
Factors affecting purchase decisions for organic dried noodles of a community enterprise in Chachoengsao Province, Thailand

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Abstract The findings demonstrated that the typical potential buyer of organic dried noodles was a female aged 40–50 with a propensity toward online purchases. Interestingly, the primary determinants influencing purchase decisions are found to be product attributes such as trusted quality certifications (e.g., the FDA seal), comprehensive product information detailing benefits or nutritional content, and the credibility and traceability of the brand. These insights offered valuable guidance for businesses, encouraging further development of marketing strategies and product offerings to align with evolving consumer preferences and demands.

Keywords: Dried noodles, Consumer behavior, Marketing mix

Introduction

Rice has a significant position in Thailand's economy as one of its leading export commodities; however, in recent years, exportation has declined due to an oversupply leading to diminished prices. This downturn has adversely impacted rice farmers' income, underscored by Office of Agricultural Economics (2019). The Sanam Chai Khet Organic Community Enterprise in Chachoengsao Province faced challenges of oversupply despite their substantial annual organic rice production capabilities. The enterprise decided to produce fresh noodles to add value and address the oversupply issue; however, these new products faced market sustainability challenges due to inconsistent product quality and distribution limitations. A proposed solution is transitioning from fresh noodles to organic dried noodles (Nguyen and Do, n.d.; Wijesinghe and Nazreen, 2020).

Agricultural product processing is a critical solution to circumvent oversupply and subpar quality challenges. Such processes included freezing,

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fixation, food additive addition, fermentation, drying, and transforming the product into various forms, such as powders, chips, liquids, and lines. These processed forms are offered to enhance aesthetics, taste, convenient transportation, and extended shelf life, potentially leading to increased revenue for enterprises (Srisook, 2020).

Rice-based products, particularly those that are ready for consumption such as flour and dried noodles have gained substantial popularity. The export value and a shift in consumer preferences have increased toward healthier food choices, positioning these products favorably in the market. The Thai culinary industry has recognized fresh noodles as a classic product in various forms, including fresh, fermented, and instant (dried noodles) forms. Dried noodles offer longevity and ease of preparation, which are attributes that consumers value (Thammakitwat, 2019). Viriya, *et al.* (2018) asserted that a mix of marketing factors, particularly product quality and pricing, influence consumer decisions for dried noodles made from jasmine rice.

Producing organic dried noodles is a strategic choice to harness the potential of markets. However, understanding customer demographics, preferences, and relevant marketing factors are crucial for successful market penetration. Hence, the study aimed to explore the consumers' demographics, purchasing behaviors, and perceptions regarding the salient marketing mixed factors that influenced their buying decisions for organic dried noodles.

Materials and methods

Study area

Sanam Chai Khet Organic Community Enterprise in Chachoengsao Province, Thailand, is one of the organic agriculture communities in the region. The enterprise has adopted sustainable farming by urging its members to transition from traditional farming techniques to a more environmentally friendly organic system to ensure the cultivation of nutrient-rich produce. The organizational structure is cohesive and well-defined, comprising various roles such as company president, student, treasurer, and dedicated health care member. The members cultivate different rice varieties across 222 rai (approximately 88 acres) of land, with a potential yield of around 65,544, including notable rice types such as fragrant jasmine, big jasmine, jasmine 105, and nutritious black sticky rice.

One of the unique attributes of the Sanam Chai Khet Organic Community Enterprise is rigorous adherence to recognized agricultural standards. The enterprise has secured certifications at a national level and garnered international

recognition. Their farming model complied with standards set by esteemed institutions like the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, the Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of organic agriculture standards, and the Canada Organic Regime. Their efficient management approach further emphasized the group's commitment to sustainability. The enterprise ensured the purchase of organic rice from its members even when market prices are fluctuated below the guaranteed threshold. The rice subsequently undergoes processing, producing a range of products in bulk and packaged forms. The flagship brand under which these products are sold is Organic Agriculture Sanam Chai Khet.

Data collection

The researchers closely collaborated with the Community Enterprise group and local food research and development laboratories affiliated with nearby educational institutions. The primary objective was to assess the prototype product's characteristics, specifications, and packaging, facilitating a comprehensive data collection guideline.

Population and sample selection

The target demographic for this study primarily consisted of online followers from two Facebook groups: the Sanam Chai Khet Organic Farming Group, with 862 members, and the Sanam Chai Khet Rice Safety Community Enterprise Network, with 571 members (data current as of June 2, 2022). The sampling method was convenience sampling. The sample size determination was guided by the nonprobability sampling technique, considering the specific size of the target audience. Yamane's formula is used for sample size calculation (Yamane, 1973) as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N_e^2} \quad (1)$$

Wherein n = target sample size, e = coefficient level, and N = total population. The sample size amounted to 313 respondents were calculated. The breakdown of the sample for each Facebook group was done as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Sample size breakdown

Group name	Followers	Sample size
The Sanam Chai Khet Organic Farming Group	862	187
The Sanam Chai Khet Rice Safety Community Enterprise Network	571	126
Total	1,443	313

Data collection procedure

Data collection employed a collaborative online approach. The researcher coordinated with the Facebook group administrators to initiate promotional campaigns for the organic dried noodles products. After this, the researcher shared the questionnaire’s URL with the group administrators. To incentivize and engage members, enticing prizes were announced for select participants based on specific criteria. The data was then collated online.

The structured questionnaire comprised four distinct parts. Part 1 focused on demographic details, encompassing gender, age, educational background, profession, and monthly income. Part 2 targeted the purchasing habits of respondents concerning dried noodle products, exploring aspects such as purchase locations, frequency, average expenditure, reasons for purchase, and preferred information channels using the 6Ws1H model. In Part 3, consumer opinions on various factors influencing purchasing decisions, from product attributes to pricing, distribution, and marketing, were gauged through a five-point Likert scale. Subsequently, Part 4 delved into additional aspects related to consumer preferences and behaviors in the context of dried noodle products. This comprehensive questionnaire design aimed to capture a holistic understanding of the market dynamics and consumer perspectives.

Table 2. Likert scale was used in the study

Rating	Likert scale	Purchase rating
5	Strongly agree	Definitely buy
4	Agree	Might buy
3	Neutral	Unsure
2	Disagree	Might not buy
1	Strongly disagree	Definitely not buy

Data analysis

The study’s primary variables, including demographic factors and consumer purchasing behavior, were examined using descriptive analysis. Metrics such as frequency and percentage are used to elucidate the distribution

of the variables. Furthermore, to assess the perceived impact of the marketing mix on the decision to purchase dried noodles, we computed the mean and standard deviation for each component.

Furthermore, a logistic regression analysis assessed the factors influencing consumers' decisions to buy organic dried noodle products. This analytical technique was particularly suited for circumstances where the outcome variable is categorical. A binary logistic regression model was used. In this model, the dependent variable (Y) was taken the value of 1 if consumers opt to purchase the dried noodles and 0 otherwise. The logistic regression model can be expressed as follows:

$$\log\left(\frac{Y}{1-Y}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Product) + \beta_2(Price) + \beta_3(Place) + \beta_4(Promotion) + u \quad (2)$$

Where:

$\log\left(\frac{Y}{1-Y}\right)$ = log odds of the consumer buying organic dried noodles
 β = coefficients corresponding to the marketing mix factors and u = error term

Analysing model (2) was determined how each marketing mixed component affected the odds of a consumer's decision to buy the dried noodles, thereby offering insights for the Sanam Chai Khet Organic Farming Group enhanced their marketing strategies.

Results

Consumer's sociodemographic characteristics

The 144 participants examined the factors affecting the purchase decisions for organic dried noodles from the community enterprise of Chachoengsao Province. The distribution between genders was significantly skewed toward females, with 69.1% (101) female and 30.9% (43) male (Table 3). The dominance of female respondents found that women might be concerned the primary decision makers when purchasing organic dried noodles, indicating a potential target market.

The age demographics indicated a higher representation from middle-aged to older age groups. Specifically, those aged 50–59 comprised 29.2%, and followed by the younger group of 20–29 years at 26.4%. It implied that while organic dried noodles appealed to a broad age range, there was a slightly

preference among older consumers because of the increased health-conscious decisions associated with age.

Table 3. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	43	30.9
Female	101	69.1
Age (Year)		
<20	3	2.0
20-29	38	26.4
30-39	20	13.9
40-49	36	25
50-59	42	29.2
>60	5	3.5
Education Level		
Lower than Bachelor's degree	13	9
Bachelor's degree	82	56.9
Master's degree	41	28.5
More than a master's degree	8	5.6
Occupation		
Student	20	13.9
Government officer	20	13.9
Company employee	54	37.5
Business owner	37	25.7
Monthly income		
<10,000	19	13.2
10,000-20,000	28	19.4
20,001-30,000	18	12.5
30,001-40,000	19	13.2
40,001-50,000	19	13.2
>50,000 bath	41	28.5

Examining respondents' educational backgrounds, the majority, 56.9%, held a bachelor's degree, and followed by those with a Master's degree at 28.5%. Such a trend found that individuals with higher education levels might be informed or inclined toward organic food choices, reflecting information exposure and possibly their socioeconomic status. Company employees were shown to be the most prevalent among the respondents at 37.5% and followed by business owners at 25.7%. It indicated that those in formal employment or running businesses, possibly with higher amounts of disposable income could be predisposed to purchase organic products, perhaps valuing quality over cost.

Moreover, economic capacity was a notable 28.5%, with more than 50,000 baht earned monthly. It indicated that organic dried noodles, which are often perceived as a premium product, favor among those with a higher income who

can afford to prioritize organic and health-conscious choices over regular alternatives. The demographic insights revealed the survey participants' preferences and practices, laying the groundwork for tailored marketing and product development strategies for producing and marketing organic dried noodles in Chachoengsao Province.

Consumer's buying behavior

The consumers predominantly purchase organic dried noodles was shown in Table 4. Online platforms were found to be the dominant choice, with 46.5% of respondents opting for this medium. Modern trade are closely followed for accommodating the buyers of 45.1%. Interestingly, community shops and fan page community enterprises also hold significant shares, with 29.2% and 27.8%, respectively. It suggested traditional community-oriented outlets continuing to be valued, while digital purchasing channels are preferred.

Frequency is crucial in understanding buying patterns. The data revealed that the vast majority (a whopping 94.4%) purchased the dried noodles between one to three times a month. This consistent buying behavior indicated a stable demand for the product in the studied group. Examining expenditure revealed that consumers were conscious of their spending as 53.5% spent less than 100 baht each time they brought organic dried noodles; however, a comparable to 45.1% for a slightly higher price ranged between 100 and 499 baht.

The motivations behind these purchases and convenience emerged as the primary driver of 65.3% of respondents who found dried noodles with easy cooking. Taste had influenced with 36.8% purchasing dried noodles because they enjoyed eating it. Furthermore, attributes such locally produced food and nutritious ingredients highlighted the values of quality and origin in purchasing decisions, representing 22.9% and 8.3%, respectively.

Finally, social media platforms are dominated the channels from which consumers received information about organic dried noodles. An impressive 58.3% of the respondents noted that they relied on platforms like Facebook, suggesting that digital marketing and online engagement are proved to be pivotal for brands in this sector. The insights gathered highlight the blend of modern digital preferences with traditional values in purchasing organic dried noodles. The balance of convenience, taste, and nutritional benefits reinforced the product's position in the consumer market. Additionally, the strong preference for using online platforms for purchases and gathered information emphasized the power and potential of digital strategies for businesses in this domain.

Table 4. Consumers' buying behavior towards organic dried noodles

Items	Frequency	Percent
Buying place		
Convenience store	49	34
Modern trad	65	45.1
Community shop	42	29.2
Fan page community enterprise	40	27.8
Online platform	67	46.5
Health product store	32	22.2
Others	6	4.2
Monthly purchase		
1-3	136	94.4
4-6	6	4.2
7-9	2	1.4
Average spending		
<100	77	53.5
100-499	65	45.1
500-999	2	1.4
Reasons for buying		
Like to eat	53	36.8
Convenient to cook	94	65.3
Wisdom identity	30	20.8
Community product.	25	17.4
Local food	33	22.9
Nutritious ingredients	12	8.3
Others	10	7.7
Information channel		
Social media	84	58.3
Community product fair	48	33.3
Community market	12	8.4

Consumer's perception of factors affecting buying intention

The results on consumers perceived significance of the four pillars (four Ps) of the marketing mixed product, price, place, and promotion which concerned organic dried noodles (Table 5). The responses showed that the product itself is the paramount factor, with a mean rating of 4.29, reflecting consumers' "Strongly Agree". It underscored the consumers' inclination toward organic dried noodles' quality, features, and overall appeal. Similarly, price is shown to be substantial weight, registering a mean rating of 4.24, reinforcing that consumers recognized and valued the pricing strategy which employed for these noodles.

In contrast, although still influential, place and promotion are slightly less emphasized, with ratings of 4.18 and 4.16, respectively. Both fall under the "Agree" category, suggesting that while these elements were vital, they might not be considered pivotal as the product's intrinsic qualities and pricing. From an

overarching perspective, the cumulative average rating for the four Ps stands at 4.23, landing in the “Strongly Agree” zone, which signified the overarching influence of the marketing mixed elements in shaping consumers’ intention to purchase organic dried noodles.

Table 5. Consumers’ perceived influence of the marketing mix factors towards their buying intention

Marketing mix factor	Mean	SD.	Rating
Product	4.29	0.13	Strongly agree
Price	4.24	0.81	Strongly agree
Place	4.18	0.06	Agree
Promotion	4.16	0.08	Agree

A deep dive into consumers’ perceptions regarding various marketing mixed elements is offered insights into their primary considerations when deciding to purchase organic dried noodles (Table 6). The emphasis on the product’s quality and safety is abundantly found with a “Strongly Agree” rating for attributes such as the product’s texture, high-quality assurance, and a reliable quality guarantee mark. Specifically, the mean scores for product attributed a sticky, soft texture (4.34) and a high quality and safe product (4.44) which revealed significant consumer inclinations toward these characteristics. However, while it was still essential, elements such as product diversity and packaging appearance resonated less with the respondents, garnering an “Agree” rating.

Price is an integral aspect of the purchase decision. Most consumers strongly felt that the price of the organic dried noodles was appropriate for the quality (4.26). The data suggested that consumers appreciated a range of price points (4.12) and a transparent pricing strategy that noted price directly on the packaging (4.30).

While consumers did agree that considerations such as easy accessibility of location (4.12) and the presence of safe parking (4.13) matter, the importance of distribution channels (4.28) and home delivery services (4.22) stood out. It indicated an overall shift in buying patterns, which is possibly influenced by the contemporary convenience of online shopping and door-to-door delivery services. In addition, promotion showed a pivotal influence on consumers’ buying decisions. The respondents strongly favored innovative promotional strategies, such as free samples (4.22) and the provision of nutritional information (4.24). While other promotional methods like discounts (4.16) and public relations through platforms like Facebook (4.17) were appreciated, they received slightly less emphasis. The data indicated that consumers value

interactive promotional activities, like informational sessions that provided knowledge on making dried noodles using local wisdom (4.03).

While each of the four Ps in the marketing mix is found to be vital, their elements appeared to be varied degrees of importance for consumers. It is evident that while intrinsic product quality and price transparency were paramount, the modern consumer is deeply valued for buying convenience and innovative and informative promotional strategies. Marketers of organic dried noodles can harness these insights to tailor strategies and create more effective consumer-centric campaigns.

Table 6. Consumer perceptions towards factors under the four marketing mix affecting the buying intention for organic dried noodles

Items	Mean	SD	Rating
Product			
The product has a sticky, soft texture.	4.34	0.74	Strongly agree
The products are high quality and safe	4.44	0.73	Strongly agree
The product has a reliable quality guarantee mark as FDA no-brand	4.40	0.76	Strongly agree
The products are diverse, such as colors and flavors.	4.13	0.83	Agree
The appearance of the packaging is attractive.	4.13	0.77	Agree
The product shows detailed information and benefits.	4.26	0.73	Strongly agree
The brand is reliable and traceable.	4.27	0.78	Strongly agree
Products display production and expiration date information.	4.49	0.73	Strongly agree
The product has nutritional value.	4.17	0.78	Agree
Price			
The price is appropriate to the quality.	4.26	0.75	Strongly agree
There are a variety of prices to choose from.	4.12	0.82	Agree
The price is suitable for the packing quantity.	4.28	0.76	Strongly agree
The price is clearly stated on the packaging.	4.30	0.80	Strongly agree
Place			
Location: The location is easily accessible.	4.12	0.84	Agree
Convenient and safe parking location	4.13	0.86	Agree
There is a visible arrangement of products.	4.17	0.83	Agree

There are various distribution channels.	4.28	0.80	Strongly agree
There is a home delivery service.	4.22	0.87	Strongly agree
Promotion			
There are exciting ways to promote marketing, such as giving away samples.	4.22	0.83	Strongly agree
Give it a try, increasing the quantity of products but keeping the price the same.			
Organizing promotional activities that meet needs, such as discounts, exchanges, giveaways, and freebies.	4.16	0.83	Agree
Information on the nutritional value of the product is provided.	4.24	0.76	Strongly agree
There are public relations through various channels such as Facebook.	4.17	0.77	Agree
community enterprise			
There are activities with customers. For example, there is training to provide knowledge. Making dried noodles using local wisdom	4.03	0.85	Agree

Logistic regression analysis offers an analytical perspective regarding how different marketing mix factors influence consumers' likelihood of purchasing organic dried noodles. The result showed that the coefficient (B) for the product was positive at 0.154, indicating that the value attached to the product aspect increases, the odds of a consumer purchasing organic dried noodles also rised (Table 7). The Exp(B) value of 1.167 was interpreted as each unit increased in the product rating, the odds of buying organic dried noodles rised 1.167 times. The significance level (Sig.) was at 0.093, making it was statistically significant at 0.10. It underlined the product's pivotal role in influencing buying decisions.

For price, the coefficient was 0.216 which signified a positive association between price perception and purchasing behavior. The Exp(B) of 1.241 indicated that as the perceived value for the price increases, the odds of purchasing the noodles rised by a factor of 1.241. However, the significant value of 0.240 indicated that the factor was not statistically significant at conventional levels, suggesting caution in overemphasizing its impact. Place was a negative

coefficient of -0.234 . It implied that an increased rating or positive perception of the place decreased the likelihood of purchasing organic dried noodles. The Exp(B) value of 0.791 suggested that for every unit increased in the place rating, the odds of purchasing decreased by about 21%. However, the factor was not statistically significant ($\text{Sig.} = 0.133$), indicating that other external variables might influence the relationship, or the sample might not adequately capture the entire population's sentiment.

The promotion coefficient was positive at 0.067 , albeit with a marginal influence on the buying decision, given the Exp(B) of 1.070 . This finding suggested that promotional activities might slightly affect the likelihood of purchasing, but the Sig. value of 0.652 was not statistically significant, warranting a more in-depth exploration of the efficacy of promotional strategies. The product was significantly determined the buying organic dried noodles among the four Ps of the marketing mix, per the logistic regression results. While the other factors showed the roles, their statistical significance were either marginal or absent. Markets should prioritize product-related strategies and use a holistic approach that integrates all elements, optimizing them based on further research and market dynamics.

Table 7. Effects of the marketing mix factors towards the consumers' buying intentions using the logistic regression

Marketing mix factor	B	Exp (B)	SE.	Sig.
Product	0.154	1.167	0.092	0.093*
Price	0.216	1.241	0.184	0.240
Place	-0.234	0.791	0.156	0.133
Promotion	0.067	1.070	0.149	0.652
Log-likelihood	89.160			

* Significant at ($p < 0.10$)

Discussion

The organic dried noodles market in the Sanam Chai Khet community revealed distinct buying patterns and perceptions shaped by diverse factors ranging from demographics to intricate marketing mix nuances. Diving deeper into these intricacies, a multilayered narrative emerge that offered comprehensive insights into the dynamics of this unique market space in Chachoengsao Province.

The results revealed that females predominantly influenced the purchasing decisions for organic dried noodles. This dominance of women in purchase

decision making concerned the broader societal tendencies, wherein women generally took the helm as households' primary grocery shoppers (Sujata Sen Bhowmick, 2023; Verzosa *et al.*, 2021). This trend is not only limited to Thailand but observed globally (Barrett *et al.*, 2001; Giulia Caroli *et al.*, 2022). The age dynamics further emphasized demographic data, with the 50–59 age group being the most active purchasers. This age-driven inclination toward organic foods could be attributed to increase awareness and emphasis on health and dietary choices among older consumers (Ekachai, 2016; Gardebroek *et al.*, 2010; Sujata Sen Bhowmick, 2023). As the age progresses, health are often paramount, and organic foods, known for their natural cultivation processes, are preferred choice for many older adults (Sujata Sen Bhowmick, 2023).

The demographic insight provided essential information for marketers. The implications are shown to be clear; marketing strategies and campaigns tailored to resonate with women, particularly those within the 50–59 age bracket, could yield significant dividends. Businesses can effectively resonate with their primary consumer based on emphasizing products' health benefits, organic purity, and sustainability (Indig *et al.*, 2017; Llonas *et al.*, 2021; Wollni *et al.*, 2010).

Examining the marketing mix, our study showcased that product and price dimensions were pivotal in influencing purchasing decisions. Respondents strongly aligned with the product's quality, safety, and texture attributes, indicating that organic dried noodles' intrinsic characteristics were more valued than extraneous factors. Concurrently, an appropriate price point was a significant determinant. The interplay between product quality and price cannot be understated. While consumers are increasingly conscious of the quality and benefits of what they consume, they remained sensitive to products' value proposition (Llonas *et al.*, 2023; Rahnama, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, businesses should continuously innovate, ensuring product quality while maintaining a price point that consumers perceive as justified for the value offered.

Another critical point in our analysis concerned purchasing channels. The evolution of the digital age is redefined buying practices, with modern trade platforms and online media emerging as predominant conduits for purchases (Nguyen and Do, n.d.; Shiao and Chau, 2015; Teng and Wang, 2015). This digital trend reflected a broader shift in consumer practices, emphasizing the convenience and variety online shopping offers (Shiao and Chau, 2015). Businesses operating in this domain must recognize it trended and adopted strategies to meet the evolving demand. Strengthening online presented through dedicated e-commerce platforms or partnerships with established online retailers

which can significantly boost sales and brand visibility (Nguyen and Do, n.d.; Wijesinghe and Nazreen, 2020).

Additionally, the influential role of platforms like Facebook in relaying product information, a robust digital marketing strategy is indispensable. The logistic regression confirmed the dominant influence of the product and price marketing mix components in shaping purchasing decisions. This statistical affirmation reiterated the need for businesses to place these two components at the center of strategic planning (Constantinides, 2006; Mada Shinta Dewi, 2022).

Considering these insights, a series of policy recommendations arose. Product diversification tailored to resonate with consumer feedback can be a significant difference in the markets. Enterprises can tap into the local culture and preferences by introducing product variations that incorporated the local flavors and ingredients. Moreover, targeted marketing strategies emphasize health benefits and organic authenticity, which leverage platforms like Facebook, which can reach and impact. While maintaining quality, the pricing front offers introductory prices or periodic discounts, particularly on digital platforms, and serves as an incentive, drawing more consumers into the fold. Finally, community engagement is essential. Given the central role that the Sanam Chai Khet community are claimed to be organic farming, which bolsters community ties such as workshops, informational sessions, and interactive events that trust and enhance the brand's image.

In summary, the organic dried noodles market in the Sanam Chai Khet community offered a microcosmic perspective regarding the intricate interplay between consumer perceptions, demographics, and marketing strategies. By understanding and aligning with these dynamics, enterprises that can chart a path to the sustained growth and success in this vibrant market.

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