

## Determinants of Purchase Intention of Functional Food in Thailand: A Study on Young Adults

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### Abstract

The increasing number of health conscious consumers has led to a growing demand of functional food in Thailand. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of perceived food quality attributes, food motives and health consciousness on the purchase intention of functional food.

The data were collected from 400 young adult consumers aging from 18 - 45 years old, living in Greater Bangkok, who consume functional food on a regular basis, using the convenience sampling approach. The data were then analyzed through descriptive and regression analysis.

The results indicated that perceived food quality attributes, food motives as well as health consciousness have a significant effect on purchase intention. This study makes an important academic contribution to the understanding of young adults' behavioral intention towards functional food in Thailand. This study also provides useful insights for product design, marketing activities as well as branding strategies of functional food in order to trigger purchase intention of their consumers.

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This research is limited by the area scope as well as the nature and the number of determinants. Future research can focus on other areas in Thailand and also examine other determinants of purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Functional Food, Perceived Food Quality Attributes, Food Motives, Health Awareness, Purchase Intention

## ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อการตัดสินใจ ซื้ออาหารฟังก์ชันผลิตภัณฑ์จากการศึกษา กลุ่มวัยผู้ใหญ่ตอนต้นในประเทศไทย

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### บทคัดย่อ

การเพิ่มตัวขึ้นของผู้บริโภคทางเลือกเพื่อสุขภาพกำลังส่งผลให้มีความต้องการของอาหารฟังก์ชันในตลาดเป็นอย่างสูง งานวิจัยนี้ถูกทำขึ้นเพื่อการสำรวจถึงผลลัพธ์ของการทำให้รับรู้เกี่ยวกับคุณภาพของอาหาร แรงจูงใจจากอาหารและการรับรู้ถึงคุณค่าทางโภชนาการของอาหารฟังก์ชันที่ลูกค้าได้ทำการซื้อ

ข้อมูลที่น่ามาใช้ในการวิจัยนี้ได้รับการเก็บมาจากกลุ่มผู้บริโภคในกลุ่มวัยผู้ใหญ่ตอนต้น 400 คน ซึ่งมีอายุตั้งแต่ 18 - 45 ปี ที่อาศัยอยู่ในเขตกรุงเทพมหานคร และรับประทานอาหารฟังก์ชันเป็นประจำ โดยใช้หลักการสุ่มตามความกระแส ในการเก็บข้อมูล โดยได้นำข้อมูลมาทำการวิเคราะห์ผ่านหลักการวิเคราะห์เชิงพรรณนา และการวิเคราะห์เชิงถดถอยผลลัพธ์ที่ได้บ่งชี้ให้เห็นว่าการทำให้รับรู้เกี่ยวกับคุณภาพของอาหาร แรงจูงใจและการรับรู้ถึงคุณค่าทางโภชนาการของอาหาร เป็นแรงจูงใจที่มีความสำคัญต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้าในผู้บริโภคเป็นอย่างมาก

งานวิจัยนี้จะส่งผลทางการศึกษาอย่างสำคัญต่อความเข้าใจถึงการตัดสินใจของกลุ่มวัยผู้ใหญ่ตอนต้น ต่ออาหารฟังก์ชันในประเทศไทย เช่นเดียวกันงานวิจัยนี้จะช่วยให้ข้อมูลต่อการพัฒนารูปแบบของสินค้า การทำการตลาดรวมถึงการวางกลยุทธ์ของแบรนด์สำหรับอาหารฟังก์ชันในประเทศไทยเพื่อกระตุ้นการตัดสินใจที่จะซื้อในกลุ่มลูกค้า

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งานวิจัยนี้ยังมีข้อจำกัดถึงในเรื่องของพื้นที่รวมถึงลักษณะและจำนวนของปัจจัยต่าง ๆ ซึ่งเป็นโอกาสสำหรับงานวิจัยในอนาคตที่จะมุ่งเน้นไปยังส่วนอื่น ๆ ของประเทศไทย รวมถึงการวิจัยถึงปัจจัยอื่น ๆ ที่ส่งผลต่อการตัดสินใจของผู้บริโภค

**คำสำคัญ:** อาหารฟังก์ชัน การรับรู้ถึงคุณภาพของอาหาร แรงจูงใจทางอาหาร ความตระหนักรู้ด้านสุขภาพ ความตั้งใจซื้อ

## Introduction

The contribution of nutrition has shifted from the prevention of dietary deficiencies to the promotion of well-being, health and reduction of the risk of disease (Roberfroid, 2000a). Studies have revealed a relationship between nutrition and diseases. Nutrition is beneficial in preventing the risk of diet-related chronic diseases as well as promoting a better health (Kraus, 2015a) and this is one of the main reasons that consumers are more concerned about the health benefits of specific food (Bazhan, Keshavarz-Mohammadi, Hosseini & Kalantari, 2016). Consumers exhibit a growing concern on their health and accept healthier eating habits since they believe that foods can contribute directly to their health (Chen, 2011). The food demand and the food consumption have undergone substantial changes due to the increasing health consciousness among consumers over the past years (Singhal, 2017).

In reference to Japutra, Vidal-Branco, Higuera-Castillo and Molinillo (2022), health conscious consumers are concerned about their well-being and thus, motivated to improve or maintain their health and quality of life as well as preventing diseases through practice of healthy and self-conscious behaviors. The same study also stated that health conscious consumers will look for foods rich in nutrients. This phenomenon has provided new business opportunities to develop new functional food products (Salvatore, Adamashvili & Conto, 2021). Other changes such as socio-demographic evolutions, rising costs of health care, increase of life expectancy and higher demand of life quality, are contributing in the increasing importance of functional food (Bazhan et al., 2016, Kraus, 2015a; Roberfroid, 2000b). Hassan, Sade and Subramaniam (2020) mentioned that the current health issues of overweight and obesity will encourage more consumption of functional foods as prevention and treatment. In recent years, the market of functional foods has grown mainly in developed countries (Vecchio, Van & Annuziata, 2016). However, developing countries displayed growth opportunities and both food business and consumers can benefit from the development (Vicentini, Liberatore, & Mastrocola, 2016).

Although consumers accept healthier choices, their intentions and actual behaviors might not always align (Salvatore, Adamashvili, & Contò, 2021). According to Lim and An (2021), consumer purchase intention has been one of the main areas of focus for many researchers, because it is collectively considered the immediate antecedent of purchase (Chakraborty, 2019). Studies examine the antecedents of purchase intention because the findings can serve as market and consumer insights for business to adjust their products

or services (Chen & Lee, 2015). Despite the high number of studies investigating purchase intention, gaps concerning the influencing factors of consumer intention still remain. Therefore our study aims to examine the determinants of consumer purchase intention. The main objective of this research is to investigate the effects of perceived food quality attributes, food motives and health consciousness toward purchase intention. These variables are found to have a significant influence on purchase intention (Ghvanidze, Velikova, Dodd & Oldewage-Theron, 2017; Huang, 2014; Dowd & Burke, 2013) and are thus, considered as some of the key determinants of purchase intention of food products. Many papers supported this concept. First, according to Ghvanidze, Velikova, Dodd and Oldewage-Theron (2017), a decision to purchase a healthy food product is influenced by product attributes and food motives. The increasing concern about food quality has made food consumption a rationale decision (Konuk, 2018). However, little is known about consumers perception towards food quality attributes in their purchase decision (Wang, Gao & Chen, 2022). For this reason, it deems necessary to examine the effect of food quality attributes on purchase decision. Then, food motives are found with a significant contribution to the explanatory power in predicting purchase intention (Dowd & Burke, 2013). Finally, in the study of Huang (2014), health consciousness is shown to have an influence on food purchase decision. According to Maehle, Iversen, Hem and Otnes (2015), health consciousness plays an important role in food consumption and appears as a primary motive for purchasing organic food.

This research will fill the literature gaps by examining the determinants of purchase intention. The findings of this study can serve food business in designing their marketing strategies and updating with current consumer trends.

## Literature review

### Functional Food

According to Annunziata and Vecchio (2011), functional food is considered as one of the most intriguing areas of research and innovations in food industry because it aims to provide additional benefits to consumer through food modification or innovation (Salvatore, Adamashvili & Conto, 2021). Functional foods refers to foods that have been modified in order to create a functional and positive influence on the health and well-being through elimination, addition, or modification of specific components (Bazhan et al., 2016). Bigliardi and Galati (2013), identified different types of Functional Foods: (1) Fortified products

(increase the amount of existing food nutrient); (2) altered products (remove an existing harmful food nutrient); (3) enriched products (add a food nutrient that is generally absent); (4) enhanced commodities (improve raw material through new techniques of production).

### **Perceived Food quality attributes**

Past studies have identified two types of food quality attributes. Extrinsic attributes are product-related attributes that are not part of the physical product itself such as product origin, raw material origin, package, price, brand, safety label or manufacturing date (Wang, Gao & Chen, 2022) and intrinsic attributes physical composition of a product such as colour, smell, appearance and flavor (Bukhari, Woodside, Hassan, Ali, Hussain & Waqas, 2021). The study of Memery, Angell, Megicks and Lindgreen (2015) mentioned that the “properties of food” have a significant influence on food choice through both physiological and sensory affect on consumer’s decision making. In the same study, the authors also indicated that product quality is one of the most important criteria that provides an overall evaluation on the food or similarly named perceived quality. For many years, an abundance of researches has attempted to explore the effects of perceived quality on consumer behavior (Slack, Singh, Ali, Lata, Mudaliar, & Swamy, 2021; Wang, Liang, Ko & Lin, 2021; Espejel, Fandos & Flavián, 2007).

### **Food motives**

According to Brecic, Gorton and Barjolle (2012), there are numerous motivations that underlie in consumers’ choice of foods. Steptoe, Pollard and Wardle (1995) underlined nine distinct food choice motives ranging from health, mood, convenience, sensory appeal, natural content, price, weight control, familiarity to ethical concern. Since then, many researchers attempted to explain the selection of foods by applying this concept. Ares and Gambaro (2007) studied the willingness to try functional food and concluded that the food motives are significant determinants but varies depending on the group age and gender. Milosevic, Zezelj, Gorton and Barjolle (2012) investigated food choice in Western Balkan Countries and concluded that the most important factors are sensory appeal, purchase convenience, and health and natural content whereas the least important are ethical concern and familiarity. Brecic, Gorton and Barjolle (2012) examined the functional food consumption in Croatia and found that health, convenience and familiarity are three factors that significantly influence functional food consumption. Kraus (2015b) explained that the maintenance of good health conditions, the contribution of functional food towards good health, product information and product knowledge are essential motives to consume functional food.

### Health consciousness

Konuk (2018) defined health consciousness as the extent to which health concerns are coordinated with a person's daily activities. Tan, Lau, Sarwar and Khan (2022) explained that health consciousness reflects the desired state of well-being as well as the readiness to take actions to live a healthy life. Individuals exhibit different level of health consciousness in their behavior: lifestyle (Tan et al., 2022), eating behavior (Siegrist, Bearth & Hartmann, 2022), smart wearable device using behavior (Zhu, Lu, Gupta, Wang & Hu, 2022), etc. Health consciousness has been extensively examined and is found to drive consumers to adopt healthier behaviors. Consumers become more aware and concerned about their wellness and are motivated to improve and/or maintain their health and quality of life (Husic-Mehmedovic, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Kadic-Maglajlic & Vajnberger, 2017). Past studies explain that health-conscious consumers tend to explore foods with health and nutritional benefits or consume nutritious food (Japutra, Vidal- Branco, Higuera-Castillo & Molinillo, 2022; Jin, Line & Lee, 2017). Shin and Mattila (2019) elaborated that high level of health consciousness drives individuals to consider more both desirable nutrients (such as vitamins and minerals) as well as undesirable nutrients (such as saturated fat and sugar). The study of Lee, Conklin, Cranage and Lee (2014), a study in the context of restaurant, showed evidence that consumers are more likely to show more favorable responses to healthy foods.

### Food quality attributes, motives, health consciousness and purchase intention

Applying the concept of Mohamad, Rusdi and Hashim (2014), purchase intention refers to the representation of a person's readiness to perform a purchase action, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of purchase. Purchase or repurchase intention towards a brand or product are behavioral intentions that triggers interest in marketing studies (Ahmad, Jamil, Latif, Ramayah, Ai Leen, Memon & Ullah, 2019). Numerous studies have attempted to examine the determinants of purchase intention. Bukhari et al. (2021) found that both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes have significant effect on consumer purchase intention, namely packaging and labeling. These findings align with the studies of Schnettler, Sepúlveda, Bravo, Grunert and Hueche (2018) and Oliveira, Machin, Deliza, Rosenthal, Walter, Giménez, and Ares (2016).

Micale, Giallanza, Enea and La Scalia (2018) explained that motives have a significant influence on purchase intention. Consumers are willing to purchase functional food in order to prevent diseases, improve physical and mental wellbeing, and so on. Salvatore, Adamashvili and Conto (2021) mentioned that nutrition information can encourage purchase and consumption, but it is not always sufficient. Dowd and Burke (2013) found that food choice motives are significant contributors in the prediction of purchase intention on sustainable food.

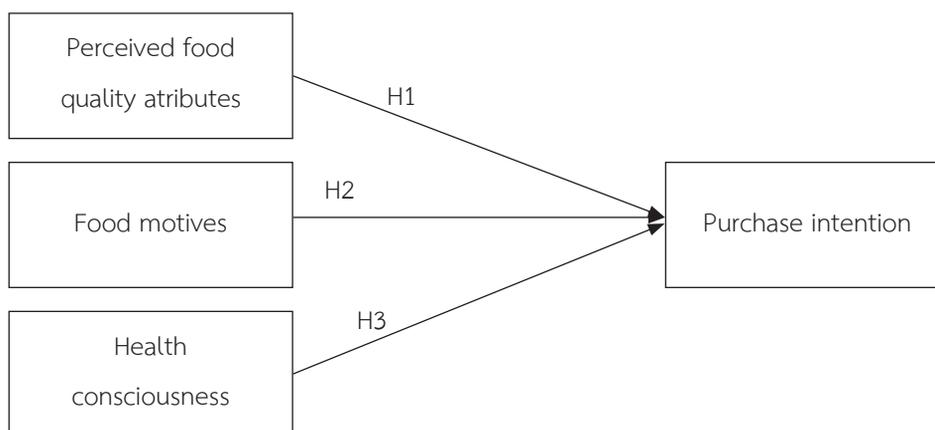
The effect of health consciousness on purchase intention is found significant by many scholars (Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, Lobo, & Vu, 2019; Lian, 2017; Rana & Paul, 2017) and has been examined in different context such as organic food (Japutra et al., 2022), organic coffee (Lee, Bonn & Cho, 2015), restaurant (Konuk, 2018), fast-food (Ghoochani, Torabi, Hojjati, Ghanian, & Kitterlin, 2017), ecological food (Amin & Tarun, 2022). Japutra et al. (2022) explained that health consciousness is one of the most important determinants of purchase intention and also determines the consumers' willingness to pay for higher price.

Based on the literature, this research formulated 3 hypotheses:

H1: Perceived food quality attributes have a positive effect on purchase intention

H2: Food motives have a positive effect on purchase intention

H3: Health consciousness has a positive effect on purchase intention



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework of this study

*Source:* Own compilation adapted from Wang and Scrimgeour (2022), Pacho (2020), Husic-Mehmedovic, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Kadic-Maglajlic and Vajnberger (2017)

## Methodology

Based on the literature review, this research only focuses on four main variables: three independent variables: Perceived Food Quality Attributes, Food Motives, Health Consciousness and one dependent variable: Purchase Intention. The data were collected from young adult consumers aging from 18 - 45 years old, living in Greater Bangkok, who consume functional food on a regular basis. Applying the convenience sample approach, the study approached people who are reachable and available to answer the questionnaire. Using the statistics from the National Statistical Office of Thailand and Yamane's formula, this study obtained a sample size of 400. The calculations are as follows.

$$\text{Formula} \quad n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$n$  = sample size     $N$  = number of young adults in Greater Bangkok

$e$  = deviation of sampling design

$$n = \frac{10,899,786}{1 + 10,899,786 (e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10,899,786}{1 + 10,899,786 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 399.98$$

This study collected data from 400 respondents. The questionnaire is launched online in Thai language. According to Evans and Mathur (2018), the strengths of online questionnaire lie in the possibility to reach potential participants virtually anywhere and at any time. The questionnaire includes five distinguished sections: Socio-Demographic factors, Consumer Behavior, Perceived Food Quality Attributes, Food Motives, Health Consciousness and Purchase Intention. The questionnaire items are selected based on the works of Shimul, Cheah and Lou, (2021), Hassan, Sade and Subramaniam (2020) and Kraus (2015a). The constructs, the items and the respective sources are shown in Table 1. The questionnaire is designed with a few forms of questions including 5 points importance scale-low importance (1) to high importance (5), 5 points Likert-scale type - strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), multiple choice type questions and open ended questions. A pilot test was conducted with

50 respondents to check the understanding of the questions. This study focuses mainly on two statistical methods to analyze the data collected. This study started with a descriptive analysis to examine the demographic characteristics and the behaviors of the respondents. Then, a multiple regression analysis was used to study the effect of Perceived Food Quality Attributes (independent variable) Food motives (independent variable) and Health consciousness (independent variable) towards Purchase intention (dependent variable).

**Table 1: Constructs, items and sources**

Constructs	Items	Sources
Perceived Food quality attributes	Natural product Nutritional value Nice taste Expiry date Environmentally friendly packaging	Kraus (2015)
Food motives	Functional food strengthens the immune system Functional food helps to maintain correct body weight Functional food provides components necessary for well-being Functional food improves external appearance Functional food reduces the risk of diseases	Kraus (2015)
Health consciousness	I make a lot of efforts for my health I consider myself health conscious. Health is important in my life I think it is important to know well how to eat healthy. I often dwell on my health.	Shimul, Cheah & Lou, (2021).
Purchase intention	I am willing to purchase functional food although the options are limited I am willing to purchase functional food due to the additional nutrients I am willing to purchase functional food although it is a bit pricy I am willing to spend time sourcing for functional food I prefer functional food to the conventional alternatives	Hassan, Sade & Subramaniam (2020)

## Reliability test

According to Hair, Page and Brunsveld, (2019), a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is considered to be acceptable. Thus, all the four variables in this study are consistent: Perceived Food Quality Attributes (Cronbach alpha = 0.902), Food motives (Cronbach alpha = 0.928), Health consciousness (Cronbach alpha = 0.884), and Purchase Intention (Cronbach alpha = 0.844).

## Results

## Descriptive analysis

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics (n=400)

Demographics		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
GENDER	Male	187	46.7	46.7
	Female	213	53.3	100
AGE	18 - 25	87	21.7	21.7
	26 - 35	126	31.5	53.2
	36 - 45	187	46.8	100.0
EDUCATION	Bachelor degree	102	25.5	25.5
	Master degree	291	72.8	98.3
	Doctoral degree	7	1.7	100.0
MONTHLY INCOME	Less than 10,000 Baht	68	17	17
	10,000 - 20,000 Baht	57	14.2	31.2
	20,001 - 30,000 Baht	72	18.0	49.2
	30,001 - 40,000 Baht	107	26.8	76.0
	40,001 - 50,000 Baht	81	20.2	96.2
	Above 50,000 Baht	15	3.8	100.0
AVERAGE CONSUMPTION OF FUNCTIONAL FOOD PER WEEK	1 - 3 times	166	41.5	41.5
	4 - 6 times	138	34.5	76.0
	7 - 9 times	58	14.5	90.5
	Above 9 times	38	9.5	100.0

Table 2 shows a slightly higher number of female (53.3%) against male (46.7%) among the respondents. The respondents come from various age range: 18 - 24 years old (21.7%), 25 - 35 (31.5%) and 36 - 45 years old (46.8%). The majority of the respondents have received a Master degree (72.8%). The remaining respondents have received a Bachelor degree (25.5%) and a Doctoral degree (1.7%). It can be observed that the top three income ranges that the respondents received every month are 30,001 - 40,000 Baht (26.8%), 40,001 - 50,000 Baht (20.2%) and 20,001 - 30,000 Baht (18%). Finally, it is worth pointing out that 41.5% of the respondents consume functional food in average 1 - 3 times per week and 34.5% of the respondents consume in average 4 - 6 time per week.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of independent and dependent factors (n=400)**

Constructs	Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
PERCEIVED FOOD QUALITY ATTRIBUTES	Natural product	1.00	5.00	3.811	1.043
	Nutritional value	1.00	5.00	3.721	1.225
	Nice taste	1.00	5.00	3.799	1.021
	Expiry date	1.00	5.00	3.528	1.103
	Environmentally friendly packaging	1.00	5.00	3.513	1.209
FOOD MOTIVES	Functional food strengthens the immune system	1.00	5.00	3.717	1.081
	Functional food helps to maintain correct body weight	1.00	5.00	3.765	1.078
	Functional food provides components necessary for well-being	1.00	5.00	3.989	1.026
	Functional food improves external appearance	1.00	5.00	3.645	1.136
	Functional food reduces the risk of diseases	1.00	5.00	3.931	0.972
HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS	I make a lot of efforts for my health	1.00	5.00	3.964	1.185
	I consider myself health conscious.	1.00	5.00	3.819	0.983
	Health is important in my life	1.00	5.00	3.979	1.112
	I think it is important to know well how to eat healthy.	1.00	5.00	3.751	0.948
	I often dwell on my health.	1.00	5.00	3.578	1.134

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of independent and dependent factors (n=400)

Constructs	Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
PURCHASE INTENTION	I am willing to purchase functional food although the options are limited	1.00	5.00	4.035	1.065
	I am willing to purchase functional food due to the additional nutrients	1.00	5.00	4.325	1.061
	I am willing to spend time sourcing for functional food	1.00	5.00	4.193	1.078
	I am willing to purchase functional food although it is a bit pricy	1.00	5.00	4.215	1.025
	I prefer functional food to the conventional alternatives	1.00	5.00	3.908	1.097

According to Table 3, the top three quality food attributes perceived with the highest level of importance are natural product (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.811), nice taste (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.799) and nutritional value (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.721). The food motives that rank the highest are functional food provides components necessary for well-being (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.989), functional food reduces the risk of diseases (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.931) and functional food helps to maintain correct body weight (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.765). The results also show that the respondents place high importance on health in their life (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.979) and make significant efforts for their health (mean  $\bar{X}$  = 3.964).

#### Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4: Results of Perceived Food Quality Attributes, Food Motives &amp; Health consciousness towards Purchase Intention

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sig
PERCEIVED FOOD QUALITY ATTRIBUTES	.370	9.119	.000*
FOOD MOTIVES	.228	4.568	.000*
HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS	.255	7.385	.000*
$R^2 = 0.797$ adjusted $R^2 = .0635$ $F = 230.011$ $Sig = 0.000^*$			

\*. Coefficient is significant at 0.05

The results in Table 4 show that perceived food quality attributes ( $\beta = 0.370$ ), food motives ( $\beta = 0.228$ ) and health consciousness ( $\beta = 0.255$ ) exhibit a p-value lesser than 0.05. For these reasons, all 3 variables (perceived food quality attributes, food motives and health consciousness) carry a significant effect on purchase intention.

**Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis		Test result
H1	Perceived food quality attributes have a positive effect on purchase intention	Accepted
H2	Food motives have a positive effect on purchase intention	Accepted
H3	Health consciousness has a positive effect on purchase intention	Accepted

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of perceived food quality, food motives as well as health consciousness on purchase intention. The findings show that all 3 hypotheses are significantly accepted (as shown in Table 5). The findings in this research align with the findings in other studies. According to Hsu, Chang and Lin (2016), consumers show higher level of concern to health, quality and food ingredients. Correspondingly stated in Wang, Pham and Dang (2020), food quality is found to have significant effect on consumer's decision making. More exactly, this study found that perceived food quality attributes have significant effect on consumer purchase intention, which is similar to the findings of Wang, Tao and Chu (2020).

This study provides evidence that food motives have a significant influence on purchase intention. This finding is supported by the study of Micale et al. (2018) and Miranda, Anton, Redondo-Valbuena, Roca-Saavedra, Rodriguez, Lamas, Franco and Cepeda (2015). Well-being and the motive to reduce the risk of disease, are the two main food motives manifested by the participants of this research. These results align with the study of Irene Goetzke and Spiller (2014) stating that the desire for health and well-being represents an important determinant in the food market. Miranda et al. (2015) pointed out a continuous growing demand for functional food thanks to its capacity to decrease the risks of some diseases.

Resembling to the research of Amin and Tarun (2022), Japutra et al. (2022) and Konuk (2018), the findings of this study indicate that health consciousness has significant influence on consumer purchase intention. Health-conscious consumers, motivated to improve and/or maintain their health and quality of life (Husic-Mehmedovic, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Kadic-Maglajlic & Vajnberger, 2017), are more likely to purchase functional food (Siegrist, Bearth & Hartmann, 2022).

### **Implication**

Intention behavior gap is often highlighted and captivates the interest of numerous researchers. Therefore, this study would enrich the understanding of consumer behavior towards functional foods. This study provides insights on the demographic characteristics of functional food consumers as well as the three determinants of purchase intention namely perceived food quality attributes, food motives and health consciousness. Future researchers can examine consumer behavior further based on the empirical results of this study.

Piggford, Raciti, Harker and Harker, (2008), stated that a deep understanding of motives is crucial in designing marketing strategies, from product design to marketing communications. In regards to practical implication, the findings of this study provide insights for manufacturers, marketers and retailers of functional products. This study provides empirical evidence on the effect of food quality, food motives as well as health consciousness on purchase intention. Businesses should focus on these factors in their product design, marketing activities as well as branding strategies, in order to trigger purchase intention of their consumers. For instance, it would be more effective to emphasize on natural product, eco-friendly packaging and nutritional value in the product development. It is noteworthy to spotlight well-being and risk of diseases reduction in various marketing communications. In order to get a higher engagement, brands can target individuals who are concerned about the nutritional value of what they consume and individuals who keep a strict diet to maintain a good shape.

In summary, this research sheds light on functional food and the related consumer behavior. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the understanding of behavioral intention towards functional food in Thailand and the development of functional food in the future.

### Limitation

Several limitations can be found in this study. Nevertheless, these limitations can provide avenues for further research. Since this research is conducted among young adults in Greater Bangkok, it requires further research to be able to generalize the findings. This study is also limited by the nature and the number of determinants of purchase intention. Although this study examined several determinants of purchase intention, there are other existing determinants of purchase intention. Bazhan et al. (2016) stated that functional food consumption surpasses consumers' individual factors and includes also other factors such as environmental factors. For these reasons, this research can be extended by exploring other factors in order to achieve higher clarity in understanding consumer behavior.

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