ABSTRACT

Personality characteristics are an important element to understand consumer behavior. Personality traits have been extensively used as correlates and applied in consumer behavior studies and marketing. This study's major focus was on the automobile industry which has shown growth figures despite the economic crisis and which continues to provide major export earnings to Thailand.

This research studies the relationship between personality factors and automobile purchase decision. The Big Five theory was employed to find the relationship between personality factors and automobile purchase decision. In addition to personality, buyers' demographic data was also related to automobile purchase decision.

A self-directed questionnaire was used to collect data from people who had just purchased a car (red licence plate). A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed between August 15-September 15.

To analyze the data, the researcher used descriptive statistic, Chi-square test and Spearman's Rank Correlation. The findings showed that there was several demographic factors and buying decision. For example, there was a significant relationship between age and purchase decision in term of price and country of origin. Marital status was correlated to price. There was also a significant relationship between education background, price, and style. Finally, monthly income was related to brand, style and country of origin.

In terms of personality factors and purchase decision, the results indicate that neuroticism has relationship with price, while openness has relationship with safety. There was a significant relationship between extraversion and purchase decision in
term of price and style. There was a relationship between agreeableness and all attributes of automobile purchase decision. Meanwhile, conscientiousness showed a relationship with price, brand and safety.

From the findings it can be concluded that personality factors are significantly related with automobile purchase decision. However different personality traits are linked to the evaluation of different automobile attributes in the buying decision. Therefore, marketers need to study and use personality factors in implementing their marketing strategy and increasing customer satisfaction.