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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MOTIVES FOR THE PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD IN HARARE

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ABSTRACT. The remarkable growth in the purchase and consumption of organic food is widely acknowledged by many practitioners and academics in both developed and developing countries, yet in the Zimbabwean context, there seems to be a paucity of research in this field. To address this identified research gap, the current study attempts to examine the motivational factors for the purchase and consumption of organic food in Zimbabwe. An exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the underlying motivational factors from data that were collected from a sample of 200 consumers in Harare, Zimbabwe. The findings indicate that consumers purchase organic food because of six major reasons: is good for their health, assists environmental sustainability, ensuring values and principles, the naturalness of food, some consumers perceive that some selected organic food products are cheap and help improve one's ability to cope with stress. In this regard, an understanding of the motivational factors for the purchase of organic food is of crucial importance to marketers as they are able to craft strategies to meet the needs of organic products consumers.

Key words: *organic products, motivation, consumption, Zimbabwe*

ZUSAMMENFASUNG. Das bemerkenswertes Wachstum beim Erwerb und die Konsumsteigerung dem Bio-Lebensmittel wird weithin von den Fachleuten und Wissenschaftlerinnen in Industrie- und Entwicklungsländernanerkannt und dennoch im simbabwischen Kontext wird relativ wenig zu dem Thema geforscht. Zur Handhabung der ausgemachten Forschungslücken, die vorliegende Studie unternimmt den Versuch der Motivationsfaktoren für den Erwerb und Verbrauch der Bio-Lebensmittel in Simbabwe zu prüfen. Eine explorative Faktoranalyse wurde verwendet, um den grundlegenden Motivationsfaktoren von erhobenen

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Daten zu bestimmen, aus einer Probe von 200 Verbraucher in Harare, Zimbabwe. Die Ergebnisse lassen darauf schließen, dass Verbraucher biologischer Lebensmittel kaufen, wegen folgende sechs Hauptgründe: es ist gesund, unterstützt ökologische Nachhaltigkeit, sicherstellt die Werte und Grundsätze, die Natürlichkeit von Lebensmitteln, einige Verbraucher bestimmen, dass ausgewählten biologische Nahrungsmittel billig sind und verbessert die Stressbewältigungsfähigkeit. In dieser Hinsicht, ein Verständnis der Motivationsfaktoren für den Einkauf von Bio-Lebensmittel ist von entscheidender Bedeutung der Vermarkter, da sie in der Lage sind, Strategien zu gestalten, um die Bedürfnisse der Verbraucher der Bioprodukte zu erfüllen.

Schlüsselwörter: *Bioprodukte, Motivation, Verbrauch, Zimbabwe*

1. Introduction

The consumption of organic food has grown remarkably, both in developed and developing countries. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (2009) estimated that the value of global market for organic food has reached $45 billion (USD) in 2007. According to Roitner-Schobesberger, Darnhofer, Somsook, Vogl (2008) the demand for organic food among consumers in Thailand is on a sharp increase. In addition Zepeda and Leviten-Reid (2014) as well as Zepeda and Li (2007) highlight that its growth can be traced to concerns over the negative environmental impact of conventional agricultural practices, as well as the potential long-term effects of consuming genetically modified food. In Zimbabwe, markets for organic agriculture products have grown rapidly over the past 15 years, driven by increasing consumer awareness, and concerns about food safety, environmental protection and nature conservation (Makatouni, 2012).Although organic food comprises only a small fraction of the food market, its rapid growth has generated much interest among consumers, businesses as well as researchers.

Over the last few years, some Zimbabwean consumer market segments now prefer to consume organic products. This consumption pattern seems to be prevalent in the whole country and as such the phenomenon has become a critical one for marketers. In addition the consumption pattern seems to be influenced by psychological factors. The problem is that the motivations for the preference or shift from other food products to organic products are not very clear to marketers. Marketers therefore need to have information about these psychological factors that influence purchase decisions so that they are bale to

craft strategies that help them satisfy the needs of this market segment. Various studies have been done on the psychological factors influencing the purchase behavior of organic food products but however they have mainly been in developed countries. The growth of the organic products industry has given rise to new opportunities for business growth and sustainable ways of consumption. While fully fledged industries have been blossoming in the developed world, there have not been well documented studies of consumer trends, behaviors and psychological factors behind the purchasing of organic products in developing countries as such as Zimbabwe. This paucity of information is certainly a cause for concern as this has potential to impede the growth of the organic market in any country. Because of this potential for more revenue to be generated, it is vital for business to fully comprehend the market and the psychological factors that are associated with the purchase of these products, in order to come up with marketing strategies to fully capitalize on this consumer need.

Previous research has shown that organic products are usually viewed in positive light but this has not always resulted in more purchasing and consumption of organic food products because of lack of information (Onyango, Hullman and Bellows, 2007). Studies have also shown that psychological factors play an important role in the purchase of products. The studies in this psychology marketing field do show the need for marketers to come up with innovative and informative marketing strategies to satisfy the needs of organic food consumers. In Zimbabwe not many studies have been done to investigate consumer motivations for the purchase of organic products. It is against this backdrop that the current study sought to gain an understanding of this under-researched area in the Zimbabwean context. The results of this psychological marketing study have potential of extending knowledge about consumer perceptions of organic food. The study is necessary as it can help equip marketers with knowledge about consumer perceptions and they can use the knowledge to predict the consumption behavior of organic products.

The growth of the organic products has been unprecedented especially in the western society and a lot of studies have been generated on the trends and motivations in consumer behavior with regards to organic products (Kisaka-Lwayo and Obi. 2015; Krissoff, 2008). While these studies have been highly informative, the present study is relevant because it specifically inquires on the Zimbabwean market with its own uniqueness and challenges. The Zimbabwean economy has been very depressed for a long period and this research will add to the knowledge in consumer perceptions towards organic products.The remaining sections present the literature review, methodology of data collection, analysis, discussion and recommendations of the study.

2. Literature review

2.1 Psychological theories of Motivation

The theory of Reasoned Action created by Fishbein and Ajzen in the 1960s posits that there are pre-existing attitudes in the decision making process of consumers. Consumers are viewed as rational actors who buy products when they expect to get a specific benefit from the product. It means that in the case of organic products, consumers make purchase decisions based on the expectation that they would benefit from the organic products.

On the other hand, Engel, Kollet, Blackwell (EKB) Model of consumer motivations posits that the input phase of the consumer decision making process is critical because it is a stage when consumers are provided with information about the products. The information provided is then used to make a decision about whether to buy the product or not. When marketers of organic products provide consumers with information about the benefits of organic products, they stimulate desire to purchase the product.

The Motivation-Need Theory developed by Maslow in 1943 also assists in explaining the psychological motivation aspects in the organic food purchase. The theory suggests that people act in a certain way because of the need to fulfill their needs which include the physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization. Marketers of organic products do not only create awareness to the product but also create its place on the hierarchy of needs. The theory therefore maintains that messages used by marketers create a sense of need. Corroborating the same view, the theory of Social Status suggests that consumers are motivated to purchase products because they want to be perceived as people 'in the know'. It follows that consumers purchase certain products because they want to be viewed by others as people equipped with product knowledge so that they gain respect of others.

In the same vein, the ego psychology theory suggests that what motivates consumers to purchase products is the desire to enhance their status because there are certain products which signify the status of a consumer. The Trait view point of personality contributes to this subject by stating that the consumers' purchase behavior is influenced by the unique pattern of traits. On other words, consumers display their need to be unique by purchasing certain products which the majority of consumers do not purchase (Mpinganjira, Dos Santos, Botha, Du Toit, Erasmus, Maree and Mugobo, 2013). The authors also use the socio-cognitive theory of personality to explain consumer motivations to buy products. The theory posits that the consumer's personality in influenced by the way he or she thinks and when exposed to products, the consumer usually

searches for information about the product so that when the purchase decision is finally made, the product choice should reflect who he or she is. It demonstrates that consumers are motivated by the need to show who they are when they purchase products.

2.3 Other motivational factors for organic products

Studies have found that the motivational factors for the consumption of organic food products are numerous and varied. According to Bourn and Prescott (2012), apart from health, food safety and environmental considerations, there are other product characteristics to be considered, such as taste, appearance, nutritive value, freshness as well as other sensory distinctions which influence consumer preferences. Studies that investigated the effect of organic food quality attributes on consumer preferences have found varied results. Other studies have found that product quality characteristics affect consumers' preferences for organic food and the other factors are the nutritional value, economic value, freshness, flavor or taste, ripeness, and general appearance of organic food products (Wolf and Cunningham, 2012).

Wolf and Cunningham (2012) also reported that 93% of Canadian respondents prefer food products with good taste. In contrast, Torjusen et al. (2009) discovered that in studies for other parts of the world, the consumers ranked nutritional value and freshness higher than taste and other related quality characteristics.

With specific reference to health, most studies in Western Europe show that most organic users were more concerned about the health benefits which could be derived from these products. According to Padel and Foster (2005) the increasing demand for organic products is in response to information about genetically modified foods in food chain. People want to buy organic products for reasons of maintaining their healthy states, improve their health, preventing illness or preventing food allergies. When keeping the health condition, it is also important for organic consumers to avoid taking foods with chemical residues. To maintain health, consumers choose foods with fewer pesticides and more vitamins and mineral contents. Few studies have been done in the developing world on organic food products and the consumer behaviors with regards to organic food purchase. However, what is apparent from the literature is that consumer choices are not actually uniform and drawing cross cultural comparisons is a difficult exercise. In addition, Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005) state that consumer behavior is influenced by ideas, feelings, experiences and actions, along with additional environmental factors, like advertisements and price. This is precisely what this research intends to explore, in an attempt to gain insight

into the motivation for purchasing organic products. In addition, while some studies have been quite insightful in revealing the blossoming of the organic industry in Asia, it is apparent that not many studies have been conducted on the African continent. The scarce literature reveals more about organic farming than consumer motivations. Some expert opinions from scholars like Parrott, Sockyew, Makunike and Ntambi, S. (2006) state that this is due to lack of awareness, low-income levels, lack of local organic standards and other infrastructure for local market certification. While the literature above reveals the extent to which organic farming is prevalent in Africa, this study seeks to understand the consumer behavior and motivations in consuming organic products in Zimbabwe and the perceived benefits of organic products.

3. Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research design was adopted in this study as it allowed for the evaluation of different variables associated with the purchase of organic products. The sample consisted of 200 current and potential consumers of certified organic products from the retail outlets in Harare Metropolitan area.

3.1 The measuring instrument

Items in the instrument were developed from a review of literature and were initially pre-tested with two academics in the health field. Forty-five statements were assembled initially but they were reduced to 39 items after experts' appraisal. Various changes were made to the questionnaire regarding wording and appropriateness to organic food consumption context. The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A contained questions on the profile of the respondents and section B contained a 39 items scale investigating various factors based on a 5-point Likert type scale anchored with 1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree.

3.2 Data collection

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed in person to the customers shopping at retail outlets in Harare. Prior to the survey, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study. The respondents were informed that they were under no obligation to complete the questionnaire. Based on the information collected through the literature, a questionnaire was developed to

suit the Zimbabwean context. The questionnaire contained two sections. The instrument was pre-tested with 20 respondents in order to assess the clarity of the questions, to check whether any changes are needed to be made to the questionnaire before using it for the main study.

3.3 Data analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21). Descriptive statistics were first used to establish a demographic profile of the respondents. Second, the data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to identify the factors influencing consumers to purchase organic products.

4. Results

4.1 Profile of respondents

A total of 200 potential respondents were approached to participate in the main survey. Of these, 187 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 93.5 % response rate. Of the 187 responses used in the study, the survey comprised 64.4 percent males (n=121) and 35.2 percent females (n=66). 41% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 35 years and this was also the case with those aged between 36-55 years as they also constituted 41% of the respondents. However, those above 56 years old were only 17.6% of the respondents. 41% (n=77) of the respondents had degrees as their highest academic qualifications, those who had Ordinary Levels, Diplomas and Masters Degrees each constituted 17.6% of the respondents' population whilst only 5.9% had Advanced Levels.

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Factor analysis was used to determine the principal motivational factors behind purchasing of organic products in Zimbabwe. Table 1 shows that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value for this study is **0.695** which shows that the data were suitable for factor analysis because the minimum threshold for sampling adequacy is 0.5 (Parsian & Dunning, 2009). In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has an associated p-value smaller than .001 which indicates suitability of the dataset for the analysis.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.695
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3290.424
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

The principal component analysis method was used to extract the number of main factors that motivate consumers to purchase and consume organic products. The procedure extracted six motivational factors as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.818	21.901	21.901	4.818	21.901	21.901	3.615	16.430	16.430
2	3.476	15.802	37.703	3.476	15.802	37.703	3.369	15.315	31.745
3	3.055	13.885	51.588	3.055	13.885	51.588	3.054	13.880	45.625
4	2.521	11.459	63.047	2.521	11.459	63.047	2.770	12.589	58.213
5	2.381	10.822	73.869	2.381	10.822	73.869	2.704	12.290	70.504
6				1.950	8.864	82.733	2.690	12.229	82.733

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 2 shows that six factors were extracted because they met the requirement of having an eigenvalue of above 1.00. The six motivational factors explain over 82.733% of the total variability in the data. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that to explain the data a six factor solution will probably be adequate.

The study went further to test the factor loadings using the varimax rotation method to identify the items that load to the six different factors. The factors loadings are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Good for health	Environmental sustainability	Ensures values and principles	Natural and untarnished	Saves income	Improves ability to deal with stress
Healthy	.918					
Nutritious	.901					
Good for skin	.563					
Low calories	.809					
Control weight	.691					
Energy giving	.691					
Cope with stress						.889
Relaxes						.949
Keeps me alert						.950
No additives				.939		
No artificial ingredients				.944		
Chemical free				.946		
Bought close					.963	
Value for money					.899	
Not expensive					.923	
Doesn't compromise principles			.981			
Human rights respected			.962			
Doesn't conflict values			.956			
No pain for animals		.796				
Environmentally friendly packaging		.861				
Better for environment		.757				
Wildlife protection		.745				
Cronbach alpha overall score 0.745	0.877	0.855	0.924	0.946	0.935	0.934

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The factor analysis procedure led to the removal of redundant variables and as a result six factors were identified to represent the variables of the motives for purchase of organic foods. The next procedure was to name the factors and to discuss the composition of each factor.

4.3 Naming and interpretation of the factors

Factor 1: Good for health

The first factor labeled good for health has an eigenvalue of 4.818 and a percentage of variance of 21.901%. This factor comprises six items and these items are namely that organic food, keeps me healthy with a factor loading of 0.918, it is nutritious (0.901), good for skin (0.563), is low in calories (0.977), helps control weight (0.691) and provides enough energy to get through physical exercise programs (0.691). The Cronbach alpha for this factor yielded a value of 0.877, indicating the reliability of the factor. These findings are in line with Roitner-Schobesberger, Darnhofer, Somsook, & Vogl (2008) who in their study in Thailand discovered that consumers purchase organic food products for mainly for health reasons. This has led some consumers to shift to organically produced alternatives from conventional products. According Van Duyn & Pivonka (2000) several consumer studies undertaken in most parts of the world to assess consumer perceptions about organic foods concluded that consumers' purchases are mainly driven by the notion that organic products have better health benefits. This view is also supported by Wang et al. (2007) who reported that 76% of survey respondents from China believed that organic food is safer than conventional alternatives.

Factor 2: Environmental sustainability

Factor two was labeled 'environmental sustainability' and it describes how the purchase and consumption assists in sustaining the environment. This factor explained 15.802% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 3.476 as well as a Cronbach alpha score of 0.855, which indicated the reliability of the factor. This factor is comprised of four components which include the fact that organic food products have been produced in a way that animals have not experienced pain, with a factor loading of 0.796, are packaged in an environmentally friendly way (0.861), are prepared in an environmentally friendly way (0.757), and have been produced in a way that animals' rights have been respected (0.745). This is in line with Debnath, Kishore Vijaya & Jain (2015) who postulate that the increased focus on the environment has also influenced consumer choices towards organic food products. In addition McEachern & Mcclean (2002) also made an observation that the general perception of conventional agricultural systems, compared to organic production, tend to have long term health implications as well as adverse environmental effects. This has led some consumers to shift to organically produced alternatives from conventional products. Additionally Wolf (2012) found that U.S. consumers rated the attributes associated with organic food products, such as environmental friendliness, as "somewhat desirable" or "very desirable". This

was also the case in Thailand as Sangkumchaliang and Weng-Chi Huang (2012) also discovered that consumers purchase organic food products because they were produced in way that safeguarded the environment.

Factor 3: Ensures the conservation of values and principles

Factor three was labeled 'ensures values and principles', describes how organic food products ensure the conservation of values and principles. This factor explained 13.885% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 3.055 as well as a Cronbach alpha score of 0.924, which indicated the reliability of the factor. This factor comprised of three variables which include the fact that organic food products are in harmony with my religious views and principles with a factor loading of 0.981, come from a country in which human rights are respected (0.962) and have been prepared in a way that does not conflict with some political values (0.956). These findings are in line with Thogersen (2010) who states that political and religious factors such as regulations, principles and government initiated market development activities have been known to have a major impact on the availability as well as frequency of purchase of organic products for consumers. Shifferstein (2010) adds that even in cases where similar attitudes between different countries were depicted, cultural differences lead consumers to seek different values when making purchasing decisions on organic food products.

Factor 4: It is natural and untarnished

The fourth was named 'natural and untarnished' and has an eigenvalue of 2.521 and a percentage of variance of 11.459. This factor comprises three items which consist of the idea that organic products contain no additives, with a loading factor of 0.939, they contain no artificial ingredients, with a loading of 0.944, and are certified free of chemical and hormones, with a loading factor of 0.946. The Cronbach alpha for this factor yielded a value of 0.946 which indicates the reliability of the factor. This is in line with Chen (2009) who discovered that respondents preferred organically produced food as they perceive it to be more natural and healthy, compared to conventional food. Jolly (1991 in GadMohsen & Dacko, 2013) established that consumers buy organic produce because they perceive that organic produce has no artificial fertilizer, no growth regulators, no pesticides and is residue free. A UK survey conducted by Hutchins and Greenhalgh (2007) also produced similar results as it showed that consumers were motivated to purchase organic food products because of absence of chemicals and growth hormones. According to the Soil Association of UK (2013) some of the benefits of organic foods in the eyes of consumers is the fact that they trust that such foods are better for the environment and wildlife protection.

Factor 5: Saves income

Factor five was named 'saves income' and describes how purchasing organic food products save income. This factor explained 10.822% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 2.381 as well as a Cronbach alpha score of 0.934, which indicated the reliability of the factor. This factor comprised of three variables which include the idea that organic food products, can be bought in shops close to where I live, with a factor loading of 0.963, are good value for money (0.899), and are not expensive (0.923). This is contrary to Zanoli and Naspetti (2002) who state that organic food products are known to have premium prices. Therefore, this debunks the statement that organic food products are not expensive. However, Cicia et al. (2012) argue that the higher prices do not unequivocally constitute a barrier to organic consumption but that high prices function as a signal of high quality. Zanoli and Naspetti (2002) also observed that in the case of Italian olive oil consumers expected the organic products to be more expensive hence if it was not, then this was interpreted as a sign of low quality.

Factor 6: Coping with stress

The sixth factor which was labeled 'coping with stress' has an eigenvalue of 1.950 and a percentage of variance of 8.864%. This factor comprises three items and these items are assessing the idea that organic products help to cope with stress, with a factor loading of 0.889, help to relax, with a factor loading of 0.949, and keeps the consumer alert, with a factor loading of 0.950. The Cronbach alpha for this factor yielded a value of 0.935, indicating the reliability of the factor. Therefore, as noted above, organic food products improve the consumers' ability to deal with stress and this increases the desire to consume more. For example, when some individuals are stressed, they consume organically produced peanuts as they consider that this might relieve their stress.

Therefore, in summary, the most important factor of the motives for the purchase of organic food products in Zimbabwe was that they provide good health, followed by the fact that they promote environmental sustainability, save income, help to deal with stress and because of their natural state. Whilst the least important motive for the purchase of organic food products in Zimbabwe was that they ensure conservation of values and principles. This is in line with a number of studies and scholars such as Sangkumchaliang and Weng-Chi Huang (2012) who observed that consumers in Thailand purchase organic food products for mainly health reasons. In addition, Shifferstein (2010) also shared similar sentiments as he noted that in most countries, worldwide consumers tended to place health, food safety and environmental concerns at the top of the preference ranking. If marketers have to improve on the purchase of organic products there is need to strategize on how to convey these motives to the potential market for organic products.

5. Managerial implications

The results of the current study make significant contributions to both academic as well as practical realms. One academic contribution is the identification of the factors that motivated consumers to purchase organic food products. The findings showed that there were some similarities between the motives and barriers to purchase of organic food products in Zimbabwe as in other nations like Italy, United Kingdom as well as the United States of America. To the practitioners, the study contributes in developing a framework that could guide marketers of organic products to improve the marketing of organic food products. Improved marketing will lead to more demand for organic products and farmers will benefit from increased demand.

The six important motivational factors highlighted by the study should form the integral part of marketing programs by all concerned marketers of organic products in Zimbabwe. Their marketing drives should be focused on highlighting to the consumers about the benefits of organic food products. The study also has provided evidence that the consumers' purchase behavior is affected by their perceptions of organic food products. The study therefore furthers insights about the benefits that marketers need to emphasize when they want to convince consumers to purchase organic food products.

6. Limitations

Possible limitations to this research might be that the study focused exclusively on the urban population and the population was also only drawn from individuals who live in Harare. This was due to time and resources available for the study. Therefore, due to the difference in the structure of urban and rural populations there might also be differences in their motives and barriers to the purchase of organic food products in those areas. Hence the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other contexts. The researchers propose that a further study should be conducted on the similarities and differences between the motives to the purchase organic food products in rural and urban areas in Zimbabwe. This study will help policy makers to identify were improvements need to be made in the distribution and production of organic food products in Zimbabwe.

7. Conclusion

In the context of Zimbabwean organic products, consumers purchase organic food products mainly because of six identified motives, namely: is good for their health, assist environmental sustainability, ensure conservation of ideal values and principles, are natural and untarnished, save income and help to deal with stress.

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