



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Management**

**LOCUS OF CONTROL OF ORGANIC FOOD BUYERS AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

**KEY WORDS:** Organic food, Locus of Control, Mysore, Agribusiness Management, Consumer Behaviour

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**ABSTRACT**

The demand for Organic Food is increasing at a pace which cannot be ignored by the market forces. The need to consciously understand the Organic Consumer has become more important than before. It is more cost effective to scheme a marketing mix that meets the requirements of a specific market segment than to aim at the broad undifferentiated market. This tactic is referred to as a concentration strategy. Some companies apply a multi-segment strategy, which is, varying products, prices, promotion methods, and distribution channels to cater to more than one market segment. This study, conducted in the city of Mysore, aims at understanding the locus of control of the organic food consumers. It is evident from the study that the locus of control of the organic consumers tends towards internality. Internals tend to be more planned in their purchasing, they actively look for information regarding products and brands and their buying choices change with new information acquired and interpreted.

**INTRODUCTION**

Locus of control is defined as the degree to which people believe that the outcomes of events in their lives are controlled by them or that they themselves are responsible for their destinies, as opposed to the belief that other external forces which are beyond their control, control their lives' outcomes. Julian B. Rotter developed the understanding of the concept in 1954 and it has evolved since then. The locus (location) of one's control is conceptualized as:

- Internal (the belief that one controls his life) or
- External (the belief that factors such as chance or fate or other people control one's life).

Locus of control has been widely applied in areas of educational psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology and consumer behaviour. Consumer behavior is an appropriate target for psychological research since it includes difficulties of impulsivity, the need to resist influence, planning and prioritizing, and the necessity to balance desires with resources.

The psychological burdens experienced by consumers when they try to shop wisely, like defending themselves against fraudulent marketing gimmicks, sales pressure and plain frauds were explained by Schwartz (1994). Martin, Veer and Pervan (2007) applied locus of control to consumer behaviour and examined how the weight locus of control of ladies influence how they react to female models in advertising of different body shapes. They found that ladies who believe they can control their weight ("internals"), respond most positively to slim models in advertising, and this positive reaction is arbitrated by self-referencing. In dissimilarity, ladies who feel incapable of controlling their weight ("externals"), self-reference larger-sized models, but only prefer larger-sized models when the advertisement is for a non-fattening product. For fattening products, they exhibit a similar preference for larger-sized models.

According to APEDA organic food are organic products which are grown under a system of agriculture without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides with an environmentally and socially responsible approach. This method of agriculture works at grass root level to preserve the reproductive and regenerative capacity of the soil, good plant nutrition, and sound soil management, produces nutritious food rich in vitality which has resistance to diseases.

A study conducted by Hughner et al. (2007), identified numerous themes that reflect the various justifications used by consumers when deciding to buy organic food. The literature evidently indicates organic food consumers are not homogeneous in demographics or in beliefs.

It is important for marketers to understand the motivations, perceptions and the degree of impact their marketing endeavors are having over the intended consumers. The purpose of this paper

is to understand the locus of control of organic food buyers in comparison to the locus of control of non-buyers.

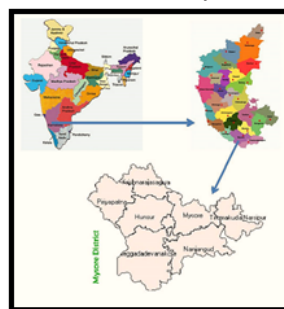
**OBJECTIVES**

1. To find the locus of control of organic consumers
2. To compare the locus of control of organic consumers and conventional food consumers.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

**Study Area**

The study was conducted in Mysore city area. Mysuru city is one of the tier II cities in Karnataka, India. Mysore being the cultural capital of India is also a hub of industrial activities and is also called the 2nd capital of Karnataka. This city is one of the most preferred destinations for industries including IT hubs other than Bangalore due to salubrious climate and availability of natural resources (water, etc.). It is a main trading center of silk and sandalwood. It has an area of 6,268 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 3,001,127 (2011 census). Mysore has many Yoga centers and Ayurvedic centers. Many foreigners come to Mysore for Yoga & Ayurvedic treatments. Both Yoga and Ayurveda propagate Organic food. Therefore this city is relevant for our study.



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**Database & Sampling Design**

A quantitative survey was conducted with a randomly selected sample comprising of 100 consumers of organic products and 100 consumers of conventional food products from Mysore city, conducted in both generic supermarkets selling organic food products and stand-alone organic retail outlets. Sample respondents for this study were selected through random stratified purposive sampling method. Consumers who were visited chosen outlets during the survey time, and those who have time to fill in the survey instrument and willing to participate in the survey, formed the sample respondents. The total number of respondents is 100. The reference year for the data collected is 2017-2018

**Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to few retail outlets in Mysore City such as Loyal World, Big Bazar, More, Reliance Fresh, Dhaatu, Nature's Nectar, Namaste, Hasiru and Organic Basket. The results are limited to the primary data collected.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Statistical Hypothesis:**

H1: There is no significant mean difference between buyer of organic food and non-buyer of organic foods

To test H1, t-test was used and the computations made were tabulated in table 1

**TABLE 1: Demographic factors: buyers of organic food vs. non-buyers**

Variable	Buyers	Non Buyers	t-Values	P - Values
Age	44.83	31.93	6.45	0.000
Marital Status	1.71	1.53	2.66	0.009
Qualification	3.81	3.69	0.71	0.624
Stream of Education	2.09	2.13	0.34	0.731
Employment	4.16	3.60	2.37	0.019
Individual Income	2.32	1.95	2.41	0.017
Family Income	2.98	2.69	1.94	0.054

Source: Primary survey: 2017-18

From the above table following inferences made:

- Since  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Age between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.009 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Marital status between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.624 > 0.05$ , the test was not significant at 5% levels, that is, there was no significant mean difference in Qualification between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.731 > 0.05$ , the test was not significant at 5% levels, that is, there was no significant mean difference in Stream of education between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.019 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Employment between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Age between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.017 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Individual Income between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.
- Since  $P = 0.054 > 0.05$ , the test was not significant at 5% levels, that is, there was no significant mean difference in Family Income between Buyers and Non-buyers of organic foods at 5% level of significance.

The null hypothesis is rejected for age, marital status, employment and individual income. Buyers tend to be significantly in the middle age and above. More buyers are married and so the buying behaviour might be a result of combined buying choices made with their spouse or in the interest of the children. Individual income is significantly higher than the non-buyers' group and this is can be related to the premium prices charged for the organic food products. Interestingly, average family income, qualification level and the stream of education (science, commerce or arts) were not significantly different.

**LOCUS OF CONTROL**

The locus of control of the organic consumers and the

conventional food buyers were collected using the inventory for Locus of Control: Total with alpha of 0.86 from the International Personality Item Pool, a scientific collaboratory for the development of advanced measures of personality and other individual differences. The inventory contains 20 items.

Table 2 presents the Likert scale data of the Locus of Control: Total Inventory with 20 items. The dominant answers of both the Organic Food Consumers' group and the Conventional Food Consumers' group have been tabulated

**TABLE 2: Locus of Control: Total [Alpha = .86]**

	Questions	Dominant Answer		
		Organic Consumers	Conventional Consumers	
+ keyed	Feel comfortable with myself.	83% Agreeable	85% Agreeable	
	Believe that my success depends on ability rather than luck.	62% Agreeable	71% Agreeable	
	Just know that I will be a success.	54% Agreeable	63% Agreeable	
	Come up with good solutions.	77% Agreeable	80% Agreeable	
	Love life.	86% Agreeable	81% Agreeable	
	Act comfortably with others.	71% Agreeable	61% Agreeable	
	Feel up to any task.	79% Agreeable	77% Agreeable	
	Like to take responsibility for making decisions.	77% Agreeable	79% Agreeable	
	Take the initiative.	73% Agreeable	77% Agreeable	
	Make a decision and move on.	76% Agreeable	73% Agreeable	
	- keyed	Believe that unfortunate events occur because of bad luck.	43% Disagreeable	30% Disagreeable
		Believe that the world is controlled by a few powerful people.	39 % Disagreeable	42% Agreeable
		Feel that my life lacks direction.	34% Disagreeable	30% Disagreeable
See difficulties everywhere.		45% Agreeable	66% Agreeable	
Habitually blow my chances.		33% Disagreeable	37% Disagreeable	
Believe some people are born lucky.		40% Agreeable	45% Agreeable	
Dislike taking responsibility for making decisions.		5 8 % Disagreeable	39% Disagreeable	
Am less capable than most people.		70% Disagreeable	65% Disagreeable	
Dislike myself.		73% Disagreeable	75% Disagreeable	
Feel that I'm unable to deal with things.		44% Disagreeable	32% Disagreeable	

Source: Primary survey: 2017-18

**Statistical Hypothesis:**

H2: The locus of control for organic food consumers and conventional food consumers are not different.

To test H2, t-test was used and the computations made were tabulated in table 3.

**TABLE 3: t-Test Output for Locus of Control: Total Inventory**

t-Test for Locus of Control: Total	Buyers	Non-Buyers
Mean	71.71	68.6
Variance	75.48070707	56.54545455
Observations	100	100
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	194	
t Stat	2.706639343	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.003701458	
t Critical one-tail	1.652745977	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.007402916	
t Critical two-tail	1.972267533	

Source: Primary survey: 2017-18

Since  $P = 0.007 < 0.05$ , the test was significant at 5% levels, that is, there exists significant mean difference in Locus of Control score between organic food consumers and conventional food consumers at 5% levels of significance.

The locus of control of both organic food buyers and non-buyers are towards internality. The locus of control of organic food buyers of the sample studied is more towards internality than non-buyers, although they have the same tendency towards internality.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the study show that the organic food buyers have a higher internality of locus of control compared to the non-buyers' locus of control, although they also tend towards internality. Internality of locus of control means that the shoppers actively search for information pertaining to the products and brands. Therefore the marketers should actively take to publishing the right information through the right channels in order to convert random consumption to brand recognition, to brand preference and then to brand insistence. The internet being the most preferred source of information, marketers have to utilize the power of communication through written, audio and visual forms of communication. Blog posts and video testimonials are the most effective on the internet. Marketers should also be ethical and not publish any unscientific conclusions regarding the advantages of organic food. Consumers should be made aware of the certifications and labelling norms regarding organic food.

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