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Factors affecting organic food consumption: A case study of Ankara

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Abstract

Our study's central topic inquires as to whether or not consumers of organic foods give environmental factors any weight when making purchases. This study was carried out in Ankara's Can kaya and Inimitable districts. This data was collected by a questionnaire, and the 'Proportional Sampling Method' was used to determine the overall number of people who regularly purchase organic foods. In order to get this information, we conducted in-person interviews with 97 consumers at these establishments. We also used the Chi-square test to see whether there was any correlation between those who consume organic food and a concern for the environment. The findings demonstrate that organic food is preferred by consumers over non-organic food, with the perceived health benefits of consuming food that has been independently proven to be chemical-free being a primary factor in this preference. Cost is a key deterrent for consumers who might otherwise choose to buy organic products. Some people choose organic produce not just because of its potential benefits to their health, but also because of their concern for the environment. The chi-square analysis suggests that customers are more concerned with their own health than the environment.

Keywords: organic food, organic food consumer, consumer behaviour, environmentally-conscious.

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Understanding customer habits is crucial for identifying consumer wants and requirements. The goal of the study of consumer behaviour is to provide an explanation for the why, how, and when of individual consumers' choice to satisfy their wants and requirements. In spite of this, customer behaviours are influenced by marketing elements, as well as socioeconomic and cultural factors². Societies' food habits can shift in response to factors like improvements in education, the rise of the working mother, the elimination of barriers between national markets, the proliferation of information and communication technologies, the expansion of retailing options, and better access to transportation networks. Certain sorts of human behaviour in the context of making purchases have attracted the attention of researchers. Consumer behaviour is a term with several meanings. The definitions presented here are those that are most applicable to the present investigation. What we mean when we talk about "consumer behaviour" is

the way in which individuals make decisions and take actions as consumers with regards to products and services that help them achieve their requirements. The definition of consumer behaviour is that it is the process through which an individual decides what goods and services to purchase, as well as from whom, how, where, and when to make those purchases. The increasing prevalence of food fraud has made it more difficult to get nutritious products. As a result, shoppers are more interested in GMOs, GMO derivatives, and items that are assuredly free of chemicals and additives. Concerned about their impact on the environment and their health, a new demographic of shoppers emerged and came to be known as "green customers." The green customer, sometimes known as the organic consumer, is a kind of shopper whose decisions are heavily influenced by ethical and ecological considerations. Studies from a wide variety of nations

have noted various consumer behaviours in relation to organic food items. The organic idea, consumer attitudes, concerns impacting demand, and variables that facilitate or impede the spread of organic goods are all essential to this research. An examination of the elements that influence customers' attitudes and preferences for organic goods revealed four aspects that stand out in terms of consumers' buying behaviours and attitudes toward organic products, for instance. Consider the four dimensions of duty, trust, value, and benefit. Besides these 4 factors, the concepts of organic food and farming are founded on the values of health, ecology, justice, and care⁶. Nutritional and health concerns have been at the forefront of numerous organic food research. 70% of participants in a 2006 survey by Winter et Davis⁷ said they bought organic food to avoid agricultural pesticides; 68% said they bought it because it was fresh; 67% said it was better for their health and nutrition; and 55% said they bought it because it wasn't genetically engineered. The cost of buying organic foods is a major deterrent to more people making the switch. In light of the importance placed on a better understanding of consumer behaviour, it is crucial to examine the habits of those who regularly purchase organic foods. While cost is a major factor, consumers also consider a variety of other factors before making a purchase of organic food, including how the food tastes, how long it will keep, how easy it is to prepare, whether or not it was grown using genetically modified organisms, and so on. ⁸ There have been several research that look at the characteristics and consumer behaviour of organic foods across the globe. The study's overarching objective was to shed light on consumers' motivations for making purchases, tastes, and convictions, as well as examine the causes of consumer worries and the correlation between those worries and the frequency with which they buy and eat fruits and vegetables. ⁹ The purpose of this research is to learn how well-informed customers are about organic foods, what motivates them to buy them, and whether or not they are ecologically concerned in their purchasing decisions. **EXPERIMENTAL Materials.** In this investigation, two primary resources were used. The primary content of this study was derived from secondary sources, which included both domestic and foreign research on the issue. Besides that, we used online resources, as well as theses and publications that had already been published. The second component of this study was information collected from consumers of organic foods through questionnaires administered

at organic product retail outlets. During in-person interviews, participants filled out questionnaires designed to elicit the data needed for the study. **Method.** Ankara's Can kaya and Inimitableneighbourhoods were selected. The number of customers who filled out the questionnaire was calculated using the proportional sampling method. 10

$$n = \frac{Npq}{(N-1)D + pq}$$

$D = (d/t)^2$ where d is the margin of error and t is the t-score for a 95% confidence interval, N is the total number of consumers, p is the ratio of consumers for the sample, q is the frequency of non-occurrence ($1 - p$), and n is the sample size. The goal of this study is to collect as many participants as possible. To achieve this goal, we settled on the values $p = 0.50$ and $(1 - p) = 0.50$. In light of this, a total of 97 customers were questioned in-person at establishments offering organic food, with a 95% confidence interval and a 10% error margin. SPSS 20 was used to analyse data collected via questionnaires (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The Chi-square Independence Test reveals whether or not two or more qualitative variables are independent from one another. In keeping with the study's stated goals, we conducted a chi-square independence test among the necessary variables using questionnaire data, with a significance level of $p < 0.10$. A proportionate distribution is all that is provided for a few of the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics such as age, gender, employment, level of education, income, and marital status are considered to be personal factors within the context of this research since they are expected to influence consumer behaviours. Table 1 displays the categorized results of in-person surveys administered to customers that inquired about the aforementioned consumer behaviours. Table 1 shows that females make up over half of the sample. Most participants are between the ages of 16 and 43, and hold either a bachelor's or a master's or doctorate. The biggest percentage of people, 37.1%, have monthly incomes between \$4,000 and \$5,500 in Turkey. Some 59.8 percent of the sample is married. The private sector employs over half of all participants (49.5%).

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of consumers

Variable	Category	Number	%	Variable	Category	Number	%	
Marital status	married	58	59.8	Gender	female	54	55.7	
	single	33	34.0		male	43	44.3	
	deceased wife	3	3.1			total	97	100.0
	separated wife	3	3.1					
	total	97	100.0					
Age	16-21	2	2.1	Education	primary	2	2.1	
	22-32	33	34.0		high	17	17.5	
	33-43	29	29.9		college	3	3.1	
	44-54	12	12.4		university	55	56.7	
	55-65	17	17.5		master-doctorate	20	20.6	
	66-76	3	3.1		total	97	100.0	
	77-87	1	1.0					
total	97	100.0						
Profession	officer	10	10.3	Total monthly income	1.200-2.000	5	5.1	
	retired	10	10.3		2.500-3.500	23	23.7	
	profession required specialisation	18	18.6		4.000-5.500	36	37.1	
	private sector	48	49.5		6.000-7.500	11	11.3	
	housewife	7	7.2		8.000-10.000	14	14.4	
	student	4	4.1		11.000-14.000	3	3.0	
	total	97	100.0		15.000-25.000	5	5.1	
					Total	97	100.0	

Table 1 also shows that thirty-six percent of these customers are under the age of thirty-two. You may say that the modern youth market favours organic products. Only 21.6% of respondents are between the ages of 55 and 87, which is quite low considering the possibility that elderly individuals may not eat organic food owing to difficulties in transportation. There is no correlation between green-mindedness and age, according to chi-square testing. According to Table 1, 56.7% of the sample has a college degree or above. With the addition of the 20.6% of participants with master's or doctorate degrees, 77.3% of the sample has completed post-secondary education at a high level. If this is the case, it might be seen as evidence that people who choose to eat organic foods are more educated. Sakarya11 found similar outcomes in his research from 2007. According to the research, those with master's or doctorate degrees were the most likely to buy and eat organic foods (46.9%). These numbers might be used to support the claim that a significant proportion of organic goods have a university degree or above. There is a significant uptick in eco-awareness among tertiary education recipients (39.5%), as seen in this survey. A Chi-square analysis, however, shows that educational attainment and eco-consciousness are not significantly linked. Organic food preferences may be affected by a variety of things, including a person's gender. Among those who filled out the survey, women made up 55.7% and men made up 44.3%. As expected, this research included more female participants than male ones. Women tend to know more than males do about the benefits of eating organic due to factors including pregnancy, health concerns, and a concern for the environment. In 2010, research by Akin et al.12 shown that

different participants' demographics might lead to different attitudes on organic food and purchasing habits. Women, according to the aforementioned research, have a more favourable attitude toward, and are more likely to buy and eat, organic foods. Women shoppers are shown to be more concerned about protecting the environment. No statistically significant correlation between gender and concern for the environment was found using the Chi-square test. A total of 37.1% of people in this study had monthly incomes between 4,000 and 5,500 Turkish Lira (TL). Research by Biyikoglu5 (2010) into the estimation of demand for environmentally friendly agricultural products in Turkey's provinces of Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir reveals that higher-income domestic consumer groups have the potential to buy products that are produced organically and certified appropriately. Customers in this demographic have significant disposable income, are above the age of middle age, and are health conscious. Those with monthly incomes of above 4,000 TL (about \$850) are 45.1% more likely to self-identify as belonging to a certain group. No statistically significant relationship between income and eco-consciousness was found using a chi-square test. Organic food has a rising demand, particularly in the industrialized world and in Turkey. Consumer demand is the primary driving force behind this expansion. There is a direct correlation between rising levels of literacy and prosperity and a corresponding increase in consumer demand. 11. Organic items account for between 1.5% and 24.5% of the budgets of 82.5% of the participants. This means that organic food accounts for a quarter of shoppers' monthly expenditures. Organic food items have a lower price tag than conventionally produced goods. There are three main reasons why organic foods and goods cost more: manufacturing challenges (33%), high expenses (32%), and limited output (33%). Low demand for organic food may be attributed to factors like consumers' lack of awareness and the high cost of buying organic produce and meat. About 37.5 percent of all customers are more concerned about the environment when they spend 1 to 25 percent of their monthly money. A Chi-square test was performed to see whether there was a significant relationship between monthly spending on organic food and concern for environmental conservation, and the results showed no such relationship exists. Agriculture pesticides are utilized extensively in the process of farming. Pesticides mitigate losses in output, but they also upset the natural order of things. More over half of shoppers (54.6%) agree that organic products are better for both their health and the planet. For obvious health reasons, organic foods are preferred by 44.3% of shoppers. This data suggests that customers care more about the health benefits of organic foods than the environmental

costs. Most buyers have heard of the term "organic," and they may even be familiar with some of the benefits associated with organic products, but they lack a thorough understanding of the chemical-free advantages of these goods. Many customers also lack knowledge about organic farming regulations and practices. Consumers¹³ may be confused by the amount of market development, the introduction of new positive vocabulary, and the categorization of products. In response to the question "what is an organic product?" Participants in this research indicated a preference for "Hormone free goods" (63.9%), and "items that are not GMO" (57.7%). Only 16.9% of people immediately think of a certified product with a logo on it when asked about organic products, whereas 83.1% had no trouble understanding the idea. These numbers don't prove that 83.1% of customers are clueless about the organic movement, but they do suggest that many of them are unsure of what it entails. The research on organic food purchasing has highlighted the significance of factors including product quality and safety, faith in certifications, and brand name in particular items. Australian research confirmed what many people already knew: organic food is better for you and the planet. In recent years, there has been a dramatic rise in the demand for organic foods. Because of environmental concerns, animal welfare concerns, food safety concerns, taste preferences, and health benefits, consumers are increasingly gravitating toward organically produced goods. Consumers' tastes for several categories of organic foods were also examined. Fresh produce and fruit are bought by 44.3% of customers, followed by meat and other animal goods (purchased by 42.3%). The percentage of people who choose organic options across the board is 35.1%. Similarly, a 2007 study by Sarikaya¹¹ showed a similar pattern. According to Sarikaya¹¹'s findings, people value organic fresh produce the highest. Second, data from the Romanian organic food market suggest a dearth of staples, as shown by another research (fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, bread and especially meat in most supermarkets or specialised shops¹⁵). 202 In terms of nutrition and health benefits, 77.3% of consumers say organic foods are their first choice, while 41.2% say the same about safety. Due to the reduced danger of chemical residues and health reasons, customers choose organic foods. Organic food consumption is growing as customers increasingly prioritize their health. Biyiklioglu⁵'s 2010 research also found that although having children did not influence organic food purchases by low-income households, it did by middle- and upper-class families. These days, organic baby food is the norm in many households. Table 2 shows that 22.6% of shoppers choose organic products just because they are feeding a baby.

Table 2. Organic food consumption preferences of consumers

What is your preference for consuming organic foods?	Yes	
	number	%
Nutrition and health	75	77.3
Being safe	40	41.2
Risk of chemical residue in other products	39	40.2
Baby in the family	22	22.6
Taste and aroma	22	22.6
Life style	10	10.3
Fashion, curiosity	1	1.0

Low consumer interest contributes significantly to the high costs in the organic food sector. In Turkey, supermarkets generate 65% of organic food's net profit, while specialty organic produce marketplaces bring in the other 35%. Customers like to shop at these two stores over others since their organic goods are labelled with a distinctive badge. As seen in Table 3, 68.1% of shoppers would rather buy organic produce from a reliable retailer. When shopping for organic items, labels are read by 49.5% of buyers. In the eyes of most shoppers, reliable establishments are specialized organic food stores called besears. Only around one in 14 shoppers considers cost while buying organic products. Consumers seem to worry less about costs than about other aspects.

Table 3. Most important factors that consumers consider when buying organic foods.

What do you pay attention to most when you buy organic foods?	Yes	
	number	%
Buy from reliable places	66	68.1
Label	48	49.5
Producing company	35	36.1
Packing	22	22.7
Production place	18	18.6
Price	14	14.4

The majority of the population believes that the high costs of organic foods are justified because of the high cost and difficulty of their production. Other others believe that poor production levels are to blame for the high costs. This research found that 60.8% of customers consider the costs of organic foods to be excessive, with 26.8% calling them "extremely expensive." There isn't a single customer who thinks the pricing are fair. Prices are expensive because of inputs like fertilizer, insecticides, and the price tag attached to obtaining the appropriate certification. Ninety-two percent of shoppers say they are less likely to buy organic

goods because of their high pricing. Due to the high cost, the majority of customers said they only buy a little amount of organic foods for their children. Consumption is low mostly because prices are so high.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's overarching goal is to find out whether people who buy organic food are environmentally conscious in their eating habits. Consumers who put environmental concerns first did not differ from the general population in terms of age, gender, education, or income, according to the results of a recent survey. Consumers' decision-making processes have been influenced by marketing campaigns aimed at altering their dietary preferences and habits. In terms of health, customers place a higher value on quality and freshness than they do on price and standardization of packaging. High product pricing, along with consumers' lack of organic food awareness, contribute to the sector's relatively low penetration. Low organic food consumption rates may be attributed, in part, to consumers' high product pricing and lack of organic food awareness. Seventy-seven-point three percent of respondents in this poll favoured organic food due to concerns about their health and wellbeing, and forty-one-point two percent favoured it due to concerns about their safety. According to the results of this analysis, shoppers spend 44.3% of their grocery budget on fresh produce, followed by 42.3% on meat. Participants in the survey said that the high price of organic goods was a major reason why they either did not eat them or consumed them in very tiny amounts. Some of the 204 customers surveyed also reported buying organic goods because of their high wealth and because they are more interested in doing so for reasons of style, curiosity, and longevity. According to the results of this analysis, people who buy organic food do so because of its superior flavour, fragrance, and health benefits as well as its lower environmental impact. According to the research, while shopping for organic goods, customers focus mostly on the packaging and branding. According to surveys, these are the main reasons why customers say they are willing to pay a premium for organic goods. When shopping for organic goods, 68.1% of customers said they look for secure locations, and 49.5% said they read labels. An analysis of organic food customers' concern for the environment reveals that women and college graduates are more likely to choose organic products than their male counterparts. However, when environmentally aware of the consumers and other consumption preferences are analysed together, it can be claimed that the nutrition and health aspects are the dominating factors, not the environment.

Promotional efforts for organic goods are inadequate, studies in this area find. Because of this, people have a negative impression of organic goods despite their potential health advantages. The manufacture and distribution of organic foods are crucial in this regard. Increasing the number of organic product promotions in Turkey would improve the number of sales. Accordingly, it can be argued that organic goods may be preferred over the other products if the customers are well educated about the product and have information about the product attributes and marketing methods. Environmentally concerned shoppers of organic foods, according to this report, fall short of expectations. Nutrition and health considerations are leading for these sorts of customers. Therefore, there is need for more studies on this topic.

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