Purchase Intention of Organic Food; Perceived Value Overview

INTENTION D'ACHATS DES ALIMENTS BIOLOGIQUES; VUE D'ENSEMBLE DE VALEUR PERÇUE

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Abstract:　Organic food consumption among consumers is becoming popular nowadays. The attitude has emerged in today's modern world due to the increased in awareness of the importance to maintain a healthy lifestyle by consuming foods without unsafe additives, preservatives, flavor and coloring. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation, therefore promotes the healthy food characteristics. However, based on the reviewed of literatures, there were some inconsistencies in the previous research findings. In terms of perceived value towards organic food product, most of the research found positive and not less also discovered negative result mainly due the lack of some special value in the eyes of consumers. For instance, higher in price, not value for money, satisfied with the existing conventional food, doubts on the product guarantee and unclear declarations of the organic status. The research aims to identify the perceived value factor and its impact towards the customers' purchase intention in Malaysia. The findings of the study indicated that out of four factors, only perceived value and health consciousness influenced the customer purchase intention. However, food safety concern and religious factors were found to have less impact on customer purchase intention. The result has shown some similarities with the previous literature where

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perceived value was found to have significant impact towards the customers' willingness to purchase organic food products. Hence, this study is expected to provide understanding to both the industry players as well as academicians on the factors that influence Malaysian customer purchase intention towards organic food products as these phenomena might be different from one country to another. Future research should focus on the similar study with the extended scope to all states in Malaysia so that the findings could be compared and generalized to the entire population in Malaysia.

Key words: Organic Food; Healthy; Perceived Value; Consumption, Purchase Intention

Résumé: La consommation des aliments biologiques est devenue de plus en plus populaire chez les consommateurs de nos jours. L'attitude est apparue dans le monde moderne en raison de l'augmentation de la conscience de l'importance de maintenir une vie saine en consommant des aliments sans additifs dangereux, sans conservateurs, sans arômes et pigments. Les aliments biologiques sont produits sans utiliser les pesticides les plus classiques, les engrais à base d'ingrédients synthétiques ou des boues d'épuration; la bio-ingénierie, ou les radiations ionisantes encouragent donc les caractéristiques des aliments sains. Toutefois, sur la base revue des documents, il y avait des incohérences dans les conclusions de recherches antérieures. En termes de valeur perçue des produits des aliments biologiques, la plupart des recherches ont trouvé des résultats positifs et découvert aussi pas mal de résultats négatifs, principalement en raison du manque d'une certaine valeur particulière aux yeux des consommateurs. Par exemple, la hausse des prix, la satisfaction de la nourriture classique existante, des doutes sur la garantie du produit et la déclaration peu claire du statut biologique. La recherche vise à identifier les facteurs de la valeur perçue et leurs effets sur l'intention d'achat des consommateurs en Malaisie. Les conclusions de l'étude indiquent que parmi les quatre facteurs, seulement la valeur perçue et la conscience de la santé ont une l'influence sur l'intention d'achat des consommateurs. Toutefois, la préoccupation de sécurité alimentaire et des facteurs religieux ont été découvert d'avoir moins d'impact sur les intentions d'achat des consommateurs. Le résultat a montré quelques similitudes avec les documents précédents, où la valeur perçue a été trouvée d'avoir un impact significatif sur la volonté d'achat des produits alimentaires biologiques des consommateurs. Par conséquent, cette étude devrait fournir aux acteurs de l'industrie ainsi qu'aux académiciens une compréhension sur les facteurs qui influecent l'intention d'achat des produits alimentaires biologiques des consommateurs en Malaisie, car ces phénomènes pourraient être différentes d'un pays à l'autre. Les recherches futures devraient se concentrer sur une étude similaire avec un champ d'application étendu à tous les États de la Malaisie, et donc les résultats pouvaient être comparés et généralisés à toute la population en Malaisie.

Mots-Clés: alimentation biologique; santé; valeur perçue; consummation; intention d'achats

1. INTRODUCTION

According to National Organic Standards Board of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), organic food emphasizes the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance

environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Organic chicken for instance is different from the ordinary chicken as the breeding and growth require 'natural way' technique rather than the use of substance, vaccine and chemical to reduce the chicken maturity age. The conventional chicken growth and breeding is vulnerable to the use of unsafe and non-halal vaccine that is unhygienic and unsafe to consume. The meats of organic chicken are high in protein rather than non organic chicken which promotes antioxidant and anticancer to those who consume it.

Nowadays, the demand for organic food is growing in Malaysia. The consumption among customers is getting popular and the market is emerging tremendously, a similar trend facing by other countries in other parts of the world. According to International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the global sales of organic food and drink have increased by 43% between 2002 and 2005. The demand remains concentrated in Europe and North America, countries that are experiencing undersupply because production is not meeting the demand.

As the people are moving towards a modern and sophisticated life, similar effects are expected to the consumer food choices and preferences. With the increased in standard of living and level of education, consumers nowadays are intelligent enough in choosing the right healthy food especially organic food products. The habit also comes from the changes in lifestyle of the fast faced world which has been seen some lack in the conventional food safety. The increased consumers' interest in organic food has been attributed among others to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues (Childs and Polyzees, 1997; Zotos et al., 1999; Baltas, 2001; Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002). Organic products are obtained by processes friendly to the environment, by cultivation techniques that consider both the attributes of the final product and the production methods (Chinnici et al., 2002). Thus, the growing demand for organic food is expected to continue in the future.

Most of the previous research findings indicated positive value perceptions towards organic food products. Consumers perceive organic as a healthier alternative to conventional foods in that they contain more nutrients (Lea & Worsley, 2005; Padel & Foster, 2005; Baker et al., 2004; Lockie et al., 2004; Magnusson et al., 2001; Tregear et al., 1994) which enhance personal well being (Williams and Hammit, 2001), organic produce is also considered safer (Padel & Foster, 2005; Schifferstein & Oude Ophuis, 1998) and better in taste and more enjoyable than conventional products (Baker et al., 2004; Fotopoulos et al., 2003). The premium values were greatly dependent on the food itself, different cultivation methods, way of handling that guarantees risk minimization and etc (Gil et al., 2000). The consumers perceived that organic food has the value and benefits and that's why they are willing to pay more for the price. Hutchins and Greenhalgh, 1997 noted that approximately half of the consumers of their sample were willing to pay more for organic foods, the majority of them reaching levels of 10-20 percent. Meier-Ploeger and Woodward, 1999 claimed that 52 percent of the German consumers of their sample were willing to pay more for organic fruits and vegetables, 34 percent for animal products and 39 percent for grain products. Canavari et al., 2003 mentioned that the proposed premium price for organic peaches and apples was accepted by 65.8 percent of the Italian respondents of their survey. Similarly, Gil et al., 2000 concluded that actual Spanish organic consumers were willing to pay a premium of 15-25 percent for organic food

However, some studies also show negative value perceptions towards organic food products. A major repercussion in buying organics is the higher price compared to conventional food product prices (Jolly, 1991; Tregear et al., 1994; Roddy et al., 1996). Consumers are satisfied with the conventional food products they consume, thus threaten to the expansion of organic foods in the market (Magnusson et al., 2001). Moreover, it was found that organic product have limited availability (Jolly, 1991; Tregear et al., 1994; Roddy et al., 1996; Wandel and Bugge, 1997) and lack of some special value in the eyes of consumers (Tregear et al., 1994 and Roddy et al., 1996). Worner and Meier-Ploeger, 1999 mentioned on consumer doubts on the product guarantee, lack of promotion and unclear declarations of the organic status.

Meanwhile, the whole concept of this study was based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which

suggests that a person's behavior is determined by his/her intention to perform the behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). But what constitutes to predict the influence of behavior has become the main interest of the study. Hence, the main objective of the study is to clarify the roles of perceived value in predicting the consumer purchase intention of organic foods. Though there were some inconsistencies in the previous research finding, this study is trying to find the possibilities of the effects in Malaysian organic food market environment. With such findings, it is hoped that the key factor that leads to customer purchase intention towards organic food products could be explored and discovered to provide a real understanding to the phenomena that are always changing in the consumer market environment.

From the review of literature, Figure 1 depicted the proposed theoretical framework of the study.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Hypothesis Development

Given the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is no significant difference between health consciousnesses towards purchase intention of the organic food.

H2: There is no significant difference between perceived values towards purchase intention of the organic food.

H3: There is no significant difference between food safety concerns towards purchase intention of the organic food.

H4: There is no significant difference between religious factor towards purchase intention of the organic food.

2.2 Research Design

This research is a quantitative research where sources of information are gathered from questionnaires. Instrument utilized was through the self-administered questionnaire containing closed-ended and scales to matrix questions. This study is interested in describing the characteristics of a population or phenomenon, thus the study is a descriptive study. This study also used hypotheses testing to determine the influence of health consciousness, perceived value, food safety concern and religious factor towards customer purchase intention of organic products. The type of sampling is probability sampling. Data collected were based on cluster sampling since the respondents were selected mainly from two big towns in the state of Kedah such as Sungai Petani and Alor Setar. These two towns are places where most of organic food restaurants and shops are located. The population identified to be estimated as 500 organic food customers. Out of the total population, 150 respondents have responded to the research survey. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was made during the pilot study. The scale was piloted amongst a sample of twenty (20) private workers and university students.

2.3 Data Analysis Method

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17 to compute all the data gathered from the questionnaire. The techniques of analysis used in this study were descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential analysis (regression) to sum up the data collected. The questionnaires used are adopted from the questionnaires developed from past researches. In order to describe the sample characteristics in the data analysis report, demographic data (Section A) such as age, gender, ethnicity, and religious, place of living and education level are included in the questionnaire. These data are structured in a range of response option, rather than seeking exact figures. In the subsequent sections, all the study variable scales are measured using Likert scale rated varying from 1 to 7 (highly disagree to highly agree). Health consciousness was constructed in

seven measurement items, perceived value was constructed in six measurement items, food safety concern in six measurement items, religious factor in seven measurement items and purchase intention in five measurement items respectively. Pre-Testing of the questionnaire was made during the pilot study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of this study. The data are interpreted using the mean, factor analysis and regression methods of SPSS.

3.1. Pilot Study

Improvement has been made based from the feedback by reducing the questionnaire Likert scale rating from 1-7 to 1-5 in order to ease respondents' understanding and interpretation of each question.

3.2 Demographic Profile

The result of the demographic profile shows that majority of the respondents are male (54.7%), age from 21 until 30 years old (36%), Malay in race (82.7%), Muslim in religion (83.3%), working in private sector (38%) and low to medium income group (40%).

3.3 Reliability Analysis

From the reliability analysis result as shown in Table 1, all factors including independent and dependent variables were found to be good reliability with all the Cronbach's Alpha result are of above 0.6.

3.4 Factor Analysis

Based on KMO measure of sampling adequacy test in Table 2, it was found that the factor analysis data was appropriate with the value of 0.817, which falls between the ranges of being great and appropriate of factor analysis data. Bartlett's Test was utilized with the result which indicates a highly significant result with $p=0.000$ ($p<0.05$) and therefore factor analysis is appropriate. From the results obtained in rotated matrix table 3, all five factors can be accepted with attributes required for re-shufflement and reduction. 5 items with the result of less than 0.5 were omitted and disregarded from data analysis. This reduction is possible because the attributes are related. The rating given to any one attribute is partially the result of the influence of other attributes.

3.5 Regression Analysis

Table 4 shows the R-Square and Durbin-Watson test. R-Square test result of 0.503 can be accepted for the regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson test result of 1.811, an indicator that the autocorrelation is almost reaching to zero or there is a significant difference which exists between the dependent and independent variables (no autocorrelation). From the ANOVA in table 5, it appears that the three predictor variables are not all equal to each other and could be used to predict the dependent variable, brand loyalty as being indicated by F value of 15.794 and strong significance level of 0.000 ($p<0.05$). Further as shows in table 6, the results show that out of four factors, only health consciousness and perceived value are significant ($p<0.05$) influence towards purchase intention with high Beta 0.205 and 0.433 respectively. However, food safety concern and religious are less significant impact ($p>0.05$) with low Beta of -.007 and .096 respectively. The VIF value of less than 10 for all variables show that the problem of multi-collinearly have not existed and all data are mutually exclusive. As for the interpretation, the test indicates that health consciousness and perceived value have significant influence towards customer purchase intention of organic food. By examining the t statistic for all the independent

variables it has apparently confirmed that health consciousness and perceived value have significant relationship due to strong significant level ($p<0.05$) with purchase intention, indicating that the null hypotheses for H1 and H2 are wrong and can be rejected. On the other hand, the null hypotheses for H3 and H4 which representing food safety concern and religious are correct and can be accepted.

3.6 Discussion

The statistical results show that Malaysian consumers place relatively high level of importance on health consciousness and perceived value whereas low level of importance on food safety concern and religious factor in their intention to purchase organic food products. Perceived value is not all about price alone. It is also about the benefits of having, using or consuming a product. Customers form expectations about the value and satisfaction that various market offerings will deliver and buy accordingly (Kotler, 2010). As such, if a person perceives that the outcome from performing a behavior is positive, he/she will have a positive attitude toward performing that behavior. People consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not to engage in a given behavior (Ajzen I., 1980). These perceptions are not fixed and can be changed if the product has high level of awareness, good image from marketing activities such as advertising, sales promotion and etc. Organic food products are always being portrayed in the mass media or through national and NGO's advertising efforts (health campaigns) that organic food has more nutritional value because the breeding and growth of organic food (for instance chicken) is being done naturally without involving any use of hormones and chemical. Besides that, organic food products are known for their superior quality and more freshness than conventional food. For instance, organic fruit and vegetables appeared to have more freshness as they were produced from the farms that are free from chemicals and pesticides. This natural growth product also can provide more nutrients and vitamins that are good for health. When these values have been communicated effectively, the consumers will develop positive impression which eventually could turn into the purchase, satisfaction and loyalty towards the product.

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that perceived value has significantly influenced the purchase intention of organic food products. The results have shown some similarities with the previous research findings where perceived value is an important factor and become the deciding factor to purchase organic food products. The consumers know what are the best to them as consuming the right food (organic food) and taking appropriate dietary measures may always bring a healthy and happy life. Price is not a prime factor as long as the organic food can deliver more nutritional value than the ordinary conventional food in the market. As the people in the world today are better informed through the explosion of information technology and internet, all of the benefits of organic foods are easily available to the consumer just by a click of a finger tip. The more information received the more the customer will perceive organic food products as something that has value and worth buying.

As for the recommendations, it is important to increase the awareness of organic food product value and benefits in order to develop health consciousness among the consumers. This can be done by carrying out effective product awareness program in trade shows, road tours, exhibitions and advertisements on a regular basis. Secondly, there is a need to carry out effective campaigns to introduce organic food products in the market. Frequent campaigns can help to establish the positive perception of consumers towards the organic food products. Thirdly, more efforts should be placed in innovating more organic products. Certain budget for funds should be allocated on R&D of organic food to find the best way to produce more organic foods in bigger quantity at a minimum cost. Lastly, there is a need to increase the government's involvement in the development of organic food products by providing incentives and tax exemption to the organic food supply across the whole supply chain network. Private sectors also should play a role in helping the government by increasing the use of more organic raw materials in the production of food. This will increase the supply of organic food products which will indirectly create more suppliers and entrepreneurs in the organic food industry. Eventually, a cheaper

cost can be passed to consumers in the form of lower and competitive prices as compared to the conventional food products in the market.

Future research should focus on the similar study of perceived value factor affecting customer purchase intention towards organic food products with the extended scope to all states in Malaysia. By doing this, hopefully we can get a clearer picture on the tested existing and new variables which can be further examined. Eventually, a comparison can be made between the findings so that more constructible findings could be generalized to the entire population in Malaysia.

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Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework
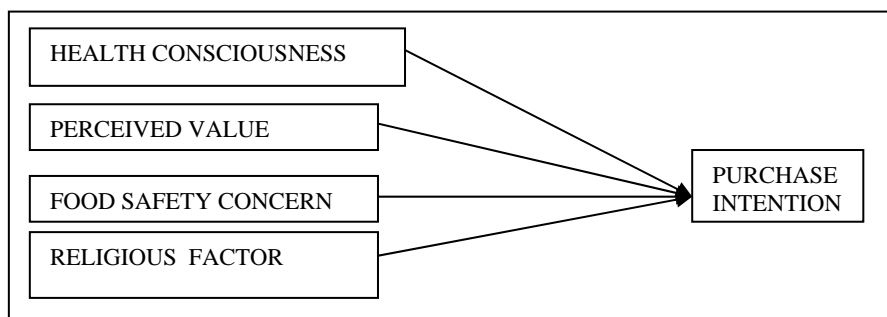
Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Factor	Status	Cronbach's Alpha Result
Health consciousness	Independent Variable	.655
Perceived value	Independent Variable	.854
Food safety concern	Independent Variable	.732
Religious	Independent Variabl	.957
Purchase intention	Dependent Variable	.938

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
My family members prefer halal products	.945	.002	.029	-.006	.010
I like to choose halal products anywhere I go to get a meal	.938	-.036	.030	.002	.025
Preparation of organic food is forbidden in my religion	.906	.039	.059	.104	-.068
I do not bother to drive far in order to buy halal meal	.890	.038	.000	-.048	.092
Preparation of organic food is in harmony with my religious values	.875	.139	.112	.119	-.095
My friends would think that I should choose halal product	.856	.094	.063	-.022	.290
I expect to consume organic food	.084	.885	.257	.008	.077
I would buy organic food products	.147	.862	.207	.044	.105
I plan to consume organic food	.089	.851	.207	.076	.113
I try to consume organic food for my long term health benefits	.145	.779	.197	-.034	.292
I intend to purchase organic food produce within the next fortnight	-.043	.779	.272	.094	.258
Organic products have more freshness	.052	.208	.791	-.015	.030
Organic products have superior quality	-.069	.077	.782	.095	.131
Organic food are natural food products	.069	.161	.767	.107	.075
Organic products are tastier	.089	.278	.717	-.064	.170
Organic food has more nutritional value than conventional food	.032	.317	.670	.231	-.018
I'm really worried about food safety because of my concerns with animal diseases such as bird flu, influenza H1N1	.117	-.014	.144	.768	-.092
Quality and safety of meat nowadays concern me	.084	.243	.238	.734	-.106
I have the impression that sacrifice a lot for my health	.020	-.069	.076	.639	.330
I think it is important to know well how to eat healthily	.138	-.061	.077	.615	.232
I think that I take health into account a lot in my life	.106	.070	-.145	.584	.292
I am prepared to leave a lot to eat as healthily as possible	-.007	-.041	.063	.531	.499
I reflect a lot about my health	.024	.267	.026	.041	.739
I'm alert to changes in my health	.001	-.003	.264	.072	.739
I take responsibility for the state of my health	.032	.157	.073	.102	.686
I consider myself very health conscious	.039	.115	.011	.168	.586

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.817
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3.049E3
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

Table 4: Result of R Square and Durbin-Watson Test

Model	R Square	Dutbin-Watson
1	0.503	1.811

Table 5: Result of Annova Test

Model	F	Sig.
1	15.794	0.000

Table 6: Result of Coefficients

Variable	Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		.299	.766		
Health Consciousness	.205	2.419	.017	.671	1.491
Perceived Value	.433	5.906	.000	.894	1.119
Food Safety Concern	-.007	-.080	.937	.690	1.449
Religious	.096	1.372	.172	.973	1.028