







The moderating role of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on consumer purchasing of organic food

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ABSTRACT

Consumers' cultural values influence their decision-making, and these values are captured in Hofstede's six cultural dimensions. Culture is important in the food context in India but has been relatively neglected in research. Further, the moderating effect of Hofstede's newest cultural dimension (Indulgence vs Restraint) is under-researched, especially for organic food. The aim of this study was to examine the moderating effects of Hofstede's six cultural dimensions on the relationship between organic food purchase intention and purchase behavior. Data from 401 students in North India were collected through online surveys. Results revealed that three cultural dimensions (Uncertainty avoidance, Long-term orientation, and Indulgence) significantly moderated the effects of organic food purchase intention on organic food purchase behavior, while three others (Power distance, Collectivism, and Masculinity) did not. The results have implications for organic food producers and marketers, who need to be aware of cultural characteristics when targeting consumer markets.

KEYWORDS

Hofstede's cultural dimensions; organic food; organic food purchase behavior; organic food purchase intention; young Indians

Introduction

Societies around the globe are embracing pro-environmental (green) behaviors, such as recycling and the usage of eco-friendly products (Felix et al. 2016), which do minimum harm to human beings and our ecosystems (Tong, Tee, and Ismail 2016). In particular, organic food (OF), which is based on organic agriculture, promotes crop rotations, animal well-being, soil quality, plant and animal diversity and eliminates genetic engineering, irradiation and almost all synthetic fertilizers and pesticides (Reganold and Wachter 2016). Given these benefits for human health, the environment and animal welfare, more people are attracted to OF (Żakowska-Biemans and Renko 2011; Prothero 2019). For example, globally, the market for OF has increased from \$15.2 billion in 1999 to \$77 billion in 2015 (Testa, Sarti, and Frey 2019) and is anticipated

to reach \$564 billion by 2030 (Grand View Research 2022).

Almost 90 per cent (over USD 97 billion) of the OF market is found in western nations, including the United States, Germany and France, with most African and Asian nations exporting their OF production to Europe and North America (Willer and Lernoud 2019). Most developing nations have nascent markets for OF (Basha et al. 2015). For instance, in India, the domestic consumer market for OF is still at a nascent stage with a market share of less than one per cent (Ernest and Young 2018), even though it has the world's highest number of OF producers and is one of the biggest exporters of OF (Willer and Lernoud 2019). In 2019–2020, India produced approximately 2.75 million metric tons (MT) of certified OF, and the total export volume was 0.638 million MT, which fetched 689 million USD (Nithya, Kiruthika, and Dhanaprakash 2022).