

## Influent Factors to Purchasing Decisions on Healthy Food Products through Online Channels of Consumers in Bangkok

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**Abstract:** Bangkok's burgeoning health-conscious demographic necessitates convenient access to healthy food options. Online channels present a viable solution; however, a thorough understanding of consumer behavior within this domain is paramount. The aim was to elucidate the factors influencing Bangkok consumers' online healthy food purchasing decisions. This study conducted interviews using a qualitative approach to examine the impact of five key factors on consumer behavior: product quality, price, information transparency (including detailed descriptions and certifications), delivery service efficiency (both speed and reliability), and the influence of online reviews on trust and online purchase decisions in Bangkok. Unveiling these consumer preferences could provide valuable insights for online healthy food businesses in Bangkok. By strategically addressing factors such as product quality, pricing strategies, information transparency, delivery efficiency optimization, and leveraging the power of online reviews, businesses can enhance their online presence, optimize the customer experience, and potentially achieve significant sales growth. The factors that influence purchasing decisions in Bangkok include quality, price, information, service, and the availability of online platforms for health food products.

**Keywords:** Online healthy food, Consumer behavior, Influent factors

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### 1. Introduction

Bangkok's residents, who are more concerned about their health, have necessitated convenient access to nutritious food options [1]. This tendency is in line with the fast growth of the e-commerce business, which has given room for buying groceries and prepared meals [2]. Online healthy food shopping is popular; however, there is still scanty information regarding what influences a consumer's decision-making process when it comes to organic foods on the internet [3]. Previous reports monitored changing customer preferences in Bangkok [4]. Consequently, an increased awareness of personal health has led to a shift toward healthier eating habits [5]. At the same time, electronic commerce has been growing, offering a convenient method for buying foodstuffs [2]. However, the drivers of online purchase decisions for health foods remain largely unknown [3]. Understanding these factors will help companies serve this segment better since they are interested in having healthy customers [6]. Customers' purchase decisions on food products are influenced by various concepts such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) [7], the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [8], and Social Influence Theory [9], which explain how technology adoption influences consumer decisions. We will also examine marketing theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) [10] and Hedonic Shopping Motivation Theory [11] to understand how marketing strategies and consumer motivations influence online purchasing behaviors. Moreover, the decision to purchase health food involves a series of steps in the decision-making process, including problem recognition, information recruitment, actual product purchase, and product satisfaction. These reflect many theories, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) [12], the Consumer Choice Theory, the Perceived Risk Theory [13], etc. The structure of these theories and concepts creates a comprehensive framework for understanding how consumers make decisions and learn about their behavior in the marketplace through various mechanisms. Therefore, the key factors influencing customers' decisions to purchase healthy food through online channels in Bangkok should be identified using survey questionnaires and interview guidelines, following the guidelines of a previous report [14], which was the primary objective of this study.

### 2. Methodology

The tools and techniques in the study aimed to investigate what influences Bangkok customers' choices to buy healthy food online. Using focus groups and in-depth interviews, the research takes a qualitative approach to acquire a thorough understanding of consumer behavior in the context of online healthy food purchases. This method of developing procedures and providing ample, contextualized data for scrutiny enabled a comprehensive investigation of the study problem, encapsulating the intricacy of consumer decisions. The study adhered to ethical guidelines [15] to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. We

obtain informed consent from all participants, ensuring their anonymity and the voluntary nature of their participation. We performed an overall data collection and a deeper exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences [16].

### **2.1. Population Recruitment and Data Collection**

This study's target participants consisted of the population living, working, or studying in Bangkok who have either purchased or are considering purchasing healthy food via Internet channels. It used a purposive sample technique, which takes into account their background and subject-matter expertise.

Data collection in this study consisted of in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews. We conducted in-depth interviews [17] with individual consumers to gather detailed insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding online healthy food purchases. The semi-structured interview style was informal and flexible, allowing the researcher to explore areas of concern while giving participants the freedom to fully express themselves. We conducted semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30-45 minutes with each participant, recording the interviews with their consent for further analysis. Therefore, we conducted interviews with about 15-20 respondents to gather diverse perspectives and pertinent data about the unique factors that influence the decision to purchase healthy foods online. We arranged focus groups to foster customer conversation and uncover diverse perspectives on the factors influencing online sales of healthy food. The researcher led each focus group, consisting of four to six participants, to ensure a structured conversation. We taped and transcribed the focus groups for analysis, each lasting approximately forty-five minutes. This method gave the qualitative data more depth, enabling the investigation of group dynamics and collective perspectives [18].

### **2.2. Research Tools**

The research tools consisted of two parts: (1) an in-depth interview questionnaire and (2) focus-group interview questionnaires. There were 24 questions from in-depth interview questionnaires following the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (3 questions), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (3 questions), Uses and Gratifications Theory (2 questions), Flow Theory (2 questions), Social Influence Theory (2 questions), Loss Aversion Theory (2 questions), Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (2 questions), Expectation Confirmation Theory (2 questions), Elaboration of Uncertainty Model (EUM) (2 questions), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (2 questions), and Hedonic Shopping Motivation Theory (2 questions). Whereas, the focus group interview questionnaire consisted of 23 questions following the TAM (2 questions), Theory of Planned Behavior (3 questions), Uses and Gratifications Theory (2 questions), Flow Theory (2 questions), Social Influence Theory (2 questions), Loss Aversion Theory (2 questions), Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (2 questions), Expectation Confirmation Theory (2 questions), Elaboration of Uncertainty Model (EUM) (2 questions), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (2 questions), and Hedonic Shopping Motivation Theory (2 questions).

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

The data from this study was analyzed using two methods: (1) thematic analysis [19], which we applied to the qualitative data after coding the transcripts of interviews and focus groups to identify recurring themes and configurations. We then classified and construed these explanations to fully understand the factors that led to consumer choices. The thematic analysis entails several steps, including familiarization, coding, identifying common threads, and verifying themes. Additionally, it involves the use of Assistant Software as Tarquette, a crucial step in most qualitative research analyses [20]. Another sophisticated tool, Software Tarquette, caters to the unique needs of managing and analyzing qualitative data with various types of texts, graphics, or audio materials, ensuring efficiency, accuracy, depth of analysis, and collaboration.

## **3. Results**

The Taguette software developed a thematic analysis that identified some factors influencing consumers' decision to purchase healthy food online in Bangkok. In this regard, the key determinants of consumer behavior were convenience, trust in the quality of the products, social influence, delivery efficiency, and finally, price sensitivity. Based on the conducted interviews, we identified several key factors that influence the decision of consumers in Bangkok to purchase healthy food through online channels. The first significant factor was convenience. Participants consistently highlighted the convenience of accessing products without the need to visit physical stores as a major advantage of online shopping. One participant stated, "It's convenient to buy... If we go to the store, maybe we have to drive, wasting time and gas, but if we order online, I can get it tomorrow. You can buy it anywhere. Many people choose online shopping platforms because of the diversity and time-saving benefits they offer."

### **3.1. Product information and Brand**

The availability of product information was another important consideration. Customers stressed how crucial it was to comprehend the ingredients and health advantages of the food they buy online. One participant emphasized the importance of accurate product information, stating, "I need to know what I'm putting into my body before making a purchase," underscoring the need for accurate product details. Additionally, customer reviews played a pivotal role in influencing purchase decisions. Although some participants expressed concerns about fake reviews, consumers trust reviews from others to assess the quality and effectiveness of the products.

### **3.2. Branding and Quality**

We frequently discussed trust and confidence in the brand and product quality. Consumers often rely on well-known brands to build trust, especially when purchasing healthy food online. If the brand was already well-known, "I don't need to read a lot; I'll buy it right away," stated one participant. However, participants frequently raised issues with product quality, particularly regarding freshness and the accuracy of descriptions. Shared sentiments, such as "Sometimes the product doesn't match the cover; it looks more beautiful online," indicated fears that products might not meet expectations or be of poor quality.

### **3.3. Pricing and Social networks**

Another theme was price sensitivity. Consumers actively compared prices across platforms to ensure they were getting the best deal. One participant said, "I like it when I find out I could have bought the same thing cheaper elsewhere." One individual stated, "It's fun to compare prices and get the cheapest item, especially when there are promotions like Double Day." The influence of social networks, including recommendations from family and friends, was also a recurrent theme. While not all participants relied on these recommendations, some found them helpful. One participant stated, "If a friend recommends it, I'll buy it."

### **3.4. Risk and Enjoyment**

Concerns about risk and uncertainty surrounding the safety and authenticity of products were prevalent, with many participants hesitant to trust online purchases without thorough research. One participant shared their worry: "I'm concerned about the freshness and whether the product is genuine or fake." This fear of receiving substandard or unsafe products was a common deterrent, though participants mentioned mitigating these risks by reading reviews and purchasing from trusted platforms. Lastly, some consumers mentioned enjoyment and satisfaction as influential factors. One participant explained, "It's fun to compare prices and add to the cart, especially when there's a flash sale or free shipping." This sense of satisfaction often stemmed from discovering deals or finding new products. However, worries about the accuracy of product descriptions and the quality of received items often counterbalanced this enjoyment.

## **4. Discussion**

This study highlights some of the major drivers of buying healthy food through online channels from Bangkok consumers. The convenience factor was dominant and supported TAM evidence [7]. The respondents elaborated that online channels saved them from going physically to stores, and they could shop while sitting anywhere, thus saving a lot of time and conserving energy. One of the respondents commented, "It's so convenient. You can buy it anywhere, and there are a lot of options to choose from, further reinforcing the existing literature that e-commerce adoption is significantly influenced by ease of use. The availability of detailed information on health benefits and ingredients for each product was also a critical factor, supporting previous evidence [6]. The finding is in agreement with the Uses and Gratifications Theory [21], which states that, as active consumers, they engage themselves in seeking certain content to satisfy their needs. Precise and complete product information gave the consumer great confidence, and here was where the Expectation-Confirmation Theory [22] comes in; if expectation has been met, satisfaction increases with less uncertainty. The other influential factor in decision-making was customer reviews, although there was an issue of questioning the authenticity of the reviews. For example, one participant commented, "Customer reviews have a great effect because they come real," revealing that confidence in the opinions of peers persists, even when skepticism in reviews being fake was elevated [12]. This finding highlights the dual role of reviews in fostering trust and simultaneously instilling consumer caution when making online purchases. The combined results indicated that businesses should focus their efforts on improving convenience, providing accurate and transparent product information, and promoting genuine customer reviews [21]. These are the factors, along with price and trust in branded quality, considered most influential on purchasing decisions for healthy foods online in Bangkok.

#### **4.1. Key factors on influence Bangkok consumer's decision to purchase healthy food through online channels**

In Bangkok, several factors influence consumers to purchase healthy food online. First, convenience is the major factor that influences people to shop online, since many of them do not want to waste time accessing stores physically. As noted in the previous report [10], having access to detailed product information about nutritional content and ingredients is crucial, as health-conscious consumers aim to make informed decisions about the food they purchase. Other critical determinants involved customer reviews, allowing buyers to estimate the quality and reliability of a product [23]. However, some consumers continued to doubt the authenticity of such reviews. Consumers favor brand trust when making online purchases, which is equally salient. Price sensitivity also appears to factor into decisions, as many shoppers compare prices across platforms and hunt for promotions, discounts, or special offers. Social networks, therefore, might include recommendations from family and friends, and even influencers, since such endorsements provide an additional layer of trust. Lastly, there could be some type of risk concern in online shopping aspects [3,19], such as the freshness and authenticity of products bought online, which again is mitigated by choosing sellers that are trusted and reading reviews about them [24].

#### **4.2. Make decisions to purchase healthy food through online channels**

In Bangkok, consumers engaged in a systematic decision-making process when purchasing healthy food online. The procedure usually starts by evaluating the convenience of online shopping, where the consumers feel comfortable being able to purchase products from any location without necessarily going to the stores physically [24]. After determining the convenience, they thoroughly researched the products of interest, scrutinizing the availability of well-articulated product information, including ingredients and health benefits, to confirm that their food choices aligned with their health objectives [25]. They then looked at customer reviews for the benefits and certainty of products, though they also showed skepticism concerning the possibility of fake customer reviews [10]. Consumers prioritized brand trust at this stage, preferring to purchase from reputable and well-known brands. Secondly, consumers actively sought the best deals through price comparison, often motivated by discounts and promotions [11]. Social influences enter into the consumer's decisions; recommendations through friends or family, or even social media influencers, influence them to choose one or another [26]. Finally, buyers consider, for example, potential risks concerning product authenticity or freshness [25]. However, consumers mitigate these risks by relying on trusted platforms, reading reviews, and choosing reputable sellers (Davis 1989). Some of them even find pleasure in that very process of finding deals and participating in various promotions, which also contributes to their general feeling of satisfaction with shopping [11]. Therefore, the overall results support the marketing business on healthy food [27] and have the potential for development in e-commerce in Thailand [28, 29].

### **5. Conclusion, Implication and Limitations**

The information gathered from this study is quite useful for online healthy food retailers seeking to change consumers' perceptions in Bangkok. In this scenario, retailers should prioritize enhancing convenience by simplifying the user interface, providing detailed information about the product, and promoting trustworthiness in product quality through open communication. Understanding the finish line for a price-sensitive consumer and how to attract them through competitive pricing strategies or employing a discount/promotion approach will help. Moreover, the customer's guarantees, safe payment methods, and well-established product return policies can dispel the risk. Retailers can effectively use social influence as a tool to build consumer trust by providing reviews, engaging with consumers, and fostering interactions on social media. This study not only discussed theoretical contributions, but also contributed to the understanding of how consumers make healthy food purchases online. The authors propose a common denominator for the research, which integrates various theories and highlights both hedonic and utilitarian motivations for consumers to purchase healthy food. Understanding issues such as perceived risk and the impact of social networks further enhances existing knowledge in this specific market about how consumers engage in purchasing activities through online channels.

Finally, this study's findings were based on a small sample of customers, who might have other influences on their decision to buy health food in Bangkok. Therefore, it would be beneficial to study larger customers from different areas, ages, and occupations. Furthermore, this study failed to distinguish between different types of healthy food products, necessitating further clarification to inform future marketing strategies and business plans.

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