

Organic Food Consumption Behaviour: Sustainability, Symbol of Social Class, Luxury and Price

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Abstract

This research tries to analyse the motives of consumers in Kediri, East Java, Indonesia in buying organic food. The four main motives that influence organic food consumption behaviour are sustainability, social class symbol, luxury and price investigated in this study. Questionnaires were used and given to 190 respondents. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling and tested four hypotheses. The findings state that sustainability, social class symbols, and price significantly influence organic food consumption behaviour. There is no significant effect of luxury on organic food consumption behaviour. Based on these findings, strategies to improve quality, long-term health benefits, be environmentally friendly, and reduce the price of organic food should be implemented. This research draws on social practice theory as a critical lens for understanding organic food consumption not just as a result of individual choices, but as several interrelated 'relationships of action and speech'. This study investigates the consumption of organic food in East Java, Indonesia. Three consumption practices, which include investing in long-term welfare, expressing sustainability values, and signifying social status, so it can be concluded that organic food can be understood as a certain type of food as a trend food.

Keywords: *Organic food consumption behavior, Sustainability, Symbol of sosial class, Luxury, Price*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organic food sales have experienced unprecedented growth in international markets, and more than half of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 are actively seeking to incorporate organic foods into their diets. In the West, they consume mostly organic food (54%), while in the East, they consume the least organic food (39%) (Chiripuci et al., 2022). The Indonesian government has long cared about organic food and it is hoped that this will support national food security because it can provide safe food for the community (Najib et al., 2022).

In 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia launched the 'go organic' program to support organic farming practices and the go organic program was strengthened by a program to develop 1000 organic farming villages in 2016 (Haryati & Adi, 2019). In the Asian region, Indonesia ranks fourth with the largest area of organic agricultural land, with a land area of 208,042 ha and ownership of 17,948 producers (Syukur & Awaru, 2019). Data from the Indonesian Organic Alliance shows that in 2018 domestic market demand for organic food experienced positive growth, mainly due to the development of online sales carried out by several organic food distributors. The sales growth of packaged organic food in Indonesia in 2017-2022 is estimated to reach 8.4% (Carolan, 2021).

Organic food is food that is made without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, growth hormones, antibiotics or gene manipulation (Chausali & Saxena, 2021; Urbul et al., 2021). Organic food combines best environmental practices, high levels of biodiversity, preservation of natural resources, and application of strict animal welfare standards, resulting in higher quality food to meet consumer demands (*Research Data and Solutions for the Development of Organic Production in Finland*, 2024; Kushwah et al., 2019). Global consumer demand in recent years for organic food has increased significantly and consumer purchases are influenced by several internal and external factors (Roh et al., 2022). The main motivation for

consumers besides organic food is healthy and sustainable is that organic food consumers also care about health and well-being.

This study seeks to find the main shortcoming of previous studies, namely that it lies in its dominant focus on individual consumers and it considers individual beliefs and attitudes as predictors of organic food consumption focus. This study assumes that organic food buying behaviour is "the result of a linear and rational process" for decision making in consuming organic food, but food consumption is not only a matter of individual motivation and choice but an important symbolic role in the wider cultural context and is related to class. Social. The complex and evolving practices of organic food consumption include dietary choices and representational rituals and practices, which are shared cultural 'codes' that reflect and shape cultural systems. Previous research on marketing suggests that organic foods are used variously by consumers to express important aspects of their personal identity, provide convenience, and to negotiate cultural boundaries and to signify ethnic and religious traditions across cultures' adaptability, and class mobility. (Najib et al., 2022). This study suggests that in order to develop a more holistic view of sustainable organic food consumption, pay more attention to contextual and sociocultural typologies.

This research draws on social practice theory as a critical lens for understanding organic food consumption not just as a result of individual choices, but as several interrelated 'relationships of action and speech'. This study investigates the consumption of organic food in East Java, Indonesia. Three consumption practices, which include investing in long-term welfare, expressing sustainability values, and signifying social status, so it can be concluded that organic food can be understood as a certain type of food as a trend food.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

The output of this study are factors that need to be considered in organic food consumption behaviour that can increase organic food behaviour in Kediri, East Java. Identification of the factors that influence the behavioural intention of organic food is carried out and research is carried out using quantitative research methods such as research methods to test certain theories through testing the relationship between variables using research instruments (Hermin Istiasih et al., 2022). The object of this research is organic food consumers who are at least 25 years old and have their own income and have consumed organic food for at least the last year. A clearly targeted sampling process allows the researcher to have some control over who accepts the invitation to participate in the study. A total of 190 participants agreed to participate in this study and according to Hair et al., (2012) that a minimum sample size of 50 to 200 is required for SEM analysis and a sample size greater than 30 and smaller than 500 is suitable for most studies (Ali Memon et al., 2020).

Respondents were selected using the non-probability convenience sampling method, where the non-probability design involved elements in the population that were selected randomly, so that in this study the sample subjects were randomly selected (Space, 2013). The non-probability convenience sampling method provides flexibility to researchers because samples can be accessed easily and higher survey response rates are achieved. A questionnaire survey using random sampling with 190 respondents. This study conducted a questionnaire survey using a five-point Likert scale to obtain data for each construct in the research model. The scale measures sustainability, symbols of social class, luxury, price and consumption behaviour of organic food. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to perform descriptive analysis, analysis of validity and reliability. AMOS version 24 was used to perform Structural

Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis to test hypothetical relationships between the proposed constructs. Data were analysed using a two-step estimation technique proposed by Anderson & Gerbing, (1988).

The proposed research conceptual framework for verification and analysis is shown in Figure 1

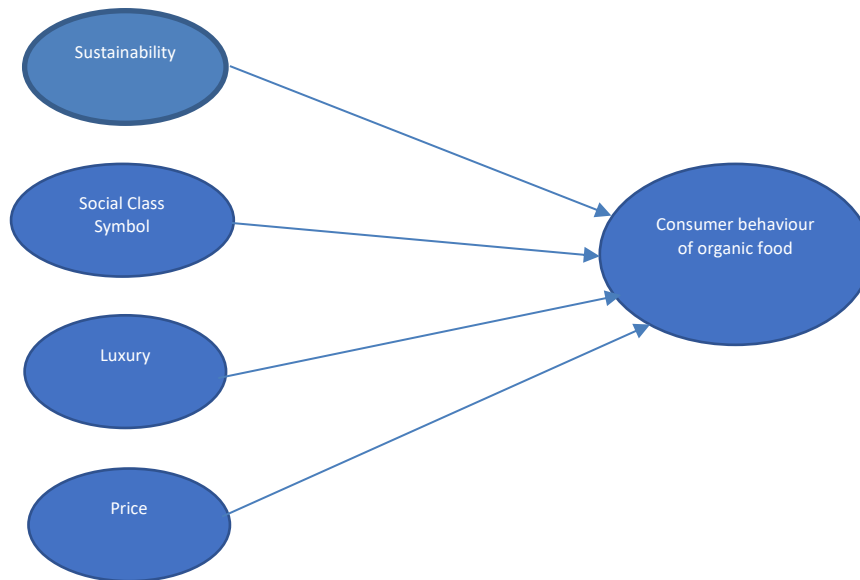


Figure 1. Research Concept Framework

Table 1 describes the profile of respondents in which this study shows the characteristics of the sample consisting of 65.8% female sex and the remainder consisting of 34.2% male consumers. The sample also shows that 55.8% comes from consumers with married status and the age range is between 47-57 years. Most of the consumers with university degrees are 65 consumers and their income level is between three million and five million. At this age, most respondents buy organic food and are willing to buy it at a higher price because apart from health factors it is also due to sustainability. The questionnaire also asked about their previous experiences in buying organic food and most of them had a history of buying organic food.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the results of all items exceeding the recommended value of 0.5 as suggested by (Hair et al., 2012). In addition, composite reliability is used to test the extent to which construct indicators truly represent latent and the values obtained exceed the recommended value of 0.7. Meanwhile, the average extracted variance (AVE) is used to test the variance captured by the construction indicators relative to the measurement error. In this study, the AVE for each indicator is in the range of 0.705 and 0.945. Cronbach's alpha results should range from zero to one where getting closer to one means there is a high level of internal consistency between variables. Table 2 shows that the CA results range from 0.731 to 0.960 so there is instrument reliability.

Table 2. Measurement Results

Model constructs	items	Factor Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Sustainability	Sustainability 1	0,828	0,960	0,866	0,945
	Sustainability 2	0,891			
	Sustainability 3	0,901			
	Sustainability 4	0,946			
	Sustainability 5	0,931			
	Sustainability 6	0,949			
Social class symbol	Social class symbol 1	0,798	0,742	0,852	0,755
	Social class symbol 2	0,759			
	Social class symbol 3	0,921			
	Social class symbol 4	0,911			
	Social class symbol 5	0,931			
Luxury	Luxury 1	0,771	0,731	0,891	0,705
	Luxury 2	0,811			
	Luxury 3	0,789			
	Luxury 4	0,917			
	Luxury 5	0,936			
Price	Price 1	0,881	0,888	0,851	0,733
	Price 2	0,763			
	Price 3	0,905			
	Price 4	0,877			
Organic food consumption behavior	Organic food consumption behavior 1	0,772	0,759	0,746	0,845
	Organic food consumption behavior 2	0,832			
	Organic food consumption behavior 3	0,786			
	Organic food consumption behavior 4	0,801			

Table 3 shows the discriminant validity for testing items that differ between constructs or concepts. In addition, this table is done first by looking at the correlation between sizes for the possibility of overlapping a construct. Table 3 shows that the squared correlation for each construct is smaller than the average variance extracted by the indicators measuring the construct. The research model has achieved a good fit as shown in Table 3. The Chi-Square value is 710,055 and the chi-square probability value is greater than 0.05 indicating an acceptable model fit. The χ^2/df ratio is 2.197 which is lower than the value of 3.0 as suggested by Byrne (2001). (18)

Table 3: Structure model assessment and hypothesis testing

Model fit indices	
Chi-square	710.055
Degree of freedom	313
Probability level	0.000
RMSEA	0.061

IFI	0.926
CFI	0.925
TLI	0.916
ChiSq/df	2.197

Hypothesized relationships	Estimate	P Values	Result
H1 Sustainability → consumptive behavior	0.279	***	Supported
H2 social class → consumptive behavior	0.353	***	Supported
H3 luxury → consumptive behavior	0.001	0.982	Rejected
H4 price → consumptive behavior	0.281	***	Supported

Normality assessment was carried out and showed that the data were normally distributed with skewness values between -1.0 and 1.0, and kurtosis between -3.0 and 3.0, then, estimated path coefficients were derived and the research hypotheses were analysed. Regression weights and probability values indicating their significance are presented in Table 3. The findings show that sustainability issues have a significant positive effect (0.279) on organic food consumption behaviour and H1 is accepted. H2 is accepted and the social class symbol has a significant effect on organic food consumption behaviour (0.353), even the value of this correlation coefficient is the strongest on organic food consumption behaviour compared to other constructs. The regression coefficient for the relationship between luxury and organic food consumption behaviour is not significant (0.001), so H3 is rejected. The regression coefficient of the relationship between price and organic food consumption behaviour has a significant relationship (0.281) and H4 is accepted.

Overall, the findings show that organic food consumers in Kediri prioritize considerations of sustainability, social class symbols, and price as their motives for carrying out organic food consumption behaviour. The government should promote more sustainable food safety guarantees and affordable prices for organic food products sold in the market to motivate consumers to buy these products. Campaigns and special events on organic food health and environmental damage can increase public knowledge about organic food such as farming and environmentally sustainable production methods. In addition, the government must also make policies related to organic certification and logos to build better consumer confidence in these organic foods.

The empirical results in this study show that organic food consumers in Kediri have a strong concern for sustainable food, which encourages them to buy organic food. Consumers believe that organic food is better in terms of nutritional value, quality, safety and health benefits

and is safe for the environment in the long term. The findings indicate that organic food merchants should explore new media channels, especially social media for targeted consumers in disseminating information and facts about health benefits, long term environment, nutrition facts, organic farming methods related to organic food. Furthermore, more organic food restaurants and retail outlets should be established to target organic food consumers to promote healthy eating. Affordability was found to be a consideration in purchasing organic food for consumers in Kediri. It can be concluded that consumers in Kediri perceive organic food to be sold at high prices in the market, which affects their purchasing power. Therefore, the price of organic food should be lowered by encouraging more locally produced organic food products at a lower cost.

The government should support local organic farmers by providing more subsidies and financial assistance to encourage more locally produced organic food products. It is also recommended that organic food producers and retailers prioritize nutritional value, long-term health benefits, and environmental concerns and make organic food products affordable for consumers. Consumers are increasingly demanding food products that are produced without exploitation of the environment (Ranjbar Shamsi et al., 2020; Lian & Yoong, 2019). In the aspect of environmental concern, the concept of environmentally friendly organic food must be prioritized.

The theoretical contribution of this study is the validation and development of organic food consumption behaviour. In this study, sustainability, social class symbols and price have been shown to be important constructs that influence organic food consumption behaviour. From a managerial perspective, the findings of this study provide valuable information for organic food entrepreneurs or marketers in Kediri who wish to increase their sales and achieve sustainable business growth. Retailers or marketers can plan and implement more effective targeting and positioning strategies to increase consumer demand for organic foods.

CONCLUSION

As for the limitations of this study, the investigation was only observed through the influence of the sustainability construct, social class symbols, luxuries and prices on organic food consumption behaviour. Future research should consider other motivational factors such as experience, knowledge, beliefs, culture or even demographics that influence organic food consumption behaviour. In addition, this research focuses on organic food consumers in Kediri, East Java, Indonesia. Comparison of research for each region in Indonesia or comparisons with other countries can be explored to provide clarification of differences in the behaviour of consuming organic food.

Future research may also adopt mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods. The relationship between driving factors, consumer purchase intentions and actual purchases can be investigated in depth using both quantitative and qualitative methods to produce a more qualified presentation of data analysis for future research.

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