

Influence of Nutrient Rich and Eco-Friendly Organic Food Products on the Purchase Intentions of Malaysian Consumers

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ABSTRACT

Organic foods are becoming popular in today's modern world. People's awareness towards the importance of healthy foods consumption has increased. The critical importance in stabilizing the style of living by consuming healthy protein by safe additives, safe flavorings, safe colorings, safe preservatives and those that are claimed to be pesticides-free has been the main focus for many consumers nowadays. The focus of this study and to examine the extent to which the Malaysian consumers would accept the type of food offered in the markets and examine factors like food safety, food quality and eco-friendly nature of organic food that influence the consumers' acceptance toward organic foods in Malaysia. The conclusion of this study will assist the organic foods suppliers to strategize and improve the selection of food adaptable in markets of Malaysia that will help the sustainability of the company in the long run.

Keywords: organic food, nutritional value, eco-friendly, consumer's choices, purchase intentions

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INTRODUCTION

Organic farming is the latest and emerging trend of modern world. People are becoming habitual of consuming environment friendly, nutrient rich and readily available organic products. In the late twentieth century, the world saw a change in outlook in the compass of training and in the demeanor of individuals towards life. As a feature of this move, there was a stamped increment in the inclination for natural nourishment. Organic foods are environment friendly and safe for health because they are nutrient rich. Nowadays, the market growths of organic products are growing rapidly. Customarily, numerous ranchers were ignorant of the advanced and logical nourishment creation systems and consequently, they didn't utilize engineered manures, pesticides or other yield protecting synthetic substances during the time spent nourishment creation (Sani & Siow, 2014; De Silva et al., 2018a; De Silva et al., 2018b; Nikhashemi et al., 2013).

information on the advantages of natural nourishment Golnaz, Zainalabidin, Mad Nasir, and Eddie Chiew (2010). This demand accompanying the trend and growth are expected to continue. Subsequently, natural cultivating assumed a lower priority, and customers started buying ordinarily developed nourishment due to its sheer wealth and lower costs. In the long run, the unpredictable utilization of synthetic compounds prompted ecological crumbling (Zailani, Arrifin, Abd Wahid, Othman, & Fernando, 2010; Dewi et al., 2019; Pambreni et al., 2019; Tarofder et al., 2017). Numerous buyers, nowadays, have confidence in the saying "For getting healthy, the kind of food you eat is everything" an observation that has profoundly added to the expansion sought after for natural nourishment (Norazmir et al., 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that organic foods are becoming attractive in Malaysia and there are more interest and intention towards understanding the Malaysian behaviors and attitude towards organic foods (Habib, Abu Dardak, & Zakaria, 2011; Doa et al., 2019; Maghfuriyah et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2019).

The very intent of consumers to make purchase choices is based on their perception of the value that products and services offer. The essential potential approach to get bacterial pollution in plant plants is pet compost found in natural cultivating. Natural farming joins a few works on including the use of natural composts, privately adjusted seeds/breeds, organic bug control and inter cropping with nitrogen-fixing trees, or vegetables, or with other synergistic yields. Principles of living beings are a great deal types of facultative anaerobic microbes, protozoa, worms, infections and prisons. In sustenance related assessments, "safe" is normally recognized as one of the basic segments driving customer lead towards buying and eating nourishment sources. "Safe sustenance" is a thing that one can eat with no fear of becoming ill. Thusly regular sustenance is viewed as having high worth, anyway it is in



Figure 1: The USDA Organic Label and Malaysian organic label

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical analysis of literature is based upon the two main variables which are food safety and environmental safety considerations of organic food. These two factors adversely affect the consumer choices and their purchase preferences. This pattern thrived in spite of the

like manner saw as shielded sustenance due to characteristic agrarian or developing practice (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002).

Consciousness of health is used to describe someone who is keen to eat healthy and nutritious foods in order to ensure one's health. In other words, 'health conscious' describes an attitude of awareness in which one has towards one's diet and healthy lifestyle (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

Many studies reveal that health consciousness is highly interrelated with organic food consumption. In the course of the most recent decade, customers' trust in staple quality highlights diminished significantly, fundamentally in light of developing environmental mindfulness and numerous nourishment outrages. Purchasers incorporate began to search for more secure and better took care of nourishments produced in more ecologically well disposed, real and nearby frameworks. That finding has confirmed that health benefit is one of the important attributes of organic foods (Lin, Sher, & Shih, 2005; Pathiratne et al., 2018; Rachmawati et al., 2019; Seneviratne et al., 2019; Sudari et al., 2019; Tarofder et al., 2019).

For this, advertisers need to think about the forthcoming purchasers to whom they can advance natural nourishment. Naturally delivered nourishments are generally considered to fulfill the recently referenced requests, at last causing lower ecological effects and higher nutritive qualities (Ulaga & Chacour, 2001). Until now, this sort of feeling, natural and normal yields incorporate less nitrates, nitrites and pesticide buildups yet, typically, progressively dry issue, supplement C, phenol mixes, fundamental amino acids and all out sugars than regular harvests. Natural and common yields in like manner contain measurably more nutrient mixes and by and large have better tangible and long haul extra room characteristics. Abdullahi et al. (2016) Buy expectation as point out, is a decent indicator for conduct while expressed that aim variable assumes a pivotal job toward conduct since aim is considered as a middle person of persuasive elements that affect a conduct. Anyway, there are likewise a few negatives: vegetation developed in natural frameworks for the most part has 20% lower yields than routinely made harvests. A great deal of significant provokes should be tended to in the showing up years: ecological, bacterial and contagious poisons of natural and regular harvests and, the most basic issue, the impact of natural and common nourishment utilization upon creature and human wellbeing.

To relate this to the natural nourishment study, utilization of natural nourishments or natural horticultural practice, it is some way or another, a roundabout showing of our anxiety and care to the earth and with this propensity, it is foreseen that a superior domain would follow. In nourishment related examinations, "safe" is commonly acknowledged as one of the essential components driving shopper conduct towards purchasing and eating food sources. "Safe nourishment" is an item that one can eat with no dread of getting sick. Consequently natural nourishment is seen as having high worth, however it is likewise viewed as sheltered nourishment because of natural agrarian or cultivating practice (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

Toh and Birchenough (2000) As Natural nourishment creation and purchasing (conduct) premium has expanded as of late among the shoppers, along these lines, a few

experimental investigations on this market have been handled since the natural nourishment showcase has started developing pattern. The very intent of consumers to make purchase choices is based on their perception of the value that products and services offer. The move in customer disposition happened in light of the fact that natural nourishment has satisfied the desires for current shoppers. The essential potential approach to get bacterial pollution in plant plants is pet compost found in natural cultivating. Natural farming joins a few works on including the use of natural composts, privately adjusted seeds/breeds, organic bug control and inter cropping with nitrogen-fixing trees, or vegetables, or with other synergistic yields. Principles of living beings are a great deal types of facultative anaerobic microbes, protozoa, worms, infections and prisons.

In sustenance related assessments, "safe" is normally recognized as one of the basic segments driving customer lead towards buying and eating nourishment sources. "Safe sustenance" is a thing that one can eat with no fear of becoming ill. Thusly regular sustenance is viewed as having high worth, anyway it is in like manner saw as shielded sustenance due to characteristic agrarian or developing practice. As point out, the expectation buy relationship has pulled in a considerable lot of observational investigations featuring critical irregularities between buy goal and buy conduct. In the Malaysian context, Sani and Siow (2014) Also, found that natural buy expectation is conceptualized as the chance and ability of a person to offer inclination to items that having Eco-accommodating sort over other customary items in their purchasing thought (Oktora & Achyar, 2014; Nikhashemi et al., 2017; Tarofder et al., 2019; Ulfah et al., 2019; Tarofder et al., 2016; Udriyah et al., 2019). Natural buying is characterized as buying merchandise and ventures which have less unsafe for natural and human wellbeing, natural buy conduct identifies with the utilization of the items and administrations which are valuable to the earth, recyclable and receptive to environmental concerns. The connection among expectations and exercises has been made concerning a wide range of sorts of practices. In this manner, the expectations to buy natural cheap food are noteworthy indicators of genuine conduct right now. Further states, utilizing arranged conduct hypothesis, the expression of aim can be clarified which expect that people consistently have a reason in acting (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

In this manner, since the buy expectation assists most natural nourishment makers with keying out the conduct of clients and their recognition into the product then it is something critical to think since goal shows how extreme an individual is to make a few endeavors. Thus, this factor is selected to be further tested among Malaysian working adults. This research would like to further understand, how Malaysian working adults perceive health consciousness in relation to their decisions in purchasing foods (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

Hypotheses 1: Health consciousness is the main influential factor which affects the purchase intentions of Malaysian working adults towards organic food.

Studies have shown that the goals of purchasing natural nourishment to the conduct is certain and has been demonstrated that the viability of the TPB of natural nourishment utilization (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). While examined that emotional standard and saw control altogether help the buyer's expectation to

purchase natural nourishment. While brand character is an alluring and engaging idea in the market today that portrayed it as one of the center elements of the brand personality and maybe as the nearest factor to the purchasers' dynamic procedure of purchasing and it likewise alludes to the idea that connections are basic in network life. To relate this with organic food study, consumption of organic foods or organic agricultural practice, it is somehow, an indirect demonstration of our concern and care to the environment and with this habit, it is anticipated that a better environment would ensue (Kuo, Wu, & Deng, 2009).

In food-related studies, the word "safe" is generally accepted as one of the basic factors driving consumer behavior towards buying and eating foods. "Safe food" is a product that one can eat without any fear of becoming ill. Thus organic food is perceived not only as having high value, but it is also regarded as safe food as a result of organic agricultural or farming practice (Yee & San, 2011). In this study, as organic foods are perceived as having high quality as compared to non-organic food. Something else, characterized Brand character as "the hover of human trademark related with an exchange name" and it's imagined to be a significant component for the achievement of the exchange name terms of taste and decision. Henceforth, clients' perspectives and practices towards the disgrace will think about brand, character which may respect on the shopper propensity regarding the brand and at last influence buy probability Riaz, Farrukh, Rehman, and Ishaque (2016) In another exploration led, specialists reviewed purchaser demeanor toward hindrances of utilization for natural items (Operation). The examination was led in the Gorgan city of Golestan area in Iran. The example size contained 150 individuals through basic arbitrary testing strategy by utilizing Cochran's table. The information was gathered as a survey (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015).

As indicated by aftereffect of factor examination test obstructions of Operation utilization were sorted into four factors as: Institutional boundaries (15.75%). There was increment in mindfulness about the impacts of unsafe synthetic substances in the nourishment that is developed utilizing concoction composts and bug sprays (Nie & Zepeda, 2011). They found that there was a developing pattern to buy natural nourishment. The analysts fell that an investigation of factors that really incites buyers to turn towards natural nourishment is significant. It was discovered that a portion of the noticeable inspiring elements to buy natural nourishment included ecological concern, well being concern and way of life, item quality and abstract standards. The significant discoveries of research were that the general mindfulness on Natural Nourishment Items among people in general is expanding and their mentality towards buy goal is 4 constructive. Numerous investigations distinguish and clarify the variables that impact purchaser purchasing conduct of natural nourishment in Bangladeshi Markets Ball et al. (2009). It was found through this exploration that absence of mindfulness and information about natural nourishment, absence of accessibility and constrained scope of items, significant expense and high respect for affirmation naming were the serious issues looked sought after for natural nourishment items (Yee & San, 2011). The impacts of these variables were seen as noteworthy to 5 change purchasing conduct. An examination on another harvest creation framework in western Canada called

Pesticide Free Creation. This harvest framework stresses decreased utilization of pesticide in mix with expanded reliance on rancher information on agronomic practices that eases weed, bug and malady pressure (Bravo, Cordts, Schulze, & Spiller, 2013).

At end, products are always perceived as green products that contribute to the environment, and organic is also categorized as safe food in compliance to the organic agricultural practice. Hence, these two factors are selected to be further tested among Malaysian working adults on their relation with organic food consumption (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The exploration was to contemplate if Canadian customers would pay a premium for nourishment items. The examination found that in excess of 65 percent respondents demonstrated readiness to pay a one to 10% premium when contrasted with an ordinary nourishment item. "Most organic products are prone to food borne illnesses, within recent years organic food recalls have risen, however they still only account for 10 percent of all food recalls" The finding would provide an understanding on the reason behind consumers buying products (Al-Swidi, Huque, Hafeez, & Shariff, 2014).

Hypotheses 2: there is significant link amid purchasing intentions of Malaysian people and environmental protection concern by use of eco-friendly organic food products.

Five percent of respondents were happy to pay in excess of a 20% premium Ahmad and Juhdi (2010) Those individuals, who wanted to purchase these items, were worried about wellbeing and condition, were happy to switch markets and were youthful. Dispersion channels outfitted towards wellbeing nourishment stores (or wellbeing nourishment focuses inside 2 supermarkets) are likely focuses for PFPTM nourishment items (Voon, Ngui, & Agrawal, 2011). By understanding the main factor that influences such consumption which can stimulate the purchase intention, it will provide some meaningful findings to the organic food producers to formulate the best strategy in order to sustain in the competitive market. Hence, the intention of purchase is the most suitable dependent variable for this study (Evans & Berman, 2001).

METHODS

This research is exploratory in nature as it includes literature reviews in order to gain insight into the research problem and to identify the main issue in relation to the consumers' perceptions towards organic foods among the Malaysian working adults. Exploratory research is used to gain background information about the research problem in order to clarify the problem and to generate hypothesis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A sample size of 300 consumers was randomly selected to answer the questionnaires. From the total of 300 targeted respondents, only 215 responded on the questionnaires, thus the response rate is approximately 71.6 percent. In order to increase the representative of the sample, the questionnaires have been sent to as many respondents as possible with different demographic and geographic backgrounds into the sample. For this study, the respondents around Malaysia are accessed through the Internet. A structured questionnaires were distributed through e-mail and by using the most currently popular website which is Facebook, URL : <http://facebook.com>.

The survey questionnaire was constructed into five sections. In the first part of the questionnaires, Section A, respondents were asked to provide demographic and

socioeconomic data which included age, gender, race, education level, main occupation etc. Section B and C aim to study the respondents' perception towards organic food consumptions. Section D, is to investigate the importance of attributes which had influenced respondents during their food-shopping. This section aims to understand the purchase intention towards organic foods, based on the four main factors investigated in this study. The last section, Section E is to investigate the contributing factors influencing the respondents in making the decision whether or not to purchase the organic food products. The questionnaire is ended with an open-ended question asking the respondents to comment on the overall survey. The questionnaire is based on structural questions (based on the Likert scale) that required respondents to mark their answers. Five-unit scales were used in the questionnaire to simplify the data analysis. Table 1 highlights the main points of the whole research design.

Table 1: Sample Descriptions

Details	No
1. Total number of e-survey sent to potential respondents	300
2. Number of questionnaire responses received	215
3. Number of questionnaire responses selected for analysis 200	210
4. Percentage of total responses over total number of e-survey invitation	71%
5. Percentage of total responses selected over e-survey received	97.7%

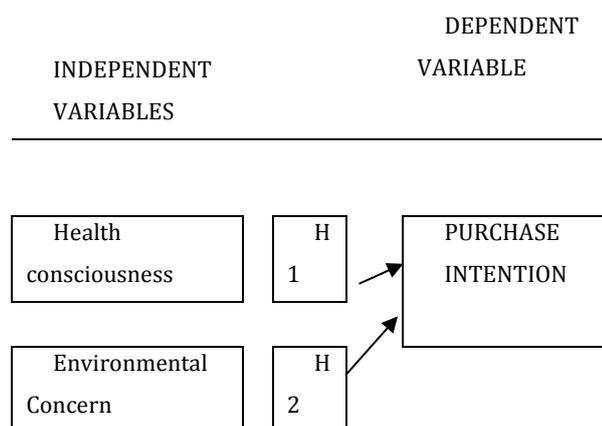


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

ANALYSIS

There were three items to check the health conscious factor as Table 2. The results for the factor of health consciousness in accordance with reliability are shown in Table 2. The upper side of the average means score indicates that, health consciousness is on the top of the list of priority as the perception adopted towards organic foods. To explain this, 85% of respondents agree that health consciousness is the main driving factor for the organic food consumption.

Table 2 Reliability Statistic for Health Consciousness Items.

Qualities	Mean	Scale Variance	Correlation	Alpha
Healthier	8.433	2.17	.610	.795
More_nutritious	8.638	1.80	.648	.763
Healthy_family	8.500	1.83	.741	.660

Four items are used to evaluate the environmental concern as Table 3. More than 75% of the respondents agreed that organic food consumption can make the environment better, which indirectly contributes to the environmental issues and also a way for them to protect the environment as well as showing that they care and feel responsible towards preserving the environment.

Table 3 Reliability Statistic for Environmental Concern Items

Qualities	Mean	Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Better environment	12.1429	.591	.837
Minimize Environ Issue	12.3714	.699	.793
Care environment	12.3857	.708	.789
Protect environment	12.4286	.721	.783

The high mean score highlights the fact that the concern towards environmental issues is at a high level of perception towards organic food interest. 81% respondents strongly agree that consuming organic foods products can equate adopting an environmental friendly attitude and outlook.

The 'purchase intention' items are the combination of the four factors that are selected for this study where two questions were posed for each of the factor. Overall, more than 80% respondents agreed that the purchase intention towards organic foods is correlated to the health consciousness factor. Meanwhile, 62% to 77% of respondents agreed that the reason for organic foods purchase is due to the people's concern on food safety and environmental issues.

Table4: Summary of Purchase Intention Distribution

Items	Distribution Average	Mean Average	Reliability of Items
Purchase Intention due to Health Consciousness	85.5%	4.27	Good
Purchase Intention due to Environmental Concern	63%	3.79	Good

Overall result on the purchase intention items are presented in Table 4. From the above result of the purchased intention towards organic food products categorized by the main factors, it is found that customers are willing to pay for organic foods products due to health consciousness, followed by the high perceived value towards organic foods. However, this result cannot explain the overall purchase intention towards organic foods consumption. The overall purchase intention of each independent variable will be further investigated using the Pearson Correlation Test. The Pearson correlation test is used to measure the relationship between variables, whether it is positive or negative. These tests are carried out to examine the individual relationships between the independent variables (health consciousness and environmental concern) and the dependent variable (intention to purchase organic products). In order to determine the strength of the relationship, the Guilford's rule of thumb is employed.

Table 5: Correlations Output for Purchase Intention

		Purchased_ Intention_ Organic Food
Health_ Consciousness	Pearson Correlation	.466(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

	N	210
Environmental Concern	Pearson Correlation	.511(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	210

Hypothesis 1

There is significant relationship between purchased intention towards organic foods and the consumer's health consciousness.

Hypothesis 2

There is also a significant relationship between the purchase intention towards organic foods and the consumer's concern for the environmental issues. The multiple linear regression (MLR) test using the stepwise regression method is subsequently conducted to find determinants that could explain the intention to purchase organic food products. The method is appropriate because this study has one dependent variable (the purchase intention towards organic foods) and carries two independent variables (health consciousness and environmental concern) to predict a single dependent variable.

Table 6: Regression Output for Intention to Purchase Organic Food Products

R-Square	0.312		
Adjusted R-Square	0.299		
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.52272		
ANOVA Output			
Model	Df	F	P Value
Regression	4	23.292	.000(a)
Residual	205		
Total	209		

Regression Coefficients				
Component	Unstandardised Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	1.714	.255		
Health consciousness	.072	.089	.817	.415
Environment	.342	.067	5.087	.000

Table 7: Hypotheses Results Obtained from Several Testing

Hypothesis		Accept / Reject
H1	There is a significant relationship between the purchase intention towards organic foods and the consumers' health consciousness.	Rejected
H2	There is a significant relationship between the purchase intention towards organic foods and the consumers' concern for the environmental issues.	Accepted

Based on the several testing that have been conducted to test the hypotheses of the study, this is to conclude that there are significant relationships between the perceived value and environmental concerns, with the purchase intention towards organic foods. Consumers' perception towards this type of foods is highly related with the consumers' concern towards the environment and also the high value they perceive towards organic food consumption.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study also recommends for the retailers to be more proactive in approaching the targeted consumers. Knowing how consumers perceive organic food products

by understanding the reasons of buying would help the retailers to establish a proper communication message. There should be a room for feedback between consumers and the retailers. The environmental concerns are highlighted in the finding; this study suggests that the industry's development must be consistent with the consciousness towards environmental issues. The most important concern related to future prospects of organic food is rapidly increasing demand which should be properly addressed. In this whole process the environmental protection should be kept in mind.

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