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ORGANIC SHOPPERS' INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIC FOODS: SELF AND IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT:

This study incorporates critical factors such as customer values to understand the organic shoppers' consumption of organic foods products.

Purpose

The paper identifies what drives customers to purchase organic food items - customer values, attitudes toward organic foods and support to environment, all of which influence customers.

Design/methodology/approach

Questionnaire surveys were administered to the purchasers of organic foods. The study is focused in Maharashtra, Pune Region. A total of 451 respondents completed responses were obtained for data analysis. To examine that 5 point likert scale were used and tested with Friedman Chi Square test.

Findings

Findings of the research indicates that main values for purchasing organic food items (Strong Predictor) are Healthy for family, Free from Preservatives, GMO, Pesticides, chemical fertilizers, Growth Hormones, Rich in nutrients, Environment friendly.

Key words:

Organic foods, attitude, Nutrition Value Health consciousness, Motives, Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION:

I. HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS

Health consciousness best describes those "consumers [who] are aware and concerned about their state of wellbeing and are motivated to improve and maintain their health and quality of life, as well as preventing ill health by engaging in healthy behaviours. These individuals tend to be more aware of health related information and invest their time physical fitness(Kraft, 1993). Many research were done in this regard where relation was found between organic food and health as a contributing factor towards attitudes and intentions to purchase organic food, the overwhelming majority of which find 'health' to be one of the primary reasons consumers buy organic foods. We will aim to discuss some of the literature below

(Brugarolas, 2005)

In this paper author said consumer's choice is influenced by many factors in which health concern has been given more weightage than other factors like concern about environment and food/diet. They consider it more dominating for paying higher price.

(Grossman, 1972)

In this research researcher commented that deterioration in human health was a main reason to influence consumers to think about organic food. On the other side consumers bought organic food as an investment in good health.

(Budi Suprpto, 2012)

The aim of this study is to examine the model of consumer's purchase intention towards organic food in Indonesia. Its model presents the relationship among healthy consumption life style, attitude toward organic food, and purchase intention of organic food.

(Juhdi)

This study attempted to gain knowledge about consumer attitude towards organic food products. Result indicated that people do aware of what is happening to the surroundings with regards to the environment and ecology problems and most consumers perceived that organic food product is healthier. They portray a positive attitude towards organic food and exhibit willingness to pay at certain amount of price.

(Naspetti, 2012)

The paper presents partial results from an Italian study on consumer perception and knowledge of organic food and related behaviour.. All consumers associate organic products with health at different levels of abstraction and want good, tasty and nourishing products, because pleasure and wellbeing are their most important values. Results show that differences exist between groups of consumers with respect to their frequency of use (experience) of organic products and level of information (expertise).

II. NUTRIENT VALUE

(Heaton)Assessing organic food quality:

This study was done to answer the question 'is organic food better for you?' in terms of safety, nutritional content and biological value aspects of food quality. In this study evidence the result proved that available valid evidence supports the consumer intuition that organically produced foods are superior in terms of food safety, nutritional content and nutritional value to non-organically produced foods.

(Bourn, 2002)

In this research author commented that consumers buys organic food items because nutritive attribute gave competitive advantage to organic food over conventionally produced goods. That give inclination to buyers choose organic produce.

Conclusion:

Although health benefits is considered as a key motivator described under several studies but some studies (Tarkiainen, 2005)(Michaelidou, 2008)do not consider it is very important. For them, health benefit is the least important influence for purchase of organic food. With the contradiction in views regarding the importance of health benefits, researcher aims to test it.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the motives behind purchasing organic food items and their attitude towards organic produce

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H1a: There is a significant difference in the weightage customers attached to the various reasons for buying organic food items

H1b: There is a no difference in the weightage customers attached to the various reasons for buying organic food items

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

❖ Primary Method of Data Collection

- **Questionnaires:** The data was collected through self-administered questionnaires which were distributed to the buyers and non buyers of organic produce in Pune region.
- **Interviews:** Discussion were also done with buyers & non buyers of organic produce to understand buying behaviour pattern for household grocery items

- ❖ **Secondary Method of Data Collection** The secondary data was collected from: Books, reports, newspaper article, e- journals, journals, research papers, websites, and publications-periodicals.
- ❖ **Sample size:** The study is focused in Maharashtra, Pune Region. A total of 451 respondents participated in the survey.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Above hypothesis are tested statically.

H2a: There is a significant difference in the weightage customers attached to the various reasons for buying organic food items

Statistical Test: Friedman Chi Square test

Variable & Measurement: Respondents were presented with following seven reasons for purchasing organic food items. Each reason were measured on 5-Point Likert scale (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

- It is Healthy for me & my family
- Free from Preservatives, GMO, Pesticides , chemical fertilizers, Growth Hormones
- More Nutrient value-(Rich in Vitamins & Minerals)
- Safe for environment
- Tastier than non-organic
- Provide peace of mind when I consume organic
- Support Farmer Initiative

Result shows:

Level of Significance $\alpha = 0.05$

Observation: $\chi^2 (6) = 251.010, P = 0.000, N = 236$

Conclusion:

Since the P value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05) the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is significant difference in the weightage customers attached to the various reasons for buying organic food items

In order to find where the difference lies we refer to the Ranks Table.

Ranks Table of Reasons for Consuming Organic Food Items

	Mean Rank
Healthy for me & my family	4.80
Free from Preservatives , GMO, Pesticides , chemical fertilizers	4.57
More Nutrient value-(Rich in Vitamins & Minerals)	4.46
Safe for environment	4.39
Tastier than non-organic	3.35
Provide peace of mind when I consume organic	3.15
Support farmers initiative	3.27

Source: Field Survey

Interpretation: From the Ranks table it can be seen that “It is healthy for me & my family” has a mean rank of 4.80, “Free from Preservatives, GMO, Pesticides , chemical fertilizers, Growth Hormones” has a mean rank of 4.57, “More Nutrient value-(Rich in Vitamins & Minerals)” has a mean rank of 4.46, “Safe for environment” has a mean rank of 4.39, “Tastier than non-organic” has a mean rank of 3.35, “Provide peace of mind when I consume organic” has a mean difference of 3.15, “Support farmers initiative” has a mean difference of 3.27.

Conclusion of Hypothesis: Hence it can be concluded that the top four reasons (Strong Predictor) for purchasing organic food products are Healthy for family, Free from Preservatives, GMO, Pesticides, chemical fertilizers, Growth Hormones, Rich in nutrients, Environment friendly. *It is found that Health is a main motive for buying organic food items.*

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

The research done in the past showed the mixed results about the effect of motives on attitudes towards organic produce. Authors report both significant and insignificant relationships between role of motives (e.g. health consciousness, food safety) and reason behind the consumption of organic produce remains to some extent elusive. The research reported in this paper contributes to knowledge by first studying health consciousness, food safety concern and safety for environment as predictors of attitudes towards organic produce. The findings reported in this study are important in furthering our understanding of the role (Strong Predictor) for purchasing organic food products are Healthy for family, Free from Preservatives, GMO, Pesticides, chemical fertilizers, Growth Hormones, Rich in nutrients, Environment friendly of organic produce. Findings indicate food safety concern as the most important predictors of attitudes towards organic produce.

Future research can be done to explore the dimensions like consumer trust in organic, renewable energy and carbon offsets. Further, findings in this study show Support farmer's initiative to be the least important motive in predicting attitudes toward organic produce.

Appendix

Table 1 Test Statistics^a of Reasons for Consuming Organic Food Items

N	
Chi-Square	236
df	251.010
Asymp. Sig.	.000

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