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Declared non-buyers of organic food: A study of young British and Polish consumer profiles¹

1. Introduction

Food systems are under scrutiny for how the elements and activities related to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, impact on human health and environmental sustainability (Béné et al., 2019; Willet et al., 2019). Food producers must support a growing global population while reducing the negative environmental impact of production, a difficult task. Achieving the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition, while protecting the planet and ensuring social and economic well-being (Willet et al., 2019) will require substantial change. Meeting SDG12, which is aimed at ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, will require communities to switch to a nutritious and safe diet with a lower environmental footprint. Consuming more organic food is one

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potential option. It is worth noting that while increasing the proportion of organic farms will help achieve SDG12, it might pose a threat to food security (Ziętara, Mirkowska, 2021). Some of the aims of the SDGs are therefore conflicting.

The principle of organic farming is to work in harmony with nature and protect the environment in the process (Verhoog et al., 2007; Siepmann, Nicholas, 2018). Organic farming methods aim to preserve the natural habitat of plants, animals and wildlife, avoid the use of synthetic materials such as fertilizers, pesticides and antibiotics, and ban genetically modified crops. Organic farming certification requires an annual on-site inspection to confirm that organic practices are being followed (European Commission, 2022). Furthermore, the European Commission is aiming to boost organic food consumption and production to meet the European Green Deal objective of 25% of agricultural land being farmed organically by 2030 (Kowalska and Bieniek, 2022). Research on consumer attitudes to, and behaviour regarding, organic food is therefore an especially worthwhile endeavour.

Global sales of organic agri-food products reached €106.4 billion in 2019, an increase of more than 10% over 2018 (Willer et al., 2021; FIBL Statistics, 2020). This was largely driven by consumer demand (Rana and Paul, 2017). Despite growing sales, organic food remains a niche market; one that attracts consumers of a specific socio-economic profile (Hughner et al., 2007; Monier-Dilhan and Bergès, 2016). One of the barriers to purchasing organic food is the discrepancy between consumer attitudes and intentions, and actual purchasing behaviour. This is known as the 'green gap' (Chekima et al., 2019; Kushwah et al., 2019; Tandon et al., 2020a).

A better understanding of consumers, especially the motivations of young consumers, and the barriers to purchasing organic food (Kushwah et al., 2019) may help to frame the 'green gap' and identify the factors that foster food consumption conducive to environmental sustainability, social health and animal welfare (Reddy, 2010). Exploring the reasons for not buying organic food is therefore of interest to sustainability stakeholders, including practitioners and policymakers. This alone makes it worthwhile. Most studies on what induces people to purchase organic food have been conducted in developed economies, where the supply and demand for certified organic products are most established (Kushwah et al., 2019; Tandon et al., 2020a). However, developing economies represent a large market opportunity with a growing middle-class (UN, 2019).

It is definitely worth comparing the attitudes and behaviour of Polish (PL) and British (BR) non-buyers of certified organic products, as there has been little research to date on non-buyers generally (Jolly, 1991; Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002; Hughner et al., 2007; Truong et al., 2021), and most of the studies that have been conducted have only examined a single country (the USA, Greece, Vietnam etc.). The most recent research presented by Truong et al. (2021) concerns the impact of consumer values on the food choices of non-buyers of organic food. The authors cite environmental and health concerns, and the importance of trust in the food system and organic food. However, they have left space for going further and exploring the perception of certified organic food and the willingness-to-buy organic food, as well as provenance-related alternatives thereto, on the part of Generation Z and Y non-buyers in both mature and immature markets.

The overarching aim of the study is to identify the profile of young consumers in Poland and the United Kingdom (UK) who, despite their environmental awareness, do not purchase organic food. Using a questionnaire on-line survey of 624 individuals, this study compares the attitudes and behaviours of young non-buyers in the two countries. The comparisons are made by using the Mann-Whitney U test.

The article is structured as follows: Section 1 includes an introduction to organic food consumption research and details the underlying rationale; Section 2 develops the theoretical framework through which the research problem is examined; Section 3 considers materials and methods; Section 4 analyses the survey of young consumers; Section 5 discusses the results; and Section 6 provides conclusions and draws implications, which should be of value to academics and those working in or entering the organic food market.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Pro-social and environmental attitudes

Attitudes are key predictors of behaviour (Casaló, Escario, 2017; Madden et al. 1992), but they are not the only factors of influence (Biswas, 2017; Park, Lin, 2020). Trust partially moderates the associations between motives, attitudes, and buying behaviour in the organic food market (Tandon et al., 2020b). Furthermore, Bhattacharya (2019) has discovered that pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes are positively related as more pro-social students tend to care more for the environment. While acknowledging a gap between pro-environmental attitudes and sustainable consumption behaviours, do Paço et al. (2019) have developed a model for green consumer behaviour based on a set of three antecedents of behaviour, viz. pro-social attitudes, green consumption values, and receptivity to green communication. Their research indicated that general pro-social attitudes have a direct impact on green consumption values and green values positively influenced individual receptivity to green communication and green buying behaviour. Social and cultural influences on pro-environmental behaviour are often used to formulate communication strategies designed to appeal to consumer values (Chwialkowska et al., 2020) in the belief that such strategies are most effective. Kowalska et al. (2021) extended the do Paço et al. (2019) model by adding two more latent variables (organic food perception and organic food purchase) in order to explain young consumers' purchases of organic food. They found that neither the intensity of the pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes nor the perception of organic food explained the consumers' decisions to purchase organic food to a satisfactory extent. Therefore, organic food buying behaviour results from complex cognitive and emotional processes not included in the extended model. This calls for further research. The first question that needs to be answered is: What are the pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour of Polish and British non-buyers of certified organic products?

2.2 Trust in and perception of the organic food regime

Unlike other food certification, organic food certification is subject to regulatory control in Europe (European Union and post-Brexit Britain). A food can only bear an organic label if it was produced in compliance with the applicable regulations and if the producer has been certified as compliant by an authorized certification body (ECOEUROPE Quality & Tradition, 2022). Regulation (EU) 2018/848 sets out the conditions that have to be met for a food to be labelled 'bio', 'eco' or 'organic.' Pursuant to EU Regulation 1169/2011, the label must clearly convey material information and cannot be misleading.

Trust in organic food plays an important role in mediating consumer behaviour (Giampietri et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018; Sultan et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2022). Some studies indicate that consumers treat information about organic products with scepticism (Vermeir, Verbeke, 2006; Janssen, Hamm, 2012). In particular, the lack of trust in certifying authorities and supervision has resulted in a lack of trust in eco-labels in various countries (Grunert et al., 2015; Thøgersen et al., 2019). Awareness of, and familiarity with, the organic certification logo has been proven to exert an impact on consumers' choice of organic food. Janssen and Hamm (2012) found that consumers' willingness-to-pay for organic food varied significantly across six European countries depending on how recognizable the organic logo was and how critically standards and control systems were perceived. Murphy et al. (2022) found that consumers from four European countries (including Poland and the UK) had high levels of trust in the certified organic food chain and in certified organic produce, but that the extent differed between countries. Furthermore, distrust of the food system affects the consumption values of organic food (Murphy et al., 2022; Wojciechowska-Solis et al., 2022), i.e. the functional, social, emotional, conditional, and epistemic values (Truong et al., 2021). Consumer confidence in the social activities of producers and retailers also has a major impact on purchasing behaviour (De Jonge et al., 2008; Pivato et al., 2008; Janssen, Hamm 2011). This implies that there is a need to explore non-buyers' confidence in organic certification and examine their trust in certain aspects of organic food, e.g. quality, safety and authenticity.

A key determinant of the decision to purchase of organic products is the belief that organic food is healthier and has a better nutritional profile (Ergin, Ozsacmaci, 2011; Vapa-Tankosić, 2018; Apaolaza et al., 2018; Rana, Paul, 2020; Wojciechowska-Solis et al., 2022). However, there is no consensus as to whether organic food is more nutritious (Średnicka-Tober et al., 2016; Di Renzo et al., 2020). The direct cause-effect relationship between the consumption of organic food and health is unclear (Popa et al., 2019), as economic and socio-cultural determinants, including health status or engaging in a healthier, active lifestyle (Hurtado-Barroso et al., 2019), and how they affect consumer behavior is complex to study. *Informed eating* denotes access to information and how it affects eating decisions in line with the principles of health and nutrition (Dejnaka, 2019). One report concluded that Polish consumers believe that 'you are what you eat' (Inquiry Report, 2019) and that this motivates them to pursue healthy eating

for the health and well-being of themselves and their loved ones, especially their children. Thus, young consumers' beliefs about the impact of organic foods on human health needs to be investigated.

Non-buyers may have certain perceptions of certified organic food, e.g. that it is too expensive. These can be influenced by low availability or lack of knowledge of where to purchase, lack of information, lack of knowledge regarding certification and health benefits, an inability to distinguish organic food from traditional food, or more generally, by a lack of trust, interest or belief in organic food (IMAS, 2017; Hermaniuk, 2018). While organic products tend to be more expensive, the price differential varies depending on the product type, the season, and the country in which it is retailed (Łuczka, Kalinowski, 2020). Furthermore, both scientific and public information (e.g. communication from friends and acquaintances, information on social media or traditional media) about organic food is inconsistent and confusing. Koswatta et al. (2022) states that 'audience beliefs, values, and interests that conflict with scientific information serve as negative feedback and create cognitive dissonance.' Thus, there is a considerable amount of consumer' confusion over organic food (Dinçer et al., 2022). This gives rise to the second research question: What is the perception of certified organic food reported by Polish and British non-buyers?

The research questions cited above support the formation of the consumer profile of those young Polish (PL) and British (BR) consumers who describe themselves as 'non-buyers.'

3. Materials and Methods

Consumer attitudes to, and behaviour regarding, organic food were investigated by means of a survey questionnaire. The structured questionnaire comprised 37 questions grouped into four sections: (i) buying behaviour on the organic food market; (ii) perception of provenance-related food products (including organic food); (iii) the intensity of pro-environmental attitudes; and (iv) demographic questions. The vast majority of scales were of our authorship, although certain adaptations were made. The scale proposed by do Paço et al. (2019) was adapted to measure the intensity of pro-environmental attitudes of young consumers; the scale items were verified on a 5-point Likert scale (Table 2). The scale developed by Escher and Petrykowska (2015) was adapted to find out why young PL and BR people did not buy certified organic food (the items were verified on a 5-point Likert scale) (Table 4). A unipolar semantic scale was used to find out how consumers perceived organic food (Table 5). The questionnaire also included an open question which read as follows: 'What do you think about certified organic food?' The survey questionnaire had two language versions (Polish and English), one for each of the two countries (PL / BR).

The empirical study was conducted in Poland and the UK between December 2020 and February 2021. These two countries were chosen on account of the difference in the maturity of their organic food markets (Wojciechowska et al.,

2022). The main locations were Lublin, Poland, and various parts of the UK. The recruitment criterion was whether the consumer belonged to Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1996) or Z (born after 1996). The respondents qualified as 'young consumers' (Kowalska et al., 2021; Wojciechowska-Solis et al., 2022) as they were under 40 when the survey was conducted.

A quantitative method (Computer-Assisted Web Interview - CAWI) was employed. The study was executed by means of the 1KA which is an open source application that enables services for online surveys. The questionnaire was distributed via internal university e-mail delivery systems (having obtained the prior consent of the university authorities) in Poland and the UK, and via social media (Facebook, Twitter). Participation was voluntary and answers to individual questions were not mandatory.

A total of 1667 respondents were surveyed. The average time taken to complete questionnaires was 16 minutes 38 seconds. There were 973 completed questionnaires (812 Polish and 161 British). The difference in the sample sizes partly resulted from the purposive, snowball nature of the sampling in the two countries. However, direct comparisons were considered valid (see Hair et al., 1998). Descriptive statistics, i.e. the means of groups, and the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test were used in the statistical analysis as they do not require equal group size and normally distributed variables. The Mann-Whitney U test shows the differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed, which is similar to the case here (Montgomery, Runger, 2010; Hollander et al., 2013). Therefore, the parametric tests that require the normality of distributions and groups of equal size cannot be used for making comparisons in the present study. The Mann-Whitney U test made it possible to determine whether attitudes and behaviours differ depending on the origin of the participants.

Responses from non-buyers of organic food were selected from the complete dataset. Specifically, a Polish group of 557 participants (69% of PL respondents) and a British group of 67 participants (42% of BR respondents) were selected. Both groups are described in this paper as 'non-buyers'. The findings of the research are 'double biased' since far more young people were surveyed in PL than in the UK, and the proportion of PL non-buyers was far greater than the proportion of BR non-buyers. Despite these limitations, the profiles of PL and BR non-buyers of certified organic foods are worth exploring in order to frame the 'green gap', as there is a research gap in this area. Most of the non-buyers of organic food from both the PL and BR groups were female and they perceived their financial situation most often as average or good. The majority of respondents did not self-report a food allergy (Table 1).

The authors examined the profiles of non-buyers in terms of: (i) their reports on pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour; (ii) their relationship to certified organic food; (iii) and their willingness to buy provenance-related products in the future.

Table 1
Demographic data for the sample

Variables		PL	BR
Non-purchasers of organic food	N	557	67
Gender	Female	72.5%	75%
	Male	27.5%	25%
Place of residence	Lublin / Cirencester	39.8%	19.9%
	Another town in PL / UK	58.7%	68.3%
	Another town outside PL / UK	1.5%	11.8%
Perceived financial situation	Very bad (I am not able to meet my basic needs)	0.1%	1.2%
	Bad (I am only able to meet my basic needs)	7.0%	8.1%
	Average (I can afford to buy most of the things I would like to have)	53.5%	45.3%
	Good (I can afford to buy what I want)	28.1%	19.9%
	Very good (I can afford to buy what I want and save/invest some money)	11.2%	25.5%
Food allergy	Yes	16.6%	19.9%
	No	84%	80.1%

4. Results

4.1. Pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour of Polish and British non-buyers of certified organic products

The analysis of the data by means of the Mann-Whitney U test reveals that young non-buyers from PL and BR differ in the intensity of their pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour ($p < 0.05$) (scale adapted from Do Paço et al., (2019)) (Table 2).

Table 2
Pro-social and pro-environmental reported attitudes and behaviour of Polish and British non-buyers

Variable	Item	Mean PL	Mean BR	P
General pro-social attitudes				
A1	It is important that others are happy.	4.03	4.51	0.000*
A2	It is important to help someone who needs it.	4.27	4.55	0.004*
A3	I want to help others.	4.09	4.54	0.000*
A4	The well-being of others is important.	4.10	4.57	0.000*
A5	The needs of others are important.	4.03	4.36	0.002*
A6	It is important that all people are happy.	4.08	4.36	0.048*

Variable	Item	Mean PL	Mean BR	P
Green consumption values				
V1	It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment.	3.66	3.93	0.034*
V2	I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions.	3.39	3.6	0.094
V3	My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment.	3.46	3.49	0.768
V4	I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet.	3.99	4.49	0.000*
V5	I would describe myself as environmentally responsible.	3.39	3.57	0.162
V6	I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly.	3.30	3.84	0.000*
Receptivity to green communication				
C1	I support brands that support the environment.	3.29	4.00	0.000*
C2	I tend to pay attention to advertising messages that talk about the environment.	3.43	3.62	0.081
C3	The use of green messages in ads affects my attitude towards the ads.	3.17	3.73	0.000*
C4	I respond favourably to brands that use green messages in their advertising.	3.50	3.73	0.039*
C5	I am the kind of consumer who responds favourably when brands use green messages in their ads.	3.41	3.68	0.037*
C6	I think that green advertising is valuable.	3.57	3.80	0.060
C7	Green advertising is a necessary form of advertising.	3.78	3.65	0.555
C8	I am the kind of consumer who is willing to purchase products marketed as being green.	3.10	3.74	0.000*
C9	I tend to pay attention to green advertising messages.	3.15	3.53	0.009*
Buying behaviour				
B1	I try to buy energy-efficient products and appliances.	3.86	3.98	0.333
B2	I avoid buying products that have excessive packaging.	3.44	3.77	0.022*
B3	When there is a choice, I choose the product that causes the least pollution.	3.45	3.86	0.003*
B4	I have switched products/brands for ecological reasons.	2.75	3.53	0.000*
B5	I make every effort to buy paper products made from recycled paper.	3.00	3.48	0.000*
B6	I use environmentally friendly soaps and detergents.	3.04	3.20	0.375
B7	I have convinced members of my family or friends not to buy products which are harmful to the environment.	2.83	3.29	0.005*
B8	Whenever possible, I buy products packaged in reusable containers.	3.85	3.97	0.282
B9	I try to buy products that can be recycled.	3.59	4.21	0.000*

Note: A 5-point Likert scale was applied (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree). The Mann-Whitney U test was used. Statistical significance *p < 0.05.

The respondents in both countries exhibited statistically significant differences in the intensity of their general pro-social attitudes (Statements A1-A6). BR non-buyers expressed more intense attitudes than PL non-buyers for each variable. For green consumption values (V1-V6), there are statistically significant differences among PL and BR non-buyers in terms of the strength of the following statements: 'It is important that the products I use do not harm the environment', 'I am concerned about wasting the planet's resources', and 'I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions to be more environmentally friendly'. Again, BR non-buyers expressed more intense attitudes than PL non-buyers for those variables. As for receptivity to green communication (C1-19), there are some statistically significant differences across the groups. BR non-buyers believe more strongly in supporting brands that promote environmental protection, are more receptive and respond more favourably to green messaging in advertising, pay closer attention to green advertising messages, and are more willing to purchase products marketed as green. There are no statistical differences between the two groups in terms of the strength of their convictions in the value and necessity of green advertising.

In terms of the green buying behaviour (B1-B9), there are no statistically significant differences in the intensity of attitudes towards buying energy-efficient products and appliances, using environmentally soaps and detergents, and purchasing products packaged in reusable containers. Both groups are more likely to make more effort to buy products that can be recycled or are energy-efficient or packaged in reusable containers. However, young non-buyers from both groups differ in some green buying behaviours. BR non-buyers are less likely to buy products with excessive packaging and are more likely to choose products that have a lower pollution impact and are less harmful to the environment, and to switch products and/or brands for ecological reasons. They would also make more effort to buy products that can be recycled than are their PL counterparts. These differences in the intensity of the statements between the two groups are statistically significant (Table 2). The intensity of pro-environmental attitudes of both the PL and BR groups is relatively high as the scores are higher than the numerical value for the neutral response (Table 2).

4.2. Perception of certified organic food reported by Polish and British non-buyers

The reasons for not purchasing organic food were explored with the use of a scale adapted from Escher and Petrykowska (2015) (Table 3). The most important reason reported by both groups was high prices. The second most important barrier for BR non-buyers was the low availability of organic products, while for PL non-buyers, it was home-grown food. There is a statistically significant difference between BR and PL non-buyers in terms of the strength of the statement that they do not buy organic food because they produce food at home. PL non-buyers are more likely to substitute home-produced food for organic food than BR non-

Table 4
Perception of certified organic food among Polish and British non-buyers

Characteristic	Mean PL	Mean BR	P
Unhealthy/ Healthy	4.24	4.16	0.366
Not safe/ Safe	4.04	4.07	0.613
Not good quality/ Good quality	4.03	3.99	0.988
Not strictly controlled/ Strictly controlled	3.88	3.93	0.563
Untrustworthy/ Trustworthy	3.81	3.81	0.823
Inauthentic/ Authentic	3.64	3.91	0.032*
Not available in store /Available in store	2.93	2.88	0.635
Unaffordable /Affordable	1.91	2.1	0.077

NB: A sliding scale was used.

Affordability: 1 – unaffordable, 5 – affordable; Healthiness: 1 – unhealthy, 5 – healthy; Trustworthiness: 1 – untrustworthy, 5 – trustworthy, Quality: 1 – not good quality, 5 – good quality; Control system: 1 – not strictly controlled, 5 – strictly controlled; Authenticity: 1 – inauthentic, 5 – authentic; Availability: 1 – not available in store, 5 – available in store; Safety: 1 – not safe, 5 – safe. The Mann-Whitney U test was used. Statistical significance * $p < 0.05$.

Non-buyers were also asked about their perceptions of other provenance-related foods that could reasonably be considered as alternatives to organic food at the point of purchase (Table 5). Food acquired directly from farmers, home-grown food, domestic food, local food, traditional and regional food were all seen by PL non-buyers as viable alternatives to organic food. BR non-buyers of organic food are most interested in purchasing domestic food, products sold directly from farmers, local produce, and products with sustainability cues on the packaging. Respondents from both groups declared they had no intention of buying more organic food or more vegetarian/vegan food in the future. The BR non-buyer is statistically significantly more likely to buy food with sustainability cues on the packaging (i.e. other than organic logo) than the PL non-buyer. Conversely, the PL non-buyer is statistically significantly more interested in foods obtained directly from farmers and home-grown foods than the BR non-buyer (Table 5).

Table 5
Willingness-to-buy provenance related food by Polish and British non-buyers

Products	Mean PL	Mean BR	P
Food products directly from farmers (including family and friends)	2.15	1.96	0.025*
Food produced yourselves	2.07	1.85	0.020*
Food products originating from your country	2.06	2.03	0.777
Local food	1.94	1.98	0.567
Traditional and regional food	1.92	1.84	0.345
Certified organic food	1.67	1.67	0.963

Products	Mean PL	Mean BR	P
Food products with sustainability cues on packaging (e.g. Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance)	1.57	1.93	0.000*
Vegetarian/ vegan food	1.52	1.6	0.345

Note: A 3-point Likert scale was applied (1 – I am not going to buy more; 2 – I would like to buy more; 3 – I am going to buy more). The Mann-Whitney U test was used. Statistical significance * $p < 0.05$.

Young non-buyers of organic food are not a homogeneous group. The survey revealed that there is a whole range of views on organic food. Some are informed, some are ignorant; some are environmentally-aware, some are environmentally-unaware; and some have confidence in the system, some do not. Converting such a diverse group of non-buyers into buyers will be no mean challenge (Table 6 in Appendix). The analysis of the statements of non-buyers has revealed that consumer knowledge and awareness are fundamental problems for food marketers and food policy makers focused on using information to develop the organic food market (see also Dinçer, 2022).

5. Discussion

The BR Generation Z and Y non-buyers of organic food surveyed evinced much stronger pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours than their PL counterparts (PL). Similar results have been obtained by other researchers, who have found that, since environmental concerns are significant predictors of attitudes and behaviours, that the purchase of organic food in Serbia, Pakistan and Vietnam (all emerging organic markets) are mainly driven by egoistic motivations e.g. health or self-identity, whereas Italian consumers (a mature organic market) were more altruistically motivated in their organic food choices (Vehapi, Mitic, 2021; Ishaq et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2018). However, Denver, Nordström and Christensen (2022) reveal that the vast majority of the respondents they surveyed in Denmark (n=1000) claimed that, while they believed their actions affected the climate, they did not necessarily associate their ecological footprint with food consumption. The list of drivers influencing a willingness-to-pay for organic food commonly includes environmental concern, health awareness, quality, and locality, but the motives for, and disincentives to, buying organic food are not consistent across studies (Kushwah et al., 2019; Katt, Meixner, 2020). This suggests that the antecedents of organic food buying behaviour are either country specific or strongly associated with the level of maturity of the market. Further multinational studies in this area are clearly required.

The present study sought to examine why young consumers with a high level of pro-environmental awareness stated that they did not buy organic food. These findings show that, while some consumers are willing to pay more for organic products with additional ethical attributes, others are not (see also Zander, Hamm, 2010). The principal reasons highlighted by respondents were high prices, a lack of interest, low availability, inadequate promotion, and for PL non-buyers, home-

grown food. These findings concur with previous research conducted in Poland (Żakowska-Biemans, 2011; Bryła, 2016; Łuczka, 2019; Wojciechowska-Solis, Śmiglak-Krajewska, 2022). Concerns over trust and a lack of confidence in certification are also cited by non-buyers (Manning, Kowalska, 2021; Murphy et al., 2022), but these factors were not ranked as highly as price or availability. Murphy et al. (2022) observes that Polish consumers had a higher level of trust in EU certification than consumers in the UK or Germany, where national certification bodies were preferred. This finding was not confirmed by the present survey: neither PL nor BR non-buyers cited 'a lack of confidence in the certification' as a reason for not buying organic food.

In Poland, the supply of organic products is largely supported by imports (Bryła, 2016). Supporting domestic organic food production could be a way forward, given that respondents from both groups declared they would like to buy more domestic and local food in the future. This is part of a growing trend among European consumers to acquire local food, and was noted during the COVID-19 pandemic (E.I.T. Food, 2020). It is worth noting the positions of several authors who state that it is not possible to implement sustainable development goals (SDGs) (including SDG12) without a great deal of involvement and a proactive attitude on the part of most of the population, and that leaving it to market forces and top-down regulations will not bring the desired results (Śliwińska, 2022). Developing a Green Public Procurement (GPP) policy at a regional and national level is one of many ways to foster the growth of the organic food market, as the public sector has enormous purchasing power. GPP sets an example to private consumers and can reduce prices for environmental technologies (Kowalska, Bieniek, 2022).

Both Polish and British non-buyers perceive certified organic food as healthy, safe, high quality, strictly controlled, authentic and trustworthy. The perceived price-quality ratio, rather than the high price itself, may be a disincentive to purchase, so the placing of novel foods on the market e.g. cultured meat (Chriki, Hocquette, 2020), could influence the market further. Milić et al. (2022) have proved that the best price-quality ratio is one of the factors that most influence decisions to purchase food products. A price-quality ratio perceived as unsatisfactory could therefore pose a serious obstacle to the further development of the European organic food market. Another point to consider is that consumers might be willing to pay a premium for certain organic food products, as is the case with Danish people, who are willing to pay more for organic fish (Budhathoki et al., 2022). As consumer behaviour differs between buyers of particular organic foods, further studies are definitely needed.

Increasing international food prices and Europe's high inflation rates in 2022 (Carey 2022) may impede public and private initiatives to promote the production and consumption of organic food. The social value of organic food depends on where it is purchased (community-supported agriculture, market or supermarket) and on whether producers exhibit additional green behaviours to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability (Costa et al., 2014). Furthermore, interactions vary between consumers and the values they seek. Truong et al. (2021) suggest that interactions can be positive, e.g. positive feelings (emotional value) can lead

to a perception of better taste, or better quality and safer vegetables (functional value). However, they can also be negative, e.g. the lack of availability of organic vegetables (conditional value) causes a negative feeling of 'scepticism' (emotional value). The development of organic production and consumption therefore needs to address a wide range of measures that can be implemented to encourage green behaviour on the part of producers regarding packaging, waste management, shortening of food supply chains, and waste reduction. These issues could well be discussed more broadly in future research.

6. Conclusion

The common goal of the UN members through SDG12 is to ensure responsible production and consumption patterns in order to tackle climate change and ensure a more sustainable future for all. This might be supported by the development of the organic food market. The pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes expressed by young Polish and British respondents in the study do not, for various reasons, translate into decisions to buy organic food. Market restructuring could overcome the barrier of high prices and low availability of organic food, but appealing to consumer values is crucial within the wider context of the current food market situation. One of the main obstacles to the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to expand organic farming and develop markets for organic produce is the coexistence of various, sometimes conflicting, opinions on organic food production and consumption among young people of the same or different cultural backgrounds.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations on account of having been conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. This adversely affects the potential to generalize the results. Furthermore, the Polish group was much larger than the British group, the sampling was non-random and the assumption of normality was not satisfied, which narrowed the scope of the statistical analysis – specifically by preventing the use of parametric tests.

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Appendix

Table 6

Non-buyers' relationship to organic food (the extension of Table 4 and Table 5)

BR non-buyers' positions on organic food (n=49)	
Most frequent statements	
1	<i>Expensive/Pricey/Costly/Unaffordable</i> 15 (30.6%)
2	<i>Good</i> 6 (12.2%)
3	<i>Healthy/Healthier</i> 4 (8.2%)
4	<i>Better for the/Beneficial to environment</i> 3 (6.1%)
Single consumer views	
1	<i>It is very good but not a way to feed the world. Certain practices must be adopted by modern agriculture immediately. Regenerative Agriculture is the way forward with principles of Organic Agriculture such as less or no chemicals used.</i>
2	<i>I would like to buy more organic food because it has a low carbon footprint, but it can be expensive and I don't trust that it has effective guidelines for being labelled as 'organic' (e.g. legally, free-range only means animals get 10 minutes outside a day).</i>
3	<i>I think that it is necessary that the food is certified to increase reliability and trust in the supply chain. I don't think organic certified products are healthier or better for the environment necessarily.</i>
4	<i>I don't have a strong opinion. I think there is some Ludditism involved, in that important advances in agricultural technology that have helped feed millions are demonised. However, I also think that some elements of agricultural production are harmful, e.g. some pesticides.</i>
5	<i>Approve of low impact use but feel that it is not necessarily 'wrong' to use chemicals in farming.</i>
6	<i>Has limited appeal for me personally as value other factors more highly such as assurance of UK provenance, supporting local rural economies and welfare standards for animal products.</i>
7	<i>Conventional and Organic are too 'black and white' in my opinion. The true sustainable way of food production will lie somewhere in the middle, using best of both worlds for food production.</i>
8	<i>Beneficial to environment however sometimes the organic option comes with more packaging.</i>
9	<i>Do not understand the benefits to the increase in price so there appears to be an educational issue here. How much of that premium goes back to the farmer vs. to the certification agency as well? It is very important to me to understand that the farmer receives proper incentive to include covering the additional costs to farm organically and a reasonable profit margin. I would be happy to pay this premium if I understood that link. There is general mistrust of labels/ certifications given; there are a) too many and b) how to tell which ones are legitimate vs. a marketing/ green washing ploy?</i>
10	<i>I see it as a brand and it doesn't worry me much. But are positioned for a certain group of people. If it is food we are selling we have to make it accessible and affordable to all.</i>
11	<i>I agree with the concept but think that these foods should be subsidised by less healthy foods like takeaways (e.g. sugar taxes being use to subsidy organic and healthy alternatives).</i>
12	<i>Expensive and unsure of environmental benefits. E.g. Does organic really mean lower food miles etc.</i>
13	<i>I'm not sure that it is the best just because it is organic. I've not read the science enough to commit and felt the move was too much of a trend with agendas pushed by some that were more political than scientific to want to join in.</i>

BR non-buyers' positions on organic food (n=49)

- 14 *I used to think it was just marketing hype and a bit of a con but now have a better opinion of it due to my studies, learning about ecological benefits.*
- 15 *I think that it's a waste of money and often misrepresented. It is just a fad. I place much higher value in local and ethically sourced food.*
-

PL non-buyers' positions on organic food (n=334)

 Most frequent statements

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>Expensive/Too expensive/More expensive than other products</i> | 71 (21.3%) |
| 2 | <i>Absolutely positive attitude/Positive attitude/Fairly positive attitude</i> | 48 (14.4%) |
| 3 | <i>I don't care about it</i> | 41 (12.3%) |
| 4 | <i>No opinion</i> | 33 (9.9%) |
| 5 | <i>Good</i> | 30 (9%) |
| 6 | <i>Neutral attitude</i> | 25 (7.5%) |
| 7 | <i>Not too much confidence in organic certificate</i> | 10 (3%) |
| 8 | <i>Okay</i> | 10 (3%) |
| 9 | <i>High quality/Assured quality/Good quality food</i> | 9 (2.7%) |
| 10 | <i>Negative attitude</i> | 8 (2.4%) |
| 11 | <i>Low availability</i> | 5 (1.5%) |
| 12 | <i>Not too much difference between organic and conventional food</i> | 3 (0.9%) |
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 Single consumer views

- 1 *A longer shelf life of some products undermines my trust in organic food.*
- 2 *It is questionable whether the consumption of organic food has only positive effects on the environment and human health.*
- 3 *I'm sceptical in relation to organic food because its composition is often inferior to the composition of conventional food.*
- 4 *Healthy diet doesn't have to consist of organic food.*
- 5 *I don't care what I eat so organic food is not of interest to me.*
- 6 *It's a waste of money.*
- 7 *Just a marketing trick.*
- 8 *Organic foods are packed in plastic and polystyrene packaging to separate them from other food products. This has a negative impact on the environment. I'm against this extra packaging.*
- 9 *Difficult to tell. The certificate doesn't confirm that organic food is healthier. There are no pesticides in organic agriculture but more land is needed to obtain the same crop. Appropriate attitudes should be promoted. Good practices regarding food waste, recycling and purchasing local food should be promoted.*
- 10 *I prefer agricultural and food products coming from my own farm and home-made.*
- 11 *I'm concerned about the composition of the food product.*
- 12 *There is a possibility of food fraud associated with organic food.*
- 13 *This seems far-fetched. There is not too much difference between organic and conventional food.*
- 14 *I'm cautious. I'm not convinced of high quality of organic food which is sold in the stores. I prefer direct purchases from a farmer.*
- 15 *Only organic food should be offered for sale in the future.*
- 16 *Just to fix higher prices*
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PL non-buyers' positions on organic food (n=334)

- 17 *Expensive fad*
 18 *I have some doubts as to the authenticity of organic food products*
 19 *Money-milking*
 20 *New on the Polish market*
 21 *This food is of high importance*
 22 *It's good organic food system arose and works because organic food is healthier due to less chemicals used.*
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Note: The choice of the statements made is arbitrary.

DECLARED NON-BUYERS OF ORGANIC FOOD: A STUDY OF YOUNG BRITISH AND POLISH CONSUMER PROFILES

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the profile of young consumers in Poland and the United Kingdom who, despite being environmentally aware, do not purchase organic food. The data are taken from a 2021 survey of 624 young consumers who claimed that they did not purchase organic food (i.e. who described themselves as non-buyers). A more pro-environmental attitude was observed among young British consumers. The main barriers to purchasing organic products in both countries were being too expensive, problems with availability, a lack of consumer interest, and in Poland, competition from home-grown foods. Food acquired directly from farmers, and domestic and local food were all seen as viable alternatives to organic food. British non-buyers are more likely to buy food products marketed as sustainable, but less likely to purchase home-grown food, than their Polish counterparts. Most studies to date have been conducted in a single country and have focused on consumers. The present study rectifies this deficiency. It additionally contributes to the literature on the perceived value of organic food by demonstrating that the environmental and social values held by young non-buyers have not translated into greater interest in organic food *per se*. This is despite the fact that non-buyers of organic food often have a positive opinion on these products and perceive them as healthy, safe, high quality, strictly controlled, trustworthy, and authentic. Another barrier to organic market development might be the coexistence of differing (sometimes conflicting) opinions on the organic food system among young people of the same or different cultural backgrounds. If so, then politicians and business people should be well advised to take this into account.

Keywords: young consumers, organic food, buying behaviour, pro-environmental attitude, non-buyers

JEL: D12, D91, Q13

ZADEKLAROWANI NIEKUPUJĄCY ŻYWNOSCI EKOLOGICZNEJ: BADANIA NAD OPRACOWANIEM PROFILU MŁODYCH BRYTYJSKICH I POLSKICH KONSUMENTÓW

Streszczenie

Celem badania jest określenie profilu młodych konsumentów w Polsce i Wielkiej Brytanii, którzy pomimo świadomości proekologicznej nie decydują się na zakup żywności ekologicznej. Badanie przeprowadzono w 2021 r. na próbie 624 konsumentów, którzy określili się jako niekupujący żywności ekologicznej. Wśród młodych brytyjskich konsumentów zaobserwowano silniejsze postawy prośrodowiskowe. Bariery w zakupie produktów ekologicznych w obu krajach to zbyt wysoka cena, problemy z dostępnością, brak zainteresowania konsumentów tą żywnością, a w Polsce konkurowanie z żywnością wytworzoną w gospodarstwie domowym. Kategorie żywności pozyskiwanej bezpośrednio od rolnika, żywności wyprodukowanej w domu i żywności lokalnej były postrzegane jako realna alternatywa dla żywności ekologicznej. Brytyjczycy niekupujący żywności ekologicznej są bardziej skłonni do kupowania produktów spożywczych oznaczonych jako wytworzone w sposób zrównoważony niż Polacy. Polscy konsumenci są natomiast bardziej zainteresowani żywnością pochodzącą z produkcji domowej niż konsumenci brytyjscy. Większość publikowanych prac dotyczy zachowań nabywców żywności ekologicznej w jednym kraju, dlatego też nasze opracowanie wypełnia lukę w literaturze. Badanie wnosi wkład do literatury dotyczącej postrzeganej wartości żywności ekologicznej, ponieważ pokazuje, że wartości środowiskowe i społeczne młodych konsumentów nie przekładają się na większe zainteresowanie żywnością ekologiczną *per se*. Co więcej, osoby, które nie kupują żywności ekologicznej, często pozytywnie oceniają te produkty i postrzegają je jako produkty zdrowe, bezpieczne, wysokiej jakości, ściśle kontrolowane, godne zaufania i autentyczne. Jedną z barier rozwoju rynku ekologicznego może być zidentyfikowane współlistnienie różnych i/lub sprzecznych opinii na temat systemu żywności ekologicznej wśród młodych ludzi o tym samym lub innym pochodzeniu kulturowym, czego świadomi powinni być zarówno politycy, jak i ludzie biznesu.

Słowa kluczowe: młodzi konsumenci, żywność ekologiczna, zachowania zakupowe, postawa prośrodowiskowa, niekupujący

JEL: D12, D91, Q13