

Generation Y Consumer Choice for Organic Foods

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between demographics such as gender, major, age, income, level of education, and ethnic groups of Generation Y consumers and preference for organic foods. Generation Y is one of the largest consumer segments behind the Baby Boomers. A convenience study was conducted with New England college students under the age of thirty five years old. Over 220 surveys were tabulated and analyzed. Out of eight hypotheses examining various aspects of Generation Y preferences for the use of organic products, many yielded significant findings for the demographic variables analyzed. It is recommended that more studies would be necessary to understand the impact of gender and Generation Y's choice for organic products. There are many opportunities for marketers to pursue packaging opportunities and consumer preferences for organic products from a product development perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The global organic food market revenues are projected to reach more than USD 60 billion by the end of 2011. The North American market performed well consistently and currently accounts for approximately 50% of the global organic food market's value. (Investment Weekly News, 2011). According to a 2010 industry survey by the Organic Trade Association, U.S. organic food sales grew from \$1 billion in 1990 to \$24.8 billion in 2009. (Xu, 2010). The key driver of demand for the increased consumption of organic food is health concerns. Consumers are increasingly interested in foods that are free of pesticides, and other health risks (Mintel Organic Foods, 2006, p.1). United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Organic Rule, which became effective on October 21, 2002, has also been a factor to have increased consumer awareness of organic foods. The USDA Organic Rule provides assurance to consumers that the products are what they claim to be. (Knudson, 2007).

Mintel (2009) shows most consumers will stick with organic options even in the downward economic climate. Does this mean that the organic would become standard fare? While trading down and out of some segments is common during tough economic times, consumers that buy natural and organic food are staying loyal to this health-conscious category. (Mintel, 2009). The importance of health and environmental concerns continue to grow and are a major factor for the increase in demand for organic products. Among the reasons, many claim organic products taste better and the concerns over the use of chemicals and pesticides along with the erosion of confidence in animal welfare and conventional farming standards. From a marketing standpoint, there is an unprecedented opportunity to learn how to market to consumers about choosing the best product and appealing to a wider audience.

Wier and Calverley (2002) state that due to the demands on consumers' daily lives, the need for convenience foods are on the rise. Some notable trends include consumers are finding more venues for organic products. Retailers are making changes to their product offerings. A notable opportunity for distributors, suppliers and retailers are for prepared organic foods (Wier et al., 2002).

The Generation Y consumers are born between 1977 and 1994. They now make up 21% of the global population. While Gen Y grew up with tried and trusted established brands, this generation is now calling out for products of their own. (Mintel GNPD, 2009). According to US Census data there are approximately 70 million Gen Y consumers and will grow to nearly 90 million by 2020. (Yancovitz, 2010). According to the latest research from Wholefoods market (Withers, 2011), the USA's biggest retail organic food chain, the interest in healthy and organic food has continued to grow. The Wholefoods annual Food Shopping Trends Tracker survey found that organic foods had made a larger impact in consumers' shopping choices in 2010. The survey highlights that 27 percent of adults indicating natural and/or organic foods comprised more than 25 percent of their total food purchases in 2010, up from 20 percent in 2009. (Withers, 2011).

Problem Background

Several studies show consumption data on organic foods but not enough is known about consumer behavior toward the purchase of organic products. There is a commonly held misconception about natural and organic foods, they are not the same. Not all natural foods are organic. Food can still undergo processing and may even be grown with pesticides and artificial fertilizers. Furthermore, consumers are becoming worried about what they put into their bodies for health and wellness issues (Connor & Douglas, 2001). Consumers are losing confidence in imported foods due to the problems with dog and infant foods from China. Further studies will help not only researchers but marketers to understand the potential hot buttons of consumers with regard to purchasing organic food products. Natural Marketing Institute's (NMI) 2010 Health & Wellness Trends Database show 64% of the US adult feel foods are less safe today due to the amount of chemicals used in the growing and manufacturing processes, and 56% feel foods today have fewer nutrients due to soil depletion and over-processing (French, 2011).

Organic products are flooding the market and growing rapidly. The organic food industry accounts for two percent of the world's food market. In 2009, total U.S. organic consumer product sales grew 5.3% to reach \$26.6 billion. Organic sales growth continued to outpace total sales of comparable conventional food and non-food items by a significant margin (Organic Trade Association, 2010). The growth rate of organic food sales since 1997, have grown 17-21 percent annually (Onyango, Hallman, & Bellows, 2007) but in 2009 the rate significantly declined to 5.1 percent (Organic Trade Association, 2010). There's everything for a parent to purchase; clothing, food, diapers, wipes, and dolls. Ninety percent of Americans still continue to use disposable products (Belli, 2007). Why the demand for more expensive food products when the country is in the midst of a recession? The push for organic food stems from a multitude of reasons; food safety, the green movement, overall health and work conditions faced by farmers. The literature reveals that the typical organic foods consumers is one that is highly educated (college and above), young and have relatively high incomes (Onyango et al., 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between demographics such as gender, major, age, income, level of education, and ethnic groups of Generation Y consumers and their preference for organic foods. Generation Y is one of the largest consumer segments behind the Baby Boomers. They are one of the most net savvy generations and over studied yet, some researchers have theorized this tendency to grow bored with a product at such a fast pace stems from the constant barrage of images and communication overload this generation segment was introduced to as infants (Goman, 2006). These "twenty something" consumers are today's trendsetters and are one of the largest and most lucrative

demographic groups for marketing professionals. With more than 70 million members generating over \$500 billion in sales, Generation Y is heavily consumption-oriented and is accustomed to affluence. Close to 70% are employed and their buying power is only gaining momentum (Vahie & Paswan, 2006).

Moreover, there are many unanswered questions for marketers and suppliers of organic foods; is packaging a factor in the consumers' choice? Does demographics such as gender, age, income, college major, level of education, and ethnicity play a role in the consumer's preference for purchasing organic products? Does culture impact the decision to purchase organic products? Furthermore, since the growing trend of health consciousness and environmental issues started to gain traction in the mid 1980's in Europe and the United States such matters have been on the forefront to discover factors of consumer behavior for purchasing organic foods. Many unanswered questions about the validity of claims still remain unknown to many consumers. The use of organic on packaging can be misleading due to the governmental regulations set forth by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). However, there are some retailers like Whole Foods leading the organic movement and making inroads with the Generation Y consumer. A study of Generation Y's favorite brands reveal that Whole Foods ranks number one primarily because it was the first to communicate to consumers about the environmental concerns and educate consumers about purchasing organic products. They've been able to change the way consumers shop with carrying in their own shopping bags to the way people think about the actual products and the packaging of the food (Hein, 2008).

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. How does the demographics of Generation Y influence consumer preferences for organic products?
2. Does ethnicity of Generation Y impact consumer preferences for organic products?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation Y

Who are the Generation of consumers referred to a Generation Y? They are the sons and daughters of Baby Boomers and the largest generation since the Baby Boomers (Tinsley, 2008). In 1982, things started to change in families. Children started to "dominate the national debate over most family issues...the era of the worthy children had begun" (Howe & Strauss, 2000, p. 32). Howe and Strauss (2000) identify seven distinguishing traits: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured and conventional. These people are considered special to their parents' sense of purpose.

Spending Power

It is estimated the purchasing power of Generation Y is \$100 billion. Kids spending power has doubled since the 1960s and tripled since the 1990s. Children age's four to twelve are spending \$11 to \$30 billion annually and teens are spending \$94 to \$153 billion annually. This includes their allowance and not the money that their parents and grandparents give them. Plus, this group of children receives money for just about every holiday, birthday and even back to school. Their average weekly allowance is six to eight dollars. What does \$100 billion buy? For this generation, the top products are candy and food. Other important items include; books, games, toys, and clothing. When examining the types of clothing products between the sexes, females between twelve and seventeen (38 percent) and males (25 percent)

favor sneakers and shoes while 79 percent of the girls and 38 percent of the males prefer to purchase clothing (Sutherland & Thompson, 2003).

Xu (2007) conducted a survey of Generation Y's compulsive buying habits using a convenience sample of ninety six undergraduates at a Mid-Western University. The majority of the undergraduates were white or non-Hispanic, and seventy five percent were females and twenty five percent were males. The model developed by Valence and d'Astous was used to examine compulsive spending in Generation Y. The scale examined both financial and psychological implications. The majority of the respondents had between \$100 and \$200 per month. The findings of the study showed materialism to have a strong influence on young consumers. This result was consistent with previous studies on compulsive buying. Public self consciousness was strongly related to consumers' compulsive spending. Therefore, the findings indicate young consumers compulsive spending tendency was driven by their materialistic values. Also, the materialistic value commitment had a significantly strong direct influence on compulsive buying (Xu, 2007).

Ethnographic and Attitudinal Characteristics

The Generation Y demographic segment is in constant motion and is known to be hypersensitive, socially conscious and self absorbed. As the purveyors of “cool,” they have set the bar for technological savvy and demand instant gratification from their purchases. Anderson (2007) has called them “media-rich and tech rich,” as a group and “have an extra solid sense of their individual identity and they resent it when others suggest that they know them better than they know themselves” (Anderson, 2007).

Female Generation Y Shoppers

Shopping has become an entertainment choice for this generation going far beyond the simple act of purchasing items. For teenage girls shopping at the mall, the destination is not about the department store but the specialty stores catering to their segment of the population. “They are trendy, impressionable, and emotional in their spending habits, too, easy to reach through the dependable medium of TV...the typical college freshman carries somewhere around \$2,000 in ongoing credit card balances” (Underhill, 2004, p. 170). Their money is spent almost all on discretionary purchases (Underhill, 2004).

Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) UK study examined whether Generation Y female consumers were willing to show a “materialistic/shopping style” (p. 102). Two hundred forty-four questionnaires were administered in a non-probability sample to undergraduate women between the ages of 18-22 years. The results of cluster analysis indicated five segments classified as recreational quality seekers, recreational discount seekers, shopping and fashion uninterested, trend setting devotees and confused time/money conserving (Bakewell et al., 2003).

Male Shopping Habits

Otnes and McGrath (2001) classify males shopping habits into three classifications: grab and go, whine and wait, and fear of the feminine. The grab and go purchaser shops to fulfill a need and does not use shopping as a recreational activity. The whine and wait consumer is related to the age of the shopper. This stereotype is seen when men accompany women on a shopping trip. The younger males tend to whine while the older males seem to just wait for the female to finish the shopping tasks. The last stereotype is the fear of the feminine. This category applies to males who purchase items of a feminine nature such as clothing, and are related to a women's body or part of the household (Otnes & McGrath, 2001).

Behavior Patterns

“Generation Y appears to be a notoriously fickle consumer group, demanding the latest trends in record time” (Brooks, 2005, p.47). Brand identity is vital with this target market. Generation Y has pushed fashion to the next level with their overall acceptance of designer brands. Sebor (2006) states, “Research found that 18 to 26 year olds spend 28% more time online than 27 to 40 years old, read blogs twice as often, and are 50 times more likely to send text messages” (p.26). This type of communication has great influence on their behavior patterns. Generation Y’s are more likely to send text messages to a friend about a product or sale. Since electronic devices are an integral part of their lives, Generation Y expects everything it encounters to be wired to. “They expect their homes will be equipped to handle their laptops, wireless routers, plasma TVs, video games controllers, cell phones, digital video recorders, iPods, and cable or satellite TV and radio” (Curry, 2007, p.262). Their demands carry over into their food choices and methods to seek out knowledge about products. Not only are they optimistic about their food choices saving the planet, but they will download menus and use various networking technologies for food. Moreover, there are three key trends emerging from this age cohort; health and wellness, customization, and global flavors. Their favorite food products are all natural weight control foods, anti-aging foods, protein rich breakfast and snack foods along with comfort foods (What Generation Y eats, 2009).

Organic Consumers

Hughner, McDonagh, Prothero, Shultz II, and Stanton, (2001) integrates the findings of published research on organic food consumption. The purpose of the research is twofold; to examine why consumer purchase and fail to purchase organic food and synthesize previous research studies on organic consumers. An intensive literature review was conducted over the past twenty years but no qualitative or quantitative research was employed with this article. Fifteen themes are identified of the organic consumer ranging from lack of availability to cosmetic defects. The concluding thoughts show the need for future research to better understand the organic food consumers.

Gender

Gender differences in men and women were studied by the authors Urena, Bernabeu, and Olmeda (2008). The study was conducted in Spain to examine how gender affects consumers' choice to pay for organic food. Results show that women have a more favorable attitude depending on their lifestyle. However, men are more willing to pay a premium for organic food. A total of four hundred and sixty four face-to-face interviewees were randomly conducted in supermarkets and malls in Castilla-La Mancha, Spain. Contingent valuation, a direct valuation method was used to measure willingness to pay for organic products. Urena et al. observed significant differences in eight out of twenty three indicators depending on gender (Urena, Bernabeu, & Olmeda, 2008).

Adolescents

Stobbelaar, Casimir, Borghuis, Marks, Meijer, and Zebeda (2007) studied six hundred and eighty two Dutch 15-16 year old adolescents who were surveyed to address the needs of this group and examine their knowledge and attitudes of organic foods. Four main groups of questions were used: knowledge, attitudes, perceived influences and whether they purchased organic foods. The study results show that this age group has a positive attitude but their knowledgeable and willingness to buy is low. Eighty eight percent knew about organic foods but more girls than boys. For the girls, it was important the products

were animal friendly and girls think price is less important than the boys. There was also a considerable difference between respondents' educational levels; students in higher education were more positive about organic foods. (Stobbelaar et al., 2007).

Consumer Attitudes Among Cultures

Many studies regarding consumer preference and attitudes have taken place internationally. The Soil Association provided a classification of the organic consumer based on eight attributes; frequency of purchase, the number of categories sought, frequent consumers, who were generally older, more affluent however, research shows the highest spenders are younger and more affluent. However, price is a top barrier for consumers not purchasing organic products however other barriers include availability of products, price perception, merchandising techniques and the visual product quality (Padel & Foster, 2005). Tsakiridou, Boutsouki, Zotos, and Mattas (2007) study looked at Greek consumers and their preference for organic products. Six hundred and sixty consumers were surveyed to explore attitudes and behavior of organic products. The findings indicate majority of the respondents showed a favorable attitude toward purchasing organic products. Seventy-seven percent are not satisfied with the variety of organic products at their supermarkets. Quality was found to be the single more important attribute in purchasing organic products. (Tsakiridou et al., 2007).

Consumer Motivation Among Cultures

Consumer motivation to purchase organic food products comes in many forms. One's health is one of the major reasons. Baker, Thompson, and Engelken (2004) study reveals as an adult, choosing an organic diet may reduce the risk of Parkinson's disease. Furthermore, in a study of over 600 people (Baker, Thompson, & Engelken, 2004), those exposed to pesticides had a 1.6 times greater risk of developing Parkinson's disease. Another study published in Environmental Health Perspectives in 2009 found substituting organic fruits and vegetables in children ages 3-11 years old had lower organophosphorus pesticides in their urine. By choosing to feed a baby an organic diet is said to have many health benefits including lowering a babies' risk of asthma and allergies, decreasing chances of parents having selective or picky eaters, improving baby's digestion and immune system and decreasing exposure to toxic chemicals (Protecting the next generation, 2009). In Germany, the main reason for consumer motivation to use organic products stems from distrust in conventional foods (Baker et al., 2004).

Environmental Protection

A large body of research exists on the willingness to pay for organic products and environmental protection. Krystallis and Chrysohiodis (2005) examined two questions; willingness to pay for organic products and does willingness to pay for organic foods differ for different food categories. One hundred and sixty four consumers were approached in retail chain stores in Athens Greece in July 2003. The questionnaire included criteria that influence consumers who purchase organic foods and the second part asked respondents questions about their willingness to pay a premium for organic food. The study findings indicate that consumers' willingness to pay and the type and magnitude of factors that affect it differ according to the organic food category such as food quality and security, trust in the certification, and, for some products, brand name. (Krystallis & Chrysohoidis, 2005).

Ethical Motivations

Honkanen, Verplanken, and Olsen (2006) investigated ethical motivations in 1,643 Norwegian consumers' choice for organic foods. The three motives studies were political, religious, and ecological. It appears that the more people are concerned with animal welfare and animal rights; there was a strong influence on attitudes toward purchasing organic products. Therefore, the demand for organic products may be enhanced by appealing to consumers ecological and ethical beliefs. The authors believe ethical values are an important consideration when explaining consumer attitudes toward the purchase of organic foods.

Howard and Allen (2006) conducted a study to examine the labeling of organic products and the ethical criteria not included in the US Department of Agriculture organic standards. Focus groups and surveys were conducted among 1000 households in the Central Coast region of California to determine which standards consumers are more interested in supporting with their purchases. Results indicate consumers are most interested with the ethical treatment of animals, local origin, and reasonable wages paid to workers (Howard & Allen, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the differences between gender and attitudes toward organic products both fresh and packaged. Descriptive statistics for the study included an analysis for variance (ANOVA), t-test calculations, and chi square was used to determine if there was a significant difference in attitudes toward organic products and international consumers. On the organic products survey, questions thirteen and fourteen used a Cronbach's Alpha to check for bias in the respondents' answers.

The instrument in the study was a fifty five question survey (Appendix) that examined a series of demographic variables ranging from age, income, educational levels, ethnic groups, and college major, and the preference of organic products, spending on groceries, understanding the costs associated with purchasing organic foods and the types of products purchased when grocery shopping.

Appendix

Fifty five questions survey that examined demographic of age, sex, education, income, ethnic groups, Asian country born, marital status, college major, year in college, international student, environmental science course taken, and the preference of organic products, spending on groceries, understanding the costs associated with purchasing organic foods and the types of products purchased when grocery shopping.

Survey Questionnaire	
Age: Under 20, 20-24, 25-34, Other, please indicate	Q13a. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Fruit
Sex: Male, Female	Q13b. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Vegetables
Education: Some high school, High school graduate, Some college, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate/Professional	Q13c. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Milk
Income: Under \$10,000, \$10,000 - 14,999, \$15,000 - 24,999, \$25,000 - 34,999, \$35,000 - 49,999, \$50,000 - 74,999, \$75,000 - 99,999, \$100,000+	Q13d. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Yogurt

Ethnicity: White - Caucasian, Black - African American, Asian (if Asian, please complete question 22 if not, skip to 23), Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, Other, please list	Q13e. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Cheese
Asian born: China, Japan, India, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Vietnam, Laos, Other, please indicate	Q13f. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Pasta/Rice
Marital status: Single, Married, Divorced, Separated, Widowed	Q13g. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Cereal
College Major: Accounting, Business Management, Finance, International Business, Management, Marketing, Retail, Equine, Hospitality, Culinary, Technology, Other, please specify	Q13h. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Meats/Poultry/Fish
Year in College: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate	Q13i. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Snack foods
International student: Yes, No	Q13j. Best describes the types of foods you MOST OFTEN consume - Eggs
Environmental Science course taken: Yes, No	Q14a. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I control salt intake
Q2. In regards to your family's grocery shopping, would you say you are Solely Responsible	Q14b. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I eat a vegetarian diet
Q3. Where do you do the majority of your food shopping?	Q14c. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I eat fruits and vegetables often
Q4. Approximately how much do you spend per week on groceries?	Q14d. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I eat red meat in moderation
Q5. Do you know what "organic" foods are?	Q14e. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I exercise regularly
Q6. Do you prefer organically grown produce and other organic foods, over non-organic foods?	Q14f. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I try to eat foods free of artificial additives
Q7. How many times have you purchased organic foods in the last month?	Q14g. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I read product labels
Q8. In your opinion, are organic foods safer to consume over non-organic products?	Q14h. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I prefer to use recycled products
Q9. Do you find organic foods cost more than non-organic foods?	Q14i. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I try to reduce stress
Q1. Is it worth paying more for organic products?	Q14j. How often you adhere to the following lifestyle characteristics - I try to balance work and private time
Q11. Do you purchase organic foods for	Q15a. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Country of Origin
Q12a. Reasons for consuming organic products - They are healthy	Q15b. How important the following product characteristics is to you - The packaging
Q12b. Reasons for consuming organic products - They are nutritious	Q15c. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Price
Q12c. Reasons for consuming organic products - They taste better	Q15d. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Nutritional Value
Q12d. Reasons for consuming organic products - They are environmentally conscious	Q15e. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Environmental benefits

Q12e. Reasons for consuming organic products - They benefit local economy	Q15f. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Product's appearance
Q12f. Reasons for consuming organic products - I have food allergies	Q15g. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Taste of the product
Q12g. Reasons for consuming organic products - I am curious	Q15h. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Information on label
	Q15i. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Certification of its production methods
	Q15j. How important the following product characteristics is to you - Nutritional labeling

Primary Data Collection Process

A convenience sample of Generation Y was drawn upon from a large private University from campuses located in four states in the United States of America. The student body sample was selected from the main campus with over 10,000 students from at least sixty countries with an international student population over 900 students. The majority of students are from China, South Korea, India, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The survey was sent out to the entire population in order to collect as many international students.

The 56 questions survey instrument on consumers' purchasing preferences for organic products was administered online using SNAP Survey Software (proprietary software) to administer an online survey. The survey responses obtained though SNAP were converted to SPSS for data analysis.

In total, two hundred and sixty nine surveys were completed for this study. The surveys were administered via a web link for respondents to fill out. There were two incentives for completing the survey; two respondents had the opportunity to win a twenty-five dollar gift card to Barnes & Noble. The two winners were randomly selected based on using a random number generator though Excel. The two winners were contacted via email.

Hypotheses

- Ha1: Gender influences use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha2: Major of study influences the use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha3: Year at school influences the use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha4: Level of income influences the use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha5: Age influences the use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha6: Level of education influences the use of organic foods (fresh and packaged).
- Ha7: There is a difference between ethnicity of Generation Y choice for organic products (fresh and packaged).
- Ha8: There is a significant difference between those who have taken Environmental Science and those who have not.

FINDINGS

Eight independent factors were considered to examine the relationship between demographics of gender, major, age, income, level of education, and ethnic groups of Generation Y consumers with their preference for the use of organic foods. Out of eight hypotheses, many yielded significant findings for the demographic variables analyzed. There were significant findings for gender for their preferences to eat

fruits and vegetables often and their preference for recycled products. For the majors in the study, the areas of significance included their preference for organic foods over non-organic foods, and the location they prefer to do their grocery shopping. For the year at college, the significant findings included preference for organic foods, and the reasons for consuming organic foods. For income levels, the areas of significant findings included the reasons for purchasing organic products, and product characteristics. For age, the significant findings included the times they've purchased organic foods in the last month, reasons for consuming organic foods and lifestyle characteristics. For education, the significant findings included the perception of whether it's worth it to pay more for organic products over non-organic products, reasons for consuming organic products, and the food they most often consumed. For ethnicity, the significant findings included their cost perception of organic foods over non-organic foods and the types of food most often consumed. The final hypothesis, environmental science showed a significant finding food safety and product characteristic such as product appearance and certification of its production methods.

The following are significant findings across specific survey questions related to the demographics of the study:

Shopping: Older more educated graduates with high income are solely responsible for family grocery shopping. (p=.001)

Preference: High income American graduates majoring in accounting or management or marketing and retail or culinary and technology prefer organically grown produce and other organic foods over non-organic foods. (p=.045)

Worth paying: Graduates with high income that are older with more education that are either Black (African American) or Asian feel it's worth paying more for organic products and for the types of products consumed (fruit, vegetables, milk, yogurt, cheese and cereal). (p=.026)

Taste: Graduates with high income who are more educated indicated their reason for consuming organic products was because the organic taste better. (p=.044)

Environmental: Older more educated graduates indicated their reason for consuming organic products was because they are environmentally conscious. (p=.019)

Fruit: Graduates that are older more educated who were White, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic/Latino indicated the types of foods most often consumed, organic fruit. (p=.026)

Vegetables: Graduates that are older more educated who were White, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic/Latino indicated the types of foods most often consumed, organic vegetables. (p=.037)

Milk: Graduates that are older more educated and White, Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic/Latino indicated the types of foods most often consumed, non-organic milk. (p=.037)

Cheese: Undergraduates who are between 20-24 years old and more educated that are White, Caucasian, Black, African American and Hispanic/Latino indicated the types of foods most often consumed, non-organic cheese. (p=.016)

Cereal: Undergraduates that are under twenty years old with high school and some college and White, Caucasian, Black, African American and Hispanic/Latino indicated the types of foods most often consumed, non-organic cereal. (p=.008)

Eggs: Graduates who are older more educated and White, Caucasian and Asian indicated the types of foods most often consumed, organic eggs. (p=.029)

Additives: Undergraduates under twenty years old and with high school and some college indicated the following lifestyle characteristics; I try to eat foods free of artificial additives sometimes. (p=.015)

Country of Origin: Undergraduates with high school and some college and are White Caucasian indicated the product characteristic, country of origin as moderately important. (p=.008)

Limitations of the Study

The limitations contained in the primary data were the sample, unequal gender balance; the majority of the sample was single (92%) and the overall gender majority was female (71%), the majority was Caucasian (65%) and 78% were non-international. Further, the timing of the data collection was a limitation. The sample was a convenience sample comprised of university students attending a large private university located in four states in the United States. The data collection took place over the summer months when students were not checking their school email as frequently as the school year. Also, there was a conflict with the University and the amount of surveys which were allowed to reach the students via the University's email system. At the time of the study, there were limitations on reaching the other campuses in the other three states. Therefore, only one state was selected with email blasts to reach students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs on campus. Furthermore, the researcher made every attempt to capture the necessary international students for the study but the sample was small less than 22%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To summarize, the study contained a large number of hypotheses in the hopes of getting a deeper understanding of demographic factors of Generation Y. Almost 100% of the sample knew about organic products which is promising for marketers looking to capitalize on the organic movement in the fresh and packaged goods areas. This study attempted to advance the knowledge of Generation Y and their choice for organic products. A recommendation to future researchers would be to narrow the choices of organic products. The findings showed a strong preference for milk, eggs, and fruit but lacked any significant findings for other product categories such as pasta/rice, snack foods and meat.

The recommendations for the study of Generation Y and their choice for organic products would include a number of suggestions. The study was based on a convenience sample in New England. A number of limitations also hindered the outcome of the survey including; too many single participants which did not allow for analysis on the demographic variable; marital status, too many participants live on campus which deter students from going to purchase groceries since they are able to eat all meals seven days a week on campus. The majority of the sample was women. One suggestion to overcome these limitations would be to include a bigger sample outside of New England to a national scale. In order to prove or disprove the gender hypothesis, more males were needed in the sample as well as a large population of international students and more ethnic groups.

Moreover, the data collection period would be during the school year when students are checking their email on a daily basis. One major issue is when students do not check their email on a regular basis, the emails are returned undeliverable due to the size allocation of each student's email account. One of the keys to generating the successful sample size was offering an incentive to the bookstore on campus. Two gift cards in the amount of \$25 were offered to two random survey participants. Therefore, it is recommended that more studies would be necessary to understand the impact of gender and Generation Y's choice for organic products.

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