Perception towards Organic Foods: A Qualitative Approach to Y Generation in Colombo Gampaha Districts in Sri Lanka

K.G.N Fernando

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

H.M.R.S.S. Gunawardana

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perception among young generation in Colombo and Gampaha district of Sri Lanka on organic foods. Mainly it explored the positive and negative beliefs and attitudes towards organic food choices, purchase behavior and consumption values.

Total of 20 depth interviews were conducted among 20 males and females who have at least occasionally bought or consumed organic foods and respondents who have not bought and consumed organic foods within last three months by applying quota & snowball sampling techniques. The respondents were mainly chosen from Colombo and Gampaha districts representing A, B and C categories of Socio Economic Class. A means-end chain value map was then constructed showing attributes, consequences and values pertaining to purchasing of organic foods using Atlas.ti software.

The key trigger for purchasing organic food products was "health benefits" and the major barriers which hinder purchasing organic foods were "consumers' inadequate knowledge about organic foods", the "high price" and the "limited availability". Hence enlightening consumers about the exclusive traits of organic production methods, the benefits of consuming organic foods and increasing availability at affordable prices help to develop the market for organic food products.

This study is limited to Colombo and Gampaha districts in western province in Sri Lanka and attention should be given on generalization of findings. Yet, this study fills the gaps in qualitative research environment of organic food consumption environment in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Organic Food, Generation Y, Means-End Chain, Attribute, Consequences & Values.*