



ORGANIC CHOICES: CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS BEHIND CHOOSING ORGANIC BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

Consumers today are more sophisticated. Their decision to go for a particular organic brand is often based on a mix of psychological, social, and economic considerations. These can range from individual health objectives, past experience with the brand, perceived value, price consciousness, word-of-mouth influence from friends or social media, packaging attractiveness, or congruence with environmental or ethical concerns. Brand credibility, third-party endorsements, and open communication also have a crucial role in establishing consumer trust and loyalty. The present study aimed to understand consumer motivations behind choosing organic brands in Erode District. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 120 organic product users in the study area. Convenience sampling was applied and the study revealed that develop new organic products catering to diverse consumer preferences and lifestyle needs to maintain interest and loyalty. Since price can be a barrier, organic brands might consider offering loyalty programs, promotions and value packs to make organic products more accessible.

KEYWORDS: Consumers, Congruence, Environmental, Organic, Promotions.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, consumer consciousness and interest in health, sustainability, and ethical consumption have driven a tremendous surge in demand for organic products. As people become increasingly aware of what they eat, organic brands have become important players in providing alternatives that are felt to be safer, healthier, and kinder to the environment than conventional brands. This change in consumer choice is not a fad but a manifestation of more profound motivations driven by health awareness, greenery, food safety, and personal ethics. Organic brands now are competing not only on product quality but also on trust, transparency, certification, and brand identity. Knowing what motivates consumers to particularly purchase organic brands is paramount to marketers, retailers, and manufacturers in this arena. Those drivers can vary from faith in the genuineness of certified labels, social network influence, history of positive past experience, to perceived brand dependability and ethical branding behavior. In a health-conscious, eco-aware world, demand for organic food products has been growing exponentially. Today's consumers are not only concerned with flavor or cost; they are looking at products in terms of health value, food security, ethical origin, and sustainability. In this new marketplace, it is the organic brands that are more than mere providers of products—symbols of credibility, openness, and sustainable consumption. The growing popularity of organics is supported by increasing consumer conviction that organic produce is safer, healthier, and better for the environment than conventionally produced options. Governments and food authorities worldwide have implemented certification schemes and labeling requirements to foster consumer confidence in organic labeling. But, in an increasingly congested marketplace, not all organics are perceived to be equal. Brand positioning, reputation, and identity now increasingly shape consumer decisions, particularly in choosing between two competing organic brands. In addition, with the growing digitalization of marketing and retail, customers are exposed to different organic brands on social media, advertising, sponsored posts by influencers, and reviews. While digital exposure can raise brand consciousness, it makes the decision-making process more complex. Therefore, knowing what actually influences a consumer to select one organic brand over another has become a strategic imperative for organic businesses.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The market for organic food has seen high growth over the last ten years, with rising consumer concern for health, green credentials, and animal welfare in production. Yet with the growth has come a problem for many organic brands to stand out in an overcrowded market with numerous choices available. While many studies have looked at the overall consumer attitude towards organic products, no gap exists in knowing the particular reasons consumers prefer one organic brand to another. This research is necessary in order to determine and examine the



most important determinants of consumer demand for organic brand names, as opposed to generic organic products. Knowing these motivations is essential for organic brands to implement successful marketing strategies, establish brand loyalty, and create long-term consumer relationships. In addition, with the times demanding more openness, honesty, and congruence with one's values, organic companies have to adjust their communication and product development to address these demands. Through exploration of what drives consumers, this research will offer insightful information that can be of help to organic brands in enhancing product development, communications, and consumer engagement. Lastly, the present study is relevant to policymakers and other stakeholders in the organic food sector by identifying consumer concerns and priorities and thus facilitating the expansion of the organic market and encouraging healthier, sustainable consumption patterns.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

In spite of increased popularity for organic food items, organic brands still experience great difficulties in capturing and holding on to consumers. Although numerous consumers admit to a general desire for organic foods on the basis of perceived health and environmental reasons, the concrete reasons for their preference for one organic brand over another are still unknown. This makes it challenging for organic brands to adequately position themselves within the market as well as create aimed marketing campaigns. In addition, the market for organic foods is becoming more competitive with the influx of many brands that deal in the same products, and it becomes tricky to differentiate among them. There is also uncertainty around the influence of price sensitivity, certification trust, packaging, peer influence, and brand reputation on purchase behavior and satisfaction after purchase. Lacking a holistic understanding of these motivating forces, organic brands can lose consumers to rivals or traditional options even as demand for organic options increases. Thus, this study seeks to explore and examine consumer motivating factors behind organic brand preferences in order to enable businesses to better address consumer demands and ensure greater brand loyalty.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This research seeks to investigate the most influential consumer motivations for opting for organic brands in Erode District, examining how attributes like health consciousness, brand, product label, peer, and environmental issues influence purchasing decisions. By uncovering these driving forces, the study offers important insights into consumer behavior and enables organic brands to customize their strategies to better address consumer needs and establish enduring relationships.

MATERIALS OF THE STUDY

Consumer interest in organic food products has significantly increased over the past decades, largely driven by growing health consciousness and environmental concerns (Yiridoe, Bonti-Ankomah, & Martin, 2005). Studies indicate that consumers perceive organic food as safer, more nutritious, and environmentally friendly compared to conventional alternatives (Grunert, Hieke, & Wills, 2014). These perceptions play a crucial role in motivating purchase decisions. Research by Pino, Peluso, and Guido (2012) highlights that health benefits are the primary motivation for consumers when choosing organic products, followed closely by environmental sustainability and ethical considerations. However, beyond the general preference for organic foods, brand-specific factors also influence consumer choice. For instance, Grankvist and Biel (2007) found that trust in organic certification and brand reputation significantly affect consumer loyalty towards organic brands. Price remains a barrier for many consumers, with studies suggesting that although willingness to pay a premium exists, it varies by demographic factors such as income and education (Yiridoe et al., 2005; Hughner et al., 2007). Packaging and labeling are also important, as they convey information about product authenticity and health benefits, influencing consumers' perceived value and purchase intentions (Magnusson et al., 2003). Social influence is another key driver. Thøgersen (2010) observed that recommendations from family and peers can significantly affect organic food purchases, especially among younger consumers who are active on social media platforms. Furthermore, the convenience and availability of organic products impact consumer behavior, with better accessibility positively correlating with increased purchases (Magnusson et al., 2001). Despite these insights, there remains limited research focusing specifically on the motivations behind choosing particular organic brands, rather than organic products in general. This gap points to the need for a more detailed examination of brand-related factors such as trust, authenticity, and marketing communication strategies in influencing consumer preferences (Magnusson et al., 2001; Grunert et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized a quantitative study design with a structured questionnaire to gather primary data from 120 users of organic products in Erode District. Convenience sampling was applied in the selection of participants due to their accessibility and willingness to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained Likert-scale items used to determine various consumer motivations in the selection of organic brands, including health issues, environmental care, product quality, and trust in the brand. To examine the data, the Friedman Rank Test—a non-



parametric test that is appropriate for comparing ranked variables—was used to establish the relative significance of these motivations among the respondents. This method shed light on the most critical factors that drive the preferences of consumers for organic products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Price	120	2.56	1.002	1	5
Certification	120	2.70	1.199	1	5
Brand	120	4.18	1.263	1	5
Availability	120	2.43	1.268	1	5
Packaging	120	3.01	1.000	1	5
Recommendations from others	120	2.38	.936	1	5
Information on health benefits	120	2.68	1.216	1	5
Environmental impact	120	4.11	1.308	1	5
Taste and freshness	120	2.94	.929	1	5
Product variety	120	3.14	1.169	1	5
Promotions or discounts	120	2.55	1.166	1	5
Trust in source/farmer	120	2.14	1.292	1	5
Convenience of purchase	120	4.53	.961	1	5
Past experience with organic products	120	3.18	1.069	1	5
Nutritional value	120	3.35	1.066	1	5

The descriptive statistics reveal that among the various factors influencing consumers' decisions to choose organic brands, convenience of purchase stands out as the most significant motivator, with a high mean score of 4.53, indicating that consumers highly value easy access to organic products through online platforms or delivery services. Closely following are brand reputation (mean = 4.18) and environmental impact (mean = 4.11), which suggest that consumers not only prefer trusted and recognizable organic brands but are also motivated by the ecological benefits associated with these products. These findings underscore the importance of strong brand positioning and sustainability messaging in attracting and retaining consumers. Factors such as nutritional value (mean = 3.35), past experience with organic products (mean = 3.18), product variety (mean = 3.14), and packaging (mean = 3.01) hold moderate influence, implying that while consumers appreciate diverse options, appealing packaging, and the perceived health benefits of organic foods, these are secondary to convenience and brand trust. On the other hand, variables like price (mean = 2.56), certification labels (mean = 2.70), information on health benefits (mean = 2.68), availability (mean = 2.43), recommendations from others (mean = 2.38), and trust in the source or farmer (mean = 2.14) scored lower, indicating that these aspects are less critical in influencing consumer choices for organic brands, although the variability in standard deviations shows that some consumers still consider these factors important. Interestingly, taste and freshness received a moderate but slightly below-average score (mean = 2.94), suggesting that while these sensory attributes are relevant, they are not primary drivers in brand selection. Overall, this data suggests that organic brands seeking to enhance consumer engagement should focus on improving purchase convenience, reinforcing brand reliability, and emphasizing environmental benefits, while also considering moderate enhancements in product variety, packaging, and nutritional communication to meet consumer expectations more comprehensively.

Table 2
Friedman Rank Test

Variables	Mean Rank
Price	6.35
Certification	6.75
Brand	11.44
Availability	6.14
Packaging	7.89
Recommendations from others	5.79
Information on health benefits	6.80
Environmental impact	11.44
Taste and freshness	7.64
Product variety	8.15
Promotions or discounts	6.35



Trust in source/farmer	5.08
Convenience of purchase	12.77
Past experience with organic products	8.39
Nutritional value	9.02

The ranking of factors influencing consumer decisions to choose organic brands reveals that convenience of purchase (mean rank = 12.77) is perceived as the most important aspect by consumers, reinforcing the notion that ease of access—such as online availability and delivery options—is a primary motivator. Brand reputation and environmental impact both share the second-highest mean rank (11.44), highlighting that consumers highly value trustworthy brands and the ecological benefits associated with organic products. These top-ranked factors underscore the critical role that brand identity and sustainability play in consumer preferences. Following these, nutritional value (9.02), past experience with organic products (8.39), and product variety (8.15) also rank relatively high, indicating that consumers give considerable weight to health benefits, familiarity with the product, and the availability of diverse options when making purchase decisions. Packaging (7.89) and taste and freshness (7.64) hold moderate importance, suggesting these factors influence consumer perceptions but are not among the primary drivers. On the lower end of the ranking, factors such as certification (organic label) (6.75), information on health benefits (6.80), price and promotions or discounts (both 6.35), availability (6.14), recommendations from others (5.79), and trust in source/farmer (5.08) receive comparatively lower ranks. This indicates that while these elements still contribute to consumer choices, they are less influential compared to convenience, brand, and environmental concerns. Hence, this ranking suggests that organic brands aiming to capture consumer interest should prioritize enhancing purchase convenience and building strong, environmentally responsible brand images. Secondary focus should be placed on highlighting nutritional benefits, offering variety, and leveraging positive consumer experiences to strengthen brand loyalty.

Table 3
Test Statistics^a

N	120
Chi-Square	467.593
df	14
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

The Friedman test was conducted to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the rankings of the 15 factors influencing consumers' decisions to choose organic brands. With a sample size of 120 respondents, the test yielded a Chi-Square value of 467.593 with 14 degrees of freedom, and an asymptotic significance (p-value) of .000. Since the p-value is less than the standard significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the rankings of the factors. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in how consumers prioritize the various factors affecting their choice of organic brands.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Consumers do not rate all of the factors as being of equal consequence; some drivers like purchase convenience, brand reputation, and green impact are rated much more highly than others like trust in the source or offers. This outcome corresponds with the previous findings from the mean ranks and the descriptive statistics, which verify that certain factors have more impact on consumers' decision-making for organic brands. From the evidence, it is clear that consumers care most about purchase convenience, reputation of the brand, and environmental sustainability when choosing organic brands, highlighting the importance for organic producers and marketers to pay most attention to these areas in order to reach and hold customers effectively. Brands ought to invest in providing convenient purchasing mechanisms like strong online platforms and trustworthy delivery methods in order to satisfy consumer preferences for convenience. Further, developing a credible, dependable brand identity that reflects environmental sustainability programs can ensure increased customer loyalty and product differentiation in the competitive marketplace. Although nutritional value, variety of product, and packaging rank as moderately important factors, these factors must be incorporated judiciously into marketing efforts to support the main drivers. Conversely, price sensitivity, certification labels, and recommendations, even if not as potent in their overall impact, cannot be omitted since they can influence certain consumer segments. Develop new organic products catering to diverse consumer preferences and lifestyle needs to maintain interest and loyalty. Since price can be a barrier, organic brands might consider offering loyalty programs, promotions and value packs to make organic products more accessible. All in all, organic brands that strategically highlight convenience, authenticity, and ecological responsibility alongside secondary factors can better meet consumer expectations, encourage brand loyalty, and aid the long-term growth of the organic food market. Future studies should probe demographic differences and the changing nature of the effect of online marketing to further tune strategies specific to different consumer segments.



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