

Consumer-Company-Identification and Consumer Innovativeness

Jos Bartels (Ph.D.), Wageningen University and Research Centre,
Agricultural Economics Research Institute, The Netherlands

email: jos.bartels@wur.nl

MAPP Workshop on Consumer Behaviour and Food
Marketing May 8-9, 2007, Middelfart, Denmark



Road Map

- Introduction on the topic
- Pilot study among food consumers in The Netherlands
 - Context and research design, hypotheses, expected path model, measures, sample case study 1
 - Conclusions about hypotheses, final path model, discussion and future research

Introduction on the Topic

- Multiple organizational identification environments
 - Ashforth & Johnson (2001); Bartels et al. (2007)
- Consumer-Company Identification
 - Ahearne, et al. (2005); Bhattacharya, & Sen (2003)
- Consumer innovativeness
 - Goldsmith, & Hofacker (1991); Roehrich (2004)
- Organic Food Consumption
 - Lockie et al. (2002; 2004); Fotopoulos et al. (2003); Chrysosoidis & Krystallis (2005)

Pilot Study

- The present study extends this previous research in an organic food context by
 - (1) examining the impact of multiple consumer identification environments on organic food consumption
 - (2) examining the role of domain specific innovativeness in organic food consumption

Context and Research Design

- Relationship between consumer-company identification, domain specific innovativeness and organic food consumption.
 - Part of a broader consumer study into the knowledge of, and attitudes towards antioxidants in fresh fruit and vegetables
- Two cross sectional case studies
 - Study 1: Dutch online panel study among non- and light users of organic food (March, 2007)
 - Study 2: Convenience sample in six shops across The Netherlands among light- and heavy users of organic food (April, 2007)

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

The stronger someone's identification with the organic consumer, the higher his/ her organic food consumption.

Hypothesis 2:

The stronger someone's domain specific innovativeness, the higher his/ her organic food consumption.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 3:

Identification with the organic consumer mediates the relationship between identification with

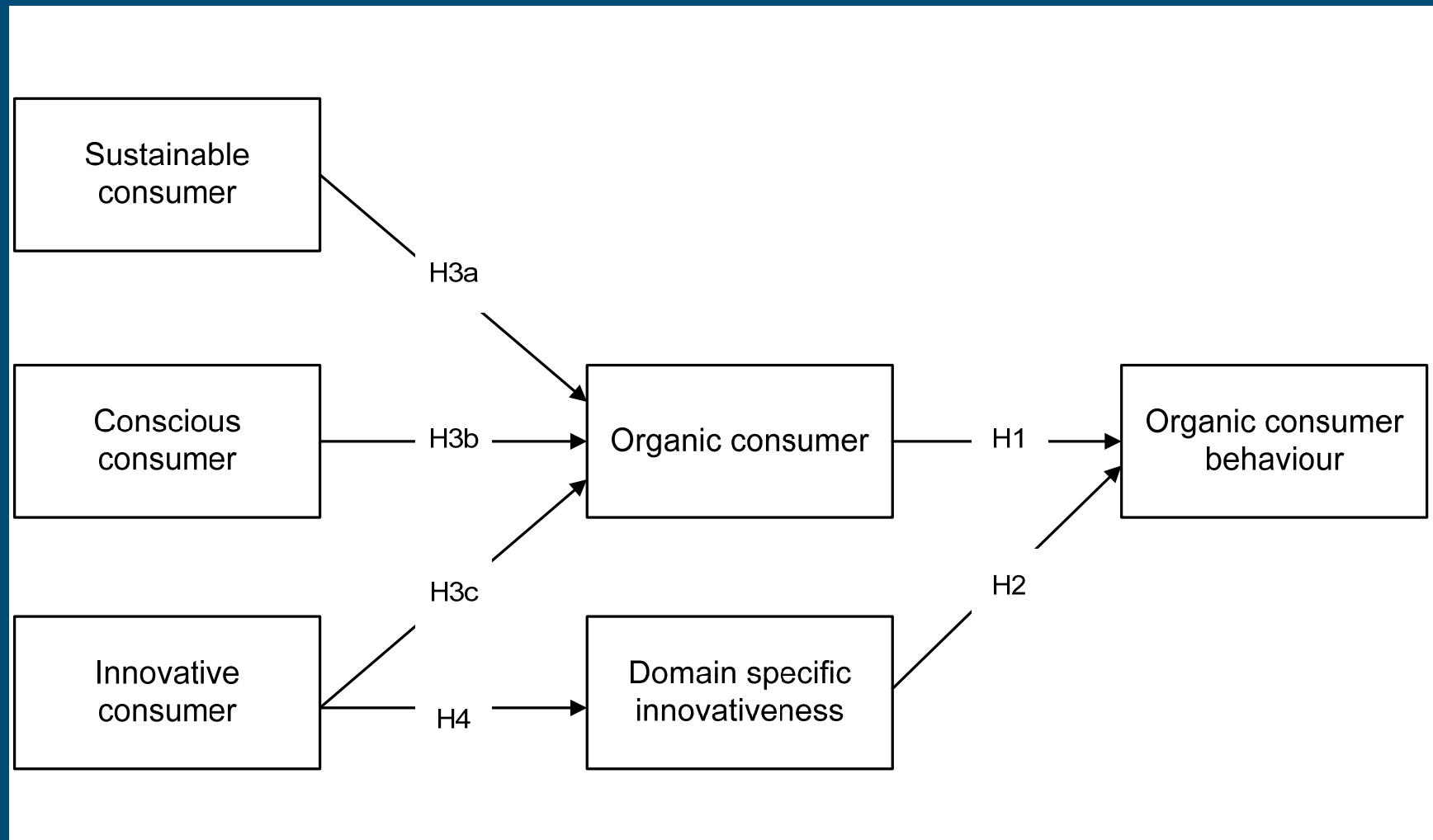
- a) the sustainable consumer and organic food consumption.
- b) the conscious consumer and organic food consumption.
- c) the innovative consumer and organic food consumption.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4:

Domain specific innovativeness mediates the relationship between identification with the innovative consumer and organic food consumption.

Expected Path Model











Measures 1/3

- Dependent variable
 - Consumer behaviour (3 items)
 - Example items are: How often do you buy? How much money do you spend on
 - (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$)
- Exogenous variables
 - Consumer-company Identification (2 items)
 - Conscious consumers (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$)
 - Sustainable consumers (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$)
 - Innovative consumers (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$)

Measures 2/3

My Identity Identity
Identity consumer group

A		Far Apart
B		Close Together but Separate
C		Very Small Overlap
D		Small Overlap
E		Moderate Overlap
F		Large Overlap
G		Very Large Overlap
H		Complete Overlap

Construct validation of graphic identification scale:

Ahearne et al. (2005)

Bhattacharya & Sen (2003)

Tropp & Wright (2001)

1) I think of myself as a(n) consumer

2) Please indicate to what degree your self-image overlaps consumer's image

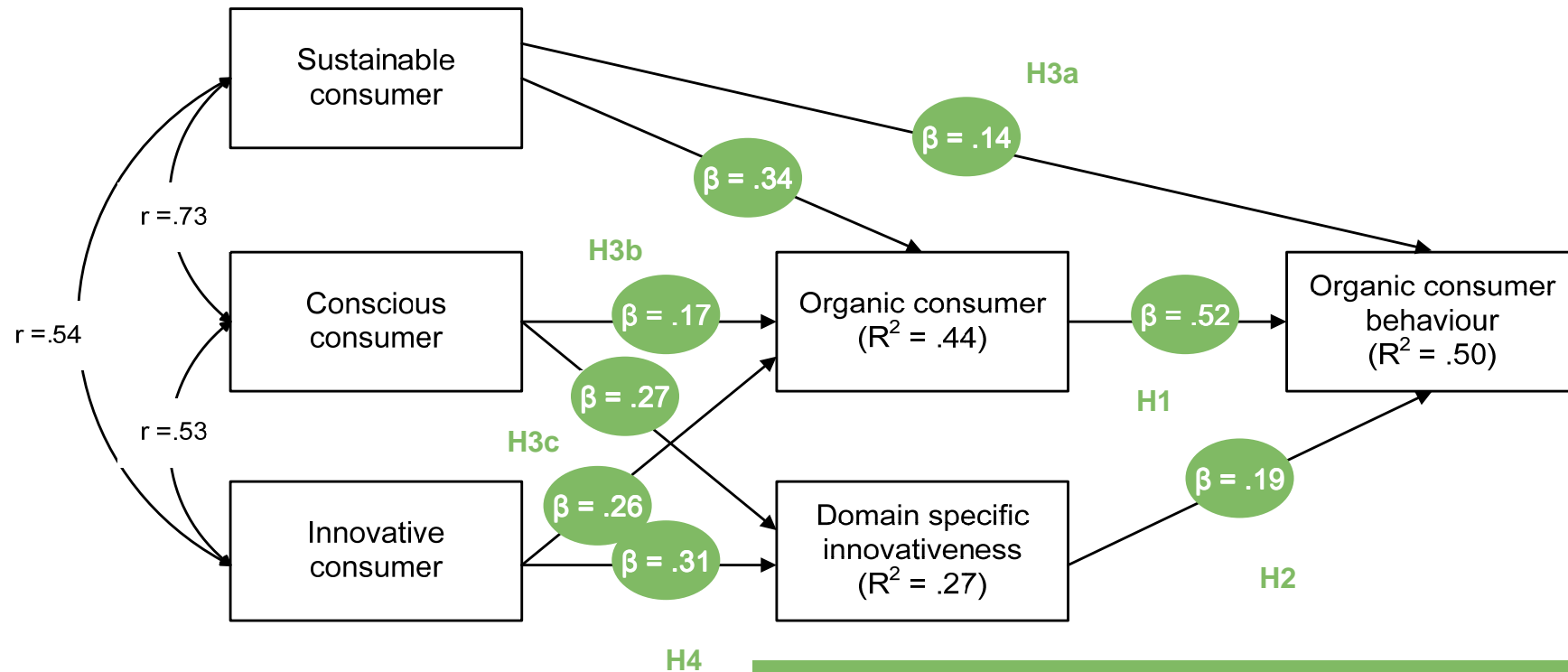
Measures 3/3

- Endogenous variables
 - Consumer-company identification (2 items)
 - Organic food consumer (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$)
 - Domain specific innovativeness (6 items)
 - Goldsmith & Hofacker (1991)
 - Example items: "In general, I am among the last in my circle of friends to purchase new products" and "I know more about new products than other people do"
 - (Standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$)

Sample Case Study 1

- Dutch online panel research (n=468)
- Demographics respondents
 - Sex: Male 49% versus female 51%
 - Age: 80% between 20-65 years old
 - Education: 30% College degree
 - Income: 52% average or below
- With the exception of age (slight under presentation of consumers below 18 years old), all demographics are representative for the Dutch population.

Results Path Analysis Final Model



Model fit indices

$\chi^2 = 2.00$, d.f. = 4; $p = .728$; $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = .51$;
 GFI = 1.00; AGFI = .99; CFI = 1.00;
 TLI = 1.01; RMSEA = .000

Discussion and Future Research

- Discussion
 - Domain specific innovativeness versus identification
 - Competition between several identification levels
 - Impact of communication on identification
- Future research
 - Multiple aspects of domain specific innovativeness
 - Identity Salience
 - Communication claims like Triple P values