

Consumer Attitude and Purchase Intention towards Organic Foods in Myanmar

Dr. Ohn Mar Myint

Associate Professor, Department of Business Management , National Management Degree College, Myanmar

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.10.05.2020.p101101

<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.05.2020.p101101>

Abstract- This study intends to identify the main influencing factors on the consumer attitude toward organic foods in Myanmar and to analyse the relationship between consumer's attitude and purchase intention of organic foods. The data is collected with structured questionnaires from 200 consumers who were visited organic outlets in Yangon on Myay Paday Thar Island and Yangon Farmers Market during the survey time. The results of this study indicate that health consciousness and consumer knowledge are most influencing factors on consumer attitude towards purchase intention. Nowadays, people are more aware of organic foods for their health safety. Most consumers not much considered for environmental concern and recommendation of other people. Moreover, this study found that consumer's income also main factor for consuming organic foods as price of organic foods is rather expensive and rare to access to get them.

Index Terms- Organic foods, Consumer attitude, Purchase intention,

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, the agricultural production methods are based on using chemical fertilizers to increase the yield of food production as the rapid growth of industrial development together with the increasing population. These highly pollutant contaminant foods are very harmful effects on people. Nowadays people's food consumption patterns are rapidly changing around the world as the result of environmental issues, concern about the nutritional value of food and health issues. Food safety and quality issues have triggered the awareness of consumers and people start to be suspicious towards conventional foods and try to use more organic food. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering or ionizing radiation.

Similarly, Myanmar now realizes the issues of environment and health rather than before. These concerns bring some Myanmar consumers looking for fine and nutritious food without or less chemical residuals. The consumption patterns of organic food have been increasing in the recent years as the increasing of awareness. Therefore, the market of organic agriculture currently is expanding more and more in Myanmar. Although the concept of "organic food" seems to be well known to many consumers in Myanmar and the consumers do have the positive perception and attitude towards organic foods, the proportion of consumers who purchase organic foods on a regular basis is low.

The organic market in Myanmar is only at the introduction stage for commercialization of the organic foods because the organic foods are perceived as the luxury food for the elite social class with higher incomes. High prices will be the main different for most of the consumer to buy the organic foods. Not only the high price but also consumer attitudes could be influenced by different factors. Different people have different attitudes towards buying or consuming organic food. Yin et al. (2010) claimed that consumer attitude could be influenced by the consumers' knowledge, environmental concern, health consciousness and subjective norms. That is why, this research aims to study what factors influencing on consumer attitude towards organic foods and intention to purchase in Myanmar.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study specifies the following objectives;

- (1) To examine the factors influencing on consumer attitude towards organic foods.
- (2) To analysis the effect of consumer attitude towards purchase intention of organic foods.

III. SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study aims to analyse the relationship of different factors that affect consumer attitudes towards organic food and the effect of consumer attitudes towards purchase intention in Yangon. To reach these objectives, both primary and secondary data are used. The primary data are collected with a questionnaire designed with five point Likert scales. Sample respondents for this study were selected through probability sampling approach, using convenience sampling methods. Questionnaires are distributed to 200 consumers who were visited organic outlets in Yangon on Myay Paday Thar Island and Yangon Farmers Market during the survey time. Secondary data are obtained from articles, international research papers, text books, documents and published data from relevant sources. For data analysis, descriptive research method is used.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEWS

There are different factors to influence consumer attitude towards organic food. Based on the previous research and literatures, this section discusses the influence of these factors on consumer attitude and purchase intention.

V. CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

Consumer knowledge is specific information about organic food that affects consumer buying decision. Consumer knowledge is classified as subjective knowledge, objective knowledge and prior experience (Brucks, 1985). Subjective knowledge is what the consumers perceive that they know. It represents for the confidence of an individual about knowledge. Objective knowledge is what the consumers actually know and prior experience is what the consumers have experiences before.

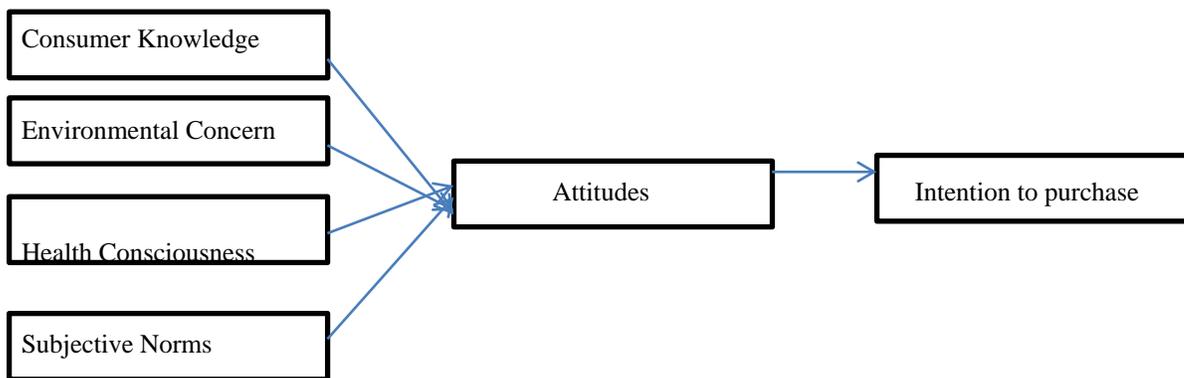
Environmental Concern

Environmental concern is one of the motives for majority of organic food consumers but not the main reason as health. Respecting and protecting environment, sustainability and production in harmony with nature can be described as values causing the environmental attitude (Zanoli et al, 2014). Ling (2013) evaluated consumers' purchase intention of organic foods with an aim to examine drivers and its moderating variable that influencing consumers' purchase intention.

Health Consciousness

Today, consumers are more concern about health and food choice to live healthy. Health consciousness has influence over consumer attitude towards organic food. Health consciousness is defines as an attitude in which people is aware of the healthiness in lifestyle (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). People believe that organic food is good for health and consume without any fear and suspicion.

Figure : Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source : Own Compilation (2020)

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following Table (1) shows the demographic characteristics of the consumers regarding gender, age, education, occupation and monthly family income. Consumers' demographic characteristics support useful information for understanding and interpreting consumer attitudes of organic foods. The gender of the sample consists of 72% of female and 28% of male. Because most of females in Myanmar are the main food purchase decision-makers in households. As per age, 40 to 49 years are more buy the organic food with 66%. The majority of consumers are graduate

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are defined as the social pressure for an individual to engage or comply with the group behaviour such as family and friends. These norms are normative beliefs and expectation that the groups or important referents have on this person (Ajzen, 1991). It has a strong impact on consumer attitude. Especially, in a country where there is high social interaction.

Attitudes

Attitudes are the desirable or undesirable evaluations that people make of particular behaviours. Because attitudes affect intentions, the more desirable the attitude is, the greater the will and intention to carry out a particular behaviour will be (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005).

After reviewing the literature, this framework is an appropriate framework for this study.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Consumers' actual purchase decision of organic food comes from intention to purchase. Ajzen (1991) said that intention to purchase a product can be considered as the best predictor of actual behaviour. Intention to purchase is impelled by the attitudes of consumers on organic food. It means consumer attitude is very important for buying behaviour. Consumer attitude is influenced by many factors such as consumer knowledge, environmental concern, health consciousness and subjective norms. Hence, the following figure illustrates the effect of four factors on consumer attitude and this attitude may lead to intention to purchase.

(54%) and self-employed (42%) with the monthly income is above 500,000ks (53.5%).

Table (1) Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers

Particulars	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	28
	Female	144	72
	20<	19	9.5
	20~29	36	18

Age	30~39	48	24
	40~49	66	33
	50≥	31	15.5
Education	Primary or below	15	7.5
	Undergraduate	46	23
	Graduate	54	27
	Post Graduate	49	24.5
	Others	36	18
Occupation	Top level manager	52	26
	Middle level manager	26	13
	Lower level manager	32	16
	Professional	40	20
	Self-employed	42	21
	Others	8	4
Family Income per Month (Myanmar Kyat)	100,000	-	-
	100,001~200,000	-	-
	200,001~300,000	8	4
	300,001~400,000	12	6
	400,001~500,000	73	36.5
	Above 500,000	107	53.5

Source : Survey data (2020)

The Table (2) shows the reliability test results to check the Cronbach's alpha value. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.6 is generally accepted (Flynn et.al., 1994). All of the Cronbach's alpha are above 0.6 therefore internal reliability is consistent and sufficient for further analysis.

Table (2) : Reliability Analysis (n= 200)

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Number of item
Consumer knowledge	.978	5
Environmental concern	.981	5
Health consciousness	.954	5
Subjective norms	.893	5
Attitude	.937	5
Intention to purchase	.884	5

Source : Survey data (2020)

After reliability test, the regression analysis has been conducted to identify the relationship between independent variables such as consumer knowledge, environmental concern, health consciousness and subjective norms and dependent variable of consumer's attitude toward organic food. According to the survey results, the value of adjusted R square is .671 which indicates that there is 67.1 percentage of consumer's attitude had been affected by consumer knowledge, environmental concern, health consciousness and subjective norms.

Among four independent variables, health consciousness and consumer knowledge have the positive sign and is strongly significant at 1 percent level. If there is an increase in health consciousness and consumer knowledge, that will increase customers attitude. Subjective norms also have the positive sign but it is significant 5 percent level.

Table (3) : The Influencing factors on Customer Attitude towards Organic Foods

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.652	.279		2.339	.020
Consumer knowledge	.201***	.045	.241	4.490	.000
Environmental Concern	.291	.055	.340	5.300	.684
Health Consciousness	.374***	.087	.310	4.314	.000
Subjective Norms	.073**	.070	.074	1.041	.292
R	.826				
R Square	.683				
Adjusted R Square	.671				
F Value	58.502***				

Source : Survey data (2020)

The next Table illustrates the finding of regression analysis on the relationship between consumer attitude and intention to purchase of organic food. According to the survey results, the value of adjusted R square is .513 which indicates that there is 51.3 percentage of intention to purchase had been affected by consumer attitude.

Consumer attitude has positive sign and is strongly significant at 1 percent level. If there is an increase in consumer attitude, that will increase intention to purchase of organic food.

Table (4) : The Effect of Customer Attitude on Purchase Intention of Organic Foods

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.774	.230		3.360	.001

Consumer Attitude	.479 ***	.097	.439	4.9 20	.0 00
R	.728				
R Square	.530				
Adjusted R Square	.513				
F Value	46.401***				

Source : Survey data (2020)

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research is to identify the main influencing factors (consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern and subjective norms) on the consumer attitude toward organic food in Myanmar. Moreover, this research also would like to analyse the relationship between consumer's attitudes and intention to buy organic foods. According to the survey results, the proportion of regular organic consumers was found very low. Most of the consumers of organic food in Myanmar are females. Because females are the main food purchase decision-makers in households. Moreover, the older consumers who are educated with high income seem to be more able to purchase organic foods. It can conclude that there is no obviously linkage between gender, age, education and occupation. However, income has a strongly impact on consumer attitude towards intention to purchase of organic food because price of organic food is very high and difficult to access to purchase.

According to the finding results, Myanmar consumers realize health consciousness on organic foods in first priority. Chemical free food was perceived as being better for health especially children and older people health. The results demonstrating that health consciousness has been identified as most influential factors for the consumer's attitude towards organic food. Moreover, the growth of organic foods consumption is highly depended on the increasing consumers' organic awareness and knowledge for the reason that organic knowledge impacts attitude toward organic foods and that directly consumers' intention to purchase.

Consequently, consumer knowledge, environmental concern and subjective norms are attitudes that consumers recognize toward organic foods. Although environmental concern was found to have a significant relationship with attitude, the conclusion that consumers do not regard highly environmental issues when choosing organic foods. Marketers could attract consumers to purchase organic food by posting advertisement via social media such as Facebook, newspaper and magazine as well as engaging

healthcare professional expertise in contemplation to prompt motivation to consume organic food. Health aspects should be more emphasized in organic food's advertising to get awareness and knowledge instead of environmental concern factors. Additionally, the results shows that a relationship between attitude and purchase intention can be concluded that consumers that have a positive attitude towards organic are likely to purchase organic foods. To encourage higher intention to purchase more organic foods, marketers should promote and support consumers to know about organic foods.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ajzen, I. 1991. The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behaviour and human decision process*, 50(2), 179-211.
- [2] Brucks, 1985. Values, environmental attitudes and buying of organic goods. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 16, 39-62.
- [3] Chen, M. F., 2007. Consumer attitudes and purchase Intention in relation to organic foods in Taiwan. *Journal of Food Quality and Preference*. 18(7), 1008-1921.
- [4] Gracia, A, 2007. Organic food product purchase behaviour, *Spanish Journal of Agricultural Research*, 5(4), 439-451.
- [5] Ling, C.Y, 2013. Consumers' Purchase Intention of Organic Foods, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(4), 349-356.
- [6] Magnusson, M. k, (2001). Attitudes towards organic foods among Swedish consumers, *British Food Journal*, 103(3), 209-227.
- [7] Stobelaar, D. J., Casimir, G., Borghuis, J., and Zebeda, S, 2006. Adolescents' attitudes towards organic food: a survey of 15 to 16 year old school children. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(4), 349- 356.
- [8] Tarkiainen, A. K & Sundqvist, R., 2005. A Structural Analysis of Purchase Intention of Organic Consumers. *International Journal of Management*, 3(2), 401-410.
- [9] Yin et al, 2010. Consumer Purchase Decisions of Organic Food Products. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 22(1), 47-58.
- [10] Yang, H. Q., 2008. Recent development of organic farming in the world and development strategy of organic horticulture in China. *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, 90(8), 1361-1367.
- [11] Zanolli et al, 2014. Consumer Motivations in the Purchase Intention of Organic Consumers, *International Journal of Management*, 6(2), 201-210.
- [12] Zhou, Y., 2013. The moderating role of human values in planned behaviour: the case of Chinese consumer's intention to buy organic food, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. 20(4), 335-344.

AUTHORS

First Author – Dr. Ohn Mar Myint, Associate Professor,
 Department of Business Management, National Management
 Degree College, Myanmar