

MINDFUL CONSUMPTION THROUGH A THAI LENS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF VALUES, CULTURE, AND BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines mindful consumption (MC) among Thai consumers through nine semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. Thematic analysis surfaces recurring patterns of moral reasoning, social pressure, and marketing responsiveness, which align with psychological, social, and marketing dimensions of MC and are interpreted through Value-Belief-Norm and Theory of Planned Behavior frameworks. Findings show psychological factors rooted in Buddhist ethics and self-regulation, social factors where demographics and digital media shape consumption intentions, and marketing factors where consumer awareness informs eco-labeling and culturally resonant strategies. Three culturally embedded dimensions—sufficiency (Phor-Piang), collective generosity (Nam-Jai), and digital mindfulness—emerge as central. MC in Thailand is thus a culturally negotiated process linking personal values with social and ecological sustainability.

Keywords: Mindful Consumption, Thai Society, Buddhist Sufficiency Economy, Value-Belief-Norm Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Consumer Segmentation, Digital Mindfulness, Sustainability Marketing, Qualitative Research, Psychological and Social Factors

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INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a society where Buddhist ethics and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy have long provided a cultural foundation for restrained and mindful living, emphasizing moderation, non-greed, and collective well-being as core everyday values (Pusaksrikit et al., 2013; Mongsawad, 2010). The Buddhist concept of karma encourages moral accountability in daily decisions, while the principle of Phor-Piang — sufficiency — guides individuals toward balance between personal needs and broader social responsibility. These values are not merely philosophical abstractions; they are woven into Thai family life, community practices, and national policy, forming a culturally embedded framework that, in principle, strongly aligns with mindful consumption (United Nations Development Programme, 2007; Merle, 2017). Yet beneath this rich cultural tradition lies a growing and urgent contradiction. Thai consumers increasingly face digitally driven impulsive consumption, algorithm-mediated social comparison, and rising household spending pressures that challenge even deeply held values of restraint. Thailand generates over 3.2 million tonnes of plastic waste annually and ranks among the world's top ocean plastic polluters, reflecting a widening gap between cultural ideals and everyday consumption realities (Phattharachai & Phramaha Surasak, 2024; Wannarak et al., 2021). This tension — between a nationally endorsed philosophy of sufficiency and the accelerating pressures of modern digital consumerism — is precisely what makes Thailand a uniquely significant and theoretically urgent context for mindful consumption research. Mindful consumption (MC) is defined as a process of conscious self-reflection that guides individuals toward responsible decisions, balancing personal convenience with collective welfare (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011). A systematic review similarly links mindfulness with more sustainable consumption processes and outcomes (Fischer et al., 2017). While MC has attracted growing academic interest globally, existing frameworks have been predominantly developed within Western, individualistic contexts, leaving a critical gap in understanding how collective, Buddhist-influenced societies such as Thailand shape MC in practice (Garg, Singh, & Bansal, 2024). This gap is particularly significant because Thai MC is not simply an individual behavioral choice — it is a culturally negotiated process embedded within shared spiritual values, family norms, community obligations, and digital social environments that Western frameworks do not fully capture. This study addresses these gaps through three objectives: (1) to explore how Thai consumers understand and practice mindful consumption in everyday life; (2) to identify the core dimensions of MC as perceived by Thai consumers and examine their alignment with the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB); and (3) to examine the role of cultural and social influences — including Buddhist ethics, family norms, and digital media — in shaping MC practices. Using qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with nine Thai adults across diverse socio-economic and geographic settings, this study provides an empirically grounded, culturally contextualized understanding of MC in the Thai consumer context, with practical implications for sustainability marketing and public policy in Thailand.

Research Objectives

- 1) To explore how consumers understand and practice mindful consumption in everyday life in Thai consumers.
- 2) To identify the core dimensions of mindful consumption as perceived by Thai consumers and examine their alignment with existing theoretical frameworks.
- 3) To examine the role of cultural and social influences in shaping mindful consumption practices in Thailand.

Scope of the Research

This study focuses on Thai consumers' perceptions and everyday practices of mindful consumption (MC), using qualitative methods to explore lived experiences rather than produce statistical generalizations. The study is geographically bounded to Thailand, with participants

drawn from urban centers within the country. It examines four key domains — psychological mindsets, social influences, marketing cues, and culturally embedded dimensions specific to Thai society — with particular attention to Buddhist ethics, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and the tension between traditional moderation and contemporary digital consumerism. These domains are analyzed through the integrated theoretical lens of the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

Participants were Thai adults aged 20-60, selected through purposive sampling to ensure balanced gender representation and coverage across age groups. The final sample comprised five female and four male participants. Data were collected during 2025-2026 through nine semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted across diverse socioeconomic and geographic settings within Thailand. The qualitative design was chosen to capture the nuanced, culturally embedded nature of mindful consumption that quantitative instruments alone cannot adequately measure.

This study does not extend to non-Thai populations, individuals under the age of 20, cross-national comparisons, or quantitative measurement of MC behaviors. The nine-participant sample is not intended to produce findings generalizable to all Thai consumers but rather to generate culturally contextualized, empirically grounded insights into how mindful consumption is perceived and practiced within the Thai context.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Mindful consumption (MC) reflects consumers' growing concern for social and environmental responsibility, conceptualized as self-reflective, responsible decision-making that balances personal convenience with collective welfare (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011). In Thailand, MC is embedded within cultural, spiritual, and structural systems rather than being purely an individual choice. This review synthesizes psychological, social, and marketing dimensions of MC through an integrated Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) lens.

VBN theory explains how internal values activate pro-environmental personal norms, providing moral motivation for mindful behavior (Stern, 2000). TPB explains how these norms translate—or fail to translate—into behavior under social and structural pressures (Ajzen, 1991). In Thailand, VBN maps onto Buddhist moral values and karma as internal activators, while TPB accounts for the gap between intention and action driven by digital consumption pressures, peer expectations, and socioeconomic constraints. Together, these frameworks address the value-action gap central to this study: why moral intent often fails to produce mindful behavior in a society that institutionally promotes sufficiency yet structurally enables overconsumption.

This integration also exposes three gaps that justify the present study. First, MC frameworks remain predominantly Western and individualistic, overlooking collective, Buddhist-influenced contexts and Thai-specific constructs such as sufficiency (Phor-Piang) and collective generosity (Nam-Jai) (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011; Garg, Singh, & Bansal, 2024). Second, the attitude-behavior gap among Thai consumers is underexplored, particularly how digital media interacts with Buddhist values to inhibit mindful behavior (Wannarak et al., 2021). Third, the tension between Buddhist moderation and digital consumerism—algorithmic content, influencer culture, social comparison—has not been examined qualitatively in Thailand, and existing MC measurement scales remain unvalidated in this cultural context (Phattharachai & Phramaha Surasak, 2024; Garg, Singh, & Bansal, 2024).

Psychological Factors: Mindset and Moral Activation

MC is fundamentally driven by an internal regulatory system rooted in mindset. Jirojkul et al. (2021) identify four core elements of a mindful mindset: commitment to the community, respect for local ways of life, knowledge of community strengths and needs, and openness of

mind. These components shape attention, perception, and moral judgment in consumption contexts, forming the internal foundation from which mindful behavior emerges.

In Thailand, these moral processes are powerfully reinforced through Buddhist philosophy, which operates as a lived ethical system rather than a purely abstract belief. Buddhist principles promote harmony with nature, non-attachment to material possessions, and moral accountability through the concept of karma — the understanding that present consumption choices carry future moral consequences. The principle of sufficiency, or *Phor-Piang*, encourages moderation and restraint as everyday moral disciplines. This is institutionalized within communities such as Santi Asoke, where material simplicity and the rejection of consumerism are practiced as spiritually meaningful acts (Kitsanarom et al., 2018). Within these frameworks, consumption is not a neutral economic act — it becomes a morally charged decision with implications for personal karma, community well-being, and environmental sustainability.

Drawing on Bandura's (1991) Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation, mindful behavior operates through forethought — whereby individuals anticipate the consequences of their actions and set personal sustainability goals — as well as through self-monitoring, judgment, and self-reaction. Self-efficacy plays a critical role: individuals who believe they are capable of making sustainable choices are more likely to persist in mindful behaviors despite constraints such as higher costs or limited product access. However, self-efficacy alone is often insufficient when social pressures intervene, producing the value-behavior gap that is central to understanding MC in the Thai context.

Social Factors: Subjective Norms and Structural Constraints

The Theory of Planned Behavior explains how values are enacted within social contexts through subjective norms—the perceived social pressure to conform to expectations of significant others (Ajzen, 1991). Applications among Thai consumers further support the relevance of TPB for explaining green purchase intentions (Maichum et al., 2016; Ruangkanjanases et al., 2020). In Thailand, these subjective norms are shaped by family upbringing, religious community expectations, peer social comparison, and increasingly by digital social environments that introduce new forms of normative pressure. Demographic characteristics further structure MC intentions in important ways. Wannarak et al. (2021) report statistically significant effects of age, education, and income on mindful consumption engagement in Thailand. Older consumers demonstrate higher MC engagement, attributed in part to greater financial security and deeper internalization of traditional Buddhist values. Individuals with tertiary education exhibit stronger environmental consciousness and are more likely to translate values into purchasing decisions. Consumers earning above 20,000 THB per month are significantly more likely to engage in MC, whereas lower income remains a primary structural barrier to mindful purchasing behavior — a finding with important implications for the inclusivity of MC frameworks and policy interventions. Beyond demographic factors, digital media platforms present a dual and often contradictory influence on Thai consumers' mindful behavior. On one hand, algorithm-driven promotional content, influencer endorsements, and social comparison dynamics amplify impulsive purchasing and status-signaling consumption, directly undermining behavioral self-regulation and widening the value-action gap. On the other hand, product review platforms and ethical consumer communities within digital spaces enable more informed, value-aligned decision-making. Phattharachai and Phramaha Surasak (2024) propose that digital mindfulness practices — grounded in Buddhist concepts of present-moment awareness and non-attachment — can serve as an effective behavioral buffer against digitally mediated consumption pressures, repositioning Buddhist ethics as a culturally resonant tool for navigating contemporary digital consumer environments.

Marketing Factors and Consumer Segmentation

Marketing operates as a systemic mechanism capable of either reinforcing unsustainable consumption patterns or scaling mindful practices across society. The effectiveness of marketing interventions in promoting MC depends critically on consumer awareness levels and the degree to which marketing strategies align with consumers' existing values and cultural frameworks. Milne, Villarroel Ordenes, and Kaplan (2020) segment consumers into three awareness-based groups that require differentiated marketing strategies; such segmentation is also relevant to green purchase intentions in Thailand (Wongsaichia et al., 2022). High-awareness consumers prioritize ethics, transparency, and product life cycles, and respond best to verifiable sustainability evidence such as third-party certifications and detailed supply chain disclosures. Moderate-awareness consumers value sustainability but remain price-sensitive, responding more readily to simplified eco-labels and behavioral nudges that make sustainable choices more visible and accessible without requiring deep ethical engagement (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009; Tiboni-Oschilewski et al., 2024). Low-awareness consumers prioritize convenience and instant gratification, and are most effectively reached through default sustainable product options and visually engaging promotions that integrate sustainable choices into existing consumption habits without demanding conscious ethical deliberation. In the Thai context, marketing effectiveness is significantly enhanced by embedding culturally resonant values into communication strategies. Framing sustainable consumption through the lens of merit-making (Tham Bun), Buddhist moderation, and collective social responsibility enhances the moral legitimacy of mindful purchasing and increases behavioral compliance (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011). This cultural embedding transforms MC from an abstract environmental commitment into a socially normative and spiritually meaningful practice—one that aligns with pre-existing Thai moral frameworks and community well-being (Pimlapas et al., 2013) rather than challenging or replacing them. An emerging trend of de-influencing in digital marketing — where brands actively discourage unnecessary consumption and promote quality over quantity — further aligns with these cultural values and represents a promising direction for mindful marketing in the Thai context

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of how consumers conceptualize and practice mindful consumption in everyday life. As mindful consumption involves personal values, self-reflection, moral considerations, and emotional experiences, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for capturing rich and contextualized insights that may not be fully accessible through structured quantitative methods. Participants were purposively selected to obtain near-balanced representation of gender. The sample comprised five female and four male participants and included adults across three age groups (20-28, 29-44, and 45-60 years). Counts, rather than percentages, are reported because the total sample comprised nine participants. Data were collected through nine semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in a private and supportive setting. This one-on-one interview format was chosen because participants may be reluctant to openly discuss personal feelings, self-control, or perceived shortcomings in mindful consumption within group settings due to social desirability concerns or fear of judgment. The in-depth interview approach therefore enabled participants to express their thoughts and experiences more openly and honestly. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore participants' understanding of mindful consumption, everyday consumption practices, perceived challenges, cultural and social influences, and expectations toward businesses and brands engaging in mindful marketing. Probing questions were used when necessary to encourage elaboration and clarification. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' consent, and was transcribed verbatim. Prior to the

interviews, all participants were informed of the study's purpose and provided informed consent. This study received ethical clearance from the Bangkok University Board / Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 416802095), and all procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the approved protocol. To protect participant confidentiality, all names appearing in this manuscript are pseudonyms; no identifying information has been disclosed. The transcribed data were analyzed using thematic analysis following an iterative process. First, the transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve data familiarization. Second, meaningful segments of text were coded to capture participants' views on mindful consumption, including behaviors, motivations, challenges, and expectations toward businesses. Third, related codes were grouped into broader themes representing shared patterns of meaning across participants. Finally, the themes were reviewed and interpreted in relation to existing mindful consumption literature, thereby identifying both theoretically aligned and context-specific insights relevant to mindful marketing. By the ninth interview, later accounts largely confirmed the existing coding structure and no substantively new themes emerged; thematic saturation was therefore considered sufficient for this exploratory study. This assessment supports the adequacy of the sample for identifying recurring meanings, but does not imply statistical representativeness.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research findings are structured around four key domains derived from thematic analysis of nine in-depth interviews: (1) psychological factors, (2) social factors, (3) marketing factors, and (4) strategies and directions for research and practice. The results demonstrate that mindful consumption is not merely an individual decision-making process but is deeply embedded within broader cultural, structural, and theoretical contexts.

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors—particularly mindset and self-regulation—are central to understanding MC. A mindful mindset in the Thai context comprises four key components: commitment to the community, respect for local culture, awareness of community needs and strengths, and an open state of mind. Drawing on Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation (Bandura, 1991), this mindset operates through forethought, whereby individuals anticipate the consequences of their actions and set personal sustainability goals. Mindful behavior manifests as a constellation of practices including behavioral control, behavior modification, thought modification, and value-matching—regulated through self-monitoring, judgment, and self-reaction.

The translation of a mindful mindset into sustained action is strongly influenced by self-efficacy. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in sustainable behaviors despite constraints such as higher costs or limited product access. However, self-efficacy alone is often insufficient when social pressures intervene. Participants reported sometimes engaging in unnecessary consumption despite mindful intentions due to peer expectations and social occasions, demonstrating a value-behavior gap. One participant reflected: "I have bought more than I needed because I wanted the items, but later realized it led to wasted money and excess waste." Psychological regulation is further reinforced through Buddhist moral agency, where practices of mindfulness and beliefs in karma function as internal moral standards guiding consumption behavior.

Social Factors

Social factors play a critical role in shaping MC through family influence, cultural norms, religious values, and digitally mediated social pressures, consistent with TPB's emphasis on subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991). Participants frequently highlighted how family upbringing shaped their consumption behavior, with familial norms becoming internalized standards guiding purchase decisions. Social expectations further functioned as powerful influences, as

observing others' possessions triggered internal evaluation—either reinforcing or undermining mindful practices through social referential comparison.

Religious and moral values rooted in Buddhist teachings shaped consumption behavior by emphasizing moderation, sufficiency, and non-excess, though participants acknowledged that personal desires sometimes overrode ethical considerations—reflecting TPB's intention-behavior gap. Digital and social media environments presented a dual influence: promotional content and influencer reviews weakened self-control and led to impulse purchases, while product review platforms enabled more informed, value-aligned decision-making.

Marketing Factors

Participants conceptualized mindful consumption as moderation, health consciousness, and environmental responsibility. One participant stated: "We should not buy more than necessary," describing MC as "choosing safe food that is good for health and connected to the environment, such as reducing plastic bags and using paper bags instead." Another emphasized collective responsibility: "If everyone pays attention and cooperates in choosing environmentally friendly products, the world will become a better place." Participants also articulated clear expectations for mindful marketing, describing it as "brands advertising responsibly, not persuading people to buy more than necessary, and showing care for consumers and society."

These insights support consumer segmentation by awareness level (Milne et al., 2020). Participants in this study aligned most closely with the high-awareness segment, prioritizing ethics, health, and environmental impact over convenience. The findings also align with the emerging trend of de-influencing in digital marketing, where brands actively discourage unnecessary consumption and promote ethical alternatives, reframing mindfulness as a collective social norm rather than an individual moral burden.

Summary of Themes from Thematic Analysis

The table below presents the key themes identified through thematic analysis of the nine in-depth interviews conducted in this study. Each theme reflects a shared pattern of meaning across participants, mapped to illustrative quotes from the data.

Table 1 Summary of Themes from Thematic Analysis

Theme	Description	Participants	Example Quotes
1) Pre-Purchase Cognitive Reflection	Evaluating necessity, budget, and consequences before buying rather than acting on impulse or trends	8 of 9 participants	"Thinking before buying... checking if really necessary" — P1, age 23. "Not buying just because of wanting it immediately" — P2, age 23.
2) Sufficiency and Moderation — Phor-Piang	Rooting consumption in Sufficiency Economy and Buddhist principles of non-greed and moderation	All 9 participants	"The principle is moderation, not being greedy, and not creating an excessive burden" — P2, age 23. "In Thailand we have the Sufficiency concept from culture and Buddhism" — P3, age 21.

3) Environmental Stewardship and Waste Reduction	Conscious effort to reduce environmental impact by choosing reusable items, avoiding plastic, and minimizing waste	7 of 9 participants	"Prefer bringing a personal water bottle instead of buying bottled water" — P4, age 29. "I chose to use a cloth bag because I do not want to use plastic bags" — P5, age 29.
4) Health, Safety and Functional Value	Prioritizing physical well-being by checking labels, expiration dates, and choosing nutritious over processed foods	6 of 9 participants	"Check product labels, expiration dates, and the FDA mark" — P5, age 29. "Choose healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, and variety of proteins" — P3, age 21.
5) Community and Collective Responsibility — Nam-Jai	Shifting from individualistic buying to supporting local economy and considering impact on community and future generations	All 9 participants	"Choosing to buy organic rice directly from farmers to support the community" — P6, age 52. "Choosing seasonal fruits to support local farmers" — P7, age 47.
6) Value-Behavior Gap Under Social Pressure	Despite strong values, social occasions, peer expectations, and digital media sometimes override mindful intentions leading to unnecessary purchases	7 of 9 participants	"Sometimes seeing promotions on social media makes me want to buy but I try to restrain myself and think whether it is really necessary" — P2, age 23. "I have bought more than I needed because I wanted the items but later realized it led to wasted money and excess waste" — P8, age 21.
7) Digital Mindfulness as a Cultural Buffer	Using present-moment awareness, reflection, screen breaks, and goal clarification to resist FOMO, algorithmic promotion, and impulsive online purchasing.	5 of 9 participants	"Social media has a strong influence, especially online trends. Advertisements can make me want to buy things beyond what is necessary." — P1, age 23. "Sometimes, when I see people reviewing new— P5, age 29. products, I want to try and buy them."

Culturally Embedded Themes Within the Integrated Thematic Framework

Three culturally embedded themes are integrated directly into Table 1: sufficiency and moderation (Phor-Piang), community and collective responsibility (Nam-Jai), and digital

mindfulness. The following interpretation explains how these themes extend conventional MC frameworks by incorporating collective values, spiritual obligations, and social identity dynamics rooted in Thai society.

Theme 2: Sufficiency and Moderation—Phor-Piang

This dimension is grounded in Thailand's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Buddhist principles, emphasizing financial and spiritual balance over material accumulation. It is defined by moderation, non-greed, and non-extravagance, with the core aim of preventing consumption from becoming a burden on one's life or financial well-being. In practice, this reflects a "more for less" orientation, whereby consumers reduce unnecessary desires to enhance rational decision-making. Participants described behaviors such as checking existing possessions before purchasing—for example, reviewing one's wardrobe before buying new clothes—and setting strict monthly budgets to maintain financial discipline. This dimension also emphasizes self-reliance, including growing organic vegetables and supporting local products to reduce dependence on resource-intensive external markets.

Theme 5: Collective Interconnectedness and Generosity—Nam-Jai

Unlike Western individualistic models of MC, mindful consumption in Thai society reflects a collective cultural orientation that prioritizes family, community, and future generations. Purchasing decisions are frequently evaluated in terms of household benefit, with participants asking whether family members or friends can also use a product before proceeding with a purchase. Families often socialize children to manage money wisely and avoid waste as a shared household responsibility. This dimension also incorporates Nam-Jai (kindness and generosity) and Tham Bun (merit-making), reinforcing sharing and non-selfishness as moral consumption practices. Consumers express this orientation through supporting local community stores and organic farmers to sustain local economies and preserve traditional knowledge. Awareness in this dimension also includes a sense of moral duty toward future generations, ensuring that present consumption does not deplete resources or compromise environmental sustainability.

Theme 7: Digital Mindfulness as a Cultural Buffer

A third culturally specific dimension emerges from the tension between Thailand's Buddhist tradition of moderation and the pressures of digital materialism. Thai consumers increasingly experience social comparison, fear of missing out (FOMO), and algorithm-driven promotional content through social media platforms, which amplify impulsive purchasing and status signaling (Phattharachai & Phramaha Surasak, 2024). In response, digital mindfulness—grounded in Buddhist concepts of present-moment awareness, non-judgment, and non-attachment—has emerged as a behavioral buffer against these pressures. Practical techniques include implementing regular screen breaks, clarifying personal goals before using social media, and practicing brief mindful breathing or reflection before making online purchases. These practices reframe digital mindfulness not merely as a personal coping strategy but as a culturally resonant extension of Buddhist ethical living into contemporary digital consumption environments.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study explored how Thai consumers understand and practice mindful consumption (MC), identified its core dimensions relative to existing theory, and examined the cultural and social forces shaping these practices. The findings address each objective in turn.

Understanding and Practicing MC in Everyday Life

Participants consistently framed MC not as an abstract ideal but as a practical, everyday discipline: checking necessity before purchasing, budgeting deliberately, and reflecting on consequences rather than acting on impulse. This pre-purchase cognitive reflection—present in the majority of interviews—suggests that MC in Thailand operates as a routinized cognitive

habit rather than an occasional ethical exercise. Notably, participants themselves acknowledged lapses, describing moments where social pressure or promotional exposure overrode their intentions. This self-aware inconsistency indicates that MC is best understood as a continuously negotiated practice rather than a fixed trait, aligning with TPB's account of intention-behavior gaps under situational pressure (Ajzen, 1991).

Core Dimensions and Theoretical Alignment

The six themes identified—spanning cognitive reflection, sufficiency, environmental stewardship, health consciousness, collective responsibility, and susceptibility to social pressure—map onto the study's VBN-TPB framework in a clear division of labor. VBN theory accounts for the moral motivation behind sufficiency (Phor-Piang) and collective responsibility (Nam-Jai), both of which participants linked explicitly to Buddhist and Sufficiency Economy values rather than to secular environmentalism alone. TPB, meanwhile, better explains the sixth theme: value-behavior gaps triggered by social occasions and digital promotions. This division suggests that existing Western MC scales—which typically treat MC as a unidimensional attitude—understate the distinct moral and behavioral pathways operating in the Thai data. The three culturally embedded themes integrated into Table 1 (Phor-Piang, Nam-Jai, and Digital Mindfulness) extend rather than merely illustrate existing frameworks: they represent categories of meaning that a directly translated Western instrument would not surface, reinforcing the pseudo-etic risk of assuming construct equivalence across cultural contexts.

Cultural and Social Influences

Family upbringing, religious values, and community expectations emerged as the primary conduits through which mindful norms were internalized, consistent with TPB's subjective norm construct. However, the data also revealed a distinctly collective orientation largely absent from individualistic MC models: participants evaluated purchases at the household or community level, asking whether a purchase benefited family members or local producers before proceeding. Digital media exerted a dual and sometimes contradictory influence—simultaneously undermining self-regulation through algorithmic promotion and supporting it through access to product information and ethical consumer communities. Participants' own coping strategy—drawing on Buddhist present-moment awareness to resist digital impulsivity—suggests that cultural resources already exist within Thai society to buffer against these pressures, rather than requiring imported behavioral interventions.

Conclusion

The study contributes an empirically grounded, culturally contextualized account of mindful consumption among Thai consumers, addressing a gap in MC literature that has largely developed within Western, individualistic paradigms. Three findings carry particular theoretical weight. First, MC in Thailand is not adequately captured by a single attitudinal construct; it comprises distinct moral (VBN) and behavioral-constraint (TPB) pathways that operate semi-independently. Second, culturally specific constructs—sufficiency, collective generosity, and digital mindfulness—are not peripheral elaborations of existing MC dimensions but analytically distinct categories rooted in indigenous vocabulary and institutional practice (e.g., the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy). Third, the consistent gap between stated values and situational behavior, even among highly value-committed participants, indicates that MC interventions targeting attitudes alone are unlikely to produce durable behavior change without addressing structural and social triggers.

These findings carry a methodological implication that extends beyond this study's descriptive scope: MC measurement in Asian, Buddhist-influenced contexts likely requires qualitative-first, culturally grounded scale development rather than direct translation of Western instruments. Applying an existing MC scale to this population without first establishing whether its items carry equivalent meaning risks a pseudo-etic measurement—one that appears

cross-culturally valid on its surface while imposing categories foreign to participants' own moral reasoning.

This study is limited by its qualitative, exploratory design and modest sample size, and its findings are not intended to generalize to Thai consumers broadly. Future research should pursue the five directions outlined above, with particular priority on re-validating MC measurement instruments against the culturally specific dimensions identified here, and on testing whether digital mindfulness practices can be scaled as structured interventions rather than remaining informal individual coping strategies.

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