

An analysis on Food Choice Motives of Organic Tea in Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT

Among the different organic products, organic tea is one of the major consumer food products. This study focused on identifying various factors influencing food choice motives of organic tea consumed by the consumers in Coimbatore city. The sample size consisted of 300 consumers selected randomly who had purchased organic tea from the five selected organic stores. The results of the study indicated that among the various motives, health and health benefits like safety and natural content were the major factor influencing the consumption of organic tea. Concern for environmental protection, familiarity and interest, sensory appeal, political and religious values, price, frame of mind and convenience had been also other influencing factors on organic tea purchase decision.

Introduction

The green buying behavior through purchase of organic foods is booming among the consumers nowadays. Globally, the demand for the environmental friendly and organic goods has attained a remarkable growth (Willer and Kilcher, 2009). The same trend is also observed in India. Indians are amongst the top 10 global buyers of foods with 'health supplements' and are eager to purchase organic food for their children (Nielsen, 2006). This consumer behavioral change has made many business entities to promote organic foods as niche products to satisfy their consumers. Nevertheless, organic food market in India is still at nascent stage. The major reasons are inadequate retail presence and little

certified branded produce. Among the various organic foods, Organic tea is one of the main products produced and marketed in India (Org-Marg, 2002). India is producing about 6.5 million kg of organic tea annually. The domestic consumption is about 25 per cent of this production. In the past decade, few retail chains are evolved in marketing organic tea in Indian major cities. Subsequently, the production of organic tea is also geared up with the increase in domestic demand. Even though, organic foods are relatively costly due to high logistic cost and low volume operation, the organic market however is slowly emerging and attracting the high end consumers (Chakrabarti, 2007). This study attempts to analyze the food choice motives of organic tea consumers.

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Any change of consumer behavior occurs with different causal factors called as motivational factors. In this study, eight such factors namely health and health benefits, familiarity and interest, sensory appeal, political and religious values, price, frame of mind, environmental protection and convenience were identified. Health and the health benefits are identified as the motivational factors to purchase of organic foods in studies (Schifferstein and Ophuis, 1998; Von Alvensleben 1998; Zanolli and Naspetti, 2002; Chen *et al.*, 2007; Sun 2008). Due to greater awareness about ill effects of chemicals used in conventional food production, the consumers are willing to buy organic foods (Hammit, 1990; Ott, 1990; Jolly, 1991; Wilkins and Hillers, 1994). The consumers believed that organic foods are free from chemical residues and free from food additives and preservatives (Wilkins & Hillers, 1994, Padel and Foster (2005). Additionally, the consumers believed that the organic foods are more nutritious, having natural contents and weight control effect (Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Magnusson *et al.*, 2001; Williams, 2002). Studies also observed that consumers perceived organic foods especially organic green tea helps to reduce their weight (Yen and Chen, 1995 and Taneja *et al.*, 2003).

Consumers when provided with adequate information and knowledge about benefits associated with food, they perceived these foods with positive attitude (Verbeke *et al.*, 2005). Chinnici *et al.* (2002) and Hill and Lynchehaun (2002) suggested that some consumers were mainly motivated by curiosity or interest to purchase of organic food which associated with the premium price. Several studies have found that sensory aspects of foods like taste, smell, look and texture to be among the important criteria in organic food purchases (Roddy *et al.*,

1996; Schifferstein and Ophuis, 1998; Magnusson *et al.*, 2001; McEachern (2002). Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005) stated that taste, nutritional value, environmental benefit had also influenced the purchase of organic food.

Consumers had favorable attitudes toward organic food because they believed it supports the local economy as it is locally grown (Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002). Besides, ethical and moral reasons for buying organic food are also apparent (Worcester, 2000, Morris, 1996). The high prices associated with organic food are perceived as organic food to be higher quality than conventionally grown food (Hill and Lynchehaun (2002). The consumers' willingness to pay more for organic food than conventional is also observed in few studies (Canavari *et al.*, 2002, Millock 2002). Studies also found that the frame of mind of consumers like positive and negative emotions influenced their purchase decision (Furst *et al.*, 1996; Rogers, 1996; Steptoe, Pollard and Wardle, 1995).

Many studies found that environmental protection and animal welfare that motivated consumers to buy organic foods (Roddy *et al.*, 1996; Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Squires *et al.*, 2001; Soler *et al.*, 2002 Hill and Lynchehaun, 2002; Aarset *et al.*, 2004). Organic foods are perceived by consumers as environmental friendly against conventional food products produced with chemicals and pesticides (Ott, 1990; Jolly, 1991; Wilkins and Hillers, 1994; Magnusson *et al.*, 2003). The unavailability and/or inconvenience associated with purchasing organic food are a further barrier to organic food purchase (Zanolli and Naspetti, 2002 and Nielsen, 2006).

Materials and methods

Data collection

This study was conducted in Coimbatore city. Coimbatore is considered to be a tier II city with

diversified cultures, wide socio-economic classes and highly sophisticated lifestyles, the preference for organic food is increasing steadily (Banumathi, 2011). Based on the sale volume of organic tea, five organic retail outlets were selected for this study. Consumer survey was conducted in these selected outlets. In each selected store, 60 consumers were contacted at random and the total sample size was 300.

Measurement of food choice motives

Stephens, *et al* (1995) developed a scale to measure food choice motives with 36 items in their Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ). This scale assessed the degree to which the respondents placed importance on motives which covered the aspects like health, convenience, sensory appeal, naturalness, price, weight control and ethical concerns, in making food related decisions.

In the present study, the food choice motives was analyzed through Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ) developed by Stephens *et al.* (1995) with modifications to suit Indian context. The statements were selected and shortlisted based on the judge's opinion and finally 28 statements for food choice motives were used in the questionnaire covering the aspects such health, convenience, sensory appeal, naturalness, price, weight control and ethical concerns and the curiosity aspect is additionally included (Appendix). The items of scale was validated through exploratory factor analysis and validated with confirmatory factor analysis.

The five-point Likert's continuum of 'Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' was used as response categories and measurement procedures followed for were also assessed through enquiry.

In this study, grouping of factors of food choice motives were analyzed with exploratory factor analysis through SPSS 20 (2010). Further the confirmatory factor analyses were carried out using the statistical packages AMOS 20 (2010).

Results and discussion

From the sample respondent 76 percent the sample respondents were female and about 77 per cent of the consumers (both male and female) belonged to age group between 25 and 54 years. Majority (90 per cent) of the respondent-consumers had more than high school education. About 62 per cent of the family households belonged to Strivers category with family yearly income ranging between ' 5 lakhs and ' 10 lakhs.

Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis is a technique for knowing the factors influencing the food choice motives to the purchase of organic tea and how the variables can be grouped. Any one variable may be completely identified or may be grouped with one or more variables (Cooper and Schindler, 2010). This analysis starts with matrix of inter-correlation coefficients between the variables. If there are k variables then there will be $(k(k-1)/2)$ different correlations to calculate. Then an Interim factorization of the correlation matrix is produced. This is referred as unrotated solution and has to be transformed or rotated to a psychologically acceptable final solution. Factor analysis needs mean and standard deviation of the variables, inter-correlation matrix, a Principal Component (or axes) Analysis and a varimax rotation (Kothari, 2008).

Exploratory factor analysis was performed separately on 28 items considered under food

choice motives. The analysis was performed using the principal factor method of extraction, along with varimax rotation, which simplified the results while maintaining orthogonality. The Eigen values were examined and all the factors with an Eigen value greater than one were kept for further examination. Factors were created from groups of items that had a factor loading over 0.5 that were not cross-loaded onto another factor. These rules ensured that the factors formed were less likely to be highly correlated, reducing the issue of multi colinearity in the analyses. In order to measure the internal reliability of each factor, Cronbach's alpha, was also calculated for each item. As the Cronbach's alphas of all factors of the scale were more than 0.7 and all factors of food choice motives were selected for further analysis Chen (2007).

Thus considering the Eigen values and communalities, the various items of food choice motives were grouped under eight factors namely health and health benefits, familiarity and interest, sensory appeal, political and religious values, price, mood/ frame of mind, environmental protection and convenience. Besides, Cronbach's alpha value of food choice motives scale (28 items) obtained was 0.910. The total variance of food choice motive scale explained by these eight factors was 76.83 per cent and it was more than 50 per cent. This could infer that, these factors were good enough to expose the food choice motives of consuming organic tea. The results are presented in table 1. The mean, standard deviation and factor loading for each item is furnished in Appendix.

Table1 : Factors of Food Choice Motives

Factor No.	Factors	Eigen value	Mean	S.D	Explained Variance (%)	Cronbach's alpha
1	Health and Health Benefits	9.673	4.51	0.66	34.545	0.929
2	Familiarity and Interest	2.586	4.04	0.819	9.235	0.907
3	Sensory Appeal	2.016	4.18	0.710	7.201	0.802
4	Political and Religious values	1.836	4.01	0.718	6.557	0.876
5	Price	1.747	3.85	0.927	6.238	0.919
6	Frame of mind	1.398	4.18	0.426	4.994	0.847
7	Environmental protection	1.250	4.39	0.826	4.464	0.839
8	Convenience	1.006	3.625	1.058	3.593	0.701
Total variance accounted for 76.827 per cent Cronbach's alpha = 0.910						

The factor health and health benefits was derived from nine items loading onto this factor. Reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha value of 0.929 obtained was above the desired level of 0.70 for any multiple-item measures with an Eigen value of 9.673 (Chen, 2007). Among eight factors, the health and health benefit accounted for 34.55 per cent of the variance out of the total variance 76.83 per cent. The responses for this factor had a mean of 4.51 (SD = 0.66), implying that respondents agreed that health and health benefits was one of the important motivational factors for purchase of organic tea. The consumers believed that organic tea has less of chemical hazard, no additives, provide low calories and contains high antioxidant and such attributes motivated them to purchase organic tea. Von Alvensleben (1998), Magnusson *et al* (2003) and Chen *et al* (2007) also found that health concern is a better predictor of the purchase of organic food than other motivational factors.

The second factor, familiarity and the interest was derived from the four items loading with 9.24 per cent of the variance. Reliability analysis indicated the measure of familiarity and interest was internally reliable ($\alpha = 0.907$) with an Eigen value is 2.586. The responses for this factor had a mean of 4.04 (SD = 0.819), indicating that respondents agreed to familiarity and interest which were motivating them to buy organic tea. The curiosity or interest to consume organic tea and familiarity through organic certification and regular consumption motivated the consumers to purchase organic tea.

Sensory appeal factor was identified from the four items. This factor accounted for 7.20 per cent of the variance among the items. Reliability analysis indicated a measure created from these items was reliable enough ($\alpha = 0.802$) with Eigen value 2.016. The variable had a mean of 4.18 (SD =

0.710). The respondents were motivated to purchase organic tea due to good smell, texture, taste and package features. The three items measuring the political and religious values spelt out 6.56 per cent of the variance. Reliability analysis indicated a measure created from these items was reliable enough for even exploratory research ($\alpha = 0.876$) with Eigen value of 1.747. The responses for this variable had a mean of 4.01 (SD = 0.718). Marking of country of origin as India and green labeling motivated the respondents to purchase organic tea.

The factor price was derived by loading from two items. Reliability analysis indicated the measure of price was internally reliable ($\alpha = 0.919$) with an Eigen value 1.747. The responses for this variable had a mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.927), indicating that respondents agreed that though price of organic tea was relatively higher than the conventional tea, the good value for money paid and related benefits supersede the additional price paid. Mood or frame of mind was identified from two items. Reliability analysis indicated the measure of mood or frame of mind was internally reliable ($\alpha = 0.847$) and Eigen value is 1.398. The responses for this variable had a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.426), indicating that respondents agreed that consumption of organic tea helped to cope with stress and keep them alert and thus motivating them to buy organic tea.

The environmental protection factor was derived from two items loading. Reliability analysis indicated the measure of this variable was internally reliable

($\alpha = 0.839$). The responses for this variable had a mean of 4.39 (SD = 0.826), indicating that respondents agreed that organic tea is being produced in a way that both human and animal rights have been respected and produced in an

environment friendly manner. The eighth factor convenience was identified from the two items. Reliability analysis indicated the measure of this variable was internally reliable ($\alpha = 0.701$). The responses for this variable had a mean of 3.625 (SD = 1.058), indicating that respondents had only slightly agreed that convenience of preparation of organic tea and easy availability were the motives behind purchase of organic tea.

Thus the foregoing discussion reveals that food choice motive is influenced by eight factors being derived from 28 items. The reliability check has also shown that these factors would motivate the consumers to purchase organic tea. These factors have to be, however, further confirmed and the goodness of fit has to be tested.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Food Choice Motives

To test the proposed model, confirmatory factor analysis with partial disaggregation using traditional structural equations approach was carried out.

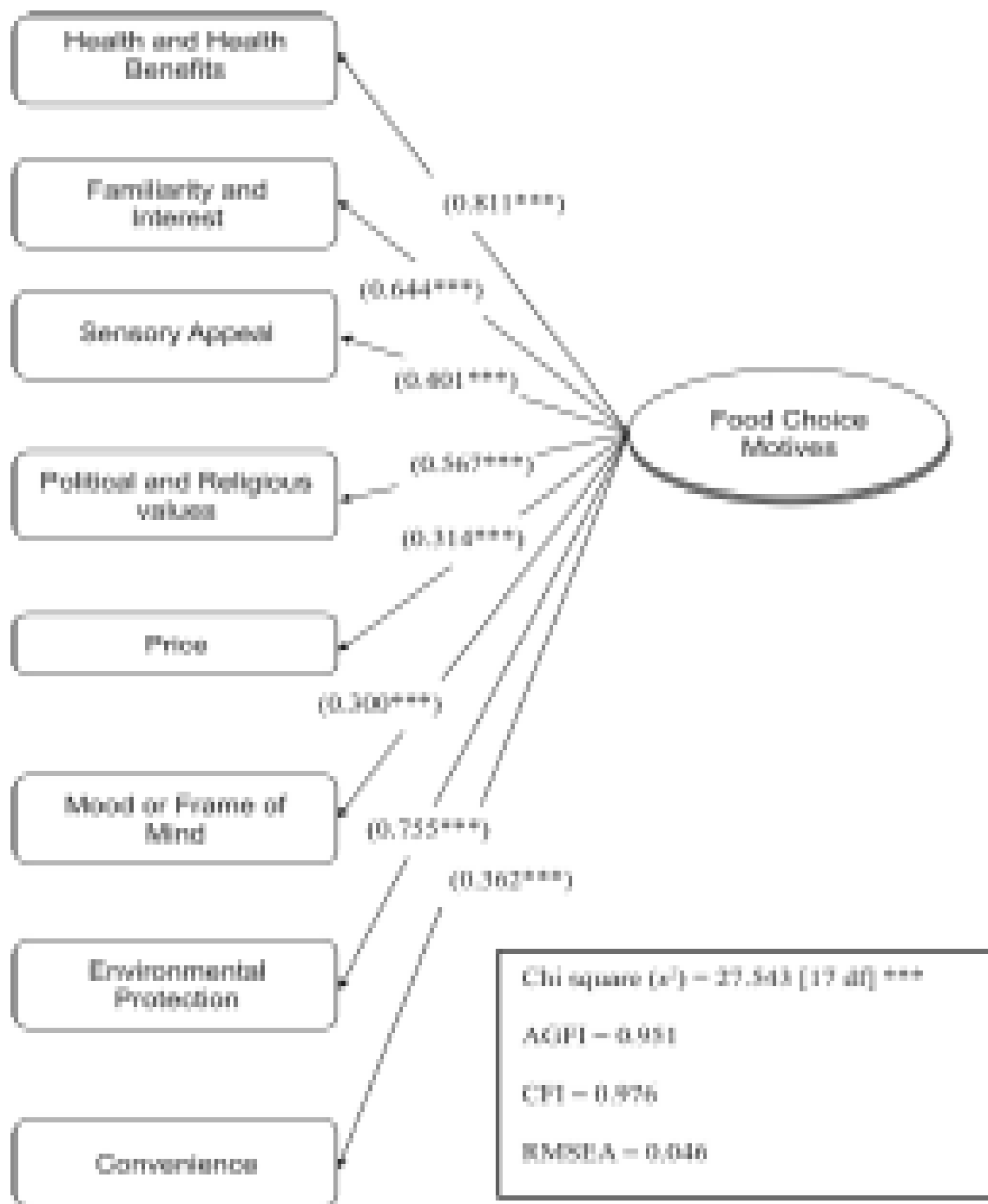
Operationally, partial disaggregation is accomplished by randomly aggregating items that relate to given construct so that there are combined indicators instead of several single item indicators. The rationale for random combination of items is that all items of indicators related to a latent variable should correspond in the same way to that latent variable thus any combination of these items should yield the same model fit. Food choice motives was measured using eight factors viz. health and health benefits, familiarity and interest, sensory appeal, political and religious values, price, mood/ frame of mind, environmental protection and convenience. The structure of food choice motives was shown in figure1.

The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), a measure of the relative amount of variance and covariance of sample and is jointly explained by hypothesized model and the index. The index ranges from zero to 1.00 and values closer to 1.00 is indicative of good fit (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1998). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value ranges from zero to 1.00. The CFI value of greater than 0.90 considered a well-fitted model (Bentler, 1992).

In this study, AGFI (0.951) and CFI (0.976) indicated that the model fitted the data well in the sense that the hypothesized model adequately described the sample data. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was first proposed by Steiger and Lind in 1980, was only recently been recognized as one of the most informative criteria in covariance structure modeling. RMSEA value less than 0.05 indicated a good fit and values as high as 0.08 represented reasonable errors of approximation in the population (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). MacCallum *et al.* (1996) have recently elaborated on these cut points and noted that RMSEA values ranging from 0.08 to 0.10 indicated mediocre fit, and those greater than 0.10 indicated poor fit. Although Hu and Bentler (1999) have suggested a value of 0.06 to be indicative of good fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. In this study the RMSEA value for the model was 0.046 and it was indicative of good fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

The Standardized Regression Weights of the variables were also shown in the Figure 1. All factors were significant at 1 per cent level. It could be also inferred that all the eight factors identified in the study were significantly influencing the food choice motives though each factor had different regression weights.

Figure 1: Structural Equation Model of Food Choice Motives



Note : ***P < 0.001 significant
 Figures in parentheses denote standardized path coefficient

Conclusion

From the above discussion the food choice motives scale was reliable with the sample data. The analysis showed that though the food choice motives influenced the attitude, among the motives health and health benefits like safety and natural content was major factor. Second most motivational factor is environmental protection and animal welfare. Additionally other motivational factors like familiarity and interest, sensory appeal, political and religious values, price, mood/ frame of mind and convenience have been influence on consumers' organic tea purchase decision. Hence, the case firm can advertise through news paper ads highlighting the health benefits and environmental friendly aspects as main theme in promotional efforts.

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Appendices

Mean and standard deviation of Food Choice Motives

N=300

Factor No	Statements	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
1	Health and Health Benefits		
	i. By drinking organic tea, I feel I am taking a healthy food	4.67	0.586
	ii. By drinking organic tea, I get a food that is more nutritious	4.64	0.569
	iii. Organic tea contains high antioxidant	4.67	0.531
	iv. Seeing people consuming chemical treated food, organic tea motivates me to buy it	4.63	0.596
	v. Organic tea is free from chemical hazard	4.36	0.799
	xv. Organic tea contains no additives	4.47	0.705
	xvi. Organic tea contains no artificial ingredients	4.46	0.705
	xix. Organic tea is low in calories and fat	4.36	0.734
	xx. Organic tea helps me control my weight	4.34	0.748
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.51	0.660
2	Familiarity and Interest		
	viii. Curiosity about organic tea is motivates me to buy it	4.11	0.733
	xxv. Organic certification motivates me to buy organic tea	3.89	0.863
	xxi. Organic tea is familiar to me	4.11	0.853
	xxii. Organic tea is what I usually drink	4.06	0.828
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.04	0.819
3	Sensory Appeal		
	xi. Smell of organic tea is good	4.10	0.761
	xii. Organic tea package looks nice and attractive	4.24	0.694
	xiii. Organic tea texture is good	4.10	0.717
	xiv. Organic tea tastes better	4.27	0.666
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.18	0.710

Factor No	Statements	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
4	Political and Religion value		
	xxvi. Organic tea has the country of origin clearly marked	4.09	0.724
	xxvii. Organic tea is produced in a way that does not conflict with my political values	3.82	0.712
	xxviii. Organic tea is in harmony with my religious values	4.11	0.719
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.01	0.718
5	Price		
	xvii. Organic tea is not expensive	3.80	0.993
	xviii. Organic tea is good value for money	3.91	0.860
	Average Mean and standard deviation	3.85	0.927
6	Mood/ Frame of mind		
	vi. Organic tea helps me to relax and cope with stress	4.21	0.406
	vii. Organic tea keeps me awake/alert	4.15	0.446
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.18	0.426
7	Environmental protection		
	xxiii. Organic tea is produced in a way that human and animals' rights have been respected and protected	4.47	0.728
	xxiv. Organic tea is prepared in an environment friendly way	4.30	0.924
	Average Mean and standard deviation	4.39	0.826
8	Convenience		
	ix. Organic tea is simple and quick to prepare	3.74	0.946
	x. Organic tea is easily available in shops and supermarkets	3.51	1.170
	Average Mean and standard deviation	3.625	1.058