

FACTORS AFFECTING PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD ALMOND MILK: A CASE STUDY OF THAI EXPERIENCED AND INEXPERIENCED CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT: *The healthy trend has been grown rapidly in Thailand market since a few years ago. There are many kinds of healthy products which provided to the consumers. Also, almond milk is one of a new face to the market. The objective of study this research is to examine the factor of affecting Thai people's purchase intention toward almond milk. The researcher used an online and offline survey to develop and distribute questionnaires to the sample of the Thai population. The target populations were both Thai people who ever purchased and never purchase almond milk before. The researcher reached the data 386 respondents by conducting the simple linear regression, the multiple linear regression and independent sample t-test to analyze the hypotheses. The results showed that health consciousness and environmental attitude have a positive influence on attitude toward almond milk in the first model. The second model, the result showed attitude toward almond milk also has a positive influence to purchase intention. Furthermore, the result of the independent sample t-test was significant between people who ever purchased and people who never purchase for attitude toward almond milk in the third model. But, the result of the independent sample t-test was no significant different in purchase intention between people who ever purchased and people who never purchase almond milk before in the last model.*

Keywords: *Health Consciousness, Environmental Attitude, Attitude toward almond milk Purchase Intention.*

Introduction

From Plant Village (2011) explained that Almond (or *Prunus dulcis*) is a fruit from the almond tree which is members of the Rosaceae or rose family that is along with many other fruits such as peaches, apples, pears, plums, cherries, and apricots.

Almond is native to the Mediterranean region of the Middle East like Pakistan eastward to Syria and Turkey. According to statement of Tamimi, J. Z. (2016), The Almond is a deciduous tree which growing around 4

to 10 meters in height. The young twigs are in green color at first, later becoming purplish when exposed to sunlight and then it will turn to gray in the second year. The flowers appear before the leaves in early spring, and they are white to pale pink. The best temperature for its growth is between 15 and 30 °C (59 and 86 °F) respectively. Almond harvest season starts when hulls of fruit in the interior of the canopy are open. And the seed coat turns brown during the drying-out process of maturation which is in the third year of its life. Almonds can be stored for months either in-shell or shelled if dry. Almonds are the most widely-used for the candy store or sweet decoration item like candy bars, cakes, toppings, etc. Also, Griffiths, M.D. and Huxley, A.J. (1992) said that most of the crop is roasted and flavored or

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salted and sold in cans. Also, Almonds themselves are rich in nutrients like protein, fiber, vitamin E, magnesium, selenium, manganese, zinc, potassium, fiber, iron, phosphorus, copper and calcium. Moreover, Almond milk also contains flavonoids which lower bad cholesterol and help to protect the heart also. Almond milk is plant milk which produced from almonds with a nutty taste. It contains neither cholesterol nor lactose, and was often consumed by those who are lactose-allergic and others who wish to avoid dairy products, including vegans. Commercial almond milk comes in sweetened, unsweetened, plain, vanilla and chocolate flavors, and was usually enriched with vitamins. It can also be a homemade product by using a blender, almonds, and water. It was traditionally consumed through much of the Mediterranean. Due to almond milk has no cholesterol, therefore, it is often recommended to lower blood sugar levels and treat constipation. Moreover, Fresh Start: Thailand Fitness Bootcamp (2017), there are now a lot of dairies milk alternatives which available on supermarket shelves such as cow, soy, rice, oat and almond milk are among them. Having these options is a relief for those people who suffer from dairy allergies which are often related to being lactose intolerant. Some of the people are unable to properly digest lactose in cow milk mainly. Nowadays the trend of lifestyle was changed; most of the people are more concern about their health. Hence, almond milk is one of their choices when people do shopping for healthy products. Almond milk has become more known in recent years because of its Low-Calorie content and nutritional benefits. But almond milk does not have the same nutrition as dairy milk, therefore it can't be completed for substitute the levels of protein and calcium that people would find in dairy one, so people should make sure to consume these nutrients from other sources of diet as

well.

In 2016, there is a country report of drinking milk products in Thailand states that Thai consumers have become increasingly in consuming milk which a large shift from the traditional perception in the past that milk is only for children. But today the health and wellness consciousness are also plays a big part in changing the perception, as more consumers understand that milk is beneficial for the adult also, Euromonitor (2016).

This research studied about the factor affecting purchase intention toward almond milk and if there is the difference between people who are experienced and non-experienced in purchasing Almond milk or not. Also, studied of what factors those are influenced attitude toward almond milk. Lastly, this paper also aimed to understand attitude toward purchase intention of almond milk in Thai people.

Literature Review

Health Consciousness

From the study of Oude Ophuis, 1989; Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis, 1998, indicated that health consciousness is an individual's willingness to take care or support his or her health to avoid of sickness or disease. Furthermore, Hong (2011) integrated its meaning from the previous marketing related researches and defined health consciousness, based on an individual's perspective of personal health or health awareness to be healthy. Hence, the health-conscious consumer is the one who prefers to do something for making them healthier. (Mai and Hoffmann, 2012; Michaelidou and Hassan, 2008)

The previous study of Hill and Lynchehuan, 2002 say that "health consciousness" refers to the understanding of consumer toward changes in health condition. Most of the consumer believes that organic food contains more nutrients than conventional food.

So, the significant factor for purchasing food for many consumers is healthiness, (Magnusson et al., 2001; Wandel and Bugge, 1997).

Also, this study also expects that people's health consciousness will directly affect their attitudes and purchase intentions for almond milk.

Environmental Attitude

For this study, environmental attitude refers to people's perspective about the environment that related to how they feel concern, preference and the overall assessment of environment (Solomon, 2014). Nowadays, the healthy products that were produced without destroying the environment are increasing in demand of the consumers. The purpose of healthy products which came from the organic farm are to prevent the environment from being destroyed and to protect the natural resources of the product produced (Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis, 1998; Williams and Hammit, 2001) Also, the research of (Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis, 1998; Van Dam, 1991) indicate that it had been proven that the environmental concern factor is one of the main issue for purchasing a healthy product or organic food. There was a positive relationship between environmental attitude and purchase intention which positive attitude is the direct effect that has stronger purchase intention toward the healthy and organic product. Besides, the previous study of Felix and Braunsberger, 2016; Gupta and Ogden, 2009) say that purchasing decisions were based on the people's environmental attitudes. Therefore, this paper expects that consumer's attitude will significantly affect their purchase intention.

Attitude toward Almond Milk

Attitude toward almond milk refers to the viewpoint or level of preference to almond milk which can be both positive or

negative valued. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) demonstrated that an individual's attitude toward any object can be predicted with a high degree of accuracy from the knowledge of the individual's beliefs about the attitude object and the evaluation aspect of these beliefs. Based on Ajzen and Fishbein's model, a person's attitude is a function of the strength with which he or she holds these beliefs and his/her evaluation of each attribute. Moreover, the research of Yadav and Pathak (2016), confirmed that the attitude of the consumer is considerably influencing to purchase intention.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention can define as a customer's willingness to purchase a product or a service from anywhere in the future. Per the mentioned statement of Felix and Braunsberger, 2016; Gupta and Ogden, 2009) that purchasing decisions were impacted on the consumer's attitude. There was a positive relationship between health-consciousness, attitude and purchase intention. A research by Teng (2009) indicates that positive attitude tends to have a strong purchase intention. Also, purchase Intention refers to the probability of subjective persons to be involved in the purchasing action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Research Framework and Methodology

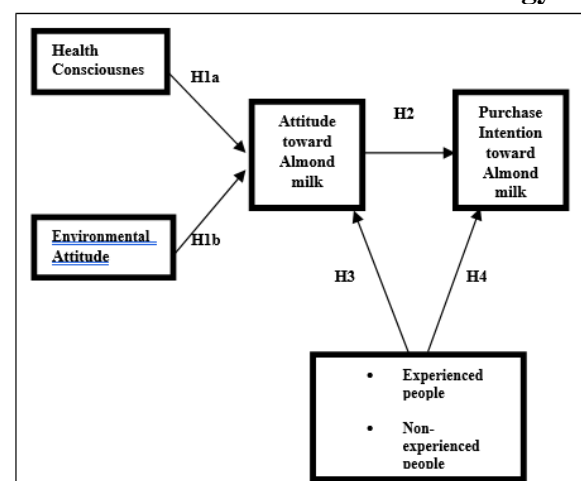


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This study examined five hypotheses to achieve the research objective.

H1a: Health Consciousness is significantly affected to the attitude toward almond milk.

H1b: Environmental Attitude is significantly affected to the attitude toward almond milk.

H2: Attitude toward almond milk is significantly affected to the purchase intention toward almond milk.

H3: There is a significant different in attitude based on group of people who used to purchase and people who never purchase almond milk before.

H4: There is a significant different in purchase intention based on group of people who used to purchase and people who never purchase almond milk before.

Research Methodology

According to this study, the research was collecting the data by using both online survey questionnaire and paper. The data for this study were collected in Thailand from both male and female which selected by convenience sampling method. To measure the hypothesis, the Likert scale model was use in the questionnaire. The researcher use a 5 Likert scale to measure of the all items ranking from “Strongly disagree (1)” to “strongly agree (5)”.

Measurement of Variable

The target respondents for this survey were Thai people by divided into two groups, people who used to purchase and people who never purchase almond milk product.

Population and Sample

Questionnaires were distributed to 386 respondents in Thailand by using online and paper survey questionnaire.

Reliability Test

The test was done with the target number of 30 respondents, which was conducted by Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient. All the result of the reliability shown that the reliability result was greater than 0.70 (Cronbach, 1951) that was meet the typical prerequisites of reliability of research instrument.

Table 1: Consistency of the scales test (N=30)

Variable	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Health Consciousness	.853	4
Environmental Attitude	.862	4
Attitude Toward Almond Milk	.740	4
Purchase intention	.922	3

Result and Discussion

- Data Analysis

Statistical application was used to analyze the data to define the relationship between variables and mean differentiate of two groups.

- Descriptive analysis of respondent’s profile

This research was collected data from the respondents from both who experienced and non- experienced of purchasing almond milk in Thailand. All respondents are 368, which show 100 percent. The majority respondents which is 56.4 percent was the people who have no experience in purchasing almond milk before, the rest was people who have experience in purchasing almond milk with 43.6 percent.

Most the respondents were female with the 68.7 percent and the rest were

male respondents with 31.3 percent. For the age, most of the respondents were age between 29-33 years old at 38.8 percent, follow by age between 24-28 years old at 34.2 percent and 34 years old and above at 21.2 percent. The least group of respondents were age from 23 years old and below which is only 5.8 percent. For the education level, most of the respondents with 71.5 percent have a bachelor's degree, follow by 23.8 percent have a master's degree and 4.1 percent who were the respondents got lower than bachelor's degree. There are only 0.6 percent of people who have higher than master's degree.

For income level per month in baht, the majority respondents have more than 45,000 baht at 37 percent, follow by 31.6 percent of respondents who have income between 15,000-30,000 baht per month, 26.9 percent are between 30,001-

Variable	Beta (Std. Error)	VIF
Health Consciousness (HC)	.428** (.043)	1.493
Environmental Attitude (EA)	.123** (.051)	1.493
R Square (R^2)	.342	
Adjusted R^2	.339	

45,000 and the rest of 4.5 percent are below 15,000 baht per month.

- Descriptive analysis and Correlation Matrix

The 5-points Likert scale was used as the scale to test each variable where 1 refers to 1 strongly disagree and 5 refers to strongly agree.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis and Correlation Matrix

VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	AA	HC	EA
AA	3.71	.648	1		

	70	46			
HC	3.72	.767	.576	1	
	54	47	**		
EA	4.10	.641	.413	.574	1
	82	98	**	**	

****Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).**

Per the above correlation matrix, it shows that these two independent variables have positive correlation with the attitude toward almond milk. First, there is a moderate impact of Health Consciousness (HC) to Attitude toward almond milk (AA) at 0.576. Second, there is a moderate impact between Environmental Attitude (EA) and Health Consciousness (HC) at 0.574. Besides, there is one coefficient of correlation which less than 0.5. It is the positively impact of Environmental attitude (EA) to Attitude toward almond milk (AA) at 0.413.

- Inferential Analysis

The result of regression analysis between independent variables and dependent variable is illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Result of Regression

Variable	Beta (Std. Error)	VIF
Health Consciousness (HC)	.428** (.043)	1.493
Environmental Attitude (EA)	.123** (.051)	1.493
R Square (R^2)	.342	
Adjusted R^2	.339	

Beta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis, ** $p \leq .05$

Table 3 is representing the Multiple Linear Regression analysis by using Health Consciousness (HC) and Environmental Attitude (EA) as independent variables while using Attitude

toward almond milk as dependent variable at the 0.05 significant levels. The value of $R^2=.342$ or (34.2%) indicated that health consciousness and environmental attitude are significant variable with attitude toward almond milk which $sig.= .000$ and $.016$ respectively.

Due to the beta (β) of Health Consciousness (HC) is at the highest value which is 0.428. Therefore, the researcher can summarize that health consciousness is the most influence factor that affects attitude toward almond milk.

To test multicollinearity problem, variance inflation factors (VIF) was tested to the model and it is revealed at 1.493 which does not exceed the maximum value of 10 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995) Thus, the multicollinearity is not the critical problem in this research.

Table 4: Result of Regression

Variable	Beta (Std. Error)	VIF
Attitude toward Almond milk (AA)	.918** (.048)	1.000
R Square (R^2)	.489	
(Adjusted R^2)	.487	

*Beta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis, ** $p \leq .05$*

Table 6: Result of Independent Sample t-test for Attitude toward almond milk

F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
1.750	0.187	3.926	384	.000
		3.952	383.999	.000

According to table 5 and Table 6, the results show that there is statistically significant mean difference of attitude toward almond milk between experienced (Mean 3.8516, SD =0.59693) and non-

Table 4 is representing the Simple Linear Regression analysis by using Attitude toward Almond milk (AA) as independent variable while using Purchase Intention as dependent variable at the 0.05 significant levels.

The result reveals that Attitude toward Almond milk has positively affect to purchase intention.

It has the coefficients of independent variable greater than zero ($\beta = .918$, $p \leq .05$). The independent variable can explain variance of purchase intention toward almond milk at 48.7%. It means that H_0 is rejected.

The independent sample T-Test were conducted to compare difference in attitude and purchase intention toward almond milk between experienced people and non-experienced people as illustrated in Table 5 -8.

Table 5: Result of Group statistics

Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experienced people	3.8516	.59693
Non-experienced people	3.5968	.67009

experienced people (Mean 3.5968, SD=0.67009); $t(384) = .3926$, $p=.000$.

Therefore, this research rejected H_0 . It could explain that attitude toward almond milk between experienced and non-experienced people are significantly mean different.

Table 7: Result of Group Statistics

Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experienced people	3.4505	.88139
Non-experienced people	3.4853	.82537

Table 8: Result of Independent

F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
0.336	0.563	-.400	384	.689
		-.398	371.987	.691

Sample t-test for purchase intention

According to table 7 and Table 8, the results show that there is no statistically significant mean difference of purchase intention toward almond milk between experienced (Mean 3.4505, SD = 0.88139) and non-experienced people (Mean 3.4853, SD=0.82537); $t(384) = -.400$, $p=.689$.

Therefore, this research fails to reject null hypothesis of H4. It could imply that purchase intentions between experienced and non-experienced people are not significantly mean different.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Conclusion

From the empirical analyses of a sample of 386 respondents using linear regression and t-test to examine purchase intention toward almond milk of Thai people in different groups between experienced group (people who used to purchase) and non-experienced group (people who never purchase) almond milk. The results present there was significant difference between experienced and non-experienced

people's attitude, supporting H4. But, there was no significant difference in purchase intention of these two groups. Also, multiple linear regression result explained that two independent variables could describe the attitude toward almond milk by 34.2%. Moreover, the result from simple linear regression showed that attitude toward almond milk could describe purchase intention toward almond milk by 48.9%.

Recommendations& Implication for Future Research

This research was surveyed by using three independent variables to examine purchase intention towards almond milk which can describe not much in detail. Therefore, it can be recommended to use more related factors for further study that would better predict or describe the dependent variable. Moreover, there are significantly mean difference in attitude between these two groups, people who used to purchased and people who never purchase almond milk, therefore it would be recommended to have different promotion for each group as they have the different attitude toward almond milk. Lastly, the future study could be applied in other countries as well.

For Example, China as they are majority of population in Asia. Or, Japan is another country that the survey could be applied in because the elder is the most population in the country which they may face with the issue of lactose intolerant or digestion problem. Therefore, almond milk can be the alternative milk for them.

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