

## **ASSESSMENT OF CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOODS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

*<sup>1</sup>Sijuwade Adebukola ADEBAYO, <sup>1</sup>Kemi Funmilola OMOTESHO, <sup>2</sup>Toyin Benedict AJIBADE, <sup>1</sup>Gbemisola Bose ADETAYO*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

*\*Corresponding author's e-mail: sijuadeadebayo@yahoo.com*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study focused on assessment of consumer's behaviors towards organic foods in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to identify the level of awareness of the respondent on the organic foods, determine factors influencing the respondents on consumption pattern for organic foods among others. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were randomly selected. Data for the study were obtained with the aid of a structured questionnaire administered to the organic foods consumers at the point of purchase. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the study. Results of the analysis revealed that the average age of the respondents was 41 years. Majority of the respondents were male (61.7%), had tertiary education (80.8%), married (75.8%) with average monthly income of #47,992. The average household size was 4 persons. In addition 92.5% of the respondents were aware of the health benefit of organic foods. Concern for health ( $x=3.83$ ) was ranked first as factor influencing consumption of organic food. One of the constraints faced by respondents in the patronage of organic foods is the fact that organic foods are expensive. The study recommends that organic foods should be made affordable at the shopping mall in order to promote the level of purchase and consumption of organic foods.*

**KEY WORDS:** consumers, behavior, organic food, consumption, benefit

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last twenty years, the world has become increasingly concerned with the safety and quality of their food, leading them to question conventional agricultural practices. This interest in safety, paired with growing concerns about the environment and sustainability, has led to a large increase in demand for organic food products (Liu, 2007). Food consumption patterns are rapidly changing nowadays as a result of environmental issues, concern about the nutritional value of food and health issues. Issues such as quality and safety in food attract consumer interest in organic food that is free from pesticides and chemical residues (Baltas, 2001; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002; Ianovici *et al*, 2008; Misca *et al*, 2014). Although the concept of "organic food" seems to be well known to many consumers (Roddy *et al*, 1996; Von Alvensleben, 1998), the proportion of consumers who purchase organic foods on a regular basis is

low (Grunert, 1993; Wandel & Bugge, 1997; Roddy *et al.*, 1996; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002).

Organic products are obtained by processes friendly to the environment, by cultivation techniques that consider both the attributes of the final product and the production methods (Chinnici *et al.*, 2002). Organic foods typically garner a higher price in the marketplace, which is one reason why farmers and ranchers might consider organic production. The increase of consumer's interest on organic food has been attributed among others to the growing demand for food free of pesticides and chemical residue. However the level of awareness about organic food is relatively low among the people in the society. Moreover, the producer will not produce organic crop or animal if there will be no request for such produce. As the Nigerian society becomes more and more concerned with the safety, nutritional value, and environmental effects of their food and its production, it is important that we find out how Ilorin residence' behavioral pattern influence buying decision of "organic" food products. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are to;

- Describe the socio-economic characteristic of the respondents;
- Identify the level of awareness of the respondent on the organic foods.
- Determine factors influencing the respondents on consumption pattern for organic foods.
- Examine attitude of respondents towards organic foods.
- Identify the constraints to patronage of organic foods.

**Hypothesis for the study:** H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristic of the respondents and consumption of organic foods.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was carried out in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Ilorin, the state capital of Kwara State is located on latitude 8<sup>0</sup>30' and 8<sup>0</sup>50'N and longitude 4<sup>0</sup>20' and 4<sup>0</sup>35'E of the equator. Ilorin city occupies an area of about 468sqkm and it is situated in the transitional zone within the forest and the guinea savannah regions of Nigeria. The climate of Ilorin is tropical under the influence of the two trade winds two climate seasons i.e. rainy and dry season. The rainy season is between March and November and the annual.

The city of Ilorin has an estimated population of 1,622,438 inhabitants spread over a total area of 295 square miles. Ilorin has two mega shopping, which are modern mall that allowed people to purchased different variety of goods. This includes Shoprite and Matrite which are located within accessible reach of people.

**Sampling Procedure and Sample Size.** The target population of interest for this study was made up of shoppers of supermarket in Ilorin metropolis. A two stage sampling techniques was adopted for this study. First, two supermarket were purposively selected. The purposive selection was based on being renowned for

marketing of organic foods. The selected shops were Shoprite and Martrite. Systemic random sampling was used to select respondents in each supermarket at purchase points. Every third of organic foods buyers was sampled interviewed until the quota for the target store was attained.

**Data Analysis.** The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequency count, percentages, means and ranks. PPMC was used for testing the hypothesis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents.** Table 1 shows that the mean age of the respondent was 41years. This implies that the respondents are still in their active age. Majority of the respondents (61.7%) were male, educated (80.8%), married (75.8%) have a household size of 1 – 5 persons (79.2%). This implies that there are more male and well inform respondents with relatively small household that patronize organic food. The result shows that 41.75 of the respondents were civil servant and 45.0% of the respondents earn #15,000- #44,000. This implies that the respondents have a source of income that makes them to afford organic foods. 55.8% of the respondents were of Christians while 44.2% of the respondents were Islam. This implies that both Christians and Muslim do patronize organic food.

**Level of awareness of respondents on Organic Foods.** The result in Table 2 indicates the level of awareness of respondents on organic foods. Majority (92.5%) of the respondents in the study area were aware of the health benefits of organic foods. This implies that the respondents in the study area were aware of the importance of the health benefits of organic foods. Also, 57.5% of the respondents in the study area were aware of organic foods at the point of purchase. This implies that majority of the respondents were not aware that organic foods are sold in the shopping malls until they get there. Majority (64.2%) of the respondents in the study area were aware of the various brands of organic foods. This implies that respondents were conversant with the producers/ suppliers of organic foods. This may be the importance they attach to organic food so that if they cannot get in a place they can check the other. 67.5% of the respondents in the study area were aware of the various symbols certification/other identifiers which declare the food as organic foods. This implies that the respondents can easily identify organic food and are not likely to buy any fake products as organic. The unsafe food and environmental problems may have influenced consumers' purchase decision in looking for food that is safe and environmental friendly products such as organic food products (Onyango *et al.*, 2007).

**Factors influencing consumption of Organic Foods.** The result in Table 3 shows that the leading factors that influences the consumption of organic foods is the concern for health ( $\bar{x}$  3.83). This implies that the respondents were aware of the health benefit of organic foods and will not mind the cost to purchase it. Concern for health is

considered subjective intention or motivation of an individual to improve their health. Previous studies have shown that the most important reason to purchase or consume organic food seems to be concern for health (Wandel & Bugge, 1997; Von Alvensleben, 1998). Another factor influencing the consumption of organic food is concern for safety ( $x = 3.63$ ). This implies that the consumers want food that save to eat i.e food that are probably free from chemical residue which may be dangerous to the health of the consumer. Wessells *et al* (1996) found out that consumers will purchase products depending on their perceived quality expectations. Moreover, some past studies have shown that a high level of environmental concern among teachers has been found to be the second top predictor of green purchase behaviour, including the consumption of organic food products (Aini *et al.*, 2003).

**TABLE 1. Distribution by socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (n =120)** (Source: field survey, 2018)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Average
<b>Age</b>			
20-29	21	17.5	41 years
30-39	26	21.7	
40-49	45	37.5	
50-59	22	18.3	
60 & above	6	5	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	74	61.7	
Female	46	38.3	
<b>Educational status</b>			
Quranic education	7	5.8	
Secondary education	16	13.4	
Tertiary education	77	80.8	
<b>Employment status</b>			
Civil servant	50	41.7	
Self- employed	38	31.7	
Private employee	32	26.6	
<b>Monthly income (#000)</b>			
15-44	54	45	#47,992
45-64	38	31.6	
65-84	23	19.2	
85 & above	5	4.2	
<b>Marital status</b>			
Single	27	22.5	
Married	91	75.8	
Separated	2	1.7	
<b>Household size</b>			
1-5	95	79.2	4 persons
6-10	25	20.8	
<b>Religion</b>			
Christianity	67	55.8	
Islam	57	44.2	
<b>Total</b>	120	100	

**TABLE 2. Distribution of respondents by level of awareness of organic foods** (Source: field survey, 2018. \*Multiple responses)

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I am aware of the health benefits of organic foods	111	92.5
I am aware of the environment benefits	16	13.3
I am aware of organic foods at the point of purchase	69	57.5
I am aware of the various brands of organic foods	77	64.2
I am aware of the various symbols certifications/ other identifiers which declare the food as organic food.	81	67.5

**TABLE 3: Distribution of respondents by the factors that influence their consumption of organic foods** (Source: field survey, 2018. \* Multiple responses).

Factors influencing organic foods consumption	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean score	Rank
Concern for health	39 (31.6)	50 (41.7)	29 (24.2)	3 (2.5)	3.83	1 <sup>st</sup>
Concern for status	52 (43.3)	50 (41.7)	15 (12.5)	3 (2.5)	3.26	5 <sup>th</sup>
Concern for the environment	39 (32.4)	47 (39.2)	17 (14.2)	17 (14.2)	2.90	8 <sup>th</sup>
Concern for quality product	57 (47.5)	39 (32.5)	21 (17.5)	3 (2.5)	3.25	6 <sup>th</sup>
Concern for taste	64 (53.3)	36 (30.1)/	19 (15.8)	1 (0.7)	3.36	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Concern for safety	78 (65.0)	40 (33.3)	2 (1.7)	-	3.63	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Concern for affordability	51 (42.5)	45 (37.5)	23 (19.2)	1 (0.7)	3.22	7 <sup>th</sup>
Concern for satisfaction	50 (41.7)	58 (48.3)	9 (7.5)	3 (2.5)	3.29	4 <sup>th</sup>

**Attitude of consumer towards organic foods.** Table 4 shows the result on the attitude of the respondents on the consumption of organic foods. The amount of point is 3.00 due to the rating scale. A mean score above 3.00 shows a positive attitude while a mean score less than 3.00 shows a negative attitude towards the consumption of organic food. The result shows an overwhelming positive attitude of the respondents towards consumption of organic foods. The attitude statement as ranked by the respondents are that 'I prefer organic food because of the nutritional value' ( $\bar{x} = 3.83$ ), 'organic foods are less processed' ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ ), 'organic foods give a sense of satisfaction' ( $\bar{x} = 3.66$ ). This implies that consumer of organic food are conscious of the nutritional benefits of organic foods and would not mind to buy such at any cost because of the satisfaction they will derive from consuming such foods. Attitude to protect their own health is based on avoidance of food with chemical residue but eating more of food containing minerals and vitamins from fruits and vegetables (Zanoli & Naspgetti, 2002).

**Constraints faced during patronage of Organic Foods.** The result in Table 5 shows the constraints being faced by respondents in consumption of organic foods. The challenges ranges from the fact that 'organic food are expensive' ( $\bar{x} = 4.17$ ), smaller in quantity when compared to conventional foods' ( $\bar{x} = 3.89$ ), organic foods are not promoted properly' ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ), 'Organic foods are not available in full range of variety' ( $\bar{x} = 3.66$ ), etc. This implies that organic food is costly when compared to conventional foods i.e in terms of quantity. Therefore, consumers with large household

size will likely consider what will satisfy the entire family. Another implication is that organic foods do not have variety compared to conventional food and are limited in supply. The high price, low availability and poor appearance - can be viewed as general barriers against consumption of organic food (Vindigni *et al.*, 2002; Zanolli & Naspetti, 2002). Moreover, the supply of organic food items in the local market was insufficient; and most mentioned that organic rice, fruits, fish, shrimp, egg and chicken satisfied less than half of their family demand.

**TABLE 4. Distribution of the respondents by their attitude towards organic foods** (Source: field survey, 2018. \* Multiple responses).

Attitude	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean score	Rank
I prefer organic foods because of the nutritional value.	45 (37.5)	45(37.5)	11 (9.2)	2 (1.7)	17 (14.1)	3.83	1 <sup>st</sup>
Organic foods are expensive.	34 (28.3)	51(42.5)	17 (14.2)	12 (10.0)	6 (5.0)	3.80	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Price of organic foods is the first thing I look into before purchase.	33 (27.4)	53(44.2)	17 (14.2)	11 (9.2)	6 (5.0)	3.80	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Organic foods are less processed.	37 (30.8)	43(35.8)	17 (14.2)	16 (13.4)	7 (5.8)	3.73	4 <sup>th</sup>
Buying organic foods give me a sense of satisfaction.	32 (26.7)	41(34.1)	30 (25.0)	8 (6.7)	9 (7.5)	3.66	5 <sup>th</sup>
I would purchase organic foods if readily available.	30 (25.0)	44(36.7)	28 (23.3)	9 (7.5)	9 (7.5)	3.64	6 <sup>th</sup>
I prefer organic foods because they are chemical free.	36 (30.0)	33(27.5)	30 (25.0)	3 (2.5)	18 (15.0)	3.55	7 <sup>th</sup>
I prefer organic food in packages that can be refilled.	22 (18.3)	32(26.7)	36 (30.0)	16 (13.3)	14 (11.7)	3.27	8 <sup>th</sup>
Organic foods are truly environmental friendly.	19 (15.8)	37(30.8)	28 (23.4)	14 (11.7)	22 (18.3)	3.14	9 <sup>th</sup>
I will buy more of organic foods just because they are safe.	26 (21.7)	36(30.0)	33 (27.5)	12 (10.0)	13 (10.8)	2.67	10 <sup>th</sup>

**TABLE 5: Distribution of respondents by the constraints faced during patronage of organic foods** (Source: field survey, 2018. \* Multiple responses).

Constraints	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean score	Rank
Organic food are expensive.	54 (45.0)	49(40.8)	5 (4.2)	7 (5.8)	5 (4.2)	4.17	1 <sup>st</sup>
Organic foods are not promoted properly.	37 (30.8)	52(43.4)	13 (10.8)	14 (11.7)	4 (3.3)	3.87	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Organic foods are not available in full range of variety.	37(30.8)	38(31.7)	20 (16.7)	17(14.2)	8 (6.7)	3.66	4 <sup>th</sup>
Organic foods are not easily available in shopping outlets.	23 (19.1)	39(32.5)	26 (21.7)	18 (15.0)	14 (11.7)	3.33	7 <sup>th</sup>
Limited quality supply.	27 (22.5)	41(34.2)	24 (20.0)	19 (15.8)	9 (7.5)	3.48	6 <sup>th</sup>
Proximity to the mall.	15 (12.4)	36(30.0)	26 (21.7)	26 (21.7)	17(14.2)	2.92	9 <sup>th</sup>
Labels of organic foods are not informative.	28 (23.3)	45(37.5)	23 (19.2)	17 (14.2)	7 (5.8)	3.58	5 <sup>th</sup>
Poor storage facilities after purchase.	20 (16.7)	46(38.3)	17 (14.2)	24 (20.0)	13 (10.8)	3.30	8 <sup>th</sup>
Smaller in quantity when compared to conventional foods.	46 (38.3)	41(34.2)	15 (12.5)	10 (8.3)	8 (6.7)	3.89	2 <sup>nd</sup>

**HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY.** Result of the Pearson product moment correlation between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and consumption of organic foods. This result shows that out of the all the selected socio-economic variable considered, only educational status ( $r=0.271$ ,  $p=0.003$ ), monthly income ( $r=0.277$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) had significant relationship with respondents consumption of organic foods. This implies that the higher the level of education of the respondents, the higher tendency to purchase organic foods. This is because educated respondents will be well informed on benefits of organic food. Moreover, the income of the respondents may influence the consumption because organic foods are quite expensive compared to conventional foods. Therefore, consumers with low income may not be able to have the purchase of organic food. Moreover, many studies find that high income and small households are more likely to purchase organic products (*Rachael et al*, 2009).

**TABLE 6: Pearson product moment correlation between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the factors influencing the consumption of organic foods (Significance level of  $p \leq 0.05$ )**

Variable	p-value	r-value	Remark
Age	0.808	0.022	Not significant
Sex	0.280	-0.099	Not significant
Educational qualification	0.003	0.271	Significant
Employment status	0.022	0.209	Not significant
Monthly income	0.002	0.277	Significant
Marital status	0.818	-0.021	Not significant
Household size	0.688	0.037	Not significant
Religion	0.580	-0.051	Not significant

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the respondent were aware about the health benefits attributed to the consumption of organic food. Health issues are taken into cognizance before the consumption of organic foods. In addition, level of education and monthly income also determine the rate of organic food consumption. The study therefore recommends that Organic foods should be made available in large quantity and affordable at the shopping mall in order to promote the level of purchase and consumption of organic foods.

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