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Toward Healthier and Sustainable Diets: Factors Influencing Chinese Consumers' Olive Oil Purchasing Behavior

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Abstract

With China's economic growth, rising living standards, and the government's strong promotion of healthy eating habits, the demand for healthier foods such as olive oil has surged, improving the overall quality of life in the country. Despite this significant increase in consumption, the factors driving Chinese consumers' olive oil purchases remain underexplored.

This study adopted an exploratory research design. Based on identified gaps in the literature, a bespoke consumer purchasing decision model was developed. During the data collection phase, 514 valid responses were analyzed using logistic regression to identify the key determinants of purchasing behavior.

The analysis showed that higher monthly income (OR = 1.84–1.99), health-related motivation (OR = 2.06), and previous tasting experience (OR = 1.90) significantly and positively influenced the likelihood of purchasing olive oil. Age did not show a significant effect on purchasing behavior.

The findings provide valuable insights for foreign olive oil producers targeting the Chinese market. Marketing strategies should prioritize middle- and high-income groups, emphasize health benefits, and promote sensory marketing through tasting experiences to enhance consumer acceptance of olive oil.

Keywords – Healthy Diet; Olive Oil Consumption; Consumer Purchasing Behavior; Chinese Market.

Paper type – Academic Research Paper

Sommario

Verso diete più sane e sostenibili: determinanti del comportamento d'acquisto di olio d'oliva tra i consumatori cinesi. – Con la crescita economica della Cina, l'aumento del tenore di vita e la forte promozione di abitudini alimentari salutari da parte del governo, la domanda di alimenti più sani, come l'olio d'oliva, è aumentata, contribuendo a migliorare la qualità della vita nel paese. Tuttavia, nonostante questo significativo incremento dei consumi, i fattori che influenzano gli acquisti di olio d'oliva da parte dei consumatori cinesi rimangono poco studiati.

Il presente studio ha adottato un disegno di ricerca esplorativo. Sulla base delle lacune individuate in letteratura, è stato sviluppato un modello specifico per la decisione d'acquisto del consumatore. Durante la fase di raccolta dei dati, sono state analizzate 514 risposte valide mediante regressione logistica, al fine di identificare i principali determinanti del comportamento d'acquisto.

I risultati dell'analisi indicano che un reddito mensile più elevato ($OR = 1,84-1,99$), la motivazione legata alla salute ($OR = 2,06$) e l'esperienza di degustazione precedente ($OR = 1,90$) influenzano in maniera significativa e positiva la probabilità di acquistare olio d'oliva. L'età, invece, non ha mostrato un effetto significativo sul comportamento d'acquisto. Questi risultati forniscono indicazioni preziose per i produttori stranieri di olio d'oliva interessati al mercato cinese. Le strategie di marketing dovrebbero concentrarsi sui gruppi di reddito medio-alto e alto, enfatizzare i benefici salutistici dell'olio d'oliva e promuovere il marketing sensoriale attraverso esperienze di degustazione, al fine di incrementare l'accettazione del prodotto da parte dei consumatori.

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1 Introduction

Healthier living and well-being have become mainstream topics in recent years. Many scholars have emphasized the importance of sustainable and organic eating patterns. Some researchers have also explored the significance of traditional food consumption (Pashova, 2020) and regional dietary habits. The Mediterranean diet is one of the five major dietary patterns worldwide and is considered among the healthiest by many authoritative journals and scholars. According to Baidu Encyclopedia, it refers to the dietary habits of France, Greece, Spain, southern Italy, and other regions along the Mediterranean Sea. This diet is primarily based on vegetables, fruits, fish, grains, legumes, and olive oil. After studying seven Mediterranean countries, La Verde et al. (2018) found that the mortality rates from cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and cancer-related diseases in these regions were 1.3% lower than in other areas.

In 2025, *U.S. News & World Report*, the third-largest news magazine in the United States, ranked the Mediterranean diet as the most effective and healthiest among dozens of dietary patterns (U.S. News, 2025). Similarly, Menotti and Puddu (2015) and Mari, Capozza, Falvo, and Hichy (2007) demonstrated that olive oil offers protective effects against numerous diseases influenced by behavioral factors, particularly in populations adhering to traditional diets high in fat and animal protein, which can contribute to various health conditions.

The fifth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents*, published in 2022, updated its principles to reflect advances in nutritional science and changes in dietary structure, nutrition, and health. To address the evolving nutritional and health needs of Chinese residents, the Guidelines recommend complementing traditional Chinese diets with elements of the Mediterranean diet, in which olive oil plays a vital role.

According to data from the International Olive Council (IOC), China's olive oil consumption increased from 12,000 tons in 2008 to 53,000 tons in 2024, while imports rose from 12,000 to 44,000 tons during the same period. Currently, about 34 olive oil brands are available on the Chinese market, with products from Spain, Italy, and Greece dominating (IOC, 2025). Therefore, understanding the factors influencing Chinese consumers' olive oil purchasing behavior is essential for Italian companies seeking to expand further into the Chinese market.

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing Chinese consumers' olive oil purchasing behavior, thereby enabling foreign companies to better understand consumer motivations and develop effective marketing strategies in China. The main beneficiaries are foreign producers of extra virgin olive oil who export, or intend to export, to the Chinese market.

This study follows a classic research design and process (Figure 1). First, we conducted a comprehensive literature review integrating existing theories, including Kotler's consumer purchasing decision model, motivation theory, and the determinants of organic food purchasing behavior, while also considering the unique characteristics of the Chinese consumer market. Previous studies clearly reveal a research gap regarding olive oil purchasing behavior among Chinese consumers. Therefore, we designed a questionnaire (n = 514) and tested the hypotheses using logistic regression analysis. The results and discussion sections explain the findings and relate them to the existing literature. Finally, the study summarizes its theoretical contributions and provides practical marketing implications for the industry.

Figure 1 – Research conceptual framework

Phase 1: Theoretical foundation ● Kotler's consumer decision model ● Motivation theories (health, sensory) ● Determinants from organic food literature ● China specific consumer behavior	Phase 2: Research gap & positioning ● Identified gap: ○ lack of integrated studies on Chinese olive oil market ● Research questions: ○ What factors influence purchasing? ○ What is their relative importance?	Phase 3: Empirical study & analysis ● Survey design & variable measurement ● Data collection (n = 514 valid responses) ● Statistical analysis (logistic regression)
Phase 4: Results & Discussion ● Key findings: ○ income, health motivation, tasting experience, flavor are significant drivers ● Comparison with literature: ○ supports and contrasts existing theories	Phase 5: Conclusions & Implications ● Theoretical contribution: ○ validates model in Chinese context ● Practical implications: ○ targeted marketing strategies for retailers	

Source: Authors' elaboration

2 Theoretical basis and literature review

2.1 Core theoretical foundations

Consumer purchasing behavior is a process shaped by complex interactions among psychological, social, and personal factors. This study is primarily based on Philip Kotler's integrated consumer purchasing decision model (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022), which provides a comprehensive

framework for analyzing the influence of cultural, social, personal, and psychological dimensions on consumer choices. The model outlines a five-stage decision-making process: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. This study focuses on the various factors that affect the decision-making stage in olive oil purchasing.

To operationalize this framework, we drew on well-established motivation theories. The Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975) and the Health Capital Theory (Grossman, 2017) offer a theoretical foundation for understanding *health motivation*, suggesting that consumers' purchase of health-related products such as olive oil serves both as a protective response to health risks and as an investment in long-term well-being.

Meanwhile, Sensory Marketing Theory (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014) and related neurocognitive research (Damasio, 1996) highlight the crucial role of sensory experience. They provide a rationale for including *taste experience* and *flavor preference* as key variables, since sensory interactions can generate emotional memories that shape consumer decision-making.

Furthermore, classic socio-economic models (Bourdieu, 1984; Drewnowski & Specter, 2004) underscore the fundamental role of income in high-end food consumption, directly supporting our inclusion of income as a determinant of purchasing power. Collectively, these theoretical pillars form the conceptual foundation for selecting and interpreting the independent variables in this study.

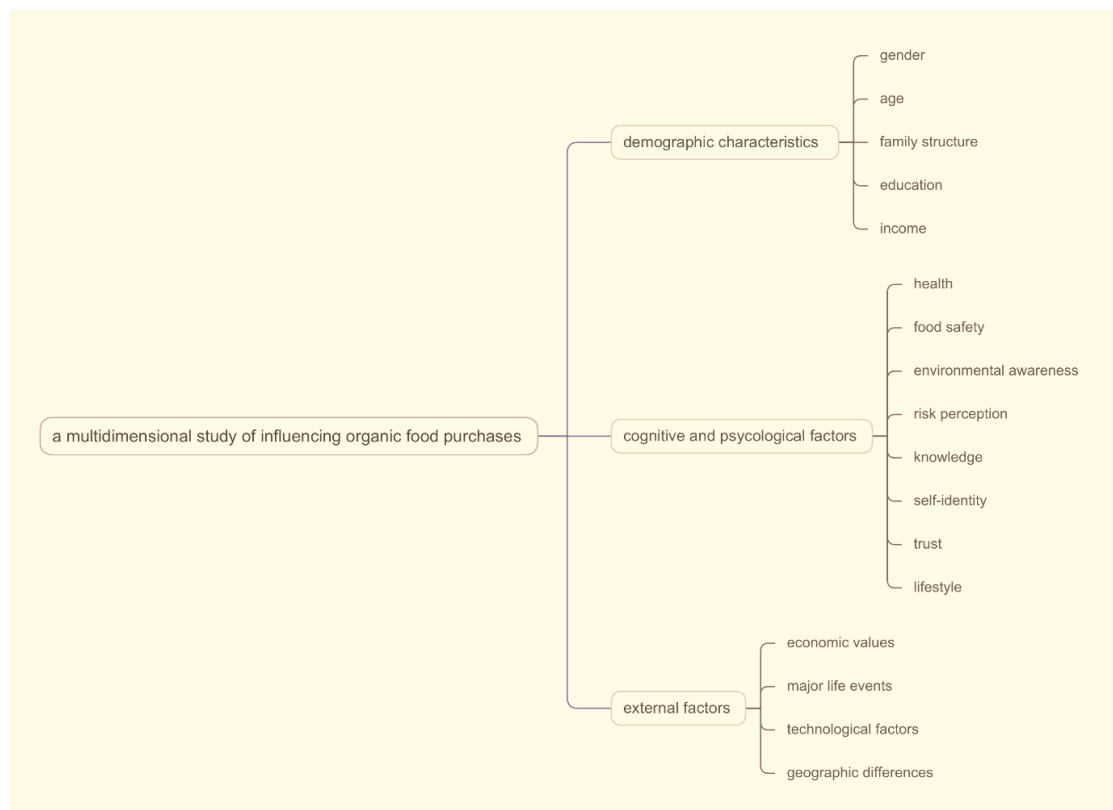
2.2 Key influencing factors in organic food research

As a high-end, health-oriented food product, olive oil shares many similarities with organic foods in terms of the factors driving consumer behavior. Therefore, the extensive body of literature on organic food purchasing provides valuable insights for identifying potential influencing factors. Empirical research consistently indicates that health and safety concerns are the primary motivations for organic food consumption (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Hsu, Chang, & Lin, 2016). Socioeconomic factors – particularly higher income and education levels – have also been repeatedly shown to be strong positive predictors of purchasing behavior (Drewnowski & Specter, 2004; Peng, 2024).

In addition, product knowledge and positive sensory experiences are essential for building consumer trust and forming favorable attitudes, which in turn translate into stronger purchase intentions (Barnes, Vergunst, & Topp, 2009; Nautiyal & Lal, 2022). The effects of demographic variables, such as gender and age, are often subtle and context-dependent. Although several studies have found that women tend to hold more positive attitudes toward organic food (Chetioui, Butt, Fathani, & Lebdaoui, 2022), other research suggests that men may exhibit a higher willingness to pay (Wang, 2008; Sujaya, Salins, & Frederick, 2022). These mixed findings indicate the need to test such relationships within the specific context of olive oil consumption in China.

Overall, this body of literature provides a reliable foundation for the present study to examine both the correlations and the relative importance of various influencing factors on olive oil purchasing behavior (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Impact of consumers’ food purchasing behavior



Source: Authors' elaboration

2.3 Health-oriented consumer behavior in China

Applying global consumer behavior models to the Chinese market requires full consideration of its unique socio-cultural and economic context. China's rapid economic growth has given rise to a middle class with increasing disposable income, creating fertile conditions for the import and consumption of high-end foods such as olive oil. The Chinese government actively promotes healthy dietary patterns through the *2022 Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents*, which explicitly incorporate elements of the Mediterranean diet, thereby significantly enhancing public health awareness.

This evolving context has shaped distinctive consumer motivations. Unlike Western consumers, who may emphasize environmental sustainability, Chinese consumers tend to prioritize health and food safety as the primary drivers of high-end food consumption (Yin, Wu, & Chen, 2008). Moreover, the perception of imported olive oil as a premium product or a prestigious gift – reflecting the notion of “face-saving consumption” – adds a unique social dimension to its purchase, although the magnitude of this effect may vary.

Finally, the digital ecosystem led by platforms such as WeChat, Tik Tok, and Xiaohongshu profoundly influences how consumers acquire product information, develop perceptions, and make purchasing decisions. These contextual factors underscore the need for a targeted examination of olive oil purchasing behavior within the Chinese market.

2.4 Identification of the research gap

To sum up, the existing literature provides a solid theoretical foundation and valuable insights through Kotler's consumer decision model and empirical studies on organic food purchasing behavior. However, a significant research gap remains: most studies either apply generalized theoretical models developed in Western contexts or focus on the consumption of general organic food products, while paying limited attention to the specific category of olive oil. More importantly, there is a lack of systematic empirical research examining the factors influencing Chinese consumers' olive oil purchasing behavior within an integrated analytical framework.

Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by developing a comprehensive analytical framework that integrates Kotler's consumer decision model, key determinants identified in organic food research, and the distinctive characteristics of the Chinese consumer market. Specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions:

- which factors – including income, health motivation, taste experience, flavor preference, and demographic variables – significantly influence Chinese consumers' olive oil purchasing decisions?

- what is the relative importance of these factors in shaping purchasing behavior?
- what practical implications do the findings have for olive oil producers and marketers targeting the Chinese market?

3 Methodology for studying Chinese consumers' olive oil purchase behavior

Data for this study were collected using a random sampling approach. The nationwide survey was conducted via Wenjuanxing, the largest online survey platform in China, between October 26 and November 2, 2024, yielding a total of 514 valid responses.

The questionnaire design and variable selection were guided by the four main dimensions of Philip Kotler's consumer purchase decision model – cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors – combined with insights from previous research on the determinants of organic food purchasing behavior (Table 1) and an analysis of the pricing, packaging, and advertising content of 34 major olive oil brands available in the Chinese market.

Table 1 – Philip Kotler's consumer purchasing decision model

Cultural Factors	Social Factors	Psychological Factors	Personal Factors
Social class	Social culture	Purchase motivation	Gender, age
National culture	Status role	Cognitive learning	Education
Regional culture	Reference groups	Beliefs, occupation	Income
Religious culture, etc.	Family structure	Attitude, etc.	Personality traits, etc.

Source: Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022)

The dependent variable in this study was olive oil purchasing behavior, while the independent variables included experiential learning (tasting experience and flavor preference), gender, income, age, purchase motivation (categorized as none, health-related, cognitive, lifestyle habits, or social status), and price preference.

The survey collected data on demographic characteristics (gender, age, income), purchasing behavior, experiential learning, and price preferences. Multiple-choice questions were used to capture the various motivations underlying purchase decisions.

The collected data were analyzed using logistic regression, as the dependent variable – olive oil purchase behavior – was binary. This method allowed us to assess the significance and relative strength of each predictor, including experiential learning, purchase motivation, demographics, and price

preference. Odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals were calculated to quantify the effect of each factor. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 20.0, and the results were interpreted in light of Kotler's consumer decision model and previous research on organic and high-end food consumption.

Regarding income classification (Table 2), this study adopted the quintile standards for urban residents' income in 2021, as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics of China. The analysis focused on the middle- and high-income groups (middle-low, middle, and middle-high income), which together account for approximately 60% of total urban income.

Table 2 – Per capita disposable income of urban residents by income quintile (unit: yuan)

Income quintile	Per capita disposable income (yuan)						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Low-income families	12230.9	13004.1	13723.1	14386.9	15549.4	15597.7	16745.5
Lower-middle-income families	21446.2	23054.9	24550.1	24856.5	26783.7	27501.1	30123.6
Middle-income families	29105.2	31521.8	33781.3	35196.1	37875.8	39278.2	42498
Upper-middle-income families	38572.4	41805.6	45163.4	49173.5	52907.3	54910.1	59005.2
High-income families	65082.2	70347.8	77097.2	84907.1	91682.6	96061.6	102595.8

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

To simplify the analysis, the high-income group was merged with the middle-high group (>59,800 yuan/year), and the low-income group was merged with the middle-low group (<30,123 yuan/year), resulting in three monthly income ranges: <3,000 yuan (\$ 390), 3,000-5,000 yuan (\$ 390-650), and >5,000 yuan (\$ 650). These ranges correspond to the average monthly disposable income of the lower-, middle- and high-income segments.

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 20.0. Both univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were performed, with independent variables including age, gender, monthly income, experiential learning (tasting olive oil, flavor), and purchase motivation (none, health-oriented, special flavor preference, dietary habits, status symbol).

Since the dependent variable – olive oil purchasing behavior – is binary, logistic regression was employed to examine the factors influencing consumers' likelihood of purchase. The logistic regression model is expressed as:

$$\text{logit}^P = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^k \beta_i X_i \quad (1)$$

The logistic regression formula (1) expresses the relationship between the probability P of a binary event – here, the probability of purchasing olive oil – and the independent variables. By transforming the probability into a logit (the logarithm of the odds), the linear effects of the predictors can be estimated. In the model, β_0 represents the intercept, which corresponds to the logit of the probability of purchase when all independent variables are equal to zero.

In formula (1), the dependent variable is binary (0 = no, 1 = yes). The independent variables (X_i) represent the factors potentially influencing purchasing behavior, including tasting experience, gender, income, age, purchase motivation (none, health-oriented, special flavor preference, dietary habits, status symbol), and price preference.

All questionnaire responses (Table 3) were initially treated as potential independent variables. Univariate logistic regression analysis (Table 4) was first conducted to identify variables potentially associated with olive oil purchasing behavior. Subsequently, multivariate logistic regression (Table 5) was performed to control for interactions among predictors and to determine the variables that truly influence purchase decisions. Only variables with $P < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant in the multivariate analysis.

Interpretation of the results was based on the odds ratios (ORs) derived from the multivariate regression analysis, providing a quantitative measure of each factor's effect on the likelihood of purchasing olive oil.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Disaggregation of results by gender

The sample consisted of 182 men (35%) and 332 women (65%) (Table 3). Linear regression analysis confirmed that gender is a significant factor influencing olive oil purchasing behavior. Specifically, the odds of men purchasing olive oil were 1.657 times higher than those of women, suggesting that men are more responsive to purchase-influencing factors (Table 5).

These findings align with previous research. For instance, Wang (2008) found that men in Beijing were more likely to purchase organic food than women. Similarly, Wang (2014) reported that men exhibited a higher willingness to pay for organic food in Wuhan; M. Guo, Tang, & X. Guo (2025) identified gender as a factor influencing willingness to purchase organic food in Beijing. This

consistency may be due to the general tendency of Chinese male consumers to be more willing to spend than female consumers.

Given that olive oil is a premium health product, men may make purchase decisions more instinctively and with fewer concerns, potentially due to certain personality traits. Furthermore, the lower number of men in our sample may be partially amplifying their apparent responsiveness to the purchase-influencing factors. Further research should explore male consumers' consumption habits, specifically focusing on their information acquisition and purchasing channels, to inform more effective promotional strategies for olive oil products.

4.1.2 Disaggregation of results by age cohort

The sample was divided into three distinct age groups, structured to reflect key stages in China's education system and working life. The first group (15-25 years), primarily composed of students, represented 17% of the sample; the second group (25-36 years), including working-age adults, represented 38%; and the third group (>36 years), consisting of individuals with stable jobs and incomes, represented 45% (Table 3). The multivariate logistic regression model (Table 5) did not include age as a significant predictor, indicating that it is not a statistically significant factor influencing olive oil purchases. Previous studies on consumer behavior present mixed results regarding the role of age. For instance, Li (2020) suggests older consumers are more health-conscious and willing to buy organic food, whereas younger consumers prioritize taste and convenience. Furthermore, Guang-Wen, Akter, Siddik, & Masukujjaman (2021) note young consumers are influenced by social media and novelty, while Yu, Qu, Wu, Song, & Wen (2019) find older consumers perceive organic food as healthier. Crucially, other studies, such as Yin, Wu, & Chen (2008), and Wang (2008), report that age is not a consistently significant determinant, a finding that aligns with our results. In conclusion, based on this analysis, age does not appear to determine olive oil purchase behavior among Chinese consumers.

4.1.3 Disaggregation of results by household income

Following the five-level income classification established by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the sample was categorized into lower-middle, middle, and upper-middle income groups (Table 2). Among respondents, 19% reported earning less than \$ 390/month, 35% earned between \$ 390 and \$ 650, and 46% earned more than \$ 650 (Table 3).

Statistical analysis confirmed that income is a statistically significant factor: the odds of purchasing olive oil were 1.842 times higher for the \$ 390-650 group and 1.985 times higher for those earning

above \$ 650, when compared with the <\$ 390 group (Table 5). Therefore, income positively influences olive oil purchasing behavior.

This is consistent with prior research, which suggests that higher-income consumers are more likely to purchase expensive healthy foods, including organic food and olive oil. This is generally attributed to greater affordability and a higher sensitivity to product quality (Bourdieu, 1984; Drewnowski & Specter, 2004; Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008).

The analysis of price preference revealed that, among 34 major imported olive oil brands in China, 80% of respondents favored products priced between \$ 4 and \$ 20. Only 11% accepted prices below \$ 4, and 9% accepted the \$ 20-65 range (Table 3).

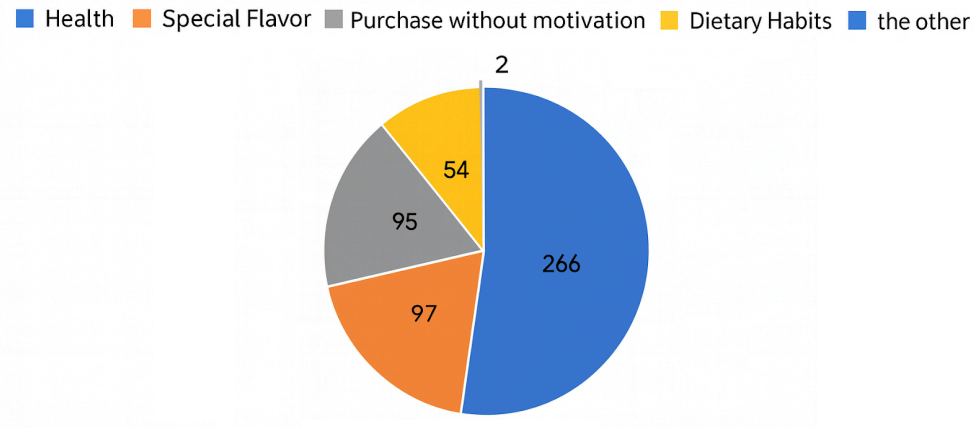
Although the multivariate analysis did not identify price as an independent influencing factor, it remains relevant, given its high correlation with income. Since high-income consumers represent a key target group, future efforts should focus on understanding their consumption habits, brand knowledge, and loyalty to optimize market strategies for olive oil in China.

4.1.4 Disaggregation of results by motivational factors

Health was the most frequently cited reason for olive oil purchase, with 51.7% of consumers motivated by health benefits. This was followed by 18.8% motivated by flavor, 10.5% by dietary habits (habitual consumption), 0.3% by social status or gifting, and 18.4% who purchased randomly (Table 3).

The multivariate analysis confirmed these factors as significant predictors. Relative to consumers who purchased randomly (occasionally), the odds of purchase were: 2.05 times higher for those motivated by health benefits; 7.26 times higher for those motivated by flavor; and 5.43 times higher for those motivated by habitual consumption (Table 5).

These results strongly align with prior research emphasizing health awareness as a key driver of healthy food consumption (Grossman, 2017; Roitner-Schobesberger, Darnhofer, Somsook, & Vogl, 2010; Liu & Qiao, 2011; Yin, Wu, & Chen, 2008). This trend is further supported by the growing interest in the Mediterranean diet and increased health consciousness across China in recent years (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Distribution of the main motivations behind Chinese consumers' olive oil purchases

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 3 – Statistics of factors influencing olive oil purchases

Variable	Number of respondents	%
Purchased olive oil (purchasing behavior): yes/no	186/328	36.187/63.813
Tried the olive oil (learning, cognition): yes/no	443/71	86.187/13.813
Gender: male/female	182/332	35.409/64.591
Age:		
15-25 years	87	17
26-36 years	198	38
> 36 years	229	45
Monthly income:		
<390 dollars	97	18.872
390-650 dollars	178	34.630
>650 dollars	239	46.498
Price prefer:		
0-4 dollars	57	11.090
4-20 dollars	411	79.961
20-65 dollars	46	8.949
Purchase reason:		
purchase without motivation	95	18.482
health	266	51.751
special flavor of olive oil (learning)	97	18.872
dietary habits	54	10.506
symbol of identity (social status)	2	0.389

Source: Authors' elaboration

4.1.5 Disaggregation of results by prior experience

Eighty-six percent of respondents reported prior tasting experience with olive oil (Table 3). The multivariate analysis confirmed the significance of this variable: the odds of purchasing olive oil were 1.89 times higher among consumers who had previously tried it compared with those who had not (Table 5). This result demonstrates that tasting experience significantly influences purchase behavior.

This finding is consistent with prior studies which confirm that learning and tasting experience foster product recognition and positively influence subsequent purchase decisions (Damasio, 1996; Caporale, Policastro, Carlucci, & Monteleone, 2006; Barnes, Vergunst, & Topp, 2009; Delgado & Guinard, 2011; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014; Panas, Thrasidi, Halkiopoulos, & Gkintoni, 2022). Specifically, improved sensory education and greater familiarity with the product's flavor profile enhance consumer satisfaction, increase repurchase intention, and elevate the willingness to pay for quality olive oil.

However, despite high tasting experience (86%), only 36% of respondents had actually purchased olive oil. This lower purchase rate may reflect the perception of olive oil in China as a premium gift item rather than a daily culinary staple. The existence of consumers who have tasted the product but not purchased it directly suggests significant opportunities to expand market penetration through targeted distribution and promotional channels (Table 3).

Table 4 – Univariate logistic regression analysis of factors influencing olive oil purchase behavior

Independent variable	B	SE	Wald	OR (95% CI)	P
Tried olive oil (learning, cognition)	0.673	0.295	5.204	1.959 (1.099-3.492)	0.023
Gender: male	0.587	0.190	9.503	1.798 (1.238-2.610)	0.002
Monthly income:					
390-650 dollars	0.655	0.281	5.431	1.925 (1.110-3.341)	0.020
> 650 dollars	0.661	0.270	5.995	1.973 (1.141-3.290)	0.014
Age:					
26-36 years	0.550	0.284	3.761	1.733 (0.994-3.022)	0.045
> 36 years	0.533	0.279	3.666	1.705 (0.987-2.943)	0.046
Purchase reason:					
health	0.915	0.311	8.739	2.505 (1.363-4.604)	0.003
special flavor of olive oil (learning)	2.028	0.349	33.796	7.600 (3.836-15.058)	0.000
dietary habits	1.748	0.392	19.928	5.744 (2.666-12.374)	0.000
symbol of identity (social status)	1.674	1.442	1.348	5.333 (0.316-90.027)	0.246

B = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; Wald = Wald χ^2 statistic; OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; P = p-value.

OR (95% CI) represents the odds ratio and its 95% confidence interval. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 5 – Multivariate logistic regression analysis of factors influencing olive oil purchase behavior

Independent variable	B	SE	Wald	OR (95% CI)	P
Tried olive oil (learning, cognition)	0.640	0.319	4.019	1.897 (1.014-3.548)	0.045
Gender: male	0.505	0.206	6.007	1.657 (1.106-2.482)	0.014
Monthly income:					
390-650 dollars	0.655	0.315	4.316	1.842(1.045-3.557)	0.025
> 650 dollars	0.945	0.320	8.746	1.985 (1.347-3.843)	0.012
Purchase reason:					
health	0.722	0.319	5.127	2.058(1.102-3.843)	0.024
special flavor of olive oil (learning)	1.983	0.363	29.823	7.267(3.566-14.808)	0.000
dietary habits	1.692	0.407	17.308	5.432(2.447-12.507)	0.000

B = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; Wald = Wald χ^2 statistic; OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; P = p-value.

OR (95% CI) represents the odds ratio and its 95% confidence interval. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 6 – Factors Influencing Consumer Olive Oil Purchasing Behavior
(Odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals)

Predictor Variables	OR (95% CI)	Scale
Flavor motivation		7.27 (3.57-14.81)
Habit motivation		5.43 (2.45-12.51)
Health motivation		2.06 (1.10-3.84)
Income (>\$ 650)		1.99 (1.35-3.84)
Tasting experience		1.90 (1.01-3.55)
Income (\$ 390-\$ 650)		1.84 (1.05-3.56)
Male gender		1.66 (1.11-2.48)

Note. This table displays the odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) from a multivariate logistic regression analysis. The reference line at OR = 1 indicates no effect.

Key findings:

- *Sequence of influencing factors:* flavor motivation (OR = 7.27) is the strongest driver of olive oil purchasing behavior, followed by habit motivation (OR = 5.43) and health motivation (OR = 2.06).
- *Other significant factors:* income level and taste experience also show significant positive associations with purchasing behavior.
- *Statistical significance:* the 95% confidence intervals of all factors do not include 1, indicating that all effects are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Element description: ■ represents the estimated odds ratio (OR) point.

The horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, and the reference line at OR = 1 indicates no effect.

Source: Authors' elaboration

4.2 Discussion

This study found that income, health motivation, and taste experience are the key factors influencing Chinese consumers' olive oil purchasing behavior. These findings are consistent with, and expand upon, the existing theoretical framework and empirical research.

The strong positive correlation between income and purchase likelihood indicates that higher disposable income reduces the budget constraints associated with high-quality products such as olive oil (Grossman, 2017). This confirms that olive oil is regarded as a normal good with positive income elasticity in China, similar to findings in Western contexts (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008).

Health motivation emerges as a powerful driving factor ($OR = 2.058$), which can be explained by the Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975). Given the growing awareness among Chinese consumers of public health initiatives and chronic diseases, an increasing number of people view olive oil consumption as a positive health investment, consistent with the recommendations in the *Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents* (2022).

The importance of taste experience ($OR = 1.897$) underscores the role of sensory cognition in consumer decision-making (Damasio, 1996). Direct sensory interaction with products can serve as a powerful quality cue influencing consumers' purchasing behavior. This finding highlights the importance of firms shifting from informational marketing to experiential marketing in the Chinese market.

Regarding gender, our model indicates that male respondents are more likely to purchase olive oil. However, since the sample consists mainly of female respondents (65%), these results should be interpreted with caution. This may reflect a specific subgroup of male consumers who are more engaged in purchasing premium health foods; however, further research with balanced samples is needed to draw definitive conclusions.

Unlike some studies on organic foods (Li, 2020), age is not a significant predictor in our model. This suggests that the appeal of olive oil in China spans different age groups, and that its main driver is general health concern rather than the lifestyle of specific cohorts.

One key advantage of this study is its grounding in the fundamental framework of consumer theory and the use of robust statistical methods suited for binary outcomes. However, one limitation of this study lies in the ratio of event variables, which may affect estimation stability. Future research with larger samples should apply bootstrap validation and other techniques to improve robustness. Moreover, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference.

5 Conclusions

This study suggests that the decision to purchase olive oil in China is primarily driven by economic capacity (income), health awareness motivation, and positive sensory experiences. The findings validate the applicability of Kotler's consumer purchasing decision model in this specific context, highlighting the interaction among personal (income), psychological (health motivation), and experiential (taste) factors.

Theoretically, this study integrates classical consumer behavior models with the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary Chinese market. Practically, the results provide marketers with clear strategic guidance: target consumers in middle and high-income urban areas, communicate credible health benefits of olive oil, and create sensory experience opportunities through in-store promotions and tasting activities. If effectively implemented, these strategies could substantially increase consumers' purchase conversion rates.

Future research could further examine the interactions among the factors identified in this study – such as income and health perception – and incorporate cultural or demographic variables (e.g., middle and high-income segments). This would deepen the understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying China's precision consumer market.

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