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Organic Food Perception: Fad, or Healthy and Environmentally Friendly? A Case on Romanian Consumers

Dacina Crina Petrescu ^{1,*} and Ruxandra Malina Petrescu-Mag ²

¹ Faculty of Business, Babes-Bolyai University, Horea Street, No. 7, Cluj-Napoca 400174, Romania

² Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babes-Bolyai University, Fantanele Street, No. 30, Cluj-Napoca 400294, Romania; E-Mail: malina.petrescu@ubbcluj.ro

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed; E-Mail: crina.petrescu@tbs.ubbcluj.ro; Tel.: +40-722-541-847; Fax: +40-264-590-110.

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Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to explore consumers' perceptions of organic food and examine whether organic food products are perceived in the North-West Region of Romania as offering health and environmental benefits or as simply another *sine qua non* condition to be integrated into the luxurious yuppie lifestyle. The inspiration for our study came from witnessing the stereotypical image of organic food consumers as “stylish, trendy, fancy consumers” in the last three to five years. Scientific evidence on the perceptions of organic food is based on a probabilistic survey. The results indicate an environmental consciousness of organic food consumers in North-Western Region of Romania in terms of organic food: a high percentage of consumers believe that organic food is healthier than conventional food (87%) and that it contributes to environmental protection more than conventional food (75%). A statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was observed between people with higher education and those without higher education concerning the following beliefs: belief that most people consume organic products because they are in fashion, and belief that organic food contributes to environmental protection.

Keywords: organic food; consumer; perception; healthy; environmentally friendly; fashion; fad

1. Introduction

Exacerbated individualism, the financial crisis, and the conflict of cultural and religious identities—astutely analyzed by Samuel Huntington [1] as “the clash of civilizations”—are just several factors that cause the overthrow of the scale of values, especially moral values, which are seen as generating stability and human development. The search for landmark identity manifests itself in different ways, some of which are quite unexpected. One manifestation refers to green consumerism, a topical phenomenon in contemporary consumer culture [2] that is often seen as a social dilemma [3]. Dawes and Messick [4] define green consumerism—in terms of social dilemma—as a situation in which consumers experience a conflict between their (short-term) individual interests and (long-term) collective interests. As indicated by Schuitema and de Groot [5], if all consumers pursued their own interests, the result would be unfavorable, and, if all consumers only worked toward collective interests, they would benefit in the long term. The increasing consumer demand for quality products, food safety [6], animal welfare or environmental concerns makes organic food an interesting option. The need for agriculture to produce public goods—biodiversity, landscape, reduction of inputs—has been around for some time [7]. EU agricultural policy has shouldered the responsibility for consumers’ new expectations [8], establishing a solid basis for our rural patrimony preservation [9] to produce the required agricultural products and ensuring a position in the world market at the same time [10]. Along with the contribution of policies (agricultural, environmental, rural, *etc.*) and agribusiness, consumer contributions must also be taken into consideration regarding the success of the organic industry. If experts (in policy, marketing, *etc.*) understand what consumers think, feel, and do and why they act in these ways, they can take better advantage of the potential of the organic field.

The studies on consumers’ perceptions of organic food demonstrate a rich variety of approaches, focusing on different combinations of variables, including taste, price, healthiness, ethical issues, superficial aspects (being fashionable, a fad), and availability, revealing different situations across countries and cultures. Even in cases where similar attitudes between countries were depicted, cultural differences led consumers to seek specific attributes when making purchasing decisions for organic food products [11–13]; consequently, there is no valid general pattern for any country or context, and each consumer group should be analyzed and judged according to its particularities. In the last three to five years, Romanians have seen a stereotyped image of organic food consumers as “stylish, trendy, fancy consumers”, and this image became the inspiration for the present study, which proposes to compare two opposite perceptions of organic food: the superficial perception and actual perception (in relation to the main claims and purposes of organic food).

Therefore, the central objective of this paper is to add a new perspective to the organic consumer picture by examining whether organic food products are perceived in the North-West Region of Romania as offering health and environmental benefits or are simply another *sine qua non* condition that is part of a luxurious yuppie lifestyle.

Perception is the process by which physical sensations such as sights, sounds and smells are selected, organized and interpreted into a meaningful whole. Interpretation is the meaning people assign to sensory stimuli, and this interpretation can be different from one person to another, according to internal and external factors [14]. Consumers may form opinions or beliefs about a product based on

the result of their perceptions. Consumer perceptions are vital to marketers and often underlie the success or failure of products in the marketplace [15].

Without starting a debate on the philosophical meaning of perception, knowledge or belief, perception and belief will be considered similar [16–18] in this paper, and the term “perception” will be used to denote a belief, opinion or representation in the consumer’s mind [19].

Most of the literature on organic food pertains to USA and Western European consumers, while consumers in Eastern European countries have been investigated less [20]. Currently, organic products are available in upscale Romanian supermarkets, reflecting the growing interest of the market in organics. Romanian literature in this area mostly concentrates on the labeling scheme and certification process in general [21–23] and there is relatively little research on the identification of consumers’ perceptions towards organic products [24–28]. The NW Region, which is examined in this study, makes the second-largest contribution to the national GDP (11.3%; 2012 data) and has the third-largest population (13%; 2014 data), the fourth-largest monthly income per person and yearly expenditure level per household (2013 data), and the second-lowest relative at-risk-of-poverty rate (percentage of poor people in the entire population; 2013 data) among the eight Romanian NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regions. All of these features make the North-West Region an opportunity provider for the organic sector.

Focusing on the two categories of variables chosen for this study, we observed that the variables related to health and the environment are frequently present in the literature, while the second group is rarely mentioned. Zanolli and Naspetti found that all Italian consumers in their sample associated organic products with health [29]. Gherman concluded that price, health, authenticity and availability were dominant in Romanian consumers’ minds [24]. Lockie *et al.* indicated that Australian consumers believed that organic food was healthy and environmentally sound, but they were also strongly driven by the convenience factor and held a range of contradictory beliefs and practices. The conflicting results came from not having a simple good-bad choice, and the consumers were impressed with competing claims from both conventional and organic food industries regarding environmental, health and safety issues [30]. Lindeman and Väänänen extended the list of organic food consumption motives to include political values and religion, aside from ecological welfare (which included subscales for animal welfare and environmental protection) [31]. Lindeman and Stark observed that ideological food choice motives (*i.e.*, expression of one’s identity via food) were best predicted by vegetarianism, magical beliefs about food and health, and personal efforts for ecological welfare and understanding the self and the world [32]. Health concern is present in general food choice motives, not only in organic food choices. Thus, the food choice questionnaire (FCQ), created by Steptoe, Pollard and Wardle as a tool to measure the motives underlying people’s selection of food [33], revealed through a four-country study (Belgium, Hungary, Romania and the Philippines) that sensory appeal, health, convenience and price were among the five most important factors influencing food choices in Belgium, Hungary and Romania, while for the Philippines, the most important factors were health, price and mood, followed by appeal [34]. The same FCQ, which was used in six Balkan countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) with a sample of 3085 adult participants, indicated that sensory appeal, purchasing convenience, and health and natural content as the three most important factors [35]. Padilla Bravo *et al.* discovered that among German consumers, altruistic motives were the primary factor affecting their

attitudes toward organic food and purchasing behavior (according to a study of 20,000 German-speaking residents aged 14 to 80 years old) [36]. In 2010, Zander and Hamm concluded that in five European countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the UK, approximately 1192 interviews in total), ethical attributes, consisting of animal welfare, regional production and fair prices for farmers, were the most important factors for consumers' purchasing decisions [37]. Fairness of the distribution of benefits resulting from food purchases was also a factor of interest for 2000 US organic food consumers [38].

Located in a different region on the scale of values (compared to health- and ethics-related values), fashionable or trend-related characteristics are also important in relation to food choices. In our hyper-connected society, food is fashionable and is a social phenomenon that triggers consumers' interest and becomes part of their lifestyles [39]. The media promotes enjoying food and cooking in countless shows where food "becomes a trick to focus attention on the importance of pleasure, power, astuteness, cleverness and beauty" [39]. Often, people believe that "who you are" to some extent is connected to "what you buy" including organic food [40]. Some consumers perceive organic food to be fashionable (women in the UK) [41], and organic products can be especially attractive to some businesses such as restaurants [42]. The social value (defined by Costa *et al.*, as being used to signal social identity, class or status) of organic food was discovered to be present among French organic food consumers [43]. Status also acted as a stimulating factor; when people were influenced by status drivers, they chose green products over more luxurious non-green products [44]. Self-presentation was found to play an important role in increasing older US consumers' intention to purchase organic foods, as they utilized organic food consumption as a tool to portray the self in the social environment to which they belong (self-presentation aims for impression management of the self in social settings, which is often contextual) [45]. Smith and Paladino observed that the subjective norm, defined as the perceived social pressure to engage (or not engage) in a behavior (according to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour [46]), and familiarity also influenced Australian consumers' intention to purchase [47]. There are many additional variables that have been discussed in relation to perception and consumption motivations or hindering factors, such as price, availability, and others [45,47–58], but they are not the focus of the present analysis.

2. Materials and Methods

The results of the paper are based on a survey with a sample size of 420 subjects from the North-West Region of Romania. Previous focus group discussions clearly indicated the existence of two organic categories in consumers' minds: the first category involves farmers' products (from the countryside, small farms, family farms, or from friends, relatives or consumers' own production) that do not have any certification but are perceived as having organic attributes, and the second category consists of certified organic products. The questionnaire was pre-tested twice to identify the best way of expressing the intended ideas, ensure the subjects' correct comprehension of the content and reduce possible biases. The pretests were applied to a sample of 30 subjects before completing the final version. The target population was composed of inhabitants from the NW Region of Romania who were above the age of 15 and were consumers of organic food.

A filter question was used to separate organic food consumers from non-organic consumers. All subjects who were selected to participate in the survey declared that they consumed organic food (from at least one of the categories mentioned above, which was frequently the first category). Organic food in this study denotes food that is perceived as organic by consumers (including any of the categories previously mentioned). All possible measures were taken to ensure the random characteristics and representativeness of the sample.

The sample was obtained as follows: the proportion from each county (in terms of the number of subjects) within the sample was equal to the proportion of the county within the total population of the North-West Region, which is composed of six counties. Within each county, the proportions of men and women and the proportions of each age group were the same as the corresponding proportions within the population of that specific county; data concerning the structure of the Romanian population by county, age, and gender were extracted from the results of the 2011 population census. In each county, five localities were randomly chosen (from the list of all localities), and in each of these, 7–10 random starting points on the map were noted. From these points, an interview was requested at every fifth house or block of flats (the apartment number and the respondent within the household were, again, chosen at random) until the completion of the established proportions. The interviews were conducted by a trained assistant and were conducted face-to-face. Data analysis was performed using Excel and SPSS version 21. For a comparison of the differences of an ordinal variable between two groups, we used the Mann-Whitney U test; for differences between more than two groups, we used the Kruskal Wallis test. The relationship between two ordinal variables was investigated using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to evaluate the difference between two measures of the same group for variables that were non-normally distributed. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. The variables described in Figure 1 were included in the analysis. The research questions included the following: How is organic food perceived according to these variables (which include being fashionable, a fad, consumed out of curiosity, healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventional food)? Is there a difference between the two categories of perceptions—healthy and green vs. fad, fashion and curiosity? Is there a relationship between the pairs of variables 1 to 5 mentioned in Figure 1? Is there a difference according to demographic variables (age, gender, and education) concerning the strength of the beliefs related to variables 1 to 5 listed in Figure 1?

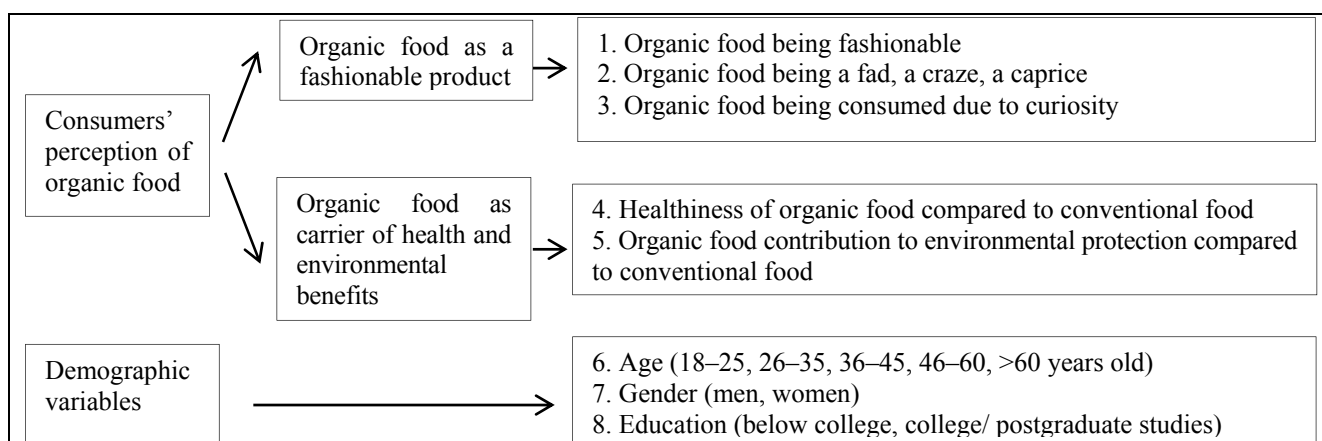


Figure 1. Variables used in this study.

The most appropriate questions to address the above-mentioned aspects, used in the final questionnaire, were the following: State your agreement/disagreement level for the following statements. “(1). Organic food is consumed by most people because it is a fashionable product”; “(2). Organic food is a fad, a craze and a caprice for most people”; “(3). Organic food is consumed by most people due to curiosity”; “(4). Organic food is healthier than conventional food”; “(5). Organic food contributes to environment protection more than conventional food”. The content of the questions was designed in the context of the emancipation and establishment of new values for Romanian consumers, and we intended to shed light on the dual nature of the organic food—fad and fashionable, or healthy and environmentally friendly. Romania has experienced difficult and long-lasting economic and political transition periods (post-communist and post-EU accession), leading to a search for new cultural models, which are sometimes distorted from the traditional and morally appropriated values and are often negatively influenced by mass media. Scattered elements of traditional life, inter-war nostalgia, communist structures and attitudes, post-communist developments that are not completely defined all coexist in Romanian society [59]. The agricultural sector has always represented a vital socio-economic sector for Romania, and in the context of decades of drifting in the search for a new EU identity, organic agriculture appears to serve as a rediscovery of the traditions and a door towards innovation and modernization.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. How “Trendy” Is It to Buy Organic Food?

Many studies have shown that health and environmental benefits have been reported as the primary motives for purchasing organic food [60–63]. Consumers who were concerned about the environment could be inferred as being sensitive to issues regarding the environment and products, brands and activities that may affect it [64]. Since 2004, Vermeir and Verbeke [65] found that young Belgian consumers did not always buy green products due to environmental concern, benefits to the community or personal beliefs but mainly to prioritize health, be part of a social group, distinguish oneself from others and satisfy the need to test new technologies.

The word “organic” can be associated with a wide variety of images and beliefs of consumers [66]. “Earth-friendly”, “grassroots”, “chemical-free” were consumers’ positive core word associations. “Trendy” was a negative core word associated with organic food by US consumers [67]. Other studies [41] suggest that some perceive organic food as fashionable because of its considerable coverage in the media, the recent promotional campaigns and the high prices associated with organic food. Therefore, ecological or social awareness-friendly shopping can be a way for individuals to express a particular social position [68].

Empirical evidence from the Romanian social environment of the last three to five years has shown that green consumerism is in fashion. This phenomenon is most visible in the media, especially in fashionable TV shows and tabloid newspapers [69]. The generic word “green” has found its way into commercial discourse, where it is employed to describe a wide range of products, from food products to cosmetics. The association of green and organic products with many types of media stars, including those that are less credible as carriers of moral values and of professional competence, propelled

organic products into the “trendy” category. By itself, this is a win because it increases the number of organic consumers, but the motivations for consumption should be rooted in the real benefits of these products rather than social factors, which are not part of such benefits.

The present study confirms that the perception of organic food as fashionable and a fad is present within the targeted population: 33% perceive organic food as fashionable and 18% as being a fad (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of consumers having a specific belief about organic food being consumed (a) because it is fashionable; (b) because it is a fad; and (c) out of curiosity by most people.

	Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Undecided	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) Percentage of consumers having a specific belief about organic food being consumed because it is fashionable	17.1%	16.2%	34.3%	22.6%	9.8%
(b) Percentage of consumers having a specific belief about organic food being a fad	31.2%	23.1%	28.3%	12.4%	5.0%
(c) Percentage of consumers having a specific belief about organic food being consumed out of curiosity by most people	8.3%	15.7%	31.2%	37.9%	6.9%

Chinnici *et al.* found one segment of Italian consumers whose purchase of organic food was motivated mainly by curiosity [70]. In our research, a high proportion of surveyed consumers believed that organic food is consumed out of curiosity (45%; Table 1).

People with higher education have stronger beliefs than those without higher education that most people consume organic products because organic food is in fashion ($p = 0.021$; Table 2). There is no statistically significant difference between men and women in terms of the strength of the belief tested for variables 1 to 5, as presented in Figure 1 ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U test results for the difference in the strength of consumers’ beliefs according to education.

	OrgFood Consumption Fashionable	OrgFood Fad	OrgFood Consumption Curiosity	OrgFood EnvProtection	OrgFood Healthy
Mann-Whitney U	17,111.000	18,900.000	18,794.000	16,668.000	18,258.500
Wilcoxon W	27,264.000	29,053.000	57,575.000	55,449.000	57,039.500
Z	−2.305	−0.737	−0.841	−2.774	−1.453
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	0.461	0.401	0.006	0.146

Note: Grouping Variable: Education

There is a statistically significant difference in the strength of the belief that most people consume organic products because they are in fashion ($p = 0.018$; Table 3) across the different age groups. People over 60 years of age have the strongest belief that most people consume organic products because they are in fashion and those between 46 and 60 years of age have the weakest belief about this aspect.

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis test results for the difference in the strength of consumers' beliefs according to age.

	OrgFood Consumption Fashionable	OrgFood Fad	OrgFood Consumption Curiosity	OrgFood EnvProtection	OrgFood Healthy
Chi-Square	11.940	5.117	3.776	17.785	10.954
df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.018	0.275	0.437	0.001	0.027

Note: Kruskal Wallis Test, Grouping Variable: Age.

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient indicated a weak, positive correlation between the strength of the following beliefs: in fashion—fad ($r = 0.283$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$), in fashion—out of curiosity ($r = 0.229$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$), fad—out of curiosity ($r = 0.172$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$).

3.2. Is Organic Food Perceived as Offering Health and Environmental Benefits?

The organic food quintessence relies on a balanced environment, health and social benefits that are recognized at the EU level through its main regulations [71,72]. Miles and Frewer reported that organic food was viewed as safer than conventional food [73]. Investigating in the same direction (with consumers from Romania, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Norway), other studies showed that health concerns were a major reason [28], along with environmental concerns, that people chose organic food products [74–76]. Von Meyer-Höfer *et al.* concluded that consumers' expectation for organic food is that it be natural, which is associated with health benefits (in mature and emerging European markets, such as Germany, the UK, Spain, and the Czech Republic) [77], and Kriwy and Mecking highlighted that the consumption of organic products is seen as an investment in an individual's health [78]. As for Romania, health and environmental aspects are increasingly present in consumers' decision processes [79]. In the present research, a large majority of consumers believe that organic food is healthier than conventional food (87%; Table 4) and that it contributes more to environmental protection than conventional food (75%; Table 4), while only 6% and 8%, respectively, disagree with these ideas and 7% and 17% are undecided. These two features of organic food represented the lowest percentages of undecided persons among all variables tested, which indicates a high level of clarity regarding the image of organic food in consumers' minds concerning its environmental and health benefits.

Table 4. Percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food: (a) being healthier than conventional food and (b) contributing more to environmental protection than conventional food.

	Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Undecided	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) Percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food being healthier than conventional food	2.4%	3.8%	6.9%	25.2%	61.7%
(b) Percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food contributing more to environmental protection than conventional food	3.3%	4.8%	16.7%	33.3%	41.9%

To offer a synthetic view and conclusion about the two aspects of organic products—fashionable *vs.* healthy and environmentally friendly—a clear domination of the second is observed in Romanian consumers' perceptions, influencing a healthy, green image of organic food in their mind rather than a motivation driven by fashion, although the latter is also present (Table 5). The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to identify statistically significant differences in the scores of the two types of perceptions (the scores were calculated as an average within each category). The result was expected, indicating a significant difference in consumers' perception of eating organic food as a fad and fashionable *vs.* organic food as healthier and contributing to environmental protection more than conventional food ($Z = -15.645$, $p = 0.000$) (Table 6). Regardless of whether consumers indicated certified or uncertified organic products when discussing health and environmental benefits, it is clear that products that are perceived as having organic attributes are believed to be healthier and greener; this is an advantage when considering the efforts to create a sustainable consciousness, and behavior that can help create a more sustainable development pattern for our world.

Table 5. Aggregated percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food (a) being consumed for reasons related to fashion, being a fad and curiosity and (b) being healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventional food.

	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
(a) Aggregated * percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food being consumed for reasons related to fashion, fads and curiosity	37.2%	31.3%	31.5%
(b) Aggregated ** percentage of consumers having specific beliefs about organic food being healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventional food	7.1%	11.8%	81.1%

Note: * $(17.1 + 31.2 + 8.3)/3 = 17.2$; $(16.2 + 23.1 + 15.7)/3 = 17.2$; $(34.3 + 28.3 + 31.2)/3 = 31.3$; $(22.6 + 12.4 + 37.9)/3 = 24.3$; $(9.8 + 5 + 6.9)/3 = 31.5$; ** $(2.4 + 3.3)/2 = 2.85$; $(3.8 + 4.8)/2 = 4.3$; $(6.9 + 16.7)/2 = 11.8$; $(25.2 + 33.3)/2 = 29.25$; $(61.7 + 41.9)/2 = 51.8$

Table 6. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Healthy Envprot—Fad Fashion Curiosity ^a	
Z	−15.645 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Note: ^a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test; ^b Based on negative ranks.

According to the results, people with lower education have stronger beliefs than those with more education that organic food contributes to environmental protection ($p = 0.006$, Table 2). Higher-educated subjects perceive organic food as fashionable and, at the same time, have less trust in the environmental benefits of organic food (compared with people with less education); these data generate the image of a higher-educated consumer who does not perceive the environmental benefits of organic food as much as a less-educated consumer. This situation may be the result of a lack of trust in the certification process of organic food. At the level of the studied population, the environmental benefits should be reinforced among people with higher education. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that, globally, the studied population shows a very high awareness of the environmental benefits

of organic food. There is also a statistically significant difference across different age groups regarding the belief that organic food has the capacity to protect the environment ($p = 0.001$, Table 3) and that it is healthier than conventional food ($p = 0.027$, Table 3). People between 36 and 45 years old have the strongest beliefs about organic food's capacity to protect the environment and its health benefits, while the youngest group (18–25 years) has the weakest beliefs about these two issues.

A correlation analysis using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient indicated that stronger beliefs about organic food contributing to environmental protection are associated with stronger beliefs about organic food being healthier than conventional food through a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, ($r = 0.429$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$). A weak negative correlation was present between the following beliefs: environmental protection–fad ($r = -0.291$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$) and healthier–fad ($r = -0.270$, $n = 420$, $p < 0.05$), meaning that consumers who are more convinced that organic food is healthy and protects the environment believe less strongly that organic food consumption is a fad.

This research has some limitations, which should be dealt with in further studies. Although the sample is representative for the studied population, the area and population investigated are relatively small and should be expanded to both the national and international context. The information obtained is based on stated perceptions, which are likely to be biased by phenomena such as wishful thinking and social desirability, among others [36]. The research presents the general perception of organic food in consumers' minds, without making a distinction between the two types of organic food observed in previous studies (farmers' products without certification that are perceived as having organic attributes and certified organic food). Consequently, a separate future analysis of each will improve knowledge of consumers' perceptions. Along with organic food, local food can become part of the family of sustainable food by acquiring a stamp of quality (such as Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication), generating welfare and trust for the local community. Consumers' beliefs about a product's sustainable attributes may be false in the absence of these certifications. In this context, a new study including questions that would investigate the concepts of sustainable food and local food in Romanian consumers' minds would be welcome and contribute to sustainability by correcting misperceptions and strengthening the correct perceptions. Additional components of consumers' perceptions of organic food, such as sensory aspects, price or availability, could also be analyzed, and more advanced statistical methods would offer valuable insight into consumer behavior related to organic food.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of consumers' perception of organic food, examining two aspects—being fashionable and being beneficial in terms of health and the environment—offers a previously unexplored perspective on the image of organic food in Romania.

Our findings suggest an environmental consciousness among organic food consumers in the North-Western Region of Romania from the perspective of organic food perception: a high percentage of consumers believe that organic food is healthier than conventional food (87%) and that it contributes to environmental protection more than conventional food (75%). Notions of organic food being fashionable (33%), a fad (18%) and consumed out of curiosity (45%) are present at a much

lower levels in consumers' minds compared to the ideas of offering health and environmental benefits. The main differences according to demographic variables (age, gender and education) are education level, which influences beliefs concerning organic food being fashionable and its environmental benefits, but there is no statistically significant difference concerning the idea of organic food consumption being a fad and that of being healthier than conventional food. People over 60 years of age have the strongest beliefs that most people consume organic products because it is in fashion; people between 36 and 45 years of age have the strongest beliefs about organic food's ability to protect the environment and organic food's health benefits. Gender does not have an influence on the variables studied.

Insight from sustainable thinking generates valuable information for marketing entities, which influences consumers when making purchasing decisions. Knowing more about how consumers perceive organic products will help marketers create the correct communication and advertising strategies [80] to strengthen sustainable behaviors and stimulate their development for further environmental benefits.

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Author Contributions

All authors made equal contributions to this paper, and they are therefore all considered first authors.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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