

Factors influence on Purchase Intention of Organic Food Products in Trincomalee District

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Abstract: *This study considers Factors influence on Purchase Intention towards Organic Food Products in Trincomalee District. The data were collected from 247 customers with a structured questionnaire. After the data cleaning process only 238 questionnaires were considered for the study purpose and the data were evaluated with Univariate, Bivariate and Multivariate analyses to explore the levels of the variables, their relationship and their influences. Customers have shown high level of attitudes regards to organic food product. Health consciousness has more influence on purchase intention of organic food products. It is useful to explain about 42% of purchase intention of organic food products. Pearson's correlation shows that, Health consciousness has strong positive relationship ($r = 0.721$) with purchase intention of organic food products and Consumer Knowledge has medium positive relationship ($r = 0.426$) with purchase intention of organic food products. Environmental concern regarding to the consumption of organic food products has medium positive relationship (0.332) with purchase intention of organic food products.*

Keywords: Organic, Health Consciousness, Organic Food Product, Natural Food

1. Introduction

Our lifestyle has changed in this fast paced world as compared to few decades ago. Today, more and more people are caught up in an endless cycle of buying and throwing away, seeing consumption as a means of self-fulfillment. Consumption is the reason why anything is produced. Demand towards products is driven by convenience and habit which in returned is hard to change. Over the years majority consumers have realized that their purchasing behaviour has a direct impact on many ecological problems (Laroche, 1996).

The growth of organic agriculture is seen as part of the emerging marketing trends where consumers demand to know what benefits a food could deliver before making a purchasing decision, consumers tend to seek for "Natural aspect" of the Food products. On the other hand, the healthy issue is becoming one of the prior concerns of consumers in purchasing products, especially when it comes to food. This factor is appeared as the main driving force for consumers to purchase organic food (Yin et al., 2010). According to Jia et al. (2002) food is categorized as "organic" if the product does not contain artificial synthesized fertilizers, pesticides, livestock, growth regulators and poultry feed additives.

A variety of agricultural products can be produced organically, including produce, grains, meat, dairy, eggs, and processed food products. "Organic" does not mean

"natural." There is no legal definition as to what constitutes a "natural" food. However, the food industry uses the term "natural" to indicate that a food has been minimally processed and is preservative-free. Natural foods can include organic foods, but not all natural foods are organic. In recent decades, the global organic market has been expanding in accordance to the increase of its agricultural cultivation area.

According to Sheng et al. (2009), organic food industry has been rapidly growing in most of developed agricultural economies around the world with the total area of 30.5 million hectares.

In particular, Europe and North America are the two largest markets of organic food in which vast majority of organic products are consumed here. However, Asia is 8 considered as a potential market with the highest growth rate per annum, and China is the main contributor to this rapid growth (Sheng et al., 2009). On the research perspective, several studies about organic food have been made in different countries (Magnusson et al., 2001; Bo et al., 2012; Parichard, 2012). For instance, the research findings concluded that people in Ireland bought organic food at least once a week. Also other studies concluded that Western consumers were frequent buyers of organic food (Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Magnusson et al., 2001). In Asia, previous studies about organic food have been conducted in China, South Korea and Northern Thailand. In general, the results showed that people in these countries start to pay more attention and be more aware of the benefits of consuming organic food (Bo et al., 2012; Parichard, 2012; Suh et al., 2012). Regarding China, this country is considered as one of the most potential markets in terms of economic growth and population expansion.

Due to the improvement in living standards such as increase in income and healthy consciousness, Sri Lankan consumers start to focus more on food quality, and hence create the chance for the development of organic food market. Sri Lanka, after its pioneering move in introducing organically certified tea to the world market, expanded this product range to non-traditional agricultural products such as: Spices, Essential oils, Herbs, Herbal preparations, Desiccated coconut and other coconut-based products, Oil seeds, Pulses, Cashew, Rubber, Tropical fruit, Vegetables (Sri Lanka Export Development Board 2014). In overall, the market of organic food is considered as a potential emerging market in Sri Lanka. Therefore it's very necessary to study the behavior pattern of the customer in terms of organic products.

2. Literature review

Consumer Attitudes towards organic food products

Most recent researches reveal that consumer attitudes towards the organic products are changing in a positive ways. Their actual buying behavior is direct result of strong intent and attitudinal values towards the benefits of the organic products (S Priya, M Parameswari, 2016). Attitudes can be determine by so many factors Environmental concern, Health concern and life style, Product quality and subjective and personal norms (Mohamed Bilal Bashaa , Cordelia Masonb et al., 2015)

Health Consciousness

Studies have found that health is strongly connected to the notion of organic food and that it is the strongest purchasing motive when purchasing organic food. Health consciousness is defined as an attitude in which people is aware of the

healthiness in their diet and lifestyle (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). In regard to the context of organic food, Suh, Eves and Lumbers (2012) concluded that positive attitude towards organic food of consumers is originated from the belief that organic food is good for health, thereby they can consume without any fear and suspicion. Originally, this factor stems from the feeling of “freedom from chemicals” of consumers which was mentioned by Devcich, Pedersen and Petrie (2007). The study showed that health worries refer to the preferences for food made from natural ingredients to synthetic and artificial additives. Similarly, Roddy, Cowan and Hutchinson (1996) stated that people who are more concerned about food safety hold positive attitude towards organic food.

Consumer Knowledge

Consumer knowledge determines high purchasing intention of organic food, according to Chryssochoidis, (2000); Padel and Foster, (2005). Knowledge of consumer is categorized as subjective knowledge, objective knowledge and prior experience (Brucks, 1985). Subjective knowledge refers to what the consumers perceive that they know. In other words, it is called as self-rated knowledge. It represents for the confidence of an individual about their knowledge. The low level of subjective knowledge results in the lack of confidence (Chryssochoidis, 2000; Padel and Foster, 2005). Objective knowledge is what the consumers actually know and finally prior experience is defined as what the consumers have experienced before (Brucks, 1985). Regarding the correlation between consumer knowledge and their purchasing intention, Stobbelaar et al. (2007) claimed that the more knowledge consumers have about organic food, the more positive it is in their purchasing intention. In

Consumer knowledge about organic food could be gained from different sources. Gracia and De Magistris (2007) demonstrated that information about organic food which is showed in the market can have a significant influence on subjective knowledge of consumers. Apparently, knowledge regarding organic food is impacted by public administration such as local governments, social media, social networks, notifications from ecological organizations and advertisements.

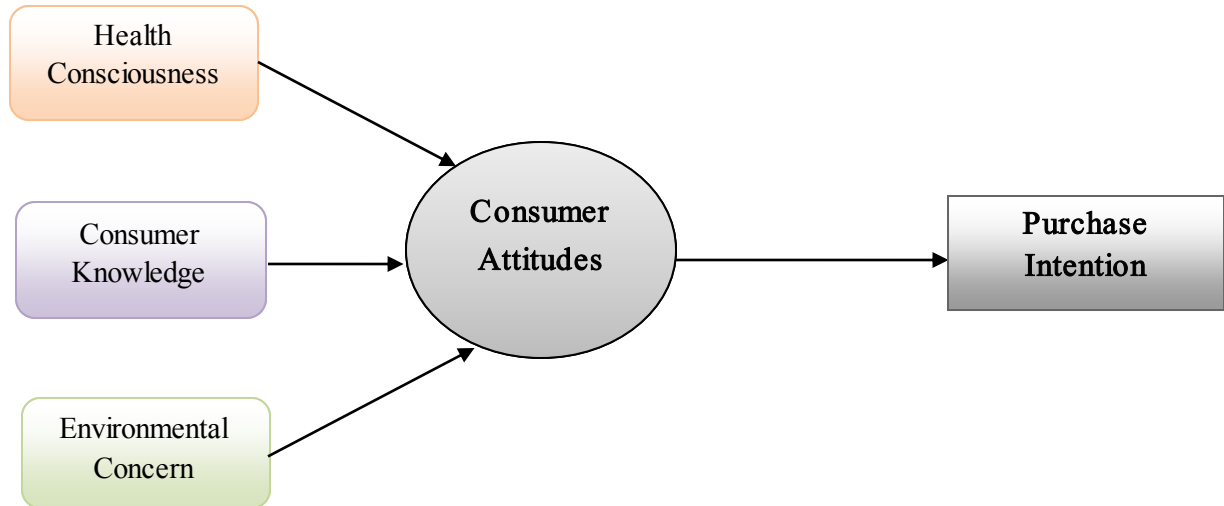
Environmental Concern

Many studies have found that environmental concern to be a factor in purchase intention of organic food products (Roddy et al., 1996; Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Squires et al., 2001; Soler et al., 2002). Organic consumers think that most of the conventional food products are producing by huge usage of chemicals and pesticides as being environmentally harmful, while organic foods are perceived as being environmentally friendly (Ott, 1990; Jolly, 1991; Wilkins and Hillers, 1994). Though environmental concern would have favorable influence on consumer purchase intention, many studies have found that it is not a driving factor of organic food purchase. Rather, perceptions of good health, nutrients, and taste are more important in the purchase of organic food (Mitsostergios and Skiadas, 1994; Tregear et al., 1994; Shifferstein and Ophuis, 1998; Zanolli and Naspetti, 2002; Magnusson et al., 2003)

3. Conceptual Framework

From the literature survey following conceptual model was developed. This conceptual framework shows link between Consumers' attitudes and Purchase intention of organic food products.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



(Sources: Mohamed Bilal Basha , Cordelia Masonb et al, 2015)

4. Methodology

This section specifies how this study has been conducted to examine the Factors influence on Purchase Intention towards Organic Food Products in Trincomalee District. Further, the methods of sample selection, data collected, data analyses and presentation, and data evaluation are organized in this section.

4.1 Research Design

Research design deals to plan and provide the path to do the study to obtain the validity of the findings (Mouton, 1996). According to the research design, the structured questionnaires were firstly issued to the respondents by visiting them and through the internet (Google Forms) thereafter questionnaires' data were entered in databases and databases were consolidated into one database for analysis purpose. Descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis were employed to test level of influences. After analyses

were preformed, findings were discussed. As result of the findings, conclusions were drawn.

4.2 Sampling Method

247 respondents were randomly selected for this study within 8 GN Division and cluster sampling method were applied to select the consumer to analyze the Factors influence on Purchase Intention towards Organic Food Products in Trincomalee District.

4.3 Data Collection

This study totally depends on primary data. The primary data were obtained through questionnaires from 247 customers and data cleaning were done to ensure the accuracy of the responses. After the data cleaning only 238 Questionnaires were considered for the study purpose. The questionnaire consists of two parts: personal information and research information.

Primary data were collected through closed ended statements in both questionnaires. Likert scale of 1-5 which ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” were employed to identify the responses from customers.

4.4.1 Univariate Analysis

This study evaluates individual characteristics of Dimensions and variables. Mean values and standard deviation are considered to assess the level of dimensions and variables with the following criteria.

4.4 Method of Data Analysis and Assessment

Decision Criteria	Decision Attribute
$1.0 \leq X_i \leq 2.5$	Low Level
$2.5 < X_i \leq 3.5$	Moderate Level
$3.5 < X_i \leq 5.0$	High Level

4.4.2 Bivariate Analysis

The Bivariate analysis is to explore the relationship between the two variables (Babbie, 2009). In this context, the correlation analysis is carried out to measure the strength of relationship between the variables. Correlation analysis measures the magnitude (the coefficient of correlation = r) of the association of variables. The value “r” lies between -1 and +1. Multiple regression was done to

identify the most influence factor determines the purchase intention of organic food products

This study assesses the significance of relationship variables, if the respective p-value is less than the 0.05. However, irrespective of the significance level of the association between variables, the correlation becomes meaningful to an extent as indicated in following table as in Senthilnathan and Rukshani (2013).

Range	Decision Attributes
r = 0.5 to 1.0	Strong positive relationship
r = 0.3 to 0.49	Medium positive relationship
r = 0.1 to 0.29	Weak positive relationship
r = -0.1 to -0.29	Weak negative relationship
r = -0.3 to -0.49	Medium negative relationship
r = -0.5 to -1.0	Strong negative relationship

Note: Table 1 implies that no correlation between two variables, if the range of r is: $-0.1 < r <$

5. Findings

Overall Measures of Consumer Attitudes and its Dimensions

Description	Dimensions			Independent Variable
	HC	CK	EC	Consumer Attitudes
Mean	4.942	4.316	3.696	4.3178
Standard Deviation	0.476	0.453	0.486	0.408
Coefficient of Variance	0.108	0.105	0.115	0.095
Maximum	5.00	4.83	5.00	4.88
Minimum	2.40	2.33	2.67	2.64
Number of data	238	238	238	238

HC: Health Consciousness, CK: Consumer Knowledge, EC: Environmental concern

This Independent variable Consumer Attitudes includes three dimensions which are Health Consciousness, Consumer Knowledge, and Environmental concern. These dimensions show high level in the Consumer Attitudes towards organic food products. They have the mean values of 4.942, 4.316 and 3.696 respectively. In addition, most of the respondents have expressed the high opinion toward the dimension Health Consciousness (Mean = 4.942)

Among 238 Customer respondents, Health Consciousness was most significant (Mean = 4.942) to Consumer Attitudes towards organic food products rather than other dimensions. Next, Consumer Knowledge

was most significant (Mean = 4.316) to Consumer Attitudes towards organic food products rather than Environmental concern dimension.

5.1 Impact of Consumer's attitudes on Purchase intention of Organic Food Products

It analyses the influence of Consumer attitudes on Purchase intention of Organic Food Products. In order to figure out which are important determinants of Purchase intention of Organic Food Products, the multiple regression model was used.

Table 2: Consumer's attitudes on Purchase intention of Organic Food Products

Independent Variables	Regression Coefficients
	Purchase intention
HEALTH_CONSCIOUSNESS	0.422**
CONSUMER_KNOWLEDGE	0.217**
ENVIRONMENTAL_CONCERN	0.027
Constant	1.600**
Adjusted R Square	0.482
F-Statistics	23.794

** Significant at the 0.05 level (p<0.05)

According to the table, 42.2% of variation in Purchase intention is explained by the variable, Health Consciousness. Likewise, 21.7% of variation in Purchase intention is explained by the variable, Consumer Knowledge. These two variables influences are significant at 5% significance level. The other variable, Environmental Concern explains 2.7% variation in Purchase intention respectively. Out of three determinant variables, Health Consciousness has more influence on Purchase intention of the

customer towards organic food products in Trincomalee district.

While considering the overall impact of the model on Purchase intention of Organic Food Products, F-Statistics value 23.794 with 5% significance level reveals that the model is significant. Furthermore, Adjusted R Square statistic is 0.482 which implies that 48.2% of change in Purchase intention of Organic Food Products is explained by these three variables.

5.2 Correlation between Consumer health consciousness and Purchase intention

		HEALTH_CONSCIOUSNESS	PURCHASE_INTENTION
HEALTH_CONSCIOUSNESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.721**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	238	238
PURCHASE_INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	.721**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	238	238

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows a Pearson Correlation value of 0.721. The correlation lies between 0.5 and 1.0, thus confirming a strong positive significant relationship between Consumer health consciousness

and Purchase intention. Correlation results between Consumer health consciousness and Purchase intention is significant at the 1% level ($r = 0.671, p=0.00 < 0.01$).

5.3 Relationship between Consumer Knowledge and Purchase intention

		CONSUMER_KNOWLEDGE	PURCHASE_INTENTION
CONSUMER_KNOWLEDGE	Pearson Correlation	1	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	238	238
PURCHASE_INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	.426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	238	238

Table 4: Correlations between Consumer Knowledge and Purchase intention

		CONSUMER_KNOWLEDGE	PURCHASE_INTENTION
CONSUMER_KNOWLEDGE	Pearson Correlation	1	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	238	238
PURCHASE_INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	.426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	238	238

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the test results, it is shown that the relationship which exists between the two variables is positive. The correlation lies between 0.3 and 0.49, thus confirming a medium positive relationship between Consumer Knowledge and

Purchase intention towards organic food products. Correlation results between Consumer Knowledge and Purchase intention is significant at the 1% level ($r = -0.349, p=0.00 < 0.01$).

5.4 Relationship between Environmental Concern and Purchase intention

Table 5: Correlations between Environmental Concern and Purchase intention

		ENVIRONMENTAL_CONCERN	PURCHASE_INTENTION
ENVIRONMENTAL_CONCERN	Pearson Correlation	1	.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	238	238
PURCHASE_INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	.332**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	238	238

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows a Pearson Correlation value of 0.332 which lies between 0.3 and 0.49. Thus, confirming a medium positive relationship between the two variables. Correlation results between Environmental Concern and Purchase intention is significant at the 1% level ($r = 0.447, p=0.00 < 0.01$).

This study has been conducted to identify the factors influence on purchase intention of organic food products in Trincomalee district. This study concludes that Health consciousness, Consumer Knowledge on organic food products and Environmental concern regarding to the consumption of organic food products have positive relationship with the purchase intention of organic food products. Most of the consumer pay more attention on Health

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

consciousness (Mean = 4.942) rather than other two variables. It reveals that respondents believe that organic food products can be a better choice for their healthy life than the conventional foods. Consumers have a sound knowledge on organic food even though health consciousness identified as a major determinant factor of purchasing intention of organic food ($R = 0.422$). Environmental concern doesn't have much influence on purchasing intention of organic foods. But it has medium positive relationship with purchase intention of organic food products. It implies that there is a need to educate the consumer on environmental issues cause by consuming foods contains artificial synthesized fertilizers, pesticides.

Limitations of the Study

- Selected samples are a number of 238 respondents within 8 GN division of Trincomalee District.. If any study considers biggest sample size about 500 or above, the findings of this study can be further confirmed.
- Each statement is measured with Likert's scale (1-5). However, the outcomes of this research study can be endorsed while using other scale beyond 5.
- This study considers 3 dimensions of consumer attitudes towards organic food products and 5 indicators for purchase intention of organic food products, respectively. If a study considers more dimensions of variables, including the study dimensions, findings would be supported in detail.

- Under the Bivariate analyses, this study considers correlation analyses only to explore the relationship between the study variables. If the analysis is extended to any other analysis, findings would be reemphasized and supported in detail.
- This study has investigated in only organic food products. If any study considers more products with different geographical areas, the results of this study would be most possibly endorsed, consistently.

Implications for future research

This research study is conducted with the intention of identifying the Factors influence on Purchase Intention towards Organic Food Products in Trincomalee District. With the findings of this study as well, I recommend the below areas to be studied in the future

- Price could be examine with the purchase intention of organic food products. .
- It would be better to conduct the same research with a large sample size, and different areas, which would give more precise results
- Further research should be carried out to find the factors which have an impact on the purchase intention organic food products such as situational factors, Advertisements

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