

## **BAB V**

### **PENUTUP**

Pada bagian bab lima ini, peneliti akan membahas mengenai hasil analisis data bab sebelumnya yaitu bab empat. Dimulai dengan membahas hasil temuan utama pada penelitian ini, kemudian peneliti akan membahas tentang kelemahan dari penelitian ini dan saran untuk penelitian selanjutnya. Terakhir peneliti akan membahas tentang implikasi manajerial dari penelitian ini.

#### **5.1 Kesimpulan**

##### **5.1.1 Karakteristik Responden**

Dari hasil penyebaran kuesioner yang dilakukan oleh peneliti secara *offline* dan *online*, peneliti berhasil mengumpulkan sebanyak 277 responden yang memenuhi syarat. Berdasarkan analisis karakteristik responden yang sudah dilakukan sebelumnya diketahui bahwa, berdasarkan jenis kelamin mayoritas responden adalah perempuan sebanyak 147 responden (53%). Responden yang berhasil dikumpulkan, mayoritas adalah responden yang berusia antar 19 – 25 tahun sebanyak 270 responden (97%). Mayoritas pekerjaan dari responden yang berhasil dikumpulkan adalah mahasiswa sebanyak 199 responden (72%). Berdasarkan tingkat pendidikan akhir yang ditempuh responden pada penelitian ini yaitu didominasi oleh lulusan SMA sebanyak 178 responden (64%). Pendapatan atau uang saku dari responden pada penelitian ini, didominasi oleh responden yang memiliki pendapatan atau uang saku Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000 sebanyak 94 responden (34%). Berdasarkan jumlah waktu yang dihabiskan oleh setiap responden untuk menonton video di Youtube adalah sebanyak 163 responden (48%) dengan menghabiskan waktu lebih dari lima (5) jam per minggu.

##### **5.1.2 Pengaruh e-WOM terhadap *Brand Image***

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM berpengaruh secara positif terhadap *brand image*, yang berarti bahwa semakin baik video *review* tentang

produk iPhone yang ada di Youtube mampu meningkatkan *brand image* dari produk iPhone. Banyaknya video review tentang produk iPhone yang beredar di Youtube memberikan keuntungan bagi perusahaan Apple karena meningkatnya *image* (citra) dari iPhone dikalangan konsumen.

### **5.1.3 Pengaruh e-WOM terhadap *Purchase Intention***

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM berpengaruh secara positif terhadap *purchase intention*, yang berarti bahwa semakin baik video *review* tentang produk iPhone yang ada di Youtube (e-WOM) yang diterima oleh konsumen, akan meningkatkan *purchase intention* (niat beli) dari konsumen tersebut. Hal ini membuktikan bahwa e-WOM yang beredar memberikan keuntungan bagi perusahaan Apple karena mampu meningkatkan niat beli dari konsumen yang menonton video *review* tersebut.

### **5.1.4 Pengaruh *Brand Image* terhadap *Purchase Intention***

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *brand image* berpengaruh secara positif terhadap *purchase intention*, yang berarti semakin tinggi tingkat *brand image* (citra merek) dari produk iPhone akan meningkatkan *purchase intention* (niat beli) dari seorang konsumen. Keandalan dan kualitas dari iPhone mampu mempengaruhi *purchase intention* (niat beli) dari seorang konsumen. Konsumen selalu menginginkan produk yang mereka gunakan merupakan produk yang unggul dan berkualitas.

### **5.1.5 Pengaruh *Purchase Intention* terhadap *Actual Purchase***

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *purchase intention* berpengaruh secara positif terhadap *actual purchase*, yang berarti bahwa semakin tinggi *purchase intention* (niat beli) dari seorang konsumen, akan mendorong seorang konsumen untuk melakukan *actual purchase* (pembelian aktual) pada produk iPhone. Hasil ini sejalan dengan penelitian yang dilakukan oleh peneliti terdahulu yaitu Wee et, al. (2014) yang menemukan bahwa *purchase intention* berpengaruh terhadap *actual purchase* pada produk makanan organik. Artinya bahwa

konsumen tidak hanya mempunyai niat untuk membeli iPhone, tetapi juga melakukan pembelian terhadap produk iPhone.

## 5.2 Keterbatasan Penelitian dan Saran Penelitian

Penelitian ini tentu saja memiliki keterbatasan maupun kelemahan yang dapat dikembangkan pada masa yang akan datang. Objek pada penelitian ini hanya terbatas pada video review tentang produk iPhone, sehingga penelitian ini tidak dapat digeneralisasikan untuk produk yang lainnya dan dibutuhkan pengujian ulang secara empiris bagi penelitian selanjutnya. Variabel e-WOM yang digunakan pada penelitian ini tidak membahas secara spesifik mengenai e-WOM positif maupun e-WOM negatif. Maka dari itu, peneliti menyarankan pada penelitian selanjutnya dapat membahas secara spesifik tentang e-WOM positif dan e-WOM negatif. Pertanyaan kuesioner EWM3 dan AC2 yang sudah digugurkan atau tidak dikutsertakan oleh peneliti, akibat tidak memenuhi syarat dalam uji validitas dan reliabilitas, sehingga peneliti menyarankan pertanyaan kuesioner tersebut dapat diganti atau dievaluasi lebih lanjut pada penelitian selanjutnya agar dapat memenuhi syarat dalam uji validitas maupun uji reliabilitas.

Terdapat penyebaran kuesioner yang dilakukan secara *online*, yang tentu saja jika responden tidak memahami pertanyaan pada kuesioner, maka akan menyebabkan *misunderstanding* (kesalahpahaman), sehingga sulit bagi responden untuk bertanya kepada peneliti. Sehingga peneliti menyarankan bahwa untuk penyebaran kuesioner lebih baik, dilakukan secara *offline* untuk mengurangi *misunderstanding* (kesalahpahaman) terhadap pertanyaan yang ada pada kuesioner. Terakhir, pertanyaan kuesioner dalam penelitian ini kurang spesifik, terutama pada pertanyaan yang menyangkut dengan “produk atau merek ini”. Sehingga untuk penelitian selanjutnya, pertanyaan kuesioner dapat bersifat spesifik dengan objek penelitian atau *to the point* terhadap objek penelitian.

### 5.3 Implikasi Manajerial

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM berpengaruh terhadap *brand image*. Dari hasil tersebut, perusahaan Apple harus memperhatikan sejauh mana beredarnya e-WOM dari produk yang mereka buat. Tujuannya agar dapat mengetahui bagaimana tanggapan para konsumen terhadap produk yang sudah diciptakan, bagaimana *image* yang terjadi pada produk yang sudah diciptakan tersebut, dan sehingga perusahaan memperoleh informasi-informasi yang penting untuk menyusun strategi dalam membangun *brand image* yang kuat dan baik melalui e-WOM.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa e-WOM berpengaruh terhadap *purchase intention*. Dari hasil penelitian ini, e-WOM memiliki peran penting dalam meningkatkan niat beli dari setiap konsumen. Tentu saja, konsumen akan lebih memilih atau tertarik pada produk-produk yang memiliki penyebaran e-WOM yang baik, berdasarkan hasil ulasan (*review*) dari konsumen lain atas dasar pengalaman dalam menggunakan produk. Perusahaan Apple dapat memanfaatkan e-WOM sebagai sarana untuk mendapatkan intensitas niat beli (*purchase intention*) dari konsumen. Perusahaan Apple juga dapat memanfaatkan para Youtuber yang profesional dan kompeten dalam perihal memberikan informasi yang baik terhadap para konsumen melalui video review yang dibuat oleh para Youtuber. Berdasarkan perilaku dari konsumen yang sering mencari video ulasan (*review*) sebelum mereka melakukan pembelian terhadap suatu produk, sehingga ulasan atau rekomendasi dari teman maupun kerabat menjadi salah satu faktor penting dalam pembelian yang dilakukan konsumen.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *brand image* berpengaruh terhadap *purchase intention*. Kembali lagi, bahwa *brand image* menjadi faktor yang penting dalam mendapatkan niat beli (*purchase intention*) dari konsumen. Pentingnya, perusahaan Apple dalam menjaga citra merek (*brand image*) atas produk iPhone yang saat ini menjadi produk yang terkesan mewah dan selalu menjadi viral pada saat ini, seperti iPhone 11 yang baru-baru di *release*. Ditambah lagi dengan bentuk dan jumlah kamera yang ada pada iPhone 11, menjadi *brand*

*image* yang begitu kuat pada saat konsumen melihat pada bagian sisi belakang *smartphone* tersebut.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *purchase intention* berpengaruh terhadap *actual purchase*. *Purchase intention* memberikan keyakinan dan kepercayaan sebelum melakukan sebuah pembelian. Maka dari itu perusahaan Apple perlu memperhatikan bahwa niat beli (*purchase intention*) berperan penting atas pembelian produk yang dilakukan oleh seorang konsumen terhadap produk yang mereka ciptakan. Untuk mendapatkan *purchase intention* yang baik maka dari itu, balik lagi kepada dua variabel yang sebelumnya mempengaruhi variabel *purchase intention*, yaitu variabel e-WOM dan *brand image*.



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**LAMPIRAN 1**  
**KUESIONER PENELITIAN**

# Kuesioner Pengaruh e-WOM terhadap Brand Image, Purchase Intention, dan Actual Purchase, Pada Video Review Produk Iphone di Youtube

Perkenalkan, nama saya Victor Dana Prayogo Setio mahasiswa Fakultas Bisnis dan Ekonomika Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. Saat ini saya sedang meneliti tentang Pengaruh e-WOM Terhadap Citra Merek, Niat Beli dan Actual Purchase, Pada Video Review tentang Produk Iphone di Youtube. Saya mohon saudara/i untuk bersedia meluangkan waktu sebentar untuk mengisi kuesioner penelitian saya. Terima Kasih.

\* Wajib

Apakah Anda pernah melihat video review tentang Iphone di Youtube ? \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

- Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)
- Tidak (berhenti di sini)

Apakah Anda menggunakan Iphone ? \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

- Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)
- Tidak (berhenti di sini)

Jika ya, apa seri Iphone yang Anda gunakan ? \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

- Iphone 7
- Iphone 7 Plus
- Iphone 8
- Iphone 8 Plus
- Iphone X
- Iphone XR
- Iphone XS
- Iphone XS Max
- Iphone 11
- Iphone 11 Pro
- Iphone 11 Pro Max
- Yang lain:

## Karakteristik Responden

1. Jenis Kelamin \*  
Tandai satu oval saja.
  - a. Laki-laki
  - b. Perempuan
2. Umur ? \_\_\_\_\_ \*
3. Pekerjaan ? \_\_\_\_\_ \*
4. Pendidikan terakhir ? \_\_\_\_\_ \*
5. Pendapatan atau uang saku per bulan ? \_\_\_\_\_ \*  
Tandai satu oval saja.
  - a. < Rp 1.000.000
  - b. Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
  - c. Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
  - d. > Rp 3.000.001
6. Dalam satu minggu, berapa jam waktu yang Anda gunakan, untuk menonton video di Youtube ? \*  
Tandai satu oval saja.
  - a. kurang dari 1 jam per minggu
  - b. 2 - 3 jam per minggu
  - c. 3 - 4 jam per minggu
  - d. lebih dari 5 jam per minggu

## E-WOM

Petunjuk pengisian ! 1 (Sangat tidak setuju) 2 (Tidak setuju) 3 (Netral) 4 (Setuju) 5 (Sangat setuju)

1. Saya sering membaca atau menonton video review online dari konsumen lain, untuk mengetahui produk/merek yang membuat kesan baik pada orang lain. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju

2. Untuk memastikan saya membeli produk/merek yang tepat, saya sering membaca atau menonton video review online dari konsumen lain. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju

3. Saya sering berkonsultasi dengan konsumen lain secara online, untuk membantu memilih produk/merek yang tepat. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

4. Saya sering mengumpulkan informasi review produk dari konsumen online, sebelum membeli produk/merek tertentu. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

5. Jika saya tidak membaca atau menonton video review online dari konsumen lain, muncul kekhawatiran terhadap keputusan untuk membeli sebuah produk/merek. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

6. Ketika saya membeli sebuah produk, komentar online dari konsumen lain membuat saya percaya diri dalam membeli produk/merek. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

## Brand Image

1. Dibandingkan dengan produk/merek lain, produk/merek ini memiliki kualitas yang tinggi. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

2. Produk/merek ini memiliki nilai sejarah yang bagus. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

3. Pelanggan bisa dengan handal memprediksi bagaimana produk/merek ini bekerja. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

## Purchase Intention

1. Saya akan membeli produk/merek ini, dari pada produk/merek lain yang ada. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju Sangat setuju

2. Saya bersedia untuk merekomendasikan kepada orang lain untuk membeli produk/merek ini. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju

3. Saya berniat untuk membeli produk/merek ini lagi di masa depan. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju

## Actual Purchase

1. Saya membeli smartphone merek ini. \*

Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju

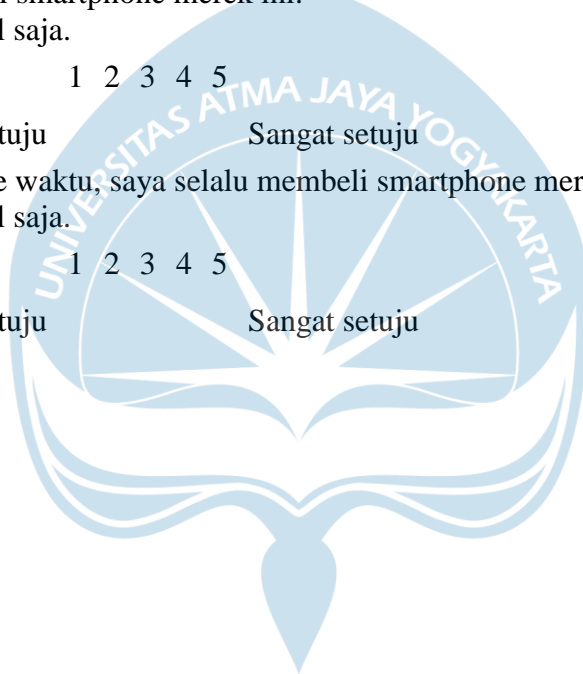
2. Dari waktu ke waktu, saya selalu membeli smartphone merek ini. \*


Tandai satu oval saja.

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat tidak setuju

Sangat setuju





**LAMPIRAN 2**  
**DATA PENELITIAN**

## DATA KARAKTERISTIK RESPONDEN

1	Apakah Anda pernah melihat	Apakah Anda menggunakan I	seri Iphone yang An	Dalam satu minggu, berapa jam v	Jenis Kelamin	Umur ?	Artis	Pekerjaan	Pendapatan atau uang saku per bulan ?
2	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	17	Bisnis online	D3	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
3	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	17	Dosen	D3	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
4	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6s+	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	17	Finance & Accounting st	D3 MI	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
5	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	17	Freelance	D4	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
6	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	17	Freelance	D4	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
7	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 8 Plus	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	18	Freelance	D4	> Rp 3.000.001
8	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 5s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	18	Fresh graduate	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
9	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone SE	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	18	Fresh graduate	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
10	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 8 Plus	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	18	Fresh graduate	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
11	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	18	Guru Les	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
12	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone6	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	18	HRD Hotel	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
13	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	18	Internal Auditor	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
14	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Kantoran	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
15	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 8 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
16	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	karyawan	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
17	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphose 5s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Karyawan	S1	< Rp 1.000.000
18	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphohe XR	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan swasta	S1	< Rp 1.000.000
19	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6s	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan Swasta	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
20	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan swasta	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
21	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Karyawan Swasta	S1	< Rp 1.000.000
22	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6s Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan swasta	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
23	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone XS Max	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	karyawan swasta	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
24	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan Swasta	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
25	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Karyawan Swasta	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
26	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Koas	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
27	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone XS	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Legal Officer	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
28	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 4s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Mahasiswa	S1	< Rp 1.000.000
29	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 11 Pro Max	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
30	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone XS Max	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Mahasiswa	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
31	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	19	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
32	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone X	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	19	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
33	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	20	Mahasiswa	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
34	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 11 Pro Max	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	20	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 2.000.001 - 3.000.000
35	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 8 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	20	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
36	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	20	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
37	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	20	Mahasiswa	S1	> Rp 3.000.001
38	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 8 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	20	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
39	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	20	Mahasiswa	S1	Rp 1.000.001 - 2.000.000
40	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanj	Iphone 6	2 - 3 jam per minqqu	Laki-laki	20	Mahasiswa	S1	> Rp 3.000.001











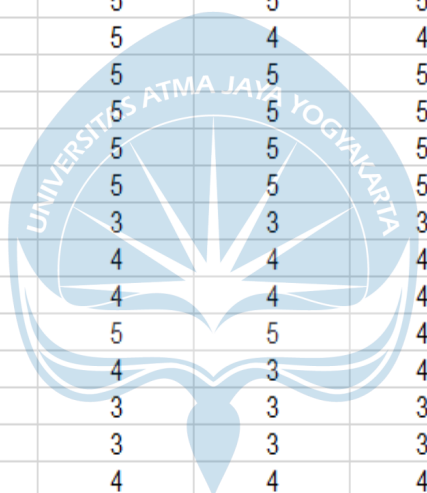


219	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
220	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
221	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
222	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XR	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
223	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
224	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Mahasiswa	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
225	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Mahasiswa Pascasarjana	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
226	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Mahasiswa Pascasarjana	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
227	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 8 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Makeup Artist	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
228	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Manager	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
229	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pegawai Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
230	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pegawai swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
231	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pegawai Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
232	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Pegawai Swasta	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
233	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Pegawai swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
234	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pegawai Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
235	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Pekerja kantoran	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
236	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pekerjaan ?	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
237	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pelajar	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
238	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	23	Pelajar	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
239	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	23	Pelajar	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
240	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengangguran	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
241	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Pengangguran	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
242	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengangguran	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
243	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengangguran	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
244	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Pengangguran	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
245	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengangguran	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
246	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 11 Pro	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengusaha	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
247	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XS	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Pengusaha	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
248	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	PNS	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
249	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Relationship Manager	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
250	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 8 Plus	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Research and Developm	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000

251	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Site engineer	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
252	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Software Engineer	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
253	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Staff Homestay	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
254	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XS Max	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
255	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
256	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
257	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
258	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7 Plus	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
259	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XR	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
260	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XR	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
261	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone XS Max	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
262	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Perempuan	24	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
263	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 11	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	24	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
264	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 11	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
265	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
266	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	25	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
267	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
268	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
269	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	< Rp 1.000.000
270	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 4s	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	< Rp 1.000.000
271	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	25	Swasta	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
272	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	3 - 4 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	26	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
273	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	26	Swasta	SMA	Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 3.000.000
274	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone X	kurang dari 1 jam per minggu	Perempuan	26	Swasta	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
275	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 8	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	28	Teknisi	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000
276	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 7	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Perempuan	29	Teller Bank BNI 46	SMA	Rp 1.000.001 - Rp 2.000.000
277	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 5	2 - 3 jam per minggu	Laki-laki	29	Wiraswasta	SMA	< Rp 1.000.000
278	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Ya (lanjut ke pertanyaan selanjutnya)	Iphone 6s	lebih dari 5 jam per minggu	Perempuan	37	Wirasahawan	SMA	> Rp 3.000.000

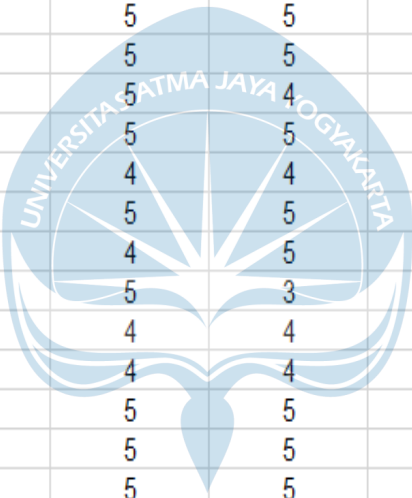
## DATA VARIABEL

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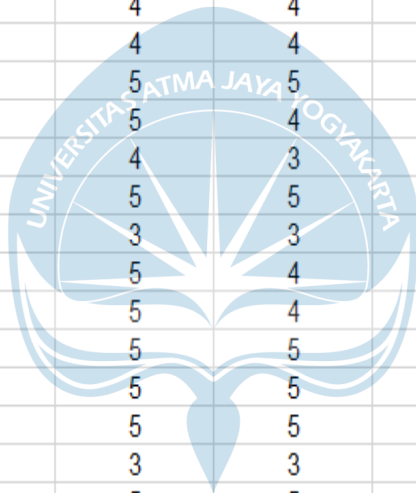




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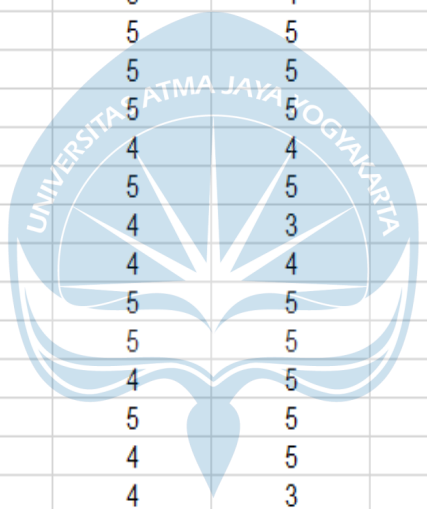


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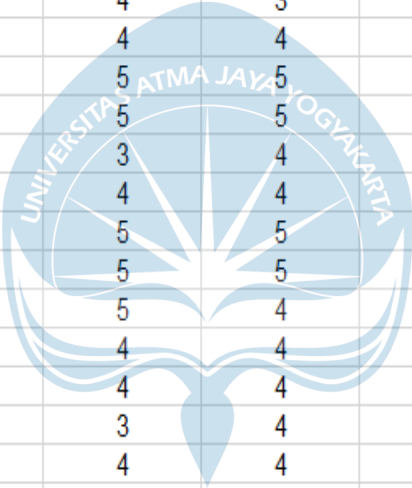




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102	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	2
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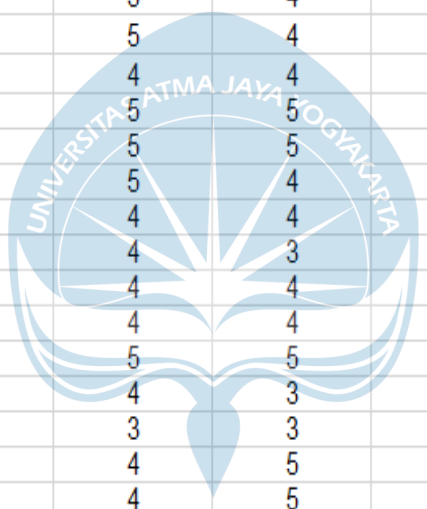


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139	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
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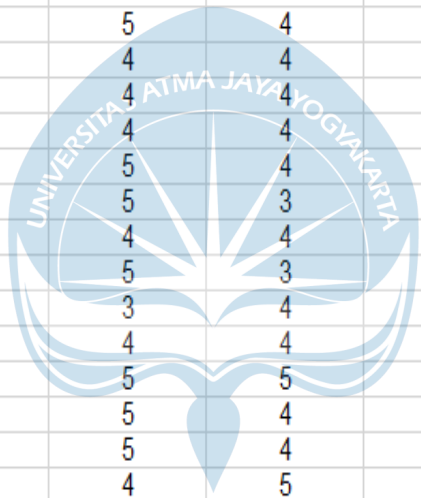
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170	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
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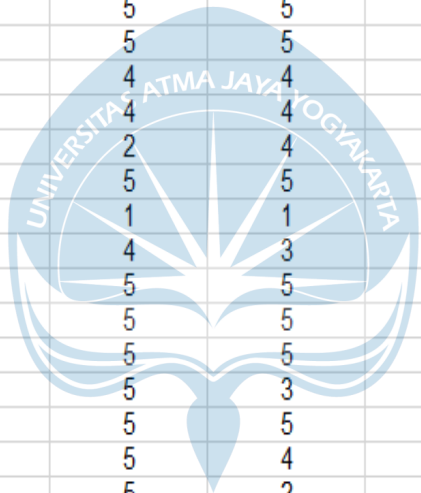
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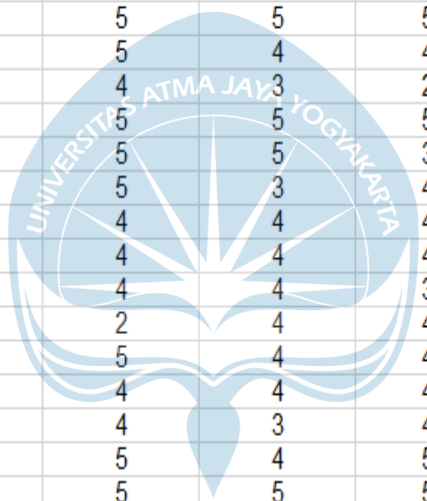
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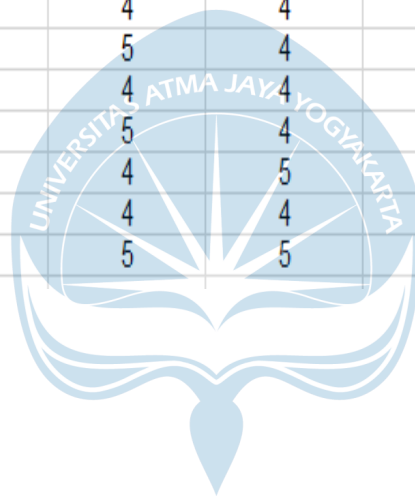
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252	4	4	5	5	4	4	2	4	4	2	3	4	4	4
253	4	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4
254	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
255	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3
256	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
257	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
258	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
259	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	2
260	3	4	2	3	3	3	5	3	3	4	5	5	5	3
261	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
262	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
263	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	3
264	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	5	4	3
265	5	5	3	3	1	3	4	3	3	5	3	4	4	5
266	4	4	3	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
267	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
268	5	5	4	5	5	2	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	2



1	EWM1	EWM2	EWM3	EWM4	EWM5	EWM6	BI1	BI2	BI3	PI1	PI2	PI3	AC1	AC2
269	4	5	3	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	2	3	4	2
270	2	4	3	2	4	2	5	4	5	3	3	4	4	4
271	4	5	3	5	5	5	4	3	3	1	4	3	5	1
272	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
273	5	5	3	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	1
274	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
275	3	4	3	4	2	1	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
276	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4
277	4	4	2	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	2	4	4	2
278	5	5	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5





**LAMPIRAN 3**  
**HASIL OLAH DATA**  
**PLS**

**Outer Loadings dan Construct Reliability and Validity sebelum penghapusan variabel EWM3 dan AC2**

**Outer Loadings**

	actual purchase_	brand image_	e-WOM	purchase inten...
AC1	0.869			
AC2	0.784			
BI1		0.803		
BI2		0.825		
BI3		0.835		
EWM1			0.788	
EWM2			0.818	
EWM3			0.374	
EWM4			0.767	
EWM5			0.665	
EWM6			0.700	
PI1				0.853
PI2				0.866
PI3				0.845

**Construct Reliability and Validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
actual purchase_	0.545	0.563	0.813	0.685
brand image_	0.759	0.759	0.861	0.674
e-WOM	0.785	0.821	0.847	0.492
purchase inten...	0.815	0.815	0.890	0.731

**Outer Loadings dan Construct Reliability and Validity sesudah penghapusan variabel EWM3 dan AC2**

**Outer Loadings**

	Actual Purchase	Brand Image	Purchase Inten...	e-WOM
AC1	1.000			
BI1		0.802		
BI2		0.825		
BI3		0.836		
EWM1				0.789
EWM2				0.824
EWM4				0.760
EWM5				0.665
EWM6				0.710
PI1			0.845	
PI2			0.874	
PI3			0.845	

**Construct Reliability and Validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted ...
Actual Purchase	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Brand Image	0.759	0.759	0.861	0.674
Purchase Inten...	0.815	0.817	0.890	0.730
e-WOM	0.806	0.813	0.866	0.565

### Path Coefficients

Matrix	Path Coefficients			
	Actual Purchase	Brand Image	Purchase Inten...	e-WOM
Actual Purchase				
Brand Image			0.573	
Purchase Inten...	0.601			
e-WOM		0.440	0.128	

### Path Coefficients

	Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Val...	Confidence Intervals	Confidence Intervals Bias Co...	Samples	
	Original Sampl...	Sample Mean (...)	Standard Devia...	T Statistics ( O/...	P Values
Brand Image -> Pur...	0.573	0.571	0.055	10.441	0.000
Purchase Inten...	0.601	0.607	0.057	10.556	0.000
e-WOM -> Bra...	0.440	0.440	0.065	6.795	0.000
e-WOM -> Pur...	0.128	0.128	0.059	2.164	0.031

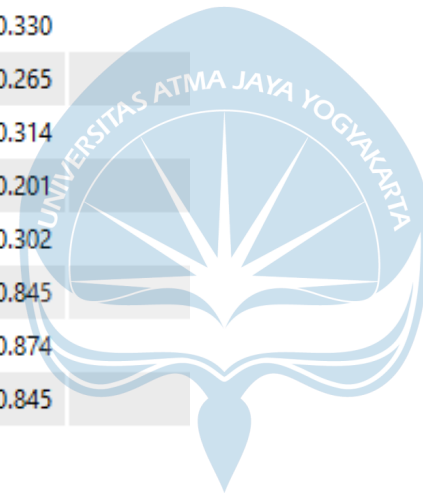


### R Square

Matrix	R Square	R Square Adjusted
	R Square	R Square Adjus...
Actual Purchase	0.361	0.359
Brand Image	0.193	0.190
Purchase Inten...	0.409	0.404

## Discriminant Validity

	Actual Purchase	Brand Image	Purchase Inten...	ε
AC1	1.000	0.487	0.601	
BI1	0.469	0.802	0.590	
BI2	0.374	0.825	0.468	
BI3	0.348	0.836	0.481	
EWM1	0.240	0.353	0.330	
EWM2	0.234	0.357	0.265	
EWM4	0.217	0.327	0.314	
EWM5	0.236	0.302	0.201	
EWM6	0.214	0.310	0.302	
PI1	0.503	0.507	0.845	
PI2	0.538	0.547	0.874	
PI3	0.498	0.557	0.845	



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**LAMPIRAN 4**  
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# Article Title Page

**The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image and Purchase Intention: An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran**

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## Biographical Details (if applicable):

### Structured Abstract:

**Purpose** – Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been recognized as one of the most influential resources of information transmission. The advances of information technology and the emergence of online social network sites have changed the way information is transmitted. This phenomenon impacts consumers as this easily accessible information could greatly affect the consumption decision. The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which eWOM among consumers can influence brand image and purchase intention in the automobile industry.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Measurement items are adapted from existing scales found in the marketing literature. Academic colleagues reviewed the items for face validity and readability. The scales are evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using data collected in a survey of Iran Khodro's prospective customers in Iran. A structural equation modeling procedure is applied to the examination of the influences of eWOM on brand image and purchase intention. The research model was tested empirically using a sample of 341 respondents who had experience within the online communities of customers and referred to Iran Khodro's agencies during the period of research.

**Findings** – The paper found that eWOM is one of the most effective factors influencing brand image and purchase intention of brands in the consumers' markets.

**Research limitations/implications** - The paper outlines ways to effectively promote a brand through online customer communities, as well as general tips for web site and forum moderators for facilitating such presentation in a manner useful to the members of their online communities. While there is a substantial research stream that examines branding of consumers goods and an increasing literature on product brands, little is known about brand image in the context of online communications. This paper extends existing measurement of brand image to a new setting, namely eWOM.

**Originality/value** – This paper provides valuable insight into the measurement of eWOM, brand image, and purchase intention in the automobile industry and offers a foundation for future product branding research.

**Keywords:** Internet, Consumer behavior, Word of mouth, Brand Image, Iran

**Article Classification:** Research paper

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**Running Heads:**



## **The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image and Purchase Intention: An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran**

### **1. Introduction**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is generally acknowledged to play a considerable role in influencing and forming consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions (e.g., Chatterjee, 2001; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Herr et al., 1991; Kiecker and Cowles, 2001; Sen and Lerman, 2007; Smith and Vogt, 1995; Weinberger and Dillon, 1980; Xia and Bechwati, 2008). Research has shown that WOM communication is more influential than communication through other sources such as editorial recommendations or advertisements (e.g., Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Smith et al., 2005; Trusov et al., 2009) because it is perceived to provide comparatively reliable information (Gruen et al., 2006). Consequently, this type of communication is considered as having a great persuasiveness through higher perceived credibility and trustworthiness (e.g., Chatterjee, 2001; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Mayzlin, 2006). Whereas WOM communication initially referred to the idea of person-to-person conversation between consumers about a product (Chatterjee, 2001; Sen and Lerman, 2007), the worldwide spread of the Internet brought up a less personal but more ubiquitous form of WOM communication, the so-called online WOM communication (e.g., Brown et al., 2007; Chatterjee, 2001; Davis and Khazanchi, 2008; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Kiecker and Cowles, 2001; Xia and Bechwati, 2008). This new type of WOM communication has become an important venue for consumer opinions (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Mayzlin, 2006) and it is assumed to be even more effective than WOM communication in the offline world due to its greater accessibility and high reach (Chatterjee, 2001). Product reviews that consumers post on the Internet constitute one of the most important forms of online WOM communication (Schindler and Bickart, 2005; Sen and Lerman, 2007), and for consumers it is increasingly common to look for online product reviews when gathering pre-purchase product information (Adjei et al., 2009; Zhu and Zhang, 2010) and forming purchase intentions (Zhang and Tran, 2009). Furthermore, the issue of branding has been deemed as primary capital for many industries. Strong brands can increase customers' trust in the product or service purchased and enabling them to better visualize and understand intangible factors. According to Yoo and Donthu (2001), brand image can influence a company's future profits and long-term cash flow, a consumer's willingness to pay premium prices, merger and acquisition decision making, stock prices, sustainable competitive advantage, and marketing success. Based on the argument that especially vividly presented WOM communication has a strong impact on product judgments (Herr et al., 1991), we argue that online WOM communications that are posted in such a vivid and interactive medium as the Internet might have strong effects on brand image and as a result, purchase intention. Brand image is the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Brand image stems from all of a consumer's consumption experiences, and perceived service quality is a function of these consumption experiences. Thus, customer perception about service quality directly affects brand image (Aydin and Ozer, 2005). Intangibles such as after sale services cannot be evaluated before the consumption experience; therefore, purchasing intangible products and services brings a higher risk, so customers are more dependent on the interpersonal influence of eWOM (Lewis and Chambers, 2000; Litvin et al., 2008). Despite the significant impact of eWOM in the manufacturing segment, little research has been done to investigate eWOM in this field. Based on these findings in the literature, we understand that eWOM messages can affect the brand image and purchase intention. Since no relevant explanation has been proposed to explain these effects, this study applied experimental design methodology to explore: (1) the impact of eWOM communications on image brand, (2) the impact of eWOM communications on purchase intention, and (3) the impact of brand image on purchase intention. The rest of this paper is organized as below. First, we provide a review on the literature related to eWOM and brand image. Second, we introduce hypotheses and the research model. Next, we describe the research methodology and discuss the statistical results. Finally, we summarize the findings and discuss the implications for both research and practice.

### **2. Empirical background**

As no studies exist on the link between online WOM communications, brand image, and purchase intention, we will provide separate literature reviews of the research streams on effects of eWOM and brand image.

#### *2.1. Previous research on the effects of electronic word of mouth*

With the advancement of Internet technologies, increasing numbers of consumers are using the Internet to seek information about a product or a company, and eWOM has emerged as a result. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined eWOM as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet." Researchers are interested in investigating the motives for seeking eWOM (e.g. Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006) and for sharing or

articulating the eWOM (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2006), providing implications for marketers to better understand online consumer behavior. Stauss (1997, 2000) discussed the threats and opportunities for businesses brought about by the rise in online customer articulations. A recent survey found that most consumers perceive online opinions to be as trustworthy as brand web sites (ACNielsen, 2007). Rowley (2001) also proposed that commercial enterprises should try organizing online communities rather than to simply advertise on the Internet. These studies indicate how great of a potential impact eWOM can have on the consumer decision process. Senecal and Nantel (2004) examined how eWOM influences product choice using an experimental study of consumers' use of online recommendation sources. The various platforms themselves, which facilitate eWOM such as discussion boards and other online communication tools are also increasingly being recognized for how they influence the adoption and use of products and services (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003). Gilly, Graham, Wolfinger, and Yale (1998) indicated that the lack of effective information to distinguish products raises the risk of purchase. At this moment, a WOM message will be a very important reference for consumers to establish their purchasing decision-making process. Some related studies have also indicated that eWOM messages are an important means whereby consumers can obtain information about product or service quality (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Moreover, this kind of message can effectively reduce the risk and uncertainty recognized by consumers when purchasing products or services, so that their purchase intention and decision making can be further influenced (Chatterjee, 2001). Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) examined effects of online product reviews on relative sales of two online book shops based on publicly available data from two leading online booksellers. The results of their study show that such online communications significantly affect other consumers' purchase behavior. In spite of the rich literature on the effects of eWOM on purchase intention, to date no research has been conducted in order to investigate which eWOM has strong effects on brand image. To our knowledge, only one study exists in this area that is related to our purpose. Bambauer and Mangold (2011) examined the effects of negative online product reviews, a specific type of word-of-mouth communication, on consumer-based brand equity. The results of their empirical study supported the assumed detrimental effect of negative online product reviews on consumer-based brand equity. The above studies spell out the reality that eWOM has become a permanent element of the online marketing mix by contributing a great deal to the brand image and the purchasing decisions of online consumers.

## *2.2. Previous research on brand image and its effects*

Over the last decade, firms have markedly increased their investments in the creation and development of brands. The creation of a brand implies communicating a certain brand image in such a way that all the firm's target groups link such a brand (and thus the services sold using its name) with a set of associations. Aaker (1991, p. 15) conceptualizes brand equity as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". Building on Aaker's work, Keller (1993) develops the behavioral concept of customer based brand equity (CBBE), which consists of the two dimensions of brand awareness and brand image and is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on customer response to the marketing of the brand. Brand image comprises the attributes and benefits associated with a brand that make the brand distinctive, thereby distinguishing the firm's offer from competition (Webster and Keller, 2004). Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them (Keller, 1993, 1998). In firm-customer relationships, every interaction between a firm and its customers becomes an input to brand image. Because a service brand communicates a commitment to provide a certain kind of experience, it is critical that service firms assure that everyone in the organization understands the importance of delivering consistent, predictable, high quality performance to the customer (Webster and Keller, 2004). In B2C exchanges, customers face serious disruptions if product/service providers fail to meet expectations. Consequently, customers typically rely on a small number of trusted product/service providers that consistently deliver high quality products or services (Cousins and Menguc, 2006). At the same time, product/service providers depend on a handful of key customers for a significant portion of their revenues. The underlying goal is for the brand is to evoke feelings of trust, confidence, security, strength, durability, speed, status, and exclusivity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Ultimately, a strong product/service brand conveys the core value proposition of both the organization and its product/service in a way that resonates with customers. Although empirical evidences indicated that brand equity can affect purchase intention in the various contexts (Ashil and Sinha, 2004; Chang and Liu, 2009), the number of studies which measure the effect of brand image on purchase intention is limited. Wang and Yang (2010) investigated the impact of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention focusing on China's automobile industry. They proposed that brand awareness and brand image play a moderating role in this relationship. However, Bian and Moutinho (2011) examined the impact of perceived brand image, direct and indirect effects (mediator and

moderator effects) of product involvement and product knowledge on consumer purchase intention of counterfeits in the context of non-deceptive counterfeiting. Their results indicated that brand image is not a mediator of the effects of involvement/knowledge on purchase intention. Wu et al. (2011) also investigated the direct effects of store image and service quality on brand image and purchase intention for a private label brand. Their study revealed that store image has a direct and positive effect on brand image and purchase intention. Additionally, they showed that service quality has a direct and positive effect on brand image. Shukla (2010) Indicated that how interpersonal influences and branding cues shape consumer luxury purchase intentions. The results of his study showed that while normative interpersonal influences were found to be significant across nations, the role of informational interpersonal influences was significant among consumers. Moreover, brand image was a significant moderator between normative interpersonal influences and luxury purchase intentions. Davis, Golicic and Marquardt (2009) also suggested that brand awareness, brand image, and brand equity scales are valid and reliable in the context of logistics services. The above presented arguments lead to our research hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Electronic word of mouth has a significant impact on brand image.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Electronic word of mouth has a significant impact on purchase intention.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention.

#### 2.4. Conclusion of the literature reviews

The overview of studies in the field of the effects of online WOM communication led to the insight that eWOM can have effects on variables such as brand image or purchase intention. In this section we will develop the research model that provides a basis for the assumed effect and test this effect in a new empirical study. The assumed link between eWOM and brand image has not been examined empirically before and will be analyzed in the empirical study presented subsequently (Figure 1).

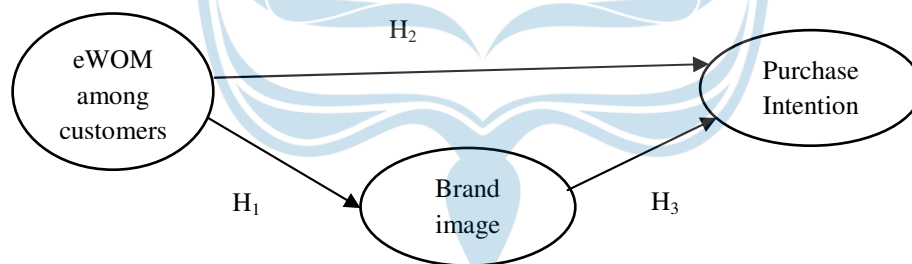


Figure 1. Research model

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Measurement

To achieve the study objectives, a self-administered survey questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised. The survey consisted of four parts covering the following issues: (1) eWOM, (2) brand image, (3) purchase intention, and (4) demographics. In the eWOM section, with six items, respondents were asked about using online WOM communications (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011). In the brand image section, with three items, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on the importance of brand image regarding automobile X (Davis et al., 2009). In the purchase intention section, with three items, respondents were asked about their intention to purchase this automobile (Shukla, 2010). Measurement of Electronic word of mouth, Brand image and Purchase intention were carried out by a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). The advantage of using an interval scale is that it permits the researchers to use a variety of statistical techniques which can be applied to nominal and ordinal scale data in addition to the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, product-moment correlations, and other statistics commonly used in marketing research (Malhotra, 1999). The measures are presented in Table 1. The last section of the questionnaire gathered respondents' demographic information, such as age, gender, education, and monthly income.

<b>Table 1. Measures</b>	
<i>Electronic word of mouth</i> (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011)	(eWOM1) I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know what products/brands make good impressions on others (eWOM2) To make sure I buy the right product/brand, I often read other consumers' online product reviews (eWOM3) I often consult other consumers' online product reviews to help choose the right product/brand (eWOM4) I frequently gather information from online consumers' product reviews before I buy a certain product/brand (eWOM5) If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision (eWOM6) When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand
<i>Brand image</i> (Davis et al., 2009)	(BI1) In comparison to other products/brand, this product/brand has high quality (BI2) This product/brand has a rich history (BI3) Customers (we) can reliably predict how this product/brand will perform
<i>Purchase intention</i> (Shukla, 2010)	(PI1) I would buy this product/brand rather than any other brands available (PI2) I am willing to recommend others to buy this product/brand (PI3) I intend to purchase this product/brand in the future

### 3.2. Data collection and analyses

The questionnaires were distributed based on a cluster sampling method and collected at Iran Kdoro's (a well-known automobile brand in Iran's automobile industry) agencies in Isfahan during the month of March 2011. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed and 341 usable samples were obtained after excluding the incomplete ones, yielding an 85% response rate from those who agree to participate. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the internal consistency reliability. Data analysis involves descriptive statistics using SPSS and structural equation modeling using AMOS structural equation program. AMOS is designed to estimate and test structural equation models (SEMs). SEMs are statistical models of linear relationships among latent (unobserved) variables and manifest (observed) variables. Its purpose is estimating the coefficients in a set of structural equations. For this research AMOS is used to investigate the causal relationships, where the path coefficients are tested for significance and goodness-of-fit. The overall model fit measures were used to evaluate the fit of the structural model. In estimating the goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) for measurement and structural models,  $\chi^2$  (chi-square) test was used. In addition, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was used as an absolute fit index. The incremental fit index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI) were used as incremental fit indices. Standardized estimates were used in reporting the causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous constructs. The path diagram of the structural model specified (Figure 1) is proposed based on the past literature in Section 2.

## 4. Data analysis and results

### 4.1. Sample profile

Of a total sample 341 respondents, 64.8% (221) were male and 35.2% (120) were female. A large majority of respondents' age were between ranges of 26-35= (32.3%), 36-45 = (36.7%) and 46-55 (24.9%). The majority of the respondents (41.1%) had above 600 dollars monthly income. In addition, majority of the respondents' education (53.1%) was two year college or associate's degree. Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 2.

<b>Table 2. Demographical characteristics of respondents</b>			
Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	CF (%)
Age			

25 or Under	12	3.5	3.5
26-35	110	32.3	35.8
36-45	125	36.7	72.4
46-55	85	24.9	97.4
Above 55	7	2.3	100
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	221	64.8	64.8
Female	120	35.2	100
<i>Monthly income</i>			
Under \$200	21	6.2	6.2
\$200-\$299	56	16.4	22.6
\$300-\$600	124	36.4	58.9
Above \$600	140	41.1	100
<i>Education</i>			
Below high school graduate	5	1.5	1.5
High school	25	7.3	8.8
2 year college or associate's degree	181	53.1	61.9
Bachelor's degree	91	26.7	88.6
Postgraduate	39	11.4	100

#### 4. 2. Measurement model

The proposed structural model was estimated by structural equation modeling (SEM), which included a test of the overall model fit and individual tests of the significance of the relationships among the variables. These tests indicated the relationship between eWOM communication, brand image and customers' purchase intention. The estimations of the parameters and the overall fit index of the measurement model are based on the maximum likelihood (ML) method. The basic conditions assumed for the use of ML estimation (Byrne, 2001) are met or closely approximated in the study. Further, the sample is sufficiently large (n=341 cases), over the recommended size of 200 cases (Medsker et al., 1994), the scale of observed variables is continuous, and no violations of multivariate normality are found in the survey responses. As presented in Table 3, the reliability of the measurement items was verified using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  to assess the internal consistency of the constructs in the applied model. The level of internal consistency for each construct was acceptable, with the alpha ranging from 0.727 to 0.788, which exceeded the minimum hurdle of 0.60 (Hair et al., 1998). All measurement items had standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranging from 0.518 to 0.702) at the alpha level of 0.05, indicating the convergent validity of the measurement model. Construct reliability was verified to estimate convergent validity; each construct had acceptable construct reliability, with the estimates ranging from 0.801 to 0.836 (Hair et al., 1998).

Construct	Item	Standardized loading	t-statistic	Mean	St. dev	Cronbach's $\alpha$
	EWOM1	0.702	9.483	4.72	1.202	
	EWOM2	0.591	8.464	4.33	1.175	



Electronic word of mouth CR = 0.836, AVE = 0.631	EWOM3	0.590	8.454	4.65	1.081	0.788
	EWOM4	0.627	8.820	4.41	1.302	
	EWOM5	0.614	8.693	4.39	1.177	
	EWOM6	0.573	-	4.38	1.189	
Brand image CR = 0.813, AVE = 0.593	BI1	0.653	9.040	5.35	1.135	0.760
	BI2	0.567	8.184	5.32	1.194	
	BI3	0.604	-	4.86	1.298	
Purchase intention CR = 0.801, AVE = 0.670	PI1	0.518	-	6.16	0.801	0.727
	PI2	0.627	7.551	6.22	0.852	
	PI3	0.520	6.790	6.11	0.828	
<b>Notes:</b> CR-Construct Reliability, AVE-Average Variance Extracted; EWOM-Electronic word of mouth; BI-Brand Image; PI-Purchase Intention						

In addition, because the average variance extracted (AVE) from all three constructs exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.5 (ranging from 0.593 to 0.670), convergent validity was assured (Hair et al., 1998). To test the discriminant validity among the constructs, we estimated correlations among the constructs to determine whether they were significantly different from 1; the confidence intervals of the correlations, calculated as correlations  $\pm 1.96 \times$  standard error of estimate, did not contain 1, so these results indicated the discriminant validity of the measurement model. The correlations for the constructs are shown in Table 4. Overall, these measurement results are satisfactory and suggest that it is appropriate to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model.

**Table 4.** Correlation matrix

	EWOM1	EWOM2	EWOM3	EWOM4	EWOM5	EWOM6	BI1	BI2	BI3	PI1	PI2	PI3
EWOM1	1.00											
EWOM2	0.356	1.00										
EWOM3	0.408	0.371	1.00									
EWOM4	0.396	0.395	0.381	1.00								
EWOM5	0.424	0.321	0.415	0.398	1.00							
EWOM6	0.387	0.352	0.347	0.408	0.402	1.00						
BI1	0.470	0.403	0.299	0.420	0.277	0.266	1.00					
BI2	0.316	0.342	0.306	0.275	0.269	0.244	0.335	1.00				
BI3	0.421	0.393	0.288	0.264	0.273	0.243	0.411	0.361	1.00			
PI1	0.478	0.269	0.255	0.323	0.332	0.342	0.329	0.299	0.327	1.00		
PI2	0.369	0.297	0.292	0.347	0.373	0.310	0.332	0.368	0.307	0.201	1.00	
PI3	0.321	0.317	0.289	0.270	0.255	0.176	0.280	0.280	0.274	0.173	0.199	1.00
<b>Note:</b> All of the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level; EWOM-Electronic word of mouth; BI-Brand Image; PI-Purchase Intention												

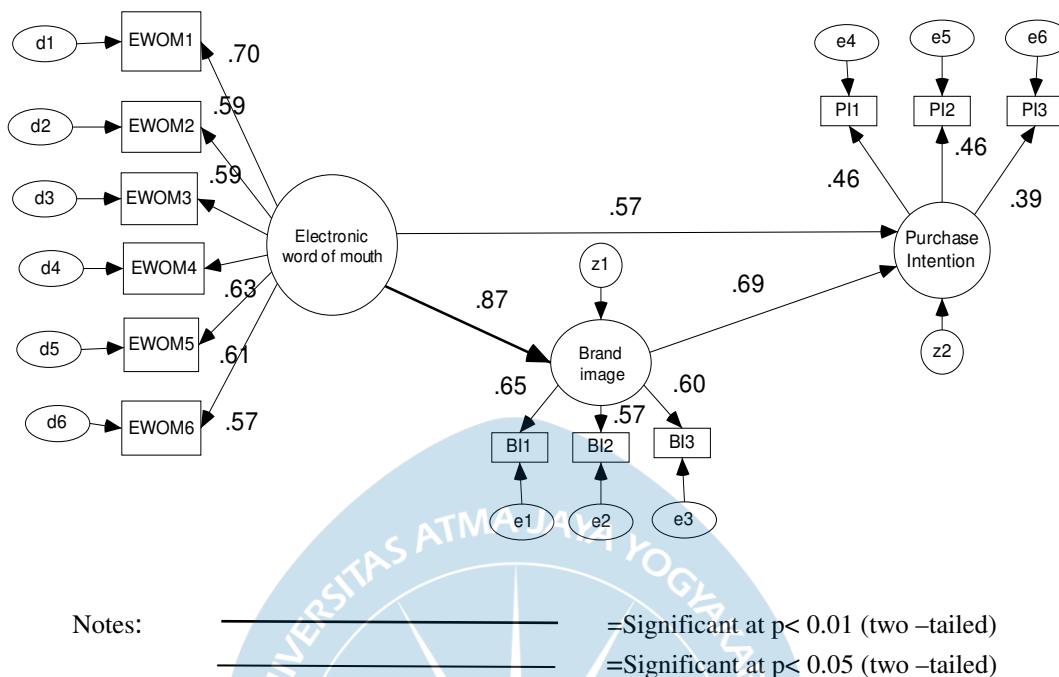
#### 4.3. Structural model

Figure 2 shows the overall explanatory power, the standardized path regression coefficients that indicate the direct influences of the predictor upon the predicted latent constructs for the model, and associated t-values of the paths of the research model. The model fit indices of the structural model and the cut-off value of those fit indices are presented in Table 5. The goodness-of fit statistics show that the structural model fit the data reasonably well. The 3-item model produced a chi-square of 83.2 (d.f = 51, p = 0.003). While the overall chi-square for this measurement model was significant (p < 0.05), it is well established that this statistic is sensitive to large sample sizes (e.g. Hair et al., 1998). To alleviate the sensitivity of the chi-square statistics, the value of chi-square is commonly divided by the

degrees of freedom. The re-estimated chi-square value was 1.631 and this new value is within an acceptable cut-off value range, from 1.0 to 3.0. The goodness fit index (GFI= 0.961, with 1 indicating maximum fit), Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.969, 1 = maximum fit), the comparative fit index (NFI = 0.925, with 1 indicating maximum fit), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI= 0.960, 1 = maximum fit) and the incremental fit index (IFI= 0.970) met the proposed criterion of 0.90 or higher. Finally, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.043, with values <0.08 indicating good fit), one of the indices best suited to our model with a large sample, indicated that the structural model was a reasonable fit.

<b>Table 5.</b> Maximum likelihood estimates for research model (n = 341)						
Independent variable	Dependant variable	Estimate	Standardized estimate	Standard error	t-statistic	p
Electronic word of mouth	Brand image	0.997	0.866	0.127	7.842	**
Electronic word of mouth	Intention to purchase	0.312	0.574	0.140	2.224	0.026*
Brand image	Intention to purchase	0.325	0.690	0.129	2.518	0.012*
**Significant at the p < 0.001 level (two-tailed)						
* Significant at the p < 0.05 level (two-tailed)						
			Structural model	Cut-off value		
Model fit statistics		Chi-square = 83.2 d. f = 51 p-Value < 0.05 Normed chi-square = 1.631			1.0-3.0	
		GFI= 0.961			> 0.90	
		NFI= 0.925			> 0.90	
		CFI= 0.969			> 0.90	
		TLI= 0.960			> 0.90	
		RMR= 0.48			< 0.50	
		RMSEA= 0.043			< 0.08: good fit	

Table 5 presents the results of the individual tests of the significance of the relationship among the variables. Among the 3 relationships tested, one was found to be significant at the alpha level of 0.01, and two relationships were significant at the alpha level of 0.05. eWOM had a significantly positive impact on brand image, with  $\beta = 0.866$ ,  $t = 7.842$ , and  $p = 0.000$ , indicating that customers' eWOM communication was an important antecedent of brand image. eWOM also had a strong positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.574$ ,  $t = 2.224$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ). These results suggest that compared to other promotional media, eWOM communication plays a major role as an important antecedent of customer's behavioral intentions. Finally, brand image influenced purchase intention, with  $\beta = 0.690$ ,  $t = 2.518$ , and  $p = 0.012$ , indicating that brand image was an antecedent of purchase intention. The statistical results, summarized in Tables 4, generated three major findings: (1) eWOM communication has a positive impact on brand image; (2) eWOM communication has a strong positive impact on purchase intention; (3) Brand image influences purchase intention (Fig. 3). In addition, 45% of respondents said they used e-mail for their eWOM, 40% relied on company's websites, and 30% used other media (e.g., facebook.com) for eWOM communication.



**Figure 2.** Standardized regression coefficients-proposed model

To examine the interplay between the two variables that affect intention to purchase, an analysis of the standardized direct, indirect and total effects is conducted (see Table 6). Of particular interest is the direct effect of eWOM on intention to purchase (0.574). The analysis also indicates that eWOM has an indirect impact on purchase intention (0.597) through its impact on brand image.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Electronic word of mouth	Brand image	0.866	0.866	0.000
Electronic word of mouth	Purchase intention	1.172	0.574	0.597
Brand image	Purchase intention	0.690	0.690	0.000

## 5. Conclusion and implications for further research

The starting point of this paper was the observation that virtual communities (e.g., facebook.com) where consumers can disseminate their product/service experience become increasingly popular. Moreover, both practical experience and previous research suggested that in an online WOM context, consumers are especially interested in writing and reading pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Consequently, from a marketer's perspective, the question arose which effects online WOM might have on response variables that are relevant in marketing. A response variable that plays an important role in marketing but has not been considered in the context of effects of online WOM communication yet, is brand image. Therefore, it stood to reason to extend the existing body of research in the field of effects of online WOM communication by introducing the concept of brand image in this context and examining possible effects of eWOM. This research builds on prior studies and explores the unique contribution of interpersonal influences on brand image and purchase intention in automobile industry. Our empirical study show that eWOM has considerable effects on brand image and indirectly leads to intention to purchase, particularly in the automobile industry. In addition, we showed that eWOM has a strong direct effect on purchase intention. This point has been

established by numerous studies prior to our study (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), of course not in the automobile industry. Our results have several important implications. The finding that online WOM communication can cause purchase intention is particularly important for the automobile manufacturers. Through mobile Internet, which is becoming increasingly popular, customers can read online recommendations for the product they are interested in directly at the point of purchase which might have strong effects on their purchase decisions. Therefore, managers could initiate point of sale activities in the form of product trials with the objective to motivate online WOM communication by enabling consumers to form their own impressions. Many studies have investigated customers' perceptions of service quality as a predictor of customers' behavior intentions, such as WOM communication. Boulding et al. (1993) indicated that service quality positively affects behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and positive WOM. Zeithaml et al. (1996) proposed a model of the behavioral consequences of service quality and suggested that perceived service quality was related to positive behavioral intentions including WOM, purchase intentions, complaining behavior, and price sensitivity. Based on Zeithaml et al.'s study, Alexandris et al. (2002) indicated that service quality explained 93% of variance in WOM. In addition, managers can improve the brand image by increasing product variety, enhancing product quality, offering the products in the price worthy of value, and pleasantly providing after sale services. These improvements directly increase the purchase intention of the products. However, companies with high equity brands should not rely on the benefits of high brand image such as customer loyalty that can be found in the literature (Aaker, 1991; Agarwal and Rao, 1996; Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Instead, even such companies should be aware of the risks of negative online WOM communication because, even high brand equity can be significantly diluted by negative online WOM and because such detrimental effects will become even more important with increasing improvement and spread of network technology. In addition, the accessibility, reach, and transparency of the Internet allow marketers and organizations to continuously monitor the online WOM communication about their brands (Kozinets et al., 2010). Marketers could develop appropriate communication tools to make consumers more knowledgeable about specific brand or bank characteristics and try to change some of the negative associations that consumers have about the brand or the product through online WOM. It is important to say that positive WOM and eWOM play an important role in increasing customers' purchase intentions, creating a favorable image of the company and its brand, and reducing promotional expenditures. Furthermore, it would be interesting to analyze the effects of online WOM communication on brand image for more brands and in other product categories such as financial services because WOM communication may have a particularly important influence on consumers' perceptions of products/services that have high credence qualities (Sweeney et al., 2008). Finally, it would be useful to test an expanded model that more fully examines brand image by including functional, experiential, and attitudinal dimensions of brand image (Keller, 1993). In addition to testing this construct within internet networks, exploring the antecedents to brand image would provide guidance for managers who want to strengthen their products' brands.

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## Consumers Perception, Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase Behavior of Organic Food Products

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### ABSTRACT

The green concept and the developing of organic food are still in the infant stage in Malaysia. Therefore, there is a need to gain knowledge about the consumer's behavior towards organic food products. Specifically, this study attempts to examine consumer's perception, purchase intentions and actual purchase behavior and the interrelationship between them in the context of organic food products. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, the five steps of consumer decision making process and previous researches on organic foods, 18 items of four dimensions were constructed to measure the consumer's perception towards organic food, 6 items were used to measure their purchase intention and six items were engaged to determine the actual purchase behavior of consumers. Data was collected in supermarkets and surrounding areas in the district of Kluang, Johor, Malaysia. A total of 288 completed questionnaires were gathered, representing 96% response rate, using convenient sampling method. The result indicated that intention to purchase organic food was significantly influenced by the consumer's perception of safety, health, environmental factors and animal welfare of the products. Surprisingly, there was no significant effect of consumers' perceived quality of organic food products on their intention to purchase the products. Actual purchase behavior of organic food products was significantly affected by the purchase intention of the products. Significant means differences were observed in the purchase intention of organic food products according to the respondents' gender, age, income level, education level and residence area. Theoretically, this study supported the view of consumers' perception towards organic food products will influence their behavioral intention and then lead to the actual purchase of the products. The findings proposed useful information to organic marketers to help them develop effective marketing strategies to convince organic-concerned segment to purchase the organic food products and to enhance the pro-environmental purchasing behavior in Malaysia.

**Key words:** Theory of Planned Behavior, Consumer's perception, Purchase intention, Actual purchase behavior, Organic food products.

### 1. Introduction

Interest in organically produced products is growing throughout the world in response to concerns about conventional agriculture practices, food safety, human health concerns, animal welfare considerations and concerns about the environment. The demand for organic food products is dramatically rising in Malaysia as the population becomes more affluent and more educated about health and wellness issues, leading to greater consciousness in food choices. Studies performed by Cheah (2009) found that increased demands of organic food are found in the Malaysian market. Nevertheless, The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) which spearheads efforts to modernize the country's agricultural sector stated that the local organic food industry is still very small source. Further, more than sixty percent of organic food products are imported and these are required to carry a reliable label of "certified organic" from the exporting countries source. Therefore, it is important to carry out researches on understanding consumer's perception and organic food-related purchasing and consumption behavior to help organic producers enhance the development of organic foods in Malaysian market.

In general, green or organic foods refer to foods that are safe to be consumed, are of fine quality, are concerned with humane animal treatment, are nutritious foods and are produced under the principle of sustainable development (Liu, 2003). A green consumer is defined as consumers who are conscious of and interested in ecological issues (Soonthonsmai, 2007). They perceived and believed that all products and services have environmental impact and their initiative is to reduce the damage as much as possible. They were also willing to change their purchasing and consumption behavior to a more environmental friendly way and are willing to pay more for the products. However, an individual concerned about the environment does not necessarily behave nor purchase in a green way. Ohtomo and Hirose (2007) found that people who are environmentally conscious do not necessarily behave pro-environmentally; for example, people might throw rubbish away when most people around them do so (reactive process, as opposed to intentional decision making). Whilst most consumers have a positive attitude towards buying organic products (Saba and Messina, 2003), they are often constrained by some barriers. There are several factors contributing to the lack of organic food purchase by consumers; the main constraints to purchase organic foods are high price premiums, availability and to a lesser extent, lack of information, lack of trust in organic certification schemes and quality (Thompson, 1998). According to Gottschalk and Leistner (2013) the first criterion that plays a significant role when it comes to buying organic products is the consideration of price. Thus, it is necessary to explore how consumers' perceived organic food products and their behavioral intention and actual purchase behavior towards the product.

Consumer's intention of organic foods is the first step in developing demand for organic food products. In the five step of consumer decision making process (Armstrong and Kotler, 2010), consumers pass through all the stages when considering to purchase a product, in this case, organic food products. In the second stage, i.e. Information search of the decision making process, their Information search is linked to the perception because it is about presenting information to customer that will create awareness and attention so that customer are aware of and pay attention to what is available, where to buy it, and why they should buy it (Armstrong and Kotler, 2010). How they perceived and believed the information of products will have influence on them in the next stages, i.e. evaluation of alternatives and purchase decision. Theory of Planned Behavior, developed by Ajzen (1991) has been applied to studies of the relation among beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intention and behavior in various fields such as healthcare, information systems, advertising, etc. (Ajzen, 1991, Stern, 2005, Koger & Deborah, 2010). However, use of this theory in this area, such as behavioral intention and use behavior of consumers towards organic food products, especially in



Malaysian context is limited. As this study involved safety, health, environmental factors and animal welfare of the products, validating the use of the planned behavior theory in relation to organic food products is interesting to research.

Several studies agreed on the socio-demographic profile of organic food buyers. The proportion of people consuming organic food has been found to rise with an increase in income (Torjusen et al., 2001) and tend to be more highly educated than non-organic consumers (Lockie et al., 2002; Storstad and Bjorkhaug, 2003). One of the reasons for growing demand of organic foods is the increasing number of consumer concerns about the conventional food production (Van Loo, My Nguyen Hoang, Pieniak, & Verbeke, 2013). However, some researchers also indicate that socio-demographic and personality indicators have had only limited success in profiling consumers according to their pro-environmental purchasing behavior. For example, Thompson and Kidwell (1998) stated that age, gender, and having a college degree just had little impact on a shopper's decision to buy organic food. Due to inconsistent agreement between previous researchers, it is significant to explore the influences of socio-demographic roles on the purchase intention of organic food products.

Since it is important to study purchasing and consumption behavior of consumers towards organic food products and there are limited researches investigating the appropriateness of applying Theory of Planned Behavior in this area as well as in the Malaysian context, this research developed the research questions as follows: (i) What are the effects of consumer's perception of organic food products on their purchase intention?; (ii) How consumers' purchase intention influence their actual purchase?; and (iii) Does consumers' purchase intention of organic food products vary according to their demographic variables?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Organic Food Products – Consumption Trend and the Need to Examine Consumers' Perception, Behavioral Intention and Actual Purchase Behavior in Malaysia

Researches examining behavioral related of consumers in organic food products have been conducted worldwide. Table 1 presents past researches in this area adapted of Dimitrova et al. (2010). The review of past researches in organic foods led to the following issues:

- Most studies explored customs and tradition of organic food buyers and detected that they have significant impact on purchase behavior. However, based, on the five step of consumer decision making process (Armstrong and Kotler, 2010), search information (the second step of the process) and interpretation of the information gathered will be influenced by consumers' perception. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) stresses in the link between beliefs and behavior, however, consumers' judgment on attributes of organic food products will be influenced by their perception. Researches also examine consumer's attitudes and actual organic choice, however, the TPB stated actual use behavior is a result of intention, and therefore, behavioral intention should precede the use behavior. Thus, examining how consumers' perceived organic food products, behavioral intention and use behavior is necessary.
- Consumers perceived organic products were compared to conventional products, and trait was examined, as behavior indicators towards the products. However, consumers judge and make purchase decision is mostly influence by their perception, and therefore, how they perceive the products is important to research.

- According to the 9th Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), the use of chemical and hazardous substances showed an increased particularly in the agricultural sector. The amount of

Table 1: Overview of the previous studies in term of main objectives, findings and products/practices related to this research.

Author (year) & products	Main objectives	Main findings
Magnusson et al., (2001) Organic foods: milk, meat, potatoes and bread.	To gain knowledge about Swedish consumers perceptions of organic foods.	Majority-Positive attitudes toward buying organic food, but low intention to choose them; Small proportion of regular purchasers; Most important food purchase criterion- good taste, least important- "organic produced", Most common beliefs about organics- healthier, more expensive; Price is a major obstacle to purchasing organic food. Habits- another explanation of the low purchases.
Makatouni (2002) Organic food	Explore beliefs and attitudes of organic food buyers and detect their impact on purchase behavior.	Organic food perceived as a means of achieving individual and social values- human, animal and environment centered; The health related factor (responsibility for health and well-being for self and the family) is the main motivation for purchasing organic food.
Fotopoulos & Krystallis (2002) Organic food	Examine consumer's attitudes and actual organic choice; Analyze the organic aware non-users by identifying organic products rejection reasons and potential organic buyers cluster.	Main reasons for not purchasing-low availability; low variety of fresh organic products; high price (though decreasing importance); satisfaction with conventional food; Personality variables (ethnocentric tendency/tradition; look for convenience); lack of confidence in advertising campaigns-mistrust; Food safety concern; Exploratory buying behavior.
Magnusson et al., (2003) Organic foods: milk, meat, potatoes and bread.	Investigate the important of perceived environmental, animal welfare and human health consequences of organic food purchase for consumer's attitudes and self-reported purchase of organic foods.	Health is the most predictor of attitudes; purchase intention and frequency; Environmental concern- also often stated motive for purchasing organic food; Egoistic motives (health concern) are stronger than altruistic motives (environmental concern and animal welfare). Eating behavior is resistant to change, characterized by affective, non-cognitive components.
Padel & Foster (2005) Organic food (dairies; fruit and vegetables; cereal products; meat)	Explore the core motivation values that underlie consumers purchasing decision of organic food.	Main motives for buying-health consciousness; well-being and quality of life, environmental and animal welfare concern ("better for the environment"); food as "enjoyment"; Barriers-price; lack of information/knowledge-lack of confidence; visual product quality and presentation; lack of availability; mistrust in the organic food in supermarkets; eating habit and convenience needs.
Hughner et al., (2007) Organic food	To review and synthesize the research concerned with identifying organic consumers, and to identify the reasons why consumers purchase and fail to purchase organic food.	Generally favorable attitudes, but low level of actual purchasing. Motives for purchase organic food-health concern; better taste(perceived higher quality); environmental and animal welfare concern; concern over food safety; Hindrances to purchasing-high prices (WTP); lack of availability; skepticism towards organic food label (distrust); insufficient marketing ; satisfaction with conventional food.
Lea & Worsley (2008) Organic products; meat; food packing; recycling	Examines the prevalence of Australian's food - related environmental beliefs and behaviors.	Decrease use of packaging by food manufacturers seen as the most important item to help environmental, while lower meat consumption- least important; Use of organic products-the least common food- related behavior; Consumers perceive the health -related benefits of organic foods, but the price premium and lack of availability act as strong barriers.
Mondelaers et al., (2009) Organic fresh vegetables (carrots)	Whether consumers perceive organic products as healthier as and more environmentally friendly than conventional products; and whether consumers consider health traits more important than environment traits.	Undesirable health related issues (concerning food safety) trigger stronger response than desirable traits (nutrition benefits); consumers classify organic products among others quality niche products; Purchase intention is mainly based upon quality traits, not the organic name; Price is the main barrier for users and light users to increase purchase; The organic label is, in general, associated more with health and environmental quality traits.

fertilizers used had increased from 2.2 million tons in 2001 to 4.0 million tons in 2004. Through Skim Akreditasi Ladang Malaysia (SLAM) and Skim Organik Malaysia (SOM), the government has introduced better farming practices to reduce the use of chemicals and hazardous substances. Further, Malaysians is encouraged to use more organic related products, and this will create a steady and sustain demand for the products. However, awareness of the importance of environment and organic related products is insufficient, and therefore, examining behavioral intention of consumers towards the products is crucial.

Thus, there is a need to carry out more researches investigating consumers' perception towards the products in Malaysia, as well as to examine the use of Theory of Planned Behavior in assessing behavioral intention and actual purchase behavior in this area.

## 2.1 Theoretical Consideration

Generally, in considering purchasing organic food products, consumers pass through five step of consumer decision making process which is need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior (Armstrong and Kotler, 2010). The buyers usually will recognize a problem or need when they sense a difference between his or her actual state and some desired state. For example, a person who has been ill for some time, may realized a need and look or be motivated for a healthier choice of product such as an organic product. In this stage, they will search information related to the organic food products and this process is linked to the perception in term of selecting the information and assigned a meaning to them. Subsequently, this will lead to how they perceived the products. Perception is one of the psychological factors that can influence consumer purchase behavior, and it is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets the information he or she receives from the environment (Sheth et al., 2004). What consumer thinks will affect their action, buying habits, and so forth, thus, perception has strategic implications for marketers because consumers build decisions based on what they perceive rather than on the basic of objective reality (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010). After acquiring sufficient information, consumers will identify a set of determinant attributes to use to compare between others alternatives. For instance, a consumer may look for attributes such as cost, features and values before purchasing an organic product and use these product attributes or others factors to evaluate the criteria. Hence, their perception and believe on the relative importance of organic food products attributes as compared to those of non-organic may influence them to purchase the organic products. In general, consumers during their decision-making process rely on different product attributes before deciding whether to buy or consume the organic food products. After purchasing the product, the consumer will be satisfied or dissatisfied with their purchase and will engage in post purchase behavior.

Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) stresses in the link between beliefs and behavior and it has been applied to studies of the relation among beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intention and behavior. Behavioral intention is an indication of an individual's readiness to perform a given behavior, is based on attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, and it is assumed to be an immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 1991, Wikipedia, 2010). Behavior is an individual's observable response in a given situation with respect to a given target (Ajzen, 1991, Wikipedia, 2010). Ajzen (1991) said a behavior is a function of compatible intentions and perceptions of behavioral control. The Theory of Planned Behavior is presented in Figure 1, and it is used in this study to examine consumers' behavioral intention and purchasing behavior towards organic food products. These behaviors are examined in term of how consumers' perceived of safety, health, environmental factors and animal welfare, and quality of the organic food products, as discussed in the five steps consumer decision making process (Armstrong and Kotler, 2010).

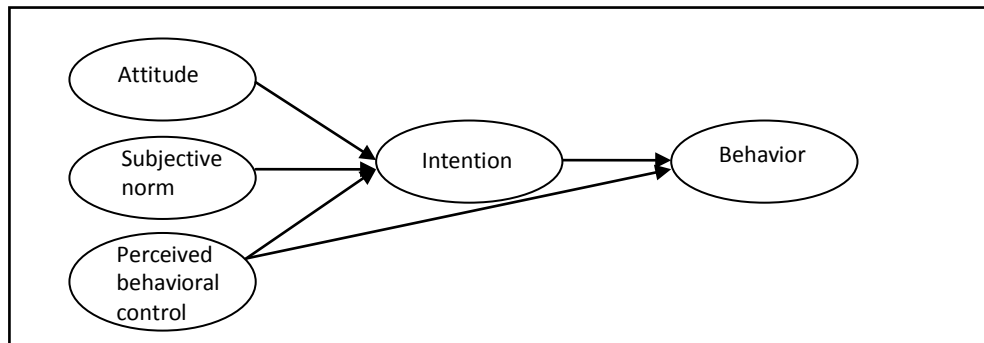


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB); Source: Ajzen (1991)

In general, organic production emphasizes the use of renewable resources, conservation of energy and resources, and preservation of the environment, without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Therefore, organically produced food is generally regarded as healthier, safer, better tasting and more nutritious than conventionally produced food (Krystallis and Chryssohoidis, 2005). It is also typically perceived as product without chemicals that is not intensively produced and is grown as natural (Williams and Hammit, 2001). This has been reflected in an increasing demand for organic produce, which is perceived as less damaging to the environment and healthier than conventionally grown foods (Schifferstein & Oude Ophuis, 1998). While, in case of domesticated animals it is natural for the consumers to think that an improvement in the animal rearing technique will consequence in a better, healthier, safer food and reduced the environment issues and improve animal welfare (Passille and Rushen, 2005). Previous studies showed that consumers perceive organic food as of higher quality, safer and fresher (e.g. Thompson & Kidwell, 1998; Schifferstein & Oude Ophuis, 1998). Normally, people buy organic food because organic food is seen as healthier, more nutritious and safer, no chemicals are used, organic farming is kinder to the environment, and quality better than conventional food (Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002; Wier and Calverly, 2002). Kareklas, Carlson, and Muehling (2014) expect that consumers' beliefs that organic farming is less harmful to the environment will positively impact their organic food-related attitudes and purchase intentions. Thus, perception would influence the intention to purchase organic products, so it is necessary to examine which of the variables give the strongest effects.

Basically, purchase intention represent to what consumers think they will buy (Blackwell et.al, 2001). According to Brown (2003), consumer with intentions to buy certain product will exhibit higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying. Consumer's intention of purchasing organic foods is the first step in developing demand for organic food products. However, intention do not necessarily equate with actual purchasing. According to Niessen & Hamm (2008), there is a big gap between stated and actual buying behavior in the case of organic food. The results in their study showed that 50% of consumers say they buy organic products, but in reality only 15% buy what they say. Since there are few researchers investigating the actual purchase behavior in the context of organic food products, it is significant to explore the consumer actual purchasing behavior in this study.

Demographic drive certain wants and needs. Segmenting potential consumer through their demographic factor will help marketers to be successful in targeting their potential customers. So, it is not surprising that socio-demographics have been the most widely used variable for profiling purpose. Indeed, there are some socio-demographic differences in organic food beliefs and consumption behavior. For instance, Grunert and Juhl (1995) reported that young consumers are more likely to buy organic food. These outcomes can be explained by the notion that older consumers are characteristically more conservative in trying out new products compared to their more audacious younger cohorts (Govindasamy and Italia 1999). However, Geen and Firth (2006) concluded that committed organic consumers tend to be older than the average population in the UK. Shafi and Madhavaiah (2013) emphasized on the facts that affect the consumer decision making process on purchasing imported health food products, in specific demographic effects such as education, income, gender and marital status. Hence, it is necessary to examine the impact of consumer's demographic characteristic on purchase intention since there might be some socio-demographic differences in organic food acceptance and consumption behavior.

## 2.2 The Research Model and Hypotheses

Given the preceding discussion, Figure 2 depicts the proposed framework of the study.

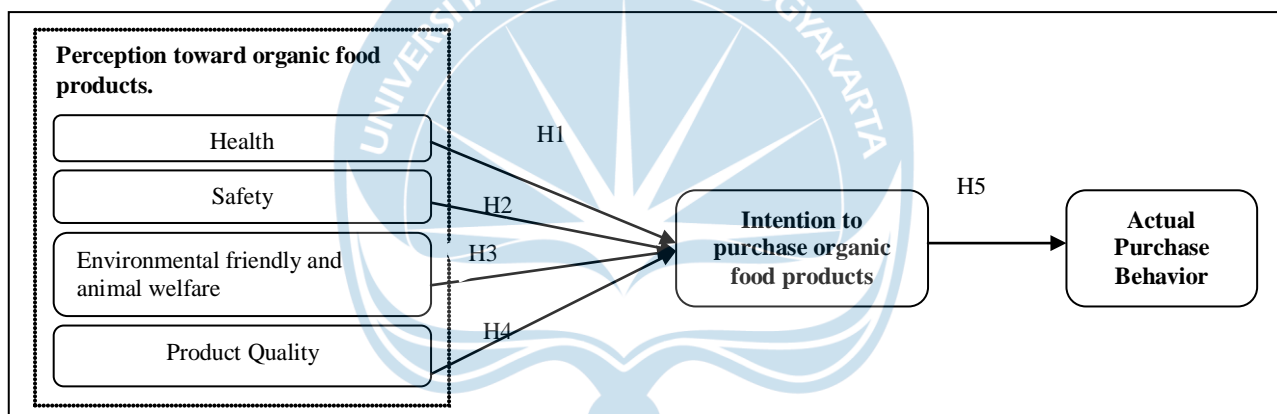


Figure 2: The research model

Empirical evidence has shown that intention to buy organic products is influenced by consumer's perception. For instance, Krissoff (1998) reported that consumers purchase organic products because of a perception that such products are safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventionally produced alternatives. Health concern appears as the most important reason for purchasing and consuming organic food (Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Padel and Foster, 2005 and Michaelidou et al., 2008). Likewise, Roitner-Schobesberger et al., (2008) found that health consciousness was a main reason to purchase organic food in Thailand, particularly when consumers are concerned with residues from synthetic chemicals used in agriculture. Molyneaux (2007) supports the positive relationship between health consciousness and organic purchasing. So, H1 is proposed:

**H1:** *Perceived health of organic food products will positively affect the purchase intention.*

Food safety issues have driven consumers to seek for safer foods whose qualities and attributes are guaranteed (Lockie et al., 2004). In fact, food safety was highlighted as a motive for purchasing organic food (Padel and Foster, 2005). Williams and Hammitt (2001) found that consumers believe organically grown produce poses fewer risk to consumer than

conventional products. Krystallis, Fotopoulos & Zotos, (2006) also found that organic produce buyers are concerned about the safety of foods in that they are willing to sacrifice money in return. Therefore, perceived safety of organic food products and its positive effect on behavior intention towards the product is proposed, i.e. H2.

**H2:** *Perceived safety of organic food products will positively affect the purchase intention.*

The increase of the environmental consciousness has had a thoughtful effect on consumer behavior, with the green product market expanding at a remarkable rate (Bhaskaran, Polonsky, Cary & Fernandez, 2006). It can be found that there has been an increasing consumer demand for agricultural produce obtained by means of processes having less impact on the environment, especially for organic produce (Chinnici et al., 2002). According to (Harper and Makatouni 2002), animal welfare has become an important component of consumer motivation to purchase products from organic farms which claiming to provide animal-friendly living conditions for farm animals. In fact, environmental and animal rights issues had a strong influence over attitudes and behavior intention towards organic food (Honkanen, Verplanken & Olsen, 2006). Hence, environmental concern remains one of the reasons of organic purchasing intention, therefore, H3 is proposed:

**H3:** *Perceived environmental friendly and animal welfare of organic food products will positively affect purchase intention.*

Perceived quality of organic food by consumers is becoming increasingly important to its rapid consumption (Magnusson et al, 2001 and Padel et al., 2005). Most consumers purchase organic products because of a perception that these products have unique (and in some cases superior) attributes compared to conventionally grown alternatives (Vindigni, Janssen & Jager, 2002). So, H4 is proposed:

**H4:** *Perceived quality of organic food products will positively affect the purchase intention.*

Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behavior, and the best predictor of behavior is intention. According to the Theory of Reason Action, the stronger the intention of an individual to perform a particular behavior, the greater the particular behavior will be performed (Ajzen, 1991). According to Brown (2003), consumer with intentions to buy certain product will exhibit higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying. Results of studies has supported that the path from intentions of buying organic food to the actual buying behavior is positive and significant (e.g. Saba and Messina, 2003; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005; Thøgersen, 2007). Alternatively, Thøgersen (2007) found that uncertainty about organic food has a direct negative impact on the intention to buy organic food and also a negative impact on the translation from intention to purchase organic food into the actual purchase itself. Based on this evidence, the H5 hypothesis is proposed:

**H5:** *Intention to buy organic food products is positively and significantly affects the actual buying behavior of the products.*

In addition, the consumer's buying behavior may also be influenced by socio demographic profiles. Previous research has found a significant relation between consumer's demographic variables and the consumption of organic food products.

- In term of gender, Magnusson et al. (2001), Lockie et al. (2004) and Lea and Worsley (2005) have found that a higher proportion of women than men hold

positive attitudes towards organic food. At the same time, Stobbelaar et al. (2007) find that adolescent girls are more positive towards organic products than boys.

- Cranfield and Magnusson (2003) also noted that younger consumers are more likely to pay over 6% in higher premiums to ensure food products are pesticide free. Further, Rimal, Moon & Balasubramanian (2005) find that older respondents were less likely to buy organic foods than younger respondents. Nevertheless, it is also of interest to note the contradictory findings of Misra et al. (1991) that older individuals may be willing to deviate and switch to organic food products due to health-related reasons. Geen and Firth (2006) find that in the UK, committed organic consumers tend to be older than the average population. While, Mintel (2000) reported that the most common purchasers of organic vegetables in the UK are 45-54 year olds. Also, Lockie *et al.* (2006) find organic food consumption does not differ across age categories.
- In food industry, many marketers segmenting their markets based on income. Usually, household income has a significant positive correlation with organic food purchases. For example, Underhill and Figueroa (1996), Thompson and Kidwell (1998), and Cranfield and Magnusson (2003) have consistently shown that wealthier households are more likely to spend, and even spend more on organic food products. Besides that, it is also interesting to note the contrasting findings of Byrne, Toensmeyer, German & Muller (1991) that income is inversely related to food safety concerns. This suggests that affluent consumers may be more confident of the safety of food supply or are less concerned about pesticide residue risk due to the higher premium paid for the products (Govindasamy and Italia 1999).
- For educational level, O'Donovan and McCarthy (2002) stated that individuals with higher education level generally are more likely to purchase organic food than others people. Although there is a numerous research find a positive relation between education and organic food consumption (Cunningham, 2002; O'Donovan and McCarthy, 2002), while others find a negative relation (Wilkins and Hillers, 1994; Thompson and Kidwell, 1998). Lea and Worsley (2005) find that the impact of education on organic food beliefs is smallest. Also, Arbindra et al. (2005) found that the level of education has no statistically significant influence on organic food purchase patterns. This could be due to the fact that more highly educated consumers may either feel that no particular food-safety problem exists or expect better quality and safer food products without having to pay extra for it.
- Furthermore, Underhill and Figueroa (1996) and Connor and Douglas (2001) suggest that urbanites are more likely to purchase organic food products compared to those in the rural areas. Two possible reasons exist for this outcome. First and foremost, urban localities have a wider array of organic food products shopping establishments compared to rural locales. Marketing channels are also better established in urban areas. Second, rural residents may live a more traditional lifestyle and have a greater affinity to produce food for their own consumption, thus lowering the likelihood of acquiring commercial organic food products.

Thus, the following H6 – H10 hypotheses are proposed:

**H6:** *There is a significant difference between gender variable towards purchase intention of the organic food products.*

**H7:** *There is a significant difference between age variable towards purchase intention of the organic food products.*

**H8:** *There is a significant difference between income variable towards purchase intention of the organic food products.*

**H9:** *There is a significant difference between education variable towards purchase intention of the organic food products.*

**H10:** *There is a significant difference between residence area variable towards purchase intention of the organic food products.*

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Measurement and Sampling Procedure

The descriptive survey using questionnaire was employed in this study to examine how consumers' perceived organic food products affect their behavior intention to purchase the products. The section A of the questionnaire inquires some demographic data of the respondents. The development of the Section B, C and D was based on the following:

- 18 questions were developed in the section B to get respondent's views on various aspects of organic food products. Specifically, four items for measuring consumers' perceived health of organic food products were adapted from Emma Lea & Tony Worsley (2005) and Golnaz et.al, (2011), four items for perceived safety of the product (Golnaz et.al, (2011), six items of perceived environmental friendly and animal welfare (Golnaz et.al. 2011, and Phuah et.al. 2011) and four questions of perceived quality of the product (Kulikovski and Agolli (2010).
- Six items of behavioral intention to purchase organic food products were constructed based on the studies of Mohd. Rizaimyet. al, (2010) and Phuah et.al. (2011).
- Six items to measure respondents' actual purchasing behavior were adapted from the work of Kaman Lee (2009).

All items were measured using 5-point Likert scale (1 is low and 5 is high). The survey was conducted via mall-intercept personal survey. The respondents were selected randomly in the supermarkets in the district of Kluang and its surrounding areas for 2 weeks. Prior to the data collection, the availability of organic food products within these locations was confirmed. According to Hill (1998), in multivariate research the sample size required should be 5 to 10 time of variables for 10% and 5% margin error. In this study, the number of total questions in the developed questionnaire was 30 and therefore the number of samples should be 300 for 5% margin error. Only 288 sets of questionnaires were fully answered and completed by the respondents. The response rate for the questionnaire was 96%.

#### 3.2 Validity and reliability Assessment

For consumers' perceived of organic products, the first round of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component extraction and Varimax rotation performed yielded four dimensions (KMO score of 0.880, Bartlett's Test  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ). The factor loading for all the 17 proposed items is above 0.5, however one item of perceived quality, i.e. 'Organic food products are tastier and more freshness than conventional food' was below 0.5. Therefore, it was removed from further data analysis. The second round EFA performed on the remaining 17 items and the results confirmed that all the remaining items were accepted with factor loading more than 0.5 with four dimensions extracted. Further, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis confirmed the four dimensions of consumers' perceived organic food products, with total Varian explained of 72.993%, as presented in Table 2. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy tests for behavioral intention and actual purchase behavior were 0.868 and 0.902 respectively (Bartlett's Test  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ). As can be seen in Table 3 and 4, all items of behavioral intention and actual purchase behavior were accepted based



on factor loading of 0.5, with one component extracted for each variable. The total Variance explained for behavioral intention was of 67.638% and 81.968% for actual purchase behavior.

**Table 2:** The results of Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup> for perception of organic food products

Perception of organic food products	Component			
	1	2	3	4
<b>Health</b>				
Organic food products contain more vitamin and mineral.	.093	.280	.849	.049
Growing food organically and naturally is better for health.	.167	.088	.884	.098
Organic food products are healthier than conventional food because it produces without preservatives or artificial color.	.128	.152	.794	.048
Choosing organic food products are good for ensure our health.	.158	.297	.699	.053
<b>Safety</b>				
Organic farming is the most convincing way of food safety.	.269	.844	.209	-.058
Organic food products are safer to eat.	.245	.850	.229	-.048
Organic food products are chemical free.	.207	.809	.176	.060
Organic produce can reduce the food poisoning risk.	.254	.787	.230	.045
<b>Environmental friendly and animal welfare</b>				
Organic farming is friendliness to the environment.	.737	.357	.178	.035
Organic farming can prevent the contamination and pollution of soil, air, water and food supply.	.849	.161	.205	.056
Organic farming uses less energy.	.860	.169	.155	.092
Organic farming can protect the environment because it does not carry any harmful synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers.	.818	.186	.165	.013
Organic farming treats animals humanely.	.839	.167	.083	.044
Organic farming always considers the animal well-being.	.772	.168	-.012	.122
<b>Quality</b>				
Organic food products have superior quality.	.116	.053	.012	.787
Organic food products are more quality than conventional food.	.018	-.006	.054	.854
Organic produce are of better quality and less associated with health risks.	.074	-.040	.114	.749
Total variation explained	72.993%			
Cronbach's Alpha	0.898			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.884			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity:				
Approc. Chi-Square	3150.488			
D.F.	136			
Significance	.000			

For reliability analysis, as can be seen in Table 2,3 and 4, all the Cronbach's Alpha results were above 0.7. For consumer perceived organic food products, the Cronbach's Alpha scores were 0.869 (perceived health), 0.907 (Safety), 0.922 (Environmental friendly and animal welfare) and 0.721 (perceived quality of organic food products). Thus, all dimensions of perceived organic food products, behavior intention and actual purchase behavior of the products were valid and reliable for further inferential analyses.

**Table 3:** The results of Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>for intention of organic food products

Purchase intention of organic food products	Component
	1
I would buy organic food products in the near future.	.801
I plan to buy organic food products in regular basics.	.836
I intend to buy organic food products for my long term health benefits.	.815
I intend to buy organic food products because they are more concern about food safety.	.837
I intend to buy organic food products because they are more environmentally friendly.	.823
I intend to buy organic food products because I am concerned about animal welfare.	.822
Total variation explained	67.638
Cronbach's Alpha	0.903
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.868
Barlett's Test of Sphericity:	
Approc. Chi-Square	1045.718
D.F.	15
Significance	.000

**Table 4:** The results of Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>for actual purchase behaviour of organic food products

Actual purchase behaviour of organic food products	Component
	1
I often buy organic food products.	.915
I often buy organic food products on regular basics.	.941
I often buy organic food products because they are more environmentally friendly.	.896
I often buy organic food products that against animal-testing.	.922
I often buy organic food products that are safety to consume.	.921
I often buy organic food products for my health.	.833
Total variation explained	81.968
Cronbach's Alpha	0.952
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.902
Barlett's Test of Sphericity:	
Approc. Chi-Square	1909.131
D.F.	15
Significance	.000

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the socio demographic profile of the respondents. In this study, most of the respondents are females 171 (59.4%) as compared to male 117 (40.6%) and the numbers of respondents from urban and rural areas are 184 person (63.9%) and 104 person (36.1%) respectively. Majority of the respondents was under the category of 20-40 years old (39.6%), followed by 40-60 years old (27.4%), below 20 years old (19.1%) and above 60 years old (13.9%). In terms of income distribution, 20.8 percent of the respondents earned less than RM1000 per month and 19.8 percent of the respondents have an income between RM1001-RM2000. Furthermore, 26.7 percent of the respondents have an income between RM2001-RM3000, 21.2 percent of the respondents belong to the income group of RM3001-RM4000 and a smaller percentage of respondents (11.5%) have income above RM4001. The education of the respondents is categorized into six categories. 17 percent of the respondents are below SPM level, 29.5 percent are SPM holders, 13.2 percent of respondents have a college diploma, 19.1 percent of the respondents graduated with a bachelor's degree, 10.8 percent had completed a master's degree and 10.4 percent are PhD holders.

#### 4.2 The effects of consumer's perception of organic food products on their purchase intention.

Table 5 provides result of the Multiple Regression Analysis on the effect of consumers' perceived organic food products on their intention to purchase the products. The result indicated that perceived safety of organic food products ( $\beta = 0.196$ ,  $t_{3.577}$ ,  $p < .001$ ), health ( $\beta = 0.132$ ,  $t_{2.098}$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and environmental friendly and animal welfare ( $\beta = 0.107$ ,  $t_{1.997}$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influenced intention to purchase. The highest effect on the purchase intention is perceived safety of the organic products ( $\beta = 0.196$ ,  $t_{3.577}$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, perceived quality of organic food products was not significant. Hence, hypotheses 1 – 3 are accepted, and hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Table 5: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis on the effect of consumers' perceived organic food products and behavioral intention to purchase the products

Parameter	Coefficients			t	Sig.	VIF
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	Beta	Std. Error	$\beta$			
(Constant)	2.405	0.247		9.753	0.000	
Health	0.116	0.063	0.132*	2.098	0.037	1.347
Safety	0.120	0.055	0.196**	3.577	0.000	1.605
Environmental friendly and animal welfare	0.070	0.053	0.107*	1.997	0.047	1.394
F-Value=19.372		R= 0.412		Rsquare (R2)= 0.170		

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

#### 4.3 The effect of consumers' intention to purchase organic food products on their actual purchase.

Simple Regression test was performed to examine the effect of purchase intention and actual purchase behavior of organic food products. As showed in Table 6, purchase intention was significantly related to actual purchase behavior ( $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $t_{2.187}$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates consumers who have intentions to buy the products will exhibit actual buying behavior of purchasing the products. Therefore, H5 was supported.

Table 6: Result of Regression Analysis on the effect of consumers' intention to purchase organic food products and actual purchase

Parameter	Coefficients			t	Sig.	VIF
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	Beta	Std. Error	$\beta$			
(Constant)	1.945	0.256		8.153	0.000	
Purchase intention	0.106	0.072	0.295**	2.187	0.000	1.000
F-Value=65.712		R= 0.398		Rsquare (R2)= 0.165		

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$

#### 4.4 Differences in the consumers' purchase intention of organic food products according to their demographic variables

In this study, Independent t-Test was used to identify the significant differences in the purchase intention of organic food products according to the gender. Based on Table 7, the P-

value (0.143) of the Levene's Test for gender was more than 0.05 which indicates that the variance is not heterogeneous. Hence, t-test for equal variance was used in this study. As a rule of thumb, 2-tailed significance (0.036) that is less than 0.05 suggests that the difference is statistically significant. According to the equal variance assumed, the differences in the mean of 3.9758 and 4.1404 with the standard deviation of 0.6283 and 0.4839 for both gender on purchase intention was significant. Therefore, it can be said that both male and female have significant differences in their purchase intention towards organic food products. Thus, H6 was supported.

Table 7: Independent t-Test for Gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.155	.143	-2.103	286	.036	-.16457	.07825	-.31858	-.01055
Equal variances not assumed			-2.075	237.44	.039	-.16457	.07930	-.32079	-.00834

One-Way ANOVA test results in Table 8 (i) shows that respondent's age (F=7.877; Sig. = 0.000), had the significant impact on the purchase intention of organic food products. Therefore, H7 was supported. Based on the results of LSD Test for respondent's age group in 8 (ii), the age group of 40-60 years old had statistically significant higher score on purchase intention of organic food products than others age group.

Table 8 (ii): ANOVA Test for Respondent's age group

Purchase intention	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	9.489	3	3.163	7.877	.000**
Within Groups	114.039	284	.402		
Total	123.528	287			

Table 8 (ii): LSD Test for Respondent's age group

Dependent Variable	Respondent's age		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
	(I)	(J)		
Purchase intention	40-60 years old	Below 20 years old	0.45562**	0.000
		20-40 years old	0.34257**	0.000
		60 years old and above	0.45032**	0.000

Note: \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

Results in Table 9 (i) shows that respondent's age monthly income (F=9.480; Sig. = 0.000) had the significant impact on the purchase intention of organic food products. Therefore H8 was supported. The results of LSD Test for respondent's monthly income in Table 9(ii) showed that respondents who have income level higher than RM3000 per month had statistically significant higher score on purchase intention of organic food products than respondents from those lower than RM3000 per month.

Table 8 (ii): ANOVA Test for Respondent's monthly income

Purchase intention	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	14.597	4	3.649	9.480	.000*

Within Groups	108.931	283	.385		
Total	113.528	287			

**Table 9 (i):** LSD Test for Respondent's monthly income

Dependent Variable	Respondent's monthly income		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
	(I)	(J)		
Purchase intention	RM3001-RM4000	Less than RM1000	0.49982**	0.000
		RM1001-RM2000	0.43783**	0.000
		RM2001-RM3000	0.34859*	0.001
	RM4001 and above	Less than RM1000	0.61515**	0.000
		RM1001-RM2000	0.55316**	0.000
		RM2001-RM3000	0.46392**	0.000

Note: \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

Based on Table 10 (i), results shows that respondent's education level (F=6.290; Sig. = 0.000) had significant impact on the purchase intention of organic food products. Therefore, H9 was supported. Furthermore, the results of LSD Test for respondent's education level in Table 10 (ii) indicated that respondents who hold degree and master had statistically significant higher score on purchase intention of organic food products than respondents who possess SPM qualification. Meanwhile, PhD holders had statistically significant higher score on purchase intention than of other group of respondents.

**Table 10 (ii):** ANOVA Test for Respondent's education level

Purchase intention	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.394	5	2.479	6.290	.000*
Within Groups	111.134	282	.394		
Total	123.528	287			

**Table 10 (ii):** LSD Test for Respondent's education level

Dependent Variable	Respondent's education level		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
	(I)	(J)		
Purchase intention	Degree or equivalent	Below SPM	0.30353*	0.014
		SPM or equivalent	0.28396 *	0.009
	Master or equivalent	Below SPM	0.33070*	0.022
		SPM or equivalent	0.31113*	0.019
	PhD or equivalent	Below SPM	0.66565**	0.000
		SPM or equivalent	0.64608**	0.000
		Diploma or equivalent	0.51053*	0.001
		Degree or equivalent	0.36212*	0.012
		Master or equivalent	0.33495*	0.038

Note: \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

Moreover, Independent t-Test was also used to identify the significant differences in the purchase intention of organic food products according to the residence area. The P-value (0.074) of the Levene's Test for residence area in Table 11 was more than 0.05 indicated that the variance is not heterogeneous and hence the t-test for equal variance was used in this study. The 2-tailed significance for residence area (0.018) was less than 0.05 suggests that the difference is statistically significant. According to the equal variance assumed, the differences in the mean of 4.1422 and 3.9519 with the standard deviation of 0.67313 and 0.60903 for both residence areas on purchase intention were significant. It shows that both urban and rural have the significant differences in their purchase intention towards organic food products. Hence, H10 was accepted.

**Table 6 (2): Independent t-Test for Residence area**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.211	<b>.074</b>	2.383	286	<b>.018</b>	.19029	.07984	.03315	.34743
Equal variances not assumed			2.451	232.069	.015	.19029	.07765	.03730	.34327

## 5.0 Discussion

The result of the study highlighted that consumers' perceived organic food products did affect their intention to purchase the products. The result indicated that safety ( $\beta = 0.196$ ) had the greater effect on purchase intention in the context of organic food products followed by health ( $\beta = 0.132$ ) and environmental friendly and animal welfare ( $\beta = 0.107$ ). The significant effect of perceived health (Kyriakopoulos and van Dijk, 1997), safety (Fagerli and Wandel, 1999) and environmental concern (Crosby, Gill and Taylor, 1981) on purchase intention suggests that consumers are willing to purchase organic food products because they perceived the products are more environmental friendly, safe and good for their health. In this study, safety has been found as the major motive of purchase intention of organic food products. The results are consistent with earlier studies which suggested that food safety as a reason for consuming organic food products (Schiffstein & Oude Ophuis, 1998 and Padel and Foster, 2005). Lockie et al., (2002) found that people buy organic products because they perceive them by not carrying any pesticide residues and to better for their health. Although environmental friendly and animal welfare had the least effect on the purchase intention, its existence cannot be neglected. The environmental friendly (consumer) behavior is often characterized as ethical or moral behavior, driven by the social norms and the moral considerations (Pál, 2012). Surprisingly, the relationship between perceptions of quality and purchase intentions is not significant. This finding was contradict with the research carried out by previous researcher, where the perceived quality of organic food by consumers becoming increasingly important to its rapid consumption (Olson 1977, Magnusson *et al*, 2001 and Padel *et al*, 2005). The result of this research confirmed that safety is an important objective for consumers buying organic food products. In addition, health consciousness, environmental friendly and animal welfare consideration also serve as drivers for consumption of organic food products. Therefore, it is important for marketers of organic food products to incorporate these objective and drivers in their promotional materials to convince consumers to purchase the products.

In this study, purchase intention is positively affect the probability of a customer decision that he/she will buy organic food products. This finding is consistent with what being proposed in Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the work of Brown (2003) who stated that consumer with intentions to buy certain product will exhibit higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying.

For marketer of organic food products, this finding suggests that promoting buyer's intention to buy the products is necessary, because this will lead them purchasing the products.

This study highlights that significant differences in the consumers purchase intention exist in the context of organic food products. Specifically,

- The differences in the purchase intention were observed based on gender and residence area. In term of gender, organic products buyers tend to be women and they tend to be the primary food shoppers of a household and may be more aware of organic food issues, compared to men. Besides, Underhill & Figueroa (1996) and Connor & Douglas (2001) had stated that urbanites are more likely to consume organic food products compared to those in the rural areas.
- The differences in the purchase intention were also significant according to consumer background of age, education and income. In term of age, the research result shows that older consumers are more likely to purchase organic food. This finding was supported by Misra et al. (1991) which stated that older individuals may be willing to deviate and switch to organic food products due to health-related reasons. Further, a significant effect of income on organic food purchases highlighted that wealthier households are more likely to spend, and even spend more on organic food products (Underhill and Figueroa (1996), Thompson and Kidwell (1998), and Cranfield and Magnusson (2003). In addition, the evidence of significant difference in the purchase intention based on education was highlighted by Jolly (1991), who found that among consumers who purchase organic products, those with university degrees were willing to pay the most for the products.

## 6. Conclusion

As a conclusion, perception of consumers is important in the purchase decision of organic food consumption. How consumers perceived the organic food products is crucial because this will determine their intention to buy and consume the products. Subsequently, this will lead to the actual behavior of purchasing the product. However, variables of price, taste, etc. of the organic food products, and consumer beliefs of extended Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2006) were not tested in this study. This means that the research results may not cover all aspects of the consumer conception toward organic food products. Since consumer's perception towards organic food products affect their intention to purchase the product, it is wise to further investigate more in this area. In addition, future research should focus on the similar study by extending the scope to all states in Malaysia in order to obtain a more reliable and accurate research result. The analysis on how organic food buyers perceived the products should also be carried out as compared to non-buyers and users of the products.

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