

Comparisons of Consumer Behavior towards Organic Vegetables between Developed and Developing Countries (Case Study: Comparisons between Japan and Indonesia)

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Abstract: The total of organic farming area in Asia is 2.9 million hectares, or equal to 9% of the land area in the organic farming world. However, it still can't meet the demand of organic products in Asia that continues to increase. Consumer awareness towards organic foods has increased because of the high level of health issues in recent years. The demand of organic products in Asian developed countries is higher compared to the demand in the developed countries. One of the countries in Asia with high demand of organic products is Japan. In 2007, Japan had around 6,626 hectares of organic farmland, while the total of Indonesia's organic farmland is 66 184 hectares, but it is inversely proportional to the high demand for organic products in both countries [1]. Based on these facts, this study aims to identify the characteristics of organic vegetables consumers. The research is conducted in Japan and Indonesia, both is the countries that produce organic vegetables in Asia yet have different consumer characteristics, which also affects the demands for organic vegetables. Characteristics of organic vegetable consumers are seen based on age, occupation, and marital status. The results of this study can be a reference to both countries about consumer behavior towards organic vegetables, especially in Indonesia. The government and producers of organic vegetables can increase the consumption of organic vegetables by looking at the current social trends.

Keywords: consumer characteristics, organic products, organic vegetables, organic consumers, the demand for organic vegetables.

INTRODUCTION

Asia's total geographical area is nearly 2.9 million hectares. It is nine percent of total organic farmland in the world. Although the region has nearly three million hectares of organic farmland, most of the products are exported from other countries. It's because organic food production and consumption continue to increase in Asia. Prosperous countries, like Japan, usually have big organic food demand. Asian markets also continue to grow at 15 to 20 percent per year. Consumer awareness of organic food has increased rapidly which helps the market to grow. It also has increased because of the high level of health issues in recent years [1].

In developed countries like Japan, most of the consumers do not only consider the taste and price in choosing a food product; they also consider the long-term effects for their health such as nutrition that can be obtained from organic vegetables [2]. Japanese consumers are usually not concerned about the price of the product as long as it has positive effects on their bodies or even greater benefits that they never expected before [3].

In developing countries such as Indonesia, the consumption of food products continues to increase, along with the growing prosperity in Indonesia. Not only the quantity, type and quality of consumer goods are also expected to boost [4]. Social trends and lifestyle has become the reflection of people's welfare and prosperity level in Indonesia. One of the cities in Indonesia that has growing level of food consumption is Malang city, East Java, with more than 50% of its respondents said that they had consumed organic products such as organic fruits and vegetables [5].

The demand for organic products is also affected by consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is the act of searching for goods or services done by the consumers to meet their needs, by evaluating and selecting the goods or services through the decision-making process [6]. Consumer behavior can be influenced by 'who', 'income', and 'how' attributes [7], but this study is only focused on 'who' attribute.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods of data collection in this study are the non-probability sampling method, where not everyone in the population has a chance to be the respondent. The

'consumer intercept survey' technique is a survey done by selecting and conducting interviews or giving questionnaires to consumers in the survey area. This survey technique aims to find potential customers by asking for personal information such as age, occupation, and marital status.

The location of the research was chosen purposively, using a method of determining the location based on several considerations as well as the specific objectives which aims to make the results more representative (Sugiyono, 2010). The survey is conducted on modern markets which provide a variety

of organic products in Malang. While in Japan, the survey is conducted in the area of Miyazaki city and Aya City, Miyazaki Prefecture, and Kitakyushu city, Fukuoka Prefecture. The data obtained will be presented descriptively in the form of a diagram.

RESULTS

In this study, there were 50 respondents of Japanese citizens who reside in city of Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture, city of Miyazaki and Aya, Miyazaki prefecture.

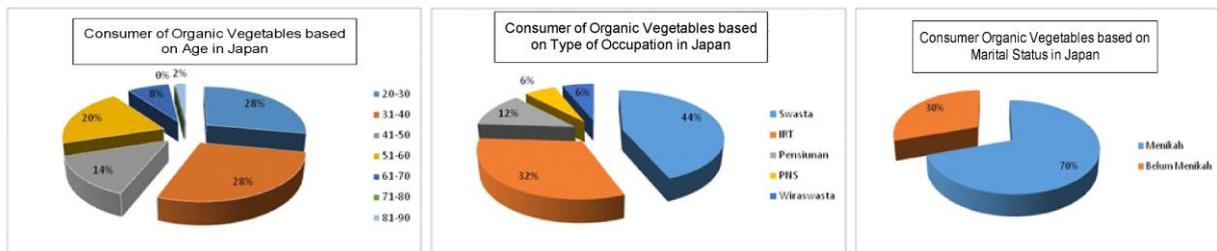


Fig-1: Characteristics of Organic Vegetables Consumers in Japan

The chart shows that 28% of organic vegetables consumers in Japan are consumers in the age group of 20-30 and 31-40, 20% of the customers are in the age group of 51-60, 14% of the consumers were in the age group 41-50, 8% are in the age group of 61-70, and the remaining 2% are in the age group of 81-90. Meanwhile, based on types of jobs, 44% of the respondents are private company employees, 32% of

them are housewives, 12% of the consumers are retired, and the remaining 6% are civil servants and entrepreneurs. Based on marital status, the chart shows that 70% percent of respondents are married and the remaining 30% are not married.

In this study, there were 50 Indonesian respondents who reside in Malang.

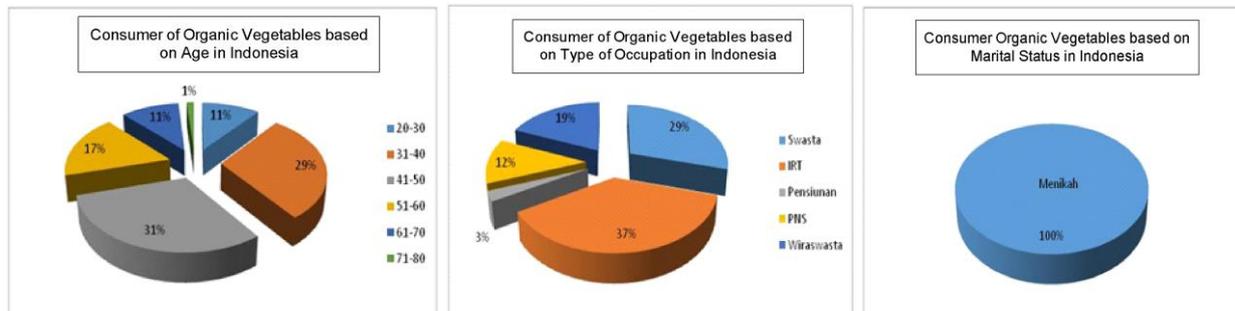


Fig-2: Characteristics of Organic Vegetables in Indonesian Consumers

Based on age, the majority of organic vegetables consumers in Malang are in the age group of 41-50 (31%), 29% of the consumers are in the 31-40, 17% are in the age group 51-60, 11% of the consumers are in the age group of 20-30 and 61-70, and the remaining 1% are in the age group of 71-80. Based on types of jobs, 37% of organic vegetables consumers are housewives, 29% of the consumers are private company employees, 19% are self-employed, 12% are civil servants and the remaining 3% are retired. Meanwhile, based on marital status, 100% of the respondents are married.

DISCUSSION

Based on age, the consumers of organic vegetables in Japan ranges between 20-30 years of age, meanwhile in Indonesia the consumers are between 41-50 years. It means that the healthy lifestyle awareness in Japan has grown at the beginning of a productive age. Based on types of jobs, most of the organic vegetables consumers in Japan are company employee, while in Indonesia, most of the customers are housewives. Meanwhile, based on marital status, the two countries

have the same results; most of the consumers are married consumers.

CONCLUSION

The different characteristics of organic vegetable consumers in Japan and Indonesia can be used as references about organic vegetables consumer characteristics in both countries, especially in Indonesia. Governments and producers of organic vegetables can increase the consumption by marketing strategies using addressing the social trends.

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