

HEALTH VALUES, FOOD CLAIMS AND THE INTENTION TO USE ORGANIC OLIVE OIL: AN EXTENDED MODEL OF GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOUR

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The choice of healthy food is influenced by different factors, such as demographics, social influences, and a complex of psychological processes involving values, cognition, affect and volitions. For example, individuals may use knowledge about the un/healthy properties of foods when they make choices, but knowledge alone is insufficient to determine food choices, as it interacts with individual, social, and environmental facilitators and barriers. In the framework of the Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour (MGB), consuming healthy food is a volitive process resulting from long-term values and goals that influence behavioural desires in conjunction with attitudes, social norms and perceived control regarding the consumption.

Adopting this framework, this paper develops an extended MGB to predict the intention to use extra-virgin organic olive oil (EVOOO) as the main edible oil. Intention depends on social norms and on behavioural desire, control, and attitude. To accommodate the influence of health-related goals and attitudes, we conceptualise two facets of EVOOO attitudes: healthy food, depending on the value attributed to health and anticipated emotions of approaching healthy eating; safe food, depending on the concern with food safety and anticipated emotions of avoiding unhealthy foods. Both attitudinal facets are additionally influenced by how consumers use and trust food claims. The model was tested in a cross-sectional survey of 799 German olive oil consumers. Results from a PLS-SEM model reasonably predict behavioural intentions and desires and globally confirm the hypotheses of the research model, with the exception of the avoidance path. This study makes a theoretical contribution by incorporating health values and food claims as antecedents of attitudes regarding food, namely EVOOO. From a practical perspective, it discusses how claims, beliefs, and subjective norms may heighten the volitions regarding the use of EVOOO.

Keywords: Healthy eating, EMGB, Organic olive oil, Food claims.