

The Evaluation of Organic Food Purchase Intention in Terms of Consumption Value Theory and Involvement: An Empirical Study in Turkey

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Abstract: Throughout the past years, worldwide interest in organic food has increased, as well as in Turkey. Several studies were done to understand what affects the organic food purchase intention. This study is done in Turkey to understand what affects the organic food purchase intention in terms of testing the functional value (quality and price) of consumption values theory with the mediation role of involvement. The questionnaire was distributed and the responses of 386 respondents were analysed using SPSS version 22.00 and AMOS version 22.00. The findings of this study showed that there is a positive direct significant relationship between functional value-quality with the organic food purchase intention. It also shows a positive direct significant relationship between functional value- price and purchase intention of organic food. Results also showed that involvement fully mediates the relationship between functional value-price and purchase intention. Involvement doesn't mediate the relationship between functional value-quality with the purchase intention.

Keywords: consumption value theory, functional value involvement, organic food, purchase intention, Turkey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture is one of the markets that will lead to sustainable goals according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations ("FAO - COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE," 1998). Applications of the organic farming will contribute to the food system sustainability (Godfray et al., 2010). Due to these research results, the European Union started applying all what is needed to reach more organic areas, which in turn impacted consumers too by letting them seek for more sustainable food consumption (Reisch, Eberle, & Lorek, 2013).

In recent years, marketers are focusing on the trend of healthy food, which is why the sector of organic food is having more attention nowadays. Organic food is defined as the food that is processed without including any synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, and as the food that organic methods should be used while growing it. Demand for organic goods is increasing since 1990's, according to USDA it is estimated that the organic market has double-digit growth through the past years (United States Department of Agriculture, 2019). In another words, according to Research Institute of Organic Agriculture "FiBL" it has increased up to 533 percent since 1999 till 2017 (Hegla Willer & Lernoud, 2019).

Organic market in Turkey is one of the expanding markets, the National Committee for organic agriculture was established in 2002 and later, in 2004, the national organic law was set. In 2018 the organic area reached 107.3 million hectares, organic farmland 71.5 million hectares, with 2.8 million organic producers (increased 55% since 2009). The share of the organic agriculture in Turkey is 1.7% in 2018, which is low compared to other countries, Liechtenstein has 38.5% of organic share, Samoa has 34.5%, Austria has 24.7%, Sao Tome and Principe 22.5%, and Estonia 21.6% (Helga Willer, Schlatter, Trávníček, Kemper, & Lernoud, 2020). The organic agriculture industry is considered in the starting

phase but is increasing because it is considered as an important exporting country for the EU (Rehber & Turhan, 2002)(Polat & Sayan, 2004). Due to the demand of the EU countries through the past 10 years, the organic industry has increased rapidly (Oraman, 2014).

The organic food net income ratio is 65% from the general markets, and 35% from markets specialized with organic food. More promotions, education about the importance of organic food would increase the purchase of organic food in Turkey (Olhan & Ataseven, 2019). Hence this study will contribute more to the factors affecting the purchase intention and help marketers to expand this industry by setting new marketing strategies that targets organic food in Turkey.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Consumption Value Theory

The model of TCV in fig. 1. below shows that the theory consists of five values identified by Sheth *et al.* which are the “functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value, and epistemic value” (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). This theory was conducted among several different fields in order to know more about the drivers that lead to the choice toward a certain product or service. The theory of consumption value suggests that the consumers choose what they want to choose according to several consumption values. The customer value is a result of the customer experience with certain product, which many marketers are considering nowadays in their marketing programs (Turel, Serenko, & Bontis, 2010). Each of the five values influence the purchase decision in a different way. According to the Consumption Value Theory by Sheth *et al.*, the functional and social value will affect the consumers in terms of whether to buy the filtered or non-filtered cigarettes, but the emotional value was the driver to whether the consumer will smoke or not. Hence, all values have a differentiated performance, values will show what impacts the person’s decision to choose product A or product B, brand A or B, service A or B (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Sheth *et al.*, 1991).

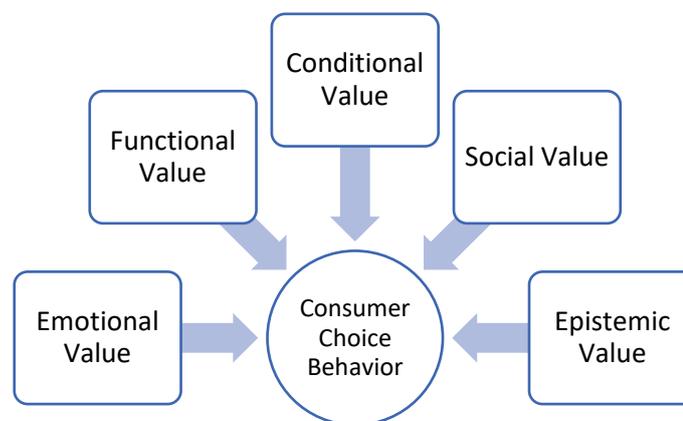


Fig. 1: Theory of Consumption Value Model

Source: (Sheth *et al.*, 1991)

Functional value:

Functional value is explained as the benefit and advantage the consumer gets due to the functional attributes of the demanded product (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Functional value in theory of consumption value is measured by two aspects, the first one is quality and the second one is price. Functional value determines the consumer’s usage to certain product depending on the product’s function, physical performance, utility, such as having a reliable product, durable, and with a suitable price. According to previous literature about organic food products and functional value, the functional value was identified by mentioning the biological features of the organic foodstuffs (Finch, 2006; Rahnama, 2017). Building on this fact we can group the following motives to the functional value; quality of organic food, the absence of harmful materials, taste, food security, nutritional and natural content, freshly produced, impact on health (Kushwah, Dhir, Sagar, & Gupta, 2019).

Price is another factor to consider in the functional value, in the organic market there were 16 studies about willingness to pay for organic products and all of the studies' results showed that the price is the major barrier, however there was a study done that showed that the price isn't the major barrier and other factors such as lack of knowledge and low availability of the organic products are the barriers (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017). The functional value in terms of price differ from country to another according to the literature, hence this study will investigate more about the price functional value in Turkey.

2.2 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the possibility that a customer will purchase a specific product or service (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Purchase intention is also defined as the individual behavioral tendency toward a certain product (Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979). Purchase intention is a plan that is set by a consumer consciously in order to do an effort to buy a product (Spears & Singh, 2004). It shows the consumer's reason for buying a specific product (Saad et al., 2012). Buyer's perceived value and perceived benefit are two determinants of purchasing intention (Xu, Summers, & Belleau, 2004; Dodds et al., 1991). Purchase intention is not similar to attitude, attitude refers to evaluating the product, whereas the intention explains the motivation of the consumer to do a certain behavior. Some of the researchers defined the purchase intention as the object that we will purchase because we think that we will buy it (Rezvani et al., 2012). Purchase intention is considered as the choice to perform an action, which will make us understand the consumer's behavior to a specific product (Wang & Yang, 2008). Purchase intention is affected by factors such as the price, value, quality, external and internal motivations (GOGOI, 2013).

2.3 Involvement

Involvement in general is defined as "The concept of felt involvement refers to a consumer's overall subjective feeling of personal relevance" (Celsi & Olson, 1988). In the attitude strength aspect, involvement is defined as the person's own logic about concern, care, and importance that he/she assign to a specific attitude (Olsen, 2001).

Involvement is important to the consumer's life, the extent to which the food is important to the consumer varies from a person to the another. People that are highly involved in food are involved more in all the stages of food. People with high involvement level do a lot of differentiation among food especially among food taste, food evaluation, and hedonic level (Bell & Marshall, 2003). People also care about food that brings them and lead them to more healthy actions like getting involved in food that provides them good nutrients such as fruits and vegetables, and will be less involved in food that affect their health negatively such as the high fat snacks and food (Marshall & Bell, 2004).

Organic food involvement is the degree to which consumers are attracted and interested in all the different things about organic food (Hansen, Sørensen, & Eriksen, 2018). Organic food is perceived as a healthy food to the consumer unlike the conventional food. People with high food involvement will have positive attitude toward organic food, in turn they will intend to purchase organic food more than people with low involvement (Chen, 2007). Hence this research proposes the following hypothesis:

- **H1:** There is a positive relationship between functional value-quality and organic food purchase intention in terms of mediating the effect of involvement
- **H2:** There is a positive relationship between functional value-price and organic food purchase intention in terms of mediating the effect of involvement

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Questionnaire Design

Exploratory research is the type of research that is done in this study, quantitative method is used while collecting data in this type of research (Krishnaswamy & Satyaprasad, 2010). The questionnaire design was based on previous literature from different authors who measured the consumption values. The functional value scale is adapted from Sweeney & Soutar (2001), with having four items to measure functional value (price), four items for functional value (quality). The involvement scale and the purchase intention scale are adapted from Teng & Lu (2016), four items are used to measure each of the involvement scale and the purchase intention scale. In all parts except the demographics, five-point Likert scale was used to know whether the consumers agree or disagree with the statements listed, the scale is from "strongly disagree" along to "strongly agree".

3.2 Data Collection

The questionnaire is carried among Turkish consumers in Turkey. The questionnaire was sent online to 386 respondents. In this study the non-probability sampling is used using the convenience method that is the quickest method to collect data and test the problem of interest (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis in this study starts with the descriptive statistics that include details about the demographics of the respondents which will help in knowing the characteristics of the respondents. Later, the inferential statistics are analysed, and they include the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) that help us understand the relationship between the variables and to know the variability and reliability of the dimensions. After that, the multiple regression assumptions were done. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. SEM is a method designed to analyse the hypothesized model and it is done for complex models and other several types. Demographics are analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.00, while AMOS software version 22.00 are used for the EFA and CFA.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

This questionnaire included two subcategories of gender which are male and female, 64% (247 respondents) of respondents were female, and 36% (139 respondents) were male. The age group in the questionnaire is presented across five age categories. "Less than 25" has the greatest percentage which is 37.6% (145 respondents), 32.1% (124 respondents) are "25-34", 22.3% (86 respondents) are "35-44", 5.4% (21 respondents) are "45-54", 2.6% of respondents (10 respondents) are above 55.

Marital status has two subcategories, single and married, there are 67.1% (259 respondents) single, whereas the married respondents were 32.9% (127 respondents). Most of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, 48.2% (186 respondents) of the respondents, 27.2% (105 respondents) of the respondents have a master's degree, 16.8% (65 respondents) of the respondents have a high school degree, 5.4% (21 respondents) of the respondents has PHD degree, and 2.3% (9 respondents) has primary school. Majority of the respondents has the lowest income level, which is 2020 Turkish Liras and below, they constitute of 35.5% (137 respondents) of the sample study, 22.3% (86 respondents) with an income between 2021-3500 Turkish Liras, 19.4% (75 respondents) between 3501-5000 Turkish Liras, 14% (54 respondents) between 5001 and 7000, 8.8% (34 respondents) has an income of 7001 and more.

4.2 Normality

The values for both skewness and kurtosis must not be above 3 nor below -3 (Dori'c et al., 2009). TABLE 1. shows us that both skewness and kurtosis values are not below -3 nor above 3 which indicates that the data is normally distributed.

TABLE 1: Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
FV-Quality1	-.519	-.434
FV-Quality2	-.695	.020
FV-Quality3	-.783	-.045
FV-Quality4	-.640	-.210
FV_Price1	.804	-.047
FV_Price2	-.078	-.645
FV_Price3	-.121	-.948
FV_Price4	.920	.346
Involvement2	-.435	-.536
Involvement3	-.096	-.653
Involvement4	-.096	-.879
Purchase_Inten1	-.838	.043
Purchase_Inten2	-.741	.008
Purchase_Inten3	-.903	.209
Purchase_Inten4	-.745	-.205

4.3 Reliability

Reliability for the factors is done by checking the Cronbach's alpha scores. The values should be above 0.70 to indicate a good internal consistency (Hair, 2013:33). In the TABLE 2. all the of the Cronbach's alpha scores are above 0.70 which is required.

TABLE 2: Variables Reliability Results

Variables	Total Items	Cronbach's alpha α
Functional Value- Quality	4	.892
Functional Value- Price	4	.825
Involvement	3	.883
Purchase Intention	4	.922

5. TESTING HYPOTHESES

We need to check whether there is a mediation or not by checking the direct and indirect effects. The indirect effects determines whether there is a mediation or not (Schreiber et al., 2006:328). Mediation analysis allows us to test the mediator impact on the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. In order to check for the mediation, we should check if the mediator has an effect on the dependent variable, and if the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable. To prove the mediation, we need a strong correlation between the independent variable, dependent variable, and mediation variable (Hair, 2013:33). In the TABLE 3. we can see the results of the mediation.

TABLE 3: Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Direct Beta without mediator	Direct with mediator	Standardized indirect effect (two tailed significance) (BC)	Result
Functional Value (quality) - Involvement-purchase intention	.142 (.007)	.103 (.020)	.041 (.366)	No mediation (indirect is not significant)
Functional Value (price) - Involvement-purchase intention	.117 (.040)	.028 (.559)	.089 (.018)	Full mediation (direct effect was significant prior to the addition of the mediator, insignificant after adding mediator, and indirect is significant)
Involvement-purchase intention	.547 (***)	-	-	Involvement significantly affects purchase intention

- **H1:** There is a positive relationship between functional value-quality and organic food purchase intention in terms of mediating the effect of involvement

By looking at TABLE 3., we can interpret that involvement doesn't mediate the relationship between functional value-quality and purchase intention, which means that our hypothesis (H1) is rejected, and null hypothesis is accepted.

- **H2:** There is a positive relationship between functional value-price and organic food purchase intention in terms of mediating the effect of involvement.

According to TABLE 3., involvement fully mediates the relationship between functional value-price and purchase intention, which means that our hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The functional value is measured by two aspects, first one is the functional value in terms of quality, the second one in terms of price. To start first with the functional value-quality the results showed that there is a positive direct relationship between the functional value quality and purchase intention (without the mediator), however, the indirect effect is

insignificant, hence, involvement does not mediate the relationship between functional value quality and purchase intention. In another words, consumers will buy the organic food for its quality, they don't need to be involved in the organic food to buy it, believing that the product is high quality is enough for them. However, when we come to the functional value- price, there is a positive direct relationship between the functional value-price and purchase intention, there is also significant indirect effect, and it is a full mediation. This indicates that people who purchase organic food are highly involved with it to pay the higher price for organic food compared with the conventional food. This finding will help marketers to target consumers who are highly involved with organic food.

7. LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The sampling design have a limitation in which we used the non-probability sampling, the convenience method, which might cause a limitation because respondents does not represent the population as it is presented if compared with probability sampling. Another limitation is that the survey was collected by distributing the survey online, because maybe some consumers of organic food do not have access to the internet, so using focus groups, or interviews might be better for future studies. We recommend marketers to target Turkish consumers with high involvement in the organic food. As it appears that involvement has a positive effect on the purchase intention of organic food. Especially that it mediates the relationship between the functional value-price and purchase intention.

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