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Organic foods motivations factors for consumers

Nihan Ozguven ^a

^a*Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir 35160, Turkey*

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the motivations factors of buying organic foods in consumers. Consumers were approached during their food shopping in retail chain in Izmir. Research samples know meaning of “organic foods”. The questionnaire included in a number of criteria that influence consumers when buying food. Data is analyzed with SPSS to explain consumers’ willingness to buy organic foods. The results show that most consumers associate organic at first with milk, fruit and vegetables with organic products. The decision-making process is complex and the motives factors may affect vegetables. Data were collected in Izmir. So research are represented only research samples. This is not generalized. Research results are important for company and consumers. Because these findings have implications for future sector-based communications to consumers. However they inform company for product development and consumer behaviour.

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1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour in terms of preferences and opportunities for choice: unlike preferences, the opportunities for choice are often directly observable so that, to the extent that variations in behaviour can be traced to variations in opportunities, they have a straightforward and objective explanation of observed phenomena (Deaton, Muellbauer, 1980). It is important for marketers to be aware of the changes in consumers’ behaviour.

In marketing, however, the analysis of consumer behaviour is dealing primarily with preferences and how preferences are formed in the mind of the consumer. Marketing approaches to consumer behaviour may be distinguished as cognitive versus behavioural. From a cognitive perspective, can be defined consumer behaviour as the activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, and using products and services to satisfy needs and desires. Such activities involve mental and emotional processes, in addition to physical actions (Zanoli, Naspetti, 2002).

In order to understand why customers are interested in purchasing a product, it is necessary to understand the nature of the finalised buying decisional process and, therefore, of what they want or try to achieve through the purchase (Smith and Swinyard, 1999).

In this study I will focus on consumer motivation in the case of organic products. The study was essentially aimed at analysing factors of motivating consumer to buy organic food. The paper opens with a detailed discussion of the international literature surrounding the organic consumer and the factors that affect buying for organic products.

2. Literature Review

Many of the consumer studies on organic food have considered factors that motivate consumers for organic food consumption, consumers' attitudes and consumers profile who buy organic foods.

Silverstone, (1993) the reasons that account for a reversal in favourable attitude towards organic products are price and availability.

Hutchins and Greenhalgh (1995) examined organic foods who buy. Among organic purchasers, health and children were most important reasons.

Davis et al., (1995) reveal that purchase motives are attributed to environmental and health consciousness, safety and quality concerns and exploratory food buying behaviour, as well as to specific product attributes such as nutritional value, taste, freshness, and price.

Thompson and Kidwell, (1998) the study of the socio-demographic profile of organic product buyers, all studies agree they are mainly women, who buy in larger quantities and more frequently than men. The age factor does not play role of buying organic foods. But the presence of children in the family seems to play an important role, positively influencing organic purchase.

Worner and Meier-Ploeger, (1999) Consumers doubts about product guarantees, lack of promotion and misunderstanding of organic ways of production.

Worner and Meier-Ploeger, (1999) other purchase motives that seem to reflect national interests, such as support to organic farmers for German consumers. Meier-Ploeger and Woodward, (1999) animal welfare for British consumers.

Mintel (2000) survey found youngest and oldest age groups least concerned with organic, reflecting a lower emphasis on health and diet. Organic purchasing grows as consumers reach their 30s and have no children.

Chrysochoidis (2000) explored attitudes toward organic food products. Respondents think there are differences between organic and conventional products but consider the actual differences to be insignificant.

Fotopoulos et al. (2002) examined attitudes and behaviors of buyers and non-buyers of organic food. Organic buyers were further segmented into four groups. These groups are explorers, greens, motivateds and price sensitives.

Wier et al. (2003) studied the effect of both public and private factor influences on consumers' demand for organics. Their results show that private benefits i.e. user values such as product health benefits, taste, and freshness influence purchases more than public (non-user) values such as environmental and animal welfare.

Magnusson (2004) factors driving willingness to pay for different food products that included organics, conventional and genetically modified organisms. The study findings suggest that a majority of consumers have positive attitudes towards purchasing organic foods. Yet, few purchase organic foods regularly.

Krystallis and Chrysochoidis (2005) found in a Greek urban setting that factors such as food quality and security, trust in the certification, and in some cases, the brand name correlated much more strongly with willingness to pay than did price or socio-demographic variables.

3. Organic Foods

Baker et al., (2004) described organic food market is as a promising and predicting to grow strongly. Therefore investigating drivers or motives for organic food consumption has become an important marketing research issue in recent years (Squires et al., 2001).

The development of the organic sector has been driven by growing interest of consumers, retailers that have had a role in furthering growth, promoting products, increasing range and aiding farmers to convert.

The main reasons that prevent consumers from buying organic food are; high price, lack of availability, satisfaction with conventional food, lack of trust, the limited choice and lack of perceived value (Makatouni, 2002).

Organic food consumption is often related to an alternative lifestyle that includes active environmentalism, vegetarianism and/or alternative medicine (Cicia, et al, 2002). Organic food is produced without pesticides, herbicides, inorganic fertilisers, antibiotics and growth hormones (Honkanen et al., 2006:420).

Many studies have dealt with motivations to purchase organic food, including health concern, environmental concern, food safety, sensory variables, ethical concerns or value structure (Tregear et al., 1994; Magnusson et al., 2003;). Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis (1998) find that organic produce buyers are concerned about the safety of foods and that they are willing to pay a premium for such produce.

Organic food purchases are mainly attributed to consumers' environmental concerns and food quality/safety consciousness.

4. Methodology

4.1. Objectives of the Study

The principal aim of the study was to understand consumer motivations with regards to organic food.

4.2. Data and Methods

Data collection took place during the last two weeks of January 2012. Purchasers were approached during their food shopping in retail chains in Izmir. For analysis of the questionnaires, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), was selected because of its ability to extensively analyse quantitative data.

The surveys have covered a number of issues, such as socio-demographic features, product group and motivations factors. Motivations factors are too much. These factors are quality, security, trust, senses, price, convenience, brand name value, ethical self-identity, environmental view, healthy and food safety. So I maked interview with 45 consumers. 45 participants of the pilot study presented both genders and various age. I asked them which factors are important for them. They were opinion union at quality, price, healthy and food safety. Closed questions were presented to respondents and a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure consumer motivation (i.e. 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'). Studies of Fotopoulos and Krystallis (2002), Krystallis and Chryssosoidis (2005), Michaelidou and Hassan (2008) were used as reference while preparing the basic scale expressions in the survey form.

Five hundred questionnaires and prepaid return envelopes were sent to a representative sample of the Izmir population. Four hundred thirty questionnaires were returned (86%), of which 410 were usable.

4.3. Findings of the study

The analysis of the reliability value is obtained as 0.848 - accordingly, indicating a high reliable scale ($0.80 < \alpha < 1$). Of the participants, 39% were male, while 61% were female. 22% of respondents are aged 18-25 years, 15% are aged 26-35 years, 34% are aged 36-45 years, 12% are aged 46-55 years, 10% are aged 56-65 years and 7% are more than 65 years old. According these results, participants are 36-45 years. 17% of survey respondents are elementary school graduates, 38% are high school graduates, 45% are university graduates. This findings show that participants are university graduate. 70% of respondents are married and 30% of them are unmarried. Among the respondents of survey, 15% earn 500-1500, 22% earn 1501-2500, 33% earn 2501-3500, 26% earn 3501-4500, 4% earn 4501TL or more than. Participants earn 2501-3500. 19% of the surveyed work in public sector, 25% of them work in private sector, 4% are housewives, 9% are retired, 12% of them are students, 16% are self-employed and 15% are trader. Most of the participants work in private sector.

We have used the respondents' answers of how often they buy organically produced food to divide the sample of organic consumers. The consumption of organic food is low Izmir, and our data shows that only 8% eat organic food at least once a week, 25% eat montly, 57% eat once a year , %10 eat. two times a year or more than.

Most participants regularly purchased organic products were milk (47% of respondents), fruits (29% of respondents), eggs (7% of respondents), vegetables (9% of respondents), bread (7% respondents) and clothing (2% respondents) were regularly purchased. Asked the participants organic product consumption is changing according type of product. Of the participants 78% said "yes", 22% said "no". Also they said they prefer organic product type of non-durable consumer goods especially foods.

According to the factor analyses four factor solution based on twenty nine statements. The first factor, quality has 15; the second factor, price has 5, third factor healthy has 6 and the last factor, food safety has 3 questions. Factor loadings of the questions for the first factor are between 0.652 and 0.768; for the second factor are between 0.647 and 0.728, for the third factor are between 0.788 and 0.812, for the last factor are between 0,823 and 0,876. All factor load values high. The first factor explains 32% of the total variance, the second factor explains 29%, the third factor explains 22%, and the last factor explains 17% of the total variance. According to the obtained findings, quality and price are more explanatory than the other factors.

According to the correlation of the scale dimensions there is a strong direct correlation between quality, price, healthy and food safety dimensions. There are 0,853 pearson correlation between quality and price, 0,714 pearson correlation between quality and healthy, 0,632 pearson correlation between quality and food safety, 0,678 pearson correlation between price and healthy, 0,842 between price and food safety, 0,876 between healthy and food safety. Finding show that price and quality and healthy and food are more stronger relationship than other dimensions.

Accordingly, test value was taken as 3. If the average value of the expressions is more than 3, then it means that the respondents agree. However, the t values show that respondents do not agree in the statements: "I think foods are not helping me control my weight", "I think foods are helping me control my stress" and "I don't think foods are keeping me awake". These statement mean values are; 2.359; 2.145; 2.647. These statements t test value are negative. They agree the most statements are; "Nowadays most foods contain residues from chemical spays and fertilizers", "The quality and safety of meat nowadays concerns me", "Foods apperance is very important for me", "I am looking country of origin", "It is important that the food is value for money" and "Brand name is significant for me". These statements' mean values are respectively; 3.624; 4.256; 3.897; 5.768; 4.753, 3.875.

In this study, the following hypotheses are formed; H₁: Quality motivate buying organic food, H₂: Price motivate buying organic food, H₃: Healthy motivate buying organic food, H₄: Food Safety motivate buying organic food

When the hypotheses were tested with regression analysis, quality motivate buying organic foods was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The relationship is a very strong and positive one ($r = 0.832$). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r^2) was calculated as 0.725. Consumers buy organic foods because of quality. Hypothesis H₁ is accepted.

The relationship between price and organic foods is a positive one ($r = 0.785$). However, the correlation coefficient (r^2) was calculated as 0.649; H₂ hypothesis was accepted. But this relationship is sub-oriented. Price influence organic foods buyers. They don't want to buy organic foods because of price. They think organic foods are expensive.

Healthy motivates buying organic foods ($r = 0.894$). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r^2) was found to be 0.77. Hypothesis H₃ is accepted.

Food safety motivates organic foods buyers ($r = 0.861$). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r^2) was found to be 0.73. Hypothesis H₄ is accepted.

5. Research Limitations

Leaving aside specific limitations very common to similar surveys (for instance, limited sample size and representativeness in relation to the wider population), largely due to the sample's recruitment method, a number of weaknesses should be openly discussed, mainly in relation to the research design. Data were collected in Izmir. So research are represented only research samples. This is not generalized.

6. Conclusion

In this study participants were male, 36-45 years, university graduate, married, earn 2501-3500 and private sector workers. They eat organic foods twice a years. This show that consumers in İzmir do not consume a lot of organic foods. They prefer to buy milk that is type or organic product. According to factor analyzing four factor are important for consumer to motivate buying organic foods. These are healthy, quality, price and food safety.

The findings reported in this study are important in furthering our understanding of the role of quality, price, healthy and food safety in the purchase of organic produce. Findings indicate that healthy and price are the most important predictors of buying organic produce. All hypothesis are accepted.

According all findings, company should make numerous advertising to introduce organic foods. Nowadays, consumers are conscious. So they began to prefer organic foods. But these consumers number are so slightly. Numbers should be increase.

Turkey consumers' stated differs according to the organic product categories. The importance of motives vary between different product categories. So future research may focus on product segmentation.

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