

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Coffee, the unique tasting and aromatic beverage, is the favorite drink for many people worldwide. The word *coffee* comes from the Arab word *qahwah* which means stimulating or invigorating. How it was introduced into Arabia is not known, but there is a well-known legend about the origin of coffee. Before 800 A.D. in Ethiopia, 'Kladi,' a goat herder, watched his flock eat the bright red berries from a wild evergreen bush—and was subsequently amazed to see the animals leap about with wild abandon. He tried some of the berries himself, and soon he was leaping as well (Ray & Ksir, 1996, p. 292).

With its stimulating qualification, it was not long before such a drink spread across Arabia, Egypt, North African, and around the Mediterranean into Turkey. "Everyone who tried coffee wanted more—and if they were travelers, they wanted to take it home with them. With lightning speed, coffee became a valuable trading product and spread throughout the world: first to Turkey, then to Italy and France, and finally to the rest of Europe by the mid-seventeenth century." (Cherniske, 1998, p.14)

Coffee, therefore, had gradually spread into Western communities. The first 'Coffee house' or 'Café' was opened in Istanbul in 1475. Later, the first English coffee house opened in Oxford in 1650, and the concept soon spread throughout England. The coffee houses were referred to as 'schools of the cultured,' and coffee was 'the milk of chess players and thinkers.' Along with coffee, this intellectual tradition associated with coffee houses soon spread across Europe (โจเซฟ สกอลสวอธ, 2549).

In Thailand, by the record of Mr. Jerini (พระสารสาสน์พลขันธ์), it stated that the coffee plant began since Ayutthaya period but it only started to become known during the reign of King Rama III. The word coffee in Thai, 'กาแฟ' (Ka-Fae), was recorded on Dr.Braddley's book in หนังสืออรรถาธิบายศัพท์ in the late 18th century. However, it has become known since the plant of coffee trees by Mr.DeeMoon, a Muslim Thai, at

Songkla province. Coffee at that time was called 'Ko-Pee' or 'O-Leang.' During the reign of King Rama VI, the Thai coffee house named 'No-Ra-Sing' was established from the influence of western culture (วลัยพร สดสว่าง, 2548).

Coffee has played a major role in Thai society recently. Since 1997, the emergence of western coffee houses, such as Starbucks, has affected Thai consumers strongly. From 10-baht per cup, coffee houses can earn more than 100 baht a cup. The success of Starbucks in Thailand has accelerated the coffee business in the Thai market.

While the growth of the coffee market is rising continuously, the concern about the side effect of coffee towards human health is criticized. Many research studies that even though caffeine in coffee can cause some health concerns such as headache, stress, or malnutrition, coffee is still a favorite drink for many Thai consumers.

Water is central to many bodily functions including circulation, digestion and elimination of waste. Water is also a natural blood thinner since it makes up the majority of our blood. It composes 95% of the plasma component of the blood which comprises around 55% of the total blood volume. Thus, when the body does not receive enough water, blood loses its fluidity as water is drawn out of the blood. This increased blood viscosity leads a person to feel more tired and sluggish. Therefore, it is suggested that everyone drink about 8-10 cups of water per day. This will maintain the balance of the body's system (สมศักดิ์ วรคามิน, 2546).

According to the Kasikorn Reserch Center, it forecasts that the amount of coffee products in Thailand in 2007 will be 25,600 million baht, which is higher than the amount in 2006 of 6.7% while the growth of the amount of water is 13,000 million baht, which has a growth rate of 3%. This data indicates that Thai consumers prefer to drink coffee more than just plain water.

Although drinking coffee will lead to some health problems such as stroke, and high blood pressure, many Thai people still crave to drink it. Furthermore, as coffee drinking, in some sense, has been regarded as 'mature', 'modern', 'business like' or with 'classes', it is interesting to know whether or not some Thai people hold such beliefs. This research has the hypotheses that most Thai people love to drink coffee,

which could cause some health problems, more than water, which is cheaper and more health-concerned.

To explore the reason why people love to drink coffee, the theory of reasoned action by Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein has been referred to in this research. The theory is based on the assumption that people use the information available to them in a reasonable manner to arrive at their decisions. However, this is not to say that their behavior will always be reasonable or appropriate from an objective point-of-view.

Furthermore, the trend of coffee drinking in Thailand might represent some symbols which Thai people have the same meaning in their perception. The Symbolic Interactionism by Herbert Blumer is mentioned to explain this phenomenon as well. People act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation. For example, the wearing of yellow T-shirts on the 60th anniversary of the reign of His Majesty the King is a social interaction that Thai people interpret to the respect and loyalties of Thai people toward their beloved King.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the rising popularity of coffee drinking among Thai people as well as the perception of health concerns about caffeine in coffee is contrasting, it is interesting to study the perception of coffee drinking among Thai employees—focusing on 10 private companies. This study focuses on one main question and two sub questions as follows:

- 1.2.1 What is the reason Thai consumers used to decide to drink coffee more than water?
- 1.2.2 What are the characteristics of people who drink coffee and those who don't drink coffee?
- 1.2.3 What is the perception of Thai people towards drinking coffee and water?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Main Objective

1. To explore reasons that Thai consumers used to decide to drink coffee or water.

1.3.2 Sub-Objective

1. To describe characteristics of people who drink coffee and those who do not drink coffee; and

2. To assess people's perception about drinking coffee and water

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.4.1 From the Collins Cobuild Learner's Dictionary (1998), the word coffee means a hot brown drink that you make by pouring boiling water onto ground roasted coffee beans, or onto instant coffee powder.

1.4.2 Coffee in this study includes all types of coffee: instant coffee, roasted coffee, and canned coffee. Coffee here also means drinks containing caffeine which relieve sleepiness. The size of coffee in the questionnaire means the middle size cup which contains 12-14 oz or 360 or 420 cc per cup.

1.4.3 The conceptual and operational definitions as well as the indicators of variables of the study were provided in the table below.

Table 1. Definition of Variables

Variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Indicator
<u>Independent variable</u>			
Educational background	Formal education a person has	A person's schooling at an academic institution	Diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate degree
Occupation	A work that a person does for a living	The position that a person holds in line of managerial aspect	Assistant staff, Senior, Sales, Manager, etc.
Income	The money that a person earns from work	The monthly monetary gain from all sources of work	0-5,000 Baht, 5,001-10,000 Baht, 10,001-20,000 Baht, 20,001-30,000 Baht

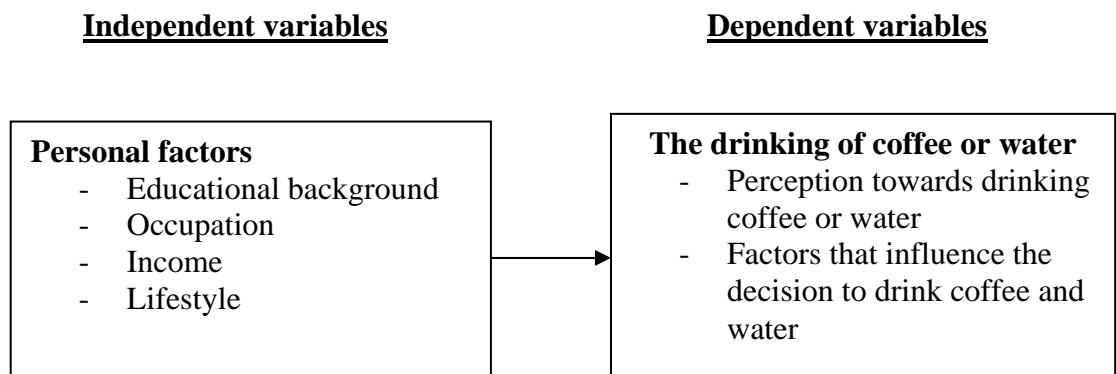
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Table 1. (continued)

Lifestyle	The way in which a person lives and works	Activities that a person often does in their life	Working, staying home, eating out, reading, drinking etc.
<u>Dependent variable</u>			
Perception about water or coffee	A person's understanding and thought about water and coffee	A feeling a person has about water and coffee	Strongly disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly agree

Variables

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of why coffee not water



1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The target population is the employees at 10 private companies follows

1. Toyota Motor Thailand Ltd.
2. Adidas Thailand
3. Bangkok Insurance Public Co Limited
4. CP Seven Eleven Corporation
5. Evergreen Shipping Agency (Thailand) Co., Ltd
6. Scenario Company Limited
7. Loxley Public Company Limited
8. Thai Union Manufacturing

9. Sumitomo Corporation Thailand Limited

10. Claoride Thailand Limited

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study will be guidelines to understand the perception of Thai people about drinking coffee. The results of the study will raise the awareness of Thai people to the appropriate amount of coffee they should consume.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study of why coffee not water in this paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction. The background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the definitions of terms as well as the objectives, the scope, the significance, and the organization of the study are described in this chapter.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review that covers theoretical and basic concepts for the study and related research studies.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this study, consisting of the subjects of the study, instrument of data collection, procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 deals with the results of the data analysis which give the general background, the factor that affects the behavior of drinking coffee or water, and the perception of drinking coffee or water.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.