



Motivations and healthy food consumption behaviors among generation Z Students: A case study in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the motivation and consumption behavior related to healthy food among Generation Z university students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. It also explored the relationship between personal factors, motivational drivers, and healthy food consumption behavior. The sample consisted of 400 undergraduate students who had prior experience consuming healthy food. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Chi-square test. The findings revealed that most respondents were female, enrolled in education-related majors, had a monthly expense of 4,001–6,000 baht, and resided in dormitories or apartments. Overall, respondents reported a high level of motivation toward healthy food consumption. The most prominent push motivation was the desire to maintain good health, while the most significant pull motivation was the appeal of reasonable pricing and high-quality ingredients. In terms of behavior, the majority consumed healthy food two to three days per week, mostly at shopping malls. Online platforms were the primary source of information. The main purposes of consumption were health improvement and physical strength. Cleanliness was identified as the most important factor in choosing healthy food, and yogurt was reported as the most frequently consumed product. Hypothesis testing indicated statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) between all personal factors and both types of motivation—push and pull—and healthy food consumption behavior. These findings offer practical insights for entrepreneurs and marketers in developing targeted strategies to effectively meet the needs of Generation Z students.

Keywords: Motivation, Consumption Behavior, Healthy Food, Generation Z Students

1. Introduction

Maintaining good health and physical well-being has become a significant goal for many individuals in the modern era. However, the transition from an agrarian society to an industrialized one has resulted in rapid changes in lifestyles and consumption behaviors, particularly in urban areas. These shifts have contributed to various nutritional problems and health-related conditions (Department of Health, 2023; Kongsap, 2017). At the same time, the global healthy food market is expanding rapidly, with the market value in Thailand exceeding 200 billion baht in 2023, and is expected to continue growing. This growth is driven by increasing health consciousness, concerns over physical appearance, and the country's demographic shift toward an aging society (National Food Institute, 2023).

Among the most influential future consumer segments is Generation Z, defined as those born between 1997 and 2012, totaling over 20 million people in Thailand. In particular, university students aged 20–23 have shown increasing awareness of personal health and nutritional food choices (National Statistical Office, 2023). Gen Z consumers differ from previous generations in that they are more attentive to nutrition, willing to explore new food options, and often purchase products via online platforms. As a result, businesses in the food sector must adapt their offerings to effectively serve this emerging target group.

Nakhon Si Thammarat is the second-largest province in southern Thailand in terms of population and holds the highest number of residents in the region.

The province's service sector grew by 21% in 2023, reflecting strong economic development (Comptroller General's Department, 2024). It also boasts a growing variety of popular healthy food establishments. Given this context, the present study aims to investigate the motivations and consumption behavior of Gen Z university students (aged 20–23) in Nakhon Si Thammarat regarding healthy food. The goal is to generate insights that will support more effective marketing strategies for businesses in the health food sector, enabling them to better meet the needs of this consumer group. Ultimately, such strategies can promote sustainable healthy eating habits among the younger generation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 General Information on Healthy Food

Healthy food refers to food that is rich in nutrients and supports both physical and mental well-being (Inchudet, 2022). It typically contains essential and balanced nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber, while maintaining appropriate levels of sugar, saturated fats, and sodium (Roberfroid, 2002)^[32]. In addition, healthy food includes fresh, natural ingredients and products made from safe sources, with a strong emphasis on plant-based ingredients and plant-derived proteins (Chiangkul, 2022)^[8].

Alkerwi (2014)^[1] proposed that healthy food should encompass three core dimensions: (1) nutritional value, (2) safety, and (3) environmental sustainability. Consuming food that meets all three dimensions promotes holistic well-being and supports long-term planetary health. Regular consumption of healthy food provides numerous health benefits, including the prevention of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and certain types of cancer (Locke *et al.*, 2018)^[20]. It also strengthens the immune system, helps with weight management, supports cognitive function, and improves mood (Inchudet, 2022). In the Thai context, traditional dietary culture has long placed importance on healthy food, emphasizing the use of fresh, natural ingredients and well-balanced seasoning. As a result, Thai cuisine has been inherently beneficial to health (Kongsap, 2017). However, recent shifts in dietary culture—especially among urban populations—have led to increased interest in health-conscious eating, contributing to the growing popularity of the health food market (National Food Institute, 2023). This trend is particularly evident among younger generations such as Gen Y and Gen Z, who are highly attentive to their food choices and nutritional intake (Baker, 2021)^[3]. Therefore, studying the motivations and behaviors related to healthy food consumption among Gen Z consumers is timely and essential. It offers valuable insights for product development and strategic marketing aligned with the specific needs of this emerging consumer group, which aligns closely with the objectives of this study.

2.2 Concepts and Theories of Motivation

Motivation is defined as an internal driving force that stimulates individuals to engage in behavior aimed at achieving specific goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). It can be derived from internal factors such as needs, interests, and values, or external factors such as incentives, rewards, and persuasion (Phutachot, 2016)^[30]. Understanding motivation is essential, as it helps explain the psychological drivers behind human behavior, which can be strategically applied in consumer-focused marketing (Gong *et al.*, 2016)^[12]. One of

the most widely recognized theories in the study of motivation is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), which categorizes human needs into five ascending levels: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. These needs guide individual behavior and decision-making, including purchasing choices. In a similar vein, Alderfer's ERG Theory (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973)^[34] condenses Maslow's five levels into three core categories: existence, relatedness, and growth.

In the context of consumption behavior, motivation can be broadly categorized into two types. Intrinsic motivation originates from internal satisfaction, personal interest, or emotional fulfillment, whereas extrinsic motivation stems from external stimuli such as social recognition, rewards, or media influence (Ryan & Deci, 2000)^[3]. Yuan and McDonald (1990)^[41] described these as push and pull factors—where push factors represent internal psychological motivations, and pull factors represent external appeals or influences. With regard to healthy food consumption, Bennett and Tschirgi (2021)^[4] identified various intrinsic motivators such as the satisfaction of maintaining good health, pride in making healthy choices, and positive beliefs and attitudes toward health food. Extrinsic motivators include social support, exposure to nutritional information through media and advertising, and tangible rewards such as promotions or loyalty points. These diverse motivational sources—both intrinsic and extrinsic—interact to shape consumption behavior. Therefore, exploring the motivations that influence Generation Z consumers to adopt healthy eating habits is especially valuable. It offers important insights into how health-related goals, psychological preferences, and environmental cues influence their choices—insights that can guide product development and marketing strategies tailored to this influential consumer segment.

2.3 Concepts and Theories of Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior refers to the actions and decision-making processes individuals undertake in selecting, purchasing, using, and evaluating products or services to satisfy their needs and desires (Solomon, 2020)^[36]. The study of consumer behavior encompasses various dimensions, including what consumers buy, why they buy, when and where they buy, how often they purchase or use a product, and how they evaluate their experiences. It also considers how post-purchase evaluation influences future buying decisions (Armstrong *et al.*, 2018)^[18]. One of the widely accepted models is that of Blackwell *et al.* (2001)^[5], which outlines a seven-step decision-making process: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, consumption, post-purchase evaluation, and disposal. Another practical framework is the 6W1H model (Kotler & Armstrong, 2003)^[18], which uses seven guiding questions—Who, What, When, Where, Why, Whom, and How—to investigate consumer behavior systematically. Additionally, the five-stage model of the consumer decision-making process, which includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior, is also widely used in marketing theory and practice (Kotler & Keller, 2016)^[19]. These theories suggest that consumer behavior is a complex process influenced by both internal and external factors. These factors shape consumers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and ultimately, their purchasing decisions. Studying the consumer behavior of Generation Z with regard to healthy

food provides deeper insights into the specific needs and values of this cohort—especially their growing concern for health and wellness. Their consumption preferences and purchasing patterns often differ from those of previous generations. Understanding these differences is essential for developing products and marketing strategies that align with

Gen Z's lifestyle and expectations. As such, this research has significant implications for the health food industry, offering practical knowledge that can be used to design more effective marketing approaches.

Based on the literature review, the observable variables and their operational definitions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Observable Variables and Definitions

Variable	Component	Indicator	Source
Motivation for Healthy Food Consumption	Push Motivation	Internal psychological motivation arising from interest, satisfaction, or personal feelings	Ryan & Deci (2000) ^[3] , Yuan & McDonald (1990) ^[41]
Motivation for Healthy Food Consumption	Pull Motivation	External motivation triggered by environmental stimuli	Ryan & Deci (2000) ^[3] , Yuan & McDonald (1990) ^[41]
Healthy Food Consumption Behavior	6W1H Consumer Behavior Theory	Analyzing consumer behavior using seven guiding questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, Whom, and How	Kotler & Armstrong (2003) ^[18]

2.4 Development of Hypotheses and Related Studies

1. The Relationship Between Personal Factors and Healthy Food Consumption Behavior:

Previous studies have shown that various personal factors—such as gender, educational level, field of study, income, and living arrangements—are significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior among university students. Research suggests that females, individuals with higher education or income levels, students in health-related disciplines, and those living with their families tend to demonstrate more frequent healthy food consumption (Unkaew, 2022; Suwannapanich, 2012; Bunchoochuay, 2016; Phonphornsakviwat, 2017; Methaphattana, 2017; Mooljai *et al.*, 2023; Yanti & Uttarachai, 2020)^[37, 25, 38].

2. The Relationship Between Motivation and Healthy Food Consumption Behavior:

Regarding the link between motivation and healthy food consumption, several studies have confirmed the relevance of push and pull motivational theories in explaining consumer behavior. Push factors refer to internal motivations such as the desire for better health, while pull factors represent external influences such as perceived benefits, advertising, brand image, and media trends. Both types

of motivation have been found to significantly influence healthy food consumption, including among Generation Z students (Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Chansaenroj *et al.*, 2022; Hsieh & Chang, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2003; Zhu *et al.*, 2020)^[41, 7, 13].

3. Factors Influencing Healthy Food Consumption Behavior:

Synthesizing previous research findings reveals that key factors influencing healthy food choices include health knowledge and awareness, media and social influence, price and accessibility, income level, and educational attainment. These studies have explored consumer behavior across multiple dimensions—such as frequency of consumption, expenditure, purchase location, motivations for purchasing, and consumption patterns (Siriphon, 2019; Phirattanon, 2022; Wangniyom *et al.*, 2020; Phlupratch, 2020; Lueamsaisuk & Phuechphol, 2018; Jaipanont *et al.*, 2023; Phraekhao, 2021)^[35, 39, 21, 15].

Based on the literature reviewed, this study proposes a conceptual framework for investigating the motivations and healthy food consumption behavior of Generation Z students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, as illustrated in Figure 1.

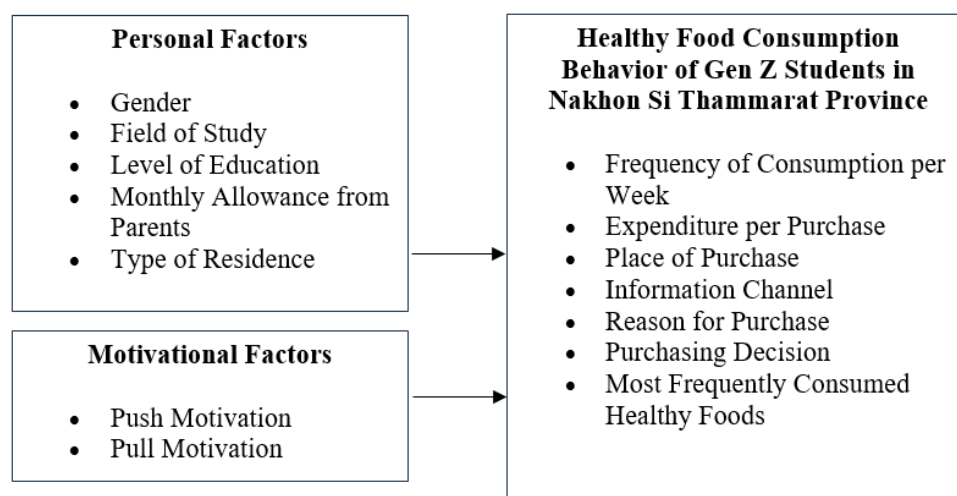


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The findings from the reviewed literature provided a theoretical foundation for identifying relevant variables and formulating research hypotheses concerning the influence of

personal factors, push motivations, and pull motivations on the healthy food consumption behavior of Generation Z university students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. These

insights support the development of targeted and effective strategies to promote healthy eating that align with the contextual needs of this consumer group. Based on this foundation, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1(H1): Personal factors are significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior.

Hypothesis 2(H2): Motivations for healthy food consumption (push and pull) are significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the motivations and healthy food consumption behaviors of Generation Z university students aged 20 to 23 who are currently pursuing undergraduate degrees in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province and have prior experience consuming healthy food. A quota sampling technique was applied to recruit participants from eight higher education institutions across the province. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula (1977), based on a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 0.05, and a proportion estimate of 0.5 as the population parameter (Machin *et al.*, 2018) [22]. This resulted in a required sample size of 385. To ensure completeness and account for potential non-responses, the final sample was expanded to 400 participants. The study focused on two sets of independent variables: personal factors—including gender, field of study, level of education, monthly expenses, and type of residence—and motivational factors, which were categorized as push and pull motivations. The dependent variable was healthy food consumption behavior, which was assessed across seven key dimensions: frequency of consumption, expenditure, place of purchase, information channel, reason for choosing, purchasing behavior, and the most frequently consumed types of healthy food.

3.2 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, developed based on an extensive review of relevant theories, concepts, and previous research. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section addressed personal factors through closed-ended checklist questions. The second section measured motivations for healthy food consumption using a five-point Likert rating scale. The third section assessed healthy food consumption behavior through multiple-choice, closed-ended questions. To ensure the quality of the instrument, both content validity and reliability were evaluated. Content validity was assessed using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index, reviewed by three subject-matter experts. Only items with an IOC value of **0.5** or higher were retained. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with values equal to or greater than **0.67** considered acceptable. Data collection was conducted using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through online questionnaires administered via Google Forms, targeting the selected sample group. Secondary data were gathered from relevant academic books, journal articles, theses, and official documents.

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

The data were analyzed using SPSS, a statistical software package. Two types of statistics were employed. Descriptive

statistics were used to analyze personal factors and consumption behavior through frequencies and percentages, while levels of motivation were analyzed using means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics were applied to test the research hypotheses. Specifically, Chi-square tests were used to examine the relationships between personal factors, motivational factors (both push and pull), and healthy food consumption behavior. The findings from the analysis are intended to guide strategic marketing efforts aimed at promoting healthy eating behavior among Generation Z university students in the target area.

4. Research Results

4.1 General Information of the Respondents

The demographic analysis of the 400 respondents revealed the following characteristics. The majority were female (76.50%) and most were enrolled in the Faculty of Education (31.00%). The largest proportion of participants were fourth-year students (27.75%). Regarding monthly expenses received from parents, the most common range was between 4,001 and 6,000 baht (30.75%). In terms of living arrangements, most students reported residing in dormitories, apartments, or condominiums (64.75%), as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	94	23.50
	Female	306	76.50
	Total	400	100.00
Field of Study	Management, Business, Accounting	93	23.25
	Medicine and Nursing	73	18.25
	Law	32	8.00
	Engineering	26	6.50
	Education	124	31.00
	Political Science and Social Science	39	9.75
	Others	13	3.25
	Total	400	100.00
Year of Study	Year 1	91	22.75
	Year 2	96	24.00
	Year 3	102	25.50
	Year 4	111	27.75
	Total	400	100.00
Monthly Allowance from Parents (in Baht)	Less than 3,000	64	16.00
	3,001–4,000	62	15.50
	4,001–6,000	123	30.75
	6,001–8,000	102	25.50
	8,001–10,000	27	6.75
	More than 10,000	22	5.50
	Total	400	100.00
Type of Residence	Own house	128	32.00
	Dormitory, Apartment, or Condominium	259	64.75
	Others	13	3.25
	Total	400	100.00

4.2 Motivation for Healthy Food Consumption

The overall motivation for healthy food consumption among Generation Z students was found to be at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.13$). Specifically, push motivation scored the highest ($\bar{X} = 4.33$), reflecting strong internal drivers such as the desire to

maintain good health, reduce the risk of illness, and control body weight. Meanwhile, pull motivation was rated at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.94$), with key external influences including the

perceived balance between price and ingredient quality, as well as the impact of online media, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Motivation for Healthy Food Consumption among Generation Z Students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province

Motivation Type	Item	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	S.D.
Push Motivation	1. To achieve good health and physical strength	4.52	0.68
	2. To reduce the risk of disease	4.50	0.65
	3. To control body weight and maintain a good figure	4.32	0.79
	4. To improve skin complexion and radiance	4.17	0.85
	5. To nourish the brain and enhance memory	4.15	0.84
	Overall	4.33	0.55
Pull Motivation	1. Influenced by rising public awareness of health issues	4.11	0.91
	2. Influenced by athletes or celebrities promoting health through sports	3.74	0.94
	3. Influenced by influencers consuming or endorsing health food	3.73	0.98
	4. Influenced by social media bloggers cooking healthy meals	3.85	0.95
	5. Influenced by reviews or expert opinions	4.07	0.92
	6. Attracted by the reasonable balance of price and ingredient quality	4.12	0.80
	Overall	3.94	0.68

4.3 Healthy Food Consumption Behavior

The analysis of healthy food consumption behavior among respondents revealed the following patterns. Most participants consumed healthy food two to three days per week (48.50%) and typically spent 101–200 baht per meal (48.50%). The most common places of purchase were fresh markets or local street markets (39.25%), and the primary

source of information was online media (77.50%). The main reason cited for choosing healthy food was to maintain good health (48.75%), while cleanliness was the most important factor influencing food selection (39.50%). Among the types of food consumed, yogurt was reported as the most frequently consumed item (27.25%), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Healthy Food Consumption Behavior among Generation Z Students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province

Behavioral Category	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Healthy Food Consumption per Week	Once a week	51	12.75
	2–3 days per week	194	48.50
	5 days per week	41	10.25
	Daily	36	9.00
	Occasionally	78	19.50
	Total	400	100.00
Spending per Purchase (in Baht)	Less than 100	76	19.00
	101–200	194	48.50
	201–300	88	22.00
	301–400	25	6.25
	401–500	12	3.00
	More than 500	5	1.25
	Total	400	100.00
Place of Purchase	Department stores, shopping centers	119	29.75
	Food delivery apps	40	10.00
	Fresh markets, night markets	157	39.25
	On-campus stores	21	5.25
	Convenience stores	60	15.00
	Others	3	0.75
	Total	400	100.00
Information Channel for Healthy Food	Television	36	9.00
	Online media	310	77.50
	Print media	4	1.00
	Health food retailers	48	12.00
	Others	2	0.50
	Total	400	100.00
Reason for Choosing Healthy Food	Weight control / Obesity-related concern	107	26.75
	To maintain good health	195	48.75
	To enhance physical appearance	75	18.75
	Influence from health-conscious celebrities	22	5.50
	Others	1	0.25
	Total	400	100.00
Primary Factor in Purchasing Healthy Food	Food cleanliness	158	39.50
	Nutritional value and content	141	35.25
	Appearance of the food	29	7.25
	Price and value	59	14.75

Most Frequently Consumed Healthy Food	Reward points	8	2.00
	Packaging	4	1.00
	Brand	1	0.25
	Total	400	100.00
	Clean food and snacks	75	18.75
	Plant-based / Vegan	4	1.00
	Yogurt	109	27.25
	Organic / Local vegetables	102	25.50
	Smoothies or fresh fruit juices	60	15.00
	Alternative health food products	48	12.00
	Others	2	0.50
	Total	400	100.00

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The results of Hypothesis 1 testing indicated that personal factors—including gender, field of study, year of study, monthly expenses, and type of residence—were significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior ($p < 0.05$).

For Hypothesis 2, the findings showed that both push and pull motivations for healthy food consumption were also significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior ($p < 0.05$), as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Research Hypothesis	Result
H1: Personal factors are associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	
H1.1 Gender is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H1.2 Field of study is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H1.3 Year of study is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H1.4 Monthly allowance from parents is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H1.5 Type of residence is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H2: Motivation is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	
H2.1 Push motivation is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted
H2.2 Pull motivation is associated with healthy food consumption behavior.	Accepted

This study aimed to examine the motivations and consumption behaviors related to healthy food among Generation Z university students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, as well as to explore the relationships between personal factors, motivational drivers, and healthy food consumption behavior. The key findings can be summarized as follows:

Regarding the general characteristics of the sample, most respondents were female, enrolled in the Faculty of Education, and in their fourth year of study. Their monthly allowance from parents typically ranged between 4,001 and 6,000 baht, and the majority lived in dormitories, apartments, or condominiums. In terms of motivation, the overall level of motivation for healthy food consumption was high ($\bar{X} = 4.13$). Push motivation was rated at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.33$), driven by the desire for good health, disease prevention, and weight control. Pull motivation was also rated at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.94$), influenced primarily by the balance of price and ingredient quality and the impact of online media. As for healthy food consumption behavior, the

majority of respondents consumed healthy food two to three days per week, with an average expenditure of 101–200 baht per occasion. They preferred to purchase from fresh markets, street markets, or community-based venues and primarily received information about healthy food through online media. The main reason for consuming healthy food was to improve health and physical strength, with cleanliness identified as the most important factor in food selection. Yogurt was reported as the most frequently consumed health food.

Hypothesis testing revealed that all examined personal factors—gender, field of study, academic year, monthly allowance, and type of residence—were significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior at the 0.05 level. Both push and pull motivations were also significantly associated with healthy food consumption behavior at the same level of statistical significance. In conclusion, Generation Z university students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province place considerable importance on healthy eating. Their behavior is shaped by both internal motivations—such as the desire to stay healthy—and external factors including quality, price, and media influence. These personal and motivational factors are significantly related to their purchasing decisions and patterns of healthy food consumption. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for health food businesses to develop product strategies and marketing communication approaches that are aligned with the needs, motivations, and behavioral tendencies of this influential consumer group.

5. Discussion

The findings on the healthy food consumption behavior of Generation Z students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province are consistent with established consumer behavior theories (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001; Kotler & Armstrong, 2003) [5, 18], which suggest that consumption behavior is a complex process influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. The students in this study typically consumed healthy food two to three times per week, which reflects the time constraints associated with their fast-paced lifestyles. Their spending per meal generally fell within the 101–200 baht range, indicating typical budget limitations among students. Most preferred to purchase healthy food from supermarkets and community markets, which offer both convenience and variety. Online media emerged as the primary source of information due to its accessibility and alignment with the digital lifestyles of this demographic (Kotler & Keller, 2016) [19]. In choosing healthy food, the participants placed primary importance on health and physical strength, in line with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which identifies health and safety as fundamental human needs. Cleanliness was the

most emphasized factor in their food selection, a growing concern among consumers in recent years (Alkerwi, 2014)^[1]. Yogurt was the most frequently consumed item, likely due to its convenience, availability, and nutritional value (Roberfroid, 2002)^[32].

The relationship between personal factors and healthy food consumption behavior in this study aligns with previous research, which found significant associations between gender, field of study, academic year, financial resources, and type of residence, and students' dietary choices (Unkaew, 2022; Suwannapanich, 2012; Bunchochuay, 2016; Phonphornsakviwat, 2017)^[37, 38]. These factors influence students' knowledge, interest, and capability to make health-conscious food choices. Similarly, the observed relationship between motivation and consumption behavior supports the push and pull motivation framework, as previously identified in the literature (Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Chansaenroj *et al.*, 2022; Hsieh & Chang, 2020)^[41, 7, 13]. Internal drivers such as the desire for good health serve as major motivational forces, while external factors like product quality and marketing communication act as effective pull factors, encouraging Generation Z students to choose healthy food more frequently.

Overall, the findings highlight the significant relationships among personal factors, motivation, and healthy food consumption behavior among Generation Z students in the study area. These students exhibit a growing awareness of healthy eating, driven by both intrinsic desires and extrinsic influences. Their consumption behavior reflects unique patterns tied to their lifestyle and situational constraints as university students. These insights have practical implications for the development of targeted marketing strategies in the health food sector, enabling businesses to more effectively connect with and meet the needs of Generation Z consumers.

5.1 Practical Recommendations

1. Segment the market by gender and tailor products and communications to meet gender-specific needs. For example, marketing for female consumers could emphasize benefits related to physical appearance and skincare, while products for male consumers could highlight energy enhancement and muscle-building benefits. Such differentiation would improve the effectiveness of targeting and engagement with each segment.
2. Incorporate students' fields of study into niche marketing strategies by designing products and messages aligned with the knowledge, awareness, and behavioral patterns of each academic discipline. This approach ensures that marketing initiatives address the distinct preferences and levels of health consciousness across student groups.
3. Utilize social media platforms as the primary communication channel, emphasizing accessible, engaging, and lifestyle-relevant content. As Generation Z frequently relies on digital platforms for information related to health and lifestyle, targeted and interactive digital campaigns are essential for driving engagement.
4. Develop pricing and distribution strategies that match students' purchasing power and convenience. This may include offering affordable pricing tiers, student-exclusive promotions, and strategically locating distribution points near student residences or university campuses to ease access and stimulate purchase

decisions.

5. Design health food products that prioritize convenience, speed, and portability, which are well-suited to the lifestyles of students living in dormitories, apartments, or condominiums. Additionally, clear packaging and benefit-oriented messaging should be emphasized to attract attention and accommodate students' fast-paced purchasing behavior.
6. Leverage both push and pull motivation strategies by communicating compelling health benefits, offering attractive promotional incentives, and ensuring accessibility through diverse distribution channels. These combined strategies can enhance regular and spontaneous healthy food consumption among Generation Z students.
7. Enhance the credibility of pull motivation strategies by delivering clear and accurate information from qualified health and nutrition experts. Engaging content should be disseminated via online platforms and relevant influencers to build brand awareness and trust among Generation Z consumers.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

1. Expand the scope of the sample to include not only university students but also consumers from other age groups, both within and outside of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. This broader sampling would enhance the diversity of data and increase the generalizability and practical application of the findings for the development of the health food industry.
2. Investigate additional psychological variables that may influence motivation and healthy food consumption behavior, such as attitudes, risk perception, health beliefs, and personal values. Exploring these deeper psychological constructs could provide clearer insights into the internal decision-making processes of consumers.
3. Include economic-related factors in future studies, such as perceived value in relation to price, or purchasing trends based on income level. This information could be used to develop health food products and services that align more closely with consumers' financial considerations and perceptions of affordability.
4. Adopt a mixed-methods research design by integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Supplementing surveys with in-depth interviews or focus group discussions would allow for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of consumer behavior and motivation, capturing both statistical trends and the underlying meanings behind choices.

6. Conclusion

The findings highlight the significant relationships among personal factors, motivation, and healthy food consumption behavior among Generation Z students in the study area. These students exhibit a growing awareness of healthy eating, driven by both intrinsic desires and extrinsic influences. Their consumption behavior reflects unique patterns tied to their lifestyle and situational constraints as university students. These insights have practical implications for the development of targeted marketing strategies in the health food sector, enabling businesses to more effectively connect with and meet the needs of Generation Z consumers.

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