

Global Consumer Cultures and Experiences of Sustainable Food Consumption in Host Country

Lynn L. K. Lim

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland

George Londob

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland

Our research examined how subculture, micro-culture and acculturation influence sustainable food consumption of expatriates. More than fifty expatriates, retailers and sustainable labeling organizations participated in the research interviews. The research explored the depth of consumption cultural phenomenon. Expatriates had varying knowledge of sustainable food labels and its concepts in their consumption experience. Their sustainable food consumption habit, fueled by the global consumer culture, related to the triple dimensions. Integration into a new consumption was evident in the findings of economic considerations. This research provided some strategic and useful insights in responding to the needs of global consumers or expatriates.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

While the public attempts to comprehend the real meaning behind the concept of sustainability, some individuals are skeptical and simply uninterested. The word sustainability always leads to arguments as if everything is a global marketing gimmick. Our research initiated when we recognized the important roles of culture and acculturation experiences on individuals' consumption of sustainable food, particularly involving expatriates in Switzerland. Expatriates are typically foreigners living temporarily or permanently in a host country. They experience cultural changes in various aspects of their lives, including biological and food consumption patterns. How they adapt to these changes is a process of acculturation with outcomes that vary from assimilation, integration, maintenance to resistance (Berry, 1980; 1997; Penaloza, 1994). Reisch's (2010, p.1) and Reisch, Eberle and Lorek (2013, p.7) suggested three simple dimensions of sustainability- environmental, economic and social. Our study integrated these simple and yet comprehensive dimensions in understanding the roles of culture and acculturation experiences. We examined how expatriates as consumers, from different cultural backgrounds and experiences, adapt to a new food consumption culture that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. The aim was to add knowledge to existing literature on consumer acculturation in the context of sustainable food consumption culture. From international marketing perspectives, we sought to understand the influences that shaped the consumption of ethnic consumers, in order to respond to their needs.

Generally, ethnic consumers purchase products based on cultural-based product attributes (Faber, O'Guinn and McCarty, 1987). Food has more than a means of sustenance in expressing one's culture (Penaloza, 1994, p.42). Globalization and international migration lead the way to 'culturally plural' societies when different cultures meet each other (Berry, 1997, p.8). Through consumption of goods and services, culture continues to determine individuals' attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, and satisfying needs (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Stamm and Lamprecht (2012) found that the most important difference in eating food habits emerged when we distinguished foreigners in Switzerland according to their region of origin. The expatriates' interest to integrate into the Swiss culture plays a part in the speed at which they adopt the Swiss eating patterns (Swiss National Food Science Foundation, 2015). Expatriates appeared to have different understandings and attitudes towards sustainable food consumption. The reasons can be due to the different path of acculturation.

Consumer acculturation is central in cross-cultural consumer consumption studies. However, cross-cultural consumer research has limited scope in addressing national cultural, intranational, subcultural and micro-cultural differences within countries (Ogden, Ogden and Schau, 2004; Walters, Phythian and Anisef, 2007). Some studies showed that ethnic consumers, depending on their level of acculturation, displayed more comprehensive brand recognition (Vijaygopal and Dibb, 2012; Segev, Ruvio, Shoham and Velan, 2013). Besides the influence of nationality and origin culture on the expatriates' food consumption, the outcomes of acculturation can be dependent on acculturating individual's attitude, motivation and interest to adopt the new culture. We focused on culture within a national boundary in our study and referred culture to the concept of minority culture and host culture, which was the Swiss culture of food consumption.

CULTURE, ACCULTURATION AND FOOD CONSUMPTION

Most definitions of culture highlight common culture characteristics although this word is still a complex concept. Consumption cultures within a national boundary include several terminologies at various levels of cultures such as host or mainstream culture, minority culture, subculture and micro-culture (Berry, 1997; Ogden, Ogden and Schau, 2004; Borna, Stearns and Sharma, 2007). The minority culture, as opposed to mainstream or dominant culture, refers to subculture and micro-culture. It represents the expatriates' culture in the host country. From a business standpoint, analyzing subculture and micro-culture is more relevant than relying on stereotypes and generalizations. Subculture accounts for ethnicity or nationality of the expatriates that translates to the expatriate's national food consumption culture. The purchasing power of ethnic consumers is still a market opportunity, while not at par with the mainstream consumers. Subculture analysis offers opportunities to meet needs of ignored micro-cultural groups. Micro-culture takes into consideration the individual-based factors.

Penaloza (1994), Oswald (1999) and Parasecoli (2014) explained that food consumption of one's own food in a host country is a coping strategy for the immigrants, while they were adapting to the host culture. They feared losing the traditions of their original culture in both individual and social levels. Consumers reacted to their environment based on cultural framework of experiences, and perceived the world through their own cultural lens (Uelthschy and Krampf 2001, p.15). Acculturation theories can explain food consumption cultures and cultural adaptations.

Foreign consumers migrating to a new country or location face socio-cultural adaptations that can create significant psychological stress (Berry, 1997). Berry's (1980; 1997) acculturation model stems from two issues faced by the acculturating individual: cultural maintenance, and participation with the host culture. Acculturation strategies are assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. This acculturation model inspired subsequent consumer acculturation studies. Wallendorf and Reily (1983; 1983a) assessed migrants' consumption patterns in comparison with the mainstream consumers consumption. Desphande, Hoyer and Donthu (1986) showed various levels of ethnic identification among Hispanic consumers based on brand loyalty, attitudes towards business and media usage. Mehta and Belk (1991) reported over-assimilation and hyper-identification acculturation outcomes in their Mexican American and Indian informants respectively. Penaloza's (1994) influential study on Mexican immigrants

in the US ushered the wave of consumer acculturation research from measuring to exploring consumer acculturation experiences rather. Given the resistance to American values and consumption practices, Penaloza advanced Berry's passively constructed marginalization strategy. Penaloza's study successfully refuted Berry's Universalist perspective by demonstrating cases not captured in Berry's acculturation strategies.

Research by Oswald (1999) of Haitian immigrants demonstrated the volatility of acculturation outcomes by the participants' use of consumption to swap between cultures instead of having stable identity positions. Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard (2005) study of Greenlandic participants in Denmark supported this finding. Ustuner and Holt (2007) in their study of Turkish immigrant women who experienced "shattered identity" showed that hybrid identity as an outcome of acculturation. These succeeding studies regarded consumer acculturation as a dynamic and multidimensional process that involves continuing cultural negotiation. Luedicke (2011, pp.225-227) further reviewed fourteen most influential consumer acculturation studies and found two waves of consumer acculturation. Two key acculturation agents are retailers and label organizations.

In most European countries, conventional supermarket chains are leading actors in provisioning sustainable food (Oosterveer, 2008). In Switzerland, the role of major retailers, Migros and Coop, credits for pushing sustainable food consumption by selling and promoting organic, Fairtrade and other sustainability labeled food products (Kim, 2009). Fairtrade products' sales worldwide is increasing over the years (Fairtrade International, 2015). Europe had a share of more than half of the organic market in the world, with Germany having the biggest contribution, followed by France, UK, Italy and Switzerland (Kilcher et al, 2011). There are evidences of high-level of organic and Fairtrade products consumption among Swiss consumers (Kim 2009; Willer and Schaack, 2015; Max Havelaar Foundation, 2016). This is due to consumers' willingness to pay the higher prices associated with sustainable food products.

Another important partner for retailers in the sustainable food market is labeling organizations, also known as third party certifiers. Max Havelaar Fairtrade Foundation Switzerland issues the Fairtrade label to retailers. Another establishment, Demeter International registered in 1954, issues the Demeter label. Bio Suisse, an umbrella organization of Swiss organic farmers, issues the "bud" label. Migros Bio and Coop Naturaplan Bio are two biggest distributors of Bio Suisse certified products in Switzerland. These retailers and labeling organizations are important market actors that facilitate consumer socialization of expatriates towards sustainable food consumption.

DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION

There are several debating topics discussing sustainable food development and consumption. UK Sustainable Development Commission (2005) then described sustainable food and drink as safe, healthy and nutritious for consumers, while at the same time met the needs of the less well off at a global scale. Reisch (2010, p.2) extended the description to practically feasible in everyday life and its consumption had socio-cultural dimension. In the swift development of sustainable food and consumption, many evolving challenges subsequently surfaced (Reisch, Eberle and Lorek, 2013, p.7). Food security, food waste, and health-related problems, due to overconsumption or under-consumption were some challenges. Environmental impacts made up of climate change and environmental degradation associated with food production, storage and distribution followed.

Many studies on sustainable food consumption investigated its impact on the environment, animal welfare, fair trade and fair working conditions for small farmers and producers (Lockie et al 2002; Reynolds, 2002; Møller, Hansen and Sorensen, 2003; Ravn Heerwagen, et al 2014; von Meyer-Höfer, et. al., 2015; Fair Trade International, 2016). Few studies examined ecologically conscious food consumption with a focus on locality or seasonality of produce and organic food products (Tanner and Kast, 2003; Niva, Mäkelä and Kahma, 2014; RavnHeerwagen et. al., 2014; Teng and Wang, 2015). Therefore, to find out more about other issues, we adapted the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainable food consumption in our research.

Economic Dimension

Economic dimension refers to premium prices attached to sustainably produced food products. Consumers' willingness to pay the premium price for sustainable food products ensures that producers can continue with their sustainable food production. Lankoski (2010) classified this willingness-to-pay as altruistic (based on high moral intensity), instrumental (based on perceived benefits) and induced (based on stakeholder pressure or norms). She argued that a combination of the different willingness-to-pay was possible and more effective in sustaining the strength of the willingness-to-pay along the food chain. Fairtrade products are a good example to illustrate this economic dimension of sustainable food. Producers and small farmers of Fairtrade receive fair and stable prices for their produces. Through Fairtrade premium, employees receive a secure income, while long-term trade relations offer security and make investments possible (Fairtrade International, 2015).

In Switzerland, the Max Havelaar Foundation is the most popular Swiss fair-trade seal of approval and is responsible for a 90% share of Fairtrade products marketed in the country (Max Havelaar Foundation CH, 2016). It reported that Swiss consumers spent 62 Swiss Francs per person on Fairtrade products. At least 2,200 different Max Havelaar labelled Fairtrade products are available on the Swiss market. The pricing of sustainable food products is realistic because it is usually one of the main competing criteria in consumers' purchases.

Ecological Dimension

Ecological dimension refers to food consumption and production practices that minimize negative environmental impacts. These include green food, organic products, local & seasonal produces, no excessive packaging, less meat diet and take into consideration the animal welfare. Green food consumers look for quality, availability, convenience, performance, and affordability, including the food contribution to help solve environment problems as their purchasing criteria (Ottman, 1992). Liu (2003) defined green foods as those foods production were in accordance with the principle of sustainable development. Green food is either semi-organic or organic food.

Organic food production system or farm management concerns the environmental practices, health of soils, the application of high animal welfare standards, ecosystems and humans by relying on natural resources and production practices (IFOAM, 2005; European Commission, 2007). This high level of biodiversity and locally adapted cycles are more important than using inputs with negative effects for consumption. In Switzerland, Bio Suisse (2016) defined organic production standards as including prohibitions on the use of genetic engineering. It requires the inspection of organic production and processing. Biodynamic farming is another popular organic movement in Switzerland for certified dynamic organic farms (Demeter International, 2016). It commits to sustainable management with their own specialist training, social justice, and transparent price setting.

Consumers do not immediately associate organic consumption with environmental benefits nor animal welfare standards, but rather with perceived health benefits, better taste and naturalness as the primary reasons for consuming organic (Tanner and Kast, 2003; Scheibehenne, Miesler and Todd, 2007; Pearson, Henryks and Moffitt, 2007; Tobler, Visschers and Siegrist, 2011; Ergönül and Ergönül, 2015). Regardless of consumers' general positive attitude towards organic consumption, there is a concern on whether organic-labeled food is truly organic. Three reasons explained this skepticism and low trust on organic food. Firstly, the lack of transparency in regulations owing to many existing organic labels (Tanner and Kast, 2003). Secondly, the often higher price of organic products relative to conventional ones (Thogersen, 2009). Lastly, the confusing organic product certification labels (Tung et. al., 2012). Despite this skepticism, the organic food consumption in Switzerland has the highest per capita consumption in Europe (Willer and Schaack, 2015). This implies the wide acceptance of organic food products among Swiss consumers.

Two indicators of ecological dimension are seasonality and locality of food products. This is a response to the issue of food miles associated with imported food, with no excessive packaging and less meat diet. Chambers et. al. (2007) found that consumers buy local and seasonal produce because they perceived it as of higher quality, fresher and tastes better. Tobler et. al. (2011), in their study of

consumers' willingness to adopt ecological food consumption behaviors, concentrated on less meat diet and locality of produce criteria. Niva et. al. (2014) examined four Scandinavian countries' practices and factors of ecological food consumption. In Switzerland, retailers emphasize the locality of produce through labels such as "Aus der Region fuer die Region" by Migros and Coop Natura farm, apart from the mandatory labeling of the product's origin (Figure 1). Furthermore, in most municipalities in the country, small farmers come to the village center every week to sell organic, fresh and locally produced fruits, vegetables and dairy products.

**FIGURE 1
ORGANIC, BIO AND FAIRTRADE LABELS**



Social Dimension

Social dimension considers Fairtrade products or buying from small, local farmers. Fairtrade food consumption associates with feeling of social responsibility as well as ethical and environmental concerns (Tanner and Kast, 2003; Andorfer and Liebe, 2012). Fairtrade labeling ensures that the production of goods meets dignified working conditions and environmentally sustainable practices (ISDC, 2012). This is a principle that is consistent with the World Fair Trade Organization (2014, p.1) definition of FairTrade as a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers, especially in developing countries. Whether Fairtrade really delivers to its promises is a subject of few studies (e.g. Raynolds, 2002; Griffiths, 2012). Fairtrade in its own studies try to prove otherwise.

Swiss major retailers carry a wide range of Fairtrade certified food products in their stores. Switzerland has the highest consumption of Fairtrade products per capita in the world. Moreover, major retailers employ a mixed labeling scheme combining Bio and Fairtrade targeting consumers who prefer either sustainable attributes or both. According to Fairtrade International (2016), this is good for the economic dimension as the beneficiaries receive more for their products as opposed to using only one label.

Simple socio-demographics cannot explain the growing complexity of food consumption in a multicultural environment. Marketing research on food consumption continuously adopts a broader perspective using socio-cultural and socio-psychological variables to assess, describe and segment food consumers (Diamantopoulos et. al., 2003). Consumers actively reflects upon existing cultural norms and negotiating what will or will not let into their body (Giddens, 1991; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005). Sustainable food consumption in particular has been the subject of debating studies over the years. As the market of sustainable food grows, more consumers become aware of the ecological, economic and social

implications of their consumption. Broad segmentation of sustainable food consumers identifies three levels of abstractions namely values, behaviors and food related lifestyles (Verain et. al. 2012). However, our research integrated the social dimension of sustainable food consumption of May Havelaar Foundation (2016). We then examined how minority culture (which includes subculture and micro-culture), and acculturation (which includes process, agents and outcomes) influence the economic, ecological and social dimensions of expatriates' sustainable food consumption.

METHODOLOGY

We applied interpretive approach to find out the multiple realities and subjective questions in our research. This was useful in gaining consumer market insight (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; Elliot and Janket-Elliott, 2003; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006; Penalzoza and Cayla, 2007; Anderson, 2009). We observed consumers in their natural consumption setting, narrate conversations and conduct in-depth interviews. The meanings of the data were dependent on each participant's view and context. The description of a realist narrative account in our study was to facilitate understanding of a culture by looking at patterns of cultural experience based on the field notes, interviews and artifacts (Geertz, 1973; Van Maanen, 1998). Participants provide some pictures, which aided in rich contents and helped make their point clear.

According to Swiss Statistics (2016), Switzerland hosted almost two millions of immigrants as of 2015. We gathered primary data from fifty-one expatriates of thirty nationalities. Four food retailers and a sustainable food labeling organization in Switzerland also contributed to the data. Our participants' countries of origin come from Asia, Europe, Americas and Africa regions. From Asia, they are from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. From Europe, they come from Bosnia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Norway, Romania, Serbia and Spain. From the Americas, they are from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, United States of America and Venezuela. Only one representative comes from South Africa. The demographic details of expatriates provided an understanding of their background and their acculturation level.

Secondary data from online platforms for expatriates in Switzerland, namely Englishforum.com and Internations, contributed to our data analysis. We posted our research questions in these platforms to invite meaningful discussions and comments from expatriates. These platforms offered a wealth of valuable different insights between Swiss and Expatriates sustainable food consumption without feeling uncomfortable for some in face-to-face interviews. We observed and engaged some participants in an informal conversation at retail shops, as to supplement unobserved data during the interviews. On-site observation provided a vivid demonstration on how the expatriates chose and bought their food products.

We conducted the interviews mainly in English and in few cases in other languages. Most expatriates are female and at least twenty participants are in a relationship with a Swiss national. Majority of them have graduate degrees. All expatriates are able to communicate in one or two of the Swiss national languages, which is allowing them to navigate the Swiss marketplace on their own. The choice of retailers participated in our research is from two groups- major food retailers and discount stores. The two major food retailers are distributors of sustainable food products and sell their own sustainable food labels as well as independent labels at their stores. Expatriates are familiar with them. The remaining two most popular retailers are discount stores where expatriates also shop their groceries there. Although there are two sustainable food-labeling organizations responsible for Fairtrade certification in Switzerland, only one organization participated in our research.

As the data were in different languages, we first transcribed them and then translated to common English language. We analyzed the data through a semi-open coding scheme, while based on argumentations or meanings emerging from the expatriates' data. We constructed a mind map of all codes to provide easier visualization of emerging patterns and interconnectivity among themes (Novak, 1998). We differentiated retailers' data between major retailers and discount stores.

In view of ethical considerations, we considered Sieber (1992) privacy, confidentiality and anonymity practices in our study. The participants understood the privacy and secrecy clauses in written and oral forms, which explained the research context and the expectations of the voluntary participation. Participants also knew that we kept all personal information confidential and their identity remained anonymous. Only one participant who requested to remain anonymous. No participant required confidentiality agreement. However, we decided not to directly name or label expatriates, retailers and labeling organization.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The expatriates participated in our research have varying degrees of familiarity and consumption of sustainable food products. Some were sustainable food consumers, while majority of them have had positive attitude towards sustainable food consumption. The participants consumed a range of sustainable food products. Their national consumption and individual cultures influenced their positive or negative consumption behavior. Their acculturation experiences facilitated by various agents and processes led to integration, assimilation, maintenance and resistance to the new food consumption culture.

Our participants from Scandinavia, Germany and America saw their 'national culture' influenced their sustainable food consumption. These countries has the same advancement like in Switzerland in the sustainable consumption. When cultural differences are small, national culture matters in buying behavior. On the other hand, big cultural differences produce the opposite effect. The national consumption culture of most participants appeared to be inconsistent with their host country's sustainable consumption culture. Thus, there was an overwhelming consensus among these participants that *'their ethnicities or nationalities do not influence their sustainable food consumption'*.

Some elements of participants' national consumption culture did not indicate sustainable food consumption. The Asian participants noted that they "cook too much" or prepared as many dishes as possible for their guests, even for a "regular lunch", because of their hospitality culture. They agreed that such practice results in overconsumption and food waste. One participant provided an illustration of the tendency for overconsumption (see Figure 2). Food wastage has an indirect effect on practicing their hospitality culture. This culture of consumption applies not only in some Asian countries but also in other countries such as South Africa, Spain and Serbia where food revolves around meat, dairy, and lots of bread, taste and flavors.

FIGURE 2
NATIONAL HOSPITALITY CULTURE OF FOOD CONSUMPTION OVER LUNCH



A pervasive consumption mentality in a country can make a person skeptical about the sustainable food consumption concept especially in terms of the price sensitivity. When a home country has a history of 'cheap is good' or focusing on buying cheaper products, this rooted mentality. Food scandals in a home

country can deter consumers' belief in Bio and other similar labels. Hence, people may not pay attention to sustainability. Other reason rather than sustainability reasons is a high regard to the authority that sponsors the sustainable food project. This leads to consumers believing in the goodness of the products. For example, the monarchy sponsoring organic farming project in a home country.

While some countries are behind in the development of sustainable food consumption, more people are starting to be more conscious of what they eat as information become accessible and available globally. Most participants felt that they acculturated well to the new food consumption. Apart from the cultural difference, the universal sustainable food consumption concept allow developed countries like Switzerland to advance through their policies and education. The country has the economic and political means to advance their sustainable development in various dimensions. In Finland, school and family lead the communication and awareness of sustainable food.

In contrast, most developing countries are still in the early stage on the concept of sustainable food consumption. Some countries do not perceive sustainable food consumption as an ecological, social or economic priority. Therefore, there is no awareness of it. Participants generally indicated that there was still lack of awareness of sustainable food consumption concept in their respective countries. It was not a priority in both national and individual level. There were more pressing concerns to address, such as priority to overcome hunger and more about daily survival. Moreover, the high cost of sustainable food discouraged consumption. In addition, some government's policies encouraged the production of pesticides and genetically modified food. Nevertheless, United Nations recognized the unsustainable consumption patterns in fast developing countries and noting the improvements made by the developed countries (UNDESA 2015, p.1). Hence, the consortium aims to ensure developed countries taking the lead in sustainable consumption and production.

Our findings showed that the ecological dimension of participants' food consumption tends to gravitate towards the concepts of Bio or organic, as well local and seasonal produces obtain from the farmers market or special market days. Participants saw Bio as natural or free of chemicals, healthier and tastier, which were the primary reasons why they consume them. The environmental benefits and concern for animal welfare were secondary reasons. In America, the cleaner lifestyle movement, people eat organic foods more for health reasons and weight control. However, one participant argued that sustainability is often a secondary reason for these trends.

Because of pricing and health reasons, some participants consumed less meat in their host country than in their home country. There was a strong preference for meat from Switzerland rather than the imported ones. Those who had the access and financial means will buy from the local butcher. There was a special emphasis on the so-called 'necessary Bio purchase', such as eggs, fruits and veggies, including the eating of their peelings or eating them raw. Some participants consumed Bio or organic product because their living partners imposed sustainable practices in their household purchases and food consumption (Figure 3). Another common reason for consuming organic products was consumers' allergic reaction to chemicals in non-organic food.

FIGURE 3
COURTESY OF ONE PARTICIPANT'S BIO LABELED FOOD STOCK



Switzerland has a large variety of organic labels available at retailers, and from other independent Bio labels such as Reformhaus and at farmers' stands (Bio Suisse certified farmers). Hence, our participants associated very quickly with the word Bio or organic. Most of them recognized the labels from Coop Naturaplan, Bio Suisse, Migros Bio, Al Natura and EU organic label. This was apart from the heavy promotion of Bio products by retailers, which emphasised on their environmental benefits (Tobler et. al., 2011). The concept of local and seasonal produce as related to ecological dimension was something that resonated most positively with all participants in comparison to the labeled products. Some participants preferred locally grown produces to Bio. They associated local and seasonal produce with higher quality, freshness and better taste. This finding echoed the findings from previous studies (see Tanner and Kast, 2003; Chambers et. al., 2007; Tobler et. al., 2011) on consumers' perception of local or regional and seasonal food. Additional reasons included the reliability and trustworthiness of the label providers, and if there was a direct impact and benefits on their purchases.

On the other hand, Bio was also a label that most consumers distrust, especially among label skeptics found in this study. Padel and Foster (2005) study showed that their participants voice their mistrust of organic label products as something truly organic. Tobler et. al. (2011) based on their Swiss participants offered an explanation that the mistrust is due to too many Bio labels in the Swiss food market and the regulations are not transparent to consumers. In our study, the skeptic participants believed that Bio label is a form of marketing trick for retailers to be able to charge more precisely. They doubted the regulations surrounding the labeling scheme and the issue of transparency. A few participants mentioned the issue of packaging. They preferred less packaged food and a preference for natural rather than "processed food products". This finding was in-line with previous studies on determinants and motivations of organic consumption by Tanner and Kast (2003), Padel and Foster (2005), Pearson, Henryks and Moffitt (2007) and Ergönül and Ergönül (2015). Generally, participants related to the ecological dimension easily because it was something they have had in their home country.

In examining the social dimension, Fairtrade was another popular label we found in our research. Most participants saw Fairtrade more positively. Many of them associated it with supporting small farmers or giving back to their community while benefiting at the same time. By buying directly from small farmers or producers, they saw the connection and the impact of their purchases. Some participants voiced their skepticism if this really was the case. Others buy Fairtrade to support the advocacy of exporting products from developing countries.

For the economic dimension, participants were willingness to pay the premium price attached to sustainable food products. It is instrumental because of perceived personal benefits from the consumption, altruism or genuine concern for sustainability or induced owing to retailer's pushing of sustainable products. What distinguished the mainstream Swiss consumer from the expatriate's consumer in this

study while comparing to previous research studies by Tanner and Kast (2003) and Tobler et. al. (2011)? Price was not a barrier among Swiss consumers in their consumption of sustainable food. It was also notable that a few participants found the price difference between conventional and sustainable food products in Switzerland not very significant, when comparing to their home countries. Thus, this encouraged them to consume more sustainable food products. The majority of participants indicated that in Switzerland sustainable food products were more expensive than the conventional ones.

Price as an important deciding factor to purchasing sustainable food products continued in other countries. In Norway, there is easy access to sustainable food as well as lower prices of these products. The lower prices make it easier for consumers in Norway to buy sustainable food products. Eventually, the micro-culture of food consumption driven by personal ethics and morals directly address sustainable dimensions because it transcends the question of price and other non-sustainability motivations. Ecological and other sustainable benefits are usually the secondary reasons.

What appeared as more pervasive influenced on the sustainable food consumption of participants in this study were micro-cultures or individual factors. They negatively or positively influenced the sustainable food consumption of the participants. Those that had positive influence include factors for health, taste, quality, ethics and morals. Family, friends, the market place, the sustainability environment in a country facilitated other variables such as education, upbringing, religion and socialization. These reflected the findings from previous research studies (e.g. Tanner and Kast, 2003; Padel and Foster, 2005; Pearson, Henryks and Moffitt, 2007, Ergönül and Ergönül, 2015). Their findings also highlighted the importance of context factors such as availability and accessibility of sustainable food as equally important considerations for consumers. Table 1 shows a summary of micro-cultures of participants' sustainable food consumption.

TABLE 1
MICRO-CULTURES (MC) OF EXPATS' SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION (SFC)

MC of SFC	Characteristics	Reasons
Health-driven Consumption Dimensions of SFC: Ecological	Expatriates are usually mothers with young children, or ones with dietary requirements against allergies and other illnesses, and health conscious expatriates	Expatriates in this category express preference for Bio or organic fruits, vegetables, dairy, and seasonal and local produce.
Price-sensitive Consumption Dimensions of SFC: Ecological and Economic	Price as one of the deciding factors in the purchase of sustainable food products. It can be either positive or negative. High price paradox.	The willingness to pay is higher and this leads to more consumption. The opposite is true for negative price sensitivity. The high-price paradox may encourage sustainable practices that prevent food waste and over-consumption.
Swiss influenced consumption Dimensions of SFC: Ecological and Social	Sustainable consumption arising from the influence of Swiss spouse, partner, boyfriend, family and the Swiss environment (i.e. retailers, media, school).	Consumption is inclined to local and seasonal produce, Made in Switzerland brands and Fairtrade.

<p>Ethics/ Moral-driven Consumption</p> <p>Dimensions of SFC: Ecological, Economic and Social</p>	<p>Main driver of consumption. Expatriates see their consumption as a “social contribution”, “good for the planet”, “animal welfare”, “support small and local producers”, and “for the sake of future generations”.</p>	<p>Expatriates identify themselves as vegetarian or vegan. Credit religion, education and proactive research as contributory to their sustainability awareness.</p>
<p>Labels/ Brands Skeptics</p> <p>Dimensions of SFC: Ecological and Social</p>	<p>Do not buy based on labels, especially Bio labels. See labels as marketing tool. Buy based on taste and appearance. Do not trust the labels.</p>	<p>Incline to support Fairtrade products, and local and seasonal produces. Prefer to buy directly from the farmers.</p>

Our findings showed the acculturation outcomes that associated with sustainable food consumption were firstly the integration, followed by maintenance, then resistance and finally assimilation. Participants adopted elements of the host culture’s food consumption while maintaining elements of their own culture. However, economic considerations could constraint these positive acculturation outcomes and affected participants' practice in sustainable food consumption. If economic constraint was no longer an issue, there was an indication that the participants would adopt a more sustainable food consumption practice. Assimilation took place when an acculturating person completely abandoned his own culture and assimilated to the new culture. Corollary to the outcomes was the agents and processes of acculturation, which the participants experienced.

Participants credited acculturation agents to their sustainable food consumption. Family, retailers, labeling organization, the Swiss or host country environment and the media contributed to the decision. In the acculturation processes of the new food consumption culture, participants related their experiences to exposure to new food labels and concepts, economic adjustment, adaptation strategies to the new consumption culture and nostalgic consumption. These experiences saw participants learned to eat the same products in different ways, ranging from cooked vegetable to raw vegetables as salads, bought at ethnic shops to fulfill one's familiar taste from home countries, shopped across the borders and understood the different meaning of organic label and originality of produces.

One participant recognized the influence of acculturation agents to sustainable food consumption after 13 years of living in Switzerland. The role of the expatriate’s Swiss family and the sustainability conducive Swiss environment influenced expatriates' integration to the sustainable food consumption culture. This was evident among participants coming from countries without established sustainable food market. They only became aware of the concept of sustainable food consumption in Switzerland when they learned about them through their socialization with the acculturation agents. These expatriates have become ‘reflexive consumers’, as according to Giddens (1991) description of this type of consumers. They actively reflect how they eat or cook food. To a certain extent, they become instrument to spread sustainability awareness to their families in home countries. For example, a participant educated her family Bio gardening whenever she returns to her home country. Finally, these favorable acculturation outcomes also highlighted the fact that sustainable food consumption culture’s learning is continuing.

Comparing the expatriates’ perspective to the retailers and sustainable label organization perspectives in our participating samples, we found that all retailers emphasized similarly on animal welfare but differently in other considerations. Major retailers focused on fair production and trade, environmental friendly production, and fish and seafood sustainability. On the other hand, discount retailers focused its sustainable program on the philosophy of providing their customers with high quality products at a reasonable price. They also emphasized sustainability when selecting products, suppliers and

manufacturers. Their sustainability practice also included conservation of resources and decent working conditions, depending on the product and product category. The labeling organization addressed all sustainability dimensions in their certification. They were the minimum price that secured income for small farmer beneficiaries, a premium for projects for the development of cooperative and implementation of joint projects, and procurement plans and the right to pre-financing. In addition, the social development sought to improve the living and working conditions of workers among others and the environmental aspect involves maintenance of soil fertility, protection of water resources, waste management, prohibition of the most toxic pesticides and prohibition of genetically modified plants.

Our participating retailers and sustainable label organization supported our research extensively as they had yet to conduct an empirical market research on sustainable food consumption of expatriates. In their own opinions, they saw no difference between Swiss and Expatriates consumption or buying behavior of sustainable food products. On the contrary, expatriates saw it otherwise. While retailers argued that sustainable food products were more expensive because of more elaborate production process, the labeling organization argued that the retail prices of certified products had nothing to do with the cost of production. Instead, trading partners who controlled the additional value creation determined the prices. Hence, Fairtrade is making an effort to get this value creation process done in the producers' countries. The labeling organization also argued that consumers' cultural aspect was not the focus of their marketing initiative, which the retailers viewed differently. Our findings thus suggested conflicting views between the retailers and sustainable label organization.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This paper presented a research that examined the influence of minority cultures and acculturation based on the different dimensions of sustainable food consumption of expatriates in Switzerland. These dimensions were ecological, economic and social. Minority cultures whether they were sub-cultures (ethnicity or nationality) and micro-cultures (individual cultures) influenced the sustainable food consumption of expatriates in various ways. Literatures on sustainable food consumption argued various motives for consumers to engage in sustainable food consumption. These motives ranged from non-sustainable to sustainable reasons.

The participants in our study concluded that the motives of consumption in the different dimensions of sustainable food consumption. The majority of them consume primarily out of non-sustainability motivations and with sustainability as secondary reason. These motives were also apparent in their micro-culture. The similarities and differences of the expatriates' national consumption cultures led to positive and negative influence on their sustainable food consumption respectively. It was positive for expatriates coming from countries with established sustainable consumption practices. It was negative for those expatriates coming from countries with consumption cultures that did not promote the principles of sustainable food consumption, or where this type of consumption was not a priority in national and individual level. The more influential culture in the sustainable food consumption of expatriates was micro-cultures or individual cultures that reflected in the motives, attitudes and beliefs of the expatriates in their sustainable food consumption.

Acculturation models highlighted the roles of individual factors and acculturation agents that facilitated the process of consumer acculturation resulting in various outcomes ranging from over-assimilation to hyper-identification. Acculturation agents and processes influenced the expatriates' sustainable food consumption if acculturation outcomes led to assimilation, maintenance and integration to the host country's culture, while the opposite was true for resistance outcome. Finally, while integration to the new consumption maybe evident, economic considerations remained an important factor in expatriate's sustainable food consumption. Nostalgic consumption as means of cultural adaptation was and might remain a common theme among expatriates.

We can derive both practical and theoretical implications from our research. The practical implication mainly concerns with sustainable or the marketing of sustainable food products for retailers although a business implication for ethnic food retailers is also apparent. Retailers and label organization in this

study believe that mainstream consumers and minority consumers are the same in terms of their consumer behavior towards sustainable food consumption. Hence, there is a lack of market research and profiling of expatriates as a different group of consumers. Consumers buy sustainable food products not primarily because of sustainable reasons but with reasons ranging from perceived health benefits, sensory appeals (taste and texture) and among others. Environmental, economic and social benefits often times are secondary reasons for their consumption.

This study also offers business implication for ethnic retailers. They are at risk of running into a strategic myopia if they fail to recognize the changing needs of their expatriates' community of consumers, when acculturation influences sustainable food consumption. While their main existence is to cater to expatriates' nostalgic consumption, they may miss expatriates as buyers who have become more sustainability conscious if they do not respond to their consumers' changing needs. Most ethnic retailers do not offer any sustainable food products and usually refer consumers to go to local retailers for organic or Bio products.

The price sensitivity implicates a different theoretical development to conventional pricing strategy in other consumption based on acculturation theory. In addition, consumer acculturation of expatriates and individual consumption factors (cultural and non-cultural) facilitates sustainable food consumption. More importantly, socialization from acculturation agents influence the adaptation processes of the acculturating expatriates. Theoretically, economic considerations remain a crucial factor to put sustainable food consumption into practice. Financial and cultural capitals as espouse by consumer acculturation theories are important factors to allow the individual to participate in the host's consumer culture.

For marketers, responding to the preferences of ethnic consumers helps them to develop more feasible targeting and positioning strategies for sustainable marketing. The subset of acculturation process includes the role of acculturation agents such as retailers and labeling organization. Data gathered from these two important actors in the promotion of sustainable food consumption contributes to the comprehensiveness and robustness of the analysis and consequently strengthen the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As part of the methodological limitation, our research mainly relied on self-reported data from the participants, which was subject to bias due to selective memory and exaggeration of claims. We tried to overcome this by including participant observation during the data collection. Another direction for international business and marketing research is to examine the possibility of selling sustainable food products in ethnic shops in foreign countries. There is a high potential for ethnic shops to contribute to sustainable food consumption, given their current offer for nostalgic consumption of expatriates. Hence, more research in this area will bring new insights to sustainable products consumption.

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