with "desire for space was strong enough to override the expense of renting." Even though the cost is significantly high and sharing with roommates is not undeniably an option due to cultural beliefs, shared housing is considerably low at 1.1% among people aged 20-29.

- Single female homebuyers, buying one own personal scape, seems to be the ideal option for single women seeking privacy in Japan. Buying a home does not only provide them with privacy and freedom like renting out, but it also an investment to counter the risk of poverty and welfare dependency in their old age since women are less likely to inherit property than men.

2.4 Literature summary

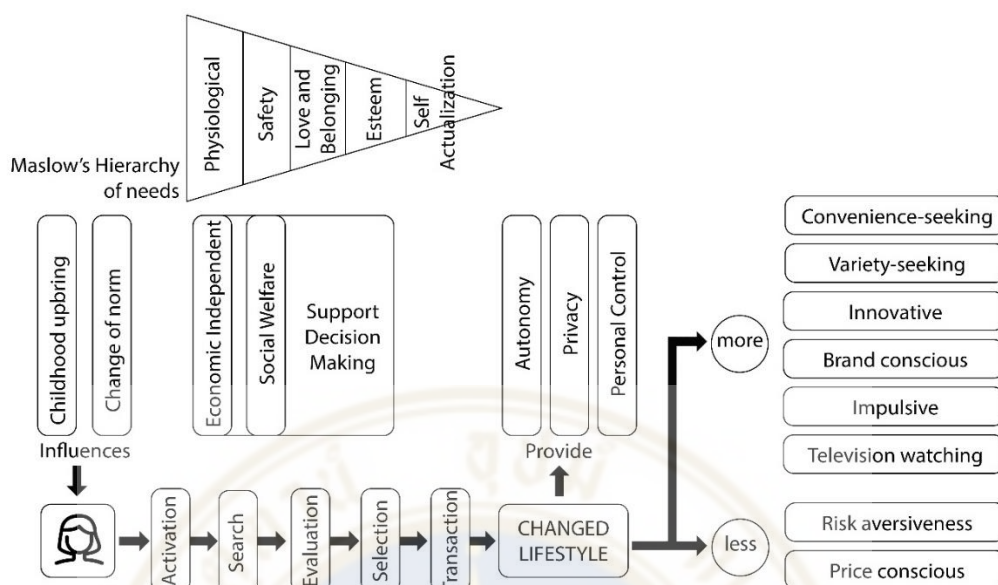


Figure 2.3 Literature summary

With the data from the literature review, a woman choosing to live independently might be influenced by one's upbringing as a child, with personal space and time provided by one's parents. Additionally, as the norm is changing, it influences the lifestyle choice as well.

Living single, first, a person is recognized with the needs for independent living, her desired state. Afterward, she would gain information upon making a decision; then, the choices are evaluated and chosen. Then the woman will shift into a new lifestyle.

To be able to live independently with good well-being, having financial freedom is vital. Thus, this also interrelates to the changing of form vice versa. Moreover, having good social welfare as an external factor could provide support to have a good life. These criteria could loosely link to physiological and safety needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

With a changed lifestyle, it is suggested in the perspective of consumer behavior that the single living women could become more convenience-seeking, variety-seeking, innovative, brand conscious, impulsive buying, and higher television-viewing behavior. Though it is also suggested that they would be less risk aversiveness, price-conscious when purchasing.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

The qualitative research will be used to explore the influences, values, and the impacts of single living in women and their consumer behavior. Qualitative research is 'the gathering and evaluation of informed opinion' (Wilson, 1952, p.78) from the specific people which support the business to picture the change and make the most of their abilities. With the gathered and evaluated information, the researcher could lower the need or neglect the tools of random sample and questionnaire which could create unfairly distribution of samples. (Wilson, 1952) The method used is an in-depth interview in each interviewee where both interviewer and interview interact upon a loosely guided list of questions, the interviewer could ask for more details or examples for a clearer understanding.

3.2 Interview Method

In this particular research, the ten interviewees will be grouped into two categories, five planning for independent living women and the other five already independent living women, to see whether their value and shopping behaviors alter after the change in lifestyle or not.

The list of interviewees is as followed;

Table 3.1 Interviewees list

planning for independent living women	already independent living women
Interviewee A1, 24 years old	Interviewee B1, 28 years old
Interviewee A2, 26 years old	Interviewee B2, 29 years old
Interviewee A3, 28 years old	Interviewee B3, 30 years old
Interviewee A4, 29 years old	Interviewee B4, 30 years old
Interviewee A5, 30 years old	Interviewee B5, 36 years old

The sample selection is based on convenient samples. The ages of the interviewee will vary from the early twenties to middle-age women, which live in a metropolitan area since the prior studies suggest that single people are clustered in the urban area.

Both groups of the interviewees, the already independent living women, and the planning for independent living women will first be open with similar questions upon their reason and belief of why this lifestyle is preferable for them.

- What are your reasons behind the chosen lifestyle of living alone?
- When did you decide to live on your own, is it a sudden urge or it gradually emerged over time?
- How did people around you react to your decision? (family, friends)
- In your circle, how other people perceived independent living from your perspective? Is it perceived as usual or unusual or somewhat in between?
- Do you know anyone who live with this lifestyle? In your view, how is that person's life doing?
- What is your ideal single living lifestyle?
- What kinds of factors do you think you need to have before you start to live independently?
- Which difficulties did you expect?

Then for the already independent living women would be asked further with:

- What are the differences you face after a changed lifestyle?
- What kinds of your behaviors that changed or unchanged in these areas?
 - In-home living lifestyle e.g. cooking, cleaning
 - In shopping behaviors for small items e.g. groceries, household products
 - In shopping behaviors for large items e.g. furniture, electric appliances, cars, houses, condominium
- Is your current lifestyle similar to your ideal one? If not, which details are different?

Moreover, for those who are planning for independent living women later in life would be asked with:

- What are your current behaviors in these areas?

- In-home living lifestyle e.g. cooking, cleaning
- In shopping behaviors for small items e.g. groceries, household products
- In shopping behaviors for large items e.g. furniture, electric appliances, cars, houses, condominium
- What do you expected to change once you live alone?
- What kind of preparation do you think needed for this lifestyle?

The probing technique, using the interviewee's previous reply for a further question, will be used in the interview to access more validity of the answer. The interviewer will ask, for example, situation, reasons, and results for each answer to gain more in-depth insight.

The interview will be conducted through an interactive conversation in person. Apart from the answers, the interviewer will also be collecting information like gesture and facial expression and a voice record if the interviewee agreed for further analysis. Additionally, the interviewer will also be creating notes along with the interview.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1 Motivations and support factors for independent living

- **Freedom**

For all interviewees, freedom is the shared core concern regarding the choice of moving out for all respondents. Though, details behind the need for freedom are varied. For instance, interviewee A4 also affirms that living in with her parents. She still feels the need to inform her parents of when she will arrive home to ensure that her parents feel at ease. Freedom, in many of the interviewees' view, also indicate an urge to choosing a choice for oneself without being a worry for others' feeling or opinion. As interviewee A1 stated that she lives in the Chinese-oriented family, where routines are scheduled, things have to be done at a particular time, For instance, breakfast time is set at 7.00, everyone has to be at the table altogether, she sometimes feels obligate to do so. The story is aligned with interviewee B4 that once lived in with relative during her university studies but decided to move out as she stated that 'moving out give me more at ease.'

- **Distressed from living with others**

For those who are planning for independent living, 3 of 5 exhibited a sign suggested that their preferred lifestyle does not match with their current one with family. As interviewee A1 stated that she finds it difficult to hang out on weekday evening since her senior family members feel worried when she arrives home late. For interviewee A2, she stated that her current home is highly unorganized and messy, she did try to improve the condition, but her parents did not fond of the idea. From her reaction, she felt that she does not like to bear with this environment, so to live on her own seems to be a decent choice, as she could do and choose everything by herself. As for interviewee A3, she did not provide many details on why she felt that the current lifestyle is not ideal or near, but as from her reaction and tone of voice, she expressed uncomfot when talked about her family. For interviewee A4, quoted from her 'Maybe it is better to have

physical distance with my parents, living together occasionally lead to arguments, which I think would be lessened if I live somewhere else.'

- **Family origin - Work location**

For those who are already living independently, all respondents' families reside in other provinces, but the respondents work in Bangkok. So, the choice of living away from family is mandatory. Though for interviewee B4 before independent living lives with relatives in Bangkok but decided to move out for work commuting convenience in the other part of Bangkok. The other interviewees stated that they chose by their own choice to live solitude without a roommate by determination of their own, all said that it is more comfortable to live alone, no need to share with others. While the other respondent, interviewee B2, used to live in with a roommate, now live alone due to a change of situation, since her roommate relocated for work.

- **Previous experience of living alone**

The majority of interviewees experienced living alone before, 4 out of 5 women who are planning for an independent living did spend part of their university life living in a dorm without a roommate. This experiences also aligns with 3 out of 5 independent living women that experienced solo living during their university studies. For interviewee B2, she stated that during her university life, at first, she used to live in the dormitory with a roommate, but later decided to move out from sharing the room to a next-door neighbor instead as she felt that she like to have her own space.

- **Privacy**

As mentioned above that 7 out of 10 interviewees had experienced living individually before; they also mentioned that during that time, what they like about living by oneself is having their own privacy, and they do not have to share their private space with anyone else as interviewee B3 mentioned that she once lived with her brother in a 1-bedroom condominium unit where her brother sleep in the living room while she took the bedroom. She felt there was no actual privacy for herself since they both had to share the water closet in the bedroom, she also felt that her brother was disturbed by her during nighttime when she arrived home late. Interviewee B3 also mentioned that 'Whenever my brother's friend comes over to play games during my reading for exam time, I have to remind them to lower the voice down a bit, though it is not their fault, I would like a quiet environment for reading.'

- **Financial Factor: independence and support**

For those who are planning for independent living, 4 out of 5 suggested that they must be financially stable before moving out to be able to have a good quality of life. Interviewee A4 states that living alone requires higher financial responsibilities, though it is only her own responsibilities, to live alone, one could not share the expenses with others. This also aligns with 4 out of 5 of those living independently, that financial stability is what made it possible to live independently. As interviewee B1 shared her experience that during her university life, she lived in with her roommate to lessen the need for expenses, but when she started working, she chose to live by herself since she could afford it on her own. The planning for independent living interviewee A1 did not mention the financial aspect as a factor supporting good independence living, as she stated that 'I am already careful with money person, I spend money cautiously.' Though, considering the interviewee's age and experiences, it could suggest that the interviewee does not have much experience upon the topic.

For interviewee A1 and interviewee B3, both though still rely on some support from their parent, for interviewee A1, she is moving into her father's own condominium a week after the interview. For interviewee B3, her condominium is also her parent's property. With this financial support of not having to pay their own rent or mortgage, it is much easier for one to live individually, though not fully independent. As interviewee B3 mentioned that, 'With my salary as a government officer, buying a condominium in Bangkok is quite impossible.' Having parents support, by buying a property have put her at more financially comfortable.

As for interviewee A4, though with her current financial status, it could be enough to accommodate her independent living, it will not be enough for her current living standard while living in with her family. She would need to be more financially wealthy to be able to own an independent living with a current living standard.

- **Do-it-yourself household**

For all interviewees who are already live independently, their weekly routine somewhat includes chores, which include cleaning, laundry, grocery, and consumer goods shopping, and some also cook. Interviewees also shared similar stories about spending one day a week, usually on a weekend-day on cleaning, laundering, shopping, and some also cook, which usually be in a big portion for the whole week.

For cooking, interviewee B1 stated that she cooks by herself, to choose healthy organic ingredients, which also aligns with interviewee B3 that she likes cooking because she can choose all ingredients by herself.

For planning to live independently women, interviewee A5 shared a similar story as mentioned above; she cooks on the weekend and packed, refrigerant for the weekdays. While for others, when asked upon the topic of housework for their future independent living, all stated that they would need to do it all by themselves but did not mention in detail.

- **Passive hobbies**

All respondents, both planning for independent living and already living independently, shared similar characteristics of their hobbies, as a passive-like hobby. For instance, watch movies or television, reading, internet surfing, napping, and sleep. Interviewee A5 stated that on her day off, she could stay in bed all day watching movies and reading books, which also aligns with interviewee B2 that she like leaning on her bed, watching movies, or weekends. Therefore, women that seek independent living enjoy at-home hobbies because they enjoy privacy.

4.2 Shopping Behavior

4.2.1 Groceries, consumer goods products

- Routine organized shopping

For household products, 4 out of 5 women who are planning for independent living and 3 out of 5 independent living women usually shop routinely with a shopping list, whether a physical list or listed in their own mind, around once a month for non-food products.

For independent living women, since the interviewees work on weekdays, arriving home from work late and tired. So, the household routine usually needs to be scheduled on a free day along with a household cleaning routine, which generally takes the whole day, usually on the day off. As for groceries shopping, it would also occur on the same day, as interviewee B1 talked about her weekend that she would typically take one day for leisure and resting and the other day for household and grocery shopping.

She also mentioned that she has a shopping list to avoid going back and forth since it would waste time on her weekend, where she prefers to be resting than supermarket shopping or doing the cleaning. The reason behind the well-planned grocery shopping for the interviewees is that they seem to either want to minimize the time spent groceries shopping because they do not highly fond of doing so or want to have spare time for leisure and relaxation instead.

Additionally, since many of the interviewees have a routine planned shopping schedule, they also exhibited the behavior less likely to buy more as a backup stock. For the independent living interviewees, only B1 exhibits spare stock of consumer products; the others do not. While for interviewee B3 did have extra stock when living with her brother but currently does not have additional stock anymore, since she lives alone, there are fewer chances of running out of soap, for instance. Which is similar to interviewee B4 and B5 stories. While for interviewee B2, she stated that she is willing to buy some more if there is a promotion, as she stated that 'If I saw a promotion like 'buy one get one free' or a discount, I will buy more because it is cheaper than usual.'

Though, the other 3 interviewees shop when they are running short on stock a few days before it runs out. For interviewee B5 who buy consumer product when it is running out, she does not like to stock up since she lives alone, it takes time to run out for each package which also agreed with interviewee A3 who also buys when she is running out of those products. The examples suggest that impulsive buying is not exhibited within household products purchasing.

- The full power of choosing

Currently, for respondents who are planning for independent living, 3 out of 5 stated that when shopping for consumer goods for oneself, they are influenced by others, not having the full power of choosing by oneself. For interviewee A3, she said that she shares consumer goods products like soap and shampoo with her sister, so they both need to select within both of their criteria which is similar to interviewee B3, who stated that when she lived with her brother, her brother dislikes her favorite brand of liquid soap. Hence, she has to avoid buying that brand during that time. While for interviewee A1, though she does not share the personal products with others, she stated that her aunt always reminds her to buy only products for sensitive skin, leading her not to be able to try many new products.

- Price awareness

Though from the literature review, it is suggested that singles independent living is less price-conscious since they do not have responsibilities for family or children, but from the interview, interviewees showed various levels of price consciousness as illustrated in the figure below. Even though all the interviewees are white-collar middle class, price does also play roles when it comes to choosing a product. Interviewees A4 and B2 who are highly price-conscious shared examples of comparing price between products by quantity and sale promotion allure them to buy, for interviewee A4, she stated that once when she lived alone abroad, she felt that it is needed to be more price conscious of what she bought. As she felt she entirely depended on her own, while when at home she could rely on others or her family from times to times, for interviewee B2 also shared that she is willing to buy the more expensive brand that provides discount promotion instead of the un-discount cheaper one since she felt that she gain better quality products. Interviewees A1, A2, A3 and B1, B3, B4, B5, who are willing to pay within the same range they usually pay, did not provide many details about the price during the interview. For interviewee A5, she willing to pay more in the case that the product provides the function she needs with a better-perceived quality.

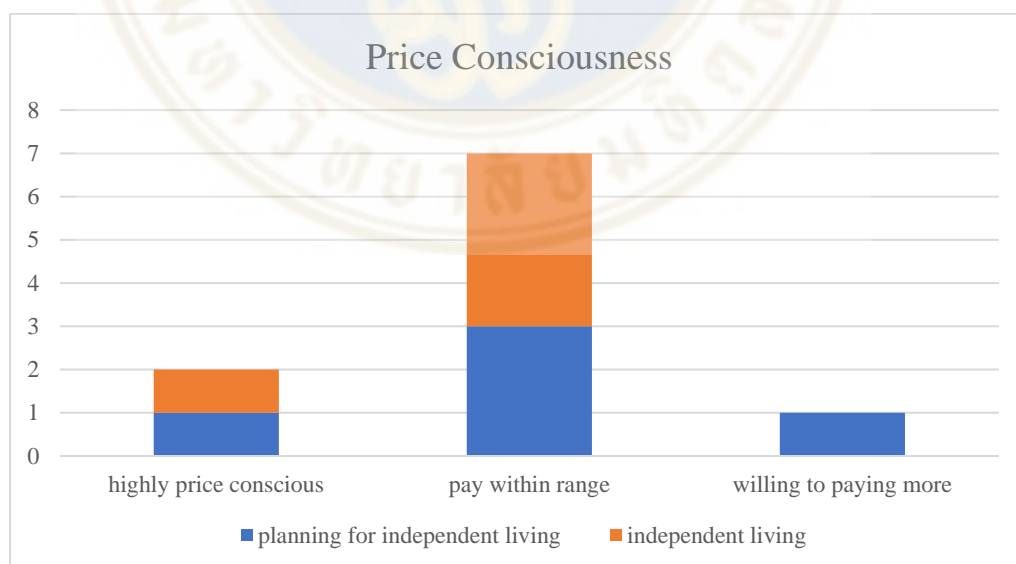


Figure 4.1 interviewees' price consciousness level

4.2.2 Shopping Goods

For this research, the researcher used examples of furniture or electronic appliances for the interviewees to provide the scope of living related products for the interviewee to provide tangible examples of their shopping behavior.

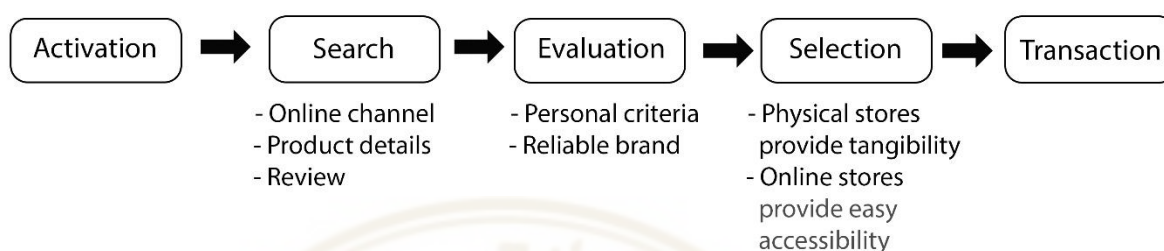


Figure 4.2 interviewees' consumer purchase process

- Search

The interviewees did not have many different influences from independent living upon the searching part. Most of the interviewees will first search through the online channel for product detail and online review and also review from the people they knew who have prior experience. For instance, interviewee B4 talked about when she was looking for furniture for her new condominium; she asked her friends who had experience for opinion and suggestion.

- Evaluating

For interviewees who are still living with other family members, not only their own criteria for choosing a product are being considered, but their family members' as well. As interviewee A5 said, 'When I am going to buy something like a shoe cabinet, I have to consider for my parents' criteria as well, whether they will like it or not and whether it would be big enough for everyone.' As for interviewee A1, she mentioned that when she finally moves in alone, she would only have her own criteria when buying for furniture.

While for independent living women, the reliability of the product's brand is highly prioritized. As interviewee B5 mentioned that for electric appliance product, since she lives alone and does not have any expertise in electrical products, she usually chooses that brand that looks reliable. During the interviewee, she also mentioned that she just realized that most of her electric appliances are from a particular brand only.

- **Selecting**

Selecting and purchasing a product usually occur at the store when the products are tangible; the interviewees can try the products and ask for more information from the salesclerk. Though, for some large furniture or electric appliances that provide no delivery service needed to carry back by the customer, it creates some difficulties. As interviewee B2 mentioned that she would order through an online channel since it is more convenient for her. Though she mentioned some con from shopping online that 'I even purchased a laptop online too, but it has some technical problem, I had to return it and wait for another one'.

4.2.3 Habitation

All independents living respondents are currently living in a condominium. Since being a one-person family does not require much space to accommodate good living, 2 of the interviewees rent out. At the same time, the other 2 bought the property for themselves, and the other interviewee is living in the condominium bought by her parents. The reason for renting is that the interviewees are not expecting to live permanently in a place. Condominium units also seem to be much a preferable choice for planning for independent living respondents as well for similar reasons.

The similar requirements among all respondents, when comes to choosing a habitat all listed as followed;

- **Commuting easily**

Of all respondents, 7 of them mentioned their criteria when choosing a place to live on to be able to commute easily, with a public railway transportation system. As one-person commuting, public transportation is the most convenient and cost-effective solution, though some interviewees also possess a car but still use public transportation occasionally. As interviewee A5 is used to commute around by train system and shared that even when she lives by herself, she would still prefer this transportation choice, since she felt that it fit with her lifestyle, providing her maneuverability when commuting alone.

- **Security**

When living by oneself, 7 of the respondents mentioned safety and the good neighborhood is highly prioritized. The secured community would provide both

physical and mental safe, which those interviewees felt it is more required when living alone. A place within a range from the station would also suggest better safety for, as the interviewees A1 and A5 also linked that being near the station, they felt it is safer since they felt it is safe to travel by train, especially at night when commuting alone. A good neighborhood is another factor mentioned, as Interviewee B3 shared her example of moving into a new condominium with a lawful next-door neighbor where she felt threatening, she has to move out and also press charges against him.

Living in a familiar neighborhood is also a requirement for half of the respondents. The respondents stated that their current neighborhood is safe and will not want to move elsewhere where they are not similar or do not have enough information to say whether it is safe or not. For interviewee A5, she said that she prefers to choose her own new place in her old neighborhood since it is not that significantly far from the public railway station, and she knows the directions around, how to get from here to places, and vice versa. Interviewee A3 also stated that living in the neighborhood she is familiar with would be easier since she knows the places around already, where to eat out, where to shop, for instance.

- Privacy

As mentioned about the interviewees' hobbies, which tend to be passive-like, when asked about their criteria about their living place, 7 of them mentioned that they prefer the place to be peaceful and quiet. As interviewee B4 talked about when she looked for buying her own place, she chose the place within the perimeter of the train station but not directly too close because she thinks that it would be quite crowded. She chose the place that needs more walking to the transportation node but provided more privacy.

- Extra space

5 respondents mentioned that their ideal dwelling should have an extra space apart from living area and the bedroom for work and hobbies at home, as mentioned earlier. As it would be their primary home that they would spend much time in, it was not just a place to sleep. A space for resting, rethinking, enjoying their hobbies is also needed. For instance, interviewee A2 mentioned that she would like to have an extra room as her working space and interviewee B5 said that it would be better to have an additional area for family or friends when they come and visit.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

To conclude, several factors align with the literature review, but some are not. Since the literature review is based mostly on other countries like the USA and European countries, whereas the research and interview are conducted in Thailand with Thai interviewees, so there are differences in cultural and social factors, which change the framework as followed.

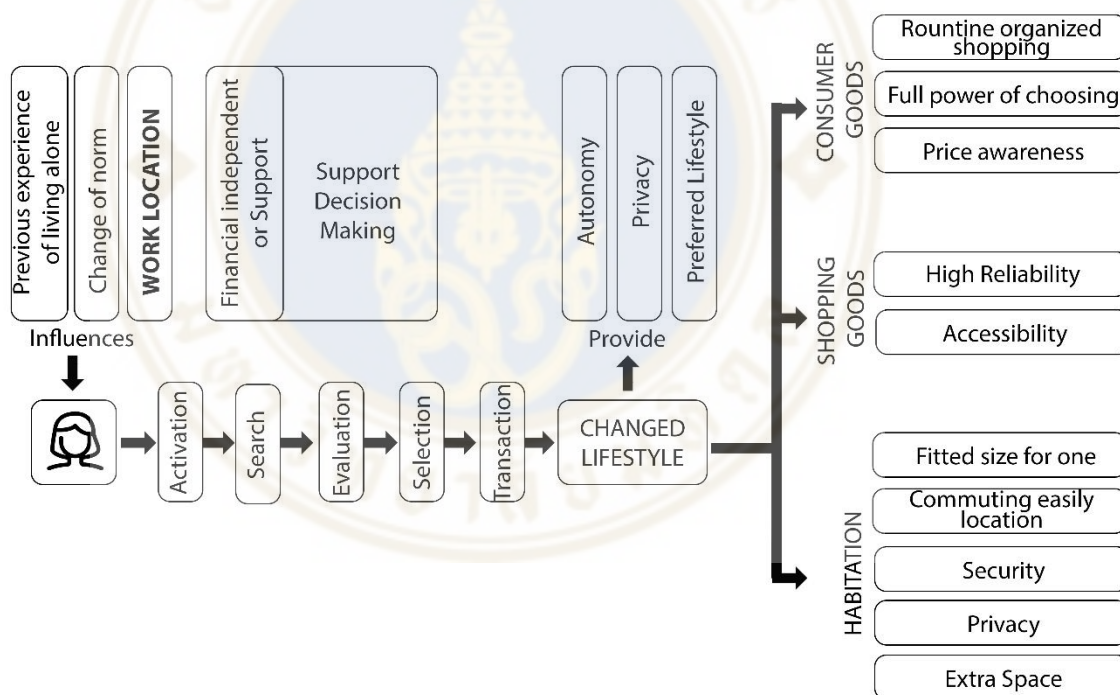


Figure 5.1 interviews' summary

Apart from the need for freedom and distress of living together with others, which usually occurred gradually within the person, the experience of independent

living provides tangible proof for the interviewees that the independent lifestyle is preferable for them.

However, what accelerates independent living is a work location where the person needs to work in the city. At the same time, her family resides in other provinces, as we can infer from the interview that all independent living interviewees originally not from Bangkok.

For the Thai interviewees, having financial independence also support independent living, while for some, it is more or less financial support as well, in term of parental support for accommodation. Since the price for residences, especially in Bangkok, are quite high compared to the pay for many occupations or early jobbers. Some respondents were able to live independently only with the support from their family for buying the living unit. In contrast, others buy within the limitation of their budget or rent out, which is preferable for future changes. Unlike western culture, Thais usually have family bonds tied much closer, as mentioned that some would still rely on family support in many aspects; for instance, financial support or advice. Additionally, apart from living with parents and siblings, when living in with the family, interviewees also shared space, consumer goods, or other products with family members, which make others' criteria are taken into consideration when shopping as well.

For some interviewee who is planning for an independent living showed a similar pattern found in Japan in the literature review (Ronald and Nakano, 2012) that she could live independently but not in a sufficient environment as she has within her parent home. She would not be willing to live in a less comfortable place than her current parent home. While for an independent living interviewee, living with her family is rather an impossible choice due to work location.

Additionally, of all interviewees, they have the similarity of having passive-like hobbies, hobbies at home-like which also indicate that they like to stay in for relaxation, they also prefer to have their own privacy, so to live by oneself would be more suitable for their lifestyle preferences.

After a change in lifestyle, it would provide one with the full autonomy, to do whatever whenever one wants. Gaining more privacy, as one does not have to share the matter with others and with one own preferred lifestyle, as their current lifestyle with others, e.g., family, might not fit with what one imagined.

With a changed lifestyle from living independently, there are aspects of their behavior changes toward how independent living women buy consumer goods, shopping goods as followed.

5.1.1 Consumer goods

- Routine planned shopping

Many of the interviewees exhibited a planned shopping routine where she has a to-buy-list or buys a specific category of products regularly to avoid spending free valuable time on supermarket shopping. With the routine planned shopping schedule, the behavior exhibited is less likely to buy more as a backup stock. For independent living women, the household routine, both household cleaning and shopping, usually need to be scheduled on the free day, which generally takes the whole day, usually on the day off.

- The full power of choosing

When living independently, the interviewees gain the full power of choosing a range of products without the limitation or requirement from others living together.

- Price awareness

Though from the literature review, it has suggested that independent living singles are less price-conscious, from the interview, all respondents showed various levels of price awareness. Even though one would only have a responsibility solely for oneself, but the cost of independent living is also more expensive.

5.1.2 Shopping goods

The subject that arose from the interview upon the topic of shopping goods are listed as followed;

When living independently, the interviewee only needs one own criterion to consider. In contrast, those who are still live with family need to take others' requirements into consideration, which leads to more time spent on evaluating before purchasing.

High reliability is highly prioritized, especially for a product that the interviewee does not have the expertise, e.g., electric appliance.

While the physical store provides tangibility, but online channel provides easier accessibility.

5.1.3 Habitation

- Fitted size for one.

As a one-person household, a condominium is much preferable.

- Easily commuting location.

For one-person commuting, public transportation is the most convenient and cost-effective choice. So, a requirement of living near a public transportation hub is highlighted.

- Security.

When living as a one-person household for women, security is becoming more prioritized. The secured neighborhood would provide both physical and mental safety while familiar neighbors would also provide proof of whether it is a secured neighbor or not. Secured inhibition also aligns with the choosing of a trusted branded product when purchasing products like electronic appliances.

- Privacy.

With a preferred lifestyle with passive-like at-home hobbies found among interviewees. Privacy, which provides peace and quiet, is a requirement among the respondents.

- Extra space.

As for passive-like at-home hobbies, an extra space within the living unit is much preferable as a place to relax and rest.

5.2 Recommendations

The trend of living as single has been booming across the globe for a few years, changed how people lived as a person, and likely to change how they choose to buy products from typical consumer goods to a habitation. This research could help clarify that within independent living people, there are also differences among genders, cultures, locations. The study could also be a benefit for products that want to target independent living women.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Since people, the number of both men and women is increasing as a one-person household, affecting how life circle evolves for individuals, what they value, their perception, which in turn affect how they choose and purchase. More researches could further work on other areas, for instance, upon a male independent living person or into more details.

This research has some limitations which will be discussed as followed. Firstly, with a time limitation, this paper only takes a small in-depth interview with 10 respondents; it could not be fully used to explain the whole spectrum, though the interviewees are varying in demographic background information. Second, the analysis is based only on the interview, where the interviewees might not mention the actual behavior that they might forget or might not notice themselves doing so. This research is also focused on general aspects of the choices the interviewees have on their living conditions.

For further research, it is suggested that the study should be expanded into more quantity and variation of interviewees to gain more insights. Additionally, the research could also include other types of methodology, for instance, an observation method to reconfirm with the interview. Moreover, further research could be more specified in a particular topic.

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