

## Factors determining value and consumption of thai food: a structural model

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### Abstract

This study identified factors that affect Thai food value and consumer behavioral intentions (intentions to consume Thai food) by surveying 12 variables that influence Thai food value from 400 international and domestic Thai food customers. Utilizing the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) as research tool, the results were used to analyze and create a Thai food value model. The authors developed Thai food value model (Model A), which consisted of 12 factors. However, the results had shown that Model A with 12 variables were not compatible with the empirical research; therefore, Model A was further developed into Model B, which consisted of seven variables, namely taste, nutrition, storytelling, marketing, assurance, Thai food value and behaviors intentions. After the second analysis of the model, it shows that the IOCis Chi-square = 3.030, D.F. = 3 and P-Value = .387. Concluded from the study is that the strongest variables in the order of influence on Thai Food value are nutrition, assurance, storytelling and taste. Marketing is the least important. Variables in the order of direct effect on Behavioral Intentions are taste, nutrition and Thai Food value. Variables with indirect effect are taste, nutrition, storytelling, assurance and marketing, which is the least important variable that affects Behavioral Intentions.

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### Introduction

Thai food is one of Thai identities that have been recognized internationally. Because of its taste and health benefit, Thai dishes such as Tom Yum Kung and Padthai become more notable and create Thai-awareness. Many dishes are put into Thai restaurants abroad; this can be seen as the diffusion of culture. However, because of the limitation of Thai ingredients in foreign countries and the local taste which is not accustomed to the real Thai strong palate, Thai cooking is unavoidably modified to meet local ingredients and preferences. This has distortion results in incorrect taste. This phenomenon does not only occur abroad, but it also occurs in Thailand. Thai food may be distorted by family recipe deviation, which adversely results from verbal teaching, and the effect of globalization. These results affect Thai culture perceived by tourists who visit Thailand to enjoy beautiful attractions and to try authentic Thai food. If the distortion of food continues, it might further affect the authenticity of Thai food. Consequently, Thai food industry will be affected, and the economy will be devalued. One of the propositions that can become the solution of this

issue is the use of innovation to create a tool to assure Thai Food value.

Innovation has long been studied. The meaning of innovation and concept of innovation vary tremendously, depending on the background and context of different studies. For this research, innovation is the new idea that creates advantage in terms of economic purpose. In brief, it is differentiated through exchange as opportunity and diffuses the new idea to create a mutual benefit towards self and society (Evan, 1966; Utterback, 1971; Drucker, 1985; Utterback, 1994; Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour, 1997; Utterback, 2004). As a matter of fact, when one wants to use innovation to its full potential, one has to understand factors that influence Thai Food value in the first place.

Literature review suggests that there are many factors that affect the value of national food and its consumption. For example, there are cultural factors. The Japanese has their uniqueness in ritual and cultures of Washoku (Japanese cuisine), which is registered as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010 (Trott, 2013). Egg pasta from Po valley has become the leading product of Italy heavily because of its ingredients and storytelling as factors

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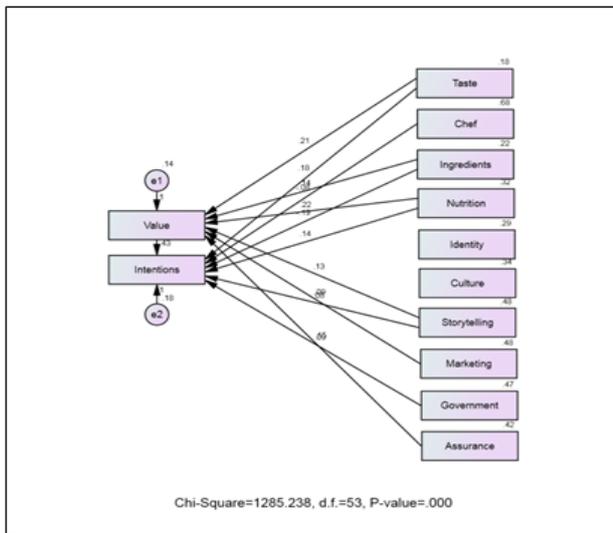


Figure 1. Model A

Table 1. Regression Weights

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Value ← Taste	0.228	0.050	4.526	***	par_1
Value ← Nutrition	0.262	0.039	6.677	***	par_2
Value ← Storytelling	0.142	0.034	4.143	***	par_3
Value ← Marketing	0.106	0.033	3.228	0.001	par_4
Value ← Assurance	0.156	0.037	4.191	***	par_6
Intentions ← Taste	0.193	0.059	3.273	0.001	par_5
Intentions ← Value	0.431	0.052	8.216	***	par_7
Intentions ← Nutrition	0.095	0.047	2.012	0.044	par_18

(Chiu, 2012; Turriniet *et al.*, 2014). There are other factors such as taste, nutrition, uniqueness and so on (Ha and Jang, 2010; Chiu, 2012; Chunhavuthiyanon and Intarakumnerd, 2014).

Study from Zeitham (1988) indicated that value perception played a vital role in consumer behavioral intentions. When consumers have acquired experiences in higher value service, they tend to express positive behavioral intentions. Hedonic value is also one of the factors related to behavioral intentions, mainly because emotional perception and past experiences enable consumers to determine approach or avoidance behavior (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). Moreover, Utilitarian value has shown to be related to behavioral intentions; consumer who has experienced high-efficiency services under the reasonable price tends to revisit and become a consecutive customer (Swinyard, 1993).

As a result, this research aimed to studying factors that influenced the value of Thai food in the perception of Thai and international customers in

order to develop a Thai food value model through surveying and analyzing the data by applying the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) program, and eventually develop a business model.

**Materials and Methods**

A Consumer Attitudes towards Factors affecting Thai Food Value and Behavioral Intentions questionnaire was developed for this research. The questionnaire consisted of 12 variables: taste, chef, ingredients, nutrition, identity, culture, storytelling, marketing, government, assurance, Thai food value and Behavioral Intentions. These variables were derived from literature review of research publications and have been identified as having influences on National food.

This study applied Likert scale (Likert, 1932) from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Four hundred international and domestic Thai food customers were asked to complete the questionnaire. Utilizing AMOS, the result were analyzed and used to create a Thai food value model.

**Results**

As per the results, there were 10 parameters including taste, chef, ingredients, nutrition, identity, culture, storytelling, marketing, government and assurance that affected Thai food value and behavioral intentions. The effect of Thai food value on behavioral intentions was tested by path analysis using AMOS and is shown in Figure1. The results of Chi-square = 185.238, D.F = 53 and P-value = .000 indicated that Model A did not match with empirical data; so model A had to be adjusted.

The results from the adjustment of Model A found that seven parameters could be incorporated into Model B. They were taste, nutrition, storytelling, marketing, assurance, Thai food value and Behavioral Intentions. Figure 2, with the Chi-square = 3.030, D.F. = 3 and P-value = .387showed that Model B matched with the empirical data.

From Table 1, the weight of all effect lines were not 0, and P-values < .05, demonstrating that each of the five parameters, including taste, nutrition, storytelling, marketing and assurance, had an effect on Thai food value while three parameters, including taste, nutrition and Thai food value affected Behavioral Intentions.

From Table 2, the parameter that directly affected Thai food value was nutrition (0.282). Less important parameters were assurance, storytelling and taste (0.185, 0.187 and 0.193, respectively).The parameter

Table 2. Standardized effects (direct, indirect and total effects)

	Assurance	Marketing	Storytelling	Nutrition	Taste	Value
<b>DIRECT Effects</b>						
Value	0.193	0.139	0.187	0.282	0.185	0.000
Intentions	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.155	0.426
<b>INDIRECT Effects</b>						
Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Intentions	0.082	0.059	0.080	0.120	0.079	0.000
<b>TOTAL Effects</b>						
Value	0.193	0.139	0.187	0.282	0.185	0.000
Intentions	0.082	0.059	0.080	0.221	0.234	0.426

which affected Thai food value the least was marketing, 0.139. The direct influential variables on behavioral intentions were Thai food value, taste and nutrition. The weight of Thai food value, which was the most influential variable, was 0.426, followed by the weight of taste and nutrition at 0.155 and 0.101, respectively.

Table 2 also showed the indirect influential variables on the Behavioral Intentions. Nutrition was the most highly influential variable with weight at 0.120, followed by assurance, storytelling and taste (0.082, 0.080 and 0.079, respectively), and the last variable that influenced indirectly on behavioral intentions was marketing with the weight at 0.059. Thai food value was not influenced indirectly by any variables. Part of Table 2 showed the variables that influenced the behavioral intentions. The weight of Thai food value, which was the most influential variable, was 0.426, followed by the weight of taste and nutrition at 0.234 and 0.221, respectively. The lowest influential variable was marketing, and its weight was 0.059.

## Discussion

Based on the experimental results, there are five factors affecting Thai food value: taste, nutrition, storytelling, marketing and assurance. Nutrition is the primary factor that affects Thai food value because it relates to sub-compositions of value as defined by Holbrook<sup>10</sup>. Holbrook has classified four types of values. First, economic value refers to the food value that can meet the customer needs. Second, hedonic value can be understood as the value of personal preference. Third, social value is the acceptance by

the society. The last value is altruistic value, which is benefits to others (Likert, 1932). Nutrition accords with the four values as people are conscious of health, hence making nutrition a factor that responds to the customer needs, customer satisfaction, social acceptance and benefits to others. The next influential factors are taste, storytelling and assurance; taste corresponds to economic and hedonic values while storytelling and assurance correspond to social value. The products that have storytelling convey the quality to customers because storytelling represents long term recognition of the society (Chiu et al., 2012). Assurance from organizations or institutions creates confidence and recognition from society as well. However, marketing is the factor that has the least influence on Thai food value among the five factors, but it is another important factor that is required. It is the one that allows the product to be known and recognized by the society (Holbrook, 2006; Chiu et al., 2012).

However, from literature review, there are several factors that may influence or indirectly relate to Thai food value. There are other factors that may affect the main factors significantly, such as taste, nutrition and assurance (Holbrook, 2006; Ha and Jang, 2010). This research, therefore, warrants further work to study and develop a better Thai food value model to be utilized as a guide to the conserve and/or improve Thai food.

## Conclusion

Five variables influence directly towards Thai food value, namely taste, nutrition, storytelling, marketing and assurance. Thai food value was not indirectly influenced by any factors. The most influential variables on Thai food value are nutrition, assurance, storytelling and taste. Marketing is the least important variable to Thai food value. Whereas Variables that directly affect Behavioral Intentions are taste, nutrition and Thai food value while indirectly affecting variables are taste, nutrition, storytelling, assurance and marketing, which is the least important variable that affects Behavioral Intentions.

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