

Research Article

Motivational Factors to Consume Organic Food Products Among University Students in Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that organic food products have gained attention among consumers. However, studies on youth motivation towards consuming organic food products are still scarce. Therefore, this study investigates the motivation to consume organic food products by examining the relationship between consumer attitude, price perception, health concerns, and environmental concerns toward motivation to consume organic food products among public university students in Kelantan. Questionnaire surveys were distributed to a sample of 235 students from three public universities in Kelantan. The data were gathered and analyzed for descriptive, reliability, and correlation analysis using SPSS version 26. The study found that consumer attitude, price perception, health concern, and environmental concern were significantly correlated with the motivation to consume organic food products. This research contributes to the factors that motivate youth to consume organic food products. The study also provides information and resources for the food industry in providing organic food for university students. Future studies should provide qualitative data, investigate other potential factors influencing the motivations for organic product consumption, and expand the study with a larger and definitive population size.

Keywords: Consumer Attitude; Price Perception; Health Concern; Environmental Concern; Organic Food Product

INTRODUCTION

Organic food products use natural and organic ingredients that support consumers' health. The ingredients of organic food products come from sources that are believed to be safe because the production process starts from the cultivation of ingredients using organic farming techniques. David et al., (2020) found that using organic farming techniques is a method farmers use to produce organic food products. According to Nguyen and Truong,

(2020) study, based on statements from the World Health Organization (WHO), organic food is considered to be the result of natural gardening, where the fertilizer used is made organically without mixed materials and the way to prevent insects is to use biological methods. Sulaiman et al., (2020) organic food has become a growing priority among the community. Demand for organic food products increased due to consumers' awareness of the importance of their health (Melovic et al.,2020). In 2017, the sale of organic food products reached 97 billion US dollars, with the US, Germany, France, and China having the largest market. Organic food products have advantages such as being free from harmful substances and having content that is believed to be safe, making people reluctant to buy. This study was carried out because it looked at the statistics of deaths in the community in Malaysia caused by suffering from various health problems such as diabetes and heart disease due to irregular and unhealthy eating habits. Also, conducting this study in Kelantan is essential as it is one of the states with various unhealthy and sweet foods.

Numerous studies on organic food products have been conducted and have revealed a connection between consumers' health concerns and their propensity to consume organic foods. An example of a study from Singh and Verma, (2017) makes price health concern and perception as a factor in consumer behavior to buy organic food products. Ditlevsen et al., (2019) have also researched organic food products, but it is more focused on consumers' health when using organic products. Previous studies have found that attitude, price perception, health concerns, and environmental concerns influence the motivation to use organic food products (Yang, Shaaban & Nguyen, 2014; Singh & Verma, 2017; Sulaiman et al., 2020; Nguyen & Truong, 2020). However, studies that link the above factors with the motivation to use organic food products for university students are still limited. Therefore, this study investigates factors that motivate university students to consume organic products. The objectives of the present study are 1. To investigate the relationship between consumer attitude and motivation to consume organic food products; 2. To determine the relationship between price perception and motivation to consume organic food products; 3. To examine the relationship between health concerns and motivation to consume organic food products, and; 4. To investigate the relationship between environmental concerns and motivation to consume organic food products.

This research contributes to the motivation factors of university students to consume organic and nutritious food. The present study also promotes awareness among university students to eat more organic or nutritious food. In addition, people are encouraged to stick with chemical-free organic food products. The present study also encourages consumers from the youth group, especially university students, to focus on the nutritional value of the food they take. On the packaging nutritional label, consumers can also find the organic purity, giving more assurance to young people to eat organic food. In addition, this study can be used as a resource for the food industry to determine what influences university students' dietary decisions and to increase the size of its market in Malaysia. This healthy diet can help students improve their performance in learning and encourage positive behavior. Improving food quality can provide students with good body health (Chen, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organic food product

The production of organic food started with cultivation methods that do not use chemicals.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), (2019), organic food was processed according to the rules set by agencies related to the organic sector. Organic food is produced using biological, mechanical, and physical procedures that preserve the essential quality of each component and the final product (IFOAM, 2006). When consumers have a sense of concern for environmental issues, it causes them to be motivated to use organic food products (Diekmann & Franzen, 1999). The growth of organic products was partly because of developing marketing trends where consumers were exposed to information on organic products and their benefits before they decided to make a purchase (Thogersen, 2016). A study by Singh and Verma (2017) found that health awareness, knowledge, subjective norms, and price factors have influenced consumers to use organic food products. Organic foods are increasingly preferred over conventional. The rise in the prevalence of lifestyle conditions like heart disease and depression significantly impacts how modern consumers change (Rana & Paul, 2017).

Consumer Attitude

Pang et al., (2021) study found that the attitude of consumers depends on their knowledge of something known as a cognitive component, while after that will involve the feelings and emotions of consumers about something that refers to the effective component. Then, the way they act will be involved, called the behavioral component. According to a study by Sulaiman et al. (2020), consumer attitudes have encouraged them to buy. Consumers' positive attitude towards buying organic food products enables them to evaluate the product and determine whether it is good or bad for them if they buy it. Students with a positive attitude towards organic food will be more motivated to consume organic food on campus and at home (Dahm et al., 2009). Rana and Paul, (2017) and Adamtey et al., (2016) have stated that the change in the attitude of each consumer towards organic food products is due to products that meet the tastes of modern consumers. A better attitude is related to behavior. If individuals have a good attitude toward something, then there will be an intention to behave towards that matter (Ajzen, 2015).

Price Perception

The term "perception" has meanings that are acknowledged in the marketing literature. The act of choosing, compiling, and interpreting sensations into a coherent whole is called perception. The frame of reference of the individual affects this process, which is very subjective (Hanna et al., 2009). Marketers are keenly aware of consumer impressions since they are crucial to businesses. In actuality, the only reality that counts in the market is the one that is created in the minds of the consumers, who are the (fair or unfair) judges of the goods and the masters of their own decisions. Here, this study investigated how individuals view the qualities of organic food. Most research studies in organic consumer behavior focus on customers' buying motivations, values that guide their decisions to buy organic food, and an analysis of factors such as health, nutritional value, flavor, or environmental concerns. According to an Italian study, customers identify organic products with health and pursue good, delectable, and nourishing goods (Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002). According to Tobler et al. (2011), health and flavor are the primary reasons people choose to eat sustainably. A thorough study by Hughner et al., (2007) and Bourn and Prescott, (2002) found that health and flavor are the main elements influencing the consumer's decision to buy and consume organic food.

Health Concerns

Previous studies by Nguyen et al., (2019) said that individuals' health consciousness reflects their attitudes toward health issues and their willingness to take action to protect their health. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about food safety and nutrition. Organic foods are considered healthier because they are high in nutrition and free of chemicals. Research findings from Tsakiridou et al., (2019) found that as many as 87.6% of his respondents believed that this organic product was healthier for them than other products. Therefore, it can be said that health concerns have led or encouraged consumers to use organic food because of the authenticity of the product that can be trusted.

Environmental Concerns

Consumer awareness and perception of ecosystem damage and the depletion of natural resources are considered environmental concerns (Kalafatis et al., 1999). Additionally, environmental care is described as one's individual opinions, attitudes, and degrees of environmental concern (Ahmadun, 2003). As people's concern for the natural environment has grown, consumers are looking for products with a "green element," as well as those with a positive impact on the environment. In addition, people are increasingly concerned about their health while purchasing products, particularly food products. This element has emerged as the primary motivator for people to purchase organic food (Yin, 2010). Organic foods protect the environment because manufacturing and selling processes do not employ polluting chemicals and technology. As a result, environmental concern is regarded as one of the factors influencing consumers' consumption of organic products (Winter & Davis, 2006).

Figure 1 shows the research framework of the present study. Four hypotheses have been developed for this study to determine whether there is a relationship or correlation between dependent and independent variables, H1: There is a positive significant relationship between consumer attitude and motivation to consume organic food products; H2: There is a positive significant relationship between price perception and motivation to consume organic food products; H3: There is a positive significant relationship between health concerns and motivation to consume organic food products, and; H4: There is a significant positive relationship between environmental concern and motivation to consume organic food products.

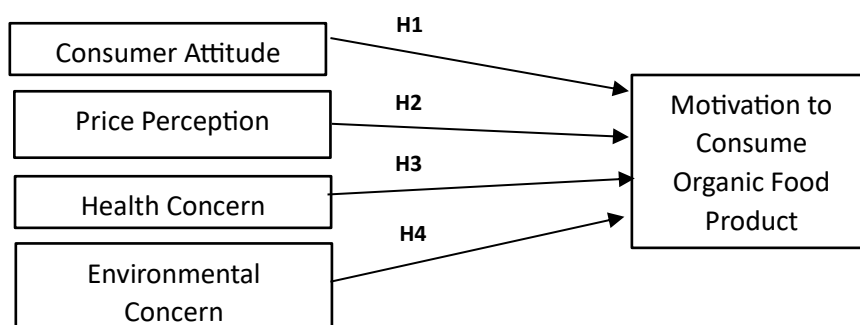


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Of Motivation To Consume Organic Food Products

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative methods were used to examine the motivation to consume organic food products among university students in Kelantan. White and Millar, (2014) and Creswell, (2011) agree that quantitative research is statistical to answer questions related to who, what, when, where, how much, and how to explain events. To collect data from respondents regarding the study, the researcher opted to employ a quantitative method called a survey. In this study, primary data has been collected from university students in Kelantan namely at the Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UITM). the selection of these respondents because Kelantan has been known as a heaven of food and various of its foods contain high-sugar ingredients. Thus this study aims to investigate the dietary and organic food consumption among students in Kelantan. An online self-administered questionnaire through Google Forms was used for data collection. The questionnaires were designed to gather demographic information and data regarding the factors that motivate youth to consume organic food products. The questionnaire was distributed using social media sites such as WhatsApp and Facebook as well as physically in each university location by sharing the Google Form with respondents.

According to Periodicals, (2019), sampling is the process of choosing a portion of the target population for a research project. A smaller group is used instead of attempting to contact every person in the community. Sampling from the population is frequently more realistic and enables data to be obtained faster and at a lesser cost. In the present study, the convenience sampling method was used. Convenience sampling is one of the types of samples included in the non-probability sampling method. The advantage of this method is that it saves time and resource savings. Convenience sampling is a sampling that takes into account the elements' accessibility and simplicity of acquisition. Convenience sampling was applied to obtain the target sample at the appropriate location and time. Although this strategy is less reliable, it is the quickest and least expensive to carry out because researchers are free to choose whom they interact with.

Data analysis was administered to determine the descriptive analysis and reliability of each variable, and Pearson correlation analysis to test the relationship between the four independent variables (IVs) and a dependent variable (DV). The four IVs in this study were consumer attitude, price perception, health concern, and environmental concern, whereas the DV was motivation to consume organic food products. Data analysis is a technique for assessing the gathered data. In most cases, it includes examining the data created by applying analytical abilities to spot trends, correlations, or patterns. Following the completion of the information-gathering process with the respondents, data were generated using SPSS software.

FINDINGS

235 data were gathered and the respondent profile is summarized in Table 1. The majority of respondents were female with 77.0% (181) while the rest were male. The highest percentage of the age group is age 21 to 23 years old with 78.3%, followed by age 18 to 20 with 17.4%, 24 to 26 with 3.8%, and 27 and above with 0.4%. Most of the respondents were single (96.6%), and Malay (91.95%). The balance was 8 Indian respondents (3.4%), 5 Chinese (2.1%), and other races at 2.6%. The respondents were degree students totaling

219 in numbers (91.9%), 18 diploma students (7.7%), and 1 master's degree student (0.4%) from Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (52.3%), Universiti Sains Malaysia (21.7%), and Universiti Teknologi MARA (26%). They were mostly in their third year (145 respondents, 61.7%). The respondents' home states were also stated in Figure 1. The state of Kelantan was ranked highest at 48.9% with 115 respondents, and the second highest was Terengganu at 10.2% with 24 respondents, while Kedah gets 9.4% with 22 respondents. For the state of Pahang, it got 7.7% with 18 respondents. For the state of Johor, there was 6.8% for that state with 16 respondents. Selangor has 4.7% with 11 respondents, followed by Penang 3.8% with a total number of 9 respondents. Perlis is equivalent to 2.1% with a total of 5 respondents. While for the state of Sembilan, Perak and Sabah share 1.3% with 3 respondents. Likewise, Kuala Lumpur and Melaka have the same percentage of 0.4% with 1 respondent.

Table 1. Result Of Demographic Analysis

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	181	77.0
	Female	54	23.0
Age	18-20 years old	41	17.4
	21-23 years old	184	78.3
	24-26 years old	9	3.8
	27 years and above	1	0.4
Marital Status	Married	8	3.4
	Single	227	96.6
Race	Malaysia	216	2.1
	Indian	8	3.4
	Chinese	5	91.9
	Other	6	2.6
Education Level	Bachelor of Degree	216	91.9
	Diploma	18	7.7
	Master Degree	1	0.4
Institution	University Malaysia Kelantan (UMK)	123	52.3
	University Teknologi Mara (UITM)	61	26.0
	University Sains Malaysia (USM)	51	21.7
Years of study	Year 1	33	14.0
	Year 2	34	14.5
	Year 3	145	61.7
	Year 4	23	9.8
States	Johor	16	6.8
	Kedah	22	9.4

Kelantan	115	48.9
Kuala Lumpur	1	0.4
Melaka	1	0.4
Negeri Sembilan	3	1.3
Pahang	18	7.7
Perak	3	1.3
Perlis	5	2.1
Pulau Pinang	9	3.8
Sabah	3	1.3
Sarawak	4	1.7
Selangor	11	4.7
Terangganu	24	10.2

Result of Descriptive Analysis

This study analyzed the mean and standard deviation for each section of the questionnaires (see Table 2). The mean and standard deviation on the independent variable for consumer attitude, with the maximum mean value of 4.27 (0.844), showed that respondents strongly agreed that organic food products are useful for meeting nutritional needs. The mean and standard deviation on the independent variable for price perception had the highest mean score of 4.01 (0.822), with the statement that “*I think the price of organic food products is in accordance with the benefits*”. The mean and standard deviation on the independent variable for health concerns, the item with the highest mean was 4.31 (0.823), which strongly agreed by respondents think often about their health. The mean and standard deviation on the independent variable, environment concern, the highest mean value was 4.25 (0.744), with the statement “ I think environmental aspect is very important in my food choice”. The dependent variable for motivation to consume organic food products for the item “ Organic food products are good for health” showed the highest mean and standard deviation score was 4.22 (0.764), indicating that the respondents strongly agreed that organic food products are good for health.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Consumer Attitude	I think buying organic food products is beneficial.	4.02	0.889
	I think buying organic food products is a wise choice.	4.23	0.814
	Buying organic food products makes me feel good.	3.95	0.818
	I believe organic food products are very useful to meet nutritional needs.	4.27	0.844
	Buying organic food products makes me feel	3.92	0.836

	pleased.		
Price Perception	I always choose the healthiest option, although it is more expensive.	3.79	0.968
	I think the price of the organic food product is not a barrier to purchasing it.	3.71	1.005
	I think everyone should buy organic food products, even though they are more expensive.	3.51	1.023
	I think the price of organic food products is in accordance with the benefits.	4.01	0.822
	I think the price of organic food products is high.	3.94	0.868
Health Concern	I think often about my health.	4.31	0.823
	I choose organic food products carefully to ensure good health.	4.18	0.830
	I think organic food products have a beneficial effect on my health.	4.19	0.746
	I think of myself as a health-conscious consumer.	4.19	0.826
	I am concerned about the type and amount of nutrition in the food that I consume daily.	3.86	0.936
Environment Concern	The balance of nature is very delicate and can be easily upset.	3.92	0.834
	I pay a lot of attention to the environment.	4.20	0.801
	I think the environmental aspect is very important in my food choice.	4.25	0.744
	I believe that organic food is more environmentally friendly than conventional food.	4.07	0.834
	I think humans must maintain a balance with nature in order to live a healthy life.	4.23	0.767
Motivation to Consume Organic Food Products	Organic food products are good for health.	4.22	.764
	Organic food products do not contain any chemicals.	4.10	0.849
	Organic food products have more nutritional value than conventional food.	4.09	0.796
	Organic food products consumption will help to protect the environment.	4.13	0.814
	I would buy organic food products because of their quality.	4.20	0.748

Result of Reliability Test

Table 3 shows the reliability of the independent and dependent variables in this study using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values. All the variables demonstrate sufficient reliability. Consumer attitude has the highest Cronbach's Alpha, with a score of 0.909, followed by the motivation to consume organic food products and the health concern, with scores of 0.896 and 0.858, respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha score for environmental concern was 0.822.

Price perception had the lowest Cronbach's Alpha, with a score of 0.813. Overall, all variables of the present study have trustworthy Cronbach's Alpha values.

Table 3: Results Of The Reliability Test

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Strength of Association
Consumer attitude	5	.909	Excellent
Price perception	5	.799	Acceptable
Health concerns	5	.858	Good
Environment concerns	5	.822	Good
Motivation to consume organic food product	5	.896	Good

Pearson Correlation

In this study, the Pearson Correlation is intended to measure the strength of the relationship between independent variables (consumer attitude, price perception, health concern, and environmental concern) and dependent variable (motivation to consume organic food products). Table 4 shows the interpretation of the correlation coefficient. The result of the Pearson Correlation for consumer attitude showed a significant value of p , 0.000, < 0.01 level of significance. The consumer attitude and motivation to consume organic food products showed a positive correlation value of 0.620. In addition, the price perception demonstrated a significant value of p (0.000, < 0.01 significant level) with a correlation coefficient of 0.453. Next, health concerns also showed a positive significant relationship towards motivation to consume organic food products with a correlation coefficient of 0.678 and a p -value was 0.000, < 0.01 level of significance. Finally, the environmental concern demonstrated a significant positive relationship towards motivation to consume organic food products with a p -value of 0.000, < 0.01 level of significance, and a correlation value of 0.639.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	Pearson's correlation, p -value	Result
H1: There is a significant positive relationship between consumer attitude and motivation to consume organic food products.	$r = 0.620, p < 0.01$	H1 is supported
H2: There is a positive significant relationship between price perception and motivation to consume organic food products.	$r = 0.453, p < 0.01$	H2 is supported

H ₃ : There is a positive significant relationship between health concern and motivation to consume organic food products.	$r = 0.678, p < 0.01$	H ₃ is supported
H ₄ : There is a positive significant relationship between environmental concern and motivation to consume organic food products.	$r = 0.639, p < 0.01$	H ₄ is supported

DISCUSSIONS

This study discovered significant positive correlations between customer attitude, price perception, health concern, and environmental concern when purchasing organic food products. As a result, all of the research objectives have been met. This study is in line with previous studies on motivation to consume organic food products (Rana & Paul, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019 & Ekasari et al., 2021). In most previous studies, it has been shown that the relationship between consumer attitudes and motivation to use organic food products is positive. This is because the two things are very closely related. According to what is in the study by Ekasari., (2021) concluded that consumer attitudes have had a positive effect on the consumer's decision to use organic food products and the same statement is found in the study by Pang et al., (2021). Therefore, this proves that consumer attitudes have a great impact on encouraging the use of organic food products. In most previous studies, it has been shown that the relationship between price perception and motivation to use organic food products is positive. This is because the two things are very closely related. The findings of the study by Ekasari et al., (2021) stated that price perception can be the reason for customer purchases of certain foods. This can be explained by the statement given by Suprpto and Wijaya, (2012), which states that consumers will decide to buy depending on the price of organic food items. This can be deduced that there is a positive relationship between price perception and the motivation that influences them to use organic food products.

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environment. Empirical research shows that views about purchasing organic food are positively influenced by environmental concerns in both industrialized and emerging nations like Australia, Taiwan, and India (Squires, 2001). Concern for the environment is one of the primary drivers of organic food purchases. Since they are produced and distributed without the use of harmful chemicals or technologies, organic foods contribute to environmental protection. More consumers are realising how important it is to safeguard the environment in every way they can.

CONCLUSION

This research was carried out in order to understand the motivation to consume organic food products among university students in Kelantan, Malaysia. The study identified four factors influencing this motivation, which are consumer attitude, price perception, health concerns, and environmental concerns. The positive attitude of consumers towards organic food products is found to be a significant factor motivating their consumption. Positive attitudes are linked to an individual's intention to consume organic food. Not only that, perception of prices, consumer awareness, and concern for health and environmental issues contribute to consumers' trust and motivation to consume organic products.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, the study aims to promote awareness among university students about the importance of consuming organic and nutritious food, emphasizing the potential health benefits and environmental impact. By understanding the factors influencing motivation, the research encourages young consumers, especially university students, to focus on the nutritional value of their food, potentially leading to healthier dietary choices. This study can serve as a resource for the food industry, helping them understand the factors influencing university students' dietary decisions and used to expand the market for organic products in Malaysia.

Future research could explore a broader demographic to understand if the factors influencing motivation to consume organic food vary across different age groups, professions, or regions in Malaysia. Not only that, change to other populations, such as among schools, to determine if school children already know about this organic food product. The research should be expanded using the qualitative method to get more authentic information. More research on the other potential variables should be explored to determine the motivation factors to consume organic food products. Longitudinal studies could assess the long-term impact of consuming organic food on individuals' health and behavior, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits over time.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the motivation factors for university students in Kelantan to consume organic food, emphasizing the importance of consumer attitudes, price perceptions, health concerns, and environmental considerations. The findings have implications for promoting healthier dietary choices and expanding the market for organic products. Future research could delve deeper into specific aspects and extend the scope to different demographics and regions.

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