

Factors influencing the purchase behaviour of organic food products in the Generation Y cohort

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ABSTRACT

The modern consumer is inundated with various hazardous issues, especially concerning the environment. The increased environmental awareness has altered the way consumers think about their food purchases. Consequently, organic food products are receiving a lot more attention and consumers are opting to consume organic products over their traditional counterparts. This organic consumption change may be attributed to factors, such as environmental issues, health concerns, future preservation and natural taste. Often these organic food choices are linked to consumers that seek to change their lifestyles to be more environmentally conscious or loyal to pro-environmental causes. An organic food product has been defined in a multitude of facets, however, each definition generally retains the same core basis. In general, these products have been produced in a sustainable manner and are free from harmful agents, such as pesticides, mineral fertilisers, artificial colorants and any other harmful chemical agent. As South Africa is an emerging country in retrospect of organic food and environmentalism as a whole, South African consumers are demanding more organic products and safer sustainable business practices than ever before. The environmental movement is on the rise and businesses need to comply with this new demand should they wish to stay relevant in the ever-changing consumer market. Organic product prices are perceived as being more expensive than traditional products, this directly effects the purchase decision of a product. Increasing demand should result in decreasing prices over time, encouraging more organic product purchases. Other factors may also affect the purchase decision of organic products and these may include health consciousness, convenience, attitudes and overall purchase behaviour. This raises the question of what factors influence the South African Generation Y consumer to purchase organic products.

Keywords: Organic food, Health consciousness, environmentalism, Generation Y