

Received: Feb. 26, 2019 • Revised: Apr. 24, 2019 • Accepted: Jul. 19, 2019

Perceived Marketing Factors Affecting Consumers' Purchasing  
Decision Making of Environmentally Friendly Products in the  
Bangkok Metropolitan Area  
ปัจจัยทางการตลาดที่รับรู้มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภคในการซื้อ  
ผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อมในเขตกรุงเทพมหานคร

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**Abstract**

This research aimed to examine consumers' personal factors, perceived marketing factors affecting purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products, and purchasing behaviors of the products, including relevant associations and determinants for affecting the purchasing decision making. A survey with the 3-section questionnaire was conducted in Generation Y consumers aged 26-35 years in the Bangkok metropolitan area. The results showed that 400 persons completing the questionnaire with the response rate of 88.89%. Approximately, half of them were female, single, and well-educated. They received or searched for information of environmentally friendly products from online and social network sources. The reason for purchasing the products themselves was their awareness of negative environmental impacts on themselves and their family. Most respondents purchased the products from stand-alone shops, paid in cash, and spent at one time less than 300 baht. Perceived marketing factors (i.e., product, price, place, and promotion) influencing their purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products were overall rated at the high level. Some personal factors

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and purchasing behaviors were associated with perceived marketing factors ( $p < 0.05$ ). Seven predictors moderately explained the purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. Overall, perceived marketing factors affected the decision of Generation Y consumers on purchasing the products.

**Keywords:** *Perceived Marketing Factors, Consumers, Generation Y, Purchasing Decision Making, Environmentally Friendly Products*

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์ลักษณะส่วนบุคคล ปัจจัยทางการตลาดที่รับรู้ซึ่งมีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อม และพฤติกรรมการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ดังกล่าวของผู้บริโภค รวมทั้งความสัมพันธ์ที่เกี่ยวข้องและปัจจัยที่กำหนดการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อม การวิจัยนี้ใช้การสำรวจด้วยแบบสอบถามที่มี 3 ส่วนในผู้บริโภคยุคเจนเอเรชั่นวายที่มีอายุระหว่าง 26-35 ปี ในเขตกรุงเทพมหานคร ผลการศึกษาพบว่า มีผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม 400 คน คิดเป็นอัตราการตอบกลับร้อยละ 88.89 ในจำนวนนี้ประมาณครึ่งหนึ่งเป็นเพศหญิง โสด และมีการศึกษาดี ผู้บริโภคได้รับหรือค้นหาข้อมูลข่าวสารเกี่ยวกับผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อมจากสื่อออนไลน์และเครือข่ายสังคม เหตุผลที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์เหล่านั้นด้วยตนเองเพราะตระหนักถึงผลกระทบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมที่มีต่อตนเองและครอบครัว ส่วนใหญ่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อมจากร้านค้าเฉพาะอย่าง โดยชำระเป็นเงินสด และเสียค่าใช้จ่ายเฉลี่ยต่อครั้งน้อยกว่า 300 บาท สำหรับปัจจัยทางการตลาดที่รับรู้ (กล่าวคือ ด้านผลิตภัณฑ์ ราคา ช่องทางการจัดจำหน่ายและการส่งเสริมการตลาด) ซึ่งมีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อม ได้รับการประเมินโดยรวมว่าอยู่ในระดับสูง ลักษณะส่วนบุคคลบางอย่างและพฤติกรรมการซื้อมีความสัมพันธ์กับปัจจัยทางการตลาดที่รับรู้ ( $p < 0.05$ ) มีปัจจัย 7 ประการที่อธิบายได้ปานกลางเกี่ยวกับการตัดสินใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เป็นมิตรกับสิ่งแวดล้อม โดยสรุปปัจจัยทางการตลาดที่รับรู้มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภคยุคเจนเอเรชั่นวายในการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์เหล่านั้น

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## Introduction

Pressing economic and environmental challenges have a great impact on all businesses in terms of long-term profitability and environmentally friendly sustainability. Since one of the most interesting trends today is consumer's growing environmental conscience, more and more businesses have realized that the responsibility for people and the planet is more than just a legal duty. Concern about the environment is dramatically growing among the public throughout the world owing to the increased media coverage, greater awareness of environmental problems, impacts of major industrial disasters, and rise of activist groups on the environment (Kalafatis et al., 1999). In fact, a sharp increase in environmentalism has emerged in the US and Western Europe since 1990s. Most businesses are aware that in the future consumers' purchasing decision will be based on environmental considerations (Lampe and Gazdat, 1995). Consumers today are likely to support the business from which they can get more profit with caring about the environment and preserving natural resources.

With the rise of green consumers, going green is the best approach to lead a business to be successful in the long run. Green business can be simply defined as any profit-oriented activity that poses minimum negative impacts on the local and global environment and meets the needs and wants of consumers (Khanal, 2018). Nowadays, a multitude of businesses is focusing on environmentally friendly products, since there is an increase in the global momentum for green growth. The rising trend of environmentally friendly products or green markets is of interest in the world market. The global market value for environmentally friendly goods and services projected by the United Nations (UN) will grow threefold, accounting about \$2,200 million in 2020 (Nisaisuk, 2015). The estimates of the global market share for environmentally friendly products vary greatly. However, according to the data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of the United Kingdom, Asia has the largest value of green sales in absolute terms and per unit of gross domestic product, compared with other continents (Viswanathan and Varghese, 2018).

In Thailand, the current market for environmentally friendly goods and services accounts for 10-15%, and it is expected to grow steadily every year (Konggaew, 2015). The promising trend of the green market in Thailand might derive from various measures implemented by the Thai government to promote the growing environmental consciousness on the part of citizens

and enterprises (Pimdee, 2016). A green marketing strategy is increasingly adopted to create the consumer preference and sustainable competitive advantage. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), green marketing is defined as marketing of goods and/or services that are believed to be environmentally friendly, which includes multiple activities, such as the product adjustment, modification of production process, packaging, labeling, advertising strategies, as well as raises awareness on compliance marketing among industries (Yazdanifard and Mercy, 2011). Based on the traditional marketing mix 4P's, green marketing mix is conceptualized with environmental concern bundled into its elements (i.e., environmentally friendly product, price, place, and promotion) to influence consumers' purchasing decision. Nevertheless, the association between the marketing factors (4P's) and consumers' purchasing behaviors of these products has not been fully investigated in Thailand.

Green products are typically developed through environmentally friendly processes, such as using green energy, reducing production waste, reducing packaging materials, and making products reusable and recyclable. Additionally, green price is an important factor in the green marketing mix. Most consumers are willing to pay a higher price due to higher green production costs because of their perceptions of the value addition of the products, for example, improved performance and changing appearance, taste, or functionality. A green place is about managing logistics in a manner of diminishing environmental impairment. It also deals with the availability of green products. Consumers must be exposed to green products across green locations. A green promotion refers to the transmission of environmental information to consumers through the company's activities, such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and sales promotions (Sohail, 2017). However, consumers' understanding of responsibility towards nature varies with different generations, or simply their personal factors.

Among the four generations (i.e., Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z), Generation Y seems to be the greatest supporter of environmental issues in recent years. The people of Generation Y were born in 1980s and 1990s and experienced a great influence of digital media. They see environmental issues in global dimensions and know how to use their knowledge (Paco and Rapaso, 2008). In a marketing perspective, Generation Y persons, or also known as Millennials, are considered as the largest market segment, and it is an interesting group for targeting by marketers and brands (Naumovska, 2017). Millennials are

attracted to authentic, handmade, and locally produced products, and they are willing to pay more for products from companies with socially active, responsible programs (Howell, 2012).

Regarding green purchasing behaviors, Kalumpabut (2011) investigated the attitudes and subjective norms of Generation Y consumers in Bangkok that affected the purchasing intention of green products. He found that consumers' attitudes towards environmental concerns and the concept of the relationship between man and nature had a significantly positive impact on Generation Y consumers' intention to buy green products. However, the attitude towards self-image and subjective norms did not affect their intention. Arttachariya (2012) examined the environmentalism and green purchasing behavior of graduate students in Bangkok and reported that environmental consciousness, concern for Thailand's environment, and reference group influence were the significant predictors of green purchasing behavior. There was no significant relationship of graduates' characteristics (i.e., age, gender, and income) and their green purchasing behaviors. Similarly, Sheikh, Mirza, Aftab, and Asghar (2014) explored the consumers' green behavior towards green products and green purchase decision. They pointed out that brand and gender differences had a very weak association with consumers' green behavior, whereas the price, quality, and green marketing had a strongly positive one. However, the association between consumers' personal factors and marketing factors (4P's) for green products has been partly studied in Thailand.

Considering green-related factors, Chen and Chang (2013) indicated that the green-perceived quality positively affected green satisfaction and green trust, whereas the green-perceived risk negatively influenced both factors. The relationships between the green trust and green-perceived quality together with the green perceived risk were partially mediated by the green satisfaction. The investigation of resources for the increase of green-perceived quality and the decrease of green-perceived risk was beneficial to enhance the green satisfaction and green trust. Overall, determinants for consumers' purchasing decision making of green products are of importance and warrant a study.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine consumers' personal factors, perceptions of marketing factors that might affect purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products, and purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products in the Bangkok metropolitan area.

2. To investigate the associations between personal factors and perceived marketing factors, and between perceived marketing factors and purchasing behaviors of environmentally friendly products.

3. To analyze determinants, i.e. personal factors and purchasing behaviors, for consumers' purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products.

## Conceptual Framework

To achieve the research objectives, a conceptual framework was proposed as shown in Figure 1. The framework included personal factors, marketing factors, purchasing behaviors, and purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products, together with their associations.

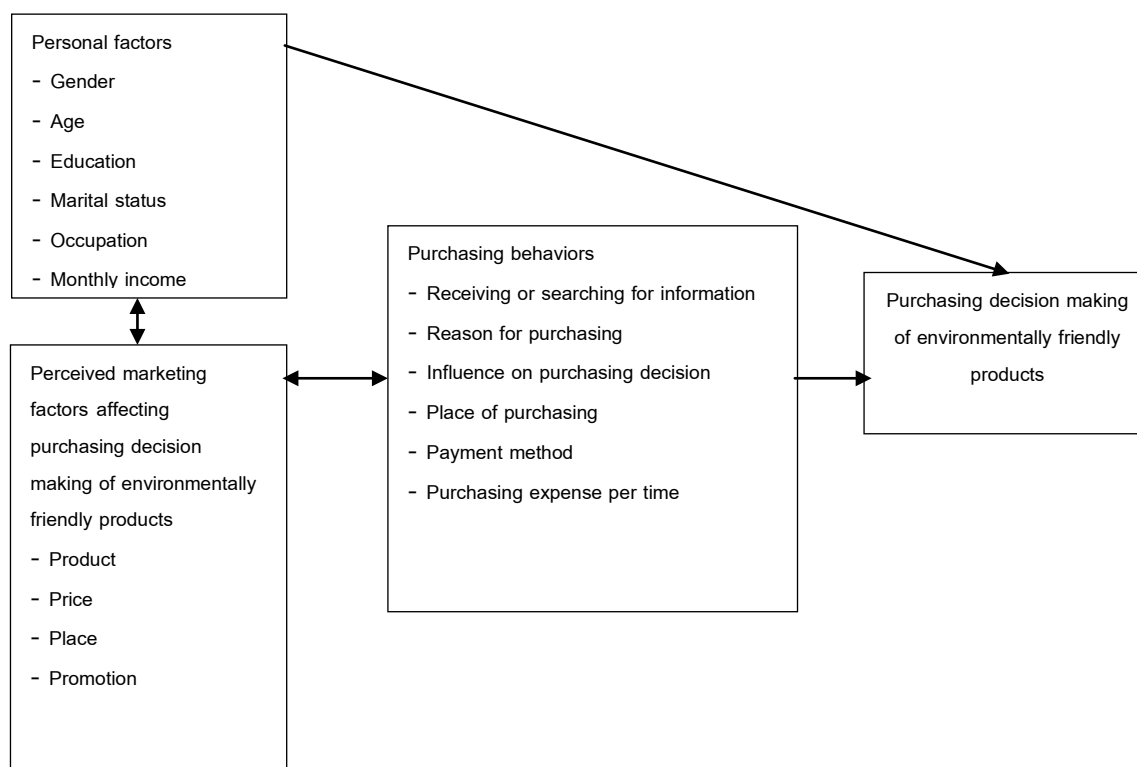


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the research

## **Research Method**

The methodology was detailed below.

### **Populations and Samples**

The population of this research were Generation Y consumers aged 26-35 years who exhibited the purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products in the Bangkok metropolitan area. A sample size was determined based on 20 persons per predictor. Since 16 predictors, i.e., 6 personal factors and 10 purchasing behaviors, were employed for the multiple regression analysis with the response rate of 70%, roughly 450 persons were estimated for the research. Additionally, a purpose sampling technique was utilized.

### **Research Instrument**

The research made use of a specially designed questionnaire in order to meet the research objectives and framework of this research. The questionnaire was entirely written in Thai and consisted of three sections. Section 1 contained six close-ended questions about consumers' personal factors, e.g., gender, age, education, etc. Section 2 consisted of 16 rating scale questions of marketing factors affecting purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. These questions adopted a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (the least) to 5 (the highest). Section 3 contained six close-ended and one open-ended questions about purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products. The questionnaire was examined by three experts for the face validity. A pilot test was then performed to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire in 40 eligible samples living in the Bangkok metropolitan area. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 was obtained; this indicated the questionnaire is reliable.

### **Data collection**

With purposive sampling, 450 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the eligible respondents via post and online. They were asked to complete the questionnaire within two weeks. A reminder letters or e-mails were issued to increase the response rate.

### **Statistical Analysis**

All data were entered into a statistical software package. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze all the data. Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage were used to describe personal factors and the purchasing behaviors of

environmentally friendly products, whereas mean and standard deviation were used to describe perceived marketing factors. Inferential statistics including *t*-test and ANOVA were used to test the relationships between personal factors and marketing factors, and between purchasing behaviors and marketing factors. A multiple regression analysis was performed for the determinants of purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. A significance level was set at 0.05.

## Results

### 1. Consumers' personal factors, perceived marketing factors and purchasing behaviors

A total of 400 Generation Y persons returned the questionnaire with the response rate of 88.89%. Approximately half of the respondents were females (219 persons, 54.75%) between 31 and 35 years of age (53.57%), and single (49.50%). They were educated with a bachelor's degree (30.25%), worked in a private sector (35.75%), and mostly earned a monthly income ranging from 15,000 to 19,999 baht (49.00%).

Regarding the perceived marketing factors affecting consumers' purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products, the overall impact was rated as high (mean =3.64). Of the four factors, the place was the most affecting factor followed by the product, promotion, and price with the means of 3.85, 3.82, 3.45, and 3.40, respectively, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Perceived marketing factors affecting consumers' purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products

Perceived marketing factors	Mean (SD)	Affecting level	Rank
Product	3.82 (0.25)	High	2
Price	3.40 (0.61)	Medium	4
Place	3.85 (0.55)	High	1
Promotion	3.48 (0.25)	High	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.64 (0.27)</b>	<b>High</b>	



In terms of the product factor, the clear identification of environmental friendliness on the package or product (e.g., refillable, reducible, reusable, and recyclable) was ranked first [mean (SD) = 4.45 (0.84)]. In the price factor, a reasonable price meeting consumers' product expectation was ranked first [mean (SD) = 4.39 (0.81)]. As for the place factor, having convenient payment methods (e.g., cash, credit card, debit card, and other forms) was ranked first [mean (SD) = 4.14 (0.74)]. For the promotion factor, communication about environmentally friendly production, usage, and disposal posing little negative impacts on the environment was ranked first [mean (SD) = 4.30 (0.66)].

In regard to the purchasing behaviors of environmentally friendly products, most respondents received or searched for information of environmentally friendly products from online and social network sources (55.00%). The most important reason for purchasing environmentally friendly products was their awareness of negative environmental impacts on themselves and their family (50.50%). The person influencing the purchasing environmentally friendly products of most respondents was oneself (54.00%). Most respondents purchased environmentally friendly products from stand-alone shops (38.00%), paid with cash (42.50%), and spent at one time less than 300 baht (41.00%).

## **2. Associations of personal factors, marketing factors, and purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products consumers**

The results of *t*-test and one-way ANOVA indicated that the personal factors, namely age, education, occupation, and income were significantly associated with perceived marketing factors ( $p < 0.05$ ), whereas gender and marital status were not associated. Moreover, the place of purchasing, payment method, and purchasing expense per time were associated with perceived marketing factors for all 4P's of perceived marketing factors. Receiving or searching for information was related to only the price and promotion, whereas the influencer on purchasing decision affected the price. However, the reason for purchasing was not affected by the marketing factors.

## **3. Determinants for purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products**

The multiple regression result of determinants for purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products is demonstrated in Table 2. As the R-squared ( $R^2$ ) was

57.80%, the model or predictors could moderately explain the purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products.

**Table 2** Determinants for purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig. <i>t</i>
Education					
Higher vocational degree (reference groups: lower or Grade 6)	-0.083	0.025	-0.144	-3.361	0.001
Influencer on purchasing decision					
Yourself (reference groups: family members or relatives)	-0.403	0.054	-0.675	-7.439	0.000
Place of purchasing					
Convenient stores (reference groups: trade fairs or exhibitions)	-0.440	0.035	-0.556	-12.684	0.000
Payment method					
Cash (reference groups: others)	0.392	0.059	0.729	6.675	0.000
Purchasing expense per time					
300-500 baht	-0.107	0.046	-0.156	-2.324	0.021
1,101-1,300 baht	-0.386	0.155	-0.107	-2.494	0.013
1,301-1,500 baht (reference groups: upper 1,501 baht)	-0.713	0.268	-0.113	-2.662	0.008
Constant	3.798	0.026		146.373	0.000

As shown in Table 2, seven predictor variables were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), i.e., higher vocational degree, oneself as the influencer on purchasing decision making, buying environmentally friendly products from convenient stores, payment method with cash, and

purchasing expense per time at 300-500 baht, 1,101-1,300 baht, and 1,301-1,500 baht. The standardized regression equation of the purchasing decision making is:

$$Z = - 0.144X_1 - 0.675X_2 - 0.556X_3 + 0.729X_4 - 0.156X_5 - 0.107X_6 - 0.113X_7$$

where

Z = Purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products in standardized score

X<sub>1</sub> = Higher vocational degree

X<sub>2</sub> = Oneself as the influencer on purchasing decision making

X<sub>3</sub> = Buying environmentally friendly products from convenient stores

X<sub>4</sub> = Payment method with cash

X<sub>5</sub> = Purchasing expense per time at 300-500 baht

X<sub>6</sub> = Purchasing expense per time at 1,101-1,300 baht

X<sub>7</sub> = Purchasing expense per time at 1,301-1,500 baht

According to the standardized regression equation, the predictors ranging from the best to the worst for purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products were the payment method with cash followed by purchasing expense per time at 1,101-1,300 baht, purchasing expense per time at 1,301-1,500 baht, higher vocational degree, purchasing expense per time at 300-500 baht, buying environmentally friendly products from convenient stores, and oneself as the influencer on purchasing decision making, respectively.

## Discussion

The survey results reflected the views of Generation Y consumers aged 26-35 years on marketing factors, purchasing behaviors, and purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. Most of them had positive perceptions about green consumption, partly because they were well-educated, earned high income, and had an environmental concern. Accordingly, the provision of knowledge and understanding of environmental protection for these people, such as by the Alpha group, is so important that they should be able to cultivate the environmental awareness to the next generation.

As for consumers' personal factors, their age, education, occupation, and income were associated with perceived marketing factors. This is consistent with the study of Thippala (2012) that pointed out consumers all over the world with differences in personal factors, such as age, income, education, religious and culture, and taste, have differences in purchasing and consuming behaviors based on their perceptions of marketing factors.

Regarding consumers' purchasing behaviors, the place of purchasing, payment method, and purchasing expense per time were entirely associated with perceived marketing factors, but receiving or searching for information and the influencer on purchasing decision were partly associated. This indicated that consumers were aware of the benefits of consuming environmentally friendly products through information from various media, such as a radio, television, or social network. Additionally, the place of purchasing depended on consumers' convenience. This is in accordance with leading theorists, for instance, Best (2005), Guiltinan, Paul, and Madden (1997), Kyambalesa (2003), Kotler (2003), and Lal, Quelch, and Rangan (2005) who emphasized that the product information should be consistently provided via diverse outlays, such as a television or social network, to stimulate the desire of consumers for the environmentally friendly products. The messages should contain the information about the product, brand, price, seller, and product availability together with consumers' product expectations. Ottman and Reilly (1998) also explained that green consumers need to know information about where and how they can purchase environmentally friendly products, and what the differences between environmentally friendly products and normal products are

As aforementioned, there was no significant relationship of graduates' characteristics (i.e., age, gender, and income) and their green purchasing behaviors. Therefore, this research did not investigate the Generation Y characteristics and their purchasing behaviors. In general, the differences in occupation and income affected the differences in purchasing behaviors of environmentally friendly products. For instance, consumers with higher income levels are likely to have more purchasing power to respond to their needs and wants than those with the lower income.

With respect to the multiple regression model, perceived marketing factors with the 5-point Likert scale could not be directly used to determine the purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. For personal factors, only the education with higher vocation

degree was a good predictor of the decision making and it was also associated with perceived marketing factors. Therefore, perceived marketing factors could partly affect the purchasing decision making. In terms of purchasing behaviors, the predictors were the influencer on purchasing decision (mostly by themselves), place of purchasing, payment method by cash and purchasing expense per time; all of these variables were associated with perceived marketing factors. Thus, the perceived marketing factors did affect the purchasing decision making of Generation Y persons. Overall, this is in line with the study of Kantaputra (2011) on the factors related to consumers' decision on eco-products purchase in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. She indicated that demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income, affected purchasing decision on eco-products. When analyzing the relationship between the marketing mix factors and purchasing decision, the researcher found that purchasing decision on eco-products was related to marketing factors.

Considering perceived marketing factors in detail, all 4P's affected purchasing decisions to some extent. Firstly, for the product factors the clear identification of environmental friendliness on the package or product was the most important factor for consumers' consideration. Thus, the producers of environmentally friendly products should pay more attention to develop packages that are easily recognized by the consumers. Secondly, in terms of the price factor there were differences in the association between the price and consumers' income levels, and most consumers seemed to prefer a cash payment. Producers should therefore focus on pricing the products according to the income level of consumers. Thirdly, regarding the place factor, although most consumers preferred the payment by cash, various payment methods and convenience to purchase were still in their consideration. Hence, environmentally friendly product producers should create distribution channels which are easy and convenient for consumers to access. Fourthly, and last, the promotion factor was considered. Communication about environmentally friendly production, usage, and disposal posing little negative impacts on the environment was the most important factor for consumers' consideration. Therefore, the producers should adopt advertising and public relations through multiple media, such as a television or social network, to reach targeted consumers.

### Limitations of the Research

This research surveyed only Generation Y consumers in Bangkok metropolitan area. Their views might be different from those living in the upcountry. Therefore, the study did not entirely mirror the opinions of the Generation Y on environmentally friendly products.

### Conclusion

This research could survey the views of Generation Y consumers on perceived marketing factors and purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products in the Bangkok metropolitan area, including the relevant associations. Based on the multiple regression model, seven predictors associated with perceived marketing factors moderately explained the consumers' purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products. As a result, perceived marketing factors did affect the purchasing decision of Generation Y persons. This knowledge helps marketers create more effective marketing strategies. Moreover, the association between consumers' personal factors and purchasing behaviors could be useful for research and development of environmentally friendly products according to their preferences. The overall findings provide a better understanding of consumers' purchasing behaviors and their perceptions of environmental issues in Bangkok metropolitan area. It is thus useful to create public relations activities to praise consumers' environmental awareness.

Further studies should be carried out on different targeted groups and areas in order to gain new information, which could be beneficial to expand the market of environmentally friendly products. In addition, more research should examine other factors that might affect purchasing decision making of environmentally friendly products, such as knowledge and understanding of environmentally friendly products among Thai consumers, and the government's role in promoting environmentally friendly products, so as to gain an insight into Thai consumer behaviors and their requirements.

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