

Dimensions Influencing Consumer Purchase Intention towards Organic Personal Care Products

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Abstract

The demand of organic personal care products (OPCP) is rising as consumers are becoming more health conscious. This study aims to propose various factors that influence the consumer purchase intention towards organic personal care products. The current study employs a systematic review of papers published on consumer behaviour for organic products. To identify the relevant studies, research databases were searched using different keywords. The findings suggest that most of the consumer behaviour studies carried by researchers around the globe in the area of organic products have been on organic food and organic personal care commodities remained an under-researched area. It was also found that most of the studies related to organic products have been conducted mostly in developed nations. The findings further suggest that although OPCP are in existence for more than a decade, but there are limited studies study related to factors influencing purchase intentions for OPCP. So, authors have proposed 08 dimensions influencing OPCP purchase intentions in this paper.

Keywords:

Organic personal care products, Review, Organic food, Consumer purchase intentions

Introduction

The organic products consumption is increasing throughout the world. In terms of organic consumption USA and Europe are have the biggest consumers, but developing nations have also been showing interest in this area (Grunert, 2006). Interest in organic products has increased owing to various concerns related to conventional products like health issues, environmental issues etc. According to APEDA, organic product is a product grown under a system of agriculture without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides with an environmentally and socially responsible approach (Rigby and Caceres, 2001). Organic products include organic fruits and vegetables, organic cosmetic products, organic apparels, organic chocolates, organic meat etc.

Chemical based products contain paraben, silicon among many other chemicals which are not very safe for consumption. There have been cases involving famous

firms where cosmetic products were linked to causing ovarian cancer among female users (Ghazali, 2017). Some of ingredients which are less desirable for consumer's health include Ethylenedimine and tetra acetic acid, formaldehyde releasing preservatives, propylene glycol, talc, Phthalates, Toluene. Some of these are hormone disrupting and known to cause various health hazards (Koniecki, 2011; Fujii et al., 2013). Fragrance in consumer personal care products has led to adverse effect on human health including migraine, asthma, dermatitis (Millqvist et al., 1999; Kelman, 2004; Elberling et al., 2005; Johansen, 2003; Kumar et al., 1995; Steinemann, 2019; Caress and Steinemann, 2009). This has led to increase in consumer awareness towards what products are they using. Organic cosmetics are free of any residual chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms etc (Ghazali, 2017). The objective of this paper is to review the literature on organic products and to identify dimensions influencing consumer purchase intention towards organic personal

care products.

Methodology:

The method followed was exhaustive review of existent literature in this field of organic products. To encompass the effect of various factors leading to buying behaviour of organic consumers, authors considered various papers published in reputed journal in the last thirty years. The keywords which were used for searching various articles included the term like organic products, personal care products, organic cosmetics, organic food, consumer behaviour, perception, organic products, willingness to pay etc. The keywords were used individually as well as in combination. 68 articles were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria from the 297 identified papers. The studies have been picked from various nations across the globe including Germany, India, Australia, Thailand, Croatia, Mexico, China, Malaysia, Taiwan etc.

Identification of factors influencing consumer purchase intentions:

Literature review revealed that most of the consumer behaviour studies on organic products conducted by researchers around the world have considered organic food as the major theme. This is because organic food is the most

consumed organic product category. Organic personal care products which form the second largest segment of organic products got little attention. Further these research studies have been conducted mostly in developed nations.

In various studies on organic products, attitude is found to be a significant predictor of purchase intentions (Mehra and Ratna, 2014; Kozup et al., 2003). Researchers have found that there can be some factors which are common between organic cosmetic products and organic food products (Kim & Chung, 2011, Ghazali et al., 2017). So, various factors affecting buying behaviour of organic foods and other organic products have also been taken into account while proposing the factors in this study. Although statistics reveals that India is the highest organic food producer but still the organic consumption market is not quite high. This indicates a significant gap in demand and supply indicating a key research gap area. Further organic food is the only prominent commodity which is floating in the organic product market in India. Organic cosmetics are in a nascent stage and many firms are trying to focus in expanding their customer base. Organic personal care product purchase behaviour has not been comprehensively studied to the best of researchers' knowledge. Table 1 discusses some prominent research contribution in field of behaviour studies of organic products.

Table 1: Notable contribution in field of organic products:

Author (year)	Country	Factors Explained
Chin et al. (2018)	Indonesia	Perceived authority support, perceived environmental concern, attitude and subjective norms
Maloney et al. (2014)	US	Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, perceived expensiveness, awareness
Ariswibowo and Ghazali (2017)	Malaysia	Religious value, environmental concerns, green purchase attitudes, green purchase intentions
Kim & Seock (2009)	US	Environmental consciousness, perceived importance of attributes of product, health consciousness, attitude
Jaiswal and Kant (2018)	India	Attitude towards green products, Environmental concern, Perceived consumer effectiveness, perceived environmental knowledge
Hilhouse et al. (2000)	US	Perceived environmental knowledge, appearance motivation, subjective norms, self monitoring, perceived behaviour control, attitude
Tsakaridou et al. (2008)	Greece	health, environmental concern, animal welfare and support
Sukato and Elsey (2009)	Thailand	beliefs, attitudes, self image, normative influences
Wiedmann et al. (2009)	Germany	Social value, financial value, individual value, financial value, luxury value
Gracia and Magistris (2008)	South Italy	Health factor, environmental factor, organic knowledge

Various models help to understand in predicting the consumer behaviour of organic products. Planned behaviour model and the reason action model are the main base on which various researchers have conducted their studies in this area. On the basis of review, authors have proposed 8 factors influencing purchase intentions towards organic personal care products. The 8 factors are discussed below:

Subjective Norms

Subjective norm is the extent of influence of various elements of society on the behaviour of individual or group. It plays a vital role in predicting purchase intention. There have been various studies which explore the effect of subjective norms on consumer buying behaviour (Ambak et al., 2019; Maloney et al., 2014; Hansen et al., 2012). Subjective norms have been found to be significantly important in studies conducted on purchase behaviour of skincare products (Vanessa et al., 2010). Study on organic skin and hair care products carried on USA customers examined various factors to determine consumer attitude and theory of planned behaviour application found significant influence of subjective norms on intention to buy organic personal care products (Hillhouse et al., 2000). In case of women consumers studies have depicted that subjective norms are powerful factors in influencing purchase decision (Lin, 2007; Tajeddini and Nikdavoodi, 2014, Nash et al., 2006).

Attitude

Numerous studies have been conducted to establish relation of consumer attitude with intention to purchase and a positive relationship has been established in these studies (Pomsanam et al., 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2000; Vanessa et al., 2010; Lin, 2007). Research by various authors suggested that organic food consumer who have a positive attitude tend to have higher linkage to buying behaviour (Sukato and Elsey, 2009; Basha et al., 2015; Aertsens et al., 2009; Rana and Paul, 2017). Attitude is an important predictor in re purchase of organic personal care products in a study conducted in Malaysia (Ghazali et al., 2017)

Environmental concern

It has been found that concern towards sustainable environment is an important consideration among consumers of organic products. Number of studies confirmed that for a consumer to take a decision to buy organic product environmental concern forms an important construct (Basha et al., 2015; Rana and Paul, 2017; Lin, 2007). This is due to the fact that organic farming employs negligible impact of environmental degradation since it avoids use of chemicals in farming (Rigby and Caceres,

2001).

Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control is the extent to which people think that they are capable of / have control over performing a given behaviour. It has been found that people who perceive higher behavioural control have higher tendency to engage in a certain type of behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In a study, conducted on organic personal care product it was found that the consumers perceived behavioural control has a strong influence on consumer buying intention for organic personal care products (Lin, 2007). Role of perceived behavioural control is depicted as a moderator in a study conducted in US market (Kim and Chung, 2011).

Hedonism

The term hedonism is referent to intrinsic benefit as well as emotional benefit for gratification of an individual (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Hedonism is largely connected with luxury cosmetics and perfumes since these products perception is hedonic by nature (Hume and Mills, 2013). Numerous studies have depicted that consumers who have high valuation on hedonic value show positive attitude on luxury cosmetic brands (Hume and Mills, 2013; Allen et al., 1992). The properties of hedonism are found to be positive for organic cosmetic consumers the repurchase behaviour of organic products is directly affected by hedonic value perception of consumers (Ghazali et al., 2019). Hedonism has been found in a study to affect consumer buying behaviour of organic cosmetics suggesting the consumption of organic cosmetic product linked directly to hedonism (Cervellon and Carey, 2014).

Product Knowledge

Knowledge about a product and its features plays a key role in influencing the consumers buying behaviour of any product including organic products (Ghazali et al., 2017). Product knowledge is driven by various sub factors including subjective, objective and experience based information (Park et al., 1992). The studies on consumer attitude towards organic products show that consumption is affected by attitude, which changes with product knowledge (Gracia and Magistris, 2008; Chryssohoidis and Krystallis, 2005; D'Souza et al., 2006; Laroche et al., 2001; Leire and Thidell, 2005; Chen et al., 2006).

Health Consciousness

Modern consumers have been found to be more health conscious in decisions concerning their lifestyle. The use of excessive chemical fertilizers and pesticides in modern agricultural system has raised concern on the effect of these

chemical residues on the products manufactured. Some people prefer to use products which have been produced from farm output having negligible chemical residue. This has caused an ideology of consumption based on organic especially in countries like Germany, Malaysia and some other European nations (Omar et al., 2017, Kim and Seock, 2009). Organic food has been the focus of most previous studies on organic product which make up the largest share in the organic industry (Magnusson et al., 2001). Various studies conducted on organic food has found that health consciousness is a driving factor for consumers in purchasing organic food (Rana and Paul, 2017; Kapuje 2016; Basha and Lal, 2019). Organic cosmetic products which share some resemblance in factors influencing their purchase by consumers also tend to demonstrate health consciousness as an important construct. A study found that health consciousness was the most vital reason behind the buying of organic cosmetic product (Mintel, 2013). In numerous studies on organic product conducted across the globe, health consciousness was found to be a very important factor in influencing purchase decisions (Grankvist and Biel, 2001; Lockie et al., 2002; Newsom, 2005).

Consumer innovativeness

Consumer innovativeness is the phenomena of being attracted towards new products / services and purchase / use them comparatively more often in comparison to others (Vanessa et al., 2010). In some studies women are more innovative as compared to male consumers in purchase of cosmetic products (Kim, 2011). Consumer innovativeness has found to be significantly affecting the purchase of skin care products in a study conducted in Sweden (Venessa et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Based on review of literature which spans three decades, the objective of this study was to identify factors affecting consumer purchase intention towards organic personal care products. 297 researcher papers were identified from reputed databases and 68 papers were selected for the extensive review. The findings suggest that most of the consumer behaviour studies carried by researchers related organic products have been on organic food and little attention has been paid towards organic personal care products. It was also found that most of the studies related to organic products have been conducted mostly in developed countries. The findings further suggest that although OPCP are in existence for very long time but there are limited studies study related to factors influencing purchase intentions for OPCP. Based on review, 08 dimensions influencing OPCP purchase intentions are

proposed in this paper.

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