

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN BANGLADESH: ANALYZING A FEW FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

Organic foods are more attractive to consumers than conventional foods due to technological advancements, health and environmental protection, and nutritional value. Purpose of this research is to uncover some hidden facts about consumers' organic food purchasing habits. This study employs a purposive sampling method to collect 110 records from people who buy organic food in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from various online shops, superstores, and department stores. The use of multivariate analysis, such as factor analysis, is used to understand why people purchase organic food. When it comes to purchasing organic food, the first consideration is health and lifestyle, followed by environmental benefits, product characteristics, perceived quality and price, marketing strategy, and customer confidence. The result of the factor analysis reveals that, three factors are accounted for explaining more than 75 percent variation explanation and scree plot, Horn's parallel analysis, and Kaiser Criterion assures it. As a result, availability and trust are needed, which can be achieved through appropriate certification and advertising. The findings of this study suggest that, health-related concerns and lifestyle, environmental benefit, perceived price, trust, perceived quality, and marketing strategy all influence consumer behavior. These factors are crucial for triggering their movement in organic food selling shop. As a result, the government, as well as people of all ages, should speak out about the nutritional value, health problems, and product qualities of organic food in order to raise awareness of buying organic food.

Keywords: Organic Food, Purchase Intention, Perceived Quality, Bangladesh, Factor Analysis.

JEL Classification Code: Q13, M30, M31

INTRODUCTION

People all over the world are becoming more aware of the importance of food substances that have a minimum level of perceived physiological benefit, including both health and environmental benefits for humans and animals. Responding to public issues, researchers are becoming increasingly interested in how food choices affect health and well-being (Block et al., 2011; Bublitz et al., 2013). When asked about foods and health, several customers mention

organic food (Ares et al., 2015). Organic foods are cultivated in a method of cultivation that does not use artificial fertilizers or pesticides in an environmentally and socially responsible manner (Shafie & Rennie, 2012). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines organic as “a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods. These methods integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster recycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.” Organic foods are considered healthier, safer and better-tasting than conventional foods (Consumers Association, 2000; Magnusson et al., 2001; Magkos et al., 2006).

Throughout the world, approximately 90 developing countries, 15 of which are Least Developing Countries (LDCs), are producing certified organic food and gaining a significant share of the global organic food market. Arable land in Bangladesh has gradually lost 85% of its fertility. The soil lacks organic matter, as well as nutrients, according to SRDI. In 3.3 million hectares of land, nutrients have deteriorated alarmingly from 8.3 million hectares of arable land in the country. The main reason behind this is the decrease in soil organic matter. Bangladesh's organic farming is still largely experimental. Bangladesh's total area of land under organic farming has been measured at 0.177 million hectares, comprising just 2 percent of the country's cultivable land (Fibl & Ifoam, 2016).

Bangladesh's economy is heavily reliant on agriculture; however, due to the overuse of chemical fertilizers, soil quality is deteriorating dramatically, and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides increases the risk of cancer in adults and children. Though the majority of Bangladeshis are unaware of the concept of organic farming, farmers and consumers have demonstrated an awareness of the concept, but organic food can boost the country's economic growth and increase youth employment opportunities. For this product, we can achieve huge foreign remittance. Most significantly, we need to function in an integrated way to protect the environment while delivering good results and revenue. Further research is needed in this regard to exploring how we can diversify our export basket with organic products and the opportunities and challenges of boosting Bangladesh's organic food production. On the other hand, only a small percentage of people in urban areas favor organic produce, which accounts for only 1% of all agricultural products despite being produced in greater amounts. Yet demand is definitely on the rise. Chemicals contaminate a large portion of our food. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the use of pesticides increased by an average of 4, 46,246.78 metric tons per year from 1984 to 2010. According to a World Health Organization survey, pesticide use affects 30,000,000 people per year. Bangladesh's organic food market scenario is not as optimistic as it is in some other areas. And there is an increase of 7% in organic food transactions. The aim of this research is to identify the factors that influence Dhaka City consumers' consumption of organic food. This research also seeks to examine the current food consumption scenario and assess consumer experience, perception and awareness of organic foods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer expectations of organic food are affected by concerns about food safety and skepticism, according to the Alshammari (2020) Report. Surprisingly, organic food literacy and health consciousness have little impact on consumer attitudes toward organic food. Furthermore, none of the moderating effects in the relationship between customer attitudes and purchasing intentions toward organic food (e.g., food safety and price) was important.

Dangi et al. (2020) seek to understand the factors that influence organic food purchasing behavior in a developing economy such as India, where organic food has a limited market share

despite its potential. The theory of planned action (TPB) is used to describe the effect of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control (PBC) on respondents' purchasing intentions for organic food in Delhi, India's national capital. Additionally, it makes a point of distinguishing between pragmatic and optimistic attitudes. PBC and expectations both have a positive effect on the intention to buy organic food. Subjective standards were discovered to be insufficient and scarcely applicable to intent in this study. The findings indicate that the primary motivators for buying organic food are health concerns, prior purchasing behavior, awareness, affordability, and confidence in the organic certification mark.

According to Thatte et al. (2016), educational qualification and Organic food consciousness is inextricably related, and customers with higher incomes are also able to pay a premium for organic food items. Rahman et al. (2016)'s empirical results suggest that attitude and subjective norm are critical determinants of buying intention when perceived behavioral impact is minimal.

Dhaka City's consumer behavior and consumption of organic food is poor. The main barriers are a lack of education, low certification, high prices, and a scarcity of organic food. Over the last century, organic food has mostly been centered on wealthy countries such as Europe, North America, and Australia, but more developing countries, such as Nepal, Malaysia, and other Asian regions, are now adopting organic farming and development (Gumber & Rana, 2017).

Sarker & Itohara (2007) conducted a study on organic food consumers in Bangladesh and discovered that the majority of them were aware of the adverse effects of pesticides and chemical fertilizers on the human body and environment. We have no preference for normal food due to a lack of awareness about organic food. Sarker & Itohara (2008) show that consumers are highly aware of their personal health have a medium understanding of the environmental hazards caused by agrochemicals, and some have no knowledge of them. However, there was a scarcity of organic food on the local market, and most people estimated that organic rice, fruits, fish, shrimp, eggs, and chicken met less than half of their family's needs. Several factors, such as health awareness (Magnusson et al., 2001; Padel & Foster, 2005, Adawiyah et al., 2021); dietary interest (Squires et al., 2001); healthy lifestyle (Chen, 2009) environmental concern (Williams & Hammit, 2001); food safety and ethical concerns (Magnusson et al., 2003; Baker et al., 2004; Lockie et al., 2004) have been found to affect the attitude towards organic food and its use. One of the difficulties in the development of organic food is the organic food businessman's lack of marketing activities (Kim et al., 2014).

Also, very little literature is present in terms of Asian consumer behavior in purchasing organic food compare to western countries. This paper will add value to the literature as there has been few studies on consumer behavior of organic food focusing on Dhaka. In general, the purpose of this study is to understand consumers (specifically from Dhaka city) perspective on their aim of buying organic food products. Such customers are those with expertise in the use or purchase of organic products. To know from them which factors motivated them to buy organic food. From their response this studies target is to identify important factors that affect consumers to purchase organic food which will help in further to increase organic food purchasing intention.

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to narrow the gap by providing valuable insights into consumer understanding of organic food buying habits in Dhaka, as well as the reasons why customers

don't opt for organic products. The primary objective of this research is to discover the various elements that influence consumer choice in the organic food market.

Sample and Instrument

This study collects primary data by conducting a survey among consumers who buy organic food from various stores in Dhaka. To test the main hypothesis of this research, the researchers have conducted a survey with a questionnaire. Questions that are used to measure various constructs were adapted and combined from similar researches. The sample are selected from several super shop of Dhaka city, who are purchasing organic food. We also collect data from the consumers who purchase organic food from different online shop and departmental store. Primary data is collected through face to face interview from 110 respondents. The survey has been conducted among the consumers who are purchasing organic food from September 2020 to early December 2020.

For quantitative approach along with descriptive statistics, inferential statistical techniques are used to analyze the data. By using STATA 15.0, collected data from questionnaires have been analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we collected a bunch of information through questionnaire from 110 consumers who have already consumed or consuming organic food. We employ overall perception through Likert scale level and endeavor multivariate analysis using factor analysis.

Demographic Profile

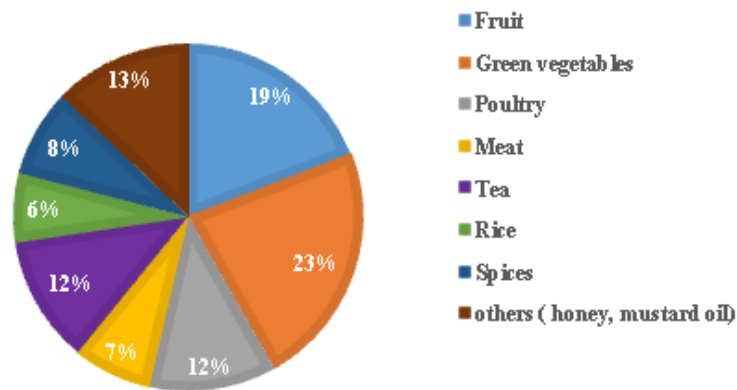
The demographic characteristics of the total respondents are addressed in the following results. In this report, 41.8 % of the 110 respondents were male, while 58.2 % were female. Women were described as having higher health consciousness and as diet innovators (Rodríguez et al., 2008). From the study result we can see that younger peoples are more health concern compared to older one. Peoples who are completed their graduation are most buyer of organic food. Education level affects the decision to buy organic food. Working people are more conscious about their health compared to non-working. Out of total respondents most of the buyer is from the income group whose income is more than 60k. So, income level affects the purchase decision towards Organic Food.

Organic Food Profile

30% respondent's means organic food as natural food, where almost 22 % means foods without chemicals.

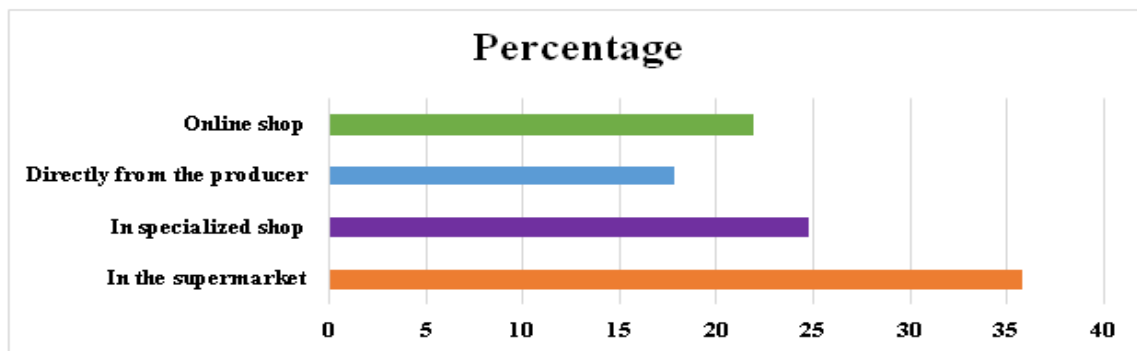
Figure 1 show that green vegetables were the most frequently purchased form of food by respondents, followed by fruit. These findings are partly consistent with previous research findings that fruit and vegetables are the most widely purchased organic food groups (Roitner-Schobesberger et al., 2008; Vlahović et al., 2011). Around 28% of total respondents said they buy organic food once a month and nearly 23% said they buy it twice a month. By looking at the source of the data, it was discovered that the majority of consumers got their information about organic products from the internet. This finding is consistent with consumer surveys in Greece,

where the majority of respondents said they learned about agricultural and food products on the internet (Baourakis et al., 2002).



Source: Authors' Compilation

FIGURE 1
WHICH ORGANIC FOOD YOU INTEND TO BUY?



Source: Authors' Compilation

FIGURE 2
USUAL PURCHASE PLACE FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

According to this report, organic items are often purchased in supermarkets (Figure 2). Several studies (Wier et al., 2008; Pellegrini & Farinello, 2009; MacKinnon, 2013) back up the conclusion that supermarkets are the primary source of organic foods.

Univariate Analysis

On this section, we attempt to basic idea about consuming behavior of organic food. Our overall factors are assembled here with their importance briefly. Perception of consumer's behavior towards buying organic food is given on Table 1.

Variables	Perception in percentage				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Health concern & lifestyle					
I think organic food is beneficial for health	16	22	16	46	19
I believe organic food is produced in natural way	1	19	31	52	15
I feel organic food products are safe	2	8	34	63	19
I am concerned about the type and amount of nutrition in the food that I consume	4	16	35	48	16
Environmental benefit					
I believe organic food production strictly adheres to eco friendly	14	16	30	47	12
Organic products do not carry pesticide residue	4	29	30	40	15
I trust organic food is produced from organic manure	6	18	30	53	11
I think organic food is produced by natural pesticides	3	16	28	52	19
Product Attributes					
I believe organic food is natural food	17	15	23	45	19
Nutrient value of organic food is higher than traditional food	4	14	46	44	12
Organic food is tastier than traditional food	6	1	34	47	24
Perceived price					
I think price of organic food is affordable	17	36	26	45	6
There is less price difference between organic food and traditional food	4	22	42	40	11
The price of organic food is in accordance with benefits	6	16	37	44	16
Trust					
Labeling on package of organic food is clearly understandable for me	19	25	28	38	8
Certification on organic food is highly reliable	2	24	45	47	13
Perceive quality					
I think quality of organic food is superior than traditional food	16	17	25	48	13
Positive image of organic food inspires me to buy	6	13	22	61	17
Purchase intention					
I am always interested to buy organic food as a healthy beverage	14	19	18	47	20
I search different stores to buy organic food	9	18	38	38	15
I still buy organic food even though conventional alternatives are on sale	6	14	38	48	13
Marketing strategy					
Organic is just a luxury marketing promotion	16	30	31	31	9
Reliability of advertising	6	22	42	39	9
Availability					
Organic products are easily obtained in the market	8	26	39	39	6
I can buy organic product online	3	14	50	39	13

Source: Estimated

Health Consciousness & Lifestyle

A consumer's first thought is to maintain and fit his or her own body. This measurement is pivot for so many research personnel. In this study, we assess this information through 4 variables-beneficial for health, naturally produced food, safe in consuming and nutritional quality is as standard wise. 46% respondents agreed about good for health on consuming organic food. 52% respondents approved about organic food produced in natural way. 63% agreed of consuming organic food is a safety issue. 48% respondents concerned about the quality of consuming organic food. So, approximately half of the respondents agreed with all these four variables about health and life style issues related to consuming organic food

Environmental Benefit

In case of consuming food, consumer asserted about environmental or ecological benefits. In addition, ethical concern is a positive issue in buying food as it clogs to environment (McEachern & McClean, 2002). In this study, we concern about four variables under this factor- products produces in eco-friendly way, free from pesticide residue, producing food in organic manure and free from chemical pesticides, that is, produce food through biotechnological way. In almost all cases, respondents stay neutral around 30 percent and almost fifty percent agree. Precisely, 53 percent respondent agrees with producing organic food from organic manure whilst 52 percent agreed in proposition of organic food are produced from bio mass.

Product Attributes

In this study, this factor consists of three variables- naturally produced product, higher nutrient value than traditional food and taste is better. Around 42 percent proposed neutral in all of these three variables.

Perceived Price

Perceived price is a prior to buy organic food as some researchers claim that high price is barrier towards buying or consuming food (D'Souza et al., 2006; Aertsens et al.; 2009; Adawiyah et al., 2021). In this study, 45 percent agreed with the statement that price is affordable while 42 percent respondent claims of no difference between traditional food and organic food.

Perceived Quality

Consumer's judgment or subjective outlook about product's overall quality and standard is consisting of perceived quality. This study reveals 61 percent respondents agree with positive image of willingness to buy.

Purchase Intension

In this study, 47 percent intent to buy organic food as a healthy beverage. 48 percent users purchase organic food having alternative although.

Marketing Strategy

Consumer are bound to buy, but not bound to choose a single market. Due to abundance of marketing in this century, consumer can choose best alternative. In addition, promoting and reliability in advertisement is crucial for selling product. 31 percent consumers are neutral to agree for promoting organic food, while 39 percent consumers agree advertising reliability.

Availability

Lack of consumer access and awareness is one of the key obstacles to the demand for organic products in many developing countries (Zundel & Kilcher, 2007). According to a report by Young et al. (2010), a lack of commodity availability had a negative effect on customer attitudes and purchasing behavior toward organic foods. According to this survey, 39 percent of consumers agree that availability in a convenient manner, as well as online accessibility, are essential.

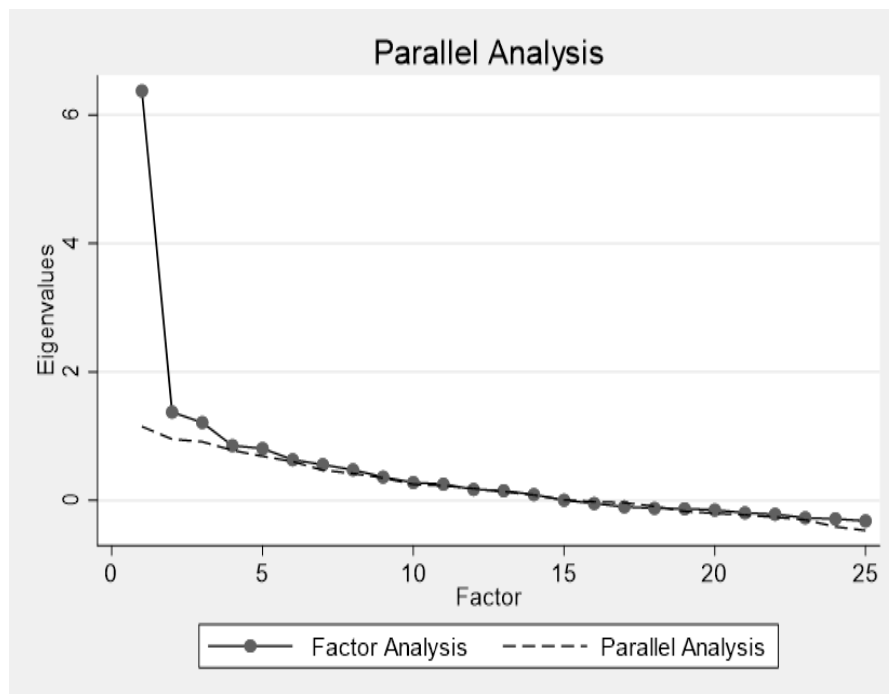
Multivariate Analysis

For exhibiting more information, this study intends to explore multivariate techniques. In multivariate analysis, we explore information through factor analysis. Factor analysis, data reduction technique exhibit dormant or latent variables and enrich more knowledge.

Factor Analysis

For digging out hidden information behind consumer's organic food purchasing behavior of the study area, we assess factor analysis. Before starting factor analysis, we strictly followed its assumptions (like a moderate correlation, adequate sample size, multivariate normality) and other special tests.

For explaining the factor analysis, firstly we employ Principal component factor (PCF) as it is so popular to explain the clear, vivid and better scenario of factor loadings. Now, our goal is to choose an adequate number of factors. Under several criteria (Kaiser Criterion, Scree plot, parallel analysis), we found 3 factors are explaining 76.29 percent variation (Figure 3). Kaiser criterion tells us to keep factors that surpass the unit. Scree plot is a graphical view of counting the required number of factors whereas a distinct break or elbow is exhibited. Although several models are available for tracking out reliable and crucial loadings, they are overestimated in most cases. Horn (1965) developed a parallel analysis for this pitfall. It parsimoniously simplifying the structure and lessen our problem like as sample bias, overestimation or else. When the adjusted eigenvalues surpass the random seed for digging more information, those factors to be retained. For 110 observations, three factors are explaining 79.36 percent variation with varimax rotation. We extract eigenvalues greater than one for explaining factor loadings. Prior to this, we employ some appropriate tests for proper validation of factor analysis.



Source: Authors' Compilation

FIGURE 3
PARALLEL ANALYSIS

Consistency analysis is applied using Cronbach's alpha method to examine the reliability of empirical data (Table 2). In this paper, most of all are exceeds 0.70 and on average 0.73 ensuring the scale reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Value of KMO is 0.7936 which surpasses the proposed cut-off value of 0.60 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). So, our sample size is adequate (Table 3).

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	6.37491	5.00144	0.5428	0.5428
Factor 2	1.37347	0.16169	0.1169	0.6597
Factor 3	1.21177	0.35864	0.1032	0.7629
Factor 4	0.85313	0.0465	0.0726	0.8355
Factor 5	0.80663	0.17374	0.0687	0.9042
Factor 6	0.63289	0.0769	0.0539	0.9581
Factor 7	0.556	0.08085	0.0473	1.0054
Factor 8	0.47514	0.1118	0.0405	1.0459
Factor 9	0.36334	0.08533	0.0309	1.0768

Source: Estimated

Rotated Component Matrix	1	2	3
I think organic food is beneficial for health (HCL_1)			
I believe organic food is produced in natural way (HCL_2)		0.57	
I fell organic food products are safe (HCL_3)			0.582
I am concerned about the type and amount of nutrition in the food that i consume (HCL_4)			
I believe organic food production strictly adheres to environment friendly agriculture techniques (EV_1)			
Organic products do not carry pesticide residues (EV_2)			
I trust organic food is produced from organic manure (EV_3)		0.75	
I think organic food is produced by natural pesticides (EV_4)		0.606	
I believe organic food is natural product (PA_1)			
Nutrient value of organic food is higher than traditional food (PA_2)			
Organic food is tastier than traditional food (PA_3)			
I think price of organic food is affordable (PP_1)	0.5064		
There is less price difference between organic food and traditional food (PP_2)			
The price of organic food is in accordance with benefits (PP_3)			
Labeling on package of organic food is clearly understandable for me (T_1)			
Certification on organic food is highly reliable (T_2)	0.518		
I think quality of organic food is superior than traditional food (PQ_1)	0.775		
Positive image of organic food inspires me to buy (PQ_2)	0.661		
I am always interested to buy organic food as a healthy beverage (PI_1)	0.543		
I search different stores to buy organic food (PI_2)			
I still buy organic food even though conventional alternatives are on sale (PI_3)			
Organic is just a luxury marketing promotion (MS_1)			0.557
Reliability of advertising (MS_2)			0.671
Organic products are easily obtained in the market (AV_1)			
I can buy organic product online (AV_2)			

Source: Estimated

In this paper, exploratory factor analysis reveals rotated loadings of 0.5 or greater to confirm that the described independent variables are represented by a particular factor of a rotated matrix. On this dimension, 3 factors are exhibited that enables us to explain factor loadings as large as possible.

On factor 1, it coincides with 5 variables, price affordability, reliable certification, quality of organic food and its superior to traditional, positive image inspire in buying organic food and buying organic food as a healthy beverage. Therefore, the first factor associates five variables under 4 factors, one for the perceived price, one for trust, two for perceived quality and one for purchase intention.

On 2nd factor, it concurs 3 variables, belief of buying due to natural way producing food, trust of organic food producing from organic manure, thinking of food-producing by natural pesticides. So, 2nd factor assembles 2 factors with 3 variables, one from health concern & lifestyle and others from environmental benefit.

Our final factor associates 3 variables- safety issue in purchasing or consuming organic food and marketing promotion in luxury way and reliability of advertising organic food. So, it ensemble 2 factors, one from again health concern & lifestyle and other from the marketing strategy. This is also found to be true by Pham's (2020) study, which demonstrated that people who were aware of their own health condition purchased organic food in larger quantities.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study is to dig out the reasons for consumer's behavior of buying organic food. Health issue & lifestyle comes first for buying organic food, after that, environmental benefit, product attributes, perceived quality and price, marketing strategy and trust ensures for willingness to buy or purchase intension of a consumer. Though in the context of Bangladesh, it's quite new for city dwellers so raising its demand due to its importance for securing the environment in safety, safe food habits and a healthy metabolism. In univariate analysis, more than 50 percent are female. Various researches found that better consciousness from womenfolk in case of health-related assessment. In addition, organic food and buying attitudes are analyzed through several factors. More than 45 percent of respondents agree with health-related issues and lifestyles, environmental benefits, product attributes, and perceived quality. Factor analysis is adapted to framing our conceptual factors, but exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is preferred due to its better description. For validation, KMO measure and Bartlett's test assured our sample size is satisfactory for further analysis. Three factors are accounted for explaining more than 75 percent variation explanation and scree plot, Horn's parallel analysis, and Kaiser Criterion assures it. Hence, availability and trust are needed through certification and advertisement in the right way. Also, consumer's behavior is entangled with health-related issues and lifestyle, environmental benefit, perceived price, trust, perceived quality, and marketing strategy. These factors are crucial for triggering their movement in organic food selling shop. Vendors must carefully segment their market and frame their marketing plan to effectively convince these potential customers.

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