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The demystifying cocoa sector in Thailand: Bean to bar chocolate as a functional food

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Cocoa is the raw ingredient of the world's most preferable products. A mass number of consumers preferably purchases top chocolate brands from either Europe or America. In contrast, a limited number of consumers perceive domestically produced chocolate in Thailand. According to the literature, dark chocolate is polyphenol-rich food derived from the seeds of *Theobroma cacao* L. The benefit of chocolate is increasingly studied because of the high volume of antioxidant properties *in vitro* of some polyphenolic constituents. The objectives of the research are to analyze bean-to-bar chocolate in Thailand in conjunction with Thai consumer perception towards Thai chocolate as a functional food and to consequently provide nutritional benefits of Thai chocolate. Based upon qualitative and quantitative research, the rich of antioxidant flavonoid in cocoa is considered as a highly beneficial antioxidant for human health when consumed in moderation. The research is designed by producing and evaluating chocolate made from raw cocoa beans from Chiang Mai and Nakornsrihammarat, Thailand in GMP laboratory and CAPPIC laboratory of National Pingtung University of Science and Technology throughout the chemical analysis method and the texture and color analysis method. Besides, the researcher evaluates the perceptions of 10 Thai bean-to-bar chocolate makers and 400 Thai consumers throughout the Hedonic sensory evaluation and the questionnaires analyzing by the ATLAS. ti. The results of the research, therefore, elaborate nutritional benefits of Thai chocolate to Thai consumers increasingly perceive as a functional food. And significantly, the researcher promotes Thai bean-to-bar chocolate as an alternative chocolate product among the world's top chocolate brands.

Biography

Chaiwat Piankarn has studied in the PhD program of the Department of Tropical Agriculture and International Cooperation at National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST) in Taiwan. Significantly, he is researching Thai chocolate in the chocolate laboratory at NPUST which it is covered the value chain from upstream, midstream and downstream of chocolate production. Besides, he is a lecturer of the faculty of Food Business Management at Panyapiwat Institute of Management under the top food industry in Thailand; CP All Public Company Limited. And he has been working and consulting the international food business for more than 3 years.

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