

Typology of the organic consumer and their shopping habits

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Abstract

Aim: Understanding consumer attitudes and behaviours towards organic buying is imperative as the trend for organic food is growing. The following study extends an elaborative research towards the major factors and reasons that impels buyers for purchasing organic products. **Methodology:** A questionnaire and interview based survey is conducted from the buyers and sales managers (n=100) to understand the major factors that shape buying behaviours for organic products. **Results:** Health and perceived quality are the major factors that cause positive organic buying attitudes. Besides, environmental factors and labelling also plays a prominent role in organic purchasing. Pricing is more a matter of concern for occasional buyers that falters to buy organic products or prefer it over conventional ones due to the increased price premiums.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The market for organic food is growing at a rapid pace throughout Europe with slightly different rates in the eastern and western parts. Consumers are overwhelmed to buy healthy yet tasty food with high nutritional value. The confidence of consumer on food safety is estimated to rise as the environmental and animal welfare and food sustainability tends to grow (Mutlu, 2007). With respect to the market size, the UK has proved itself as one of the leading organic markets in Europe. In the year 2007, the total value of organic food consumption contributed around £2 billion that represented a leap of 22% as compared to sales in 2005 (Dangour, 2009). According to Padel et al (2005), this market growth has been stimulated by three major drivers: the increased customer interest, increased availability, and increased range of organic products along with an increase in promotional activities that provides conversion support to marketers. This dramatic rise in the organic market have greatly increased the consumer demand for organic products and so the willingness of supermarkets to stock organic products in a much greater amount as compared to the last decade. In view of the author, the organic market is basically driven with the consumer confidence which buyers have on organic products.

The industry of organic food is particularly the major area where media is focused over the past decade. The reports of massive growth over years and increased popularity and awakening of the current economic recession and falling sales numbers have all made this an area of higher consideration. Such profusions towards organic consumers have made the space of organic food very tropical yet the recession has confronted it with a unique opportunity to validate many conclusions to be drawn for the sake of better economics. The recession has, up to some extent, influenced the confidence of consumers leading to a significant drop in consumer spending for organic products (Dickieson et al, 2009). Arguably, Lockie et al (2009) has highlighted the rise and expansion and organic sector. According to the author, the sector has been growing and has become the centre of attractiveness that holds potentially higher margins. Since, there have been inaugurations substantially new retail chains include the Wal-Mart, this indicates for the growing interest in organic purchasing. This has led to the expansion of natural food chains as well such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's that specializes in the sale of organic foods. In the sale of organic foods, substantial shares are earned by the supermarkets that constitute 49% of the total whereas specialty stores follows with 48%. Farmers are deprived

from the shares as they are only endowed with 3% of the sales (Lockie et al, 2006). This potential difference in margins creates the incentives for grocery chains and urges them to enter the organic market.

The patterns of organic food buying are changing due to changes in the health and environmental issues. However, the interest in production of organic food has incredibly increased throughout the world (Willer et al, 2009). The production and processing of the organic food relies upon the consumer buying habits that determines the market demand which makes it necessary to analyse the consumer's perceptions and attitudes towards organic food products (Sangkumchaliang and Huang, 2012). As demonstrated by Tsakiridou et al (2008), the consumer behaviour comprise of ideals, feelings, experiences, and the environmental factors such like price and advertisements.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

- To determine the characteristics and traits of organic buyers
- To identify the factors that encourages or discourages consumers from purchasing organic food

1.2 Structure of Study

The background to the study has been described as part of Introduction. The portion for literature review is dedicated to show the key research and findings presented by different researchers over the course of time. The study focuses upon the organic consumers and their characteristic traits along with the motivation factors that influence their habits for consuming organic products. The methodology part introduces the reader with the study design and participants included for the survey. It articulates the way questionnaire was built and structured. The result section has presented an analysis of key findings and presents the confirmatory factor analyses and the authenticity and reliability of the conducted survey. The discussion part comprises of the core extracts and results that are discussed in light of literature and compared with the previous findings to confirm their credibility. It includes commenting on the major points of study by splitting the core findings into themes. It has studied the objectives in relation to the substantial researches while the conclusion part summarizes the results and findings and includes recommendation for future researches.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

It is a worldwide phenomenon that people have grown worried about their health statuses. The changes in health and well-being have separated the origins of food for majority of consumers. As the incidence of certain diseases is growing such as obesity and diabetes, consumers seek to buy for certified organic products that do not contain carcinogens and toxins. Since the awareness for the domestic problems are arising such as pesticide poisoning and diseases from the fresh food products, the consumers are overhauled to find food safety (Srithamma et al, 2005).

The increased demand for high quality and safe food has made the organic food a good option for consumers. There have been an ample accounts of study that have presented the habits of organic consumers and what makes them to choose for organic food across the world (Onyango et al, 2007; Gracia and Magistris 2007; Gracia and Magistris 2008; Makatouni 2002; Squires et al 2001; Briz and Ward, 2009; Essoussi and Zahaf 2008; Storstad and Bjorkhaug 2003; Shepherd et al 2005; Batte et al. 2007). Besides many studies have highlighted different factors that influences organic consumer choices such as the concern for chemical residues in conventional food, nutritional concern, pesticides, conventional food products, environmental protection, health concerns, and the factors that persists among all these is the improved taste and flavour of organic food products (Storstad and Bjorkhaug 2003; Voon et al 2011; Sangkumchaliang and Huang 2010).

The existing span of literature has covered many disciplines regarding organic food. These include the agriculture, economics, and political science. Majority of researches have narrated the education and socioeconomic statuses as the major factors that influence behaviours of organic consumers. However, the views are conflicting on the variables such as gender play and age. One issue that persists for organic consumers is the need of further exploration of the effect of prices on the purchasing traits of organic consumers and their willingness to choose among organic products with respect to their capacity to pay. In areas with lowered price mark-ups, the market share experiences by organics are relatively higher as compared to those with increasing high price. Such markets suffer from a low share as consumers are not inclined to spend money organic purchasing. The increased prices refrains them to do so and this is the situation which is pertinent in most of the areas across the world.

2.1 Characteristic Traits of Organic Consumers

2.1.1 Health consciousness

There has been an extensive research carried out to unfold the characteristics of relationship shared between the organic food and health; it serve as the major contributing factor towards sharing buyer's attitudes and intentions to buy. Health is the major primary reason that overwhelms people to buy organic food (Michaelidou et al 2007; Fotopolous and Chryssochoidis, 2001; Saher et al 2006).

Analysis of consumer behaviour and traits is complex that their motivation for buying organic food is driven by more than one factor. The identification of complex pattern and sophisticated understanding of their motivations may help to boost the market researches. However, the consumer behaviour is typically defined as the study of social, physical, and psychological actions that describes the user's actions for buying and using the products (Solomon, 2014; Paul and Olson, 2008). According to Blackwell et al (2001), the basic reason behind that motivates buying of organic is much deeper and is influenced by the characteristic circumstances of consumption and purchase.

According to Zanolli and Naspetti (2002), the relationship between the organic food and consumers can best be defined as health. Health stood to be one primary reason that describes why the consumers buy organic food. However, studies have described that it is not the only reason that urges organic consumers for consumption. The major reasons that causes consumers to purchase organic food is its healthier characteristics, more nutrition, no use of chemicals, and more enriched taste as compared to conventional food (Fotopoulos and Kryskallis, 2002; Wier and Calverley, 2002, Larue et al., 2004). According to Williams and Hammit (2001), most of the organic consumers buy to manage their health risks which are more likely to be emanated by conventional food products. According to Hamm and Gronefield (2004), the environmental friendly agricultural practice techniques make the organic food a good option for health conscious people. Along with good organic farming, the better taste is another common reason that urges the consumer.

In view of Olson and Paul (2008), consumer's response towards organic buying is regulated by the differences in marketing strategies that provides major entertainment to their health and price concerns. The consumer behaviour comprises of feelings, ideas, experiences,

and actions of consumers with additional environment factors including commends, prices, and ads. Moreover, organic consumer behaviour is a dynamic process as it constantly undergoes through perception changes. Kotler (2007) have described stimulus-respond model as significant to explain the consumer orientations. The author has referred the buyer's black box as the vital point that companies and market exploit to influence their behaviours for organic buying.

According to Irianto (2015), the demand increase for organic products has been noticed since 2000 and is majorly driven the perceptions consumers regarding food quality, safety, and the positive organic farming impacts. However, this is still prominent that the consumption of organic food is comparatively lower than organic food consumption (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). The researches pertaining to consumer's attitude and intentions for organic buying have shown inconsistent results (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005; Chen, 2009; Arvola et al., 2001; Vindigni, et al., 2002).

Lockie et al (2002) has by far declared health as the strongest motivator of organic purchasing. Interviews with regular and occasional buyers of organic food revealed the major motives which impules them for organic purchasing. Among these, the health consciousness received the highest value followed by the social aspects including economical support, local farming, and fair trade whereas least the factors pertaining to environmental protection. The strongest links within health consciousness include personal health, quality of life, and well-being. According to Lockie et al (2002), consumers prefer to buy organic products because in their perception, they contain no pesticide residues and therefore are better for health. However, the study proved health as the major and primary motivator, but not the only one to influence buyer's behaviours.

Even though, a large number of studies have supported health consciousness as the most dominant motive that drives consumer's intention, attitude, and behaviour, there have also been wide steams of researches that have placed polar argument. One such study is by Tarkianen and Sundqvist (2005) in which the authors found health consciousness as the least important factors in shaping organic buyer's attitude. The conflict in findings for health consciousness implies that although the respondents are conscious towards their health, they associate only fewer health benefits with organic food consumptions with little or no direct impact on motivations for organic purchasing.

2.1.2 Ethical Identity

Michaelidou et al (2008) has also declined the pertinence of health consciousness for organic buyer's decision. According to the author, health has the least impact purchasing intentions which imply that it only influence indirectly to the intentions. Besides, the strongest influence on buyer's intentions is created by ethical identity. The results were carried out through regressions analysis. These findings reflect for the presence of some egoistic motives such like healthiness and food safety to be least important to consider for analysing behaviours of organic purchasers. Contrastingly, the findings relative to ethical considerations have been found more relatable to shape the attitudes and intentions for organic food. Seemingly, there exists a clear divergent view that complicates the importance of health consciousness and its relationship with intentions.

2.1.3 Environment Consciousness

The environmental consciousness has a role in influencing consumer attitudes for organic buying. There exists a direct relationship between the environment consciousness and buying of organic food (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005; Chen, 2009; Kim and Chung, 2011). Individuals who are influenced by the environment consciousness are more encouraged to exhibit positive attitudes for organic food purchasing. This is because the cultivation of organic food relies upon several environmental aspects including organic compost, neutral pests, and manure fertilizers that tend to minimize the negative impacts on environment.

Particularly, the consumer attitudes towards health attributes and environment are the most important factors highlighted to explain consumer's decision making processes for buying organic food (Tsakiridou et al. 2008; Lea and Worsley 2005; RoitnerSchobesberger et al. 2008; Magistris and Gracia 2008). According to Briz and Ward (2009), the availability of information regarding the organic food market increases consumer's knowledge and therefore positively influences their attitudes for buying organic products.

2.1.4 Price

The purchasing done for organic food is low than the non-organic products. The basic reason proposed behind this distinction is that the organic foods are more expensive and are considered to be premium (Magnusson, et al., 2001; Vindigni, et al., 2002; Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002; Zanolli and Naspetti, 2002). This entails that the prices have effect on

consumer's behaviour and their attitudes for buying organic products are negatively influenced by the high prices of organic food (Lea and Worsley, 2005; Pellegrini and Farinello, 2009).

According to Kotler (2007), the user's behaviour of buying and their social classes are closely inter-connected. Such like the wealthy consumers are more prone to spend on technology and fashion as most of these people share the common interests. Moreover, Blackwell et al (2001), has provided evidences how certain social groups are inclined to spend on certain specific things that makes up the characteristic feature of their respective social class. This implies that the organic buying is most probably considered to be a product of wealthy people and therefore is ignored by consumer belong to low social classes.

Consumers are more likely to spend their time for finding good alternatives for a certain product (Solomon, 2006). Prior to make a purchase, consumers make sure to select the best alternative. The choices are alternatives are influenced by the quality and price of the product that fact how best the product fits into needs of consumer. The sensible combination of price, quality and brand helps to determine the purchase probability (Blackwell et al, 2001). It is important to survey the alternative market as it influences consumer behaviour for organic buying (Armstrong and Kotler, 2007). Conversely, The soil association survey results entails that half of the UK consumers seek to buy for organic food on buying reading labels and not search for brands.

2.1.5 Price and Health Consciousness

According to Molyneaux (2007), there exists a positive relationship between price and health consciousness. The author conducted a research on basic organic food motivators that indicated inherent food consumption urges as most important as knowledge to increase organic buying. More particularly, the private benefits of an individual appear to be more important drivers of organic food as compared to public ones including the environmental concerns and protection of bio-diversity. This ensures a pertinent relationship between price and health consciousness. Likewise, Kyrikopolous and van Dikj, (1997) found that the concerns of consumers regarding their health are positively influenced by the purchasing intentions for organic food.

Zanoli et al (2002) has also supported the relationship between price and health consciousness. The author tended to link the product attributes between the consumer needs. Among the sixty individuals interviewed using hard laddering approach, it was eminent that

consumers exhibited a positive attitude towards organic food whereas health and well-being stood be the central factors that influenced their behaviour to buy organic food. Among all the other factors, Zanoli et al (2002) has distinguished health as the prevalent preponderant personal factor.

2.2 Cultural/Demographic

According to Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005), the cultural differences causes consumer to follow different values that impacts the purchasing decisions for organic food. The consumer behaviour involves intricate yet complex patterns of requirements that involve extensive marketing research to understand the underlying mechanisms. The basic desire that drives the organic consumer research is to find the reasons that urge them to buy organic products. For the purpose, it is beneficial to investigate through the circumstances that encourages consumer to buy and consume. According to Aryal et al (2009), the premium price accruing to organic food has a direct relationship with the consumption level. The demand of organic products can be analysed relative to the proportion of user income that is usually spent on food consumption (Tsakiridou et al. 2008). Moreover, the consumer behaviour is a highly dynamic process that varies with respect to changes in activities, ideas, and perceptions. The attitudes are probably shaped by the selective comprises that consumers make to cope with their needs and demands. Learning is also facilitated by the experiences made regarding purchasing and in return tends to influence the behaviours. According to Padel and Foster (2005), the behaviours are mostly learnt and the way and circumstance in which it is learnt, is translated to form the buying traits and habits. The way how consumer learns to make food choices provides the major area of research for marketers.

Generally, the intentions of buying are influenced by knowledge. Decreased knowledge and awareness towards products and health negatively affects the consumer's perceptions and attitudes. These changes in attitudes are best described in the consumer behaviour theory according to which the buying decisions are made by individual's attention to perform behaviour in return. According to Aryal et al (2009), consumer's buying decisions are based on the three major aspects: the attitude, knowledge, and intention. Consumer knowledge is defined as the construct that impacts the way consumer decides to buy. The knowledge of people is mostly influenced by the type and quality of information available. Labelling, advertisements, certification, and awareness play a vital role in enriching their knowledge. Aryal et al (2009) has

described knowledge and awareness as the central to consumer behaviours. Additionally, the demographic characteristics are also notable as they explain the buying behaviours. The individual socio-demographic properties include economic characteristics and determinants of choice. In case, the buyer is unable to clearly differentiate the difference between the organic and conventional food, the pricing of organic food may confuse him and will effect to his decision by inclining him to gain better and lower cost substitutes that are mostly conventional. Besides, there are certain other factors that influence user traits and behaviour such as household, product attributes, family size, education, age, marital status, and children.

2.2.1 Trust in Labelling and Marketing

One of the critical factors that helps researcher in understanding the consumer's willingness to spend money for organic food is their inherent trust in labelling and certifications claimed on organic food packaging and promotional material (Krystallis and Chryssohoidis, 2005; Angulo et al, 2005). Consumer's trust is required to make them buy organic food. Most often, consumers are blindly compelled by their faith on claims that marketers and consumers make (Bellows, 2008). Contrastingly, Padel and Foster (2005) found that distrust on organic labelling and certification functions as the major barrier that prevents purchasers from buying organic food; a factor that ranks high alongside availability, price, and presentation concerns.

Padel (2005) has explored the gaps between the behaviours and attitudes of organic consumers. According to the author, there prevails a major confusion and lowered understanding about organic labelling. Consumers feel they can trust the quality claims if the product is lauded high through advertisements and labelling. These were the sentiments articulated by chefs. However, it was argued that it is nearly impossible to check through the overall farming operations to verify if the products are genuinely organic or not (kaufmann, 2009). Cinque (2009) argued that these notions are not significant for evaluation of organic buying traits, but it is authentic to believe that organic food can only be grown and controlled in small amounts.

The question persists that what actually customers prefers in buying organic food with respect to brands and packaging when they are out for shopping. A TNS study conducted for 4000 households to question people how they identify the products are purely organic. 52% of the people responded they simply look for mentioning of organic on packaging. This implies the word organic as the most valuable brand in the UK and more influential than any other kind of certification (Padel et al, 2008; Mintel, 2000). These findings were also resounded in the Tesco

experience where the retailers found only few brands that consumers identify as purely organic. They specifically search out for these brands, but there also persists a few brands beyond retailer's own labelling of organic lines that experiences measurable success or brand penetration (Pierce, 2009). Clearly organic labelling has been identified has the symbol taken in negotiated meanings that confuses and frustrates consumers. Since, they come from a range of background, they leads to create serious confusion that what organic actually means (Bellow, 2008).

According to Padel et al (2009), some of the mistrust or misinformation can be explained in terms of lack of willingness as parts of government tend to interfere organic supply chain. The consistent reluctance of government to involve itself in the organic certification scheme to assuage the customer's concerns, the organic standards in UK are primarily the initiatives taken by industry. However, the certified land area of organic food in the UK has been increasing on a steady pace; both the producers of England and Scotland are required to certify both the stock and label to facilitate their organic production. According to Padel (2005), as a result of labelling certification in the UK, 60-80% of the organic productions are marketed whereas the remainder is added up to the conventional food system.

2.3 LOHAS

LOHAS is an acronym used to represent the modern form of lifestyle that translates to lifestyles of sustainability and health. According to Wenzel et al (2007), LOHAS is mainly the group of people who tends mainly tends to buy organic vegetables and fair trade products. These are prosperous people who like to fly to distant destinations without worrying about paying a bit more to save climate, their health, and body shape. According to Paulesich (2008), the number of people enduring LOHAS lifestyles has been increasing at a greater pace and thus studies pertaining to LOHAS forms and interesting area for researchers to analyse organic consumption. Experts have narrated LOHAS as one of the most promising groups of organic consumers that contributes billions to the organic market. The role of LOHAS cannot be ignored to unfold the organic consumption patterns. Ernest and Young (2008) have referred LOHAS as the group of sustainable consumers.

As demonstrated by Emerich (2010), the LOHAS marketplace comprises of two things: diverse markets including the range of insurance and the specific set of consumers. Due to their diverse interests, the LOHAS play a greater role in different markets. Despite LOHAS represents a heterogeneous group of consumers, they mostly intend to buy from similar industries such as

consumers who show interest in organic products are also likely to avail alternative health product mainly from the companies that exhibits high social standards. According to Wenzel et al (2007), there are seven key markets that are greatly influenced by the LOHAS group. These include the design, tourism, sports, industries, health sector, leisure, and media. Food is by far the most important sector, particularly the organic agriculture (Kreeb et al, 2009). According to Willer (2011), appear appears to be the most dominating group among organic consumers that reign in almost every country of Europe and forms the greatest part of organic market. Likewise, the survey conducted by Ernest and Young (2008) entails the major associations that retains the affinity of LOHAS with the organic consumption is the credibility of organic agriculture in their perception, the motivation to take healthy food for optimal well-being, and the standards for environment and animal welfare. Opperman (2008) has associated all these principles with the values of LOHAS consumers. Moreover, LOHAS is also the sector of concern where the real sustainable lifestyle feels least questionable. Besides, the regional production and marketing is usually promoted as sustainable, they does not form central focus on LOHAS's shopping list. Therefore, the development for regional production is quite slow at growth.

However, the term sustainability is complex in itself and most of the time it is confused between different beliefs and phenomena. The term stretches beyond the equilibrium of ecologic, economic, and social aspects therefore making it rather harder for the consumers to decide which actually a sustainable product is. Ernest and Young (2008) has confirmed the confusion and complexity that is caused due to contradicting labels which makes it quite hard for the consumers to spot which product is highly suited for the LOHAS lifestyle. In view of the author, the brand and labelling sector has not yet reached to its full capacity to prove its optimal influence in consumer's buying decisions. the study has further underlined that this lack of labelling and brand marketing has caused many people more willing to spend for products that meets the above mentioned criteria (Kreeb et al, 2009). The percentage of organic buyers surveyed in different countries have revealed a total of 77-86% that show consents in spending up to 10% more for organic products (Ernest and Young, 2008). The particular percentages highlights the attractiveness of LOHAS willingness to spend money for organic products and the viability of findings for companies who can take the results into account for making new marketing strategies and production lines.

2.5 GM and Intuitions

The soil association has acknowledged that positive perceptions for organic food are largely based on intuitions rather than conclusive evidence (Saher, 2006). It has also been asserted that the supporters of organic food relies upon the scientific facts shaped their personal beliefs and experiences. This implies the perceptions of food safety as majorly important as they influences the purchase of organic food and behaviours are not always concerned with reality, but are normally founded upon intuitions and merely involves rational thinking such as refusal for adjusting opinions on the basis of new evidences (Morkenberg and Porter, 2001).

Saher et al (2006) investigated the potential role of field education in shaping thinking styles, meat avoidance, values, behavioural avoidance, and gender play in the genetically modified (GM) and organic food attitudes. The research included consideration whether these factors are direct or mediated. The intuitive and rational thinking as well as the behavioural avoidance are both identified as exogenous variables. The survey revealed negative attitudes towards GM foods while the organic food attitudes felt to be surprisingly positive. The results show that organic food in contrast with the GM provides more positive reactions.

Koffman (2009) claimed that the people's belief regarding what is good for their health is the major factors that appeals consumers to buy organic product. Since, the belief prevails that organic foods are free of chemicals; therefore they are more inclined to feed to their family. Moreover, the caterers and chefs agreed upon the fact the fear of pesticides in appeals for organic food. The fact that strengthens their belief is that farmers do not have enough resources to waste them in sprinkling pesticides on lands yet pesticides are of high costs. This leads farmers to put the least they can manage and more particularly the supermarket specifications bind them to use fewer pesticides which make organic production a healthy option for people (Cinque, 2009).

CHAPTER 3: METHOLDOLGY

3.1 Research Design

In order to proceed with the research, a design methodology is necessary as it provides the layout to researches to align the goals and objectives with data collection and execution methods. A qualitative research design has been chosen for the study. The qualitative research designs mainly involve two methods: the surveys and experimentation. The study will conduct a survey based on questionnaire and interviews to evaluate the factors that motivates people for organic buying. Creswell (2009) has attributed the qualitative study designs as magnificent to conduct exclusive. Moreover, it endows researcher with a certain degree of freedom to develop strategies that may be the most relevant to bring out inquiry. The qualitative research designs are more subjective in nature as compared to the quantitative studies as it provides a broad range of methods to gather information. More particularly, when it comes to inquiring with individuals, the qualitative surveys remains the best choice (Phoya, 2012). The survey method is beneficial as it helps to examine the consumer attitudes that are common and their distinctive properties. It provides application for coding, application, analysis, and interpretation of data instead of sample. Since, the respondents are required to choose from the set of alternatives, the results are certainly reliable. Besides, there are some advantages associated with the survey method just like marketing techniques. Meanwhile, the attitudes are measured through questions, they may sometimes provide unconscious answers, but in general the method is commonly used in marketing for generous results.

3.2 Data Collection

There have been two methods chosen for data collection: the questionnaire and interview. Sullivan (2004) has described questionnaire as the formal set of questions that is specifically formulated to inquire recipients regarding their views and notions over a specific point of concern. The selection of questionnaire is appropriate to address the aims and objectives of the present study. Since, the topic intends to investigate the buying behaviours and habits for organic consumers mainly in the Ealing Broadway; the questionnaire will help shed light on individual perspectives and personal experiences. The Ealing Broadway was selected because it remains surrounded by the organic consumers and is considered to be potential marketing areas where people from different socio-economic groups including LOHAS heads to make organic purchasing. The questionnaires will help to collect data based on rational experiences, genetic

modifications, individual beliefs, perceptions, pricing, and other diverse social and economic perspectives that cannot be retrieved through a secondary study.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is formulated based on the key areas highlighted in the literature review. The proposed questionnaire type is structured and non-disguised containing an array of close ended multiple choice, and dichotomous questions. In order to generate the relevant answer, the questions include the major factors that influence the behaviours and intentions of organic consumers. Efforts have been made to make the questions include all the possible attributes that are likely to impact their behaviours. The information retrieved from the questions will be represented as the key information that precisely includes the major pointers that motivates organic food consumption and which cannot be answered clearly through ordinary questions. Moreover, the questions surrounds different points that literature have pointed as important in shaping consumer's behaviour and traits for organic buying.

3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews would be made from the supermarket and shops managers to scale the data from their perspectives. It would tend to reveal the motivating factors and buying behaviours of consumers as perceived by the sales and managers and therefore will help to analyse the data regarding organic food stocks in their outlets. Interviews conducted were face to face and no telephonic conversation way involved.

3.2.3 Sample Size

Random sampling has been applied within the area of Ealing of Broadway where the organic consumers are provided questionnaire and sales managers inquired through interview. The sample size selected is of 100 people randomly selected throughout the local supermarkets and organic shops. However, the questionnaire was only for the people who bought organic food. First, they would be asked if they consume organic food and in case of a positive response, the questionnaire would be delivered to them.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Honesty has been followed throughout the course of research. Informed consent was given the major importance to invite recipients for contributing to the research. Security of credentials and information was assured to all the recipients to avoid any inconvenience. Moreover, it was made clear to all recipients that the information retrieved would be used for any

purpose that involves infringement of the privacy and research policies and must not be subjected to made false academic or professional standards.

Besides, another suspected moral trouble that remain pertinent is the utilization of information from different researchers that articulates more or less similar information. In such instance, there is a probability that researcher may associate the findings of one author with another involuntarily. This is considered to a major copyright infringement that is considered as plagiarism. Increased attention was paid towards using of research material and compliance was assured with all the academic principles while conducting a survey. Therefore, it can be stated that all the researches cited are purely the work of respective researches followed with correct in-text citations.

3.4 Limitations

The study aims to broaden the understanding of buying behaviours among organic consumers. However, due to the time and financial barriers that study was limited to the area of Ealing Broadway. A randomized sample size of 100 people was selected for research that provides evidence limited to the targeted group of people and not all the country.

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CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, FINDINGS, And ANALYSIS

This section tends to articulate major findings extracted from questionnaires and interviews. The findings reveal typology of the organic consumer behaviors and their shopping habits by describing the pertinent buying habits among UK consumers and what motivates them to develop purchasing habits for organic food. The results have been splitted into three major themes that provides a detailed view to consumer habits.

100 recipients responded to the questionnaire with an average age of 45 years. Approximately 70% of the individuals indicated for increase in the organic food uptake for the last 5 years. However, the consumption remained constant for 23% participants. Besides, 4% reported to reduce the organic uptake. Conversely, 80% of the individuals reported for an increase in organic buying over conventional food products as compared to their purchasing earlier to 5 years. Majority of participants were female (78.3%) between 25-58 years and around 57% belonged to LOHAS. They reported for organic buying due to health consciousness and due to taste. Organic fruits and vegetables were amongst the most consumed organic products whereas meat products relatively low. Majority of recipients reported for 65% of the total consumption of organic food of their total diet including 35% certified organic food.

Around 12% of respondents reported for their growing concern in organic buying because of environmental and food safety reasons. However, 37% of respondents reported for a seldom purchase in organic products during shopping. Besides, 25% reported to purchase organic products occasionally mostly when they found the prices feasible even though they liked organic, they faltered to buy due to increased costs that do not feel fit with their household incomes and lastly, 13% reported to always chose organic products over conventional food products.

5% of respondents showed concerns for farming techniques as one of the reasons to choose for organic products, but not the only one. However, an overwhelming majority of people responded for their preference for organic food over conventional food because they perceive it is higher in quality and good for health. Besides, they were appealed by the labelling to consume organic food. However, 1.5% respondents represented the similar beliefs regarding quality of conventional and organic food as in their view they both were comparatively equivalent to health.

56% Individuals with an average household income of £1500 reported for monthly purchasing for organic food as the vital element of their food. Conversely, 68% of individuals reported for a regular purchase once in a two month or weekly whereas 32% reported for an infrequent organic purchasing less than often. 79% of respondents reported for organic purchasing for particular organic products. This implies that branding and labelling along with quality plays a role in modifying buyer's behaviours. However, fruits remained the most preferred organic products, a purchasing reported by 89% of individuals.

| Products | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| Fruits | 89% |
| vegetables | 80.0% |
| Meat | 43% |
| Dairy | 43.1% |
| Breads | 47.9% |
| Alcohol | 12.5% |
| Poultry (eggs) | 42% |
| Confectionary | 11.2% |
| Snacks | 13.4% |
| Packaged Goods | 8.9% |
| Convenience Meals | 14.0% |
| Others | 16.7% |

Table 1: Showing the purchasing for organic different organic products

Interviews revealed that sales managers and retailers have noticed lowered conversion rates from conventional towards organic products. They are agreed to the fact that price serve as the major barrier that prevents conventional buyers converting to organic purchasing besides the fact that they show willingness to buy some organic products as well. According to sales managers, the perceived quality of products is not enough to persuade customers for repurchasing when the price premiums are re-introduced.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The discussion section is designed to briefly discuss the results found in survey. The results are discussed in light of the literature findings. Each of the factors that have been found significant from both the perspectives of users and sales managers regarding organic purchasing are accounted. Two major factors including perceived quality and food safety are the most personal to buyers while the price premiums appear to be justified mainly by LOHAS based on the perceived benefits, knowledge, and taste of organic foods that simply outweighs the price.

5.1 Characteristics/traits of an Organic Consumer

5.1.1 Perceived Quality

Organic products are mostly considered to be of higher quality and good for health since it involves relevant farming features that makes them a good choice for consumers. Additionally, some of the people prefer it due to enriched taste which they mostly do not find prominent in conventional products. Buyers are well-aware of the fact that organic products are premium because they involve special ways of production methods. However, Hill and Lychehaun (2002) has argued with this finding as according to the author, they are sold at higher prices as a matter of reflecting high quality over conventional products. However, LOHAS have attributed them as a good food choice within the provided price ranges. These findings are verified by Radman (2005). The author has narrated high quality as the second major attribute that urges people to spend a bit higher money as compared to conventional purchasing. The author has referred health consciousness as the first major factor that appeals people to stick for organic purchasing.

Contrarily, these research findings are certainly of increased quality are scientifically unfounded. As reported in the Landmark report issued by the Food Standards Association in 2009, the scientists from the UK were unable to prove increased nutritional benefits of organic food consumption over conventional food (Dangour, et al. 2009). However, this study did not involve investigations for pesticide treatments and residues. The experts pertaining to the research highlighted that it was exceedingly difficult to meaningfully guarantee that certain products do not contain pesticide residues. The fact persists that some chemicals are used in the organic products, a certain fact from which majority of consumers are unaware. However, the report showed frustration towards consumer perception which implies that majority of quality oriented perceptions carried by consumers are false. According to Cinque (2009) and Koffman (2009), when the organic products are produced at a massive scale, it is impossible to assure that

pesticides from the non—organic field does not blow through the boundaries separating the two fields, therefore organic food surely contain pesticide residues. Pierce (2009), have also made this clear that if all the food production may be truned into organic farming, the results would not possibly meet to cater the demand. However, as reflected in our results, majority of people who purchased organic food found it of higher quality than conventional products. In response to these results, Harrison (2009) has argued that organic has been one of the “romantic” notions for people than somehtinf clearly definable as health and quality benefits. Magnusson et al (2003) have provided evidences which reveals that despite the confusion and lack of widely recognized certification system, people continue to buy organic products due its percieved quality and reading the labels “organic”. The author have founda postitive yet moderate relationship between organic purchase frequency and labeling echoes that provides consumer with better insights to the product that are majorly intepreted as health magnificent. Simialr sentiments have been reflected by Harrison (2009). According to the author buers are still very naïve regarding their food outcomes and tends to follow the mere romantic notions.

The supply food expert, Harrison (2009) has argued that the quality standards forms the major part for organic buying and is the main reason why organic products have gained a significant prominence since the last decade. The appearance, size, and standards set in supermarkets tends to increase the use of pesticides and other chemicals to increase the organic yielding which indicates that organic industry is moving from quality towards quantity. This drastic move highlighted by Harrison (2009) suggests for the increased demand of organic food. However, there have been some serious questions prevailing that show concerns towards unveiling the actual nutritional value of organic food over their conventional counterparts. According to Dragour et al (2009), there is virtually no nutritional difference between the organic food quality and conventional products which tend to undermine the consumer perceptions for quality.

5.2 Health and Sustainability drive behind purchasing Organic Food

5.2.1 Health Concerns

Health conciousness remained the major prominent factor, mostly maong women, for orgnaic purchasing. Among all the tested variables including safet, values, ethics, and quality, health sere as the major affinity among consumers that binds them to organic consumption. This

implies that majority of people are concerned with their health. They also conceive organic products a part of healthy lifestyle and prefer it for their family to maintain a good health status. The results are in alliance with the previous studies that have suggested health as the major factor that generates positive organic buying attitudes (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005; Chen, 2009; Kim and Chung, 2011).

5.2.2 Environmental Concerns

The responses from individuals suggested for a mingling of environmental concerns, health, and safety. Answers to questionnaire reveals that individual perceive them as overlapping factors. The environmental and safety factors including less use of pesticide stood to be the reason alongside health that discriminates organic food from the conventional food and urges consumer to develop frequent organic buying habits. These results are consistent with previous studies that have suggested environmental factors as the major besides health consciousness. However, all these studies have taken environment as an explicit factor other than safety (Vindigni, et al., 2002; Magnusson et al, 2003; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005, Chen, 2009; Kim and Chung, 2011).

5.3 Factors that influence Accessibility to Organic Food Offerings

5.3.1 Trust in Labeling

Communication of quality attributes serve to be a promising yet compelling market strategy for both the organic and conventional marketers. For conventional marketers, the articulation of product attributes remains a beneficial tool to differentiate their product in market. Similarly, the organic marketers highlight the single attributes specific to product to extend effective communication. Establishing of distinction between the product highlights is important as it helps buyer to make fairly justified decisions for their money spending. Buyers remain in search of effective alternatives that provide holistic product balanced in every perspective of health, price, and safety. Labelling and certification serve to be major carriers of information that help individuals understand the distinguishing features of the product. They also require a fair justification that why they must chose a high priced organic product over a feasible-priced conventional product. The major product information that marketers can use for labelling is the mentioning of food production and processing that discriminates and elevate the status of organic products over conventional products. According to Stolz (2005), the vague levelling leads to create vague ideas that confuses buying behaviours.

According to Dickieson et al (2009), the consumer behaviour is strictly contained by the ideas they adopt. These ideas developed do not operate in a vacuum, but seek for certain opportunities of choice. It has been argued that the variations in behaviour can be nailed through evaluating and explain the multidimensionality and complexity of consumer behaviours (Zanoli, 2002). According to Padel et al (2005), the effective labelling helps marketers to clearly communicate with consumers and therefore helps them to make decision for availing organic food by bypassing their concerns for genetically modified foods.

Respondents showed increased willingness to buy organic products based on their trust for labeling and specific food chains. This implies that trust issues are pertinent that have positive influences on food chain. However, the inability of consumers to verify chains and lack of certification for products leads them to uneasiness among consumers to make organic purchasings. The lack of certified organic branding and marketing messages are the major cause of behavioral inconsistency confusion in mind of consumers. Dickieson et al (2009) has also found a positive and significant relationship between the behaviour and trust. However, the scientific reasons behind this are uncertain. Conversely, individuals who exhibit infrequent buying of organic products did not show any significant relationship and trust with labelling and organic marketing claims. This, however, explains the ideal of trust on labelling which according to Harrison (2009) is a romantic notion for organic buyers. Simply, the word 'organic' means a lot to the brand consumers.

5.3.2 Price Premiums

Consumer's willingness to buy organic products is primarily driven by the price premium. The purchasing intentions are found to be more inclined towards price of organic products. High pricing over conventional product have restrained it to majorly behave as a product of people belonging to LOHAS. Padel et al (2005); Hughner et al (2007) and Zanoli (2002) have also attributed high pricing of organic products as the major barrier those constraints regular households from frequent organic buying. According to Laroche (2001), how much the consumers are willing to pay for organic products forms their true value that marketers may translate into price-premiums. Since, the LOHAS does not have many issues with paying slight greater than the fair prices in contrast to conventional products, this has entitled marketers to assume the value of product as optimal and therefore they prefer not to re-introduce lower prices

to compel infrequent buyers. In other words, the pricing and marketing strategies have dominated the people intentions. Marketers are convinced to drop the infrequent buyers in lieu of targeting sales towards LOHAS with increased prices that are mostly not feasible for regular households. In view of Hughner et al (2007), consumers are hypothetically remain prepared for spending a larger sum of money for organic buying since they perceive it of higher quality. Nevertheless, they are not completely willing to pay for the steep increase in prices of organic products in comparison to the conventional products. According to Solar et al (2002), people are most likely to accept price increases when they are offered with optimal information comparable to prices that entails for significant differences between organic and conventional products. This implies that prices are indeed important phenomena to influence organic buying behaviours.

Another aspect related to consumer willingness for organic buying is the price elasticity of demand for organic products. It has been found that organic retailers show brief sensitivity towards consumer price elasticity of demand partly due to price premiums that negatively affects consumer purchases (Dickieson et al, 2009). Contrastingly, relatively higher price elasticity indicates for the consumer's sensitivity towards organic products price changed as compared to conventional grown alternatives.

The findings show that occasional organic buyers are quite heterogeneous in their preferences. Some of them are fewer prices sensitive and prefers to spend for organic purchasing. Conversely, some are highly price sensitive and prefers to go with conventional alternatives. The findings agree with Mondelaers et al (2008) and Lith et al (2005). The researches highlighted that occasional consumers are less price sensitive as compared to non-buyers.

For occasional buyers, the perceived quality and performance of conventional products was found to be higher than organic products. This implies that the price sensitivity forms a part of this behaviour among occasional buyers. The organic marketers must take this factor into account to increase the perceived performance of organic products for occasional buyers by lowering down the prices for organic products. It can be possible through suitable communication and appropriate pricing strategy.

5.4 Overall Influences

Consumer attitudes share strong relevance towards health, pricing, labelling, and environmental concerns. The consumer behaviours for organic buying are formed over long periods of time and are mainly characterized by short-term advertisements that are most of the

time not sufficient to increase the demand for organic food (Zanoli et al, 2004; Hamm and Gronefeld, 2004; de Magistris and Gracia, 2008; Michaelidou and Hassan, 2008; Botonaki et al, 2006; Krystallis and Chrysosoidis, 2005; Saba and Messina, 2003; Hill and Lynchehaun, 2002; Loureiro et al, 2001; Gil et al, 2000; Solomon et al, 2012). Besides, more extensive and constant articulation of messages carrying core knowledge aids information based programming and communication strategies. These are suggested to be successful for building positive attitudes among organic buyers. Moreover, the relevance of consumer attitudes varies between labelling, advertisement, and quality. In order to increase the frequency of buying, consumers must enhance the perceived quality of organic products that include mere portions of all the mentioned factors.

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the major concerns behind conducting this survey was to measure the effects of consumer confidence, considerations, and behaviours towards organic buying. People are overwhelmingly interested to buy organic products due to their health consciousness and perceptions that organic food carries higher quality and decreased pesticide residues. The pricing and labelling are found to play a limited role as most of the people accepts that since organic products pursue increased quality, then is justifiable to pay relatively higher amount than conventional products. Frequent buyers are found to be more loyal with certain brands that products that are simply the matter of good labelling and advertisements along with quality that compels them. Food budget constraints remain a problem for people with constricted household for buying organic products besides their intentions to buy. Overall, the respondents remained positive for organic purchasing mainly due to the perceived quality and goodness for health.

The identification of consumer's behaviour towards organic buying is as good indicator and reveals certain factors that are dominant in their influence. This includes behavioural impacts, health consciousness, perceived quality, trust in labelling, and concerns over food safety; all these have a positive influence on consumer behaviours. Meanwhile, the price charged for organic products serve as a primary barrier for majority of households that prevents them from organic purchasing. In terms of the cost-benefit analysis, the increased prices are not problem mainly for people belonging to LOHAS in contrast to the perceived quality of organic foods.

Preferences of occasional and non-frequent buyers were more in favour of the conventional alternatives. Conventional buying was high comparative to organic buying because of the relatively high choice experiments. The findings are striking that infrequent buyers, besides the reason of prices, felt inclined to choose for conventional alternatives due to their high quality. This may lead to draw two conclusions. Firstly, the communication attributes such like labelling and certifications plays a role in attracting occasional consumers and secondly, the organic products are in great competition with conventional products.

Labelling has a positive impact on purchasers therefore the centralized certification and labelling must cover a long way to urge the infrequent buyers to receive to remove cynical from perceived benefits. The organic marketing must be designed in a way that may target the low self-transcendent variables because the consumers are more likely take impressions from the

messaging how organic food benefits them personally instead of going through larger or social levels. For example, the fact the organic food provides health benefits which is quite a personal factor is more compelling than social factors such like ethical or environmental concerns. The price premium has raised the perceptions of quality that appear to be founded by scientific reviews. Consumers view organic food as a symbol of quality which has not generally been proven yet.

Safety is also one of the greatest concerns for consumers. The fear of pesticide residues plays a role in pushing customers towards organic products. The conventional food marketers are concerned about losing market share because of the negative publicity that is blotting conventional food system in comparison to the organic food.

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