

## WHAT'S ANTECEDENT DRIVING INTENTION TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD? EXAMINING ATTITUDE AND TRUST

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### Abstract

**Background:** Organic food has its own appeal for consumers, so the development of the organic food business is currently rapid. Choosing the right food is the main key in maintaining health by living a healthy lifestyle.

**Purpose:** Thus, this research aims to examine antecedents that can increase consumer purchase intentions for organic food in Central Java.

**Design/Methodology/approach:** A total of 242 of organic food consumers as the respondent were involved to fill out the survey with a questionnaire determined based on purposive sampling techniques. The collected data was processed and analysed using structural equation models with the help of AMOS statistical tools.

**Finding/Result:** The research results prove that consumer purchase intentions for organic food are influenced by consumer attitudes and beliefs in organic food, but are not influenced by food safety concerns. Meanwhile, consumer trust in organic food is influenced by food safety concerns and health consciousness is not significant. Furthermore, attitude toward organic food is influenced by food safety concerns and health consciousness.

**Conclusion:** This research concludes that the antecedents used in this research have an important role in increasing consumer purchase intentions towards organic food.

**Originality/value (state of the art):** The originality of this research is that this research contributes to providing different insights regarding antecedents that can increase consumer purchasing intentions for organic food.

**Keywords:** green marketing, purchase intention, organic food, health consciousness, food safety

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, business development in the organic food sector has experienced rapid growth, especially in developing countries (Loera et al. 2022; Grimm et al. 2023; Bazhan et al. 2024). The market growth of organic food, especially in developing countries is gaining special attraction and study for researchers and business people due to the rapid increase in demand. Increasing public awareness of environmental problems (such as land and water pollution) has an impact on increasing demand for organic food (Winterstein et al. 2024), so that the negative impact of environmental problems does not become more widespread on health. This means that the level of public awareness of health is increasing so they need food that does not contain chemicals or organic food (Kirmani et al. 2022; Alsubhi et al. 2023).

Consumers' increasing concern for what they consume makes them have the intention to be sustainable in consuming organic food (Park and Lin, 2020). This is because consumers are aware that the food they consume is directly related to their health (Hussain et al. 2016). Previous studies support that consumer health consciousness will greatly influence purchasing behaviour for organic food (Hsu et al. 2016; Nagaraj, 2021). Apart from that, consumer behaviour towards what they consume is caused by food safety concerns because consumers believe that organic food has more safety compared to food that contains chemical content (Ahangarkolae and Gorton, 2021). However, organic food products are increasingly popular and popular among the public, there is still debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of organic food (Bazhan et al. 2024). Furthermore, this debate regarding consumer intentions towards purchasing organic food is still poorly understood and has received serious attention in closing the existing gap.

Understanding individual behavioral intentions in consuming environmentally friendly products will have an impact on environmental and economic sustainability (Park & Lin, 2020). Based on theory of planned behaviour, purchase intention is very important as a determinant of actual purchasing behavior (Ajzen, 2015). Previous studies explain that health consciousness is a variable that can increase consumers' intention to buy organic food products (Nagaraj, 2021) but other studies also reveal that health consciousness cannot influence the intention to buy organic products (Hoque et al. 2018). Apart from that, food safety concerns, which are

an important factor for consumers in choosing food, have also attracted debate, (Kaur et al. 2020) stated that there are consumer purchasing intentions that are not influenced by food safety concerns.

Consumer intentions and behavior in purchasing organic food are largely determined by consumers' attitudes toward the environment, in relation to consumers' positive or negative assessments of organic food (Cheung and To, 2019; Park and Lin, 2020; Leyva-Hernández et al. 2022; Schirmacher et al. 2023). In other words, purchase intention is a predictor that determines consumers' current purchasing behaviour, consequently acting as a prerequisite for actual purchasing attitudes (Riptiono, 2022; Watanabe et al. 2020). Consumer intention to buy organic food is the first step in developing demand for organic food products. Apart from attitude, one of the important antecedents for increasing intention is trust (Truong et al. 2021), because the more consumers have confidence that the products they consume and buy are truly organic products, the more positive influence it will have on their behavior (Leyva-Hernández et al. 2022; Schirmacher et al. 2023). It was found that organic products are often doubted by consumers because of the large number of organic labels, this is supported by a study conducted by (Di Guida & Christoph-Schulz, 2023) examining the causes of consumer distrust towards organic food and outlining consumer expectations from the organic sector.

Even though there has been a lot of research discussing organic food behaviour, there is still a knowledge gap regarding the lack of consumer knowledge as a factor that influences attitudes as a determinant of intention to purchase organic products (Palomino Rivera and Barcellos-Paula, 2024). Furthermore, still limited research has explicitly examined disparities related to sustainable food products. Thus, this research aims to close the gap previously described by examining the influence of health consciousness and food safety concerns on consumer purchase intentions for organic food by involving attitudes toward organic food and trust in organic food as mediation in a new research framework.

## METHODS

This research is quantitative research, data was collected through a survey method conducted between January and April 2024 in Central Java Province, Indonesia

using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Indonesian with the help of researchers. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face by trained researchers adopting the intercept survey method (Bush and Hair, 1985). Respondents were approached at a specialty organic shop.

The sample size considered for this research refers to (Hair et al. 2010) which is ten times higher than the number of variables (22 items). In addition, the sample size can be determined from 5 - 10 times the total parameters used (Hair et al. 2010). Thus, the sample size required in this research is 220 samples ( $165 = 10 \times 22$ ). By adhering to the principle of saving time and high efficiency in data collection, the researcher decided to include an additional sample of 10% ( $220 \times 10\% = 22$ ) to the existing minimum sample. Therefore, the desired sample size should be 242 ( $220 + 22 = 242$ ). The purposive sampling technique was used.

Measurement items and scales were developed based on previous research. Each construct was measured with items that were slightly adapted to fit the organic food

context. We used a 7-point Likert scale to rate the items (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Health consciousness is measured using 6 indicators adopted from (Li and Jaharuddin, 2021) Food Safety Concern is measured using 4 indicators adopted from (Nagaraj, 2021). Attitude toward Organic Food is measured using 5 indicators adopted from (Nagaraj 2021; Rivera and Barcellos-Paula, 2024). Trust in organic food is measured using 4 indicators adopted from (Teng and Wang, 2015; Watanabe et al. 2020). Purchase Intention is measured using 3 indicators adopted from (Watanabe et al. 2020; Bazhan et al. 2024). Table. 1 shows the measurement items and their sources. Data testing consisted of confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA), which is a more rigorous procedure than exploratory factorial analysis (EFA) (Byrne, 2016), and structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24.0 was adopted for analysis. This research examines the relationship between health consciousness, food safety concerns toward organic food purchase intention through consumer attitude and trust on organic food. Based on the literature review and relationship of variables, the framework of this research capture on Figure 1. Furthermore, there are 8 hypotheses tested.

Table. 1 Measurement of Variables

Constructs	Items	Measurement
Health Consciousness (Li and Jaharuddin, 2021)	HC1	I reflect a lot on my health
	HC2	I am very self-conscious about my health
	HC3	I am alert to changes in my health
	HC4	I am used to being aware of my health
	HC5	I am responsible for my health condition
	HC6	I am aware of my health condition as I go about my day
Food Safety Concern (Nagaraj, 2021)	FSC1	Food quality and safety is currently a concern of mine
	FSC2	Today most foods contain residue from chemical sprays and fertilizers
	FSC3	I am very concerned about the number of artificial additives and preservatives in food
	FSC4	I buy more fresh food and vegetables now than I did a few years ago
Attitude Toward Organic Food (Nagaraj, 2021; Rivera and Barcellos-Paula, 2024)	ATO1	I think buying organic food is good
	ATO2	I think buying organic food is beneficial
	ATO3	think buying organic food is wise
	ATO4	I think buying organic food is positive
	ATO5	I think buying organic food is beneficial
Trust (Teng and Wang, 2015; Watanabe et al. 2020)	TR1	I think companies in the organic food sector are aware of their responsibilities
	TR2	I believe those who sell certified organic food are indeed selling quality organic food
	TR3	I trust quality organic food labels or logos
	TR4	I trust agencies that certify organic food products
Purchase Intention (Watanabe et al. 2020; Bazhan et al. 2024)	PI1	If organic food is available in the store, I will buy it
	PI2	I am willing to buy organic food even if the price is higher
	PI3	The likelihood that I will buy organic food is very high

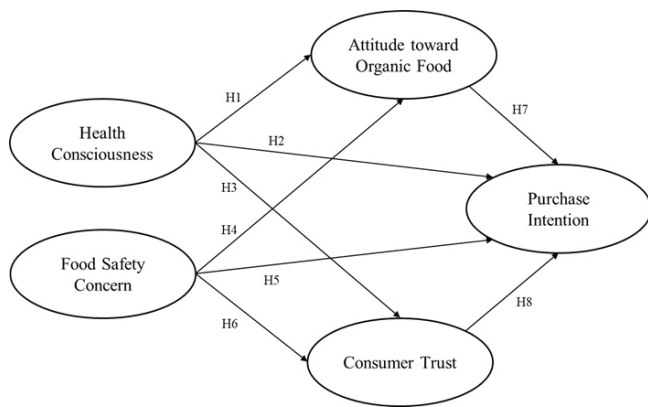


Figure 1. Research framework

### Relationship between Health Consciousness with consumer attitude, consumer trust, and consumer purchase intention

Previous research shows that health consciousness stimulates positive attitudes about organic food (Ghoochani et al. 2018; Xin and Seo, 2019). Furthermore, health consciousness is a predictor that increases consumer confidence in organic food products (Hoque et al. 2018), determines consumer attitudes towards organic food (Xin and Seo, 2019), and increases purchase intentions for organic food (Kang et al. 2015; Latiff et al. 2016; Li and Jaharuddin, 2021). Thus, the hypotheses built in this research are:

- H1: Health consciousness positively influences consumers' attitudes toward organic foods
- H2: Health consciousness positively influences consumers' trust toward organic foods
- H3: Health consciousness positively influences consumers' purchase intention toward organic foods

### Relationship between food safety concerns with consumer attitude, consumer trust, and consumer purchase intention

Several previous studies have tested the positive relationship between food safety concerns and consumer attitudes toward organic food (Shafie and Rennie, 2012; Wee et al. 2014), although there have been studies with different results (Nagaraj, 2021). Food safety concern for consumers is an important factor that triggers their minds to think about how important the product is and that it is safe for their

health, thereby increasing consumer confidence (Liao et al. 2020). This is very important because food safety concerns are a very important predictor in increasing trust (Liao et al. 2020) and purchase intention (Hussain et al. 2016; Kaur et al. 2020). Therefore, the hypotheses built in this research are as follows:

- H4: Food safety concerns positively influence consumers' attitude toward organic foods
- H5: Food safety concerns positively influence consumers' trust toward organic foods
- H6: Food safety concerns positively influence consumers' purchase intention toward organic foods

### Relationship between consumer attitude and consumers' purchase intention

Consumer attitudes towards organic food differ from each other based on variations in consumer profiles (Feil et al. 2020). Furthermore, there has been increasing research on various aspects of consumer attitudes towards organic food, but the scope is limited compared to the global literature. Several previous studies have succeeded in showing that consumer attitudes are a very strong predictor in increasing consumer purchase intentions for organic food (Hoque et al. 2018; Nagaraj, 2021; the study added the serial mediation of consumer attitude (ATT Rivera and Barcellos-Paula, 2024). Therefore, the hypothesis developed in this research is as follows:

- H7: Customer attitude positively influences consumers' purchase intention toward organic foods.

### Relationship between consumer trust and consumers' purchase intention

In the organic food market, consumer trust is a complicated issue because even after consumption, consumers cannot verify whether a product is organic. In addition, previous research has confirmed that trust is an important predictor of consumers' purchase intentions and future behavior (Teng and Wang, 2015; Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017; Truong et al. 2021). Therefore, the formulation of the hypothesis in this research is as follows:

- H8: Customer trust positively influences consumers' purchase intention toward organic foods

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of Respondents

The profile of respondents in this research can be seen in Table 2. Male respondents dominated the respondent profile with 148 people or 61.16%. Furthermore, the most common age range was 35 – 44 years old with 91 people (37.60%), followed by the 25 – 34 age range with 79 people (32.64%). The marital status of respondents was 127 people single and 115 people married (47.52%). The highest level of education was a bachelor’s degree, 127 people (52.48%). The largest category based on occupation is business owner, namely 95 people (39.26%). Finally, the respondent’s income was dominated by 72 people (29.75%) in the income range of IDR3,500,000–4,499,000.

### Reliability and Convergent Validity

The reliability test was carried out to check the reliability of the indicators in the proposed research model by referring to the composite reliability value and the Cronbach alpha value must be more than 0.07 (Hair et al. 2010). From the results of the reliability test, all variables have a CR value of more than 0.7, this shows that there is acceptable internal consistency. Before carrying out path analysis, it is important to test convergent validity by paying attention to three factors,

factor loading, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (Hair et al. 2010). The required values for loading factor and composite reliability must be greater than 0.70 and AVE must be greater than 0.5. The results of convergent validity testing in this research can be seen in Table 3, all constructs used in this research model have values that exceed the determined convergent validity index, meaning that convergent validity is declared valid.

### Hypotheses Testing

The measurement model refers to one of the important parts in SEM, linking the measured variables with latent variables (Shek & Yu, 2014). Additionally, assessing the measurement model is another step prior to moving to path analysis in the structural model under significant data fit (Brown & Moore, 2012). Based on the results of CFA analysis, the main goodness-of-fit indices are listed in Table 4. For absolute fit, RMSEA = 0.04 (less than 0.08), indicating good absolute fit. Specifically for incremental fit, GFI = 0.92 (more than 0.9), CFI = 0.92 (greater than 0.9), and NFI = 0.911 (more than 0.9), indicating an incremental fit. Besides parsimonious fit, Relative  $\chi^2 = 2.23$  (less than 3), which also indicates a good fit. The results were tested using SEM-AMOS, the complete test results of the eight hypotheses are presented in Table 5.

Table 2. Profile of respondent

Socio-demographic profiles of respondents (n = 242)		
Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	148	61.16
Female	94	38.84
<b>Age (year)</b>		
18 – 24	17	7.02
25 – 34	79	32.64
35 – 44	91	37.60
45 – 54	45	18.60
≥ 55	10	4.13
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	127	52.48
Married	115	47.52
<b>Highest Education Level</b>		
≤ High School	16	6.61
Diploma	35	14.46
Bachelor	127	52.48

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Master	56	23.24
Doctoral	8	3.31
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	27	11.16
Business Owner	95	39.26
Private Employee	81	33.47
Government Employee	33	13.64
Others	5	2.07
<b>Income/month (000)(IDR)</b>		
≤ 1,499	14	5.79
1,500 – 2,499	30	12.40
2,500 – 3,499	56	23.14
3,500 – 4,499	72	29.75
4,500 – 5,499	47	19.42
≥ 5,500	23	9.50

Table 3. Reliability and convergent validity

Variables	Items	Factors Loading	CR $\geq$ 0.7	$\alpha \geq$ 0.7	AVE $\geq$ 0.5
Health Consciousness (HCS)	HCS_1	0.783	0.946	0.872	0.748
	HCS_2	0.751			
	HCS_3	0.889			
	HCS_4	0.779			
	HCS_5	0.806			
	HCS_6	0.727			
Food Safety Concern (FSC)	FSC_1	0.809	0.925	0.816	0.756
	FSC_2	0.831			
	FSC_3	0.788			
	FSC_4	0.755			
Attitude toward Organic Food (AOF)	AOF_1	0.834	0.941	0.845	0.762
	AOF_2	0.766			
	AOF_3	0.857			
	AOF_4	0.786			
	AOF_5	0.758			
Trust in Organic Food (TOF)	TOF_1	0.733	0.932	0.862	0.756
	TOF_2	0.861			
	TOF_3	0.878			
	TOF_4	0.766			
Purchase Intention (OPI)	OPI_1	0.866	0.959	0.887	0.887
	OPI_2	0.901			
	OPI_3	0.924			

Notes:  $\alpha$ = Cronbach alpha. CR= Composite Reliability. AVE= average variance extracted

Table 4. Goodness of Fit Indices

Fit Indices	X2	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
Recommended	<3	>0.08	>0.90	>0.80	0.90	0.90
Results	2.23	0.04	0.92	0.91	0.91	0.92

Table 5. The Results of Hypotheses Testing

	Path-hypothesis	B	C.R	P	Results
H1	HCS $\rightarrow$ AOF	0.419	3.237	0.012	Supported
H2	HSC $\rightarrow$ TOF	0.088	0.461	1.076	Not Supported
H3	HSC $\rightarrow$ OPI	0.667	5.428	0.002	Supported
H4	FSC $\rightarrow$ AOF	0.590	4.119	0.008	Supported
H5	FSC $\rightarrow$ TOF	0.654	5.643	0.001	Supported
H6	FSC $\rightarrow$ OPI	0.127	0.798	0.865	Not Supported
H7	AOF $\rightarrow$ OPI	0.791	6.702	0.000	Supported
H8	TOF $\rightarrow$ OPI	4.011	3.262	0.029	Supported

Notes: HSC= health consciousness, FSC= food safety concern, AOF= attitude toward organic food, TOF=consumer trust, OPI= organic food purchase intention, B= estimate, P= significant at the level 0,05, C.R = t-value

The first hypothesis testing was carried out to test the influence of health consciousness on consumer attitudes toward organic food. The results showed a significance value of less than 0.05, namely 0.012, with a CR value of 3.237 with an estimate of 0.419. Thus, it can be concluded that the H1 test is declared acceptable. This means that the higher the consumer's health consciousness, the more positive the consumer's attitude towards organic food will be. The results of this research are consistent with previous research conducted by Hoque et al. (2018) which stated that health consciousness is an antecedent that shapes consumer attitudes. Being that organic food consumption is closely linked to health awareness, consumers' preventive behaviour towards what they consume will increase. This shows that consumers with better health knowledge will have higher health awareness, thus influencing their attitudes towards organic food.

Different results were shown in the second hypothesis test, this test was carried out to determine the influence of health consciousness on consumer trust in organic food. The research results showed that a significance value was greater than 0.05, namely 1.076, a CR value of 0.461 with an estimate of 0.088. Thus, it can be concluded that the H2 test is rejected. The results of this study are not in line with previous research by (Hoque et al. 2018) which stated the significant role of health consciousness in consumer trust in organic food. This means that consumers' health consciousness does not play a role in increasing their trust in organic food products. Consumers consider organic food products to be foods that are safe to consume but the costs incurred by consumers are expensive (Wang et al. 2024). Consumers are interested in their own health but lack confidence in whether the food products they buy are truly organic.

The third hypothesis test was carried out to test the influence of health consciousness on consumers' purchase intentions for organic food. The results showed that the significance value was less than 0.05, namely 0.002, with a CR value of 5.428 with an estimate of 0.667. Thus, it can be concluded that the H3 test is declared acceptable. This means that the higher their health consciousness, the more likely they are to choose organic food. The results of this research are in line with previous research which states that health consciousness is a predictor in determining consumers' purchasing intentions for organic food (Kang et al. 2015;

Latiff et al. 2016; Li and Jaharuddin, 2021). Health is something that is most valuable to every individual and acts as a key element that determines whether they make healthy food choices (Kang et al. 2015). Furthermore, high consumer preferences regarding health value concerns will increase purchasing intentions and behaviour for organic food (Latiff et al. 2016; Li and Jaharuddin, 2021).

The same results were shown in the fourth hypothesis test which was carried out to test the influence of food safety consciousness on consumer attitudes toward organic food. The test results showed a significance value of less than 0.05, namely 0.008, with a CR value of 4.119 with an estimate of 0.590. Thus, it can be concluded that the H4 test is declared acceptable. This means that the higher the consumer's food safety concern for organic food, the more positive the consumer's attitude toward organic food will grow. The results of this research are in line with previous research conducted by (Shafie and Rennie, 2012; Wee et al. 2014). Perception of food product safety is an important factor that can motivate consumers to buy organic food (Nosi et al. 2020). Consumers consider that the issue of food safety has strong relevance to encourage consumers to fulfill their needs for safer food and guarantee its safety (Wee et al. 2014).

Likewise, in the fifth hypothesis test which was carried out to test the influence of food safety consciousness on consumer trust towards organic food, the test results showed a significance value of less than 0.05, namely 0.001, with a CR value of 5.643 with an estimate of 0.654. Thus, it can be concluded that the H5 test is declared acceptable. This means that the higher the consumer's food safety concern for organic food, the greater their trust in organic food will be. The results of this research are in line with previous research conducted by (Liao et al. 2020). Trust plays an important role for consumers in determining the choice of product to purchase. Thus, consumers need knowledge about the safety of the products they consume so that trust will increase. Consumers need clear and accurate information regarding the safety of organic food products (Shafie and Rennie, 2012).

The difference in test results is again shown in the sixth hypothesis which tests the influence of food safety concerns on consumer purchase intentions for organic food. The test results show that the significance value obtained is more than 0.05, namely 0.865, and the CR

value is 0.798 with an estimate of 0.127. Thus, it can be concluded that the H6 test is rejected. This means that consumers' purchasing intentions for organic food cannot be influenced by food safety concerns. Even though food safety concern is a predictor of increasing consumer attitudes and trust in organic food, food safety concerns have not been proven to increase consumer purchase intentions for organic food. The results of this study are different from previous research which stated that there was a positive relationship between food safety concerns and consumer purchase intentions for organic food (Hussain et al. 2016; Kaur et al. 2020).

Next, testing the seventh hypothesis was carried out to test the influence of consumer attitude toward organic food on consumer purchase intentions for organic food. The results showed a significance value of less than 0.05, namely 0.000, with a CR value of 6.702 with an estimate of 0.791. Thus, it can be concluded that the H7 test is declared acceptable. This means that increasingly positive consumer attitudes will increase their purchasing intentions for organic food. The results of this study are in line with previous research which states that attitude is the best predictor of intention to purchase organic food (Hoque et al. 2018; Nagaraj, 2021; Rivera and Barcellos-Paula, 2024). In other words, purchase intentions are formed because consumers' attitudes are determined by whether they feel good or bad, negative or positive, and whether they are wise or unwise in buying organic products (Nagaraj, 2021).

The eighth hypothesis test was carried out to test the influence of consumer trust toward organic food on consumer purchase intentions for organic food. The results showed that the significance value was less than 0.05, namely 0.029, with a CR value of 63.261 with an estimate of 4.011. Thus, it can be concluded that the H8 test is declared acceptable. This means that the higher the consumer's trust in organic food, the greater their purchase intention will be for organic food. The results of this research are in line with previous research which states that consumer trust in organic food has a very vital role in consumer purchasing behaviour for organic food (Teng and Wang, 2015; Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017; Truong et al. 2021). Trust in the food system can shape the value of organic food consumption which determines consumer choices in food choices (Truong et al. 2021).

## Managerial Implication

In the organic food business, marketers must understand consumer purchasing behaviour well. Thus, this research provides empirical evidence regarding the antecedents that drive consumer purchase intentions for organic food in Central Java. Consumers' positive attitudes towards organic food such as good or bad, like it or not, useful, or not useful and trust play an important role in providing a direct influence to increase the intention to buy organic food. This means that business actors must understand how to increase consumer attitudes and trust in organic food. Such as sharing information with effective marketing communications. Business actors can hold organic food bazaars, provide organic labels on packaging, and educate about health awareness by eating organic food.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The results of this research reveal that health consciousness has a direct influence on consumer attitude toward organic food and intention to purchase organic food, but health consciousness is not significant on consumer trust in organic food. Furthermore, food safety concern is proven to have a direct effect on consumer attitude toward organic food and consumer trust, but health consciousness has no effect on intention to purchase organic food. The next finding is that consumer attitude toward organic food and consumer trust have succeeded in having a direct influence on consumer purchasing intentions for organic food. Furthermore, attitude toward organic food is a key predictor that has the greatest influence in increasing the intention to buy organic food.

### Recommendations

Some suggestions that can be given practically to marketers or organic food business owners, for example: marketers need to increase consumer trust, such as providing a guaranteed organic label to increase their purchasing intentions. Apart from that, providing education related to implementing a healthy lifestyle such as advertising in mass media and social media. Meanwhile, suggestions for future research are that researchers can expand the size of the sample area and use antecedents that are appropriate



to current phenomena such as the influence of social media, lifestyle, using moderation based on respondent demographics, which are thought to influence purchase intentions. Apart from that, this research only tests purchase intentions, so future research can test actual behaviour or the decision to buy organic food.

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