

Location, location, location: A comparative analysis of UK, Malaysian and Singaporean consumer views of palm oil

WHY?

There is a shortage of studies on (cross-cultural) consumer views of palm oil

1
The demand for palm oil is ever-increasing for its use in food, cosmetics, detergents, biofuel and other everyday commodities (Havlik, et al., 2016)

1964 – 1,750 tonnes
1994 – 16,000 tonnes
2004 – 36,000 tonnes
2014 – 66,000 tonnes
(WWF, 2017)

2
Despite its positive socio-economic effects, this high demand comes at an environmental cost e.g. forced labour, climate change

3
Given that the oil palm is up to 10 times more productive per hectare than its oilseed competitors (Teoh, 2010), the solution may not be to boycott palm oil, but to promote its sustainable production

4
Fundamental to the take-up of sustainable palm oil is the consumer; there is no supply without demand

5
Understanding consumer views allows gaps in consumer knowledge to surface, and with education regarding the sustainability of palm oil, the impetus for change will be created.

METHODOLOGY



ONLINE SURVEY



ONE-TO-ONE CONSUMER INTERVIEWS



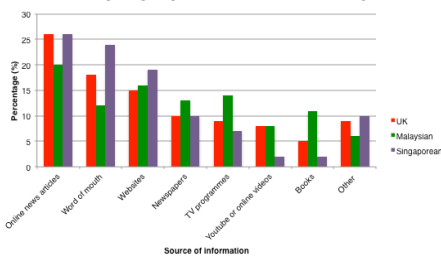
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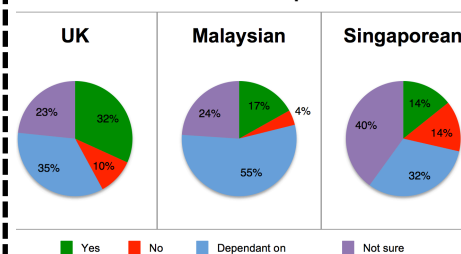
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

RESULTS

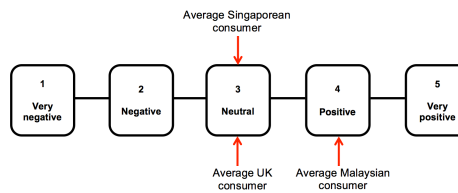
Where do you get your information about palm oil?



Would you be willing to pay more for a product that contains sustainable palm oil?



What is your view of palm oil?



Breakdown of top 3 positive and negative impacts according for consumers respectively

UK	Malaysian	Singaporean
Positive impacts 1. Don't know 2. Livelihood (social) 3. Economic booster (economic)	Positive impacts 1. Economic booster (economic) 2. Livelihood (social) 3. Good cooking oil (social)	Positive impacts 1. Don't know 2. Versatile – used in many products (social) 3. Biofuels (social/environmental)
Negative impacts 1. Don't know 2. Harmful to environment (environmental) 3. Deforestation (environmental)	Negative impacts 1. Deforestation (environmental) 2. Harmful to environment (environmental) 3. Biodiversity loss (environmental)	Negative impacts 1. Don't know 2. Deforestation (environmental) 3. Harmful to environment (environmental)

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this study was 'to compare awareness, knowledge and perception of palm oil between UK, Malaysian and Singaporean consumers'

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To determine via what medium consumers receive their information regarding palm oil
- To ascertain which impacts of palm oil production consumers are aware of
- To establish the views of consumers and what influenced their views
- To discover whether customers are willing to pay more for sustainable palm oil products (as opposed to standard palm oil products) and why

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

- Highlights the importance that consumer perception and action can have on a social, environmental and economic level at both a local and global scale
- Calls to attention the need for accessible and relevant information distribution to make effective change; it is through awareness and knowledge that perceptions and attitudes are formed, which will encourage sustainable behaviours

1. Havlik, P., Kraxner, F., Mosnier, A., Obersteiner, M. and Pirker, J., 2016. What are the limits to oil palm expansion?. *Global Environmental Change*, 40(1), pp.73-81.

2. Teoh, C. H., 2010. Key sustainability issues in the palm oil sector. *A discussion paper for multistakeholders consultations. The World Bank*. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINDONESIA/Resources/226271-1170911056314/Discussion.Paper_palmoil.pdf> [Accessed 23 March 2018].

3. WWF, 2017. *Palm oil: Productive and versatile*. [online] Available at: <http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/agriculture/about_palm_oil/> [Accessed 23 March 2018].