

CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTION OF ORGANIC RICE CASE STUDY IN CHAN AYE THAR ZAN TOWNSHIP, MANDALAY, MYANMAR

ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคที่มีต่อกลุ่มสินค้าชั้นนำในประเทศไทย

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between the consumer attitude and purchase intention in organic rice with four factors, Health Concern, Environmental Concern, Product Knowledge and Product Price. In Myanmar, the knowledge of organic product is growing among people in which the elderly consumers are well aware about the availability of organic products more than younger generations. The quantitative questionnaires are approached to detect between four factors with attitude and purchase intention by using linear regression analysis to confirm the results. The results show that four factors are significant influences to the attitude and purchase intention on organic rice. In addition, consumer attitude is significantly influenced to the purchase intention. Thus, the consumer attitude is the key of the motivating factor to purchase organic rice.

Keywords: Consumer Attitude. Purchase Intention. Organic rice

ପାତ୍ରିକା

วัดถุประสงค์ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้คือ ศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคและความตั้งใจซื้อข้าวอินทรีย์ด้วยตัวแปร 4 ตัว ได้แก่ ความใส่ใจในสุขภาพ ความใส่ใจในสิ่งแวดล้อม ความรู้เกี่ยวกับผลิตภัณฑ์ และราคา ผลิตภัณฑ์ จากการศึกษาพบว่า ในประเทศไทยมีผู้สูงอายุมีการรับรู้ในข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสินค้าเกษตรอินทรีย์มากกว่ากลุ่มวัยรุ่น การวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้แบบสอบถามเชิงปริมาณในการศึกษาปัจจัยทั้ง 4 ด้าน ที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติและความตั้งใจซื้อ โดยใช้การวิเคราะห์การถดถอยเชิงเส้น ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ตัวแปรทั้งสี่นั้นมีอิทธิพลอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อทัศนคติและความตั้งใจซื้อข้าวอินทรีย์ นอกจากนี้ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภค มีอิทธิพลอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อความตั้งใจซื้อ ดังนั้น ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคจึงเป็นแรงจูงใจสำคัญที่มีผลต่อความตั้งใจซื้อข้าวอินทรีย์

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Introduction

Since year 2000, consumer interest in the organic label continues to grow wider than non-organic food that is driven by consumer perceptions on food safety and quality (Irianto, 2015). Similarly, international markets are increasing concerns for food products which is mainly driven by health concerns (Nguyen & Ha, 2016). Compared to America and Europe market, the South-East Asia market for organic food is expanding since 2006 and the organic agriculture is one of the most important in Asia. Although the market size is very small, 40 percent of the world's organic producers are in Asia and the second producers are in Africa with 29 percent, followed by Europe 17 percent and America is 16 percent (Lernound & Willer, 2014).

Benson (2013) reported that farmers receive double price with the organic rice than conventionally rice. Comparing among other countries, the major organic rice consumers are in United State. The United State, Europe and Australia are the major importers of the organic rice from the Asia countries. The organic paddy farming system helps the farmers to improve the soil quality as well as maintaining the environmental sustainability for developing countries. The producers typically sold the organic rice in niche markets at higher prices, but the organic rice farming costs more to produce. However, an adequate yield of organic rice is still challenging in worldwide but nowadays, the market of organic rice continues to extend throughout the word.

Myanmar is one of the agricultural-based nation in the South-East Asia region. It is located near the border with Thailand, Laos, China, India and Bangladesh. Nearly 70 percent of populations are in rural area, while another 30 percent are in urban areas with 60 million populations (World Bank, 2016). Total land area is 67.7 million hectares and current crop land is only 11.97 million hectares, extendable land area is approximately 17.24 million hectares remaining suitable for cultivation (Green Net, 2011). Since 2010, Myanmar organic sector has developed and the organic farm land is 209.1 hectares and 12 producers in 2014 (Lernound & Willer, 2014). Only the organic rice certified by Myanmar Organic Association Group (MOAG) is sold in the local supermarket. With the corporation between MOAG, Myanmar, and Agricultural Certification Thailand (ACT), Thailand has been supported the organic certificate for Myanmar organic rice (Green Net, 2011).

The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) economic cooperation program, the corporation of the Myanmar government and the Nordic Development fund (NDF), had supported the organic technique in a variety of organic farming system and trained the organic cultivation about 1300 farmers in Myanmar. To provide the organic knowledge and techniques, the selected organic paddy and crop farming were built in Pyi Oo Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw, Bago Region and Mandalay Region covering more than 409 hectares and working with over 300 staffs of the department of agricultural (Roca, 2016).

Moreover, Myanmar Government wants to

persuade an estimated 30 million farmers who are about 60 percent of the country population to focus on organic farming. Organic farming helps not only the organic consumers in order to improve their health conditions, but also get a better pay for the local farmer. By increasing the organic agricultural farm project in Myanmar and the organic rice awareness of the Myanmar consumers, this research attempts to understand the consumer attitude towards organic rice in Mandalay, Myanmar. Thus, the aim of this research is to examine the Mandalay consumers' attitudes and behavior towards organic rice. The objectives of this study are as follows;

1. To investigate the current consumer attitude and purchase intention in organic rice.
2. To identify the factors which influence the consumer attitude by health concern, environmental concern, product knowledge and product price

Literature Review

Consumer attitude towards purchase intention

Consumer behavior is the process of the individuals or groups who purchase or use the products or services and satisfy the past experience of purchase, in which all these processes can lead to more complex impacts on the consumer behavior and society (Solomon, 1996). The consumer's attitude influence on the individual or groups to spend their resources (time, money, effort) related to the purchasing of certain products or services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Hsu & Chen (2014) confirmed that

if the consumer has a negative attitude about the organic food, the consumer's purchase intention is low, but the consumer's attitude has the positive view such as "organic food is clean pesticide" that will increase their purchase intention towards organic food. The consumer's belief, the feeling will impact on judging to purchase the organic food based on health, safety, and freshness of organic food. Some study pointed out that there is a significant different between consumer attitude and the real purchase intention. For instance, the Hong Kong consumers have positive attitude and low purchase intention (Yi, 2009; Mangnusson et al., 2001). In another word, the consumer attitude motivates the purchase intention of organic food. Based on the previous literatures and relevant articles, hypotheses were developed.

Health Concern

Due to healthy and a new lifestyle, organic food is gained recognition in the food market (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Nutrition content is the main aspect of personal health. This is because high-quality nutrition, the nourishing meals, and the healthy food like organic food were notifiable to purchase. The attitude of health aspect is the most influence on the consumer attitude and purchase intention of organic food (Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002). The previous studies of Irianto (2015) and Wee et al. (2014) confirmed that the health is the determinants of individual's positive attitude and purchase intention of the organic food. Consumption of organic foods leads to improve

health to be safer of higher quality nutrition than conventional foods that seems consumer beliefs about the benefits of organic products (healthy, safe, and better tasting). Therefore, the consumers' concern for their health problems has the positive effect on willingness to buy the green products (Yin et al., 2010).

Environmental Concern

Many studies found out that three main factors which are the same in different countries that organic food is seen as healthier, environmentally friendly and more nutrition than conventional food (Aertsens et al., 2009). People who have more concern for the environment are proposed to have a positive effect on the purchasing of organic products (Yi, 2009). Organic farming is begun as an alternative production system to reduce the negative impact on natural resources such as soil, water as well as to develop the rural economic. The consumer who has the ecological issues is willing to purchase the organic products (Laroche et al., 2001). Chen (2007) found that consumers who emphasize the environmental problems had the high attitude and intention to purchase the organic food. Rong-Da (2016) confirmed that the environmental protection and ecological labeling influence to establish the positive attitude and purchase intention of the organic product.

Product Knowledge

The products that based on information like labeled at item "organic" can lead consumers

to buy the organic food (Lee & Yun, 2015). In young generation, the knowledge of organic food is the main factor affected purchase intention towards organic food (Iqbal, 2016). According to Foster & Padel (2005), consumer knowledge has a positive influence on their attitude towards organic food and the more knowledge consumers have the more positive for organic food in their attitude. The information about organic food is showed the significant influence consumers' knowledge in the market (Gracia & Magistris, 2007). The lack of information has led the uncertainty about the consequence of organic food. When the consumer has more knowledge about organic benefits, this will impact on their perspective and purchase the organic food (Suh et al., 2012; Aertsens et al., 2009).

Product Price

The higher premiums price could discourage the less favorable consumers' benefits of buying organic food (Yin et al., 2010). However, the knowledge of organic food has directly affected the customers who have awareness to pay premium price of organic food (Lee & Hwang, 2016). From the consumer perspective, they perceived the value of what they give and return. In other words, what the benefits and cost is, that is the consumers see before making the final decision to buy things (Laroche et al., 2001). Price is an important factor when customer make their purchase decision. The price of organic food is the important factor to make their purchase decision (Foster & Padel, 2005).

Rong-Da (2016) stated that even consumer has the high awareness of health concerns and environmental protection, the consumer high attitude and intention of organic foods are easily affected by the price. However, the consumer trust in a label of organic food influences to purchase the organic food at the higher price. Therefore, the premium price of organic food easily affects of buying organic products.

Conceptual Framework Model

In terms of academic implications, this study uses the theoretical perspectives to

construct the model of attitude towards purchase intention of organic rice. The majority research of studies on consumer attitude towards organic food use the experimental methods of Hsu & Chen (2014), Rong-Da (2016). This study follows Hsu & Chen, 2014 to construct the research framework based on multiple theoretical regarding the purchase intention of organic rice, with adopting the theoretical perspectives or the linear model to explore the relationship among variables. Based on the previous literatures and relevant articles, hypothesizes were developed as illustrated in Fig 1.

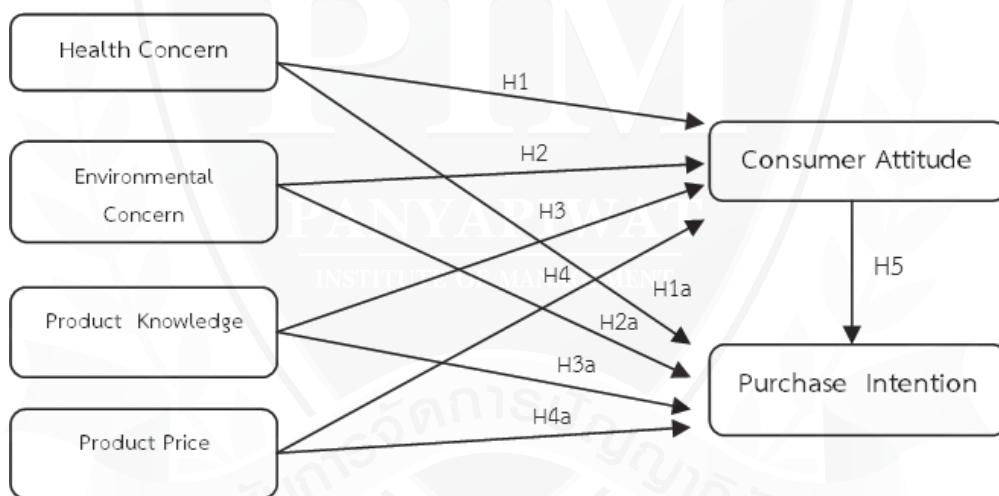


Figure 1 Conceptual frame work (adapted from Hsu & Chen, 2014)

Research Methodology

The quantitative research was conducted in a form of the survey. The respondents were based on the demographics which were expressed in table 1. The 30 drafts of the questionnaires were distributed so as to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The 400 questionnaires were distributed to samples by

using Solvin's formula which applied to calculate the sample size. The data was collected in Chan Aye Thar Zan Township in Mandalay in which 40% of the business sector is located in this area. Its current population size is 197,175 people. The questionnaire was distributed to the sample people at Market, Palaza and households is located in this are

The study was used a five-point Likert scale with option like a score of 1 indicates “strongly disagree”, whereas 5 indicates “strongly agree” with the statement. In order to know the current condition of consumer attitude, the measurement for product information, purchase intention and attitude towards purchase intention in organic rice was determined using five items adapted from Hsu & Chen (2014). After obtaining data, the information was entered directly into a statistical package in order to analyze the research result.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics is used to describe and summarize data of the respondents. In a total of valid 400 interviews, about 67 % of the respondents are female and the remaining 33% are male. The dominant age range of the respondents is 26 to 35 years old (40%),

followed by 36 to 45 years old (31%). The majority of educational background is bachelor degree (61%). About 42.8% of samples is single, while another 38% of respondents is married with children 149 (37.3%). The occupation of the majority respondents is government employee or officer (78%); people who have monthly income between 150,001 to 200,000 Ks are the major respondents (44%).

The relationship between Attitude and purchase intention

We applied the multiple regression model to test the relationship between multiple factors and consumer attitude, and another purchase intention on organic food. The research procedure was adopted from the previous literature proposed by Paul & Rana (2012) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The Relationship between Attitude (a), Purchasing Intention (b) and Four Factors

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Attitude (a) | Purchase intention (b) |
| Constant | $\beta = 0.290$ t-value = 2.404* | $\beta = 0.108$ t-value = 0.771 |
| Health Concern, HC | $\beta = 0.211$ t-value = 6.172* | $\beta = 0.219$ t-value = 5.539* |
| Environmental concern, EC | $\beta = 0.249$ t-value = 6.921* | $\beta = 0.280$ t-value = 6.710* |
| Product Knowledge, PK | $\beta = 0.220$ t-value = 5.737* | $\beta = 0.193$ t-value = 4.330* |
| Product Price, PP | $\beta = 0.249$ t-value = 10.425* | $\beta = 0.267$ t-value = 9.625* |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

Dependent variable was CATT, Consumer Attitude, Purchase Intention (PUIN) and four factors are presented in table 1. Table 1 shows that the analysis of the relationship between consumers' attitude and purchase intention with health concern, environmental concern, and product knowledge and product price was tested. The results reveal that all factors were found to be significant explanatory factors explaining the attitude and the purchase intention of organic rice ($p<0.01$), which is consistent with Gracia & Magistris (2007) and Chen (2007). From the evidence of previous researchers, health consciousness, organic knowledge, and ecology issues had the significant influence on consumer attitude to buying organic food (Hassan, Yee & Ray, 2015; Nguyen & Ha, 2016). However, Hsu & Chen (2007) found that health consciousness and attitude towards organic food show the insignificant negative relation. Yin et al. (2010) also found out that consumers are willing to pay the premium price for organic food and the price of organic food is the significant effect on the consumer's attitude. However, Hassan, Yee & Ray (2015), Hsu & Chen (2014) found out that the food safety and environmental concern had no significant influence on the purchase intention towards organic food.

Therefore, each factor is positively influenced the consumers' attitude in organic rice, indicating that Myanmar' consumers have strongly positive attitudes about the benefits of organic food in their personal lives. On the other hand, the

purchase intention is basically determined by four factors, which means that Myanmar is more likely to pay attention for purchasing in organic products.

Table 2 The relationship between Attitude and Purchase Intention

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| | β | t-Value |
| (Constant) | 0.097 | .972 |
| CATT | 0.965 | 42.628* |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

When we tested the relationship between attitude and purchase intention by using Regression, as presented in Table 2. The research result shows that consumer attitude has a positively significant relationship with the purchase intention ($p<0.01$). Timmins (2010) confirmed that the motives for purchase and non-purchase of organic food are related to the customer attitude. The consumers' attitude is the most influence consumer intention to buy the green products (Ozguven, 2012). As a result, a positive attitude of benefits of organic product can persuade consumers to buy more organic food (Chen, 2007; Aertsen et al., 2009). According to the results, Myanmar consumers have a good attitude in purchase intention of buying organic rice.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the research results, the respondents have the good attitude and intention because of health concern, environmental concern, and product knowledge but the premium price of organic product is unwilling to accept to buy organic products. In Myanmar, because of many chemical fertilizer and pesticides in agricultural products, food safety incidents and soil problem can be seen to

become a focus for the Myanmar. Myanmar consumers are inadequate in information about organic and label of organic such as “organic” on the product. The knowledge in organic information can be useful for the consumers who are willing to buy organic rice. However, price becomes the key barrier in buying organic food compared to other factors. From the evidences of this study, we summarized the hypothesis testing as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Hypothesis Testing Summary

| Hypothesis | Pathway | β | t-value | Supported |
|------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1 | HC \rightarrow CATT | 0.211 | 6.172* | Yes |
| H2 | EC \rightarrow CATT | 0.249 | 6.921* | Yes |
| H3 | PK \rightarrow CATT | 0.220 | 5.737* | Yes |
| H4 | PP \rightarrow CATT | 0.249 | 10.415* | Yes |
| H1a | HC \rightarrow PUIN | 0.219 | 5.539* | Yes |
| H2a | EC \rightarrow PUIN | 0.280 | 6.710* | Yes |
| H3a | PK \rightarrow PUIN | 0.193 | 4.330* | Yes |
| H4a | PP \rightarrow PUIN | 0.267 | 9.625* | Yes |
| H5 | CATT \rightarrow PUIN | 0.965 | 42.628* | Yes |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

In conclusion, multiple regression model was used to investigate the relationship between multiple factors and consumer attitude, and purchase intention in buying organic rice. Table 3 shows that the health concern, environmental concern, product knowledge and price concern are positively influence consumer attitude (H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, H_5) and purchase intention (H_{1a} ,

H_{2a}, H_{3a}, H_{4a}). Similarly, Consumer attitude is positively influence the purchase intention (H_5) to make a decision on purchasing products. Based on the study results, they confirm that consumer attitude plays the role of consumer mind to purchase organic food. Thus, the present study suggests that:

1. The marketers should try to share the advantage of the organic farming system as product knowledge and benefits of organic product such as organic product is free pesticide or chemical free

2. The survey also suggests that the consumption of organic rice in Myanmar is increasingly demanding; however, labeling and packaging for organic products are needed to attract people who are willing to buy the organic rice.

3. The marketers should take a notice that consumer attitude that is the key driven to purchase the organic product. Therefore, the marketers should find the way how to interpret the organic information on public and make a marketing plan to attract the young generations so as to get awareness on the organic product and also persuade the mature consumers of organic product to repurchase and to get the loyalty on organic products.

4. If the marketers want to penetrate the organic market such as vegetables, organic milk or yogurt, marketer should ensure the timely availability for organic product in the market.

5. The organic associations in Myanmar should cooperate with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to get the organic certificate in Myanmar that will help the farmer who wants to plant the organic vegetable or

organic rice.

6. The organic association group should hold the organic product exhibition in public and sell the organic vegetables, organic rice with promotion price that will attract the potential consumer for organic product.

7. Government of Republic of Myanmar should set up the organic land law that can attract the farmer or organic company who want to plant the organic vegetables or rice.

8. Government of Republic of Myanmar should give the incentives for the organic land, such as the tax reduction, promotion of payment system that can attract the farmer and private organic company.

Limitation of the Study

Although the study was carefully prepared, this study has the limited scope and time when collecting the data in Mandalay, Myanmar such as the cost of travelling and time constraints for respondents and researchers. In addition, since the study was conducted in only one city involving Myanmar consumers; another study should be conducted assessing foreign consumers 'attitude and purchasing intention in organic products, which we might use their findings to make broader generalizations from the results.

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