

Exploratory Study of Hedonic Motivation in Food and Grocery Shopping in Thailand

Boonying Kongarchapatara

Abstract—Food and grocery is one of the most important sectors in retail industry as being observed in the top list of global retailers. While many believe that food and grocery shopping is task-oriented and routine, it may be beneficial for retailers to understand the underlying hedonic shopping motivation in this shopping context. This research explored the hedonic motivation in food and grocery stores by adopting previously empirical-tested scale (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). The study found that only two dimensions of the scale significantly impacted on store satisfaction: adventure and role shopping motivations.

Keywords—hedonic motivation, customer satisfaction, food and grocery shopping

I. Introduction

Literature in retail marketing has shown that studies may be broad in terms of their focus of interest, or may pay relatively narrow attention to one specific sector. For instance, some researchers study respondents from across all types of retail (e.g., Arnold & Reynolds, 2012; Baker & Wakefield, 2012; Jones et al., 2006; Kim & Kim, 2008; Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997), while several others focus more specifically on one particular sector, such as fashion apparel (Kang & Johnson, 2007), grocery store (e.g., Gilboa & Rafaeli (2003); Huddleston et al., 2008; Morschette et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2007; Vermeir & Van Kenhove, 2005), and discount retailers (e.g., Carpenter, 2008). These two approaches have their own advantages. The more general-scope studies are superior in the ability to generalize their findings; however, Holbrook (1982) argues that those cross-sector studies may offer less reliability and validity for understanding some specific sectors and/or product categories. Additionally, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) emphasize the importance of different retail settings, such as store formats, product involvement, and shopping situation, which may vary the impacts on shoppers' attitudes and behaviors.

Food and grocery retail is one of the most important retail sectors since it is a key shopping activity which all household are required to perform, and it is likely to occupy a majority of the household shopping expenditure, particularly in the cases of medium to low income families. According to the report of Deloitte's Global Powers of Retailing (2018), many top global ranking retailers, including WalMart, Costco, Aldi, Carrefour, were in the food and grocery sector. Although the food and

grocery shopping (FGS) is considered a major shopping activity, Park et al. (1989) point out that it constitutes a routine type of consumer behavior, performing the same type of tasks repetitively. Hence, FGS can be thought of as a chore or a boring task for people to accomplish. As argued by Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006), customers shopping for groceries tend to have a task-oriented motivation, deriving satisfaction from the outcome of their shopping activities, such as the acquisition of products, services, or information. Consistently, Aylott and Mitchell (1999) found that shoppers associate higher levels of stress with grocery shopping than with any other types of shopping.

It is, therefore, essential and interesting for academics and practitioners to explore the underlying shopping motivation of food and grocery shopping and to find out how to make this type of shopping activity more fun and pleasurable so that consumers will visit stores more often and spend more time and money.

II. Theoretical Background, Research Framework, and Hypotheses

A. Theoretical background

As previously indicated, the food and grocery shopping has been identified in several previous studies as being highly task-oriented or lacking in the fun aspect (e.g., Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2009). However, previous literature has indicated that there are a number of ways to analyze the customers' shopping motivation. In most previous empirical studies, shopping orientation typologies have been identified in two main orientations; nevertheless, they are different depending on the underlying rationales, such as economic shoppers versus recreational shoppers (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980), economic shoppers versus social shoppers (Westbrook & Black, 1985), product-oriented motive versus experiential motives (Dawson et al., 1990), utilitarian shopping value versus hedonic shopping value (Babin et al., 1994), and utilitarian motivational orientation (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2009) versus hedonic shopping motivation (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). In this present study, the emphasis will be on the hedonic shopping motive since it is important for food and grocery retailers to understand this motivation and apply it for their retail store strategies.

Hedonic shopping can be expressed as recreational activities in a retail context. Hedonic shopping may be related to browsing activity (Bloch & Richins, 1983), social

Boonying Kongarchapatara, PhD
College of Management, Mahidol University
Thailand

interaction (Yim et al., 2014), sensory stimulation and learning about new trends (Westbrook & Black, 1985). Social interaction includes communications with family, friends, or even salespeople. Shopping can also represent a need for escape from a routine job (Westbrook & Black, 1985). As a result, “the purchase of goods may be incidental to the experience of shopping. People buy so they can shop, not shop so they can buy” (Langrehr, 1991, p. 428).

The concept of hedonic motivation has been developed in greater detail, accompanying the scale for hedonic value measurement offered in the article of Babin et al. (1994). Subsequently, the scale was further developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003), revealing six dimensions within the hedonic motivation of shoppers. Details of each dimension are briefly summarized as follows:

(a) Adventure shopping motivation refers to shopping for stimulation, adventure, and a feeling of being in another world.

(b) Gratification shopping motivation refers to shopping to relieve stress or a negative mood, and shopping as a special treat for oneself.

(c) Social shopping motivation refers to the enjoyment of shopping with friends or family, and socializing and bonding with others while shopping.

(d) Value shopping motivation refers to shopping motives whereby shoppers seek and enjoy hunting for bargains, special prices, discounts, or promotions. Shoppers view their shopping activities as a “challenge to be conquered” or “a game to be won” (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003, p.81).

(e) Role shopping motivation refers to the enjoyment that shoppers gain from shopping for product for others, especially their friends and family members. For female shoppers, shopping can be an expression of love (cf. Miller, 1998; Otnes & McGrath, 2001).

(f) Idea shopping motivation refers to the motivation to keep updated with the latest products and trends. This dimension is more likely to apply to certain categories, especially apparel fashion, or technology gadgets and devices.

The scale developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) has been empirically tested in various product categories, buying situations, and trade channels, such as fashion apparel (e.g., Kang & Johnson, 2011), retailing stores in general (e.g., Jones et al., 2006), food and non-food retailers (e.g., Wagner & Rudolph, 2010), supercenters and discount retailers (e.g., Carpenter, 2008; Yim et al., 2014). Even though Arnold and Reynolds (2003) have proposed six dimensions of their hedonic motivation scale, none of previous studies has employed the effects of each of the six dimensions on the retail outcomes individually. More over, in the study of the influences of shopping motivations at malls, Baker & Wakefield (2012) focused only on the social shopping dimension, and excluding all other hedonic dimensions.

B. Research framework and hypotheses

Even though many may believe that food and grocery shopping is utilitarian-oriented, a few previous studies have

found that hedonic shopping motivation has effects on shopper behavior in grocery shopping as well. For example, in the study of Yim et al. (2014), the role of hedonic motivation in a supercenter, selling primarily utilitarian products, was found to function similarly to that in a shopping mall setting. Moreover, even with discount stores, Carpenter and Moore (2009) found that the perceptions of hedonic motivation are significantly different among retailers (e.g., the level of hedonic motive among customers at Target is higher than those at WalMart). In practice, it is well observed that today retailers are paying a great deal of high attention to their store management and design in order to enhance shopping enjoyment in the customer experience. This is particularly true, for instance, among specialty food retailers in the United States (e.g., Whole Food Market and Trader Joe’s), or with several upscale supermarkets in Thailand (e.g., Central Food Hall, Gourmet Market, and Villa Market).

Previous literature has illustrated that shopping motives have influences on store satisfaction (e.g., Babin et al., 1994; Babin et al., 2005) and store loyalty, including positive word-of-mouth, and re-patronage intention (Jones et al., 2006). In particular, when customers feel enjoyment with their shopping activities, they are likely to engage more in non-planned purchases, spending more time in, and continuing to patronize the store (Kim & Kim, 2008). With the scale of six-dimension hedonic motivation (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), it is thus hypothesized positive relationships between hedonic shopping motivation and store satisfaction of customer as follows:

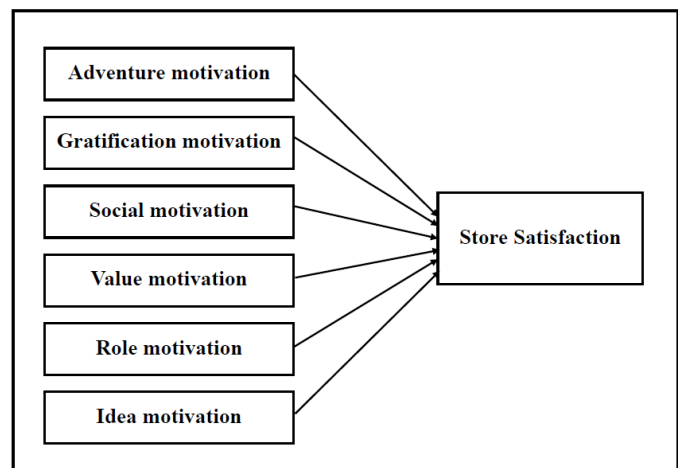


Figure 1. Research framework

H1: Adventure motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

H2: Gratification motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

H3: Social motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

H4: Value motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

H5: Role motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

H6: Idea motivation has a positive relationship with store satisfaction.

III. Research Methodology

In order to examine the hypothesized relationships between hedonic motive and store satisfaction, this present research utilized a cross-sectional correlational study, using survey instrument. The questionnaire was then designed to appropriately measure the variables in focus. This present study adopted the existing scales of previously tested scales for measuring relationships among hypothesized constructs, including shopping motivations, and customer satisfaction. The quantitative analysis was then used to test the hypotheses.

A. Sample and data collection

The population of the study could be anyone in Thailand who purchases fresh food and grocery products for their own and their family’s consumption. As opposed to the Western countries, Thailand is a collectivist culture and most Thai shoppers seem to have low time pressure for shopping activities (Shannon, 2009). Thais are more likely to enjoy spending time wandering around retail stores and this tendency may include food and grocery stores as well.

With a desire of 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the calculated sample size was 385 (Fink, 2003). Eventually, 457 sets of completed questionnaire were received. All of these were rechecked manually for potential errors from the response style and 67 of them were considered unusable. The final number of usable samples was 390, representing a usable rate of 85.3%. This size of sample was considered appropriate for the analysis.

The survey data collection employed face-to-face interviews conducted by trained interviewers. Convenience sampling was adopted. The respondents were approached before or after they had shopped at food and grocery stores. The respondents were required to have experience of shopping for food and grocery products for their own and/or their household consumption.

B. Constructs and measurements

This present study adopted the hedonic shopping motive scales developed by Arnold & Reynolds (2003), consisted of six main dimensions, each of them which included 3 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “Disagree” (1) to “Agree” (5). The dimensions of this hedonic motivation covered adventure shopping, gratification shopping, role shopping, value shopping, social shopping, and idea shopping.

The study also adopted the ‘store satisfaction’ scale used by Huddleston et al. (2008). The respondents’ satisfaction with their most preferred food and grocery store was measured through their responses to the following 3 items: “Compared to other stores, I am very satisfied with this store”; “Based on all my experiences with this store, I am very satisfied”; and “In general, I am satisfied with this store”. Their level of agreement with each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “Disagree” (1) to “Agree” (5).

All survey questions were designed originally in English and were translated into Thai language using the back-

translation method by linguistic experts and re-checked by the retail experts to ensure the face and content validity of the measurement tool. The pre-test of 30 respondents was conducted in order to examine the reliability of scales used in this study. The results of reliability test is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reliability test

Scale	Means	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Gratification Shopping	13.32	3	0.750
Adventure Shopping	12.76	3	0.834
Role Shopping	13.10	3	0.816
Value Shopping	13.46	3	0.823
Social Shopping	13.07	3	0.744
Idea Shopping	11.70	3	0.876
Store Satisfaction	13.23	3	0.798

The six dimensions of hedonic motivation and store satisfaction constructs had Cronbach’s alpha higher than 0.7, showing that the reliability was acceptable.

IV. Results and Discussions

In this section, the sample profile will be described and the results of multiple regression analysis will be presented. Moreover, the recommended strategies as well as direction for future research will be discussed.

A. Sample profile

Of the total of 457 questionnaires collected, only 390 were completed and usable. Of these usable questionnaires, 37.8% were submitted by male respondents (n = 147) and 62.3% by females (n = 242). The ages of the respondents ranged from 15 to 78 years, with a mean age 36.3 years old. With a higher ratio of female to male respondents, this sample tended to be well representative of food and grocery shoppers

Among the respondents in this sample, 15.4% were business owners; 47.3% were employees; 9.8% were government officers; 15.9% were students; and the unemployed and retired groups accounted for 11.3%. In terms of household income, 19.0% of the total sample received less than 25,000 baht (USD.750) per month; 29.5% earned 25,000-50,000 baht (USD.750-1,500) per month; 33.1% received 50,000-100,000 baht (USD.1,500-3,000) per month; and 18.5% earned more than 100,000 baht (USD.3,000) per month. This indicates that a majority of the respondents received middle to upper-middle income.

A majority of respondents (57.7%) were single, while 39.2% were married, and 3.1% were divorced. With regard to the number of people living in their family, the majority of households had 3-4 members. Of the total sample, most participants (60.0%) had no children whereas 22.8% had one child; 14.6% had two children; and 2.6% had 3-4 children.

Regarding their shopping companions, when they went to shop for food and groceries, 56.3% of the respondents shopped with their family members; 11.3% shopped with

friends; and 32.1% shopped alone. In response to being asked about their cooking lifestyle, the majority of the respondents (77.0%) cooked at home.

Lastly, the sample has been found to represent all types of retail store format in Thailand. Among the respondents, 41.3% chose supermarkets as their preferred food and grocery store choice (e.g., Central Food hall, Tops Market, Gourmet, Home Fresh Mart, Villa Market); 45.1% preferred low-priced hypermarkets (e.g., Tesco Lotus, Tesco Extra, Big C, Big C Jumbo and Makro); and only 12.1% selected convenience stores. The remaining 1.5% chose other places.

B. Hypotheses testing results

It is widely known that shopping for fashion products and/or shopping at malls can satisfy the hedonic needs of customers, but for food and grocery shopping activity it is of interest to explore what dimensions of hedonic motivation can have impacts on the shopper satisfaction. The multiple regression analysis was employed by regressing all six dimensions of hedonic scale developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) on the store satisfaction as a dependent variable. The analysis result is presented as follows.

Table 2. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Store Satisfaction		
	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient
Constant	9.726 *	
Gratification Shopping	.017	.020
Adventure Shopping	.166 *	.191 *
Role Shopping	.094 *	.114 *
Value Shopping	.083	.096
Social Shopping	-.095	-.119
Idea Shopping	-.002	-.003
Adjusted r ²	.082	
F-Stat.	5.693 *	

* p-value < .05

As shown in the Table 2, the adjusted R-square was approximately 8.2%. Among the six dimensions of hedonic shopping motivation construct, it was found that only a couple of them were significant factors on store satisfaction. The shopping motivation factors which affected the customer satisfaction were adventure shopping and role shopping. The impacts of these two hedonic motives were positive and their standardized coefficients were .191 and .114, respectively. Thus, only hypotheses H1 and H5 were supported.

C. Discussion and recommendations

As presented in the hypothesis testing results, only two out of six hedonic motivations had significantly positive impacts on store satisfaction: adventure and role shopping motives. In addition, between these two motivations, the adventure one had stronger impact on store satisfaction than the other.

For the adventure shopping, the finding shows a positive relationship between adventure motive and store satisfaction. This may imply that food and grocery shoppers had enjoy with their shopping activity as if they could switch their lives in another world. Retailers should then place more emphasis on store layout design and visual merchandise techniques. Once customers are shopping in their own happy universe, they will be more likely to spend longer time at stores and tend to make more purchases.

For the role shopping motivation which refers to the enjoyment that shoppers gain from shopping products for others, retailers should then focus on their merchandise management by having the appropriate product variety and assortment to fit well with their targeted shoppers. This means retailers need to comprehend the demands of their targeted customers, such as level of product quality and acceptability of national brand products versus private labels. Following this strategy, shoppers will be able to find what they need and seek for their family members and friends. The focus on these two hedonic motives retailers can satisfy food and grocery customers and attract them to repeatedly visit the stores and possibly become a major shopping place for their customers.

It is noted here that other dimensions of hedonic motivation which were found in other previous studies to affect store satisfaction were not statistically significant in this study, including social shopping, role shopping, value shopping, and idea shopping. Nevertheless, it may happen because these dimensions did not significantly affect store satisfaction in the food and grocery shopping context. For instance, customers who seek to hunt for bargains (i.e. discounts, sale promotions) are not particularly satisfied to any one particular store, but they rather tend to shop around at various places to find the better deals for their purchases.

D. Direction for future research

In this present study, the inferential statistics results indicated that only two dimensions of hedonic scale developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) significantly impacted the store satisfaction while the other four dimension were not statistically significant. It should, however, be noted that the scale proposed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) was the one being developed for general merchandise shopping (e.g., fashion products, home products), not for grocery shopping. Hence, future research may need to seek for better understanding of hedonic motivation in food and grocery shopping context and develop a more precise scale particularly for this food and grocery context.

With the importance of the food and grocery retail sector, as evidenced by global retailers selling food and grocery products being among the top global retail stores, it is essential for researchers to discover the underlying motivation of shoppers in this retail sector. Thus, the development of a more accurate and valid scale, using either a qualitative or quantitative approach, designed specifically for the food and grocery shopping would be strongly beneficial to retail

marketers in the development of well-crafted strategies to better serve their targeted shoppers.

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About Author (s):

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