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Drivers of Local Food Consumption: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this paper is to empirically explore antecedents of local food purchase intention in two food producing countries with different cultural backgrounds.

Design/methodology/approach: An online survey was employed to collect data from consumers located in Chile (n=283) and Australia (n=300). A proposed model is tested with structural equation modelling (SEM).

Findings: Attitude towards consuming local food is a strong and direct driver of intentions to purchase local food in both countries. Attitude toward supporting local agri-businesses and consumer ethnocentrism are found to positively impact attitude towards consuming local food in both countries. Attitude towards local agri-businesses also has a direct effect on intentions to purchase local food in Australia, but not in Chile. Interestingly, subjective norms are not found to affect intentions to consume local food in either country.

Research implications: The paper examines factors affecting the attitude toward and behavioural intention regarding local food consumption and develops an extended model of local food consumption. An outcome of this new model is the inclusion of personal variables, which influence local food purchasing behaviour.

Practical implications: Producers and retailers need to develop campaigns explaining how consuming local food supports local businesses and farmers, which will reinforce personal values associated with local consumption.

Originality/value: This is the first study to demonstrate that positive attitudes toward local foods are important drivers of local food purchase behaviour, independent of the cultural characteristics or level of economic development within a country.

Key Words: Local food, Food shopping, Australia, Chile, Agri-business, Ethnocentrism, Attitudes

Article Classification: Research paper

Introduction

There is evidence that consumer demand for local food has risen, particularly in developed countries (Penney and Prior, 2014, Jones *et al.*, 2004, Morris and Buller, 2003). Consumer interest in the origins of their food and the transparency of the food chain has increased due to a growing awareness of environmental and health-related issues (Autio *et al.*, 2013, Arsil *et al.*, 2013). Governments are also showing increasing interest in supporting and promoting local foods which suggests that this sector will continue to grow in the future (Ilbery *et al.*, 2006, Coderre *et al.*, 2010). Some retailers and culinary experts have better understood this opportunity and have invested heavily into sourcing locally produced food as a way to connect with consumers and increase profits (Darby *et al.*, 2008, Carpio and Isengildina-Massa, 2009). This local food interest is also apparent in food-related books and programs (Nabham, 2002).

Several academic studies have explored consumer perceptions and behaviours regarding local food consumption (Zepeda and Leviten-Reid, 2004, Miroso and Lawson, 2012, Rainbolt *et al.*, 2012, Autio *et al.*, 2013, Arsil *et al.*, 2013). In spite of the increased attention to local food consumption, limited research on the motivations for purchasing local food has been undertaken (e.g., Weatherell *et al.*, 2003). A review of the extant literature conveys that previous research has mainly focused on food systems, policies and distribution (Hinrichs, 2000, Duffy *et al.*, 2005, Ilbery *et al.*, 2006, Alonso and O'Neill, 2010, Coderre *et al.*, 2010, Pearson *et al.*, 2011). Studies that have explored consumer preferences, attitudes and behavioural intentions towards local food have been mostly conducted in developed first-world nations, where access to local food has been mainly through supermarkets, which have dominated the retail landscape (Lang *et al.*, 2014, Alonso and O'Neill, 2010).

While recent work has begun to examine motivations towards purchasing local foods in

developing nations (Arsil *et al.*, 2013, Arsil *et al.*, 2014), to date no work has examined whether national culture impacts on such motivations. Therefore, while interest surrounding local food purchasing and consumption is emergent, there is still a need to investigate the factors explaining the attitude and behaviour towards locally produced/sourced foods from consumers with different cultural and economic backgrounds (Campbell, 2013). The literature views food consumption as a complex interplay of cultural, economic and social forces (Kniazeva and Venkatesh, 2007, Lang *et al.*, 2014), and understanding potential factors that may influence local food consumption behaviours from less developed countries can directly help international retailers, food producers and policy makers identify and implement marketing strategies to encourage local food consumption (Darby *et al.*, 2008).

This paper seeks to examine the drivers of consumer's intention to purchase local food in Chile and Australia. Both countries are internationally recognized for their high food production quality and volume, yet have different cultural backgrounds (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). According to the Global Food Security Index 2014, Chile is ranked 27th among 105 countries, making Chile the leader in food security in Latin America (GFSI, 2014). Chile's agribusiness sector benefits from its natural conditions for food production, such as Mediterranean climate, a wide variety of landscapes and excellent phytosanitary and zoosanitary conditions for food production (GFSI, 2014). Similarly, the food industry is essential to Australia's economic prosperity and this country is ranked 15th in the Global Food Security Index (GFSI, 2014). The majority of food sold in Australia is grown and supplied by Australian farmers and most of the fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and milk sold in stores are locally produced (AFS, 2013).

This study draws on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) as a theoretical framework (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and develops a modified model which considers two antecedent

variables suggested in the literature that might affect attitude towards local food consumption: attitude towards supporting local agri-businesses and consumer ethnocentrism (Çabuk *et al.*, 2014, Campbell, 2013, Cranfield *et al.*, 2012). It is still not clear which are the main drivers that lead consumers to choose local food over food sourced from other parts of a country or globally, or whether these drivers vary across countries with different cultural characteristics. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine antecedents of consumer intention to purchase local food in two different food producing countries.

Literature Review

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) explains the roles of attitude, subjective norm and behavioural intention with regard to behaviour. This theory has been validated by numerous consumer studies, making TRA one of the most widely used theories to predict the attitude-behaviour relationship (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). According to this theory, the main antecedent of behaviour is the behavioural intention which is determined by two factors; (1) attitude towards the behaviour, which indicates the extent to which one views the behaviour favourably or unfavourably, and (2) subjective norm, which refers to the perception of social pressure that is placed on an individual to perform or not to perform a certain act and motivation to comply with this pressure (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

TRA has several benefits as a theoretical framework for investigating the attitude-behaviour link for local food. First, the theory suggests that the stronger the attitude towards a certain behaviour, the more relevant its attitude becomes. Second, the theory takes into account the role of others' normative influences within the social environment. Lastly, the theory embraces a person's behavioural intention or willingness to act, which is much easier to predict than the

behaviour itself. In this study, we aim to explain local food consumption decision-making based on an extended model of TRA by predicting consumer's behavioural intention based not only on attitude and subjective norms, but also on personal attitudes towards the local environment; such as supporting local agri-businesses, consumer ethnocentrism and sense of connectedness (Campbell, 2013).

Local Food Consumption

There is no apparent single definition of local food consumption (Jones *et al.*, 2004, Lang *et al.*, 2014). For some authors local food refers to where the food is produced, sold and consumed within a limited geographical area (e.g., Miroso and Lawson, 2012, Pearson *et al.*, 2011). In the United States, local food is commonly interpreted to mean food grown within the governmental unit of a county or a state (Wilkins *et al.*, 2002). In Finland, local food is associated with craftsmanship and artisan production and they perceive self-produced, self-processed items, including those they have gathered, hunted and fished themselves, as the most authentic local food. In general, local food seems to mean different things to people (Wilkins *et al.*, 2002), and consumers from different countries may consider it in their own ways when defining this term. For this study, local food is defined as food produced, retailed and consumed in a specific geographical area.

The majority of the research on local food consumption has been conducted in developed countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom and Finland (Autio *et al.*, 2013, Wilkins *et al.*, 2002). However, consumers are increasingly dissimilar and have diverse food preferences that reflect their unique values and culture (Bond *et al.*, 2008). For example, in New Zealand, a major influence on consumers' food choice has been the growth in farmers' markets supported by local and regional authorities (Guthrie *et al.*, 2006). A number of reasons for buying local

have been identified (Weatherell *et al.*, 2003) and they can be broadly divided into either societal or personal motivations. Personal motivations for buying local include: more pleasurable (better taste, connectedness with rural life); seen as healthier (fresher, eaten in season, fewer chemicals, less transportation and storage times); and perceived to be safer than non-local food because traceability of the food is possible. Previous studies have uncovered that improved taste, freshness and quality of produce are key drivers for consumers when purchasing local food (Chambers *et al.*, 2007, Murphy, 2011, Anderson, 2008). These features are identified as intrinsic to the food products and include notions of the food as more authentic and of higher quality (Weatherell *et al.*, 2003), as well as fresher (Jekanowski *et al.*, 2000, La Trobe, 2001) more nutritious, tasty and safe (Seyfang, 2006). In terms of production practices and product attributes, current direct shoppers place greater importance on freshness, locally grown food, and vitamin content (Bond *et al.*, 2009). Consumers believe that local produce is fresher due to a shorter distribution channel (Tippins *et al.*, 2002). For example, a survey about local products conducted in the U.S. found that intrinsic quality perceptions such as freshness, played an influential role on consumer acceptance of locally grown produce (Jekanowski *et al.*, 2000).

On the other hand, societal motivations include buying local food because it is perceived to be more environmentally sustainable (less food miles) and more socially responsible (supports the local economy). Consumers are also motivated to consume local food to support the local economy, generate local jobs and support small scale producers (Morris and Buller, 2003). Thus, consumers view local food as supporting the local economic environment. Additionally, Seyfang (2006, p.7) found that a third of consumers saw local food as a way of ‘preserving local heritage and tradition’. Thus, consumers are looking to connect with producers and farmers, and ‘make the link between the food they buy and the production origins and methods underlying them’ (Weatherell *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, consumers seem to enjoy farmers’ markets due to the

possibility of engaging personally with stallholders within the marketplace (Murphy, 2011, Tippins *et al.*, 2002), establishing relationships with farmers (Bingen *et al.*, 2011) and as a social event (Hinrichs, 2000). Finally, fair pricing and local purchase location are important to consumers (Bond *et al.*, 2009).

In spite of the benefits of local food mentioned above, not all consumers choose to purchase locally-produced food (Klein *et al.*, 2006, Bingen *et al.*, 2011). This is evident in the increasing offer of not-local food in supermarkets and other food outlets. Higher prices, accessibility and availability are seen as major barriers for consuming local food (Khan and Prior, 2010). In addition, visiting multiple retail outlets to purchase local food can add to time pressures faced by consumers and consequently become a barrier to purchasing local food as supermarkets are more conveniently located than farmers' markets (Tippins *et al.*, 2002). Further, some consumers don't necessarily want to purchase local food from a supermarket because it is not consistent with the image of a large retailer (Seyfang, 2006). While many consumers purchase their groceries from a supermarket (Intel, 2008), the relationship between the supermarket and local food is not perceived as compatible for a number of consumers. Seyfang (2006) observed a shift away from conventional food supply chains towards localised chains due to their sustainability. Consumers may perceive specialist outlets or Farmers Markets to be more authentic for purchasing local food products (Kuznesof *et al.*, 1997).

Based on the previous literature review, the main objective of this study is to examine antecedents of local food purchase intention for consumers located in Chile and Australia. Understanding differences in local food consumer behaviour provides retailers and food producers the opportunity to tailor assortments to better serve food consumers from different parts of the world, or for countries that are multi-cultural (Campbell, 2013). This study develops

a conceptual model shown in Figure 1. The next section will discuss the hypotheses.

Insert Figure 1 here

Hypotheses Development

Attitudes towards Local Food Consumption

According to the consumer behaviour literature, attitude toward a product and behavioural purchase intentions are two pivotal and popular constructs that have been routinely used by marketing scholars and practitioners in the food industry (e.g., Verbeke and López, 2005). Behavioural intention measures a person's relative strength of intention to perform a behaviour and an attitude consists of beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The relationship between attitude and intention has been tested in many studies in various settings, where the positive influence of attitudes on intentions has been widely supported (e.g., Bianchi and Andrews, 2012). The more positive attitudes individuals have towards consuming local food, the more likely they will purchase local food (Çabuk *et al.*, 2014, Campbell, 2013). Arguments indicating positive attitudes towards consuming local food include improved food quality, greater safety, better environmental welfare, improved rural livelihoods, strengthened regional economies and enhanced cultural heritage (Hinrichs, 2003, Çabuk *et al.*, 2014, Cranfield *et al.*, 2012). In a food consumption context, positive attitudes toward local food products due to perceived health benefits associated with safe and sustainable food production are usually associated with positive behavioural intentions (e.g., Çabuk *et al.*, 2014, Weatherell *et al.*, 2003, Cranfield *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics are found to be better predictors of local food buying behaviour than demographic characteristics (Zepeda and Li, 2006). Thus, the following hypothesis is stated for both countries:

H1: *Attitude towards local food consumption is positively related to intentions to purchase local food.*

Attitudes towards supporting local agri-businesses

Weatherell *et al.* (2003) argue that there seem to be several factors influencing consumers' decision criteria to consume local food. The choice of local food involves relationships that go beyond the act of eating, such as; purchasing local food offers benefits which appeal to community-minded consumers. Local food production generates and supports local employment, which supports local livelihoods, strengthens regional economies and enhances cultural heritage (Hinrichs, 2003). Consumer opinions and concern about farmers in their locality may influence their food choices (Weatherell *et al.*, 2003, Kuznesof *et al.*, 1997). Indeed, supporting local farmers is one of the main reasons given by consumers for buying local foods in a number of studies (Autio *et al.*, 2013, Hinrichs, 2000, Feagan *et al.*, 2004, Hunt, 2007, Winter, 2003). Some consumers want to take the social environment into account while buying local food, values that they want to embody by supporting local food producers and maintaining jobs and livelihood opportunities for those in their own region (Autio *et al.*, 2013, Alonso and O'Neill, 2010). Thus, supporting local agri-businesses or environmental concerns may be even stronger drivers for preferring local food consumption than personal factors. Those choosing local food frequently value the relationship with farmers and food producers based on reciprocity, trust and shared values (Hinrichs, 2000). Therefore, drawing on the previous consumer behaviour theoretical framework, attitudes towards local agri-businesses are considered important drivers of local food purchase intention in both countries.

H2: *Attitude towards local agri-businesses is positively related to attitude towards local food consumption.*

Further, several studies suggest that purchasing local food has the potential for direct interactions with producers (Hunt, 2007, Murdoch *et al.*, 2000), and feeling connected with the

local environment (Autio *et al.*, 2013). This may motivate consumers to purchase a local product, and may even increase their willingness to prefer local over non-local food (Harris *et al.*, 1989). Autio *et al.* (2013) found that Finnish consumers favoured regional production and small producers over larger companies due to a link to the historical roots of Finnish consumer society. According to the authors, local food has re-established a connection with the agrarian roots of Finnish food culture during the last decade, and this is predicted to occur in different country settings. Bingen *et al.* (2011) also found that in the U.S., consumers expressed an eagerness to reconnect with the sources of their food. Thus, the following hypothesis is stated for both countries:

H3: *Attitude towards local agri-businesses is positively related to intentions to purchase local food.*

Consumer Ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the belief that it is inappropriate to purchase foreign products because to do so is damaging to the domestic economy, will increase domestic unemployment, and is generally unpatriotic (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Consumer ethnocentrism is one of the most powerful intangible barriers to international trade and its consequences have been studied and confirmed in a number of countries (Watchravesringkan, 2011, Shankarmahesh, 2006). While new research is starting to explore the role of ethnocentrism in relation to consumption behaviour (Siemieniako *et al.*, 2011), the effect of ethnocentrism on food consumption remains under-researched. Ethnocentric consumers are inclined to view purchasing of imported products as wrong as it hurts the domestic economy and is not congruent with their in-group feelings of patriotism and belongingness to their society (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Non-ethnocentric individuals evaluate foreign goods and services mainly on their merits without consideration of whether they are made locally or imported from abroad (Shimp and Sharma, 1987, Watson and Wright, 2000).

For consumers in developed countries, research has consistently found that there is a preference for products manufactured in the home country (Bilkey and Nes, 1982, Samiee, 1994). Consumer ethnocentrism can explain these beliefs regarding the appropriateness of purchasing foreign-made products (Lantz and Loeb, 1996, Sharma *et al.*, 1995). In a study that examined the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and evaluations of foreign sourced products, Lantz and Loeb (1996) found that highly ethnocentric consumers have more favourable attitudes toward products from culturally similar countries. Based on the previous research, consumer ethnocentrism levels may be higher for Australians than Chileans; however, in both countries consumer ethnocentrism is predicted to be related to preferences for local food. Thus, the following hypothesis is stated for both countries:

H4: *Consumer ethnocentrism is positively related to attitude towards local food consumption.*

Subjective Norms

Drawing on TRA, previous literature has shown that subjective norms are powerful predictors of behavioural intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Subjective norms are understood as the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Previous research has supported the impact of subjective norms on consumer shopping intentions (Hansen *et al.*, 2004), unethical consumption behaviour (Chang, 1998) and organic food purchase intention (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005), suggesting that there may be a direct and positive relationship between subjective norms and intention to buy local food. Therefore, it is proposed the following hypothesis regarding the effect of subjective norms on local food purchase intention in both countries:

Hypothesis 5: *Subjective norms are positively related to intentions to purchase local food.*

Methodology

We collected data through an online survey instrument which was administered to respondents in Australia and Chile. These countries were chosen because they are both important food producers in their regions, but culturally different (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). In Australia, an online survey was sent to a convenience sample of shoppers located in Brisbane, which led to 300 usable questionnaires. In Chile, an online survey was sent to a convenience sample of shoppers living in Santiago, resulting in 283 questionnaires being analysed. To ensure Chilean respondents could understand the scale items, the questionnaire was translated into Spanish, and then back-translated into English by two bi-lingual university academics independent of the study (Van de Vijver and Leung, 2000, Hult *et al.*, 2008). Both academics evaluated the appropriateness of the questionnaire items and cultural relevance of the constructs to ensure functional equivalence (Jones *et al.*, 2001). Each item was operationalized using a numerical seven point Likert-type scale; from (1) “Never/Strongly Disagree” to (7) “Very Frequently/Strongly Agree” to reduce measurement error due to different scaling of established constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Following translation of the scale items, a pre-test determined both questionnaires displayed functional equivalence.

The dependent variable, *intentions to purchase local food* was measured through a three-item Likert-type scale adapted from Campbell (2013). *Attitude towards consuming local food* was measured by a four-item Likert-type scale adapted from Cranfield *et al.* (2012) and Campbell (2013). *Attitude towards supporting local agri-business* was measured by a five-item Likert-type scale adapted from Cranfield *et al.* (2012). *Consumer ethnocentrism* was measured by a four-item Likert-type scale adapted from Shimp & Sharma (1987). Finally, *subjective norms* were measured by a five-item Likert-type scale adapted from Campbell (2013). Demographic information of participants was collected in terms of age, marital status, gender,

and education. The response profile is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics, factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted. Descriptive statistics, construct reliabilities, items, means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 here

The data set (n = 283 in Chile, and n=300 in Australia) were analysed statistically and both data sets revealed normality of the data. The scale reliability test of the measures revealed that all items had high inter-item correlation and the constructs were subjected to CFA using AMOS-16. The χ^2 values for the CFA model were significant for data from Australia ($\chi^2=391.9$, $\chi^2/DF=2.178$, d.f. 180, p = .000) and Chile ($\chi^2=308.0$, $\chi^2/DF=1.702$, d.f. 180, p = .000) and the overall fit in both contexts was reasonable with satisfactory values in the incremental fit index (IFI; 0.950 for Australia and 0.962 for Chile), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; 0.942 for Australia and 0.955 for Chile), comparative fit index (CFI; 0.950 for Australia and 0.962 for Chile), $\chi^2/d.f.$ (2.18 for Australia and 1.70 for Chile), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; 0.063 for Australia and 0.050 for Chile). The AMOS-16 reliabilities of the coefficient alpha (Nunnally, 1978) for respective scales are reported in Table 2.

The reliability and validity of the construct measures were measured using Cronbach's alpha reliability and Pearson correlations. Scales exhibited relatively high reliability coefficients for both sample sets, with all Cronbach alpha scores over 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Intentions to purchase local food ($\alpha=.956$ Australia; $\alpha=.952$ Chile), attitude towards local food consumption ($\alpha=.708$ Australia; $\alpha=.739$ Chile), attitude towards supporting local businesses (α

=.860 Australia; α =.787 Chile), consumer ethnocentrism (α =.745 Australia; α =.758 Chile), and subjective Norms (α =.902 Australia; α =.895 Chile). As seen in Table 3, the analysis reveals that no correlation between constructs exceeded the lowest alpha reliability score, confirming the discriminant validity of the constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Insert Tables 3 here

To check and reduce the common method bias variance, the questionnaire included a mix of positively and negatively worded items. Using Podsakoff and Organ's (1986) procedure, factor analysis was conducted for all constructs and this demonstrated that there was no single factor or any general factor that accounted for most of the variance in the independent and dependent variables. Thus, no common method bias variance issues were identified.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The mean scores for the constructs (on a 1-7 scale), are discussed. Mean scores for *intentions to purchase local food* were higher for the Australian sample (M=6.28, SD=0.85) compared to the Chilean sample (M=5.58, SD=1.05), indicating that Australian consumers have greater intentions to purchase local food than Chilean consumers. Regarding *attitude towards consuming local food*, the mean scores for the Australian sample were also much higher (M=5.91, SD=1.05), compared to the Chilean sample (M=5.15, SD=1.39), which suggests that Australian consumers have more positive attitude levels towards consuming local food than Chilean consumers. Furthermore, the mean scores for *attitude towards local businesses* were also higher for the Australia sample (M=5.76, SD=1.29), than the Chilean sample (M=5.21, SD=1.33), which suggests that Australian consumers are more concerned about supporting their local businesses, than Chilean consumers. *Consumer ethnocentrism* mean scores were found

significantly higher for the Australia sample ($M=5.23$, $SD=1.59$), than the Chilean sample ($M=3.00$, $SD=1.53$). This indicates that Australian consumers are much more ethnocentric than Chilean consumers towards food consumption. Finally, according to the data, mean scores for *subjective norms* were found higher for the Australia sample ($M=4.51$, $SD=1.44$), than the Chilean sample ($M=2.99$, $SD=1.49$), which hints that Australian consumers are more concerned about the opinion of others regarding consumption, than Chilean consumers.

Hypotheses testing

The proposed hypotheses were tested through structural equation modelling (SEM), using Amos V.19. The results of the hypotheses testing for both countries are shown in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 here

The findings show that consumer attitudes towards consuming local food is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions in Chile ($\beta=.683$, $p=.000$) and in Australia ($\beta=.766$, $p=.000$), therefore H1 is supported for both countries. The results indicate that attitude towards supporting local agri-businesses is significantly and positively related to attitudes towards consuming local food for Chilean ($\beta=.667$, $p=.000$) and Australian ($\beta=.476$, $p=.000$), accordingly H2 is also supported for both countries. Although the results indicated that attitude towards supporting local agri-businesses is significantly related to intentions to purchase local food for Australian consumers ($\beta=.316$, $p=.025$), it was not for Chilean consumers ($\beta=.289$, $p=.073$), thus, H3 is partially supported. The results demonstrate that consumer ethnocentrism is positively related to attitude towards local food consumption in Chile ($\beta=0.402$, $p=.000$), and Australia ($\beta=0.562$, $p=.005$), thus H4 is also supported for both countries. Finally, results reveal that subjective norms are not significantly related to intentions to purchase local food in either Australia ($\beta=0.104$, $p=.099$), or in Chile ($\beta=0.069$, $p=.324$), therefore H5 is not supported.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the main drivers of local food consumption for consumers of two food producing countries with different cultural backgrounds. According to the findings, consumers that have a positive attitude towards local food consumption are more likely to have intentions to consume local food in both countries. This implies that positive attitudes toward local foods are a very important driver of local food purchase behaviour, independent of the cultural characteristics or level of economic development within a country. While these results are consistent with previous studies which have demonstrated positive attitude towards local foods to be highly predictive of local foods purchasing behaviour (Campbell, 2013; Zepeda and Li, 2006) this is the first study to demonstrate that these attitudes remain consistent across national cultures.

The two antecedents; attitude towards local agri-businesses and consumer ethnocentrism are significant and positively impact on attitude towards consuming local food in both countries. However, in Chile only moderate consumer ethnocentrism is found, while in Australia consumer ethnocentrism is the more important motivator. While it has been shown that ethnocentric tendencies reduce a consumers' intentions to purchase foreign products (Klein *et al.*, 2006), in developing countries, it has been found that foreign products may be regarded as being better than local alternatives (Kwak *et al.*, 2006, Papadopoulos *et al.*, 1990). Hence, in a developing nation like Chile, where moderate levels of ethnocentric tendencies exist, ethnocentrism does not present as a significant barrier to foreign food brands (John and Brady, 2011, Akram *et al.*, 2011). The reverse can be seen in the Australian data, where stronger ethnocentric tendencies are present, as has been noted in other research conducted in developed nations (Hustvedt *et al.*, 2013, Josiassen *et al.*, 2011) . This is the first study to demonstrate this phenomenon within a

food context. Our results demonstrate that in both countries, having positive attitudes toward local agri-businesses is an important driver to consume local food. While such findings mirror research undertaken in developed countries, like Canada and the United States (Cranfield *et al.*, 2012, Uribe *et al.*, 2012), this study is the first to identify such attitudes also exist within a developing country like Chile and remain constant across national cultures.

Further, we hypothesised that attitude towards local agri-businesses would also have a strong and positive impact on intentions to purchase local food. Our results only partially support this claim, finding that this relationship was only significant in Australia, but not in Chile. Chilean consumers did not perceive that their intentions to purchase local food were affected by their attitude towards local agri-businesses. This might be due to the fact, that in Chile, food is purchased mostly in large supermarkets or hypermarkets owned by foreign retail chains, and the supply of these local food products is good. Or, it might be that local food markets or businesses are less attractive due to quality standards or inconveniently located further way from residential areas. Furthermore, similar to other Hispanic consumers, Chileans may be more price sensitive and more likely to buy at hypermarkets with lower prices (Mulhern and Williams, 1994, Campbell, 2013).

Finally, although we hypothesised that subjective norms would affect consumers' intentions to purchase local food; the results show an insignificant relationship between these two variables for both Chile and Australia. It seems that consumers' food purchase intentions and decisions to purchase are independent of the influence of people in their social environment and are affected mostly by intrinsic personal values and beliefs. This interesting finding contradicts previous research which suggests that family and friends are relevant social influences for consumers (Nicholls, 1997, Reardon *et al.*, 1997).

Theoretical and managerial implications

There are implications, both theoretical and practical, that arise from this study. First, from a theoretical point of view, this study draws on TRA as the theoretical basis to examine the factors affecting the attitude and behavioural intention regarding local food consumption, and develops an extended model of local food consumption. Specifically, the study's conceptual model may add to the variety of conceptual models that capitalize on personal beliefs and societal norms to explain local food consumption. The most noteworthy outcome of this new model is the inclusion of personal variables, which turned out to be influential on intentional local food purchasing behaviour. The significant role of personal values (attitude towards local businesses and consumer ethnocentrism) on attitude as well as intention towards local food consumption indicates the usefulness of incorporating these dimensions in the model.

Second, there are several practical implications that arise from the study result. As the purchase of local food products involves considerations of critical elements for sustainable consumption, such as health, environment and others' welfare, firms need to publicize and educate the public about the societal benefits to be gained from consuming local food. Also, local producers and retailers need to develop new communication campaigns featuring appeals towards how consuming local food supports local businesses and farmers, which will reinforce personal values associated with local consumption. Another way to increase sales of local food products would be to segment the market based on personal value (lifestyle) variables to identify target consumer groups, who would be receptive to local food appeals. On the practical side, firms marketing local food products may find it helpful to use ads which invoke positive feelings associated with the local environment, heritage, and belonging.

Conclusions

The popularity of local foods has grown substantially in the last decade; unfortunately, research in this area has been slow to follow. This study seeks to strengthen the body of knowledge surrounding local foods through the application of theory and empirical inquiry. Utilizing the theory of reasoned action, this study was able to highlight the important role of attitudes in influencing intention to purchase local foods. This study finds that the strongest driver of local food consumption is attitude towards local food. Chilean and Australian consumers that have a positive attitude towards consuming local food are more likely to purchase local food. Moreover, a positive attitude towards local food consumption is enhanced by an attitude towards supporting local businesses and consumer ethnocentrism. This implies that to achieve higher levels of local food sales, producers, retailers and local governments must foster the development of positive attitudes towards local food by highlighting the benefits associated with quality and health to encourage consumers to purchase more local food. Additionally, in Australia, effective communication strategies should consider appeals towards supporting the local businesses, farmers and community. Consumers in Australia will reward and patronage retail businesses that purchase locally produced food and treat local farmers fairly. This can provide opportunities for retailers to develop strategic alliances with local food producers.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study fills the gap in the literature regarding antecedents of local food consumption and purchase intention, it has some limitations. The use of convenience sampling may have compromised the sample's representativeness. A follow-up study examining whether demographics play a role in predicting local food consumption behaviour would be worthwhile. This study examined only two variables as antecedents of attitude towards local food

consumption, being attitude towards local agri-business and consumer ethnocentric tendencies; however, there may be other variables that have an important impact on attitude or intentions. For example, the rise of locally produced foods throughout supermarkets and farmers markets may be one answer for enterprises looking to connect more deeply with their consumers (Campbell, 2013; Holloway and Kneafsey, 2004). Future research may seek to determine whether local food purchasing facilitates consumer's connectedness with farmers and producers. Further, consumer ethical decision making and social responsibility has been shown to influence food purchasing behaviour, specifically organic and fast foods (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan & Thomson, 2005; Schröder and McEachern, 2005; Onyango, Hallman and Bellows, (2007). It would be interesting to extend this research to examine whether local food purchasing is driven by consumer's concerns for the environment or farmers welfare. Finally, awareness of ethnic foods and wine has been determined to influence visitation and purchase (Bell, Adhikari, Chambers, Cherdchu, and Suwonsichon, 2011; Riscinto-Kozub, and Childs, 2012), as such, more work is required to ascertain whether awareness of local foods also drives intentions to purchase.

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Figure 1: Conceptual model of local food purchase intention

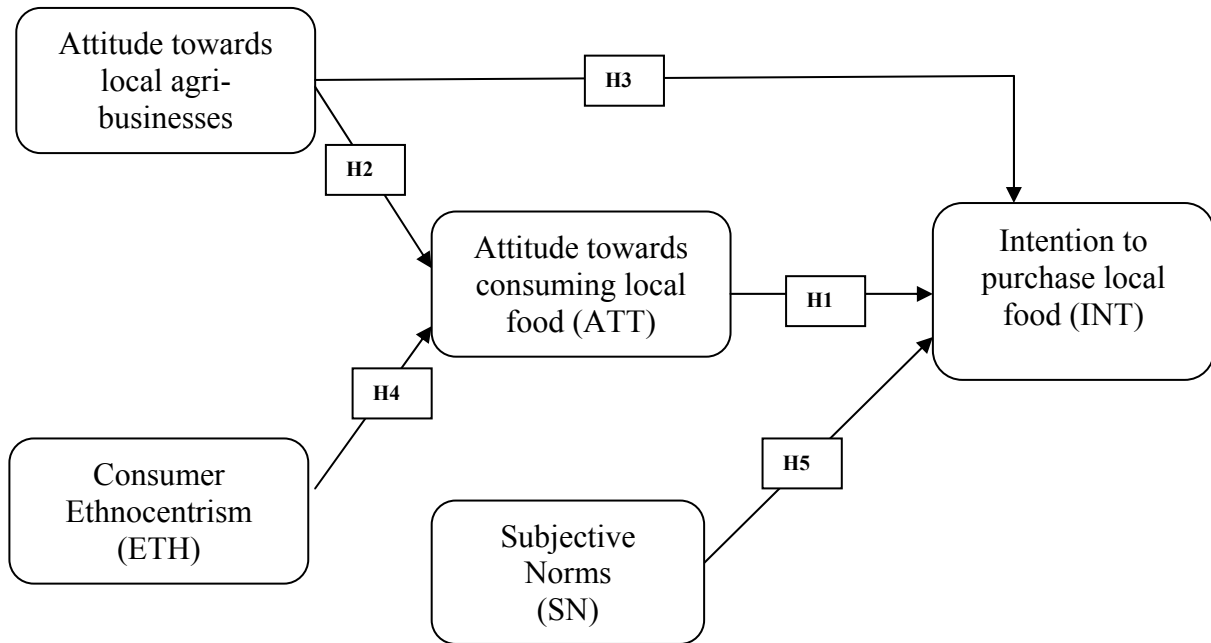


Table 1: Respondent demographic characteristics

Demographics	Australia (n=300) %	Chile (n=283) %
Gender		
Female	72.1	40.6
Male	27.9	58.4
Age		
18-24	1.0	12.0
25-35	16.0	35.0
36-45	17.0	20.8
46-55	20.0	22.6
56-65	23.0	7.1
65+	23.0	2.5
Marital Status		
Single	12.0	38.5
Married living together	77.0	50.9
Separated/Divorced	8.0	9.9
Widow	3.0	0.7
Education		
High-School Education	33.0	0.9
Technical (TAFE, Diploma)	29.0	0.9
University (Undergraduate)	19.0	20.8
Postgraduate (Master, Ph.D.)	19.0	77.4
Children living at home		
Yes, all the time	59.0	41.7
Yes, sometimes	37.0	7.4
No	5.0	50.9

Table 2: Construct alpha scores and descriptive statistics of the items

Constructs/Items	Chile		Australia		t-test (Sig.)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Attitude towards consuming local food (ATT) ($\alpha = .708$ Australia; $\alpha = .739$ Chile)	5.15	1.39	5.91	1.05	10.058 (.000)
It is important to support our local farmers and our local business community.	6.06	1.02	6.60	0.65	7.614 (.000)
By buying locally I am supporting the Chilean/Australian economy.	5.95	1.30	6.51	0.73	6.367 (.000)
I am worried that local farms are going out of business because most food purchased in supermarkets is grown on larger farms across the country.	3.66	1.69	5.48	1.36	14.320 (.000)
It is important to be able to purchase my favourite local food all year long.	4.93	1.55	5.03	1.47	0.746 (.456)
Attitude towards supporting local agri-businesses (ATTB) ($\alpha = .860$ Australia; $\alpha = .787$ Chile)	5.21	1.33	5.76	1.29	6.500 (.000)
Chilean/Australian farmers deserve greater support from the government.	5.43	1.31	5.95	1.32	4.727 (.000)
The farming sector in Chile/Australia is suffering great hardship at the current time.	5.03	1.34	5.83	1.31	7.306 (.000)
Chilean/Australian farmers deserve greater support from the large supermarket chains.	5.52	1.23	6.29	.910	8.339 (.000)
The government do not provide much support to Chilean/Australian Farmers.	4.85	1.51	5.49	1.52	5.132 (.000)
The supermarket chains do not provide much support to Chilean/Australian farmers.	5.22	1.28	5.24	1.42	.217 (.828)
Consumer ethnocentrism (ETH) ($\alpha = .745$ Australia; $\alpha = .758$ Chile)	3.00	1.53	5.23	1.59	22.210 (.000)
Chileans/Australians should always buy Chilean/Australian products instead of imported products.	3.60	1.75	5.80	1.36	16.552 (.000)
We should buy from foreign countries only products that we can't obtain in our own country.	3.80	1.90	5.17	1.61	9.429 (.000)
Curbs should be placed on all imports.	1.46	0.83	4.86	1.73	29.952 (.000)
A real Chilean/Australian should buy products produced/manufactured in Chile/Australia.	3.14	1.66	5.10	1.65	14.284 (.000)
Subjective Norms (SN) ($\alpha = .902$ Australia; $\alpha = .895$ Chile)	2.99	1.49	4.51	1.44	14.659 (.000)
My friends think that I should buy locally produced food.	3.51	1.56	4.80	1.45	10.341 (.000)
People who are important to me think that I should buy locally produced food.	2.79	1.48	4.45	1.49	13.479 (.000)
People who influence my consumer behaviour think that I should buy locally produced food.	2.60	1.45	4.14	1.49	12.602 (.000)
Society thinks that that I should buy locally produced food.	3.14	1.47	4.56	1.27	12.482 (.000)
My family thinks that I should buy locally produced food.	2.96	1.53	4.58	1.49	12.975 (.000)

Intentions to purchase local food (IN) ($\alpha = .956$ Australia; $\alpha = .952$ Chile)	5.58	1.05	6.28	.850	9.439 (.000)
I will most certainly buy locally produced products in the future.	5.43	1.04	6.28	.850	20.065 (.000)
There is a strong chance that I will buy locally produced foods in the future.	5.68	1.08	6.28	.900	10.068 (.000)
I will most likely buy locally sourced product.	5.63	1.12	6.26	.899	20.089 (.000)

$\alpha =$ Cronbach alpha.

Table 3a: Mean, standard deviation and correlations: sample Chile (N=283)

	Mean	S. D.	ATT	ATTB	INT	ETH	SN
ATT	5.15	1.00	1.00	.581**	.384**	.523**	.366**
ATTB	5.20	.992	.581**	1.00	.267**	.325**	.176**
INT	5.58	.910	.384**	.267**	1.00	.373**	.250**
ETH	3.01	1.21	.523**	.325**	.373**	1.00	.551**
SN	2.99	1.26	.366**	.176**	.250**	.551**	1.00

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 3b: Mean, standard deviation and correlations: sample Australia (N=300)

	Mean	S. D.	ATT	ATTB	INT	ETH	SN
ATT	5.92	0.84	1.00	.718**	.443**	.830**	.493**
ATTB	5.76	1.05	.718**	1.00	.344**	.612**	.313**
INT	6.27	.846	.443**	.344**	1.00	.389**	.342**
ETH	5.23	1.20	.830**	.612**	.389**	1.00	.430**
SN	4.50	1.22	.493**	.313**	.342**	.430**	1.00

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

ATT: attitude towards consuming local food; ATTB: attitude towards local agri-businesses; INT: Intentions to purchase local food; ETH: Consumer Ethnocentrism, SN: Subjective Norms.

Table 4: Results of regression analysis for the hypotheses: Australia and Chile

Hypotheses	Australia		Chile		Result of Hypotheses
	B	p	B	p	
Hypothesis 1: ATT- INT	0.766	0.000*	0.683	0.000*	Supported
Hypothesis 2: ATTB-ATT	0.476	0.000*	0.667	0.000*	Supported
Hypothesis 3: ATTB-INT	0.316	0.025*	0.289	0.073	Partially Supported
Hypothesis 4: ETH-ATT	0.562	0.005*	0.402	0.000*	Supported
Hypothesis 5: SN-INT	0.104	0.099	0.069	0.324	Not Supported

Australia:

$\chi^2 = 391.9$, $\chi^2 / DF = 2.178$, *d.f.* 180, $p = .000$, *IFI:* .950, *TLI:* .942, *CFI:* .950, *RMSEA:* 0.063.

Chile:

$\chi^2 = 308.0$, $\chi^2 / DF = 1.702$, *d.f.* 180, $p = .000$, *IFI:* .962, *TLI:* .955, *CFI:* 0.962. *RMSEA:* 0.050

ATT: attitude towards consuming local food; *ATTB:* attitude towards local agri-businesses; *INT:* Intentions to purchase local food; *ETH:* Consumer Ethnocentrism, *SN:* Subjective Norms.