

Effects of Living Behaviors Following Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy on Purchasing Decisions Made By Studying Personal Factors as a Moderator Variable.

พฤติกรรมกรดำรงชีวิตแบบปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้า
โดยศึกษาปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลเป็นตัวแปรกำกับ

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Abstract

Living on the philosophy of sufficiency economy is a modest way of living according to their status and self-reliance. There are many researches to study the application of sufficiency economy philosophy to the organization in order to increase the efficiency of sustainable operations. This research aimed to apply the philosophy of sufficiency economy to study the lifestyle of people to make a purchase. The sample size was 513 respondents obtained by stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed by hierarchical regression analysis. The living standard of sufficiency economy was at the medium level. The elderly are more modest by buying more needed products than those who are in a working age. In addition, those with lower monthly income will have more income to plan their spending than those who are older. The government should find ways to raise awareness for the people to adopt the philosophy of sufficiency economy for more applications. This is a foundation for sustainable economic development.

Keywords: sufficiency economy, purchasing decision, personal factors, moderator

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บทคัดย่อ

การดำรงชีวิตโดยยึดหลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงเป็นรูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตอย่างพอประมาณตามฐานะของตนและมีความสามารถในการพึ่งพาตนเอง ซึ่งมีงานวิจัยจำนวนมากสนใจศึกษาการนำปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงมาประยุกต์ใช้กับการดำเนินงานในองค์กรเพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพในการดำเนินงานอย่างยั่งยืน งานวิจัยเรื่องนี้จึงนำปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงมาศึกษาถึงการดำเนินชีวิตของบุคคลในการตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้า โดยรวบรวมข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 513 คน ด้วยการสุ่มแบบชั้นภูมิ ทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยการวิเคราะห์สมการถดถอยเชิงชั้น พบว่า พฤติกรรมการดำรงชีวิตตามหลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง โดยผู้สูงอายุมีความพอประมาณโดยการซื้อสินค้าเท่าที่จำเป็นมากกว่าผู้ที่มีอายุน้อยกว่า นอกจากนี้ผู้ที่มีรายได้ต่ำจะมีการจัดสรรรายได้เพื่อวางแผนการใช้จ่ายล่วงหน้ามากกว่าผู้ที่มีรายได้สูงกว่า ซึ่งภาครัฐควรหาแนวทางสร้างความตระหนักให้กับประชาชนถึงการนำหลักปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงมาประยุกต์ใช้มากขึ้น เพื่อเป็นการสร้างฐานรากในการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจของประเทศอย่างยั่งยืน

คำสำคัญ : เศรษฐกิจพอเพียง การตัดสินใจซื้อ ปัจจัยส่วนบุคคล ตัวแปรกำกับ

Introduction

Thailand has experienced an economic crisis in 1997 called the Tom Yum Kung crisis, which began at the end of the 7th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992 - 1996) and the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001), due to free trade and financial freedom that made Thais spend more. The problem of debt restructuring led to the instability of international finance. Subsequently, in the National Economic and Social Development Plan No. 9 (2002-2006), the philosophy of sufficiency economy was introduced as a guideline for the development and management of the country, along with integrated development where people are centered. The principle is that the development is based on the middle path and the non-negligence taking into account the modesty, rationality, good immunity in itself, and the use of knowledge and morality, in planning, making decisions, and action giving priority to solving the domestic economic crisis and strengthening the national economic development, with good immunity to waves of external changes, at the same time, aiming to achieve a balanced development individually, socially, economically, and environmentally to bring about the prosperity of Thai people (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2016). Thailand is currently in the period of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021), which still attaches importance to the philosophy of sufficiency economy. The emphasis is on creating knowledge and understanding for the people in applying the philosophy of sufficiency economy and living in the present to

make sustainable development of the country (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2016).

The philosophy of sufficiency economy for the people in Thailand can be reflected in the consumer behaviors. The behaviors and needs of consumers are different according to gender, age, education, income (Chaoprasert, 2004). The study of the differences in purchasing decisions of individuals is of great benefit to market segmentation because each person needs different products and services (Santiwong, 2007). Considering the future of Thailand's population structure, there are three main trends that will change: (1) the Thai population in the future will increase in number of females than in males; (2) the structure of older population will increase; and (3) the proportion of urban population in the country will increase, which reflects the size and income of households (Fiscal Policy Office, 2008).

With the above reasons, the research on Effects of Living Behaviors Following Philosophy of Sufficiency on Purchasing Decision Making By Studying Personal Factors as Moderator Variables. The results of this study can be applied to the government policy in line with the National Economic and Social Development Plan, which emphasizes the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to sustain Thailand's economic stability.

Research Objective

To study the levels of population living behavior following the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy that affect purchasing decisions based on their gender, age, and monthly income as moderator variables.

Review Literature

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a concept that can guide the way of life and practice to be self-reliant in order to sustain the lives of the people, economy and society in Thailand, making it a sustainable and stable situation (Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, 2006). The main principle in implementing the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is to consider three characteristics: (1) Moderation, which means that it is fit, it is not too small, not too much, not overpowering oneself and others, (2) Rationality, or logical reasoning, based on the factors involved, and (3) Good immunity, which means being prepared for the impact and change that will take place, taking into account the situation is expected in the near future, both near and far in the decision-making and implementation of adequate activities based on knowledge and morality, that is, to use the knowledge to

carefully plan and execute. Moreover, there must be morality and honesty in the lifestyle (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2016).

Consumer Behavior Concept

A consumer behavior model developed by Kotler and Armstrong (2006) explains that consumers receive marketing incentives, which include products, pricing, distribution channels, and marketing promotion as an input into the decision-making process to make purchases of goods or services. These stimuli will have different attributes depending on the type of product and service. The division of products and services is based on the four categories of consumer goods and services: (1) food and beverage, (2) fashion items, a necessity and extravagant product group, such as soft accessories, (3) tourism and recreation services, such as tourism services, and (4) information and communication technology (ICT) services, a service business that is essential to living in the present day, such as telecommunications network service providers, and the manufacturer or service provider of computer systems, etc. (Yodpruttikarn, 2007; The Stock Exchange of Thailand, 2017).

Related Research

Gender is an important personal factor used to study the differences in lifestyle patterns between males and females. A number of research studies have compared the differences in the mean of the implementation of the philosophy of sufficiency economy to life. The results show that the differences between males and females is that the female gave priority to moderation, immunity, and morality more than their male counterpart (Upaipanich, 2010; Boonyanuwat, 2011). On the other hand, the study showed that differences in gender did not affect the application of sufficiency economy philosophy (Pitukmuangman, 2010). The results of the study are not clear enough. This led to the following research hypotheses.

H₁: Gender is the influence moderator variable between the sufficiency economy philosophy and the purchasing decision.

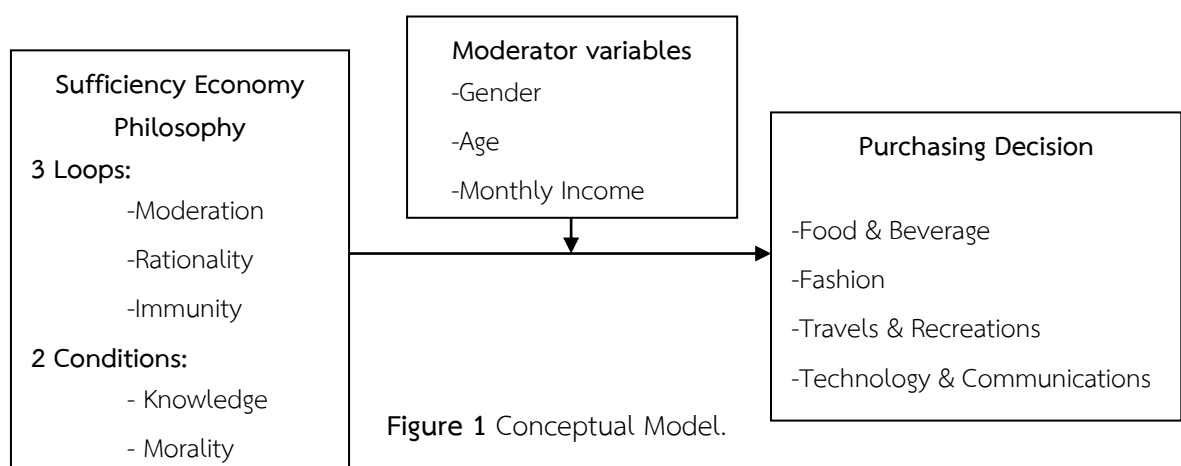
In this study, the age group was divided into two: working group or middle adulthood, aged 35-60 years, most of whom had stable economic status with good jobs and social status, and elderly group or later maturity aged 61 or older who are able to perform various tasks as well as the middle-aged. They are good counselors because they are very experienced, calm and careful, most of them have retirement income, which is a fixed income (Tongmak, 2016).

There are a number of research studies on the lifestyle of the elderly due to the awareness of the importance of demographic change that is entering the aging society. It is interesting to note that the buying behavior of older people is based on the morality and kindness of the vendors of goods and services such as non-child labor, standard wage, and the ethics of doing business (Carrigan, Szmigin & Wright, 2004). This led to the following research hypothesis.

H₂: Age is the influence moderator variable between living behaviors based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy and purchasing decisions.

The household income factor is another important variable in the study of living behavior following the philosophy of sufficiency economy. Wanasilp (2015) states that higher education levels make people more knowledgeable about the household management, resulting in the quality of family life measured by higher family income. In the study of Donkwa (2011), it was found that the income levels influenced the decision to purchase goods and services differently on the basis of sufficiency economy. For those who have an average monthly income of 10,000 baht or more, they use the reason by planning ahead before making a purchase and use more knowledge to find information to determine the details of the product or service than the sample with a lower average monthly income. However, the increase in income does not always reflect the happiness of the person. People should create a simple lifestyle by consuming them as needed and living with care (Alexander, 2012). This led to the following research hypothesis.

H₃: Monthly income is the influence moderator variable between living behaviors based on sufficiency economy philosophy and purchasing decision.



Research methodology

The samples used in the study were residents in Nakhon Ratchasima, the economic center in the lower Northeast of Thailand. The size of the sample was calculated by G * power program with the effect size of 0.15, the standard error of 0.01, gaining the sample size of 279. For this study, the data was collected from the sample of 513 samples, which is not lower than the calculation criteria, with Probability Sampling by Stratified Random Sampling which the population is partitioned into non-overlapping groups, called strata and a sample is stratified by districts in Nakhon Ratchasima. The sample size for each stratum that is proportional to that of the total population, using a questionnaire as a tool to gather information. The results of the questionnaire were content validity. The index of item objective congruence (IOC), based on the rating of 3 experts, found that all questions were content validity, from 0.67 to 1.00, which is more than the standard 0.50 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). The reliability of the questionnaire in the rating scale was found by using the coefficient alpha of the Cornbach's alpha coefficient. The alpha coefficient was found to be between 0.795 to 0.929, which is more than the standard 0.70 (Ebel & Frisbie, 1986). Efficiency testing of the questionnaire was found to be in accordance with the criteria and can be collected from the target sample. Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine the personal factors (dummy variables) and the interactions between Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and dummy variables effect on purchasing decision making. This is a framework build several regression models by adding variables to a previous model at each step. The results are to determine whether newly added variables show a significant improvement in R^2 .

Results

Most of the samples were female and male 59.8 percent and 40.2 percent, respectively. The working age group was between 35-60 years old and the elderly aged 61-80 years were 55.6 percent and 44.4 percent, respectively. The average monthly income was 5,000 - 14,999 baht and 15,000-24,999 baht, respectively, or 27.3 percent and 21.6 percent, respectively.

The sufficiency economy philosophy in all aspects was average 3.28-3.37, which was at the moderate level consisting of the use of rationality, moderation, and good immunity, respectively, with the use of morality and knowledge as the conditions for moderate living with the mean of 3.21 and 3.32 respectively.

Besides, the sample decided to purchase or use 4 products was in the medium level, including the decision to purchase food and beverages, make a decision to purchase fashion items, use information and communication technology, and use the tourism and leisure services, with the mean in the range of 3.07-3.21. For the normal distribution test of living behaviors following the sufficiency economy and decisions to purchase products and services, it was found that skewness is in the range of -0.050 to -0.350, with a value not exceeding ± 3 and a kurtosis between -0.849 to -1.104, with a value not exceeding ± 10 (Kline, 2015). The data was normally distributed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic data and Behaviors (N=513)

	N	%		Mean	S.D.	Skew-ness	Kurto-sis
Gender			Living Behaviors				
Male	206	40.2%	Moderation	3.31	1.11	-0.21	0.92
Female	307	59.8%	Rationality	3.37	1.21	-0.35	-1.04
Age			Immunity	3.28	1.08	-0.18	-0.85
35-60	285	55.6%	Knowledge	3.21	1.09	-0.05	-0.889
61-80	228	44.4%	Morality	3.32	1.19	-0.33	-0.96
Income			Purchasing Decision				
Less than 5,000 Baht	86	16.8%	Food & Beverage	3.21	1.14	-0.27	-0.93
5,000 – 14,999 Baht	140	27.3%	Fashion	3.08	1.13	-0.05	-0.97
15,000 – 24,999 Baht	75	14.6%	Tourism	3.07	1.14	-0.05	-0.99
25,000 – 34,999 Baht	101	19.7%	Technology & Communication	3.08	1.20	-0.10	-1.10
From 35,000 Baht up							

Results of Analysis of Living Behaviors Following Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy on Making Purchasing Decisions of Products and Services.

1) Analysis of moderator variable based on Gender

In the analysis of a hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine the dummy variables for females. In the first step analysis, it was found that the gender factor did not influence the decision to purchase or use the service. Therefore, the hypothesis H₁ is rejected, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Results of Analysis of Living Behaviors Following Sufficiency Economy Philosophy on Making Purchasing Decisions of Products and Services, with the Gender as a moderator variable.

Factors	Regression Coefficient (β)	p-value
Moderation	.193***	.000
Rationality	.012	.840
Immunity	.148**	.004
Knowledge	.325***	.000
Morality	.267***	.000
Female	.005	.809
R²	.763	

** p < .01, *** p < .001

2) Analysis of moderator variable based on Age

In the analysis of a hierarchical regression analysis in the first step, it was found that the age factor tested by the elderly variable influenced the purchasing decision goods or the service. A hierarchical regression analysis was performed in step 2. It was found that, when adding the elderly variables in the second stage, the R² value of the predictive equation increased by 0.023.

The interaction term that was important for the change in the magnitude of Moderation*Elderly, has the coefficient of 0.730; and Rationality*Elderly, has the coefficient of -0.815 at the significance level of .001. This can explain the fact that the elderly are the moderator variable that govern the living behaviors based on sufficiency economy philosophy. It will increase the influence of the Moderation on the decision to purchase goods or services more than the working age group. There is an increase in the rationality of the decision to buy goods or services less than that the working age group. The hypothesis H₂ was also accepted, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Results of the Analysis of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Influence on Purchasing Decisions or Use of Services, with the age as a moderator variable.

Factors	Regression	p-value	Regression	p-value
	Coefficient (β)		Coefficient (β)	
	Model 1		Model 2	
Moderation	.211***	.000	.063	.281
Rationality	.021	.721	.242**	.004
Immunity	.132*	.010	.040	.580
Knowledge	.325***	.000	.356***	.000
Morality	.275***	.000	.331***	.000
Elderly	-.060**	.009	.230**	.003
Model 1 R²	.766			
Moderation*Elderly			.730***	.000
Rationality*Elderly			-.815***	.000
Immunity*Elderly			.140	.417
Knowledge*Elderly			-.122	.412
Morality*Elderly			-.267	.074
Model 2 R²	.788			
ΔR^2	.023			
F change	11.213			

** p < .01, *** p < .001

3) Analysis of moderator variable based on Monthly Income

In the analysis of a hierarchical regression analysis in the first stage revealed that the average income per month was lower than 5,000 baht and income of 25,000-34,999 baht influenced the decision to buy goods or use services. A hierarchical regression analysis was performed in step 2, it was found that, when adding the dummy variables with less than 5,000 baht, the R² value of the predictive equation increased by 0.011.

The interaction term was significant for the change in influence size of Immunity*Income less than 5,000 baht has a coefficient of 0.327 at the significance level of .05; Rationality*Income less than 5,000 baht has a coefficient of -0.321, at the significance level of .05; and Knowledge*Income less than 5,000 baht has a coefficient of -0.382 at the significance level. 01.

It can be explained that the person who earns less than 5,000 baht is a moderator variable that controls living behaviors following economic philosophy and strengthens the influence of Immunity on the purchase of goods or services more than other income earners. But it will influence the Rationality and Use of Knowledge on decision making to purchase products or services less than income earners of other levels, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of the Analysis of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Influence on Purchasing Decisions or Use of Services, with the monthly income as a moderator variable.

Factors	Regression Coefficient (β)	p-value	Regression Coefficient (β)	p-value
	Model 1		Model 2	
Moderation	.198***	.000	.193***	.000
Rationality	.050	.398	.079	.244
Immunity	.137**	.007	.065	.271
Knowledge	.297***	.000	.363***	.000
Morality	.282***	.000	.276***	.000
Income less than 5,000 Baht	-.088**	.007	.248**	.005
Income 5,000 – 14,999 Baht	-.056	.113	-	-
Income 15,000 – 24,999 Baht	-.026	.445	-	-
Income 25,000 – 34,999 Baht	.089	.092	-	-
Model 1 R²	.770			
Moderation*Income less than 5,000 Baht			.028	.843
Rationality*Income less than 5,000 Baht			-.321*	.049
Immunity*Income less than 5,000 Baht			.327*	.018
Knowledge*Income less than 5,000 Bath			-.382**	.002
Morality*Income less than 5,000 Baht			-.019	.903
Model 2 R²			.780	
ΔR^2			.012	
F change			5.643	

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion

Living on the philosophy of sufficiency economy influences purchasing decision. When considering personal factors as a moderator variable, it allowed us to know that individuals with different characteristics in age and income, except gender, have a significant impact on the sufficiency economy philosophy to use in daily life. Santiwong (2007) states that individual purchasing decisions are different depending on motivations, knowledge, personality, and family background. In more details, the elderly people will consider the moderation in making purchasing decisions more than working people. Russell, Bruce & Conahan (2006) studied the economic security of older adults aged 65 years and older, compared with other age groups. It was concluded that the elderly will only spend money on what is needed to live, whether it is food and health care. It is based on the moderation of making the decision to buy goods or services than other age groups. The use of rationality for purchasing goods or services of the elderly is less than the working group. The elderly use life-long experiences instead of using reasons to consider the value and conditions before making a purchasing decision, especially food and beverage. The consumers need effective food control system and serious punishment for providers who sell poor quality foods (Kantamaturapoj, 2018). Unaromlert and Janpla (2014) suggested that the entrepreneurs must be concerned about the principle of general design; it was function that should be considered in psychological function which is a direct benefit to the user.

In addition, considering the average monthly income of each person, it was concluded that the average monthly income was less than 5,000 Baht, this is the lowest income group in this study. They are more likely to make their own buying decisions than those of other income earners. The immunity of sufficiency economy philosophy is prepared to confront the impact and changes that will occur in the near and far future (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2016). Low income people will know how to allocate income and spend money in preparation for future economic and social change. However, lower income earners will consider rationality and use of knowledge less than other income earners. If the relationship between income and education, it can be explained that most low-income people are less educated and therefore use reason to consider value and analyze problems before deciding to do things less than other income earners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a way of living by taking the middle way so that people can live in a self-sufficient way. The living standard of sufficiency economy of the people living in Nakhon Ratchasima was at a moderate or medium level. This shows that the people are not aware of the importance of applying sufficiency economy philosophy. It is likely that some of these people will not be able to adapt or cope with the uncertain economic situation in the future. The decision to purchase a product or service of the residents of the province are moderate as well. This shows that the people are not aware of the importance of value, pricing, easy access, and useful information for making decisions to purchase products and services in all 4 types.

Nevertheless, the results of this study reveal in depth that the personal factors of age and the average income per month encourage the person to apply the philosophy of sufficiency economy to make different decisions to buy goods and services. Older people over 60 are considered to be in the late stages of life. With their experience in living a long life, this group is saturated with spending money on goods and services. In addition, those who have average monthly income less than 5,000 baht are considered low-income groups who are aware of the uncertainty of future economic situations. Therefore, they adhere to the principle of having self-immunity than those with higher income.

The result of this research is that government agencies in various sectors must set a common path to achieve national development goals in line with the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan for sustainable economic development of the country, first by encouraging people to be aware of the importance of applying sufficiency economy philosophy to daily life.

Therefore, the state sector should set guidelines to promote effective integration of the various channels like TV, radio, print media, community leaders, etc., in accordance with the target audience. The approach must be continuous with reviewing or evaluating knowledge and understanding to improve public relations practices. It may also require cooperation from private sector to build cooperation in sustainable economic development of the country.

In this research, we found interesting issues for the next research on the effectiveness of media integration in public relations. In addition, the study of personal factors in terms of gender, age and income per month, may also provide a non-comprehensive conclusion. Therefore, other variables may be selected, such as personal motivation, family parenting, financial status/debt obligations, etc., to make a conclusion about the

implementation of sufficiency economy philosophy of the individual more clearly. The limitation of this research was that the data was collected for the sample of residents in Nakhon Ratchasima only. In the next study, samples from other regions should also be used to represent the ideal population in Thailand.

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