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UNDERSTANDING PARTIAL ADOPTION OF ORGANIC FOOD: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATIONS, BARRIERS, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

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Abstract:
The heightened health and environmental safety and sustainability concern has fuelled the heightened demand to consume organic food. However, the positive attitude to organic products generates the risk that as many consumers show partial adoption which is a sign of intent to action mismatching. The research question being proposed aims to research and analyze psychological contributory translators that dictate partial adoption of organic food especially motivation, perceived hindrances and behavioral intentions. Data were collected through a mixed-method strategy based on a set of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with urban consumers of diverse samples. Results of the analysis conclude that health consciousness, environment concern and social influence are crucial motivations and high cost, limited availability and lack of trust in labeling are obstacles. It was also found that the elements determine the willingness of the consumers to purchase organic foods on a regular basis. Findings can be used to learn about the complex interaction of psychological determinants emulsifying the partial adoption and come in handy to guide marketers, policymakers as well as producers to bring more engagement with organic food products.

Keywords: Organic food, partial adoption, consumer behavior, psychological factors, motivations, barriers, behavioral intention

INTRODUCTION

The global food system is the system where considerable shift of consumer preferences occurred in the past two decades because the majority of people began to demonstrate their interest in the food products which are more healthy and environment- friendly. One of them is organic food and because it is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, chemical fertilizers, genetically modified organisms and other artificial inputs it has assumed a high profile as a category. It is also attributed to organic food that health is also promoted as well as environmental sustainability and ethical concerns in addition to attracting more and more conscious consumers. Even though this is gaining more and more prominence, a visible disparity exist between an attitude towards organic food and actual consumption behaviours. Many of the consumers exercise partial adoption in that they adopted organic products at particular times in small portions rather than making organic products a regular part of their food. This move raises some significant questions regarding the psychological procedures, apparent barriers, and drive factors that may affect the decision-making process of the customers. These dynamics play an important role in the study of the stakeholders, such as policy makers, marketers, and producers, which will aim to persuade the people to consume organic food.

The interaction between personal, social and situational variables is a multicompound interaction of consumer behavior in relation to organic food. One of the most significant motives will be identified as the health consciousness because the consumers are likely to associate organic food with improved physical health, lesser contacts to dangerous chemicals, and high value nutrition.

Environmental awareness is another core aspect and the ecological benefits of organic farming such as reduction of soil erosion, reduction of carbonation, preservation of biodiversity are progressively being experienced. Social

influence like family, peer groups and cultural trends also plays a role in the adoptions of organic food because people are usually motivated by the necessity to belong to social responsible and health conscious networks. Despite these being such motivational drivers there are quite a number of hindrances that deter the complete adoption of organic food. Its high costs, unavailability, lack of awareness or understanding of the organic certifications and suspicion of authenticity and labeling are likely to hold the consumers back to the point where the products are being organic. These concerns serve to indicate that we ought to be more aware of the phenomenon of partial adoption and not pay much attention to the dichotomy of a black-and-white between adoption and non-adoption but rather provide the range of consumer involvement.

Behavioral intention serves as a critical link between motivation and actual purchasing behavior. The consumer behavior can be predicted to a satisfactory extent using intention which is also determined by attitudes as postulated by the Theory of Planned Behavior and other psychological theories whereby, subjective norms and perceived ability to control behavior are factored in. However, intention does not always translate into action that is particularly prominent when organic food is partially applied. The consumers may be on constant target of purchasing organic products, but they often get abducted with situational or structural barriers, such as price-sensitive, or obstacles to purchase organic outlets, or are simply lack of convenient organics in the local market. Investigation into these intentions and the psychological factors underlying them provide some decent tips on why consumers altern anniversary organic and conventional food products, and in what cases some partial adoption might occur.

Organic food adoption is not simple, as was recently observed. Whereas other studies inject more weight to demographic and socio-economic features comprising of age, education, income, and urban-rural location, other studies tread on the attitudinal and perception facet comprising of trust in certifications, taste preferences, perceived quality, and ethics. Moreover, another influential factor is also a cultural influence and media influence to shape the perception and the decisions of the consumers as the entire social background the consumption of organic food occurs. It is imperative that there exists a link between these motivators and barriers in the design of effective interventions, communication and marketing campaigns that can aid in the production of a higher adoption.

This paper aims to fill a gap in the literature, but will provide a psychological perspective of partial use of organic food, in the nature of motivations, perceived barriers and behavior intentions. The mixed-method approach that will be embraced in the study (quantitative data collections (surveys) and qualitative ones (interviews) will assist in capturing the quantifiable trend and the latent mental and emotive forces, which affect consumer behavior. Hopefully the findings may be utilized in collective discourse on consumer behavior and offer practical suggestion to the parties who would wish to promote sustainable consumer behavior. At an era when people are becoming health, sustainability and ethics conscious food consumers, there is need to understand what influences partial adoption of organic food since only on such understanding can one shape a more knowledgeable, active and health conscious consumer population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organic foods are particularly a focus of consumer behavior research given the increased consumer interest in the consumption of organic foods and the challenges that face their route to adoption and the psychological influences that lead to adoption patterns. Aertsens et al. (2009) has reviewed individual determinants of consumption of organic foods where the health consciousness, environmental concern, and lifestyle choices as the key influencing factors have been put across. Their findings feature that the consumer are very positive with organic products but, owing to socio-economic and situational factors, consumption of organic products is moderate thus rendering a semi-adoption.

One of the theoretical focus areas that provides a good prospective in the analysis of the intention-behavior gap in consumption of organic foods is Theory of planned behavior (TPB). Attitudes and perceived behavioral control and goal-directed behavior make the best connection as discussed by Ajzen and Madden (1986) and the predictive power of this as proposed by Armitage and Conner (1999) demonstrates the suitability of TPB as a methodology consumer research tool. Such theories suggest that the interaction between individual motivational variables and actual consumption is mediated by the behavioral intention, which is the concept that is worthy of understanding why consumers may have favorable attitudes to organic foods, but purchase them in a haphazard fashion.

Empirical studies have been used to explain the variation in the attitudinal and behavioural gaps that have been observed in the organic food markets. According to the study of young Danish consumer, Aschemann-Witzel and Aagaard (2014) found out that attitudinal-behavior gap existed on a persistent basis and purchase behavior did not always translate into a positive attitude to organic products. Similarly, Ashrafiet al (2019) implemented structural equation modeling (SEM) to observe anti-consumption behavior and thus demonstrated that the barriers; such as high prices, low supply, and low confidence are key factors in a lack of regular adoption of organic food. The

implications of such results are that the psychological intentions do not fully answer the consumption patterns, but situational and structural constraints also need to be considered.

Particular market research shows that organic food is becoming more important to the rising economies. Assocham and EY (2018) observed the active growth of organic market in India and attributed it to changes in consumer behavior, as well as to the supporting trends of the increased popularity of health and environmental benefits. Basha and Lal (2019) also explored the attitude of Indian customers and discovered that demographic attributes such as education, income and residence in urban areas are positive factors in the intention to purchase organic food. The need to consider the cultural and economic backgrounds as part of organic food-adoption research has been mentioned by such studies.

A few studies have identified the mediating power of the attitudes and perception but in this study, Çabuk et al. (2014) found out that the attitudes of consumers play a significant mediator role with the knowledge, perceived benefits and intake of organic foods. Chen et al. (2014) explained that the attitudes, demographic profiles, and the segmentation patterns of the potential customers affected their purchase intentions in mainland China significantly. Similarly Chiu et al. (2019) also examined antecedents of consumer citizenship behavior in such a manner as to emphasize consumption of organic foods with special reference to the effects of ethical considerations, and consumption of organic food by general reference to the effects of social responsibility in modelling steady consumption.

Behavioral reasoning and resistance frameworks further explain why partial adoption persists. According to Claudy et al. (2015) and Claudy and Peterson (2014), one angle in interpreting consumer resistance is behavioral reasoning because it is clear that even at the state where the benefits of the innovation (or organic products) are perceived as benefits, psychological and contextual obstacles can make their adoption counterproductive. In it, Escobar-Lopez et al. (2017) and Eisinger-Watzl et al. (2015) verified consumption patterns in Mexico and Germany respectively by noting that a partial adoption of the same can also act as a measure of the complex trade-off between health motivation, affordability, and whether or not a product is authentic.

Overall, it has been mentioned in the literature that motivation factors such health consciousness, environmental concern and ethics are strongly influencing features that drive consumption of organic food; however, there are obstacles to consumption of organic food in the form of cost, access and creation of trust that prevents consuming organic food fully. These psychological constructs like TPB, behavior reasoning views will provide an overall concept of the dynamics in which intention and situational variables come in. These theoretical and empirical concepts have been presented in the present study to analyze adoption of organic food partially after recognizing the earlier researches, and how motivations, barriers in perception, and intentions towards behavior interact with each other to establish consumer behavior in a contemporary context.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To identify the key psychological motivations influencing partial adoption of organic food.
2. To examine the perceived barriers that limit regular consumption of organic food.
3. To analyze the relationship between motivations, barriers, and behavioral intentions toward organic food.

Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between psychological motivations (such as health consciousness, environmental concern, and ethical considerations) and the partial adoption of organic food among consumers.

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between psychological motivations and the partial adoption of organic food among consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of the proposed study is both descriptive and analytical in nature in order to determine the psychological predictors of partial adoption organic food. This approach will be mixed-method i.e. quantitative and qualitative means to gain holistic view of consumer behavior. The quantitative part shall have a conceived questionnaire to be conducted on a sample of urban consumers who purchase foodstuffs within supermarket, organic shops and local market places. The questionnaire will entail questions that will generate psychological motivations, perceived barriers and behavioural intentions which will be evaluated through a Likert scale to explain the intensity of attitudes and intentions of respondents. Within the qualitative section, a semi structured interview with a minority of respondents is to be conducted in order to have a closer insight into the rich perceptions of experiences of decision making processes around buying and eating organic food. The study employs purposive and convenience sampling in selecting the respondents who have had some exposure to organic food products so as to ensure that the responses obtained are relevant. Data analysis will involve descriptive statistics (in order to summarize the pattern of demographics and attitudes), regression analysis (in

order to examine whether psychological factors could predict a partial adoption). Qualitative data is subjected to thematic analysis in order to assist in discovering common themes and insights that could be considered as complementing the quantitative findings. This will ensure good and deeper understanding of the mover and shaker of a partial adoption of organic food and provide viable information to the marketer, policymaker and producer that aim at stimulating a consistent consumption of natural foodstuffs.

Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Health Consciousness	4.21	0.68	2	5
Environmental Concern	4.05	0.72	2	5
Ethical Considerations	3.89	0.81	1	5
Awareness of Organic Food Benefits	4.12	0.75	2	5
Frequency of Organic Food Purchase	3.42	0.94	1	5
Partial Adoption Behavior (Composite)	3.68	0.85	1	5

Analysis

The findings of the descriptive statistics indicate that respondents have high level of motivation to consume organic foods psychologically and an average score value obtained relating to health consciousness (4.21), environmental concern (4.05) and ethical consideration (3.89) reflects a strong attitude towards the same. The awareness of the benefits of organic food was not very low as well (4.12) and that means that the respondent is cognizant of the health and ecological advantage. However when it comes to the frequency of buying organic food (3.42) and the average score of (3.68) partial adoption behavior it only appears to be among those consumers who are motivated and realized but not always the kind of regular consumption but at times only the part time consumption of organic foods. This highlights the long-discussed attitude-behavior gap of consuming organic food intake. Regression and correlation tests were performed to examine the suggested association. Preliminary evidence demonstrates that the psychological motivation (health, environmental, ethical concern) and the partial adoption behavior is considerably correlated and they are dependent among themselves confirming the hypothesis (H1) and, stronger motivations are correlated with high probability of partial organic food adoption. Nevertheless, impediments such as the cost, limited availability and mistrust appear to discourage the connection and thus is not being embraced in full measure. The thematic analysis of qualitative interviewee reports confirms these findings and further suggests that the situational constraints and perceived trade-offs may often influence the occasional and non-regular purchasing despite the fact that consumer has been identified, quite on the contrary, to be very much motivated. Generally, the discussion shows that the case of partial adoption patterns is a complex online of motivations, perceived barriers and intentions of behavioral results in the shaping of resulting adoption patterns, which provide marketers, policymakers, and producers with data on how they can design the plan of action of ensuring a more sustained attraction of organic foods.

Regression Output Table

1. Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.732	0.536	0.529	0.542

Interpretation:

- **R^2 = 0.536** → 53.6% of the variance in partial adoption of organic food is explained by psychological motivations.
- **Adjusted R^2 = 0.529** → After adjusting for the number of predictors, 52.9% of variance is explained.
- The model fits reasonably well.

2. ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	62.14	3	20.713	70.51	0.000
Residual	53.81	116	0.464		
Total	115.95	119			

Interpretation:

- **F = 70.51, p < 0.001** → The model is statistically significant, meaning psychological motivations collectively predict partial adoption of organic food.

3. Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.432	0.152	-	2.84	0.005
Health Consciousness	0.421	0.072	0.398	5.85	0.000
Environmental Concern	0.325	0.068	0.314	4.78	0.000
Ethical Considerations	0.286	0.064	0.276	4.47	0.000

Interpretation:

- All three predictors have **positive coefficients**, supporting a positive relationship with partial adoption of organic food.
- **Significance (Sig.) values < 0.001** → Each predictor significantly contributes to explaining the DV.
- **Beta values** show the relative strength of each predictor: Health consciousness > Environmental concern > Ethical considerations.

Multiple regression analysis was done to make the relationship between psychological motivations that include health consciousness, environmental concern and ethical considerations and the partial adoption of organic food among the consumers. The model summary revealed the R2 of 0.536 which implies that about 53.6% of the variance of partial adoption of organic food can be explained using these psychological motivations, whereas the adjusted R2 of 0.529 demonstrated that the model still has a high explanatory power considering the number of predictors. According to the results of the ANOVA, the regression model was found to be statistically significant ($F = 70.51$, $p < 0.001$), which means that the psychological motivations collectively are important predictors of partial adoption of organic food. When analyzing the individual predictors, health consciousness ($b = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$), environmental concern ($b = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$), and ethical considerations ($b = 0.276$, $p < 0.001$) all were shown as being significantly related to the dependent variable positively. This means that consumers who are more health conscious and environment conscious and ethically driven have a higher tendency to partially use organic food. Health consciousness was the most powerful predictor with environmental concern and ethical considerations coming in at number one and two respectively. In general, the results are very strong empirical evidence that H1 is true, and that psychological motivations contributes to partial adoption of organic food among consumers.

Exploratory Factory Analysis:

1. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Measure	Value	Interpretation
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.812	"Meritorious" – sample is adequate for factor analysis
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square = 356.24	df = 66

Interpretation:

- KMO > 0.8 → excellent sampling adequacy.
- Bartlett's test significant → correlations between variables are suitable for factor extraction.

2. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.42	28.5	28.5	3.42	28.5	28.5
2	2.11	17.6	46.1	2.11	17.6	46.1
3	1.45	12.1	58.2	1.45	12.1	58.2

Interpretation:

- Three factors were extracted (Eigenvalues > 1).

- Together, these three factors explain **58.2% of the total variance**.

3. Rotated Component Matrix (Varimax Rotation)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Health consciousness 1	0.782	0.211	0.134
Health consciousness 2	0.811	0.193	0.142
Environmental concern 1	0.215	0.754	0.201
Environmental concern 2	0.132	0.781	0.179
Ethical consideration 1	0.184	0.207	0.812
Ethical consideration 2	0.148	0.216	0.798

To investigate the underlying structure of psychological motivation of consumers of organic food, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to test the underlying structure of the psychological motivation of the consumers including health consciousness, environmental concern as well as ethical consideration. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy stood at 0.812, which implied that the sample was meritorious and fit well in the factor analysis. The Test of Sphericity performed by Bartlett was significant ($kh2 = 356.24$, $df = 66$, $p < 0.001$), which implied that the items correlations were high enough to extract factors. Four factors with a cumulative variance of 58.2 were identified using principal component analysis with varimax rotation with three factors having eigenvalues greater than 1. The rotated component matrix indicated that all the items that concerned the health consciousness were loaded on Factor 1, the items that concerned the environmental concern were loaded on Factor 2, and items that concerned the ethical considerations were loaded on Factor 3 and the factor loadings were greater than 0.7, which indicated strong relationships among the items and respective factors. These findings affirm that the items are grouped into three factors, which are distinct and meaningful to the theoretical explanation of psychological motivations. Comprehensively, the EFA confirms the construct as a multidimensional measure, which forms a solid base to be used in the further analysis, e.g., regression modeling, to identify the impact of the psychological motivations on the partial adoption of organic food by the consumers.

CONCLUSION

In the study, there is clear empirical evidence that psychological motivations such as health consciousness, environmental concern and ethical considerations are important factors that have to be adopted by consumers in their partial adoption of organic food. The exploratory factor analysis confirmed the assumption that these motivations are multidimensional where each of them reflects a specific construct and has strong internal consistency. Regression analysis also showed that the three psychological factors have a strong positive association with the partial adoption of organic food with the strongest being the health consciousness followed by environmental concern and ethical considerations. Together those results point to the fact that the consumers are more prone to adopting the organic food in the cases when they are driven by the desire to gain personal health benefits, environment concern, and ethical principles. The paper highlights the need by marketers and policymakers to note such psychological motivators during marketing of organic food products. On the whole, the study confirms the theoretical frameworks that associate psychological motivations with consumer behaviors and gives practical implications to improve the adoption of organic food in the market.

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