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Extant Corpus on the Role of Consumer Attitudes in Shaping Purchase Intention on Organic Food in China

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Abstract

Globally, food consumption has witnessed an evolving trend due to increase in health concerns, with consumers developing different perceptions, attitudes and intention towards purchase of organic product, rather than food produced using conventional agricultural practices. This research is designed to investigate the role of extant corpus conceptualized in terms of e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness on consumer attitudes in shaping purchase intention of consumers towards organic food in emerging Chinese market. Therefore, this research is anchored based on literature review, on determinants and theories relevant to consumer attitudes and purchase intention of organic food in different contexts. According to findings, it was revealed that both e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness play a significant role in determining the purchase intention of consumers towards organic food. Similarly, it was revealed from the findings that the role of e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness on purchase intention of consumers towards organic food, was mediated by consumer attitude. Thus, this research contributed to literature in the realm of extant corpus, consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards organic food, by providing new insights on variables that shaped attitudes and purchase intention of consumers towards organic food in Chinese context. Lastly, research implications were provided for practitioners in organic food market, policy makers, and researchers.

Keywords: Extant Corpus, Consumer Attitudes, and Purchase Intention.

1. Introduction

The market for organic food is currently changing global food landscape, as consumers have high taste and desire for organic food (Liu et al., 2021). The changing trend is demonstrated through growing purchase intention among consumers, as they avoid food produced using conventional method (chemicals, pesticide residues and other harmful agricultural practices) (Alzubaidi et al., 2021; Canwat, & Onakuse, 2022) and switch to organic food, which is produced using traditional method and is often considered safer for consumption (Tandon et al. 2020), due to its associated health benefits (Castellini et al., 2020). Hence, the market for organic food expands dramatically across the globe (Kushwah et al., 2019).

Accordingly, the organic food market expansion is understood through visualization of the product in internet platforms and proliferation in shelves of supermarkets across different countries (Le-An & Nguyen-To, 2020). In Brazil, for example, growing demand for organic food, accounted for 11% increase in annual sales (Lin et al., 2021; Lima et al. 2022). While, in China, an increased preference for organic food, accounted for over $8.3 billion sales of organic food, as the country invested greatly in organic food production, and dedicated over 311 million hectares of land for agriculture. Hence, the organic food signifies significant market potentials in emerging economies that accounted for USD 90 billion in sales as at 2020 (Nafees et al. 2022).

Notwithstanding, there is growing literature on consumer preference for organic food products (Ghadani et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2021). Yet, little is known on how extant corpus such as e-word of mouth (Akbari et al., 2022), price perception (Hasan et al., 2023), perceived value (Roh et al., 2022), brand image (Rachmad et al., 2023), and consumer innovativeness (Kamboj & Sharma, 2023; Anwar et al., 2021), either influence consumer attitudes or shape purchase intention among consumers towards organic food (Hamdan et al., 2023). Therefore, this

research contributed to literature on how consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards organic food are shaped by e-word of mouth, price perception, perceived value, brand image, and consumer innovativeness, in China - an emerging market.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Extant Corpus

2.1.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) refers to any feedback, positive or negative, from potential, actual, or previous customers regarding a business or product that is shared online with a large number of people and organizations (Romadhoni et al., 2023; Schleenbecker & Hamm, 2013). The concept is also used by researchers, to refer to frequency of exposure to online reviews, comments, ratings, as well as discussions about organic food products on forums, social media sites, and e-commerce websites (Wang, 2019). In this research, e-WOM refers to comments and viewpoints expressed on online forums, social media, and other digital platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Dianping, blogs and internet forums like Alibaba, and JD.com. Therefore, e-word-of-mouth is described as a powerful tool in the digital marketing landscape, that influences consumer attitude and shape purchase intention towards organic food (Fatima et al., 2024).

2.1.2 Price Perception

Price perception is defined as the consumers' view or understanding of the price of a product in relation to its value or quality (Beaumais & Crastes dit Sourd, 2024). Accordingly, Grewal, Monroe and Krishnan (1998) contend that consumers perceived price as direct cues to evaluate products in relation to their expectations in terms of quality, usability and perceived benefits. In the same way, price perception is often not simply about the actual price but about how consumers interpret the value for money, affordability, and fairness of a product's price (Yucha, Ardianto, & Putri, 2022). Price perception can significantly impact brand loyalty and product choice, as in the case of price increase, sensitive consumers are more likely to switch brands; while, consumers who cares about superior quality may remain loyal to premium brands (Kevin & Simon, 2024). Therefore, price perception is considered a vital tool that helps consumers to form positive attitudes of a product and increase purchase of organic food (Konuk, 2017).

2.1.3 Perceived Value

Perceived value reflects consumers' trade-off between perceived benefits (functionality, or emotional satisfaction) and perceived costs (such as price, time, or effort) (Uzir et al., 2021; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Functional value relates to product's practical or utilitarian benefits. While, emotional value refers to feelings or affective states that a product can evoke in consumers. On the other hand, social value refers to the extent to which the product contributes to the consumer's social image or status. In contrast, price-value involves the consumer's perception of whether the price paid is fair in relation to the benefits received. Thus, perceived value is considered a vital tool that shape consumer attitude (Molinillo et al., 2021), and purchase intention (Hoang Dam et al., 2024), especially as consumers attribute several health benefits to organic food, in terms of nutritional content and absence of harmful chemicals, which also helps consumers to have a sense of well-being, pride, and satisfaction (Nica, 2020).

2.1.4 Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as the set of beliefs and perceptions consumers hold about a brand, which are formed through direct interactions with the brand as well as through marketing efforts, and other external influences (Konuk, 2023; Keller, 1993). Equally, Martin and Nasib (2021) defined brand image as the consumers' beliefs about a brand's attributes, as well as totality of memory consumers hold about a product, which typically affects their decision-making, product loyalty and purchase intentions. At one hand, brand image entails preference or positive associations that consumers have built over time about a product, which shape their perception to purchase the brand even at tough times (Godey et al., 2021). On the other hand, brand image involves strong trustworthiness about product's benefits, leading to repeat purchase or higher purchase intention behavior (Wijaya & Putra, 2023). Hence, brand image plays a central role in shaping consumer attitude and greater intention to purchase organic food (Kwak, Lee, & Cha, 2021).

2.1.5 Consumer Innovativeness

Consumer innovativeness refers to the degree to which individuals are open to new products or ideas, and likelihood of consumers to adopt new product quicker than others (Kim & Cha, 2021). Generally, consumer innovativeness is categorized into: innate innovativeness (which focused on personality traits of consumers);

domain-specific innovativeness (which focused on consumer behavior in specific product categories); and lastly, actualized innovativeness (which specifically focused on consumer behavior towards adopting new products) (Eryigit, 2020; Heidenreich et al., 2017). Likewise, consumer innovativeness has been interpreted in line with sustainable consumption and adoption of sustainable products, such as electric vehicles and organic foods (Li et al., 2021). Hence, consumer innovativeness refers to the degree to which consumers develop a receptive attitude that shapes their intention towards purchase of organic food products (Hu, Parsa, & Self, 2010).

2.2 Consumer Attitude

Consumer attitude is typically defined as predisposition of consumers to respond consistently to a product or service in a particular manner (Ajzen, 1991). However, in the context of sustainable consumption, consumer attitude reflects how consumers perceive the environmental and ethical aspects of products, which can significantly influence their decision-making process (Li et al., 2021). Accordingly, Eryigit (2020) contends that psychological factors such as values, beliefs, and prior experiences are key drivers of attitude formation. Still, Shao and Ünal (2019) found that factors like e-word of mouth, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness play significant roles in influencing consumer attitudes and shaping behavioral intention to purchase a product or services.

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is widely regarded as a critical predictor of actual purchase behavior and is shaped by several variables, including attitudes, perceived value, brand image, and external influences such as price perception and e-WOM (Hsu, Chang, & Lin, 2019). Essentially, purchase intention reflects the consumer’s likelihood or willingness to purchase a product based on various factors such as attitude, perceived value, image of the brand, and external marketing efforts. Accordingly, Lin et al. (2021) emphasized that positive consumer attitudes directly impact purchase intention, particularly in sectors like organic food and sustainable products. Therefore, purchase intention in this context, refers to consumers’ purchasing behavior, conscious decision to buy a product or service, as well as actual buying intention.

2.4 Theoretical Underpinning

2.4.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This theory was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, and has become the most widely applied models in human behavior and decision-making literature. The theory is and extension of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) that focused on perceived behavioral control, which offers significant insights on volitional and non-volitional behavior. The theory has been used extensively to explain how attitudes influence behavioral intentions and subsequent actions. Here, attitude refers to the individual’s positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior, based on beliefs about desirable outcomes or expected consequences. Accordingly, Paul et al. (2016) applied this theory to explain organic food purchase behavior, by emphasizing that consumers who have positive attitudes, have stronger purchase intentions because they are more likely to find and afford organic products.

2.4.2 Consumer Perception Theory

Consumer perception can be defined as the process by which individuals select, organize, and interpret sensory input to form a coherent and meaningful view of the world (Scott et al., 1981). This process typically involves three stages: Exposure: The consumer's encounter with a product, brand, or marketing message. Attention: The degree to which the consumer notices and focuses on the stimulus. Interpretation: The consumer’s understanding and assignment of meaning to the stimulus. Each of these stages is influenced by factors such as prior experiences, beliefs, values, and situational context, making perception highly subjective and variable among different consumers. Hence, perception is a cognitive process that leads to the formation of attitudes, purchase intentions, and ultimately behavior, because it allows consumers to assess the value, quality, and relevance of a product or services based their individual needs and preferences.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

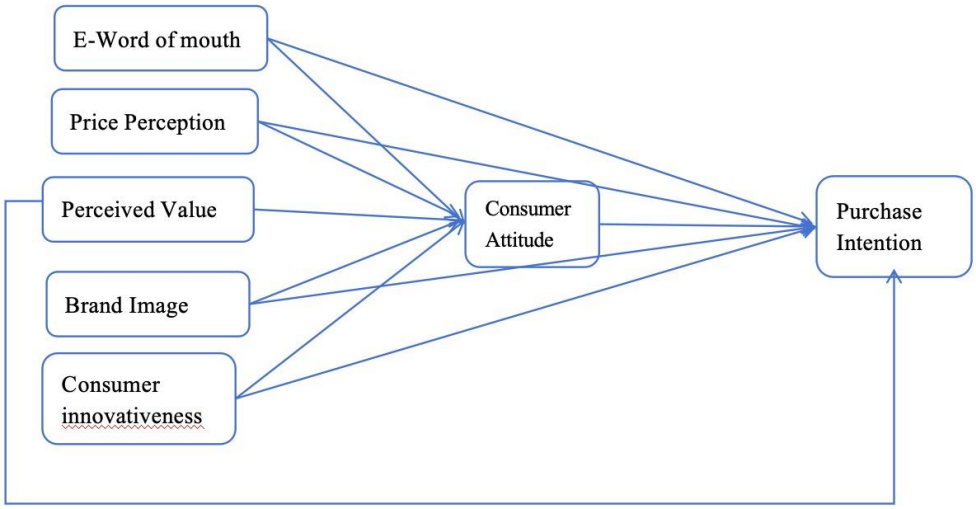


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.6 Hypotheses Development

2.6.1 Relationship Between E-Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has become one of the most significant predictor of purchase intention. In the digital age, e-WOM provides credible, unbiased, and easily accessible information, in form of online reviews, social media interactions, and recommendations (Rahman et al., 2020), help consumers to develop positive attitude about a product and directly influence consumers' purchase intentions (Romadhoni et al., 2023). Correspondingly, Goraya et al. (2019) found that e-WOM enhances better perception about brand, as well as consumers' willingness to purchase a product. Equally, Erkan and Evans (2016) found that consumers exposed to positive e-WOM were more likely to form favorable attitudes toward a product, leading to higher purchase intentions. Additionally, Kevin and Simon (2024) found that WOM can significantly affect consumer purchase decision. Hence, e-WOM is critical in stimulating consumers' purchase intention towards organic food. Therefore, it is proposed that,

H1: E-Word of mouth has significant on influence on purchase intention.

2.6.2 Relationship Between Price Perception and Purchase Intention

Price perception, which refers to consumers' evaluation of cost of a product relative to its perceived benefits, plays a central role in formation of consumers' purchase intention (Beaumais & Crastes dit Sourd, 2024). Accordingly, Uzir et al. (2021) empirically found that when consumers perceived price of a product as fair and acceptable, the consumers become more keen towards purchase intentions. Suggesting that price perception affects purchasing behavior and intention significantly, particularly in competitive markets where consumers compare prices easily across brands (Nica, 2020). Likewise, Yucha et al. (2022) attested to the fact that price perception has significant effects on purchase intention. Still, Konuk (2023) found that price fairness influence purchase intention as well as consumer loyalty towards organic food. Additionally, Kevin and Simon (2024) found that price perception can significantly affect consumer purchase decision. Hence, price perception is critical in determining consumers' purchase intention towards organic food because of its perceived benefits. Therefore, it is proposed that,

H2: Price perception has significant influence on purchase intention.

2.6.3 Relationship Between Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Perceived value, conceptualized as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product in terms of quality, functionality, or emotional benefits, is yet another strongest predictor of purchase intention (Molinillo et al., 2021). In line with this, Uzir et al. (2021) asserted that when consumers perceive a product as highly valuable (sustainable products and services), by weighting social and environmental benefits against the price, they tend

to develop greater purchase intention. Suggesting that purchase intention is significantly influenced by perceived value, as it offers consumers a justification for their purchase decisions. Furthermore, Nica (2020) established that when consumers perceived greater value from consumption of product, especially that offers health and environmental benefits, they become more inclined to purchase such a product, as in the case of organic products. Hence, perceived value is key in influencing purchase intention of consumers towards organic food. Thus, it is proposed that,

H3: Perceived value has significant influence on purchase intention.

2.6.4 Relationship Between Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image, which refers to believe consumers hold about a brand, is a powerful factor in shaping consumer purchase behavior, leading to higher purchase intentions, because it reduces perceived risk associated with product's consumption and makes consumers more comfortable to repeatedly purchase the product (Wijaya & Putra, 2023). Equally, Konuk (2023) established that even in the organic food sector, brand image is used as powerful tool to boost purchase intention of consumers, because it reflects sustainability and social responsibility of corporate enterprise through best product offerings. Additionally, Kwak et al. (2021) confirmed that consumers are more likely to purchase organic food from brands that they perceive as healthy, beneficial and contained essential nutrients. Hence, brand image is significant in boosting purchase intention towards organic food among consumers. Therefore, it is proposed that,

H4: Brand image has significant influence on purchase intention.

2.6.5 Relationship Between Consumer Innovativeness and Purchase Intention

Consumer innovativeness refers to consumers' tendency to embrace new products, because they are more open to exploring and trying new experiences, and thus, are more likely to develop high purchase intention (Goldsmith, 2016). Consequently, Eryigit (2020) found that highly innovative consumers have stronger purchase intention, because they are risk-averse and ready to experiment novel products. Similar finding was also reported by Li et al. (2021) who found that willingness to explore and adopt new products leads to stronger purchase intentions, particularly in industries that offer technology and sustainable products. Yet, in the context of organic food, consumer innovativeness has positive influence on purchasing intention of organic products, as innovative consumers are more willing to adopt new products and thus, translating into stronger purchase intentions (Kim & Cha, 2021). Hence, consumer innovativeness is a key predictor of purchase intention towards organic food among consumers. Therefore, it is proposed that,

H5: Consumer innovativeness has significant influence on purchase intention.

2.6.6 Mediating Role of Consumer Attitude

Consumer attitude plays a significant role in driving purchase intention of consumers and serving as conduit for e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness to boost purchase intention of consumers in diverse sectors (Nica, 2020). Accordingly, Kamalasena and Sirisena (2021) established that consumer attitudes toward a product significantly mediate the effect of e-WOM on purchase intentions. Similarly, Yucha et al. (2022) found that price perception significantly influences purchase intentions through the formation of favorable consumer attitudes, particularly when price fairness and quality are well-aligned. Again, Uzir et al. (2021) confirmed that consumer attitudes act as a mediator between perceived value and purchase intention, particularly in contexts where consumers weight the functional, emotional, and social benefits of a product against its cost. Still, Konuk (2023) found that positive brand image creates a halo effect, whereby consumers form positive attitudes that drive their purchase intentions. Additionally, Li et al. (2021) established that consumer innovativeness significantly influences the adoption of sustainable products like organic food, where attitudes play a crucial mediating role, as it stimulates the consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore, it is proposed that,

H6: Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention.

H7: Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between price perception and purchase intention.

H8: Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention.

H9: Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

H10: Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between consumer innovativeness and purchase intention.

3. Methodology

This research is anchored based on literature review. Accordingly, germane literature in the field of extant corpus,

consumer attitude and purchase intention towards organic food, as well as theoretical underpinnings, were used as basis for developing hypotheses, that could be tested empirically using quantitative and cross sectional survey design (Wenzel, & Babbie, 1994). This type of research design, is particularly important as the purpose is to generalize findings to entire population (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing Liao, 2004). Hence, it is suitable for collecting data from organic food consumers in China, using online questionnaire and statistical testing of causal inferences between independent and dependent variables, as well as role of mediator using structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Conclusion and Research Implications

In conclusion, this research investigates the role of extant corpus on consumer attitude and purchase intention towards organic food. In this research, extant corpus was conceptualized in terms of e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness. While, consumer attitude acted as mediating variable that provides conduit for extant corpus components to impact purchase intention of Chinese consumers towards organic product. Thus, this research is supported by relevant literature (conceptual, theoretical and empirical), which provided a basis for attesting causality between variables. Generally, it was found that e-WOM, price perception, perceived value, brand image and consumer innovativeness affect purchase intention towards organic food. Similarly, it was found that the mediating role of consumer attitude in the realm of extant corpus and purchase intention research, is positive and significant.

This research contributed to literature by improving knowledge and providing new insights on formation of consumer perceptions and attitudes and how these variables jointly influence purchase intention of organic food among Chinese consumers. Acknowledging the role of consumer perceptions and attitudes on purchase intention decisions, this research adds to the body of knowledge regarding successful tactics that key players or practitioners can adopt to encourage the consumption of organic foods among consumers. Likewise, the outcome of this research can be implemented by stakeholders in organic food industry, in order to cultivate a consumer base that is health-conscious and promote consumption practices that are environmentally sustainable. Moreover, policymakers and marketers can use this research as a guiding template in changing consumers' perceptions, shaping consumers' attitude and enhancing purchase intention towards organic food product. Lastly, future researchers can examine the framework using qualitative research design or longitudinal study.

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