

Chapter 5

Consumers' Intentions to Purchase Organic Food Products

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ABSTRACT

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is applied as the guiding principle in this conceptual paper with the aims to discuss the factors in influencing consumers' intention to purchase organic food products among Muslim consumers. The literature review exposed that attitude, health concern, environmental concern and labelling affect consumer intention to purchase organic food, and moderated by Islamic values. Results suggest the role of religiosity in firming up the intention to purchase organic food. This paper extends the literature reviews on the consumer behavioural intention towards organic food products by incorporating religiosity values which have been lacking in previous research in sustainable food consumption and also gather another perspective of the role of halal and eco-labelling in influencing consumers' interpretation of the products. Further empirical studies can be carried out to assess the underlying linkages among the factors and uncover the viable model for future research.

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INTRODUCTION

Commercialized farming was introduced in order to cater the big scale of demand from all over the world. This helped more countries to produce more foods on their own at shorter time, increase their ability to reduce food hunger as well as increase the economics of the country itself by having import-export in international trades. However, the world is also facing with other issue in food production. The commercialisation and uncontrollable biological changes in farming have led to several causes such as massive use of fertilizer, use of antibiotics to increase the growth of animals at farm at shorter time as well as uncontrollable use of harmful pesticides. There are a serious concern on health problems caused by these commercialised food products among consumers. Nonetheless, even though organic food often associated with premium prices (Rödiger & Hamm, 2015) as well as lack of product availability in the market (Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015), the demand on organic food continue to grow. For example, in the United States, the retail market for organic products was valued at USD39.1 billion in 2015 and will continue to grow in the future due to the increase in consumer demands (USDA.org, 2015).

With the growing concerns on health matters due to more health awareness among Malaysians, consumers will continue to purchase more organic packaged food for themselves as well as for their children even though the price is higher (Euromonitor International, 2015; Norazah & Norbayah, 2015). However, it is also a challenge to the organic product businesses as the increase in inflation rate, with the recent implementation of 6% government and service tax (GST) on each product at retail stores and markets (Euromonitor International, 2015), as well as the increase of other costs such as highway toll rates in the Peninsular of Malaysia, higher public transportation costs (i.e. train and commuter ticket), service charges, and increase of energy costs (i.e. electricity tariff) will effect on consumers household expenditure in the future. With the hikes in cost of living particularly in major cities of Malaysia, consumers tend to be more careful with their spending as the tight budget might constraint their expenditures to buy premium packaged foods, hence resulting in less spending on healthier foods (Euromonitor International, 2015).

Consumer pays little attention in ethical issues relating to their purchase decision-making behaviour (Carrigan & Atalla, 2001), although green consumption is seen as an expression of what consumers think their social environment expects them to do (Moser, 2015). The disconnection between environmentally conscious consumers and more ethical consumptions exists in several reasons but attitude-behaviour gap are still an on-going debate in scholarly articles as there is inconsistency in consumer attitudinal influences to their actual purchases, particularly among consumers who agreed that they are environmentally conscious and are concerned about the environmental problems but did not engage in greener consumption. Green consumer

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