

Segmenting Thai Generation Z Consumers on Cruelty-free Products: Their Value, Attitude, Brand Loyalty, and Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

This research examines Thai Generation Z consumers' value, attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intention toward cruelty-free products and segments them regarding the products. An online questionnaire was developed to study 400 male and female respondents, aged between 18 and 26 years, that are Thai by nationality or residency, with the acknowledgment of cruelty-free brands. The results showed that most Thai Generation Z consumers held universalism values towards cruelty-free products ($M = 4.65$), had overall positive attitudes towards integrated marketing communication tools of cruelty-free products ($M = 4.11$), positive brand loyalty ($M = 3.71$), and positive purchase intention on the products ($M = 4.22$). In addition, each independent variable (value, attitude, and brand loyalty) had positive relationships and predicted the dependent variable (purchase intention). Finally, this research yields five segments: Universalist Consumers, Function-based Consumers, Brand Loyal Advocates, Price-based Consumers, and Marketing Influenced Consumers.

Keywords: Segmentation, Cruelty-free product, Generation Z, Purchase Intention, Consumer behavior, Thailand

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Introduction

Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2012, makes up a quarter of the Asia-Pacific (APAC) population, as reported by McKinsey and Company (Kim, McInerney, Thomas, & Yamakawa, 2020). Generation Z is a growing market, with an estimated spending power of USD 143 billion (Raynor, 2019). Additionally, Generation Z is increasing concern with ethics and sustainability (Mintel, 2017, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021). In the context of Generation Z as a market, they take their values into account in the decision-making of which brand they choose to support (Strugatz, 2020). According to Howe (2021), Generation Z

is pressuring brands to minimize packaging to protect the environment and to acquire cruelty-free certification. Moreover, they also are willing to stop supporting brands whose values do not align with theirs, and some are willing to boycott brands that conduct animal testing (Romero, n.d.).

The universalism value in Schwartz's (1992) theory of basic values can help explain Generation Z's concerns towards animals and nature. Schwartz describes how universalism value stems from one's acknowledgment of the welfare of others and animals in the world and realizing the life-threatening consequences of

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damage to the natural environment from personal actions (Schwartz, 1992).

In 2020, the global market for cruelty-free cosmetics was worth USD 5.15 billion and was forecasted to reach USD 7.86 billion by 2027 (Newsmantree, 2022). In addition, consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious in their purchasing habits and are increasingly aware of the sources of raw materials used in products (Market Research Future, 2022, as cited in Global News Wire, 2022).

Generation Z in APAC are digital natives and spend up to 8.5 hours daily on their smartphones, relying on social media for purchase decisions (Kim, McNerney, Thomas, & Yamakawa, 2020). In addition, generation Z grew up seeing 'hard sell' advertisements and with them being value-oriented. As a result, brands are shifting to show the benefits of their products rather than sell the product itself (Shadani, 2020), making their responses to marketing communications significantly different from the older generations (Howe, 2021).

Brand loyalty among Generation Z also differs from the other generations. Generation Z is found to have lower brand loyalty than the previous generations. According to Forbes, only 37.0 percent of Generation Z consumers are truly brand loyal, compared to the Baby Boomer generation, where 56.0 percent are brand loyal (Brooks, 2022). The result of a study by Cone Communications (2017) found that 92.0 percent of Generation Z were willing to purchase from an alternative brand with a similar price and product quality if it aligned with a good cause.

This research's purchase intention questionnaire section measures Thai Generation Z's willingness to purchase cruelty-free products through various contexts to examine Thai Generation Z's behavior, including value, attitude towards integrated marketing communication of cruelty-free brands, brand loyalty towards cruelty-free brands, and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products. This helps understand the decision-making process of Thai Generation Z. With the constant growth of Generation Z's spending power and cruelty-free market on the rise; this study aims to shed light on Thai Generation Z as a new wave of complex consumers and their behaviors toward cruelty-free brands and products. In addition, this research is also to aid the cruelty-free industry in improving its marketing activities toward Thai Generation Z customers.

Literature Review

Segmentation

Market segmentation was introduced in 1956 by Wendell Smith (1956). Market segmentation provides marketers with structured data about the marketplace they face (Wilkie,

1994) while helping to uncover differences in consumers and their motivation behind their purchase decisions. Market segmentation is a consumer-oriented process of dividing a broad customer of a market into sub-categories of potential and existing customers (Camilleri, 2018). The execution of segmentation involves identifying similarities among groups of consumers based on shared characteristics, interests, lifestyles, or demographic profiles (Camilleri, 2018).

Psychographic segmentation variables, including social class, personality, and lifestyle, are essential in understanding consumer behavior (Kotler, 1994). Behavioral segmentation focuses on an individual's purchase behaviors in variables such as volumes and frequency of purchase (Camilleri, 2018). Market segmentation enables a better understanding of customers' wants and needs, allowing organizations to cater more accurately to their market and develop better marketing strategies.

Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated communication marketing (IMC) refers to the incorporation and organization of multiple communication channels with the purpose of clear and proportionate delivery of messages (Sawastah, 2020). As IMC is generally conducted through two or more communication channels, it involves uniform messages and media content to ensure unified understanding through all channels utilized (Susilowati & Sugandini, 2018). IMC can consist of both traditional and modern communication tools. Don Schultz (1992) states that successful IMC campaigns require consistent messaging and a deep understanding of the target audience to communicate with them effectively.

Traditional communication aims to pressure the target audience, which may lead to audience irritation and avoidance behavior, while traditional marketing can influence beliefs and attitudes. However, less effective in stimulating and creating demand due to the generalized nature of communication messages (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van Den Bergh, 2007). Modern communication differs from traditional marketing as modern communication is delivered through digital channels; moreover, modern communication messages are curated to its target audience, and the delivery is more oriented towards its directed market compared to traditional communication methods (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van Den Bergh, 2007). Traditional communication tools include advertising, promotions, and personal selling, while modern communication tools include public relations, online marketing, direct marketing, search engine optimization, and mobile marketing.

With the integration of both traditional and modern communications in IMC, it has optimized

communication by taking advantage of traditional communication abilities to reach mass audiences and making the most of the personalized nature of modern communication (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van Den Bergh, 2007).

Values

Theory of basic values identified ten values based on each underlying motivation. As expressed by Schwartz (2012), the values are likely to be universal as they were established under one or more of the universal requirements of human existence, namely, the needs of human beings, the needs for social agreement, and the needs of survival and welfare of groups (Schwartz, 1992). The ten values, as defined by Shalom Schwartz, are distinguished by the comprehensive goal that each value expresses. The values are as follows: Self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism (Schwartz, 1992).

Universalism Values. As expressed by Schwartz (2012), the value aims to understand, appreciate, tolerate, and protect the well-being of both people and nature. Universalism Values fall under the needs of survival and welfare of individuals and groups (Schwartz, 1992). This value is a combination of two subtypes of apprehension, the welfare of people and the world and the welfare of nature. This value stems from acknowledging others outside their primary group rather than recognizing their problems alone. In terms of nature and the environment, realizing the life-threatening consequences of damage to the natural environment brings about this value.

Functional Value and Social Value. Theory of Consumption Value (TCV) examines consumers' perceived values (Tanrikulu, 2021). This theory focuses on the utilitarian and the hedonic aspects of perceived values (Sheth et al., 1991). This theory identifies the underlying motivation for consumption behavior which also predicts, describes, and explains consumer choices through consumption values (Tanrikulu, 2021). There are five consumer values, two of which are functional value and social value (Tanrikulu, 2021). Functional value is similar to utilitarian value, where the capacity for functional and physical performance is considered (Sheth et al., 1991). Social value refers to the perceived utility where one or more social groups are recognized as social value and measured through product association (Sheth et al., 1991).

Attitude

Attitude is an ongoing general evaluation of something, ranging from negative to positive. Allport (1935) defined attitude as a mental state of eagerness that derives from experience which has an impact or influence on one's response to a

related object and situation. In a similar definition, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) refer to an attitude as a reaction toward an object. Baron and Byrne (1984) explained that attitude is a lasting combination of emotions, beliefs, and behavior directed towards specific objects that derive over time. In agreement, Solomon (2019) added that attitude takes more than one momentary event; therefore, an attitude is only formed after numerous exposures to particular objects or stimuli, making attitude last as it undergoes a length of time.

Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty

In simple terms, purchase intention means "what we think we will buy" (Blackwell et al., 2001, as cited in Lee, Goh, & Noor, 2019). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1977), purchase intention is a consumer's tendency to buy a certain product and is a vital signifier in measuring consumer behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977, as cited in Lee, Goh, & Noor, 2019). Additionally, Zeithaml (1988) classified purchase intention into "possible to buy," "intended to buy," and "considered to buy" measures of purchase intention (Zeithaml, 1988 as cited in Lee, Goh, & Noor, 2019).

A few of the first to define brand loyalty is Jacoby and Kyner (1973). The definition is commonly understood across the literature (Bozzo et al., 2003) that brand loyalty refers to the biased actions taken over time with some decision-making process while considering one or more comparable brands out of a set of similar brands, and is a result of psychological process. Oliver (1997) defines brand loyalty as a commitment to repurchasing a preferred product or service despite marketers' efforts to influence the committed behavior. While Oliver emphasizes the behavioral perspective of brand loyalty, Rossiter and Percy (1987) proposed that brand loyalty is depicted by the positive attitude towards a brand and consistent repurchases over time.

In terms of business, brand loyalty also is a substantial factor in the profitability and development of brands (Doyle, 2016). In a universal understanding, Oxford Dictionary of Marketing by Doyle (2016), brand loyalty is a measure of how unwilling a consumer is to switch to a competitor's product or service. In addition, brand loyalty can be described as high levels of customer satisfaction, and repeat buys of a brand's products or services over time are also signifiers of a brand's success (Doyle, 2016).

Generation Z

According to McKinsey and Company (Kim, McInerney, Thomas, & Yamakawa, 2020), Generation Z is the population that was born between 1996 - 2012. Their traits consist of being realistic, responsible, curious, and open-minded

(Thach, Riewe, & Camillo, 2020). They also self-identified themselves as 'woke' which translates to being consciously active towards injustice in society (Sobande, 2019, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021), and are becoming more ethical and sustainable (Mintel, 2017 as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021).

According to experts and numerous studies, Generation Z is less loyal to brands, and as stated by Hanbury, it is nearly impossible to get Generation Z consumers to be loyal to a brand (CrowdTwist, 2020; Hanbury, 2019). However, in addition to lower-priced options, the study shows that Generation Z would consider product, price, and loyalty programs in considering to become loyal to a brand (CrowdTwist, 2020).

As consumers, Okolo (2019) proposed that Generation Z are more likely to be more selective towards brands and products and are likely to choose brands and products based on the social responsibility they believe in (Okolo, 2019, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021). The global head of beauty partnerships at Kyra Media, Marina Mansour, stated that Generation Z makes conscious decisions when consuming a product or service (Howe, 2021). Generation Z consumers are actively looking for sustainable cosmetics, and up to 55 percent reported that they only purchase cruelty-free beauty and grooming products.

Additionally, Strugatz (2020) stated that Generation Z as consumers care not only about products' function but also about standing up for what is right when determining which brand to purchase from. The actions the Generation Z are willing to actively search for sustainable cosmetics options and selectively purchase cruelty-free products; this generation also speaks out and boycott brands that practice animal testing

(Romero, n/d). Additionally, a product being cruelty-free is among the top three factors influencing Generation Z in purchasing, which are, using natural ingredients, cruelty-free, and recycled packaging respectively (Strugatz, 2019).

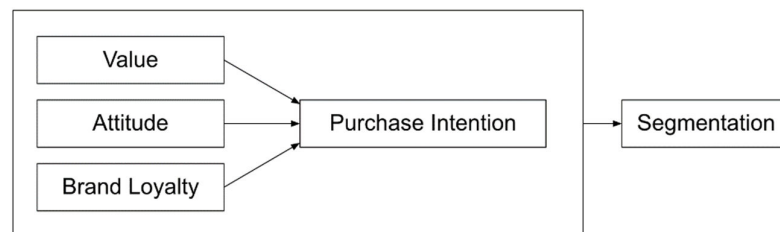
Research conducted by McKinsey & Company in 2019 on Generation Z in Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand found that Generation Z APAC population rely on social media research prior to making purchase decisions and are environmentally conscious, however unlikely to spend extra for environmental-conscious products (Kim, McInerney, Thomas, & Yamakawa, 2020).

Generation Z is also more concerned about animal rights than the older Generations. According to an article in Forbes, Generation Z is more serious about vegetarianism than Millennials; this results from how Generation Z considers animal rights critically (Patel, 2017), which gears organizations away from animal testing and animal-based ingredients (Patel, 2017).

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Generation Z is a growing market and is expected to have significant spending power and a strong interest in ethical and sustainable products. (Mintel, 2017, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021). Thus, it is crucial to examine their attitudes towards cruelty-free products. This research studies Thai Generation Z value, attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intention, in order to segment them into groups, for a better understanding of their motivations and relationship with cruelty-free products. The theoretical framework of this research is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The study's Conceptual Framework



In addition, the following hypotheses were developed.

H1 There is a relationship between value and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products.

H2 There is a relationship between attitude and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products.

H3 There is a relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention toward cruelty-free products.

Methodology

The main objective of this research is to examine and describe the nature of Thai Generation Z consumer groups which regards their

demographic profile, value, attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products and segment the behaviors into different categories. This research is conducted through a quantitative method using online questionnaires. The 400 sample of this research is gathered through quota sampling to ensure the inclusion of Generation Z respondents. The sample is Thai Generation Z of both genders, meaning those that are 10 - 26 years old as of 2022. However, for ethical purposes, this research sample is those that are between 18 and 26 years old.

There are six parts to the questionnaire of this research. The first part is the prerequisite questions to ensure that the respondents are Thai nationals or are Thai residents, belong to Generation Z, and are aware of cruelty-free brands. The second part gathers demographic information of the respondents. Part three asks about the respondents' values, with items adapted from Amin and Tarun (2020), Chakraborty & Dash (2022), and Zercher et al. (2015). Part four questions respondents' attitudes towards integrated marketing communication of cruelty-free brands, with the question items adapted from Oancea et al. (2016). Part five measures the respondents' loyalty towards cruelty-free brands with adjusted question items from Levin et al. (2004), and Jaiswal and Niraj (2011). Lastly, part six measures respondents' purchase intentions towards cruelty-free products by adapting items from van Steenburg and Naderi (2019) and Chakraborty and Dash (2022). All parts used Likert-typed scales, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, except the attitude section, where the statements were adjusted to 1 = strongly dislike and 5 = strongly like.

The questionnaire consists of 55 measurement items, with a high degree of internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's coefficient of .93. As for each variable, value returned with 0.75, attitude with 0.87, brand loyalty with 0.77, and purchase intention with 0.91.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to compute and analyze the confidence level of the data. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables was tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables was calculated through regression analysis using stepwise multiple regression method.

Findings

The majority of the respondents are female (84.7%), whereas only 11.35 percent are male, and 4.00 percent identify as other genders. The number of respondents is evenly distributed in terms of age range, 44.8 percent are between 18 and 22, and

55.3 percent are between 23 and 26. A large sum of respondents (67.8%) holds bachelor's degree, and 53.3 percent are students. Participants with a monthly income of 10,000 Thai Baht - 30,000 Thai Baht contribute 48.8 percent, followed by 34.5 percent of respondents with a monthly income of less than 10,000 Thai Baht.

Thai Generation Z Value, Attitudes, Brand Loyalty, and Purchase Intention towards Cruelty-Free Products

This study measures three dimensions of value, universalism value, functional value, and social value regarding cruelty-free products. The mean score of the value section is 4.074, with a maximum score of 4.74 and a minimum score of 3.26. The universalism value items have the highest mean score of 4.65, followed by functional value at 4.08 and social value at 3.36. This indicates that most respondents place the highest focus on universalism value in the context of cruelty-free products, meaning that the value of Thai Generation Z towards cruelty-free products is universalism value.

The attitude section in the questionnaire measures the respondents' attitudes towards each integrated marketing communication tool used for cruelty-free products. There are 20 items in total. The mean score of the value section is 4.12, with a maximum score of this section is 4.64 and a minimum score of 4.11. The items group with the highest mean score was promotion (4.59), followed by public relations (4.46) and out-of-home media (4.28). This indicates that most Thai Generation Z has generally a positive attitude towards cruelty-free products' integrated marketing communication tools. However, the respondents have the most positive attitudes toward promotion out of all the integrated marketing communication tools.

The brand loyalty section collects data regarding the degree of loyalty towards cruelty-free brands that the respondents are aware of. The mean of this section is 3.714, with a maximum mean score of 4.50, and the lowest mean score is a reverse item with 2.40, and 3.50 for a non-reverse item. The mean score indicates that Thai Generation Z are brand loyal towards cruelty-free brands, and the items with the highest mean score under this section are under the 'advocacy' category with a mean score of 4.40, which indicates that most Thai Generation Z has a high willingness to advocate for cruelty-free products to others. However, the item with the lowest return, 5.10 'I would continue to purchase from this cruelty-free brand even if its prices increase,' indicates that they are sensitive to price changes, which means although their brand loyalty towards cruelty-free products is positive, it may not be strong enough for them to remain loyal if the price of the cruelty-free products were to increase.

The purchase intention section measures the likeliness to purchase cruelty-free products in different contexts. The mean of purchase intention is 4.220, with a maximum of 4.71 and a minimum of 3.60. The mean score indicates that most Thai Generation Z has positive purchase intentions toward cruelty-free products. However, the outcome also indicates that Thai Generation Z from this study is more likely to purchase if the cruelty-free products are on a discount as per the items with the highest mean scores. The item with the lowest mean score, 6.10, 'I would buy cruelty-free products even if they are not available locally,' reveals that most Thai Generation Z has lower purchase intention if the products are unavailable locally or at their convenience.

Hypothesis Testing

Stepwise multiple regression analysis has been applied to identify the predicting factors. The computation returns a positive influence toward purchase intention for all independent variables. Brand loyalty ($\beta = .486, p < .05$), attitude ($\beta = .300, p < .05$) and value ($\beta = .119, p < .05$), with R-squared of .629. All supported the three hypotheses. That is, there is a relationship between value and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products (H1). There is a relationship between attitude and purchase intention towards cruelty-free products (H2). There is a relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention toward cruelty-free products (H3).

The analysis above indicated a relationship between independent variables (value, attitude, and brand loyalty) and purchase intention. Their relationships are moderate positive associations. Brand loyalty and purchase intention ($r = .74, p < .05$) has the highest positive association. This is evidence that there is a relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, in which brand loyalty towards cruelty-free brands has the strongest relationship with purchase intention towards cruelty-free products.

Based on the strength of association and the highest mean items in each dimension, most Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers are highly influenced by price changes, price-related promotions, and buy-one-get-one-free promotions. The outcome of this study also suggests that most Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers' favor toward cruelty-free products derives from the alignment with their values. From the outcome in the value and attitude section, despite a weak association between value and purchase intention, the result can be interpreted to indicate that many Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers see the importance of caring for nature and the environment and appreciate cruelty-free brands that conduct public relations to educate the public regarding cruelty-free.

Segmentation of Thai Generation Z Cruelty-Free Products Consumers

The segmentation analysis comprises five categories, which are based on the questionnaire responses and the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The demographic of each category of segmentation is described under each category.

Universalist Consumers

The value section revealed that the highest positively rated items were all related to universalism values, with a combined mean score of 4.65, along with a positive relationship between value and purchase intention; this suggests that a group of Thai Generation Z consumers purchases cruelty-free products as it aligns with the value they hold. This segment of consumers considers nature and the environment, cares for the society around them, and feels responsible for their actions. The result of this study helps to see that universalist consumers can be both male and female with an education of Bachelor's degree or Master's degree and with income between 10,000 and 30,000 Thai Baht.

Function-based Consumers

The second highest rated category of items under the value section is related to the functional value dimension, with a mean score of 4.08, and along with the positive correlation between value and purchase intention, this suggests that there is a group of Thai Generation Z consumers purchasing cruelty-products as per the products' functionality. This segment of consumers focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of cruelty-free products they purchase, with their attention on the product's performance. According to the outcome of this research, function-based consumers can be viewed as Generation Z business owners, as well as high school students, with an income of 10,000 Thai Baht - 30,000 Thai Baht.

Brand Loyal Advocates

The finding under the brand loyalty section returns with high positive responses on advocacy items of brand loyalty and a positive relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention. This suggests that a group of Thai Generation Z consumers would advocate for cruelty-free products that they have positive attitudes towards, find effective, or both. From this research, brand loyal advocates of Thai Generation Z are business owners or working in private sectors, of higher education, and with monthly income between 10,000 and 50,000 Thai Baht.

Price-based Consumers

Both findings from the brand loyalty and the attitude section, along with the positive relationships and correlations between brand loyalty and attitude with purchase intention, suggest that Thai Generation Z consumers are

influenced by and drawn towards price-reduction promotions. This segment of consumers is likelier to purchase cruelty-free products that are on a price reduction or buy-one-get-one-free promotion and are less likely to continue purchasing if the product's price increases. The result of this research can help identify price-based consumers as Generation Z business owners, freelancers, those with a monthly income of 30,001 - 50,000 Thai Baht, and those with a high school education or lower.

Marketing Influenced Consumers

The findings from the attitudes section and the relationship between attitude and purchase intention suggest that the integrated marketing communication tools used by cruelty-free brands significantly impact the purchasing decisions of many Thai Generation Z consumers. The finding suggests that most Thai Generation Z consumers favor buy-one-get-one-free promotion from cruelty-free brands, with a mean score of 4.64, this finding is also supported by the purchase intention section's findings where the respondents are likely to purchase if cruelty-free products are at a discount or with a promotional offer. The set of IMC tools with the second highest mean score is a set of public relations tools with a mean score of 4.47, indicating that most Thai Generation Z has highly positive attitudes towards public relations marketing methods. As per the responses in the questionnaire, marketing-influenced consumers are female Thai Generation Z consumers working in the private sector or are freelancers, of all levels of education from lower than high school to Master's degree, with a monthly income from less than 10,000 Thai Baht up to 30,000 Thai Baht.

Discussion

Universalism Value of Thai Generation Z

The Universalism value result of this research could stem from how Generation Z is the population that is most aware of the environmental, social, and political issues in history (Donnison, 2007; Henry, 2018, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021), are more active towards injustice, and are more ethical and sustainable (Sobande, 2019; Mintel, 2017, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021). Moreover, Generation Z tends to choose the brands and products that align with the social responsibility they believe in (Okolo, 2019, as cited in McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton, 2021). Additionally, Generation Z gives more value to socially responsible brands (Cheung, Davis, & Heukaeufer, 2018). These reasons lead Generation Z to consider the well-being of others, nature, and animals in their purchasing decisions, as each action they take contributes to society, and this generation feels responsible for what is happening around them.

Since Generation Z is willing to stand up for what they believe is right (Strugatz, 2020), purchasing cruelty-free products is one way Generation Z stands up to their values and what they think is right.

Attitudes toward IMC of Cruelty-Free Brands

The attitude section of this research reveals the overall positive attitudes towards cruelty-free integrated marketing communication tools, with promotion returning with the highest mean score of 4.59, followed by public relations (4.46) and out-of-home media (4.28). According to Shadani (2020), Digital Marketing Institute (2018), and Padfield (2021), Generation Z can notice inauthenticity, as also shown in this research findings where the items from direct marketing returned the lowest mean score, this supports the statement of how Generation Z dislikes hard-selling methods, and with public relations receiving the second highest mean score, also supports how Generation Z favors authenticity and prefer genuine marketing tactics. This, combined with how Thai Generation Z hold value to universalism value, suggest why Thai Generation Z have a high liking for public relation item 4.7, 'When cruelty-free brands educate the public about cruelty-free.' as public relations help communicate the underlying values of brands.

Brand Loyalty toward Cruelty-Free Brands

The outcome of this research indicates that although most Thai Generation Z has overall positive brand loyalty towards cruelty-free products, the tendency to remain loyal to a cruelty-free brand is lowered if the brands' products were to increase in price. As discussed in the literature review, it is nearly impossible to establish brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers (CrowdTwist, 2020; Hanbury, 2019). With this outcome and the findings of the attitude section, it indicates that overall, Thai Generation Z cruelty-free product consumers are price sensitive and prone to shift between brands if the price were to vary. Together with the outcome of brand loyalty towards the cruelty-free product section, Thai Generation Z is less likely to continue to purchase if the cruelty-free products' price increase.

With the consideration of the age range of the sample, this generation mainly consists of students, unemployed individuals, and first-jobbers; therefore, their purchasing power has potential however not strong enough yet, leading to price sensitivity and being prone to switch to other options if prices of the products were to increase.

Although Thai Generation Z has weak brand loyalty, this research shows that Thai Generation Z would advocate for the brands they are loyal to. The Advocacy items in the brand

loyalty section returned with the highest mean score of 4.40, a discussion in the literature review also supports this reversely where Generation Z would speak out and boycott brands that conduct animal cruelty practices (Romero, n.d.).

Purchase Intention towards Cruelty-Free Brands

The strongest correlation was found between brand loyalty and purchase intention ($r = .74, p < .05$), indicating that brand loyalty is the primary motivation for Thai Generation Z to buy cruelty-free products. As Thai Generation Z is less likely to remain loyal to brands, marketers need to work harder to encourage Thai Generation Z to remain loyal. This finding is similar to previous research conducted by CrowdTwist (2020) with 790 respondents from North America, where 38.0 percent of Generation Z respondents would consider other lower-price options before purchasing. Compared to Generation Z of Western culture, only 26.7 percent of Generation Z are truly brand loyal (CrowdTwist, 2020), contradictory to the finding of this research on how Thai Generation Z receives the highest motivating factor to purchase from brand loyalty.

Discussion of Segmentation

According to the research, Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers can be segmented into 5 categories: *Universalist Consumers*, *Function-based Consumers*, *Brand Loyal Advocate*, *Price-based Consumers*, and *Marketing Influenced Consumers*. The overall categories of segmentation show that most Thai Generation Z are true to the universalism value they believe in, yet still apply objective thinking in consideration of the function of the products before purchasing, and are sensitive to price changes both when the price increases and decreases.

The *Universalist Consumers* category reflects the Thai Generation Z consumers who prioritize nature, animals, and the well-being of others; they feel a sense of responsibility towards what is happening around them, without wanting anything for themselves or to gain a reputation for conducting good acts. On the other hand, the *Function-based Consumers* category represents the logical side of Generation Z, where effectiveness is the primary consideration before purchasing and not solely based their decision on cruelty-free products being cruelty-free. Next, the *Brand Loyal Advocate* would advocate for cruelty-free products that they have positive attitudes towards, find effective, or both. The *Price-based Consumers* category is aligned with the function-based consumers category as the consumers of the price-based consumers category do not mindlessly follow their preferred brands but consider prices before making a purchase decision. Similarly, the *Marketing Influenced Consumers* category enjoys

receiving marketing messages from cruelty-free brands and products through various sources but enjoys promotions and public relations tools the most. This category of consumers that enjoy promotions is similar to the priced-based consumers, where buy-one-get-one-free and price reduction promotions persuade this category of consumers well. Under the same category, those that enjoy public relations tools are the ones that place high values on brands that show authenticity.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

There are limitations in this study based on the nature of research study. The questionnaire for this research contains 58 questions, which may appear to the respondents as a considerable length and potentially time-consuming for them. There are also possibilities that respondents cease to complete the survey as they are answering the questionnaire. In the context of biases, there are possibilities of bias in the value section despite the effort to ensure the questionnaire is anonymous. Additionally, there is a limited variation of cruelty-free products in the current market, with the majority being beauty and personal care products.

This study mainly targets Generation Z; future research will likely yield essential information if the future study can break down the population of Generation Z more based on the specific demographics to increase precision in data. As such, future research can collect quotas of each demographic and compare between different income groups, occupations, education levels, and other demographic characteristics. To ensure the significance of the data, future research could implement multi-generation comparison to indicate the degree of similarities and differences in generations to understand further about the factor and influence of purchase intention in different generations.

With the nature of quantitative research, the research is limited in its ability to provide insights into the reasons and motivations behind the observed behaviors. Therefore, conducting qualitative research as an extension to this study could potentially gather more in-depth information on the underlying factors that influence the purchase decisions of Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers.

Based on the results of this research, comparison between the variables can yield important findings as well. Although the value, attitude, and brand loyalty have been found to impact the purchase intention of Thai Generation Z, it would be valuable to find out if these independent variables also affect each other. As discussed, Generation Z in general has weaker brand loyalty compared to other generations (CrowdTwist, 2020; Hanbury, 2019), a study on

different variables against brand loyalty could provide additional insights into the factors influencing the brand loyalty of Thai Generation Z towards cruelty-free products.

Practical Implications

This research focuses on Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers and the factors influencing their purchase decision. The findings of this research can be adapted and applied by communication marketers to develop appropriate marketing strategies and tactics that appeal to Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers.

With the value of most Thai Generation Z consumers of cruelty-free products, marketers can apply this knowledge by communicating universalism values to attract Thai Generation Z to purchase their cruelty-free products.

As Thai Generation Z has a positive attitude towards integrated marketing communication tools used in marketing cruelty-free products, marketers can implement more IMC methods to reach more Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers. Additionally, the attitude section of this research breaks down individual integrated marketing communication tools and measures Thai Generation Z cruelty-free consumers' degree of favorability of each integrated marketing communication tool. Marketers can develop more promotions, and implement fewer SMS tactics as this return with the lowest score.

With the situation of brand loyalty of Thai Generation Z, it is important for brands to focus on strengthening brand loyalty among Thai Generation Z consumers, such as developing brand loyalty programs, as this research indicates that brand loyalty is a main purchasing decision factor, yet price changes can sway brand loyalty of Thai Generation Z. However, marketers can take advantage of Thai Generation Z's concerns about price over brand loyalty by developing pricing strategies to obtain consumers who are loyal to the competing brands.

Finally, the segmentation categories show different wants, needs, preferences, and predictable purchasing decision factors among Thai Generation Z cruelty-free products consumers. Marketers can utilize this piece of information to improve their marketing tactics and better target specific purchasing decision factors for a more efficient marketing strategy and higher return on investment.

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