

Trend-Driven Innovation for RTE Food Market: A Comparison Study Between Consumers from Malaysia and Indonesia

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Abstract: The ready-to-eat (RTE) food market is growing worldwide. Nevertheless, a limited study was found where researchers compare consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods between countries. This study compares consumers in Malaysia and Indonesia regarding their food preferences and behavioral intentions toward RTE foods. Using a quantitative cross-sectional approach, the researchers developed an online survey and distributed the survey link to consumers aged 18 years and above from both countries via social media platforms. The dataset comprised 321 responses from Malaysia and 262 from Indonesia. Based on the analyses, findings reported some similarities and differences in consumer preferences and behavior intention between both countries. The highest percentages of Malaysian respondents were recorded for plant-based, genetically modified, gluten-free, and allergen-free foods. Interestingly, the highest percentage of Indonesian respondents reported for insect-based food than the Malaysians. More Malaysian consumers preferred ethnic foods from different cultures than Indonesians. About the same highest percentages of consumers from both countries preferred cell-cultured meat, 3D printed foods, and vegan foods. For Malaysian samples, attitude and subjective norms significantly influenced their behavior intention toward RTE foods. For Indonesian samples, subjective norms and behavioral control significantly influence consumer behavior intention toward RTE foods. Findings are relevant for food producers and marketers to explore the young consumer market and to identify new products to fulfill the market demand. This study broadens and deepens the current understanding of both countries' RTE food trends and consumer behavioral patterns. Food producers should promote RTE food products by highlighting their benefits through marketing channels.

Keywords: *Ready-to-eat food, food preferences, behavior intention, Malaysia, Indonesia*

1. Introduction and Background

Fast-moving consumer goods or consumer packaged goods are growing in the largest group of consumer products. Fast-moving consumer goods are products sold quickly and relatively cheaply (e.g., packaged foods and beverages). Some of the bigger multinational fast-moving consumer goods companies in Malaysia are Nestle, Unilever, DKS, and General Mill, whereas, for Indonesia, examples of the fast-moving consumer goods companies are Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur, Wings Group, and Mayora Indah (InvestinAsia, 2023). Statista Research Department (2024) reported that one-fifth of Malaysian household consumption expenditure is spent on the fast-moving consumer goods segment, one of the most essential consumer goods sectors in the country, and the fast-moving consumer goods market is expected to continue growing due to the increase in purchasing power and population size (Statista Research Department, 2024). The improvement in consumer lifestyle, rapid urbanization, and high disposable income are increasing demand for on-the-go convenience foods, fueling the growth of RTE food. Innovative products with functional ingredients, convenience, organic foods, and packaging technology advancements are expected to provide future growth opportunities in the sector (Thakur et al., 2018).

Ready-to-eat (RTE) products are part of the fast-moving consumer goods product category, and the demand for these products is also growing due to the changes in the population structure and the convenience features offered by RTE products. Despite the growing demand for RTE foods and the constant changes in the market in the forms of changing consumer demand and hyper-competition, there is always the need for the food business to make specific changes or innovations to the products to ensure that the products stay relevant in the market. Trend-driven innovation and product development are considered part of the competitive factor for food producers as they give them the edge to stay ahead of the competition. According to Statista (2024a,

2024b), the revenue for RTE foods in Malaysia is expected to reach US\$2.15 billion in 2024, whereas for Indonesia is projected to reach US\$7.99 billion in 2024. The forecasted revenue for Indonesia is higher than for Malaysia, which may be influenced by the difference in total population between the two countries. As of July 2024, the total population in Malaysia is 34.1 million (DOSM, 2024) versus 283.8 million in Indonesia (Worldometers, 2024). Although the Indonesian market records higher projected revenue, Malaysia's predicted yearly RTE foods market growth rate is 6.75%, slightly higher than Indonesia's (4.72%) (Statista, 2024a; 2024b). Such a situation could occur due to increased RTE food choices and trends in Malaysia.

Nowadays, consumers spend more time in traffic and have longer working hours; hence, RTE products could make their lives easier (Anusha et al., 2020; Basurra et al., 2020). Several researchers confirmed that convenience is the primary motivation for consumers to purchase RTE food products other than saving their time for food preparation and having a variety of RTE food product options (Anusha et al., 2020; Azman et al., 2023; Basurra et al., 2020; Permana et al., 2023; Rosli & Sahak, 2024; Sierkierski et al., 2013). Due to lifestyle changes, the demand for convenience products like RTE foods is increasing. While the RTE foods market is expanding, a limited of research was found where researchers investigating consumer behavioral intention comparing between countries (Siekierski et al., 2013). Therefore, the study aims to (a) compare consumer food preferences between Malaysia and Indonesia and (b) investigate the behavior of consumers from both countries toward RTE foods. By applying the theory of planned behavior, this study will investigate consumer behavior intention toward RTE foods in Malaysia and Indonesia and develop a food profiling for consumers from these two countries.

2. Literature Review

RTE Foods Market

The RTE foods market is among the fastest growing segments as it fulfills the changing lifestyles of the general population. RTE refers to any food typically eaten in its raw state or any other food products that are pre-cleaned, pre-cooked, pre-packaged, and ready for consumption with no or minimal preparation or cooking (Huang & Hwang, 2012). The expression 'further heating or processing' is not intended to include food preparation activities such as washing, slicing, chopping, portioning, or marinating carried out by the consumer by preference to an otherwise RTE food item (Food Standards Agency, 2011). Under this definition, several processed foods can be regarded as RTE products, including biscuits, crisps, bread, pies, sandwiches and rolls, dairy products (milk, cheese, spreads), prepared salads and vegetables, and fruit. The list can be extremely long, and with new products entering the food market nearly every day, the list is getting longer and longer (Fast, 1999). RTE food products are not an invention, but the trend has been growing over the years due to the increasing consumer demand for a modern lifestyle that demands a quick and convenient meal. RTEs are available everywhere in Malaysia, from convenience stores to retail outlets. RTE foods often become a family choice because they are cheaper than dining in a restaurant (Basurra et al., 2021).

Research on RTE Foods

Several studies from various countries investigate consumer behavior patterns from multiple perspectives. A few studies examined consumer motivation to purchase RTE foods (Anusha et al., 2020; Foster, 2020). Sierkierski et al. (2013) compared the RTE food eating habits between consumers in two countries, and they found that consumers from Brazil preferred convenience and taste compared to consumers from Italy, who were concerned about tradition and health. Choi (2022) studied consumers' RTE food purchase behavior intention among college students in Korea and reported that the time for snack consumption and RTE food consumption was similar, which suggests that snacks might replace college students' meals as they consider RTE foods as snacks. In Thailand, Mahasuweerachai et al. (2023) reported that guilt and pride significantly influenced consumer decisions to switch their eating patterns from conventional meat to plant-based protein at restaurants. An earlier study by Thienhirun and Chung (2018) found that Thai consumers liked the RTE food packaging and design to be in a clear container with proper labels for them to see the food inside compared to the Japanese, who liked the colorful design of the food container. Additionally, they found that Japanese consumers favored an authentic Thai taste compared to Thai consumers who favored the adapted taste between Japanese and Thai flavors. Huo et al. (2023) found that consumers' purchase intention in China is positively associated with their attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and trust. Meanwhile, Kabir (2023) reported that social norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, knowledge of the health

benefits of organic food, and the COVID-19 health crisis significantly influenced organic food consumption behavior among Bangladeshi consumers.

Foster (2020) studied Indonesian consumer intention to purchase RTE products, and they reported that turnaround strategy and packaging strategy influenced the increase in Indonesian consumer intention to purchase RTE products, which aligned with findings by Thakur et al. (2018). Damayanti et al. (2023) investigated the demand for food among Indonesian households. Food prepared at home and away from home are normal goods, but food away from home is more elastic than food prepared at home. More Indonesian households are found to consume food away from home. Another study in Indonesia by Permana et al. (2023) focused on Rendang as an RTE-type food product and found that aesthetic appeal, sensory appeal, quality appeal, and variety appeal affect consumer attitude toward rendang RTE, thus influencing their intention to purchase RTE rendang. Rahayu et al. (2023) reported high demand for RTE foods in Indonesia and evaluated the awareness of consumers toward healthy eating. They reported that from 2016 to 2020, the consumption of RTE foods increased, and consumers did not care about their daily nutritional intake. Therefore, Rahayu et al. (2023) suggest food producers offer healthier RTE products.

Several studies have been found on RTE food consumption in Malaysia. Basurra et al. (2020) examined the consumption practices and the perception of students and employees at one university in Kuala Lumpur. They found that most respondents consumed RTE foods twice to four times a week, mostly during lunch. Additionally, Basurra et al. (2020) found that consumer motivation to purchase RTE foods is convenience, followed by saving time for preparation. Regarding consumer perception towards RTE food, Basurra et al. (2020) reported that when buying RTE foods, consumers always pay attention to the store cleanliness rather than the ingredients of the products and compare the quality of the food packages and producer of the product. Another similar study conducted in Kuala Lumpur by Anusha et al. (2020) found that convenience was the primary motivation of consumers in purchasing RTE foods, and they purchased RTE foods more than twice a week and consumed them for lunch. Each consumer was willing to spend RM20.00 and below for RTE foods (Anusha et al., 2020). Azman et al. (2023) sampled consumers in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Melaka, Perak, Johor, and Penang, and they reported that the convenience of RTE foods significantly influenced consumer behavior in addition to health and taste orientation. The latest study by Rosli and Sahak (2024), who sampled 180 consumers in Kuala Lumpur, reported that convenience and price influenced their purchase intention toward RTE foods.

Consumer Behavior on RTE Foods

While there are studies found examining consumer behaviors toward RTE food products, a limited number of studies are found where the researchers utilized the theory of planned behavior in their studies (Sajjad et al., 2023) as more studies are found using descriptive research design (Anusha et al., 2020; Foster, 2020; Rosli & Sahak, 2024; Sierkierski et al., 2013). In consumer behavior literature, the theory of planned behavior is commonly used for examining consumer behavior in terms of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavior or purchase intention (Sajjad et al., 2023). An individual's behavior, resulting from intentions, is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Based on an individual evaluation, their attitude can be positive or negative, but a positive attitude is inclined towards behavioral intention. A systematic literature review by McDermott et al. (2015a, 2015b) posited that consumers' behavioral intentions are influenced by their positive attitudes and the perception of people around them. Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual perception of ease or difficulty in engaging in a particular behavior. Subjective norms are described as an individual perception of social influence, whether encouraging or discouraging them to be involved in certain behaviors. The theory of planned behavior is commonly used to predict an individual's behavior intention, potentially leading to an actual behavior. Based on the literature review on RTE foods research, a lack of studies has been found that use the theory of planned behavior to examine consumer behavior intention. In the current study, the researchers aim to compare the behavior intention of consumers in Malaysia and Indonesia towards RTE foods, hence justifying the use of planned behavior as an underpinning theory for this study. Acknowledging the importance of understanding consumer behavior intention towards RTE foods, we developed the following hypotheses:

H1a: Attitude positively influences Malaysian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

H1b: Attitude positively influences Indonesian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

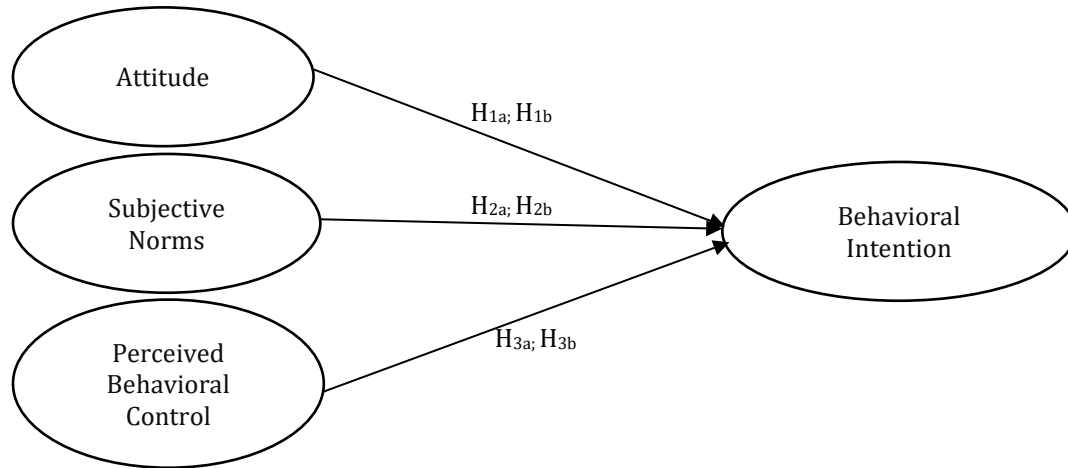
H2a: Subjective norms positively influence Malaysian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

H2b: Subjective norms positively influence Indonesian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

H3a: Perceived behavioral control positively influences Malaysian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

H3b: Perceived behavioral control positively influences Indonesian consumers' behavioral intention toward RTE foods.

Figure 1: Research Model



3. Research Methodology

The study employed a quantitative methodology. The questionnaire technique was employed in this study to test the hypothetical research model built based on the study objectives. All variables for the model were established through a detailed literature review. Each variable is rated using a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) and has more than two items measuring each construct. The items on all scales used in the questionnaire were originally in English. The experts then translated these items into Malay using the back translation procedures (Brislin, 1980). The researchers employed a scale created by Verbeke and Vackier (2005) to assess consumer attitude (four items), subjective norms (four items), perceived behavioral control (three items), and behavioral intention (three items). A web-based survey was developed using Google Forms. Web-based surveys are cost-effective and less time-consuming (Braunsberger et al., 2007). A consent form is included to ensure all the participants are 18 years old or older and agree to participate in the study.

A pilot study was conducted in August 2023 for 30 consumers. The Cronbach alpha values of all scales for the pilot study were above 0.70, which is considered reliable according to Nunnally (1978). For the actual data collection, the researchers used a non-probability convenience sampling method and distributed the survey link to various social media platforms between October 2023 and January 2024. Since the researchers did not have access to the target population (Etikan et al., 2016), convenience sampling is the best method to gather samples from the two countries that are willing to participate. Overall, the researchers obtained 321 usable questionnaires from Malaysian respondents and 262 usable questionnaires from Indonesian respondents. For Malaysia samples, attitude ($\alpha = 0.788$), subjective norms ($\alpha = 0.875$), perceived behavioral control ($\alpha = 0.884$), and behavioral intention ($\alpha = 0.916$). For Indonesia samples, attitude ($\alpha = 0.568$), subjective norms ($\alpha = 0.799$), perceived behavioral control ($\alpha = 0.689$), and behavioral intention ($\alpha = 0.714$).

4. Data Analysis and Results

Respondent Profiles

More females (Malaysia, 51.2%, $n = 164$; Indonesia, 87%, $n = 228$) answered the survey questionnaire than males (Malaysia, 48.8%, $n = 156$; Indonesia, 13%, $n = 34$) for both Malaysian and Indonesian samples. The study received the highest percentage of young consumers aged 18 to 26 (Malaysia, 61.3%, $n = 196$; Indonesia, 99.2%, $n = 260$). As displayed in Table 1, the highest percentages of Malaysian consumers selected "Yes" for plant-

based foods (66%), genetically modified foods (68.5%), organic foods (77.3%), gluten-free foods (65.7%), and allergen-free foods (62.6%). Meanwhile, for Indonesian samples, the highest percentage of respondents answered “Yes” only for insect-based foods (68.3%). Regarding ethnic foods from different cultures, more respondents from Malaysia responded “Yes” to Japanese (80.7%), Korean (80.7%), Philippine (61.4%), and Spanish (60.4%) foods, compared to the Indonesian samples. Most Indonesian samples answered “No” to all four ethnic foods (Japanese 92%, Korean 91.6%, Philippine 72.5%, and Spanish 78.2%).

Table 1: Food Preferences of the Respondents for Both Malaysia and Indonesia.

Item	Descriptions	Malaysia	Indonesia
		(N = 321) n (%)	(N = 262) n (%)
Plant-based foods	Yes	212 (66)	44 (16.8)
	No	109 (34)	218 (83.2)
Insect-based foods	Yes	54 (16.8)	179 (68.3)
	No	267 (83.2)	83 (31.7)
Cell-cultured meat foods	Yes	146 (45.5)	33 (12.6)
	No	175 (54.5)	229 (87.4)
3D printed foods	Yes	125 (38.9)	80 (30.5)
	No	196 (61.1)	182 (69.5)
Genetically modified foods	Yes	220 (68.5)	49 (18.7)
	No	101 (31.5)	213 (81.3)
Organic foods	Yes	248 (77.3)	38 (14.5)
	No	73 (22.7)	224 (85.5)
Vegan foods	Yes	142 (44.2)	102 (38.9)
	No	179 (55.8)	160 (61.1)
Gluten-free foods	Yes	211 (65.7)	39 (14.9)
	No	110 (34.3)	223 (85.1)
Allergen free foods	Yes	201 (62.6)	51 (19.5)
	No	120 (37.4)	211 (80.5)
Japanese foods	Yes	259 (80.7)	21 (8)
	No	62 (19.3)	241 (92)
Korean foods	Yes	259 (80.7)	22 (8.4)
	No	62 (19.3)	240 (91.6)
Philippine foods	Yes	197 (61.4)	72 (27.5)
	No	124 (38.6)	190 (72.5)
Spanish foods	Yes	194 (60.4)	57 (21.8)
	No	127 (39.6)	205 (78.2)

Regression Analysis for Malaysia and Indonesia Samples

The quantitative data from the study was analyzed using the SPSS program. The skewness and kurtosis values of the data were determined to be in the range of -2 and +2 (skewness) and -7 and +7 (kurtosis), which indicates the data is normal (Hair et al., 2010). Also, the sample sizes for this study are over 200; hence, they do not affect the skewness and kurtosis deviations from normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Based on this information, the researchers used regression analysis to test the influence of independent variables on dependent variables for both Malaysia and Indonesia samples.

Based on the Malaysian samples in Table 2a, there are multiple correlations ($R = 0.744$) of the three significant predictors with the criterion (dependent variable). The factors influencing Malaysian consumer behavioral intention are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors have a significant effect size, which explains 55.4% of the variability in behavioral intention. The adjusted R^2 shows that in the population, the three factors account for 54.9% of the variance contributing to the behavioral intention. Table 2b shows this regression is significant ($F = 131.090, p < 0.001$). Two of the three predictors of independent variables are significantly influenced by behavioral intention. Attitude and subjective norms positively influenced Malaysian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods, which supported Hypotheses 1a and 2a. The influence of attitude has the highest regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.481, p < 0.001$), followed by subjective

norms ($\beta = 0.328, p < 0.001$). Perceived behavioral control does not significantly influence Malaysian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods; hence, hypothesis 3a is rejected.

Based on the Indonesian samples in Table 3a, there are multiple correlations ($R = 0.415$) of the three significant predictors with the criterion (dependent variable). The factors influencing Malaysian consumer behavioral intention are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors have a significant effect size, which explains 17.2% of the variability in behavioral intention. The adjusted R^2 shows that the three factors account for 16.3% of the variance contributing to the behavioral intention in the population. Table 2b shows that this regression is significant ($F = 17.916, p < 0.001$). Two of the three predictors of independent variables are significantly influenced by behavioral intention. Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control positively influenced Indonesian consumers' behavioral intention toward RTE foods, which supported Hypotheses 2b and 3b. The influence of subjective norms has the highest regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.295, p < 0.001$), followed by perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.172, p < 0.01$). Attitude does not significantly influence Indonesian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods; hence, hypothesis 1b is rejected.

Table 2a: Multiple Correlations of independent variables with the dependent variable (Malaysia)

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-squared	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.744 ^a	0.554	0.549	0.70856

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Subjective Norms.

Table 2b: ANOVA (Malaysia)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	197.443	3	65.814	131.090	< 0.001 ^b
	Residual	159.152	317	0.502		
	Total	356.595	320			

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Subjective Norms

Table 2c: Coefficients (Malaysia)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
		B	S.E.	Beta (β)			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.028	0.191		0.146	0.884		
	Attitude	0.678	0.072	0.481	9.455	< 0.001	0.543	1.841
	Subjective Norms	0.390	0.059	0.328	6.624	< 0.001	0.574	1.741
	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.022	0.055	0.017	0.395	0.693	0.770	1.299

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

Table 3a: Multiple Correlations of Independent Variables with Dependent Variable (Indonesia)

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-squared	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.415 ^a	0.172	0.163	0.72672

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Subjective Norms.

Table 3b: ANOVA (Indonesia)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.386	3	9.462	17.916	< 0.001 ^b
	Residual	136.254	258	0.528		
	Total	164.640	261			

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Subjective Norms

Table 3c: Coefficients (Indonesia)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
	B	S.E.	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.056	0.213		4.962	< 0.001		
Attitude	0.113	0.070	0.096	1.625	0.105	0.917	1.090
Subjective Norms	0.286	0.059	0.295	4.872	< 0.001	0.874	1.144
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.165	0.056	0.172	2.926	0.004	0.929	1.077

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study was conducted to compare consumer food preferences between Malaysia and Indonesia and investigate the behavior of consumers from both countries toward RTE foods. The analyses show some similarities and differences between consumer behavioral patterns for the two countries. More Malaysian consumers preferred plant-based, genetically modified, organic, gluten-free, and allergen-free foods compared to Indonesians who preferred insect-based foods. In contrast, more Indonesians dislike plant-based, genetically modified, gluten-free, and allergen-free foods. The study found Malaysians like plant-based food more than Indonesians; perhaps the Malaysians are similar to Mahasuweerachai et al.'s (2023) study, where consumers feel responsible for switching their eating patterns from conventional meat to healthier options like plant-based and organic foods. In terms of similarity, many consumers from both countries dislike vegan foods, cell-cultured meat, and 3D-printed foods. Such results might be influenced by the negative perception of consumers towards vegans, and vegans do not eat any food products that come from animals (e.g., dairy products). Also, the term cell-cultured meat and 3D printed foods might affect consumer perception of the food's nutritional values and whether it is safe to consume such products. Health and taste orientation influenced consumer behavior (Azman et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the number of Malaysian consumers who like ethnic foods (Japanese, Korean, Philippine, and Spanish) is higher than that of Indonesians. Such findings reflected the emergence of various ethnic restaurants available in Malaysia, especially those serving Japanese and Korean cuisine. Wan and Yazdanifard (2021) reported that Malaysians are more interested in Korean food like ramen, *chigae*, and *chimek*, while Tey (2018) found that Malaysian consumers choose Japanese cuisine because the food is tasty. In contrast, Thienhirun and Chung (2018) reported that Thai consumers did not like Japanese RTE foods due to their taste and freshness. Based on the results, the demand for ethnic food in Malaysia is still growing; hence, Malaysian food operators could benefit from such findings. For the regression analysis, the findings revealed different results for consumer behavior patterns in both countries. The Malaysian consumer attitude and subjective norms significantly influence their behavioral intention toward RTE foods, and attitude was the main contributing factor. The Malaysians' positive attitude and belief about whether people around them approve of their behavior influenced their intention towards RTE foods. Generally, Malaysian consumers view RTE foods as convenience; hence, convenience is the most important motivational factor influencing RTE food purchase decisions (Anusha et al., 2020; Basurra et al., 2020; Rosli & Sahak, 2024).

On the other hand, for Indonesian consumers, this study found that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control significantly influence their intention toward RTE foods, and subjective norms were the main factor. Therefore, Indonesian consumers' perception of ease in performing their behavior and their belief that the people around them favor their behavior influence their behavioral intention toward RTE foods. In this study, attitude does not significantly influence Indonesian consumer behavior intention, which contradicted Permana et al. (2013), who stated that Indonesian consumer attitude toward Rendang as an RTE-type food product influenced their purchase intention. The current study has proven that the two countries' consumer behavior toward RTE foods is different. Nonetheless, consumers from both countries are similar in terms of their subjective norms when it positively influences Malaysian and Indonesian consumer behavioral intention toward RTE foods. In short, subjective norms are a vital construct influencing consumer behavioral intention in Malaysia and Indonesia. The similarities and differences in food preferences and RTE foods' behavioral intentions between consumers from the two countries are worth investigating. Cultural and societal

perceptions might contribute to such results. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first cross-country study using the theory of planned behavior to investigate the attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on consumer behavior intention toward RTE foods between two countries (i.e., Malaysia and Indonesia), thus, justify the novelty of study contribution.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research data provides theoretical and practical implications for food producers, food marketers, and academicians working in literature. Firstly, this study developed food profiling for consumers from two developing countries: Malaysia and Indonesia. Secondly, this study offers comparative data between these countries regarding their food preferences and behavioral intentions toward RTE foods. For practical implications, stakeholders such as RTE producers may benefit from the findings to enhance their understanding of consumer behavior that keeps changing occasionally. The comparative data reported in this study benefit RTE food exporters, importers, and producers as they expand their market to potential consumers from the two countries. Findings will help the RTE producers in Malaysia and Indonesia find more opportunities to fulfill the market demand.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, the study reported consumer behavioral intentions from the two countries (Malaysia versus Indonesia); hence, the findings cannot be generalized to other countries. Therefore, including more countries in a comparison study would be valuable for more beneficial data. Secondly, the study measured how consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influenced their behavioral intention. Other variables, such as consumer perception of food innovation and demographics, might have moderated or mediated the associations between these variables. With that, further studies are needed to investigate additional variables that could influence the associations between the study variables. Thirdly, the study only investigated the behavioral intention of RTE foods from consumer perspectives; thus, future research could explore from other stakeholders' perspectives, such as the RTE producers and marketers, to study the challenges and opportunities of exporting and importing RTE food products. Current and future research findings will also benefit both countries in developing policies related to RTE foods and education initiatives to promote the benefits of RTE foods products.

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