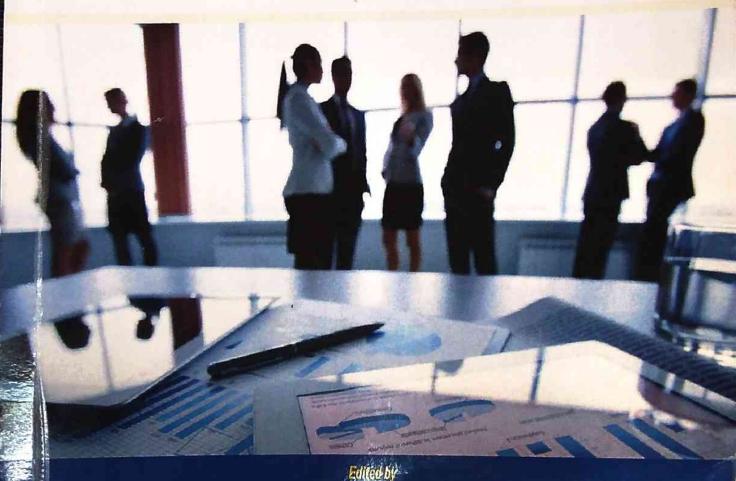
EMERGING TRENDS

GLOBAL MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



Ketaki Sheth, Rupal N. Patel and Sanjay K. Radadiya

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Emerging Trends in Global Management and Information Technology

Edited by

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A Study on Emerging Trend of Organic Options in Consumer's E-Basket

Ketaki P. Sheth

INTRODUCTION

Dor centuries in the past, the agriculture was free from all the 'vices' of Γ the modern world. The agricultural 'vices' of the era of technology and science includes usage of toxic chemicals in the name of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, along with other artificial substances like growth hormones and antibiotics or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The advances of the industry concluded in escalating the traditional agriculture invariably just for the sake of productivity and in return profitability. Since the farmers started taking up farming profession as a hardcore 'business' activity and gauging all things in terms of money, the things have gone awry. As an aggravator the land pollution levels have deteriorated the quality of soil and the industrial waste pollution being dumped into rivers have degraded the water quality and the dangerous emission of harmful gases have killed the quality of air. All these setbacks however have met with severe criticism off late and hence the concept of 'Organic Farming' is back into business once again. The logic is simple, given an option nobody would be happy eating slow poison.

Modern day 'Organic' agriculture is a confluence of innovation, science and tradition and it honestly promises a good quality of life for all that are involved. In truest sense it offers social, economic, cultural, political and environmental benefits in the longer run as compared to the meagre 'result oriented' toxic farming.

Considering these plus points, the organic products market has grown extraordinarily since late 1990s. At present the global market for such products is growing at around 16% which is quite faster than that of the conventional products i.e. around 10%. From food and beverages to

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textiles to personal care products, the organic industry is booming with glory and profits. Again, the logic is clear. Nobody loves to intake/apply hazardous chemicals, given an option of organic.

The global sales of organic products (around US\$ 90 billion) as per 2016 data have skyrocketed to almost 11 times from what it was in 2000s. In the top consumers of organic products, US is the chartbuster topping the list with consumption of almost 50% of the world's total organic market, followed by Germany and France. It can be said that major demand at present comes from the developed economies, however it would be a wrongful to ignore consumer giants of Asia- i.e. India and China. The increased demand has also increased the organically cultivable land mass from paltry 11 million hectare globally in 1999 to almost 58 million hectare in 2016. The following chart compares the demand vs. production toppers.

Table 1

Countries having Utmost Demand of Organic Products Globally	Countries having Utmost Organic Cultivation Globally
US (US\$ 43 billion = around 50% of total global organic market)	Australia (27 million hectare = around 49% of the total Organically cultivated global land)
Germany (US\$ 10.5 billion = around 12% of total global organic market)	Argentina (3 million hectare = around 5% of the total Organically cultivated global land)
France (US\$ 7.5 billion = 8.5% around of total global organic market)	China (2.3 million hectare = around 4% of the total Organically cultivated global land)

From the above table it is crystal clear that there is huge lacuna across the world in demand and cultivation. The country that demands maximum organic products i.e. US is nowhere seen near in the list of top organic producers, and it's topped by Australia. This makes it clearly evident that US must heavily importing organic produces from Australia or other countries. This also may be the reason for Organic Products selling at an unduly overpriced 'heavy on pocket' segment in the developed nations for they have to cover the transportation costs and international duties.

India has an interesting organic story to tell. It boasts of housing the highest number of Organic producers globally with almost 840000 organic

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farmers, although the land mass that they are spread across is very little as compared to Australia or China and ranks ninth in terms of organic cultivation with around 1.5 million hectare land under organic cultivation. It counts to only 1.8 hectare organic cultivation per an individual organic farmer. In terms of numbers however the exports are continuously increasing at a rapid rate, As per the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), India exported organic products worth around INR 2000 crores in the year 2015–16 to INR 2400 crore in the year 2016–17 to INR 3000 crore in the year 2017–18 and this is expected to triple by 2020. In a skimpy timeline of three years, the organic exports have increased to almost 1.5 times which is phenomenal for our country. (Business Standard, 23/5/2018)

Apart from exports, India is a land of population, housing almost 1.4 billion people and with the expansion of middle-class segment along with the thriving desires to lead a better and healthy life the in-house demand for organic products have increased astonishingly. With an added help from government in form of various schemes to incentivize organic farming the farmers are now ready to leverage the conventional farming for organic one. The FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) has recently launched an 'Indian Organic Integrity Database' to help consumers find authenticated organic food by placing a common logo and tagline 'Jaivik Bharat' on all the recognized products. Apart from all these, Nothing but the spread of technology and e-commerce in the form of E-marketplaces have been the greatest advantage for organic producers of India in the form of direct selling.

WHY CONSUMERS BUY ORGANIC?

The consumers have been organically aware in developed economies since early 1990s. However the rise of technology in the late 2000s has brought immense awareness in this context amongst the consumers of developing economies like India. Almost every Indian household has a mobile phone these days or an access to television sets, resulting into constant push of information. As a result of overall consumer enlightenment, the consciousness towards healthy lifestyle has resulted into inclination towards healthy food products. The consumer today, is bit worried about having chemicals on his plate. The review of literature in the area of reasons for consumer's preference of Organic Products bring out significant insights that are reflected in the Table 2.

Table 2

Research Contributor	Organic Product-Purchase Intentions/Reasons/Need		
Jolly (1991)	Safety, Freshness, Health benefits, nutritional value, environmental effect, flavor and Appearance		
Byrne et al. (1992)	Freshness, flavor and Nutrition		
Tregear et al. (1994)	Healthy, Environment Friendly, Tasty		
Davies et al. (1995)	Health, Environment and Taste		
Roddy et al. (1996)	Quality, Safety, Health, Taste, Environment		
Schifferstein and Ophuis (1998)	Wholesomeness, Absence of Chemicals, Environment friendliness and Taste		
Loureiro et al. (2001)	Food Safety and Environmental Concerns		
Magnusson et al. (2001)	Good Taste and Organic Method of Production		
Harper and Makatouni (2002)	Health, Food Safety		
Chinnici et al. (2002)	Health, Curiosity, Environment		
Fotopoulos et al. (2003)	Healthiness, Quality, Information, Attractiveness, and Good Taste		
Canavari and Olson (2007)	Status Symbol		
Gupta (2009)	Quality, Cleanliness, Free from Pesticides, Taste, Flavor		
Sheng et al. (2009)	Healthier		
Singh &Verma (2017)	Healthy, Pesticide Free, Fresh, Environment Friendly, Better Taste, Try Something New		
Rana & Paul (2017)	Health-consciousness, Quality and Safety, Environmental Friendliness, Ethical consumerism, Certification, Willingness to pay, Social Consciousness and Fashion Trend & Lifestyle		

Slavoj Zizek states that "A person who buys organic food, doesn't always buy it for health concerns or a lifestyle change, he may buy it because of his ideological standpoint." If the above literature is analyzed, it is crystal clear that consumers buy Organic for only two main reasons; first being health and then environment. The researches that have been referenced above are from across the world and still the reasons are a common universally. Health being the prime ingredient in our food, humans want it anyhow. That's the very reason why most organic companies also keep this factor in mind while marketing their products. However this leads the article to the next phase of elaborating the deterrents that prevent consumers from buying organic.

WHY CONSUMERS DON'T BUY ORGANIC?

Price—A number of past literature suggests that price is one of the most significant constraints in hindering the market and consumption of organic products (Magnusson et al., 2001, Chinnici et al., 2002, Fotopoulos et al., 2002). The most powerful tool impacting the purchase intention of organic products is its price. The consumers perceive that most organic products are costly compared to conventional food products (D'Souza et al., 2006).

However the effluent consumers may also consider high pricing a matter of pride in quality and affordability. Hence they are inclined to pay even high prices (Radman, 2005). However in developing economies like India not all consumers are affluent and so the companies need to target common man at large rather than the wealthy uncommon. Organic product market should be made affordable enough even for a common man because the adversities of genetically modified products, products lashed with chemicals and pesticides have their own health hazards which do not differentiate between a poor and rich man. An anonymous saying goes as "Organic food is expensive, however last I heard that Cancer is pretty expensive too along-with painful." The food we eat can either be a safe medicine or slow poison.

Availability

Byrne et al. (1992), Makatouni (2002), state that easy availability of organic products is a major constraint in development of organic products market. After price comes availability of organic products, in market as well as in consumers' demand, especially developing countries like India being reliant largely on unorganized sectors (Zundel and Kilcher, 2007). The physical distribution channel of organic products is still in budding phase. The offline availability of organic products is near to no on the shelves of retailers in unorganized Indian market. The availability is also affected by the price sensitive consumers who have their own preferences for quality with affordability.

No Certification

Certification is a vital player in encouraging consumers to go organic. To win the consumers trust it is inevitable for the sellers to authenticate, certify and validate the producers' claims towards no genetic modification, free from any hormone induction, absence of pesticides and artificial fertilizers. Also certification is the only means that discretely demarcates the non-

conventional organic products from conventional products. However in Indian market segment, getting a certification proving that the produces are organic, the testing and processing used to be a tedious task which is why it was mostly avoided by the producers who ultimately sold their so called organic products without certification in the name of organic, which ultimately proved fatal for them in winning the consumers trust. However the scenario has changed now with India ranking No. 1 with the highest number of certified organic producers in the world (FIBL and IFOAM-Organics International, 2018: the world of organic agriculture. Frick and Bonn). Organic certification in India is done under two schemes-firstly under the government's Participatory Guarantee System and secondly by third party certification done by organizations like NSP, APEDA by NPOP.

RISE OF GIANTS IN INDIAN ORGANIC PACKAGED FOOD MARKET

Organic India founded in 1997 in Lucknow is into manufacturing, processing and marketing certified organic products, herbal and Ayurveda preparations. The company not only has an online presence but also has setup retail outlets throughout the country which together contribute significantly in such a huge turnover. This company setup with an aim of sustainable living also helps the farmers by providing them training, education, self-sufficiency, and increase in income levels.

24 Mantra founded in 2004 under Sresta, is considered to be a pioneer in bringing a change in organic food industry. They are working with farmers in around 15 states trying to bring a positive change in their lives and leading the march towards healthy living through their unique practices. They have their increasing offline presence in India as well as in the United States.

Down to Earth is an organic food brand from the House of Moraka organic, set up more than 12 years ago with an aim to harmonize food and wellness into the fast moving lives of people. Just like the previous two giants, this brand too has an offline and online presence to attract customers from all walks of life. It also provides a variety of organic food products from grains, pulses ready to cook/eat foods and much more.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

 To find out the variations in the prices of similar organic packaged food products available online across three selected companies.

- To find out the variations in the conventional food product's price available in offline retail market with similar organic packaged food product available online.
- To compare the gross total price of the e-basket of three selected companies for ten categories of organic packaged food products.

RESEARCH DESIGN

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Selection of Three Companies

As far as organic industry is concerned, three companies are having the biggest market share in India in this aspect, viz. Organic India. 24 Mantra and Down To Earth respectively. As per 2012 data from Yes Bank Survey-Organic India turnover stood to around 350 crores followed by 24 Mantra at 200 crores and Down to Earth 128 crores. Hence these three companies combined shares around half organic market from turnover perspective, out-rightly becoming our prime significant target for the purpose of the study.

Selection of Categories and Sub-categories of **Organic Food Products**

10 top of the mind general categories from daily food requirements with their maximum 5 subcategories have been selected with a total of 49 sub categories of organic food products which are shown in the Table 3.

Category	Sub Category					
Rice	Basmati	Brown	Red	Puffed	Flattened	
Dal	Toor	Chana	Moong	Masoor	Udad	
Pulses	Chana	Moong	Rajma	Soyabeans	Vatana	
Flour	Whole wheat	Gram	Corn	Bajri	Suji	
Spices	Carom seeds	Cumin seeds	Fennel seeds	Coriander seeds	Black pepper	
Masalas	Turmeric powder	Chilli powder	Coriander powder	Rock salt	Asafotedia	
Oils	Coconut	Groundnut	Mustard	Sesame	Sunflower	
Dry fruits	Almond	Cashew	Walnut	Raisin	Pistachio	
Sugar	Brown	White	Cane	Coconut		
Breakfast	Quinoa	Oats	Cornflakes	Honey	Orange	

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Table 3: Category and Sub-category of Organic Food Products

Data Collection

The data was collected in the form of authenticate selling price of organic food products from their respective official online portals during August 2018. Also the price was taken on common grounds of quantity which are Rice, dal, pulses, flour, sugar and breakfast essentials (except orange juice)—500 gms spices, masalas, dry fruits—100 gms; Oils and orange juice—1 ltr.

The selling price data of similar product available across retail stores in conventional form were also collected during August 2018 from a retail grocery store in Anand city.

METHODOLOGY

The prices of similar organic packaged food product across the three brands i.e. Organic India, 24 Mantra and Down to Earth have been compared and the variations were found by comparison between the Minimum price of a particular brand in that sub-category and Maximum price of a particular brand in that sub-category available online.

Also comparison was made between the minimum prices of a sub-category of organic packaged food product available online with the similar conventional food product available in a retail grocery store, and the variations if any, were studied.

Further, variations obtained (in percentage) across the sub-categories of organic packaged food products were averaged out in respect to the main category that they belonged to, and analysis was done.

Similarly, the variations obtained (in percentage) across the sub-categories of conventional food products were averaged out in respect to the main category that they belonged to, and insights were drawn.

Lastly, an e-basket consisting ten categories of organic food products with the total price which a customer will have to shell out per brand was derived in order to determine the cost-effectiveness from the customers perspective for 'price' being the most crucial deterrent hindering the buying of organic products.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Within Brand Variations

A brand-wise comparison showed that the following items were comparatively priced on a higher side.

Table 4

Organic India	Spices, Masalas, Coconut Oil, Quinoa Grains
24 Mantra	Mustard Oil and Sunflower Oil
Down to Earth	Rice, Dry-fruits, Honey

When inter brand price variations are less, across similar organic packaged food products then the customer may go for reviews, ratings or trial and error method of selecting. The products that had a variation of less than 20 percentage were—Basmati Rice, Brown Rice, Chana, Masoor and Urad Dal, Rajama, Corn-flour, Bajri Flour, Ground-nut and Sesame Oil, Almonds and Brown Sugar. These are the products of daily kitchen and often bought, so in these cases customer may go for trial and error or largely depend upon the reviews and ratings while selecting a particular product rather than simply considering the price factor.

Whereas if the case is reverse, the customers usually tend to further check the reasons for such a huge price variations across the brands while buying. In the study, we found more than 50% price variations within subcategory of similar package food products across the three selected brands, with reference to these items- Puffed Rice, Flattened Rice, Fennel Seeds, Turmeric Powder, Coriander Powder, Mustard, White Sugar and Raisins. The price variations in all these were phenomenally gigantic within the brands and as the result the brands having price on the higher side may have tough times convincing the average Indian from low and middle income group for they might easily go for the ones on the lower side. Such brands might have to promote their quality to convince the customers with a proper justification of such massive price disparity.

Organic vs. Conventional Price Variations

There was a huge price variations observed while comparing the prices of sub-categories of organic packaged food products with prices of similar conventional food products. The variations were somewhere between as low as 10% (brown rice) to as high as 250% (rock-salt). However, the food products having variations less than 50% were—Brown Rice, Flattened Rice, Whole Wheat Flour, Gram Flour, Suji, Coriander Powder, Sesame Oil, Raisins, Quinoa Grains, Honey and Orange Juice. In these cases with lesser variations, the customer may think of shifting to organic as it may not cost him/her heavily on their pockets.

While Conventional products- Puffed rice, Bajri Flour, Coconut Oil and Sunflower Oil had variations of more than 200% in comparison to the

similar organic packaged food products which might lead even a health conscious customer belonging to lower-middle income group, in giving a second thought before buying.

E-Basket

With 43 items available out of the 49 items under study, Down to Earth tops with highest e-basket cost of ₹ 7069 alongwith maximum product option availability. 24 Mantra ranks second with 39 products available under the 49 sub-categories with a total e-basket value of ₹ 4854. Organic India's e-basket cost is ₹ 3225 but only for 10 products available amongst the 49 sub-categories. A micro analysis further says that Organic India sells 74% less items compared to 24 Mantra whereas 24 Mantra with even 39 items has a rise of only 33% in its basket value with 74% more items. This cost-effectiveness and product option availability statistics is vital from both-consumer as well as corporate view-point.

CONCLUSION

The study can be used by both ends- the customers as well as the brands. Customers before making the buying decision while brands for penetrating and strategizing for capturing the market share as well as for seeing the future scope where currently they don't sell products which other brands are selling. As in the case of Organic India especially, in spite of being the leader in market share, it's absent in many categories of products that are used in the daily chores of life. The market share war between 24 Mantra and Down to Earth is also reflected in their prices with 24 Mantra following penetration strategy while Down To Earth following a differential niche market strategy, by pricing most of their products slightly higher than 24 Mantra.

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About the Book

This book is a compendium of papers presented in the International Conference on Emerging Global Economic Situation: Impact on Trade and Agribusiness in India. The book covers thirty four papers covering the emerging trends in global management and information technology. This book will be very useful for all those are interested in issues related to global management and information technology.

About the Editors



Dr. Ketaki Sheth is presently serving as Principal in B.J. Vanijya Mahavidyalaya, Vallabh Vidyanagar. She has 36 years of teaching experience. Under her able guidance 4 students have completed Ph.D. and 8 students are pursuing Ph.D.



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