

CONSUMER-BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION AND
CONSUMPTION TOWARDS FUNCTIONAL FOOD IN
MALAYSIA

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FUNCTIONAL FOOD IN MALAYSIA

By

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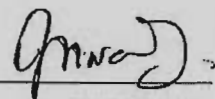
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ABSTRACT

Unhealthy eating behaviour has been linked to the risks of many chronic diseases all around the world including Malaysia. Functional foods and its association with health benefits and reducing the risk of diseases open a promising avenue for consumers to pursue a healthier life as well as extending their life expectancy. This study aims to examine the attitude dimensions, social influence and self-efficacy related factors that may influence consumer-behavioural intention to consume functional foods and to identify the relationship between consumer-behavioural intention and consumer-consumption behaviour as well as to examine the effect of past experience as moderator on the intention-behaviour relationship. By using mall intercept surveys, data were collected from 452 respondents aged 18 and above who shopped at hypermarkets in Malaysia. From the analysis undertaken, it was found that the level of consumer-behavioural intention to consume functional food was encouraging and it positively affected the level of functional food consumption behaviour among consumers. The results revealed that perceived reward from using functional food, self-efficacy and necessity for functional food significantly influenced consumer-behavioural intention to consume such food. Findings also showed that feeling of using functional food (dimension of past experience) moderated the relationship between intention and behaviour. Consumer intention towards the consumption of functional food was found to be different across gender, age and marital status. The findings delivered rich insights for the marketers and manufacturers of the functional food industry in formulating effective promotions and marketing strategies that could be aimed at the right consumers. It is hoped that this study will provide beneficial information to the government in enhancing the health promotional campaigns and activities aiming at improving healthy consumption and the health of Malaysians. This study has paved the way for further research that include a study of consumer behaviour towards specific functional food categories with unique components that could cure different health problems or reduce the risk of different disease.

Keywords: intention to consume functional food, attitude dimensions, self-efficacy, social influence, past experience

ABSTRAK

Tingkah laku pemakanan tidak sihat telah dikaitkan dengan pelbagai risiko penyakit kronik di seluruh dunia termasuk Malaysia. Makanan fungsian dan kaitannya dengan faedah-faedah kesihatan dan mengurangkan risiko penyakit memberi peluang kepada pengguna untuk memperolehi kehidupan yang sihat dan juga meningkatkan jangka hayat hidup mereka. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor dimensi sikap, pengaruh sosial dan efikasi diri yang boleh mempengaruhi niat tingkah laku pengguna untuk mengamalkan makanan fungsian. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan di antara niat tingkah laku pengguna dan tingkah laku penggunaan serta untuk mengkaji kesan pengalaman lepas sebagai moderator terhadap hubungan di antara niat-tingkah laku. Dengan menggunakan kaedah kajian pintasan pusat membeli belah, data telah dikumpulkan daripada 452 responden yang berumur 18 tahun dan ke atas yang membeli belah di pasaraya-pasaraya dalam Malaysia. Berdasarkan analisis yang dijalankan, didapati bahawa niat tingkah laku pengguna untuk mengambil makanan—fungsian adalah menggalakkan dan mempengaruhi secara positif terhadap tahap penggunaan makanan fungsian dalam kalangan pengguna. Keputusan mendedahkan bahawa tanggapan ganjaran menggunakan makanan fungsian, efikasi diri dan keperluan bagi makanan fungsian mempengaruhi secara signifikan niat tingkah laku pengguna untuk mengambil makanan tersebut. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa perasaan menggunakan makanan fungsian (dimensi kepada pengalaman lepas) menjadi perantara di antara niat dan tingkah laku. Niat pengguna terhadap pengambilan makanan fungsian didapati berbeza mengikut jantina, umur dan status perkahwinan. Hasil kajian juga memberikan pandangan mendalam untuk pemasar dan pengeluar dalam industri makanan fungsian bagi merangka promosi yang berkesan dan strategi pemasaran yang mensasarkan golongan pengguna yang tepat. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan maklumat yang bermanfaat kepada kerajaan dalam meningkatkan kempen mempromosikan kesihatan yang baik, dan aktiviti yang meningkatkan pengambilan makanan sihat serta kesihatan rakyat Malaysia. Kajian ini telah membuka jalan untuk kajian seterusnya termasuk kajian tingkah laku pengguna terhadap kategori makanan fungsian yang mempunyai komponen yang unik dan boleh mengubati masalah kesihatan atau mengurangkan risiko penyakit yang berbeza.

Kata kunci: niat mengambil makanan fungsian, dimensi sikap, efikasi diri, pengaruh sosial, pengalaman lepas

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description of Abbreviation
WHO	World Health Organisation
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
HBM	Health Beliefs Model
FF	Functional Food
KMO	Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
SE	Standard Error

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Eating behaviour has been linked to the risk of many chronic diseases all around the world including Malaysia. Steinmetz and Potter (1996), and McKeivith (2004) reported that the consumption of healthy food is important in preventing obesity and certain types of chronic disease.

As reported by World Health Organisation (WHO, 2010), unhealthy foods, unhealthy eating habits and less physical activity may lead to obesity, which is known to be a major contributor to the global burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which although non-infectious, are often referred to as chronic diseases. NCDs, such as hypertension, kidney disease, diabetes, chronic lung diseases, heart disease, high cholesterol and certain types of cancer, are increasing, affecting people of all age groups in all around the world (WHO, 2011). Therefore, to prevent NCDs, individuals must consume a healthy diet, such as consuming more functional foods and carry out physical activity.

Although there have been numerous efforts and strategies to encourage healthy consumption among individuals, previous studies demonstrate that individuals fail to follow the practice of healthy consumption (Reynolds, Baranowski, Bishop, Farris, Binkley, Nicklas, et al., 1999; Sjoberg, Hallberg, Hoglund & Hulthen, 2003). Kennedy (1998) and French, Story, Neumark-Sztainer, Fulkerson and Hannan (2001) argued that individuals are more inclined towards unhealthy eating habits, in which they consume large amounts of fats and carbohydrates, have low fibre diets, drink a lot of soft drinks and rarely take fruits

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