

FACTORS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF YOUTH FROM MIDDLE-EAST WHEN PURCHASING ORGANIC FOOD

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to analyse consumer behaviour (CB) of youths from middle-east for buying organic food. Our study brings information which can potentially be used for further research and will also be useful for organizations with a practical interest in the production sale and distribution of organic food. To investigate the influence of the various factors in CB, we have applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Price Effect Theory (PET). In the current concept, there is no significant research conducted in measuring the factors of CB that influence youths in middle-east for organic food. The theoretical part deals with the concept of consumer behaviour, factors that affect the CB, and the conceptual framework of TPB and PET. In the analytical part we have collected data from the sample of 200 potential consumers who are students in the various universities in the metropolitan cities of three countries of middle-east, namely Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirate (UAE) and Oman. Questionnaires are focused on measuring the CB for purchasing organic food while following the theory of TPB and PET. Particular items were measured using a 6-point Likert's scale, where 1 represented a negative attitude (completely disagree or definitely not) and 6 represented a positive attitude (completely agree or definitely yes). The authors opted for an even Likert scale in order to avoid the middle value and thus obtained the real opinion of the consumer who had to select one of the possibilities and thus adopt a position on the research issue. In the middle-east, the young consumer are influenced mainly by factors such as personal attitude and subjective norms. Limitations of this study are the fact that in our questionnaire we focused on how the consumer viewed the purchase of organic food in general and not how they view the purchase of individual organic. Our contribution is to identify the factors that influence youth's buying behaviour and choice for organic food in middle-east because their buying behaviour would help companies to innovate organic food and know the demand trends for the same.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Behaviour, Organic Food, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Price Effect Theory

INTRODUCTION

Health and a healthy lifestyle have become increasingly important trends in recent times. Consumers have become increasingly interested in what they eat in particular, the nutritional value and the level of artificial additives in food. These changes in preferences have led to changes in consumer behaviour and significant growth in the demand for organic food which has become one of the fastest growing markets in the food industry. According to Naim (2022), this boom in organic food is set to continue and a recent report from the TechSci Research company gave a positive outlook for the future Arshi (2021). In order to respond adequately to these changes, it is important to understand the factors influencing the behaviour of consumers when purchasing organic food, both for the retailer and producer, as well as for politicians involved in ecological farming.



Figure 1. Factors affecting Consumer Behaviour

In addition, many of the authors mentioned above have mainly dealt with the behaviour of the adult population, which is the main purchasing force. As a result, the behaviour of the younger generation, which will very quickly be of productive age and become the new purchasing force, has received little investigation.

Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour			
Economic Factors	Personal Factors	Psychological Factors	Cultural and Social Factors
Personal Income - Disposable Income, Disposable Income	Age	Motivation	Culture
Family Income	Occupation	Involvement	Subculture
Expectations regarding future income	Life Cycle Stage	Perception	Social Class
Liquid assets & consumer credit	Lifestyle	Learning	Social Groups
Level of Standard of Living	Personality & Self Concept	Lifestyle	Opinion Leaders
		Attitude	Role & Status

Figure 2. Subfactors affecting consumer behaviour

In the Middle-east Republic, it is more obvious, because there has only been one study on the behaviour of this sector. For this reason, we decided to focus our research on identifying the factors behind the consumer behaviour of the younger generation. To distinguish our research, we used the model of TPB, which was used in Middle-east.



Figure 3. Factors of Yourn consumers for CB

Further, we incorporated additional constructs (moral attitude, health consciousness, and environmental concern) in the TPB who measured its appropriateness in Indian surrounding. Combining both - young generation and extended model of TPB bring crucial information which can potentially be used not only as a basis for further research but will also be useful for organizations with a practical interest in the production, sale and distribution of organic food.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organic food, which can be defined as: ‘food produced without using the conventional inputs of modern, industrial agriculture: pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), irradiation or food additives’ (Allen and Albaladejo, 2007), is by law food from ecological farming which seeks not only to cultivate high-quality food, but also protects the environment. In addition to the health and safety requirements, the production and processing of this food have to fulfill the requirements set out in the Council Regulation (EC) no. 834/2007 and also the law on ecological farming in the Middle-east Republic no. 242/2000 Coll. (eAGRI, 2016). Organic food can also be simply distinguished from conventional food by its special ‘euro-leaf’ label which has been used for all ecological products produced in the EU since 2010. In addition to this label, there can also be a national logo, which falls under the competence of the appropriate country (eAGRI, 2017).

The applicability of TPB for organic food has also been demonstrated by several studies across diverse cultures (Yadav and Pathak, 2016), while recent research has shown that other factors also have an important influence. Amongst those which are cited most frequently are moral aspects (Yazdanpanah and Forouzani, 2015, Arvola et al. 2008), health concerns (Smith and Paladino, 2010, Yadav and Pathak, 2016) and concerns about the environment (Smith and Paladino, 2010; Pagiaslis and Krontalis, 2014). Additionally, it has also been shown that the inclusion of other prognostic variables into the original model improves its predictive ability, which is particularly

desirable (Arvola et al., 2008; Donald, Cooper and Conchie, 2014).

If we include for organic food, the individual factors can be described in the following way. We understand personal attitude to mean the extent to which the consumer thinks that organic food is healthier, tastier and of better quality, and the extent to which the purchase of organic food is considered to be wise and sensible behaviour (Hughner et al 2007; Gil and Söder 2006; Aryal et al. 2009). Subjective norms refer to whether those close to the consumer (family, friends, colleagues) believe that a specific behaviour is correct and that the consumer should, therefore, also behave in that way (Chen, 2007). Conscious control of behaviour represents the higher price, accessibility and the trust of consumers in the certification system and the label 'organic'. In other words, this variable tells us how easy it is for the specific consumer to purchase organic food (Yadav and Pathak, 2016; Yazdanpanah and Forouzani, 2015). We understand the moral aspects to be the concerns of the specific consumer about him/herself, as well as society and the environment (Arvola et al., 2008; Yadava and Pathaka, 2016). Concerns about your own health are the extent to which health and the content of food are important for the consumer when deciding whether or not to buy organic food. In the case of concerns about the environment, it is about the extent to which ecological issues enter into the consumer's decision-making process – when purchasing organic food, do they consider the negative impacts from its production and distribution on the environment? (Yadav and Pathak, 2016).

RESULTS/ DISCUSSION

The factor which the research results in consumer behaviour indicated were significantly influential was subjective norms. This finding led us to the conclusion that this might also be the case for the young consumer.

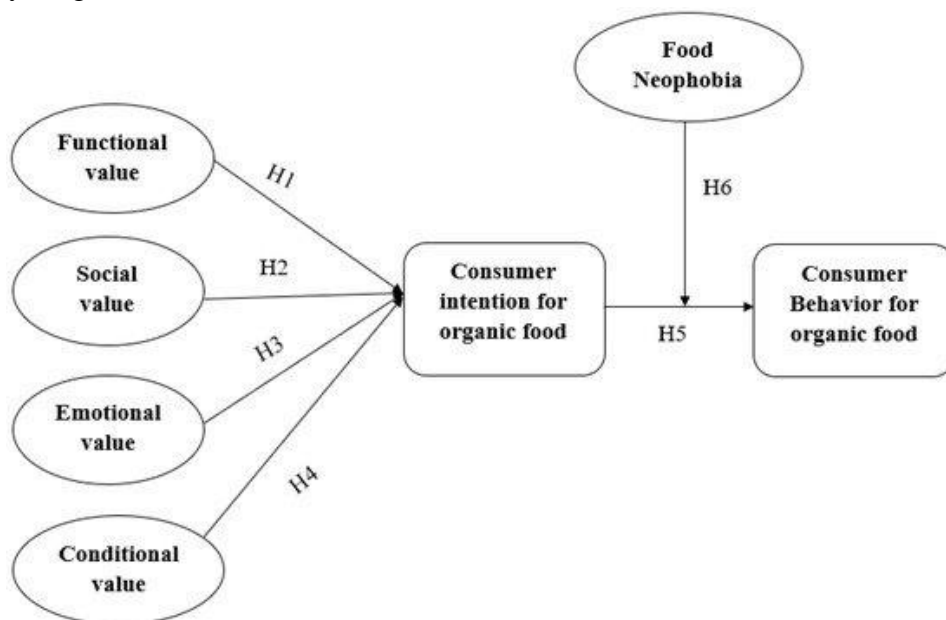


Figure 4. Factors identified in the research to measure CB for Organic food in Middleeast.

The research also showed that organic food is viewed negatively by the families of consumers who do not buy organic food as well as by those who prioritize it. From this, we deduced that there may be a limited level of independence in the decision-making of students from Brno, which may be one of the main reasons why a large number of young consumers still prefer conventional food. The last factor which was added to the original TPB model, and the significance of which is agreed

upon by a number of authors was moral aspects. Its significance stems from criticisms of rational models and represents people's convictions about what is and is not correct. The significance of this factor in predicting the consumer's intention to purchase organic food was also demonstrated in this research and the value of the standardized beta coefficient indicated the most substantial association in comparison with the other factors.

CONCLUSIONS

Our use of the social-psychological TPB model to explain the behaviour of young Middle-east consumers when purchasing organic food brought us some interesting conclusions. It transpired that the most important factors were moral aspects and health concerns, which reinforces the results of previous research which pointed to the important influence of other variables. On the other hand, the influence of conscious control of behaviour was shown to be insignificant, which corresponds to the trend in healthy living and the result that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for organic food.

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