

**ADDRESSING THE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIORAL GAP:
BARRIERS TO GREEN CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND**

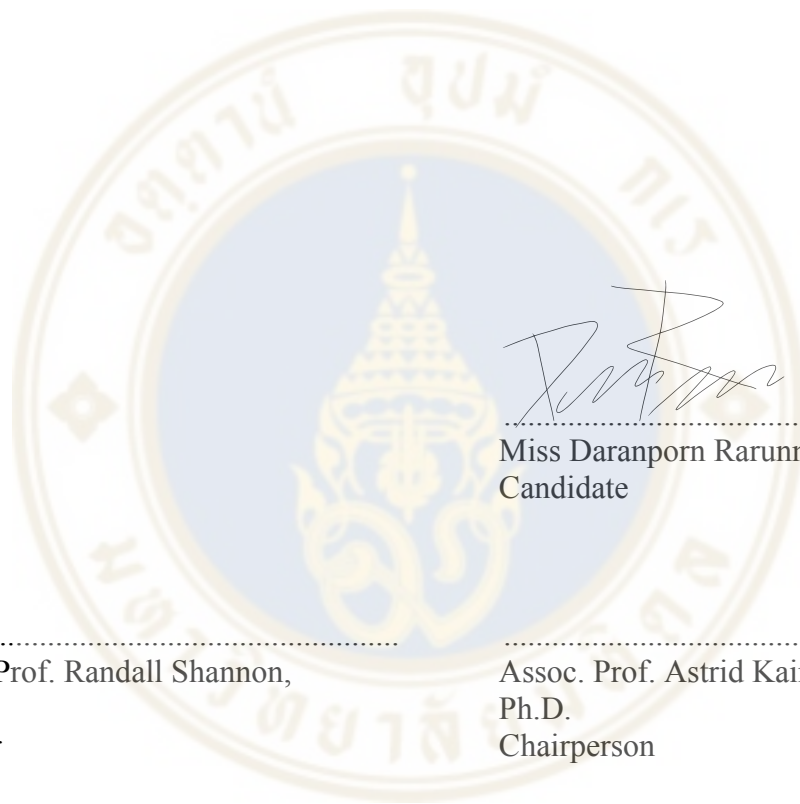


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BARRIERS TO GREEN CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND**

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ADDRESSING THE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIORAL GAP: BARRIERS TO GREEN CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing interest and positive attitudes on the environment over the years, studies have reported it to be an inaccurate predictor of actual green consumption. This study aims to explore the barriers of pro-environmental individuals that are yet active green consumers to understand the discrepancy in their attitudes and behavior. In exploring such, aspects of personal norms, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control barriers were inspected. The study adopted a qualitative approach of an in-depth interview as a data collection method. A total of 24 participants were interviewed for this study. It was found that the barriers of *Price* and *Awareness* were the most significant in prohibiting participants to act accordingly to what they advocated for. The result of this study can help businesses and practitioners to better design how they use their resources in helping consumers bridge the gap between their attitudes and actual consumption behavior.

KEY WORDS: Green consumption/Attitude and Behavioral Gap/Barriers

28 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For a major part of this decade, consumers have been aggressively warned about the finite resources of our planet. Moreover, never in our history has the issue of these planetary boundaries been unitedly agreed upon across all nations. It has become apparent that the penalty for the prosperity and advancement we have achieved as a society came with the cost of our environment. Consequently, as a society, we try hard to increase the awareness to advocate the urgency of this problem in hopes to change the way we consume. A significant amount of research done on green consumption has exponentially increased over the years aimed to better understand and help the transition into a more sustainable practice.

Regardless of the good intentions in expanding the knowledge on this issue, there are still noticeable gaps and a need for maturity in the literature. For example, the term “Green Consumption” has been somewhat ambiguous and contradictory. The term “green” signifies a sense of protection of the environment while the term “consumption” suggests destruction. In addition, the term poses a multidimensional aspect to it that the context and usage of the term could also be interlaced with economic or social aspects (Peattile, 2010). On the other hand, in defining the term it is also important to acknowledge that it may cover all or a few stages of consumption ranging from the purchase, usage, or disposal of the product (Wu & Yang, 2018). However, the most frequently used definition in the literature seems to signify a relationship between green consumption with protecting the environment, social responsibility, or a cutback in consumption.

Unfortunately, however, a growing number of studies have found that a positive attitude in environmental conservation is an inaccurate predictor of actual green consumption. This is an alarming pattern of results found when studying individuals who plead to put importance on protecting the environment. For instance, a US study found that the attitude and intention gap in energy conservation of residents who

announced to be pro-environment showed actual energy conservation as little as 6% (Nolan et al., 2008). Similarly, it was found by the European Commission that Europeans deem ecological protection to be of high importance with up to 87% reporting to some degree a responsibility of every citizen (2011). Yet, the actual demand for sustainable products in the market shows a big discrepancy in the market share of green products (Nizam et al, 2011). These rare translations of pro-environmental concerns into actual actions have a significant effect on the success to achieve tangible ecological changes. Most importantly, this complicates stakeholders like policymakers, practitioners, and businesses that are trying to push for and invest in greener solutions (Chan, et al., 2012). Such findings are signaling negatively to encourage the availability of greener products in the market (Prothero et al, 2011).

To decrease this attitude and behavior gap, there is a need to study the reason why pro-environmental attitudes rarely translate into actual purchase behavior by examining the barriers preventing greener purchases. This is notably important in the context of Thailand where little to no research has been done about this gap. Thus, contradicting the announced long-term plan of waste management and a movement toward a circular economy (Pollution Control, 2021). A few studies were found focused on understanding green purchasing behavior rather than the barriers to consumption. For instance, a study conducted in the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand was one of the few to address the determinants of Thai green consumption, especially of Generation Y. Interestingly, it was found that most of these generation Y consumers are only concerned with green consumption only at a medium level. In addition, these consumers are also willing to pay for only 1%-5% more for greener products (Leerattanakorn, 2017). On the other hand, another study on graduate students in Bangkok found that variables such as the country's environmental concern, influence group, and environmental awareness were found to be predictors of sustainable purchasing behavior (Arttachariya. 2012). These studies pave a good way for a better understanding of the Thai population regarding correlations of green purchasing behaviors. But to better understand this discrepancy, it was found to be insightful by studies across the world to first examine the barriers that are currently keeping these individuals from becoming actual green consumers.

Therefore, this study aims to identify barriers to green consumption in individuals who claim to be environmentally conscious but are yet an active green consumer in the content of Thailand. In addition, the study would also like to explore the relationship between these barriers. This is aimed to better understand whether there are any dependencies among the identified barriers. On top of that, it would also be insightful to identify barriers that are most relevant in impeding consumers to make an actual purchase.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Barriers to Green Consumptions

Three recurring themes of barriers to green purchasing behaviors were found in the current literature namely, Personal Norm, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control barriers (Sheoran & Kumar, 2020).

2.2 Personal Norm Barriers (High Price, Greenwashing & Perceived Impact)

This is in regards to how an individual feels about the product at the moment of purchase decision. For instance, *High Price* was found to often be a main barrier in green consumption studies causing a reduction of the environmental values and could decrease the willingness to purchase that product (Annuziata & Mariani, 2018). Interestingly, time and effort in finding green products can also be considered as factors that influence consumers' perception of the green product having a high price. For instance, if they need time to research about the product or travel further to shop, all of these are perceived as an added cost. It was often found that for consumers to be satisfied with their purchase, their perception of the cost to benefit ratio has to be well balanced (Gleim et al, 2013).

In addition, *Greenwashing* was also found to pose a dismissal in purchase behavior when consumers found that the product claims misleading information. This often results in a feeling of confusion, dissatisfaction, and a loss of customer loyalty (Braga et al, 2019). With an increase in green marketing, consumers are often left overwhelmed by this choice overload. Hence, activating consumers to consider their purchase through the product or the brand's trustworthiness. However, when a firm is found to use greenwashing by overclaiming or misleading consumers, this could result

in an information asymmetry causing consumers to refuse the product (Delmas & Burnano, 2011).

Another personal norm barrier was found to be the *Perceived Impact*. Consumers tend to not purchase products that they perceive to have little or no impact on the environment. Studies have shown that perceived impact can drive higher consumption because the act of purchase aligns with the consumer's intention of buying the product in the first place (Peattie, 2001). In addition, commonly in green consumption, consumers are not only looking to satisfy their personal needs but often to also benefit society through their purchases. Hence, when the consumer perceives that they can control this contribution to society through green purchasing, it gives them a stronger incentive to continue purchasing (Miniero, et al, 2014). This highlights the importance of identifying and having product attributes that show real environmental impact (Sharma & Foropon, 2019).

2.3 Subjective Norm Barriers (Social Image, and Awareness)

This is how an individual's choice can be positively or negatively determined by their surrounding social environment. For instance, studies have shown particularly in younger adults that they tend to not be interested in purchasing products that do not help them signal a better social image (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). On the other hand, studies have also shown that the linkage between *Social Image* and green consumption could be explained through the costly signaling theory. The theory explains that an altruistic behavior like green purchasing can act as a signal that the consumer has the ability to obtain the cost (ex. higher price) (McAndrew, 2021). A study by Griskevicius and colleagues (2010), found this effect to be true, but only with green products that are high and not low cost such as an eco-friendly car to signal higher status.

In addition, Environmental *Awareness* was also found to be another barrier to purchasing green products. These consumers are less likely to make a purchase if there is a lack of awareness of both the benefit of the product and the issue of sustainability (Malik et al, 2019). Numerous studies have identified that an increase in environmental information and solution does correlate with higher purchase intention while lower awareness leads to lower purchase intention. With a lack of environmental

awareness, it is less likely that a consumer will think about the effect of their purchase or search for alternative products (Ahmed et al, 2021).

2.4 Perceived Behavioral Control Barriers (Inconvenience, Availability, and Quality)

This is in regards to the individual's ability to perform a certain behavior (self-efficacy) and the degree to which that ability to perform is up to the individual (controllability). For instance, *Inconvenience* was also found to be a key predictor of barriers to purchase because consumers are not willing to compensate for their personal convenience in the usage and the performance of the product (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Studies have shown that consumers reported to be more willing to engage in greener purchases if firms could make the purchase easier and as little compromises (Afonso et al., 2018). Studies have shown that consumers do not prefer to spend too much time finding products, therefore likely to dismiss purchases that are perceived to be of higher effort (Padel & Foster, 2005).

On the other hand, factors such as the *Unavailability* of the green product at the moment required could reduce future purchase behavior (Nguyen et al, 2019). Many studies have found that the availability of green products can in fact help positively stimulate greener consumption. This is because it acts as a situational cue to prompt eco-conscious consumers of their intention and to give them a chance to act accordingly (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

In addition, the product *Quality* of a green product was also found to be of importance in consumer purchase decisions (Soegoto, 2018). Product quality is often judged on whether it meets the consumer's needs and is not prone to defects. It was found that in addition to price, consumers also deem the quality of a product to be similar or equal to its counterparts. Successful green products typically overcame the problem and were found to also increase customer satisfaction and facilitate future purchases (Eskidsen et al, 2004).

CHAPTER III

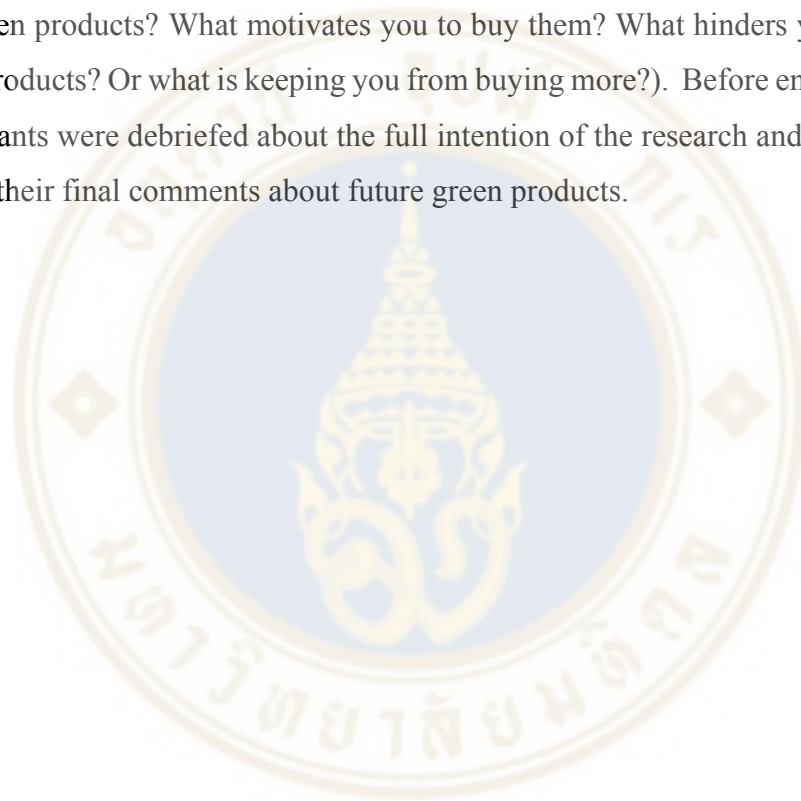
METHODOLOGY

The study took a qualitative approach of an in-depth interview in examining the barriers to green consumption. This method was chosen over a quantitative survey because it is believed that an interactive conversation with each participant would reveal a better understanding and depth of the barriers that each individual has. The study believes that with limited time and resources, it would be more beneficial if the researcher could have a chance to explore and ask questions to further understand the detail of each barrier.

Participants were recruited using 2 main methods, direct recruitment on Facebook groups and snowball sampling technique. The recruitment was open for participants aged 18-60 years old with no gender limitations that live in Thailand. Since the research aimed to understand barriers in the context of Thailand, it was also open to both Thais and foreigners who have been in Thailand for at least 5 years. Participants were selected through a recruitment process using Google Forms asking for demographic information, personal views on environmental concerns, and their experience with eco-friendly products. The target participants for this study were pro-environment individuals who claim to be environmentally conscious but are yet an active green consumers. Participants who were selected had to pass the criteria of scoring high on their concern for the environment, being an advocate for the environment, and having participated in activities they believed to help the environment. To appeal to more people the recruitment post also indicated that selected participants would receive 200 baht gift cards to buy eco-friendly products as compensation for their time.

The interview was set to be a semi-structured interview that would last approximately 30-60 mins. Each participant was allowed to do the interview either through a phone call or a video call. Before the start of each interview, participants were briefed on the definition of green purchase, the objective, and the scope of the study.

The set of questions for the interview was designed to be 3 parts. The first part was general questions aimed to get to know the participants' perspectives on the current environmental situation (ex. What do you think about the current environmental situation? What are your main concerns about the environment?). The next part was attitude questions aimed to understand the participant's opinion about green consumption (ex. What do you think about green consumerism? In your opinion, what makes a product eco-friendly?). Lastly, the third part was the main questions about their experience on barriers to green consumption and purchasing (ex. Have you ever bought any green products? What motivates you to buy them? What hinders you from buying green products? Or what is keeping you from buying more?). Before ending the session, participants were debriefed about the full intention of the research and were also asked to give their final comments about future green products.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A total of 24 participants were interviewed for this study (see appendix A). A total of eight themes were identified in the study. The two main themes that emerged from the sessions were the barriers of Price and Awareness which the majority of the participants reported to have mentioned being significant to their purchase decisions. The other six sub-themes emerged were the barriers of Unavailability, Quality, Inconvenience, Perceived Impact, Greenwashing, and Disbelief. A theme that was not found in the literature review was a barrier of Disbelief where the consumer, is dismissive of the impact of green products.

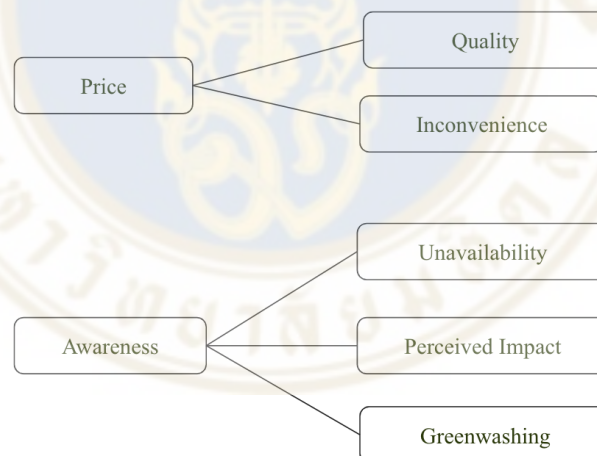


Figure 4.1 Relationship of 2 main themes and their sub-themes

Interestingly, the barrier of Price and Awareness was the 2 main themes that almost every participant, except those with disbelief mentioned as their main reason for not being an active green consumer. Each of the 2 main themes can be again broken down into sub-themes that were also reported to be related to the main theme. Those who mention Price to be the main barrier will often either also mention Quality or

Inconvenience in relation to having to pay more. On the other hand, another group of participants that did not seem to have a barrier of Price would mention Awareness as their main barrier. In addition to that, would also often mention either Unavailability, Perceived Impact, or Greenwashing as barriers related to their Awareness barrier.

4.1 Main Theme

4.1.1 Price

The barrier of *Price* refers to the consumer expressing that higher price of green products is the reason that is keeping them from either continuing or initiating the purchase. They often compare the price with traditional products and state that generally, the price is still too high. This was found to be the top reason that participants in the study reported to be their main barriers. For example:

“My most usual concern is the price. I often go out of my way to study these products to try to find better alternatives but I feel like I am hitting the ceiling with what I could afford. I have tried to change up my toiletries and personal care products but now that I want to expand into stuff like house cleaning products or detergent it’s just unreasonably expensive.” (F01, Female, 20 years old)

“Most are still very expensive and are not usually well explained as to why it has to be this price. That is probably why people are not willing to pay more if they don’t understand why it has to be so much more expensive. And a lot of the products don’t even work as well as my cheaper alternative.” (M05, Male, 27 years old)

“It feels impossible to afford things like that. On average eco-products are much more expensive and seem to just be made for rich people. Most products are made to function as lifestyle products. And the worst part for me is that it often requires more time to use. For example, having to wash and dry the products in which I don’t have the time.” (M10, Male, 46 years old)

4.1.2 Awareness

The barrier of *Awareness* referred to the lack of awareness of product benefits and/or the issue of sustainability. Despite being able to recruit pro-

environmental participants, a few still reported to still be unclear about many aspects of sustainability. Which resulted in them admitting that they do not know how or what they could have brought to be greener. Many participants reported that since it's not common for them to be active in researching green products, it's rare to discover or consider them. For example:

“Not enough advertisements and people talking about these products. It would be better if it's not so rare to see these products around. I feel like I don't know enough about it to think that I should buy them. I also feel like it's not around enough for me to access.” (F02, Female, 22 years old)

“Up to this day, I still find myself being surprised each time I discover an alternative to the things that I use. It takes time but I get really excited when I come across a product that can eliminate some daily single-use stuff. Because so many brands are also trying to claim to be eco-friendly but it's not often you can find a product that can really help.” (F08, Female, 31 years old)

“It's my own fault for not doing more research, but I don't know much about how each product can help, so I think that is why I am still using the plastic options. It's hard to evaluate what is really good for the environment. The problem seems to be so big and I don't know how much I can help.” (M08, Male, 33 years old)

4.2 Sub-themes under Price

4.2.1 Quality

The barrier of *Quality* referred to the distrust in the quality and performance of eco-friendly products. Many participants reported that they either have tried and got disappointed or were not willing to risk a try. Participants reported perceived that these products are inferior to the product they are currently using. Interestingly, many participants did mention that they are aware of the reason that these products are lower in quality, such as paper vs. plastic products. However, they are still not willing to sacrifice their performance. For example:

“Other than it being more expensive, I don't trust that these products will also work. Most brands don't explain it well enough they just focus on telling the

consumer how green it is but not the quality that I think most people are skeptical about. It's a big risk to switch from the comfortable brands that they have loved for years. I think it would help if the brand could focus on proving that things work and be clear about the things that we have to compromise for greener products.” (F03, Female, 23 years old)

“I found that quality of eco products are lower and more expensive than plastic. For example, paper straws are not able to be used for a long duration, it's still something that cannot be compared to the quality of plastic straws. ” (F09, Female, 35 years old)

4.2.2 Inconvenience

The barrier of *Inconvenience* referred to the difficulty or discomfort in using eco-friendly products. Participants reported feeling that eco-friendly products often require extra work such as taking more time or more procedures. It has also been compared to traditional products to require a different approach in using the products. For example, products trying to replace disposable products such as straws, cutlery, and napkins require an extra step of washing and drying. This often leads to the feeling of inconvenience that could discourage future use. For example:

“Convenience is very important, I work at an office, and it's not always easy to have to wash and dry stuff so single-use is appropriate in this case.” (F04, Female, 26 years old)

“An alternative product should have an almost seamless transition to it, people would expect to not have to feel like it's too different from what they are used to. Many products seem to still require extra work and cost to switch.” (M05, Male, 27 years old)

4.3 Sub-themes under Awareness

4.3.1 Unavailability

The barrier of *Unavailability* refers to eco-friendly products that are not available to them in places where they are convenient to make a purchase. Participants

often express that they have interest in considering these products however, find them to be unavailable. Many participants mentioned that they want these products to be more common in places they usually shop stating that it is inconvenient to go anywhere else just to get these products. For example:

“I think I would definitely have tried a lot more products if they were to be an option at my local supermarket. I really don't have the time to find them online or go somewhere far just to get a few things.” (F06, Female, 28 years old)

“Something that could really change the way people feel about it is to increase their exposure to more products. It can't be some niche products for the rich or tree huggers. Educating people about the real issue of their normal consumption can make it more common. I have always wanted to use more and more products but it's not easy to come across them at all. I usually have to order it online or go to a certain store for it.” (M12, Male, 50 years old)

4.3.2 Perceived Impact

The barrier of *Perceived Impact* referred to the skepticism that the usage of eco-friendly products has a positive effect on the environment. Participants reported that they are either still in the process of finding out more about the product or think that the effect of these products is just too little compared to the scale of the problem. Many reported feeling that the issue of sustainability is too complex and these products might not be significant enough. For example:

“I think the reason that is stopping me from buying it is that I am not sure if it will help. I feel that for me to invest in them I have to do a lot of research to see for myself if this thing helps at all. And frankly, that is a lot of work, as you know this issue is very complex. I want to know more before I decide to adopt these products.” (F03, Female, 23 years old)

“The scale of this problem is bigger than any one of us so it's not easy for an individual to switch their consumption up because they think it could help save the world. I agree that we need to change our consumption and production, however, I am still not sure if this is the way. Many products do not seem like it is significant enough to help.” (M08, Male, 33 years old)

4.3.3 Greenwashing

The barrier of *Greenwashing* referred to the feeling or experience that eco-friendly products contain misleading information about their environmental claims. Participants addressed that they often encounter products that show misleading or incorrect information about their benefits or contributions. These experiences then result in the feeling of distrust in the purchase and often discourage them from wanting to purchase. For example:

“I often get confused about the labels about products being eco. I don't really know but sometimes when I search up some label I either can't find anything about that certification or that it looks fishy. So I end up not buying because I don't trust it.” (F08, Female, 31 years old)

“I usually do a lot of research when buying something that is advertised as green. But I feel like it's often disappointed by the search because it does not seem like the claim follows through. It sucks because it makes you wonder about how easy it is for brands to scam you.” (M07, Male, 31 years old)

4.4 Additional Theme

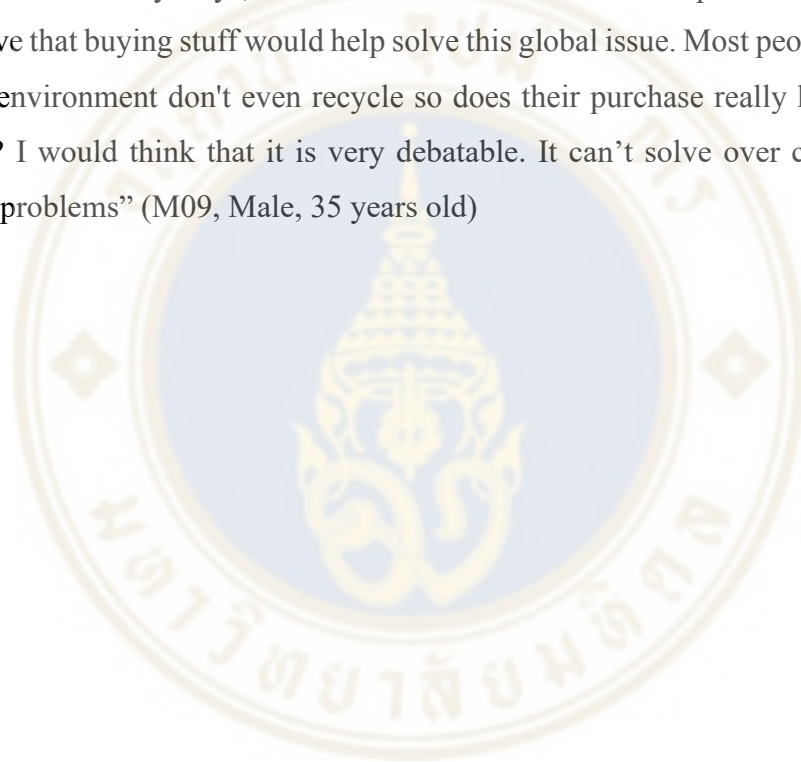
4.4.1 Disbelief

The barrier of *Disbelief* referred to the refusal to accept that an eco-friendly product will contribute to solving the issue of sustainability. Participants reported that they do not believe that the degree of contribution of these products can be compared to the scale of this ecological crisis. Many often compare the act of purchasing a green product with recycling a traditional one. The argument revolves around the green product being insignificant if it were to still be disorganized and ends up in the landfill with the other trash. This barrier has some overlap with the barrier of *Perceived Impact* however differs from the fact that these participants are certain about their perspective on eco-friendly products. They believe that it is not the solution since the issue of recycling is a lot more significant. This is an additional finding from the literature where most journals only focused on the barriers of *Perceived Impact* where consumers are skeptical about the significance of the product. This is different from the perspective of

some participants in this study that were certain that this is an ineffective solution to the sustainability issue. For example:

“But does it really work? buying stuff that is friendlier to the environment. I’m not saying that brands should stop but I am skeptical about the degree of the change. If it’s to help remind people about their consumption it could be a good practice but on a bigger scale what really matters is still the issue of trash going into the landfill. People need to recycle and be responsible for their own trash, no matter a bamboo or plastic toothbrush.” (F10, Female, 46 years old)

“In many ways, I don't think that I believe in these products. It's hard for me to believe that buying stuff would help solve this global issue. Most people that advocate for the environment don't even recycle so does their purchase really help make a real change? I would think that it is very debatable. It can't solve over consumption and landfill problems” (M09, Male, 35 years old)



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

From interviewing 24 pro-environment participants it has shed light on the reason why their attitude toward sustainability is yet to convert them to be active green consumers. Several barriers were identified in this study that could contribute to the literature on decreasing the gap between their attitudes and behavior. As indicated in the result section, the barriers that were the most frequently mentioned were either Price or Awareness with specific sub-themes showing some correlation between the barriers.

It can be concluded that the barrier of Price has the greatest impact on keeping consumers from buying eco-friendly products. This is aligned with the study by Annuziata & Mariani (2018) to suggest that high price is the top barrier that is likely to decrease willingness to purchase eco-friendly products. This is largely due to the perception of the cost to benefit ratio in paying more and feeling that they did not also receive higher benefits. The majority of the participants commented that it feels unfair that they have to obtain the extra cost for the benefit of the general. This is especially strong in low involvement products with which they are already familiar and satisfied with the price range. On top of that, fast-moving consumer goods were mentioned to be the category that is the hardest to consider if they were of high price since many are concerned about the frequency of paying this extra amount. Participants often mentioned that they would be willing to pay for higher involvement products such as EV cars or electronic appliances since they perceived them to last longer and of higher ecological impact.

But what was also worth mentioning are the sub-themes that emerged from all the participants that reported Price as their main barrier. These participants would either also mention Quality or Inconvenience as another barrier. It seems like on top of having to pay more it is less appealing that they would often have to also compromise the quality of the product. The most often used example is the paper and plastic option where participants would complain that using products such as paper straws or

containers are lower in quality but are more expensive than their plastic counterparts. On the other hand, another sub-theme that was found to be associated with the barrier of Price is Inconvenience in using the products. For example, shampoo bars are higher in price but require more care and inconvenience to use than the traditional liquid shampoo. Yet this is again aligned with the literature that factors that are perceived as an added cost could also be bundled together contributing to a bigger gap in the cost to benefit ratio of the consumer (Gleim et al, 2013).

On the other hand, another main theme that was found was the barrier of Awareness. This refers to either the awareness of the ecological benefits of the product or the participant's knowledge about sustainability. This is again consistent with the literature that consumers with lower environmental awareness will have lower purchase intentions (Malik et al, 2019). This seems to be a theme that emerged with participants that have little or no barrier to price. These participants mentioned that the main barrier was the extent of their knowledge about the product and/or the ecological issue. This group of participants would report that the reason they didn't buy more is simply due to not knowing what to buy or why to buy these products. Generally, most of the participants would even admit that they are not active in finding information about the issue that they care about. Which is the reason why they are still not an active user of green products.

In addition, the sub-themes that were found to have a correlation with the barrier of Awareness are either Availability, Perceived Impact, or Greenwashing. It was observed that participants would first report that they don't know what to buy or why to buy what and give reasons in the sub-themes. For example, some do not know what to buy because it's not in their local supermarket (Availability). Some are not sure what to buy because they are unsure about the impact it could help since it seems so little compared to the problem (Perceived Impact). And lastly, don't know enough about the issue and do not want to risk being greenwashed by brands, especially upon confusion when trying to search more about the product (Greenwashing).

On the contrary, a barrier that was not mentioned in the literature that was found in this study was the barrier of Disbelief. This refers to the refusal to accept that buying green products could contribute to solving the ecological crisis. This barrier was separated from the barrier of Perceived Impact because this group of participants made

a clear distinctive reason to the group with the Perceived Impact barrier. These participants were not skeptical or thought that the impact is too small compared to the scale of the problem. Their perception is that these products are irrelevant as a solution to the issue of climate change. They reported recycling to be much more relevant and significant since, without this process, all the eco-friendly products will still end up in landfills untreated. These participants are strong in their option to focus on raising awareness of recycling rather than fixing environmental issues through a shift in consumption.

The differences between the Price and Awareness groups are noteworthy because they could show that even at an affordable price, there are still layers of barriers that could hinder consumers to buy greener products. The research will assume that for these products to be made more affordable it is likely that it has reached an economy of scale which will also result in higher availability to the general population. However, other barriers are still at play in stopping these pro-environmental individuals from buying more. In conclusion, this study has shown that in the context of Thailand, the barriers that are the most significant to day-to-day green consumption are high prices and low awareness of the sustainability issues and products. In addition, other barriers were also found to be correlated with price and awareness, indicating that these barriers could be correlated to one another.

CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

No study is without limitations and this study encountered a few that future studies could further explore. First, the main limitation of this study was the scarcity of time and resources. And because of that, this study is prone to issues of reliability and validity. Having only 24 participants, the results might not be representative of the whole Thai population. This provides some areas for future research to replicate the study with a larger population sample. On the other hand, despite picking the method of in-depth interviews because of its richness in detail. The method is still prone to the researcher's bias and experience. Secondly, the research topic of "Green Consumption" is broad and in the future could be studied in a more specific product category. Participants with different backgrounds had very different definitions and experiences when it comes to day-to-day eco-friendly products. Which made it difficult to draw conclusions about their barriers. Future research could focus on different groups of pro-environmental individuals according to their level of experience with eco-friendly products for a better baseline. In addition, future research could also pick a specific product category such as toiletries, household products, or personal care to explore further patterns of behavior.

This study could be the first to address barriers to green consumption in the context of Thailand however, further research is encouraged to build upon the findings provided. This study would recommend that future studies examine the sub-themes that were found in this study. This study cannot conclude the relationship between the 2 main themes and their sub-themes. It was able to find some correlations but not the causations. So it would really be interesting to explore this area since it would be beneficial to understand the depth of the main barrier to Price and Awareness in Thailand.

Last but not least, another interesting aspect of research could be to explore the formation of sustainability values. Across the study, it can be observed that participants have different levels of understanding and perspectives on this ecological

crisis. It could be beneficial to study the reason behind these values to help identify the solution to each barrier. Since participants with different core values in regard to sustainability could be influenced by different messages and communication.



CHAPTER VII

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

One of the main implications of this research is the discovery of the two themes that were identified to be the most significant barriers for the participants in the context of Thailand. Discovering that Price and Awareness are most significant, suggests that this could be the issue with the highest priorities that practitioners and businesses should first tackle. The study chooses to recruit pro-environmental participants because they are the lowest hanging fruit. It is hypothesized that this is the group that should be the easiest to convert into active green consumers. Therefore, by using these findings, practitioners, and businesses should focus their efforts and resources on elevating the barriers of high price and low awareness.

This study hopes that the findings could help green businesses to acquire a higher market share. It is understandable that the issue of Price is a difficult barrier to overcome however, the study would suggest instead focusing on the consumer's perceived value. As mentioned, the reason that high prices are a big barrier is due to the mismatch between perceived value and the actual cost. On the other hand, to tackle the barrier of Awareness, it was found that most participants have problems regarding both their own knowledge about sustainability and the product itself. It might be beneficial for businesses and practitioners to also focus on raising awareness regarding this issue. Better display and communication messages could be a good and low-cost start for stores to start with. Participants often report that they do not know what to choose and also why to choose something because the benefits and impacts of the products are usually not clear. Having a clear description of the product could help their expectations to be more realistic. In addition, making clear to the consumers about the personal benefit could help the consumer to feel more relatable to the issue. Participants in the study would often mention that the issue is often felt on a grand scale and is hard to see immediate impact. Therefore, making the product benefit that is personal could help bridge ecological and personal benefits together.

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Appendix A: Participant Demographic

Code name	Gender	Age Range	Income	Education	Experience with eco-product
F01	Female	20-25	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	Yes
F02	Female	20-25	26,000-35,000	Master	Yes
F03	Female	20-25	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	No
F04	Female	26-30	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	Yes
F05	Female	26-30	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
F06	Female	26-30	36,000-45,000	Master	Yes
F07	Female	31-35	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
F08	Female	31-35	36,000-45,000	Master	Yes
F09	Female	31-35	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
F10	Female	46-50	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	No
F11	Female	46-50	36,000-45,000	Bachelor	Yes
F12	Female	46-50	36,000-45,000	Bachelor	Yes
M01	Male	20-25	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	Yes
M02	Male	20-25	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	Yes
M03	Male	20-25	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	No
M04	Male	26-30	15,000-25,000	Bachelor	No
M05	Male	26-30	26,000-35,000	Master	Yes
M06	Male	26-30	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
M07	Male	31-35	36,000-45,000	Master	Yes
M08	Male	31-35	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
M09	Male	31-35	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	No
M10	Male	46-50	26,000-35,000	Bachelor	Yes
M11	Male	46-50	36,000-45,000	Bachelor	Yes
M12	Male	46-50	36,000-45,000	Bachelor	Yes

Appendix B: Interview Questions

General Questions

- What do you think about the current environmental situation?
- What are your main concerns about the environment?
- How have you been affected by climate change?
- Do you think that individuals can make a difference in saving the planet?
- Are you doing anything in your daily consumption to help with the environment? If yes please explain.

Attitude Questions

- What do you think about green consumerism?
- What are the benefits of eco-friendly products?
- In your opinion, what makes a product eco-friendly?

Main Questions

- Could you give some examples of these products that you know about?
- Have you ever tried to search for information about these products? If not, why?
- What kind of products do you search for?
- How would you describe the process of searching for eco-friendly products?
- Could you recall a recent opportunity to purchase an eco-friendly product?
- Have you ever brought any green products?
- What was the product? Please give some examples
- What motivates you to buy it?
- What hinders you from buying green products? Or what is keeping you from buying more?
- What do you think about the current availability of green products in Thailand?
- Why do you think people find it hard to buy green products?
- What do you think about the future of green consumption in Thailand?