

Effective Factors on consumers behavior of organic agricultural products among citizens in Tehran Township

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Abstract

The main objective of this descriptive-survey study is to identify the factors affecting citizens' decision to buy organic products in Tehran. The statistical population of this study was all customers of food supply stores in Tehran that the sample size was obtained through Cochran formula for the size of the unknown community using 30 questionnaires distributed among customers (n=439). Available random sampling method was used to collect data. The research tool included a questionnaire of two sections of general questions (7 questions) and specific (23 items) in four dimensions (product, price, place, and promotion) for customers. The validity of the questionnaire was proofed by face and content validity. Likewise, the reliability

of the questionnaire was tested employing Cronbach's alpha. SPSS25 software was used to analyze the data in two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the willingness to consume organic products among customers with product characteristics, price characteristics, and promotion characteristics, but there is no relationship between the tendency to consume organic products and place characteristics. Among the contextual variables, there is only a positive and significant relationship between the willingness to consume organic products and the level of consumer income. No relationship was found between other contextual variables and the consumption of organic products. There was a significant difference between the respondents' gender and the willingness to consume organic products, but no significant difference was observed between age, income, occupation, and education with the willingness to buy organic products.

Keywords: Agricultural Organic Products, Marketing Mix, Consumer Behavior, Tehran

Introduction:

Improving the health of individuals in society is an important goal of the health system of any country (Maftoon et al., 2010). The health of the people of a society is one of the most important factors for the dynamism and growth and development of that society, and the main factor for ensuring the health of the society

is the provision of healthy and safe food (Food, Industry, and Health Association, 2020). In recent years, as diseases have increased, food consumers' concerns about the health of their consumables have increased. Increasing the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and the use of unprocessed animal manures in the production process and heavy metal residues (lead, mercury, nickel, chromium, arsenic, zinc, copper, tin, Cadmium, etc.) in agricultural products, residues of pesticides and detergents, animal, human and chemical fertilizers, drugs including antibiotics, hormones, etc. in agricultural products, production of transgenic products, etc. They have changed the attitude of food consumers towards food health in general and are more inclined to pay attention to the health of products as well as the protection of natural resources, and ultimately to behave more consciously, intelligently and accurately. To choose the food raw materials to consume themselves and their families. Due to the concerns, the market for environmentally friendly products is growing globally. These concerns about environmental sustainability have caused consumers to pay more attention to this issue (Rostamzadeh and Alimohammadi Siaban, 2016) and not only prefer to buy organic products to products with conventional cultivation, but also be willing to pay more for genuine environmental protection for products that meet environmental standards (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). This change in consumer behavior and their concern and awareness of the environment has led to an increase in green marketing activities in many parts of the world and the supply of products in accordance with the demand of green consumers (Rostamzadeh and Alimohammadi Siaban, 1395).

The main goal of marketing is to have the greatest impact on consumers' purchasing decisions when buying products (Govender et al., 2016). Marketers face many obstacles in persuading consumers

to buy and accept their products. In fact, many factors affect consumer buying behavior such as product characteristics, product brand, product package, product quality, product country of origin, and product information on consumer behavior (Chovanova et al., 2015; Holt, 2015; Shirai, 2015; Lee, 2014; Hislop, 2001; Winkielman, 2000; Azzam and Ali, 2019; Dodds et al., 1991). There are also factors called secondary factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, such as product price, product distribution (place) system, and product advertising (promotion) system, all of which are integral elements of marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2016). These factors are designed and developed according to the needs of the market and in response to the reactions of competitors. For this reason, in order to have a clear idea of how markets react to consumer products, it is necessary to analyze the relationship between all of the above elements and consumer buying behavior (Azzam and Ali, 2019).

The result of maximum research showed that marketing of organic food products based on social media in Iran, first of all, requires the adoption of policies to address the problem of the supply side (organic producers), which include: support Institutional include the creation of rules and standards related to organic products, the establishment of certification systems, the provision of computers, and tax exemptions for producers of organic products. The results of their research also showed that there are many obstacles to the development of the market of organic products and organic agriculture that success in marketing these products on social media depends on solving these problems and focusing on opportunities and facilitators. Available (Gholampour et al., 2009). There is a direct relationship between demographic variables (age, gender, education) with green consumer behavior, while there is an inverse relationship with income (Delphrooz and Moghaddam, 2017). There is a relationship between environmental

knowledge, environmental concerns, and the image of the green organization with green purchasing behavior and also between the perceived price and quality of the product and the desire to buy (Chegini Asli and Ardestani, 2016).

There is a significant relationship between accessibility, packaging, promotion, and price with consumer behavior. Price advertising, access and packaging variables have the greatest impact on the consumption behavior of dairy consumers, respectively (Manafzadeh et al., 2012). Halal products, place, and certificate are related to the intention to purchase agricultural products in the Perlis region of Malaysia (Nasirun et al., 2019). Product satisfaction, price satisfaction, promotion satisfaction have a significant effect on consumer intention to buy and satisfaction with place has a significant effect on product purchase intention (Elvinda et al., 2018). The combination of marketing, consumer characteristics, and psychological factors has a significant effect on consumer buying intention (Nugroho and Irena, 2017). Brand image, promotion, sales promotion, and personal selling have a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions (Onigbinde and Odunlami, 2015). The most important factor influencing consumers' buying behavior is product quality. The results also show that the most important problems that consumers face are lack of access to products, high prices and legal controls (Varghese and Santhosh, 2015). Green product has a positive effect on the buying behavior of the majority of respondents, but there is no relationship between the average monthly income of households and the willingness to pay higher prices for green products (Majerova, 2015). Consumers are not exposed enough to green product marketing. The results also showed that more use of marketing and brands to promote and sell environmentally friendly products and performance is effective (Maheshwari, 2014). Organic knowledge, Prices, and subjective norms, quality, and

level of consumer experience affect their attitudes and behavioral intentions (Saleki et al., 2012). The priority of green marketing components from the customers' point of view are green product characteristics, green price, green certification, environmental knowledge and awareness and green promotion, respectively (Abolghasemi and Barfi Moghaddam, 2015). Each of the dimension of promotion, place and mixed marketing price of green marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer green purchase, while green product has a negative and insignificant effect on consumers' green purchases (Ranaei Kurdsholi and Yari Buzjani, 1391).

Green brands, marketing communication activities, attitude based on more marketing communication, environmental knowledge and perceived effectiveness of the consumer have Influenced his intention to buy green (Nakhaei and Kheiri, 2012). Quality, information, brand, and product packaging have a positive and significant relationship with buyers' behavior. Among these variables, product information and product quality had the largest share in buyer behavior (Azzam and Ali, 2019). Firms that adhere to environmental ethics are more likely to implement green marketing programs that include (green production, pricing, distribution) that ultimately improve and then improve the performance of companies. They also found that the closed negative mechanism leads to a greater impact of green intermediary programs because it leads to distrust and unwillingness to cooperate internally (Han et al., 2019). The result of Rahmati ghofrani Showed strong support for price impact, consumer effectiveness, and perceived consequences in the intention to buy organic food products. Gaining organic knowledge, green trust, price, had a great impact on consumers' intention to buy. The result also showed that green marketing tools do not affect the desire and purchase of organic products (Rahmati Ghofrani et al., 2017). Indomathi and Davood concluded that the most

important factor of the product for the customer is comfort, followed by quality, brand and environmental health and finally taste. Product factors also affect buying behavior, with customers who prefer quality and health buying the organic product. Price factors also affect buying behavior. This study shows that customers buy organic products even if the price is high. People are ready to buy organic products because they are healthy and high quality. Spatial factors also affect purchasing behavior. This study shows that customers prefer stores that sell only organic products. Promotion factors also affect buying behavior, this study shows that customers prefer discounts and door-to-door delivery service to the regular buyer of organic products (Indumathi and Davood, 2016).

This research seeks to answer the question of what factors influence the decision to buy organic agricultural products among the citizen of Tehran metropolis? Therefore, the general purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the decision to buy organic agricultural products among citizens of Tehran, which have the specific objectives of examining the individual characteristics of respondents, ranking the most important items and dimensions affecting the decision to buy organic agricultural products, and finally investigates the relationship and effect of contextual variables on the tendency to consume organic products.

Research Methods:

The prevailing paradigm of this research is quantitative, and a survey method was used to collect the required data. The statistical population of this study was all customers of food supply stores in Tehran that the sample size was obtained through Cochran's formula for the size of the unknown population using 30 questionnaires distributed among customers ($n = 439$). Research tool includes a questionnaire in two sections of

general questions (7 question) and specific questions (23 items) in four dimensions (product, price, place, and promotion) for customers. Five Likert option (strongly disagree – strongly agree) were used to design the specific questions of the questionnaire. The initial questionnaire was given to several university professors and experts to comment on the validity of the questionnaire. The corrective opinions of professors and experts were included in the final questionnaire and the necessary changes were made. In order to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used (product 0.767, promotion 0.754, price 0.807 and place 0.795) which the results showed the reliability of the research tool. In this research, descriptive statistics in including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation have been used to analyze the data obtained from the samples. The inferential statistics of mean comparison (t-test and F-test) as well as Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient test were used to analyze the data. These analyzes were performed using SPSS₂₅ statistical software.

Findings:

The results obtained regarding the gender of the respondents showed that most of the respondents (52.2) were female. The minimum and maximum age of the respondents were 18 and 86 years, respectively, and their average age was 43.48 years, with the highest frequency (70.4 percent) in the age group of 40 to 50 years group. In terms of education, the highest frequency was related to people with post-graduate education with 36.7 percent and the lowest frequency was related to master's degree and higher (16.2 percent). The results of frequency distribution of respondents based on their job showed that the highest frequency is related to the housewife group (44.2 percent). Most respondents (50.6 percent) used organic products. Most of them (28.9 percent) provided between 25 and 50

percent of their required products from organic products. In terms of income, most of the respondents with 16.9 percent frequency were in the group with income between 10 to 15 million Tomans and the lowest of them were in the group with income above 15 million Tomans. Factors influencing the decision to buy organic agricultural products among the citizen of Tehran metropolis were examined in four dimensions of product, price, place and promotion. In relation to product features; High quality products (M= 4.74), good taste of products (M= 4.71), observance of environmental aspects in product production (M= 4.46), health products (M= 4.43) and freshness organic products (M= 35.4) were of green importance to

customers. In relation to the promotion feature component; offering discount coupons (M= 4.34), free door-to-door delivery (M= 4.28), taking into account customers' opinions (M= 4.25) and offering discounts to regular customers (M= 4.23) are of great importance to customers. They enjoyed. In relation to the component of price characteristics; Having the best value for money for organic products (M= 4.18) was very important for customers. And in relation to the place properties component; Availability of stores (M = 12.4), ease of buying organic products (M= 4.09), variety of products offered (M= 4.08) and product presentation space features (M= 4.7) are of great importance to customers.

Table 1 Frequency distribution of factors affecting organic consumption

Factors affecting organic consumption		Average	Standard Deviation	Rank
Product Features				
Pro1	organic products are of high quality	4.74	0.494	1
Pro3	the taste of organic products is good	4.71	0.524	2
Pro6	in the production of organic product environmental aspects are considered	4.46	0.621	3
Pro8	organic products are good for your health	4.43	0.651	4
Pro4	very fresh organic products are offered	4.35	0.663	5
Pro2	organic products have the right packaging and appearance	4.33	0.784	6
Pro5	there is a wide variety of organic products available	4.32	0.747	7
Pro7	the packaging of organic products is in line with the environment	4.32	0.641	8
Promotional Features				
Adv1	use discount coupons	4.34	0.667	1
Adv2	for organic products, free door-to-door delivery is possible	4.28	0.782	2
Adv3	the advantage of the poll system	4.25	0.821	3
Adv4	discount for organic products are offered to regular customers of the store	4.23	0.667	4
Adv5	provide detailed product environmental information on the packaging	4.22	0.834	5
Adv6	informing the company about the environmental responsibility of the products	4.22	0.675	6

Adv7	encourage consumers to use organic products to protect the environment	4.19	0.600	7
Price Features				
Pri2	organic products have the best value for money	4.18	0.877	1
Pri1	according to the quality; organic products offer reasonable prices	4.12	0.858	2
Place features				
Dis1	(stores) organic products are available	4.12	0.752	1
Dis4	it is easy to buy organic products in the store	4.09	0.830	2
Dis3	organic products have a high variety in the store	4.08	0.721	3
Dis2	organic product stores have air conditioning	4.07	0.719	4
Dis5	it is possible to buy organic products through the application (online shopping)	4.06	0.684	5
Dis6	use of green distribution and transportation system	4.05	1.098	6

In order to rank the component related to the factors affecting the purchase of organic products; cumulative indicators were considered for each component. Product features components (with an average of 4.46); Promotion features (with

an average of 4.25); Price marketing features (with an average of 4.15) and distributive features (with an average of 4.08) were ranked first to fourth, respectively, as factors affecting the purchase of organic products (Table 2).

Table 2: Ranking of factors affecting the purchase of organic products

Component	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Rank
Product	4.46	0.354	3.63	5	1
Promotion	4.25	0.392	3.14	5	2
Price	4.15	0.605	2.00	5	3
Place	4.08	0.437	2.83	5	4
Total	4.27	0.320	3.52	4.78	-

To investigate the relationship between the tendency to consume organic products and some research variables, Spearman and Pearson coefficients based on the characteristics of the variable were used. The result show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the tendency to consume organic products

with product characteristics and price characteristics at the level of one percent and with promotion characteristics at the level of five percent. The table also showed that there is no significant relationship between the tendency to consume organic products and place characteristics (Table 3).

Table 3 Relationship between propensity to consume organic products and research variables

Variable	Type of correlation coefficient	The value of r	The significance level
Product	Pearson	0.165**	0.001
Advertise	Pearson	0.103*	0.031
Price	Pearson	0.140**	0.003
Promotion	Pearson	0.079	0.100
Total	Pearson	0.153**	0.001

*Significance at the level of 0.05

**Significant at the level of 0.01

Among the contextual variables, only between the desire to consume organic products and the level of consumer income at the level of five percent, there is a positive and significant relationship. There

is no relationship between other contextual variables (age, education, gender and occupation) and consumption of organic products (Table 4).

Table 4 Relationship between the tendency to consume organic products and some individual characteristics

Variable	Type of correlation coefficient	The value of r	The significance level
Gender	Spearman	-0.016	0.731
Job	Spearman	0.075	0.0116
Income	Spearman	0.173*	0.014
Education	Spearman	-0.084	0.080
Age	Pearson	-0.078	0.102

*Significance at the level of 0.05

Mean comparison test was used to investigate the effect of contextual variables on the tendency consume organic products. The result of t-test showed that a significant difference was observed at the level of one percent between the gender of the respondents and the dimensions of the tendency to consume organic products in all dimensions, including product characteristics, promotion, price and

distribution. This significant difference was also observed at the level of one percent between the total of four dimensions of desire to consume and gender of respondents. The results of F-test also showed that there was no significant difference between the variable of age, income, occupation and education with the desire to buy organic products (Table 5).

Table 5 The effect of some research variables on the tendency to use organic (t-test and F- test)

Variable	Dimensions	Test	Statistics t & F	The significance level
Gender (Female-Male)	Product	t	263.635**	0.000
	Advertisement	t	227.251**	0.000
	Price	t	143.614**	0.000
	Distribution	t	195.698**	0.000

Total	t	279.636**	0.000
Age	F	1.089	0.319
Income	F	0.102	0.834
Job	F	1.144	0.335
Education	F	0.680	0.565

**Significance at the level of 0.01

Discussion:

Product characteristics play the most important role in the decision to buy organic products among customers (in line with the findings of Abolghasemi and Barfi Moghadam, 2015; Indomathi and Davood, 2016; Varghese and Santhosh, 2015). One of most important features affecting the consumption of organic products; Quality, taste, being environmentally friendly and its role in maintaining the health of the body. After product features, promotion plays the most important role in the decision to buy organic products among customers (in line with the findings of Maheshwari, 2014). The most important promotion features affecting the behavior of organic purchasing can be offering discount vouchers for organic products, providing free product delivery service, survey system, providing discount to regular customers of these products in exchange for purchasing and providing detailed environmental information Mentioned with the product. Price characteristics were ranked third among the factors affecting the decision to buy organic products among customers (in line with the finding of Abolghasemi and Barfi Moghadam, 2015). Reasonable price per product excepted by the consumer affects its consumption behavior. Distributive characteristics ranked fourth among the influencing the decision to buy organic products among customers. Among the most important place features that affect the consumption of organic products are the availability of products, ease of purchase, variety of goods offered, the quality of supply space and the availability of online shopping and shopping applications.

There is a positive and significant relationship between the tendency to consume organic products among customers with product characteristics, price characteristics, and promotion characteristics, but there is no significant relationship between the tendency to consume organic products and place characteristics. Among the contextual variables, there is only a positive and significant relationship between the desire to consume organic products and the level of consumer income. This means that the higher the income level, the more inclined people are to consume organic products (contrary to the heartbreaking findings of Delafrooz & Moghaddam, 2017; Majerova, 2015). There was no correlation between the variables of gender, age and education with the consumption of organic products (these findings are in contrast to the heartbreaking findings of 2017). Also, there is no correlation between the job variable and the consumption of organic products. There was no significant difference between the respondents' gender and the desire to consume organic products. which means that there is a significant difference between men and women in terms of the desire to consume organic products, but between the variables of age, income (Majrova, 2015). Occupation and education there were no significant difference with the tendency to buy organic products.

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