

Examining the Effects Social Influence on Consumers' Purchase Intention toward Organic Products

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social influences on customer purchase intention towards organic products. Organic products in this research is referring to all type of products that was produced or manufactured using the organic materials. The organic products were not limited to food but covering other products such as cosmetics, beverages, health products and others. This study measures the relationship of conformity, obedience, peer pressure, leadership, sales and marketing towards purchase intentions of organic products. The research was conducted in Capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta. 250 questionnaires distributed and 230 were used. 20 respondents were rejected due to missing data and incomplete. The results indicate that all variables have a positive relationship towards customer purchase intentions except for peer pressure and marketing activities. The outcomes of this study can be used by managers to incorporate marketing strategies in their environmental campaigns for promoting organic products purchasing practices. The current study is a pioneer in examining the role of social influence towards purchase intentions among young consumer in Jakarta.

Keywords: Social influence, Organic Product, Purchase Intention, Young consumers, Jakarta

I. Introduction

The trend towards purchasing organic products have been increased recently. There are so many products produced using the organic based materials. The trend of consuming organic based was due to many factors. Past study conducted the determinants of purchase intention towards organic products by measuring the variables such as health consciousness, perceived value, food safety concern, religious factors, environmental concerns, subjective norms, quality and price. Study have been conducted in many countries and lead to a various result that may reflect the different kind of geographical or economy background. Study found that the purchase intentions towards organic products is not consistence but expected to be associated to social groups. A study by (Basha, Mason, Shamsudin, Hussain, & Salem, 2015) proposed that a study to be conducted focusing on how the social influences may lead to the purchase intentions among the customer.

Social influence is a change of attitude or behavior by an individual or customer in order to be accepted by others. It is also concerns with the effort of others to change an attitude, belief or behavior of a customer according to the behavior of

the group. There are few important measurements to be measure such as conformity, obedience, leadership, peer pressure, sales and marketing. This research will explore the relationship of all the variables towards the purchase intention within the scope of organic products.

II. Literature review

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is the situation where customer have state of mind to purchase certain product based on certain condition. Purchase intention according to (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015) is a complex process where it involves the behavior, attitude and perceptions of customer (Tsalis, 2020). The process of getting customer to change their mind from ignorance to the intention is very complex (Prakash, Singh, & Yadav, 2018). Marketers especially need to carefully arrange their marketing plan especially those that is new in the market because of either trend or awareness (Basha et al., 2015). In order to have the purchase intention, customer first need to have the knowledge of the products (Basha et al., 2015). Customer will not simply buy something that is not known to them. The concept of marketing is to create awareness about the product (James, Hu, & Leonce, 2019). Marketers will

make communication effort either through advertising, or any form of messages to tell the target market that product is available. The awareness is important because it will let the customer know that there is such product that customer can buy (Bamberg, 2002). The awareness campaign is also to communicate the benefits of the products so that customer gains knowledge. The process of awareness is dependable on the scope of coverage intended by the marketers. The wide coverage may take time and involved a lot of cost (Hwang, 2016). The objective of awareness should be remain consistent which is to provide basic knowledge about the product, the availability and the benefits (Kotler, 1994).

The next level of creating purchase intention is interest of customer to purchase (Kumar, Scheer, & Kotler, 2000). At this stage customer may have change their mind set due to the messages that have been sent continuously by the marketers (Basha et al., 2015). The change of mindset could also due to the influence of family and friends. The interest shows by the customer means that the marketers have somehow successfully create the awareness campaign. Interest of customer must follow by action (Lindgreen, Palmer, & Vanhamme, 2004). Marketers should put more effort by giving more options to customer on how to get the products. Marketers need to communicate on the channel information and add more touch point that customer have access or via online channel (Kotler, 2017).

Customer purchase intention is also concern about customer psychographic where it involves another type of study on market segments related to customer opinion, religion belief, personality traits or even lifestyle choices (Mainardes et al., 2017). Marketers need to understand each of the segment to enable them to communicate the right messages in order to inspire the purchase intention (Teng & Lu, 2016). The right messages to the right target market will translated into the desire to purchase. At this stage, marketer need to play more role in creating the market place so that the product is available and easily to purchase.

There are many items in the purchase items that has been used by the past research. Among the items measured is the customer purchase intention to buy the product (Asif, Xuhui, Nasiri, & Ayyub, 2018a). Customer is searching and looking for the products and purposely intended to buy. It means that customer already have the knowledge based on the earlier communication on the awareness. The next level is the customer intention to buy more of the products. The customer already knows about the products and they are looking for repeat buying in order to increase the consumption.

Purchase intention as reported by (Liang, 2016; Rana & Paul, 2017b; Tleis, Callieris, & Roma, 2017) includes the level of knowledge of the products. Customer should be made aware about the products and how it can benefit to the customer (Hwang & Chung, 2019). The knowledge may include the features or other elements that may inspire customer to purchase. There are many benefits of organic products that can be made known to customer. Past research highlighted the benefits in terms of health, product quality, trust and safety (Asif et al., 2018a; Escobar-lópez & Espinoza-ortega, 2017; Grubor & Djokic, 2016; Khare & Varshneya, 2017). There are also elements such as environmental concerns and convenience used in order to measure the level of purchase intentions.

(Basha et al., 2015) highlighted of the customer perception about the products. Customer perception representing the expectations of the customer with the combination of awareness and knowledge. They perceived that the products are good and spark the intention to purchase. It is also can be considered, as a customer believed that the product is good and benefits to them (Kim, Cho, & Kim, 2019).

Attitude is also part of the customer purchase intention's dimension. It occurs when customer have the state of mind that they are going to support the product because the product is good (Yadav & Pathak, 2016). At this stage, the customer believed that the products is good and they have decided to purchase the products and not others (Rana & Paul, 2017a). Attitude is the maximum state of mind where it will create determination in customer that they will and must buy the products.

Past research related to purchase intentions related to organic products or food is more focusing on the subjective norms and lifestyle (S. N. B. B. Ahmad, 2010; Asif, Xuhui, Nasiri, & Ayyub, 2018b; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Shaharudin, Junika Pani, Wan Mansor, Jamel Elias, & Maruak Sadek, 2010). The results of past research indicated various results. The difference could be because of the different geographical areas and also economy back ground (Prentice, Chen, & Wang, 2019). The fact is the price of organic products in certain country is more expensive than the normal products. There are also researches that studied on the different of purchase intentions among the demographic. Most of the similar study reported that the purchase intention derived from the ability of the customer to pay or demand for the products (Dean, Raats, & Shepherd, 2012; Shaharudin, Pani, Mansor, & Elias, 2010; Silva, Bioto, Efraim, & Queiroz, 2017). Another interesting finding highlighted that the decision to purchase the organic products is also depending on the household income. The result stated that the purchasing

power will determined the decision of purchase despite the high level of income or education background from the customer. Such findings are very interesting to be explore further in order to understand the actual motivation towards the purchase intention.

Purchase intentions however can also be persuading by the social influence. This the situation where customer will change their state of mind in order to follow the social environments(Basha & Lal, 2019). The changes can be due to many factors but this research will focused on conformity, socialization, peer pressure, persuasion and marketing(Dean et al., 2012).

Social Influence

Social influence by definition is an act of change of behavior by individual in order to meet the expectations or demand of a social environments. Social influence can be influence in various types of forms such as conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, sales and marketing. According to (Khare, 2015; Lin, Wang, & Huang, 2020; S. T. Wang, 2014) social influence can be divided into two categories which are implicit and explicit expectations. (Camilleri, 2019; X. Yang, 2019) stated that implicit is about conformity and social roles whereas the explicit expectations are about compliance and obedience.

(Book, Tanford, & Harrah, 2018) claimed that social influence has been used by marketer to promote and inference consumer to buy their products. New innovation products may need a strong force for a customer to change their mind from rejection to accepted. (Ruiz-Mafe, Tronch, & Sanz-Blas, 2016) is part of new marketing strategy to promote product and services by comparing the status or level of certain group of people to others.

Individual could change his or mind because of the conformity elements. According to (Sreeram, Kesharwani, & Desai, 2017) customer change his mind or attitude because they want it to be accepted by others. This is a reason why sometime a group of people or community behave in a similar way. It happens such a way because they want to be accepted or recognized as part of the group (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). (Klobas & Clyde, 2001; Song, Sawang, Drennan, & Andrews, 2015) claimed that there are two types of influence which are informational influence and normative influence. Informational influence occurs when individual conform to others because he or she believe that the other party have accurate information. Individual start buying or consume organic product because he or she have been told that the organic food is good for health. Individual may change his or her behavior because of new information or

awareness(Kulkarni & Nithyanand, 2013). The new information leads to the new knowledge and change of his behavior. The same method that marketer used to promote their products. Marketer will start their campaign by creating awareness so that target customer has some knowledge and information about their product(Matsuo, Minami, & Matsuyama, 2018). The same ideas bombarded to the mind of customer until they believed that the product is good and inspire to consume. Marketers also used social influencer such as artist, sportsman or reputable individual to helps in promoting the product or servicers. Individual is more easy to get influence when they are attracted to the social influencer itself(Singh, Sinha, & Liébana-Cabanillas, 2020). Changing his or her behavior towards the products or services may be a positive step to be accepted or recognized as part of the group.

Normative influence happens when individual conform to others just because to be accepted by the others (David & Turner, 2001). Customer decide to buy something because they want to avoid rejection by the groups and desire to be accepted. It is a norm that a group of people will only get closer within themselves. (Chaouali & El Hedhli, 2019; Makanyeza, 2017; C. S. Wang, Jeng, & Huang, 2017)stated that customer change behavior because they want to be socially accepted. As a requirement to be accepted, they must first adhere to the social norms. There is also another type of social influence where it relates to obedience(K. Yang, 2010). Obedience occurs when someone with a less powerful in unequal relationship submit the demands to the most powerful person. It means that the customer changes his or her behavior following the suggestion or instructions from the group(Chau & Ngai, 2010; Suki, 2013). Obedience in marketing can happens in the family decision making process. Children normally was forced to make selection of selected brand because of the instructions from parents. They were told to buy the product or services. Such actions change of behavior because the instructions were given by higher authority(S. M. Wang & Lin, 2011; Watjatrakul, 2013).

There are many past study conducted related to the social influence and consumer behavior. (Butcher, Sparks, & O'Callaghan, 2002; Chau & Ngai, 2010) indicates that social influence can also be known as persuasion or subjective norms resulted to a change of behavior or action by the another person. Someone who never buy organic food before may start buying or consuming the organic food because of the social influence. (M. O. Ahmad, Markkula, & Oivo, 2013; S. M. Wang & Lin, 2011) reported that customer normally will change their behavior or thinking according to their reference group. This is the reasons why there is a similarity on the way the group members think. This is a reason why marketers split their target market into segments. Segments according to (Makanyeza, 2017; Mohd Suki, 2013) is a group

of people who share the same needs and wants. (Khare, 2015) same group will act at the similar purchased pattern. (X. Yang, 2019) highlighted that some customer followed the decision masking made by the groups regardless the decision is good or bad. There is also a study that reported the change of behavior could be done through coercive power. It is such a mandatory requirement that force the customer to change in order to be accepted.

According to (Chaouali & El Hedhli, 2019) social pressure also will be detected through the celebrity role model, endorsers and entertainers such as athletes in which they were very good influencer on providing a source of product information

III. Methodology

This is a quantitative study using a survey questionnaire in order to collect data. Survey method was used because it is the best method to collect data accurately despite it is also cost saving. There are altogether 45 questions divided into 2

sections. Section A is more towards respondent profile while section B is about the items to be measure in this study consist of items representing the purchase intentions, conformity, obedience, peer pressure, leadership, sales and marketing. All questions used Five Likert scale in order to provide a more definite response. Likert scale was used because it can provide a standard response in gathering data. Beside that it can also contribute a quicker response rather than the respondent needs to think beyond his thinking frame at the point of answering the questions. Questionnaire also helps researcher to gather data in big scale compared to closed user group interview. Overall the questions took respondent to spend 15 minutes of their time to complete the session.

250 questionnaires distributed at the selected shopping mall in Jakarta. The distribution applied non-probability sampling where convenient technique is considered as appropriate in order to gather the data. The data analysis was done using the 230 respondents since 20 was rejected due to missing data and incomplete.

IV. Findings

Table 1: reliability analysis

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Purchase intentions	5	0.834	Very good
Conformity	5	0.736	Good
Obedience	6	0.814	Very good
Peer pressure	4	0.814	Very good
Leadership	5	0.757	Good
Sales	6	0.830	Very good
Marketing	6	0.880	Very good

The result of questionnaire shows that all items used in this research is valid with the value of Cronbach's alpha more than

0.7. The results indicate that the set of items have internal consistency.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Purchase intentions	2.5	5.00	3.67	1.24
Conformity	1.5	5.00	3.51	1.38
Obedience	2.5	5.00	4.23	1.67
Peer pressure	2.0	5.00	3.25	1.33
Leadership	2.0	5.00	3.42	2.5
Sales	1.0	5.00	3.25	1.69
Marketing	1.0	5.00	3.33	1.25

The results based on table 2 indicates that the mean for dependent variables is 3.67 with a standard deviation 1.24.

The highest mean obtained thorough obedience followed by purchase intentions and conformity. Table 2 also shows that

the standard deviation is low and it reflects that the feedback given is closer to the average.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	23.512	6	7.653	54.209	.000 ^b
Regression					
Residual	18.356	1.41	1.75		
Total	42.787	1.47			

- a. Purchase Intention
- b. Predictors

The table 3 above shows that the P-value for independent variables is 54.2 while its significant value is equal to 0.00. based on the results it can be concluded that all the variables used in this research is significant and ready for hypothesis testing.

Table 4: Multiple regression

Model	R	R square	Adjusted square	R	Std Error
1	0.767 ^a	0.533	.577		.36879

- a. Predictors (constant)
- b. Dependent variable: PI

The results from table 4 indicates that R square value is 0.533. It means that 53.3% of the variance in selected purchase intentions influence customer towards purchase intentions

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
1	.667	.325		3.077	.000
Constant					
CO	.573	.067	.625	8.671	.000
OB	.182	.076	.164	2.268	.023
PP	.049	.057	.046	.697	.652
LP	.563	.087	.625	7.671	.000
SS	.142	.076	.194	2.268	.000
MKG	.059	.057	.036	.577	.601

Table 6: Results of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement	Remarks
H1	There is a significant relationship between conformity towards customer purchase intention of organic products.	Supported
H2	There is a significant relationship between obedience towards customer purchase intention of organic products.	Supported
H3	There is a significant relationship between peer pressure towards customer purchase intention of organic products.	Not supported
H4	There is a significant relationship between leadership towards customer purchase intention of	Supported

	organic products.	
H5	There is a significant relationship between sales activities towards customer purchase intention of organic products.	Supported
H6	There is a significant relationship between marketing activities towards customer purchase intention of organic products.	Not supported

Table 5 is the result of coefficients in which it shows which independent variables have a statistical significant relationship towards the relationship. The results indicate that peer pressure and marketing did not support the purchase intentions towards organic product. There is no relationship between peer pressure and marketing campaign towards the customer intention to buy the process.

The result however indicates that conformity, obedience, leadership and sales activities do influence customer to have intention to buy the organic products.

V. Discussion and conclusion

The results in this research somehow proof that there are strong elements in the social influences towards customer purchase intention. Social influences do play role but it may take another evaluation with regards to the rejection of peer pressure and marketing. Possible explanation on the rejection is because individual or customer may not really consider their peer pressure as the elements for them to change any behavior. Customer would motivate to change their behavior based on the intention or inspiration of other group members that the individual aims or wish to belong too. Peer pressure is a normal group that individual fall into the category. It could be the normal social cluster or works related group that may not inspired the individual to be highly associated with it.

Marketing activities was rejected because of its general message that fail to focused on specific group. The message could be very general and not able to persuade customer with a special influence messages. Marketing is good as a tool for awareness but it could not influence customer to change their behavior without a strong influence from social groups. Marketing is good for awareness and it can be translated into sales if the right approach is used.

That is the reason why sales are significant towards purchase intentions. Sales activities required a personal approach with a personal message dedicated to a specific customer or groups. Direct sales for example is more applicable to spark the purchase intentions for a new products or in order to switch customer mind set towards from not interested towards purchase. Sales activities enable for a long session of explanation and elaboration that may switch customer to a positive result.

The result of conformity is similar with many other past research. It is the fact that social influence is related to

conformity. Customer change their behavior because they wanted to be accepted or associated to the social group. The result for obedience is also similar to past research. It means that less power customer in the social circle will have a strong tendency to accept the instructions of the senior people. The situation of a family member given before is practical enough to elaborate the situation of obedience.

Based on the above, managers involved in the sales of organic product should be more focused in promoting their products. It seems that they need to dedicate a clear message according to a market segment. A young social group may require a trend setting messages in order to capture their attentions. A messages related to health perhaps is suitable to a wealthy and seniors ages group of people. Managers can easily penetrate the market by dividing the group for a customized marketing.

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