

## A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF BENEFITS AND ROLE MODELS AS THE DRIVERS OF MODERATE CONSUMPTION

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**Abstract:** Moderation or consuming less is a way to alleviate the global warming problem. It is the intent of this study to gain an understanding of the influencers of moderation in order to motivate people to be moderate. Four focus group interviews, equal in number with eight adults in each group living in Bangkok were carried out. The participants were amix between moderate consumers and non-moderate consumers as well as the those that were willing to pay a higher price for the more durable products and those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products. The results indicated many drivers of motivation. However, the major of the motivators of moderation were benefits and role models. The benefits included investment, buying big-ticket items, and having money for future emergencies. The role models were parents, elder sisters, King Bhumibhol, companies and governments. The reasons that people were non-moderate consumers were desirability, marketing efforts, including sales and promotions, comparison with friends, fashion and the financial situation. The consumers tended to pay a higher price for more durable products mainly because of the value for the money. Those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products had many reasons, including getting bored with the same old things, planned obsolescence, seeking variety, following the fashion, and price sensitivity.

**Keywords:** Moderate consumption, Non-moderate consumption, Willingness to pay more, Unwillingness to pay more, Benefits, Role models

### INTRODUCTION

Many problems have been associated with the pursuit of growth through consumption, but one that is not often considered is that the economy is a sub system of the biosphere. That is, all of the inputs into the economy come from the environment. By the same token, all of the waste produced returns to the environment, and as the economy expands, more materials and energy are consumed and more waste is emitted. However, this process cannot go on forever, as many resources are finite. A sub system cannot grow larger than the system that contains it. It is common knowledge that the economy in the world today is

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placing an excessive burden on the biosphere, and we simply cannot continue to consume at the current rate; if we do, we will use up the planet's natural resources and overwhelm its capacity to absorb waste. For example, we are cutting forests faster than they can grow back and emitting carbon dioxide faster than it can be absorbed by the oceans and forests, and although people may think that we can behave in this way for a short time, we will ultimately deplete the resources on which our economies and societies depend. This environmental problem made worse by the overpopulation of the world—many people hope that green technology will allow us to continue our gross consumption without environmental harm, but unfortunately, the rate of the development of green technology is far behind the growth of consumption. Therefore, moderate consumption seems to be a good solution for alleviating the environmental problems connected with consumption. In order to promote moderate consumption, we have to have an understanding of the consumption process. Thus, it is the intent of this study to explore the factors that affect moderate consumption, especially in terms of its benefits and the role models for moderate consumption, in contrast to the factors affecting non-moderate consumption. Additionally, the determinants of the willingness to pay a higher price for more durable products in contrast to the determinants of being unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products are also investigated.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Benefits Drive Action**

According to Andreasen (1995), in order to make behavioural changes more rewarding, it is necessary to make people perceive that they are getting good benefits at the least possible cost. If people feel that they are getting large benefits at a small cost, behavioural change can take place more easily and they will think that such behavioural change is worthwhile. Change is also likely to occur if people feel that new behaviour will bring about benefits that are greater than those they are currently receiving. This may seem clear on the surface, but the way in which those benefits are viewed and the way that the target audience views them may differ drastically. That is, what we see as an obvious benefit of a behaviour may be unimportant to others, and they may be far more interested in something we regard as unimportant. Change can bring about either short-term or long-term benefits, or both, and sometimes the benefits are not received by the person making the change at all, but by others—one's family for example, or a particular group of people—even the society as a whole. Long-term benefits are often focused on by health and community activists and often the benefits to larger groups are focused on. Individuals on the other hand may be more interested in the immediate benefits for themselves or the people close to them. However, people may simply not know about all the possible benefits of changing their behaviour.

### **Role Models Drive Behaviour**

Bandura's social learning theory asserts that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Children for example observe the people around them behaving in various ways (Bandura and Ross, 1961). The individuals that are observed are called behaviourmodels, and in society children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents, the characters on TV, and friends and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behaviour that is observed and imitated; for example a male will model his behaviour on the male model, etc. Children normally pay close attention to their surrounding environment, and this includes the people they see as models, and their behaviour in imitation of these models then becomes "encoded" in their behaviour. They will then exhibit the behaviour that they have observed, whether the "gender appropriate" or not. There are a number of processes that make it more likely that a child will behave as the society deems it appropriate for his or her sex. First, the child is more likely imitate the people that he or she perceives as similar to him/herself. Consequently, it is more likely that a child will model a person of his or her sex. Second, the people around the child will respond with either reinforcement or punishment. If the child's behaviour is rewarded, the child is likely to continue the behaviour. If parent sees a little girl consoling her dog and says "what a gooddoggy you are," this will make it likely that she will repeat the behaviour. That is, her behaviour has been reinforced (i.e. strengthened). Such reinforcement can be external or internal, and can be positive or negative. If a child wants approval from his or her parents or peers, this is a type of external reinforcement. On the other hand, being happy when approval is given is a type of internal reinforcement. In the end, a child will seek approval because children inherently desire approval. In order for external reinforcement to have an impact, whether it is positive or negative, it has to match an individual's needs. Although reinforcement can be positive or negative, the important thing to bear in mind is that it will usually lead to a change in a person's behaviour. Third, the child will also take into consideration how other people react when deciding to copy someone's behaviour; that is, a person learns by observing the consequences of another person's (i.e. models) behaviour. For example, a younger brother observing an older one being rewarded for a certain behaviour is more likely to repeat that behaviour himself. This is known as vicarious reinforcement and is related to the attachment to specific models that possess qualities that are seen as rewarding. Children will identify with a number of models with whom they identify, for example people in their immediate surroundings, such as parents or older siblings. Or, they could be fantasy characters or people in the media or in movies. The reason for this identification is that the person identified with possesses a quality that the observer would like to have. Identification then occurs with another person (the model) and involves adopting the observed behaviours, values, beliefs, and attitudes of the person being imitated. It should be noted however that identification

is not the same thing as imitation, as identification may involve a number of behaviours being adopted, whereas imitation usually involves copying a single behaviour.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Thirty-two adults aged at least 18 years living in Bangkok were recruited to participate in the four focus groups with eight persons in each group. The first group consisted of the individuals that were moderate consumers and that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products. The second group was also moderate in terms of consumption but was not willing to pay a higher price for more durable products. The third group was comprised of non-moderate persons that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products. The fourth group was also comprised of non-moderate individuals but they were not willing to pay a higher price for more durable products. On average, each focus group lasted about one hour. In this way, altogether there were sixteen persons that were moderate and an equal number of non-moderate persons. Similarly, sixteen persons were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products and an equal number that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products.

All of the participants were Buddhists. The study purposely selected males and females in equal number (Table 1). Both the moderate and non-moderate participants were roughly at the age of 30 years and most had never been married. The moderate participants tended to have lower education and a lower monthly household income than the non-moderate participants. Fewer of the moderate participants were unemployed and they tended to be administrators and professionals whereas the non-moderate participants were working as government officers.

It was also the purpose of this study to have the same number of male and female participants that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products and those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products (Table 2). The age of the participants for both group was approximately the same at 30 years and most of them had never been married. The ones that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products tended to have higher education and a higher monthly household income than those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products. All of those that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products were employed whereas those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products were split between the employed and unemployed, and housewife and student. The occupations of those that were willing to pay a higher price for more durable products were limited to the administrators and professionals as well as private businesses, whereas those that were unwilling to pay a higher price for more durable products were government officers and merchants.

**Table 1**  
**Moderate and Non-moderate Participant Data**

<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>Moderate (%)</i>	<i>Non-moderate (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	50.00	50.00	50.00
Female	50.00	50.00	50.00
<i>Age</i>	28.88 years	30.00 years	29.44 years
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Married	6.25	6.25	6.25
Nevermarried	93.75	87.50	90.63
Others	0.00	6.25	3.13
<i>Education</i>			
Less than lower primary school	6.25	0.00	3.13
Primary school	0.00	0.00	0.00
Secondary school	12.50	0.00	6.25
Some college	0.00	6.25	3.13
College graduate	75.00	87.50	81.25
Advanced degree	6.25	6.25	6.25
<i>Employment status</i>			
Employed	87.50	93.75	90.63
Unemployed	6.25	0.00	3.13
Housewife	6.25	0.00	3.13
Student	0.00	6.25	3.13
<i>Occupation</i>			
Administrator or Professional	37.50	25.00	31.25
Government officer	0.00	12.50	6.25
Employee in a private business	43.75	56.25	50.00
Merchant	6.25	0.00	3.13
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Monthly household income (Baht)</i>			
Less than 20,0000	12.50	6.25	9.38
20,000 – 29,999	0.00	18.75	9.38
30,000 – 39,999	6.25	12.50	9.38
40,000 – 49,999	12.50	0.00	6.25
50,000 – 59,999	25.00	12.50	18.75
60,000 – 69,999	0.00	12.50	6.25
70,000 – 79,999	0.00	0.00	0.00
80,000 – 89,999	12.50	0.00	6.25
90,000 – 99,999	12.50	6.25	9.38
100,000 or more	18.75	31.25	25.00

**Table 2**  
**Participants' Data on Those That Were Willing to Pay a Higher Price for More Durable Goods and Those That Were Unwilling to Pay More**

<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>Willing to pay more (%)</i>	<i>Unwilling to pay more (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	50.00	50.00	50.00
Female	50.00	50.00	50.00
<i>Age</i>	28.69 years	30.19 years	29.44 years
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Married	0.00	12.50	6.25
Never-married	93.75	87.50	90.63
Others	6.25	0.00	3.13
<i>Education</i>			
Less than lower primary school	0.00	6.25	3.13
Primary school	0.00	0.00	0.00
Secondary school	0.00	12.50	6.25
Some college	0.00	6.25	3.13
College graduate	87.50	75.00	81.25
Advanced degree	12.50	0.00	6.25
<i>Employment status</i>			
Employed	100.00	81.25	90.63
Unemployed	0.00	6.25	3.13
Housewife	0.00	6.25	3.13
Student	0.00	6.25	3.13
<i>Occupation</i>			
Administrator or Professional	37.50	25.00	31.25
Government officer	6.25	6.25	6.25
Employee in a private business	56.25	43.75	50.00
Merchant	0.00	6.25	3.13
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Monthly household income (Baht)</i>			
Less than 20,0000	6.25	12.50	9.38
20,000 – 29,999	12.50	6.25	9.38
30,000 – 39,999	12.50	6.25	9.38
40,000 – 49,999	6.25	6.25	6.25
50,000 – 59,999	31.25	6.25	18.75
60,000 – 69,999	0.00	12.50	6.25
70,000 – 79,999	0.00	0.00	0.00
80,000 – 89,999	6.25	6.25	6.25
90,000 – 99,999	0.00	18.75	9.38
100,000 or more	25.00	25.00	25.00

## RESULTS

### **Why are you moderate?**

The participants began to answer this question by defining the word moderation. It means many things to many people. For one, it means that we should have a good allocation of money for useful spending, saving, and for reserve in case of emergency as well. Another person wanted to distinguish the words 'necessary' and 'want'. Generally, we have to pay for necessary products, for instance transportation, but we should put a limit on our 'wants'. We do not have to follow others unnecessarily.

One main factor that influences the value of moderation is its benefits, including having money for investment, saving for an unforeseen future in case of an emergency, for instance, and accidents or the sickness of family members. Further, the participants want to get their money's worth, and that is why they have to take an extra care for their spending.

One gentleman wanted to buy things according to their purpose of use. He mentioned that a mobile phone that can be used simply for calling or Internet connection is good enough, and he said he can purchase one for 5,000 Baht only; it does not have to be very expensive.

The second factor that influences the value of moderation is role models, as can be seen in the following statement:

'In my case when I was a child, my family was not rich. My father was a government officer whereas my mother was a housewife. I saw my parents spent little since I was young. At the moment, my family can live comfortably but I still have the habit of the old days in such a way that we do not have to spend much. We can live, having a savings and progress in our family.'

The third factor that influences the value of moderation is the financial situation. A few women stated that their family had a low income so they had to be careful about spending. They had to earn on their own for buying the things they wanted. They tend to go with cheap versions. For one lady, family obligation did put the limit on what she could spend because she had to give a part of her money to the family.

The fourth factor that influences the value of moderation is not having to follow the current trend or fashion, especially when the product is still in good condition.

### **Why aren't you moderate?**

Most of the participants are not moderate because of their desire – they often buy things that they like because it will make them happy. One woman stated that she had to go through difficulties in earning a living. Therefore, she wanted to reward

herself by buying what she liked, for instance, cosmetics and beautiful clothes. Another woman stated that she stuck to what she liked even if other items were being promoted or were on sale. One gentleman commented that he tended to like technological products. He added that even though he already had a notebook, when he saw an Apple Mac Book Air he bought it out of his desire no matter how expensive it was. Some of the men stated that the technological products that they liked besides computers were cameras and watches and mobile phones. Another woman stated that she tended to shop extra when she went abroad.

Another main factor that drags people out of moderation is marketing. One woman thought out loud and stated that generally woman like fashionable products, for instance, handbags, and want to follow the fashion. A lot of the marketing strategies that make people buy more are promotions, including things on sale, discount coupons, accumulation of points on the member card of the store, co-promotions of the stores and credit cards to buy things at a certain time or abroad in order to get extra points. A special sale outlet that sells things at a huge discount price also can make people buy more. One gentleman wanted to buy expensive things, the top of the class version of the products, in order to make sure that he would get to latest technology and the right features. Another gentleman said that it could be an expensive product but at the cheapest outlet of all available stores.

Another influencer of non-moderation is the financial situation. Two gentlemen, a physician and an architect, mentioned that they did not have to worry about money because they had a high income, especially the architect, who added that he can earn the money easily. They can easily buy whatever they like. Two other gentlemen indicated that they were not married and that enabled them to spend the money freely; they did not have to be responsible for the family concerning financial matters.

### **What are the obstacles that prevent you from becoming moderate?**

The first obstacle was based on the idea that if our friends have something, we have to have it as well, as one gentleman stated in the following:

‘My friend has a bicycle that costs 50,000 to 60,000 Baht. If I buy a bicycle for only 7,000 to 8,000 Baht it cannot look as good when I compare it with my friend’s although it functions as well. Then, I go to buy a bicycle for more than 30,000 Baht. It still cannot be compared with my friend so I try to upgrade it by changing the tires, the accessories. I think that it will be moderate if we are concerned with only the bicycle’s function. However, in this case, my friend has something better than me and it makes me eager to have that kind of thing better than him. This is an influence of those that surrounds us.’

The second obstacle to being moderate is the influence of others. These days, we are also influenced by word of mouth from friends coming through social media



as well as in person. Our friends tell us a lot of things, for instance, what they eat, buy, and where they travel to. One gentleman was asked by a friend to help him shop for a Go Pro camera although he could not taking pictures at all. He said:

'I recommend to my friend that the camera is easy to use and has many functions. This might be a case of a person who is not moderate. In fact, this camera will be appropriate for a person who likes travelling and adventure. On the other hand, my friend likes to be at home and office but he thinks the camera can take beautiful pictures. That make him want the camera and to buy it. Eventually, he does not use the camera because he does not travel.'

The third obstacle to being moderate is that we are bombarded by various marketing strategies, whether it be mid-year sales, pop-up advertising, or using credit cards for buying products in an instalment fashion with a zero percent interest rate, as well as other promotion tools.

The fourth obstacle to being moderate originated from the idea of some people that cheap and good products are not available in this world.

**A question asked of the non-moderate individuals: Would you like to be moderate?**

Almost all of them wanted to be moderate. One main reason was that many of the things that they have bought have not been used. They think that it is a pity but they did not think about it before buying them. Another reason was that after investigating their personal finances, it was found that they ended up having little savings after several years of working. One gentleman had no savings at all. He thought that it would be worse if he were in debt. Most of all, the people that wanted to be moderate looked at the benefits of being moderate. These included having savings to do some major things, for instance, investing, setting up a business, professional training, buying a house, buying a car, and emergencies.

**A question asked of the non-moderate individual: What helps you to be moderate?**

One main way of becoming moderate, according to the interviewees, was making financial plans for the future, for instance, planning for getting married. It is better to put aside money first before spending it. A delay tactic for buying things is also suggested. That is to say, instead of buying things immediately, they can be postponed for a few weeks or a month so that the person can think twice before buying.

**A question asked of the moderate and non-moderate participants: Can you see the benefits of moderation?**

Both groups saw the financial benefit of moderation in such a way that enough savings enabled them to buy big-ticket items in the future and to have money to spend in the case of emergencies, for instance, themselves being sick or a member

of their family. An additional point of benefit was that moderation makes them happy, as one gentleman stated in the following:

‘What we do cannot be too extreme; we should take the middle path. It is not that when we do not have the money we eat Ma-Ma, instant noodle every day, or it is not that we always eat fancy food. It should be something in the middle which is an optimal point. This will make us happy and this is the ultimate goal of being human.’

Another non-moderate woman added that ‘if we can change our viewpoint to another angle, it can be seen that moderate persons can be happy as well. It is not necessary that extravagant spending will make us happy’.

**A question asked of the moderate and non-moderate persons: Do you have role models for moderation?**

Many of the participants mentioned that their fathers and mothers were role models for being moderate. One moderate gentleman’s parents supported their two children going to private schools and universities. Their parents bought a house, a car and many other things through installments and they seldom bought many clothes. They repaired their clothes and used them until they could no longer be worn. For another moderate lady, the whole family including the father, mother, and elder sister, behaved in a moderate way. They knew how much money they had, and how much they had to save. They did not live without eating enough; they just used the money in a valuable way and ranked the priority of the money usage. It is not that they lived unhappily. Another moderate lady mentioned that her elder sister provided financial support to her aunt right away when her aunt had a kidney disease. One non-moderate gentleman mentioned that his parents were not rich but they saved money. They thought about necessities first and did not buy luxury items. The reason that he did not follow his parents’ footsteps in being moderate was that when he could earn a living on his own, he wanted to reward himself by buying unnecessary items.

Another role model of moderation that was mentioned was King Bhumibhol, who squeezes his toothpaste and makes use of it until the last drop.

Another moderate gentleman cited his experience when he was a monk for fifteen days. He pointed out that as a monk you could not choose what to eat. The rice, other food and deserts were all mixed up in the monk’s bowl and he had to eat those mixed items.

**A question asked of the moderate participants: Do you see any examples of moderate companies?**

Many moderate persons mentioned that the companies were mainly doing business for profit. For instance, the company might release news that this year it was opening many new branches so that it could gain a lot of profit. However, there

are a few moderate persons that gave the example of moderate companies. The first company was Bangkok Bank, which was seen to set an example of not expanding its business too quickly. It is careful in giving loans mainly to big businesses that are not too risky, as compared with some other banks that give loans to smaller and riskier businesses in order to earn a lot of profit. Another company was Sahapatanapibul, which has launched many products under the brand name "Sue-Sat," which means honest. These brand name products are relatively cheap, of good quality, and are useful and in a way that shows honesty. The food under this brand name is good for health because it does not add monosodium glutamate. There are also green products that help alleviate the global warming problem. Another example is the energy drink under the brand name Carabao Dang, which is produced by Carabao Tawandang Co. Ltd. The advertisement of Carabao Dang addresses the issue of how to live according to the sufficiency economy philosophy. One more example of a moderate company was Ramkamhaeng Hospital. It is a small hospital and its hospital fees are not very expensive as compared to some other bigger and more well-known hospitals. It does not have to charge the patients as much in order to earn a profit. Unlike one of the bigger hospitals, it has not expanded quickly through any merger or acquisition strategy in order to make high profits rapidly.

**A question asked of the moderate participants: Do you think that the government can be a role model of moderation?**

An earlier government had issued gold cards for Thais that had low incomes. These cards could be used for any health problems. It was a way to increase the quality of life of the poor. Another example of moderation has to do with another earlier government. According to one moderate gentleman, we want to see economic growth and talk about an increase in our GDP, which depends too much on foreigners, whether it be foreign direct investment or exports. He thought that we should grow from our human capital by investing in the education of people. When an earlier government implemented the policy of free education for all Thais for twelve years, he thought that that was a good example of moderation because it was a long-term project; the government made use of the money in a worthwhile way for future development. That gentleman also thought internationally and cited the Bhutan government as an example of moderation. Bhutan used the GNH or gross national happiness to measure the progress of the country instead of the GDP, which measures economic growth. Bhutanese do not think that its country has to be very rich but that the people should be happy. It is not that having an iPhone will make people happy. They can spend their lives with their families and nature. Bhutan has a negative carbon credit. That is to say, Bhutan does not emit any carbon dioxide. Bhutan has dams that generate electricity and exports it to neighboring countries. In our case, he thought that maybe Thailand does not have to emphasize business. We do not have to be known by the world as the number

one producer of cars. It is possible for Thailand but Thailand cannot be changed in a day or two. In the case of Bhutan, they have had that attitude toward the environment for a long time. Additionally, Bhutan puts a limit on the number of tourists by asking the tourists to pay 20,000 to 30,000 Baht per person when the tourists step on the land of Bhutan. It is likely that this kind of tourist will not throw away the garbage in inappropriate places. On top of that, Bhutan also has a national dress. Bhutanese can be in their national dress and do not have to follow the fashion unnecessarily. That makes the Bhutanese moderate as well.

**A question asked of the moderate participants: Does the philosophy of the sufficiency economy make you a moderate person?**

One moderate lady thought that the sufficiency economy applied more to farmers, especially the part of a new theory which suggests to Thai farmers how to make use of their land. Besides growing rice, it can be used for raising fish, pigs, chickens as well as planting vegetables. In addition, they can do a lot of things on their own and do not have to buy much. If they are also frugal, they do not have to be in debt. Another moderate gentleman gave the following comment:

‘If it is me that has to plant the vegetables, I cannot do it. I do not have any land or know how to plant things. However, when I apply the philosophy of sufficiency economy to the lives of people in urban areas, I will reduce my unnecessary expenses and try to increase my income. I will also give the money to my parents and a little bit for merit making. Sufficiency for me is not spending extravagantly. It is knowing how to spend the money or managing the money, and lastly the money should be shared as well. It can be spent for the dogs and cats.’

One moderate gentleman commented that the philosophy of sufficiency economy should not come and go like a fashion. We should instill the philosophy in the spirit of Thais until it becomes their mindsets. It can be done through education. An earlier gentleman thought that the philosophy of sufficiency economy was quite abstract. It would be more concrete if we persuaded people, especially the youngsters, to go to the temples and take pictures of the temples and share them with friends.

Besides the philosophy of sufficiency economy, other influencers of moderation indicated by the moderate participants were celebrities.

**A question asked of the moderate and non-moderate participants: Why are you willing to pay a higher price for more durable products?**

The moderate and non-moderate participants are willing to pay a higher price for more durable products because of its worthiness, as one woman stated in the following:

‘I am willing to invest by buying a more expensive bag which costs 3,000 to 4,000 Baht because it lasts long. However, we should know that we have enough money and do

not have to bother others. We should question our happiness in buying. I used to buy counterfeit products of the same brand but the bag broke in less than a month, whereas the brand name that I am using has already lasted three years and it is still in a good shape. I paid 3,000 Baht for the brand name bag, which is ten times more expensive than the counterfeit one. The counterfeit bag lasted only one month. To make good use of my money, I have to be able to use the brand name bag for at least ten months. It is already pay off because I have used my brand name bag for three years already. I have been able to make full use of it. I use it for work, for travelling, and it can carry everything, including an umbrella.'

Similarly, one non-moderate lady commented that she bought a pair of shoes from the general market which cost 300 Baht but they only lasted for a few months. It is better to buy brand name shoes which may cost at least 1,000 Baht but that last longer, for instance, a year. Taking into consideration the money paid and the durability of the product, it is worthwhile paying more. Beyond the durability of the product, many non-moderate participants were willing to pay for quality. One non-moderate gentleman thought that there was no such thing as cheap and good. He only buys the top version or only the second best and does not buy the cheapest product. The non-moderate person was also willing to pay more for a well-known brand, brand loyalty, additional features, resell price, limited edition, and raw materials; for instance, the cheap version might be made of artificial leather whereas the expensive version might made of genuine cow leather.

**A question asked of the moderate and non-moderate participants: Why aren't you willing to pay a higher price for more durable products?**

One common reason for the moderate and non-moderate participants to not be willing to pay a higher price for more durable products is that they were getting bored with the same old things quite quickly so they had to buy new ones often. In this way, products do not last long for them.

For the moderate participants, they were not willing to pay a higher price for more durable products because the products may become obsolete. Additionally, they want to spend their money on a variety of products, for the functional value of the products only, for instance, not for the design, image or surrounding atmosphere. Some product prices will be lower as time goes by, for instance, television sets. It will be more worthwhile to buy them at a lower price although they may not last that long because we can buy them cheaper later. One moderate lady mentioned that there was a rapid development of mobile phones. For instance, there will be a new version of the i-phone every year. We do not have to buy a new version of the i-phone. We can buy an older version that has fewer specifications but is cheaper price. On the other hand, if we want to keep up with the trend, we have to pay more for products. Besides durability, one moderate gentleman did not want to pay a high price for personal products which other people cannot see when one uses them.

In terms of the non-moderate participants, one gentleman indicated that it depended on the product—if it was clothes, they would be used only for a short time and one should not pay a high price. Another lady pointed out that fashion comes and goes and people like to follow that. Another gentleman indicated that he was very price sensitive: he just wants to buy cheap products. For instance, counterfeit shoes might be 50% cheaper than the brand name he buys although they may break down in less than one year. Another non-moderate male participant stated that he tends to buy cheap products because he does not have to think about the cost; he does not have to think so much.

## DISCUSSION

A surprising finding from this study was that bettering the environment was not mentioned as a benefit of being moderate and being willing to pay a higher price for more durable products. It follows that we should make Thais aware of this benefit. It is also equally essential that we should make people understand the importance of this benefit either through the mass media, social media, or through education.

In order to make Thais reduce the usage of the limited raw materials available in this world by consuming less or by becoming moderate, they should be taught to be able to distinguish between necessities and wants, as well as be able to limit their desires. Additionally, the benefits of being moderate should be emphasized. These include having enough savings for future plans whether it be getting married, investment, buying houses, cars, or other big-ticket items, and in case of emergency, such as the illness of themselves or their family members. Another way to consume less is that when people have to buy things, they should buy more durable products even if it will be more expensive. In order to motivate them to do that, the cost and benefit, especially the durability of the products as compared to cheaper brands, have to be pointed out.

To make Thais reuse old products and not throw them away easily, the wide spread of second hand stores should be encouraged. Examples of these durable products are clothes, bags, shoes, mobile phones, and computers. The older products that are seen as obsolete by the first person because of planned obsolescence in marketing can be used by a second person and the product lives can be prolonged.

Further, in order to make Thais recycle old products, especially the planned obsolescence ones, the manufacturers of these products should think of trade-in strategies. It can be a win-win solution for the consumers and the companies. The consumers can sell unused products to the companies which can make use of the products by recycling them. This will benefit both parties financially and environmentally.

## CONCLUSION

There are four main drivers of being moderate. They are benefits, role models, the financial situation, and not having to follow the fashion. The benefits of being moderate include having money for investment and for future plans and other expenses as stated above. The role models for being moderate are the parents and siblings, King Bhumibhol, monks, and companies and the government. The financial situation in relation to being moderate is having a low income and the family obligations of the persons that have to give some of their income to the family.

The drivers of being non-moderate tend to be an individual's desire, making comparisons with friends, marketing strategies, including creating a fashion, sales, outlets that selling cheap products, promotion with credit cards and pop-up advertisements, social media, and having a high income and no family obligations.

A major driver of the willingness to pay a higher price for more durable products is value for the money, whereas the drivers of the unwillingness to pay a higher price for more durable products are being bored with old products, planned obsolescence in marketing, seeking a variety of products, and fashion and being price sensitive.

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