

## How The Concept Of Buying Local Products Impact Organic Food Products Purchasing Desicions In Emerging Markets: A Theoretical Perspective.

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## **Abstract**

There is a growing demand for organic food products, given consumers are gaining interest in preserving their health and the environment. Many researchers have assessed the changing attitudes towards organic products. Additionally, the consumption behaviour in emerging markets is shifting to local products. This research aimed to establish if the concept of consuming locally produced products, even if not necessarily certified organic, impacted the intention to purchase locally produced organic food. The specific objectives were to: Examine the consumers' awareness and perception of the concept of buying locally produced products in emerging markets; Explore consumer preferences and buying behaviour towards locally produced products; and to establish consumers' preferences towards locally produced organic foods. The study applied the theory of planned behaviour to explore the topic through content analysis of published literature and established a high probability of the 'buy local build local' concept impacting positive influences to purchasing local organic foods in emerging markets if marketing imperfections are eliminated. However, the research established a dearth of literature directly covering this topic thus recommends an extensive primary study on the subject.

**Keywords: organic food products, buying local, emerging markets.**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**LPOFP** – Locally Produced Organic Food Products **LPP** – Locally Produced Products

**OFPs** – Organic Food Products

**TPB** – Theory of Planned Behaviour **TRA** – Theory of Reasoned Action.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of the concept of buying local products on the purchasing decisions of organic foods in the emerging markets. The objective is to investigate the prevalence of the 'buy local' concept in emerging markets and how it influences the consumers' intentions to purchase locally produced organic food products. The study applies a literature review method to meet the objectives. The sections of the study as follows include the background of the topic, a methodology for the literature search, the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework for the analysis of the topic. The other parts include the findings from the literature review and the discussion of the findings.

### Background of the Study

Consumers' interests on organic food products (OFPs) have risen over time, thus making positive attitudes toward OFPs (Tandon et al., 2020). The demand for the products has had a gradual, but also extensive growth in the world market (Sultan et al., 2020) expected to meet global sales of over 20 billion US dollars by the year 2020 (Zhang et al, 2022). Basha and Lal (2019) assert that the observed increase in the demand arise from consumer adjustments towards healthful lifestyles. However, Tandon et al. (2020) assert a concern that yet the consumption of the OFPs is still considerably low in many emerging markets. This matter therefore begs the research on what motivations would raise the consumers' interest to purchase the OFPs.

Organic food has remained considered the variety of health-minded people (Kirmani et al., 2022). Thus with the rise in health awareness among people, especially in the Corona virus period, coupled with consideration to the underlying ecological conditions, consumers have begun to reconsider their food options (Poinski, 2020; in Kirmani et al, 2022). The consumer behaviour is also observed to peg on social contexts (Higgs & Thomas, 2016, in Kirmani et al, 2022), that human beings are socially concerned and collective-minded hence the manifestation of the concerns for the society and social norms. Consequently the consumers consider the effect of their consumption to the environment, express concerns of the effects on the welfare of fellow humans and other living things (Basha and Lal, 2019), while also seek to comply with the prevailing ethical codes of conduct (Ghvanidze et al., 2017, in Kirmani et al, 2022). The three aspects of consumer concern are collectively referred to as the consumer socio-environmental concern, and they are the motivations that most likely derive positive attitude organic products (Kirmani et al., 2022).

Concurrently, there is a growing influence in the emerging economies to purchasing locally produced products, LPP, (Dark & Akpan (2020)). That even firms are on the rush to acquire multi- national status by setting local brands in the emerging markets (Nguyen & Alcantara, 2020). The campaigns may take two different streams; the cultural or the economic stream: However, with support from Ghanaian economy's context, Darku and Akpan (2020) warn that the buy local campaigns as applied by economies to reclaiming their local market spaces may result in contradictory outcomes. Additionally, Gupta and Ramachandran (2021) observed that retailers must seek to adopt consumer-centric methods on promoting their products in order to compete effectively to survive in the market.

At best, organic foods must meet preference in the local markets to sell. The consumption intention as identified rely on many factors, alongside knowledge and attitude. Moreover, the concept of consuming local products could potentially complicate the situation for organic foods, given many local farmers in the emerging markets may lack the certifications or labelling prowess to improve their marketing. This begs the concern of this study: does the concept of buying local products, even if not necessarily certified, influence the purchasing decisions of organic foods in emerging markets? The study investigates this issues through a theoretical review of published literature.

### **Research Objectives**

The aim of this research is to assess how the concept of buying locally produced products, even if not necessarily certified organic, influence organic food purchasing decisions in emerging markets. To comprehensively complete the exposition the study developed specific objectives to guide the research as follows:

- To examine the consumers' awareness and perception of the concept of buying locally produced products in emerging markets.
- To explore consumer preferences and buying behaviour towards locally produced products.
- To establish consumers' preferences towards locally produced organic foods Research hypotheses:

H1: Consumers in emerging markets have varying levels of awareness and perception regarding the difference between buying locally produced organic food products.

H2: Consumers in emerging markets exhibit a preference for locally produced food products.

H3: The promotion of locally produced food products within the supply chain positively influence consumer purchasing decisions and market demand for organic food products in emerging markets.

## **Theoretical Background**

The researcher applied the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to complete this study. As the name ‘planned’ suggests, the consumers’ behaviour towards purchasing locally produced products (LPP), and more so locally produced organic food products (LPOFP) is considered a matter of planned decisions following reasoned actions.

The TPB was fronted by Icek Ajzen in attempt to improve the applicability of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1985). It is effective in analysing the determinants to behavioural intentions thus facilitating the designing of marketing campaigns (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). The TPB has three major variables: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, all that cooperate to form a consumers’ intention to act. It is thus instrumental to the study in analysing the consumer behaviour in emerging markets towards purchasing local organic food products. However, variables to the consumer behaviour towards local purchasing were added as identified in the review of published literature.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The analysis of this research was conducted through a literature review method. The researcher sourced for published literature on the topic of study and extracted literature sources that were relevant to the context of this study. The online search was conducted by typing whole sentences, phrases and key words. The main key words and phrases were: ‘consumption of organic foods in emerging markets’, ‘concept of buying locally produced products in emerging markets,’ and ‘consumption of locally produced organic foods in emerging markets.’ The table below presents the academic databases were searched and only the relevant materials gathered for analysis.

**Table 1: sources of academic literature reviewed to complete the study.**

Database	Organic food consumption literature	Local products consumption literature	Local organic Food consumption literature	Total Extracted literature
Google Scholar	5	3	6	14
Scopus	3	Nil	Nil	03
Science Direct	4	5	5	14
Taylor & Francis	2	3	Nil	05
Emerald	Nil	1	Nil	01
MDPI	Nil	1	1	02
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>

**Source: Author**

### **Data Extraction and Analysis**

While conducting online databases search the academic literature, such as peer reviewed journal papers, books, and academic theses that covered related content were prequalified and selected. The content were reviewed sub-topically according to this paper's sections and relevant information gathered. Related contents were gathered and grouped which were then used to complete this paper. In total, 39 materials were reviewed.

### **Philosophical orientation of the research**

The epistemology of this research followed the interpretivist approach. Interpretivism following a deductive reasoning helped in understanding the subjective meaning and the interpretations that influenced consumer behaviours and experiences. The application of the interpretivist approach allows researchers to deconstruct and reconstruct meanings while also juxtaposing them to achieve different perspectives of participant behaviours and experiences (Scauso, 2020). The approach allowed for the exploration of consumer perceptions and attitudes alongside their decision-making in line with locally produced organic food products. The deductive approach allowed the research to apply the theory of planned behaviour to interpret and deduce the influential factors to consumer-decision-making.

### **3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **Buying Local**

‘Buy local build local’ is an emerging campaign in many emerging economies in the effort of trying to build production bases within the local economies, and also attempt to protect infant industries to help them overcome competition from imports. The strategy is to support local economies and can either be national, regional or sectorial, like in agriculture, tourism, textile among other sectors (Darku & Akpan, 2020). However, food imports are still reported as high in some emerging economies (Awokuse et al., 2019), those forcing undesired economic consequences to domestic producers (Johnson and Walters, 2016, in Kilders et al., 2021). Thus many governments have embarked on promoting domestic production and championing consumption of local food products (Kilders et al., 2021).

Product attributes and product differentiation in the marketing and purchase. Producers or retailers must apply product differentiation in marketing while the consumer uses the same product attributes to evaluate products in the market (Salnikova & Grunert, 2020). The consumer heavily depend on the information cues of the products to make decisions about them, thus trading-off the multi-attributes of products to prefer one over another (Fasolo et al., 2007, in Salnikova & Grunert, 2020). The consumer considers the sensory (such as taste, texture and appearance), extrinsic features (like price, brand), and product origin attributes (locally or nationally produced) to make their choices (Kilders et al. 2021). But consumption orientation mediates the consumers’ attitudes and product attributes by intervening in the process of decision-making.

#### **Organic Food Products Purchasing Decisions**

Organic food products (OFPs) or simply organic foods are foods that are naturally grown and have no chemicals (Kirmani et al, 2022). The practice of growing organic foods offer socio-environmental benefits: consumer health benefits, helping the farmers’ survival through the puzzling farming situation, and save the environment from degradation.

Factors influencing organic food products purchasing decisions are based on consumer knowledge, attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control of the products. Different consumers cite different, but related reasons to influencing their consumption. Nekmahmud and Fekete- Farkas (2020) studied the influences to young educated Bangladesh

consumers to buy organic food products (OFP). Their empirical results indicated that environmental concern was the leading

variable. The young consumers felt the responsibility to protect the environment from non-organic material thus developed a bias toward OFP. Secondly, the consumers perceived a benefit in the consumption of OFPs citing quality of the products thus were motivated to purchase.

Price was also a vital factor in purchasing decisions for OFPs. Many cite high prices as detrimental factor to purchase of OFPs, however, for environmental friendliness they were willing to pay the high premiums (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). Dangi, Gupta and Narula (2020) assert that health and environmental concerns, consumer knowledge and awareness, eco-labels on the products, pricing and trust in OFPs in that order respectively influence decisions to purchase OFPs. Furthermore, the eco-labels were informants to consumers dispelling information asymmetry thus increasing trust. In the cases of the Indian market, Dangi, Narula, and Gupta (2020) posited that consumers were responsive to health concerns, consumer past purchase behaviour. Knowledge of the products, pricing and affordability, and certification of the products. Some participants of the Indian study related to enjoying their regular purchase of the OFPs. According to Tandon et al. (2020) environmental concerns and trust over OFPs were moderating factors to purchase, whereas, attitude did not a significant relation with the buying behaviour of the consumers.

Nautiyal and Lal (2022) in their study of Indian consumers assert that the attitude and the intention to purchase OFPs is subject to the perceived norms and price of the OFPs. A study of young Indian consumers in north India by Matharu et al (2022) allude that attitude toward OFPs and subjective norms significantly influence the intention to purchase while intention to purchase strongly predict purchase behaviour.

A rare factor was established by Kirmani et al (2022): that some Indian consumers were mindful of the local farmers. They were motivated to consume OFPs that they would support the work of local famers, thus implying that even if they were presented with OFPs from abroad, they would still go for the locally produced. Kirmani et al. also established other motivations to consume OFPs as health consciousness and ethical beliefs.

A study by Chetioui et al. (2023) in Morocco revealed that the consumers in the country, both in the pre and post-Covid-19 era, considered organic foods based on perceived behavioural



control, subjective norms, health consciousness, organic labelling, environmental concern, income and age. Among the attitude influences toward organic foods in Morocco, health concern, labelling

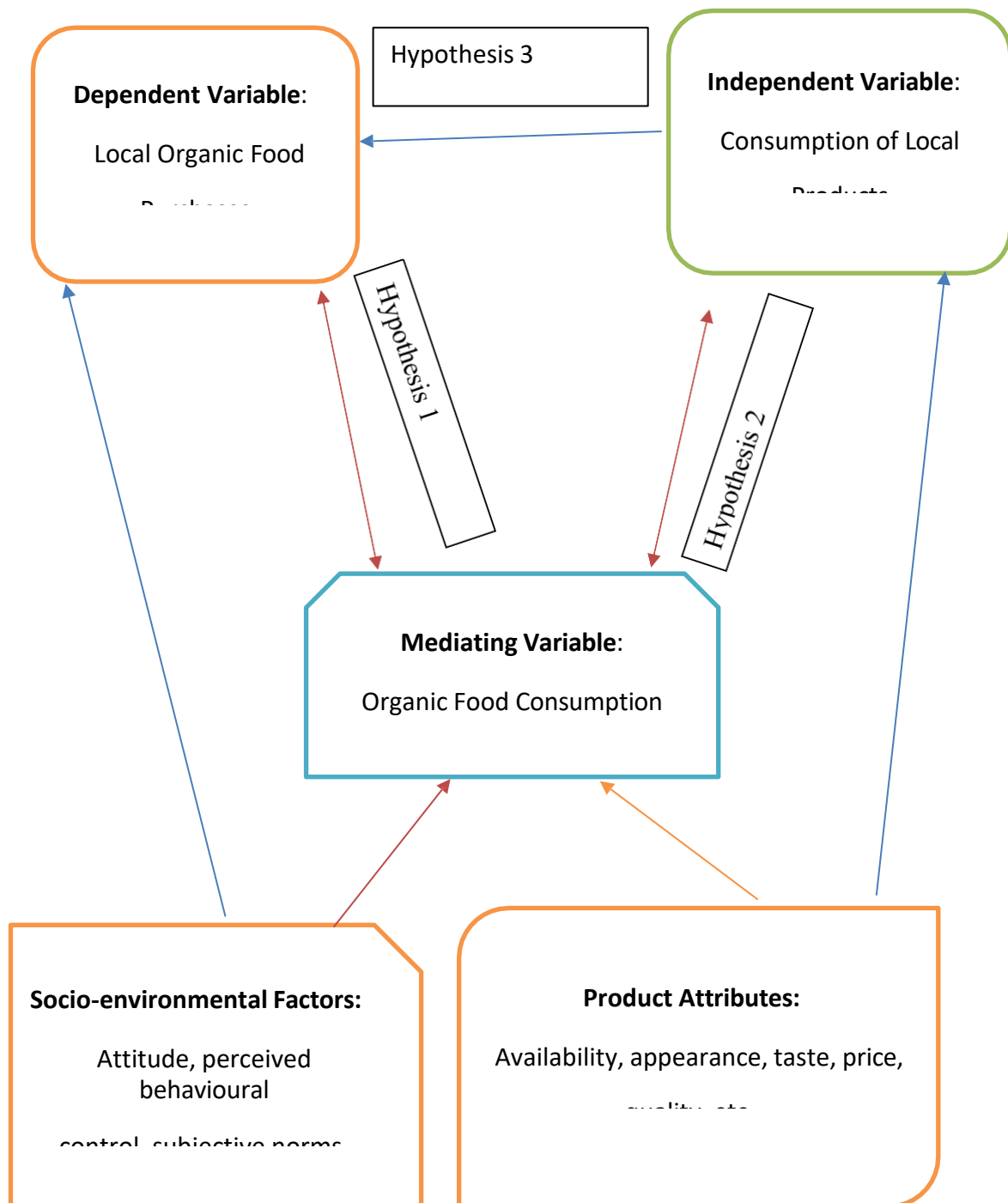
and perceived behavioural control were the highest ranking, while the consumers purchase intentions were mostly derived through health concerns, attitude and age. In Brazil, Eberle et al. (2022) established that health concerns, consumer attitude, and product knowledge were the most powerful determinants of consumer purchase intentions toward OFPs explaining the variance at

78.8 per cent. The consumer income and their consumption frequency moderated the relationship between attitude and the intention to purchase OFPs (Eberle et al., 2022).

A study of the Iranian consumers by Bazhan et al. (2024) revealed interesting details. That the intention to purchase OFPs was directly influenced by consumer attitude, sensory behaviour, and environmental concerns. Consumer knowledge, product prices, and household sizes influenced consumer attitude thus becoming indirect influencers of the intention to purchase. Consumer age was in indirect influence of purchase intentions through influence on health consciousness, concerns over environment, price and sensory character. In summary of their findings Bazhan et al. posit that the Iranian consumers' intention to purchase OFPs was mainly pegged on health concerns, subjective norms, and consumers' education.

Below is the conceptual model that summarize the assumed interdependence of the relationship between the concept of consuming local products, consuming organic foods and consuming local organic foods

**Figure 1: Conceptual model**



Source: Author

#### **4. LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS**

##### **Consumer Trends and Preferences**

Consumer trends are changing overtime. Thus Gupta and Ramachandran (2021) warn that retailers must diligently seek the balance between product-centric and consumer-centric means to match the market needs. While Nguyen and Alcantara (2020) questions the ability of the consumers to distinguish between local producers and international brands, Salnikova and Grunert (2020) while assessing the situation with pork consumers in six emerging markets argue that origin of the pork was a significant concern of the consumers –That consumer orientations impacted their preferences toward the pork products (Salnikova and Grunert, 2020; Kilders et al., 2021).

Kilders et al. (2021) assert that consumers, especially in emerging economies like Nigeria, have and ethnocentric behaviour when choosing on food products. The ethnocentric behaviour is mediated by image of the origin country, and the perceived food safety; but also affected by consumers' socio-demographic attributes like education and income. Zhang et al. (2022) attribute the consumer tendency to buy local food products to the coronavirus pandemic. The authors argue that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the food systems, significantly affecting consumers trust in the reliability and safety of imported food products thus shifting their preference toward local grown foods. The pandemic increased consumers' scepticism over global foods creating a paradigm shift from xenocentric to ethnocentric preference of foods to support local farmers in fulfilling food security needs (Hobbs, 2020).

Ideally, consumers had in the wake of globalisation formed multicultural context of consumption where global foods had gained popularity and demand. In fact, in some countries consumers had higher preferences for foreign to local products (xenocentric consumption). However, the emerging trend of government support for local foods and products (locavorism) happen to be raising the levels of enthocentric consumption. This gained more popularity with the Covid-19 pandemic that reverted food-related consumer attitude changes (Zhang et al., 2022) however this was dependent on socio-demographic and situational factors of the consumer while they were also attached to psychological factors of consumer culture like the consumers' global-local identity (Salnikova & Grunert, 2020). Zhang et al. (2022) believe the Covid-19 increased locavorism:

consumers shifted preference to local over imported foods thus developing close relations with local farmers in the belief that local foods were superior in quality and better for health. Furthermore, brand labelling appear to improve brand love by positively influencing purchase intentions in the local markets (Kumar et al., 2021).

### **Local vs. Organic**

The local products consumption trends, whether in developed or emerging markets, have gained popularity due to consumers' growing eco-consciousness thus increasing attention to ethical consumption and sustainability (Kumar et al., 2021). This derives the increasing preference for organic foods (Tandon et al., 2021), thus local food consumption rises (Memery et al., 2015) and becoming prominent as consumers seek to promote sustainability in the accessibility of the food products with nearness to production and supply (Kumpulainen et al., 2018).

Local food production is also associated with small scale productions and without using artificial additives and chemicals (Motta & Sharma, 2016). The consumers thus believe that in the use of local foods they promote ecological sustainability (Zhang et al., 2022), protect and improve their personal health through low chemical consumption and supporting local farmers (Lim & Hu, 2016; Jensen et al., 2019). This is the situation reported by researchers who have plied the economy of Finland. According to them, Finish people are turning to be pro-environment thus acting to avert adverse effects of climate change by adapting to sustainable practices (Kumpulainen et al., 2018); hence they evade consumption of foods grown with chemicals, which also is for health concerns (Skallerud & Wien, 2019). Additionally, the government of Finland, through its ministry of agriculture, has since 2013 strengthened efforts to promote local production of healthy foods to supply the needs of the local people.

Jensen et al (2019) however assert that though a growth in the local foods (within national boundaries or regionally) is growing, the consumers of the local foods perceive and attribute the same benefits to 'local' and 'organic' foods –that is to say there is many use local and organic interchangeably. With focus group interviews in the Danish economy, Jensen et al. establish a vague perception of the 'localness' with many associating local with regional specialties, small and enthusiastic producers, and from told stories of local products. Interestingly, it is also the most precise research to have delved deep to differentiate local, organic, and local-organic products usage: 31 percent of the Danish participants of Jensen et al. (2019) study were lovers of local food,

while 19 percent were consumers of organic, and 7 percent consumed local organic foods. Local food is highly esteemed in many cases for their association with quality, freshness, good taste, safety and animal welfare alongside environmental sustainability concerns.

In a Brazilian and Spanish study by Molinillo et al. (2020), the researchers assert a growing preference for organic foods among millennial groups. Though the researchers do not mention whether the preference was for local OFPs or just on any OFPs, they cite consumer preferences as motivated by product characteristics and consumer health and social consciousness, thus consumers were willing to pay premium prices and to frequently purchase the products. Dorce et al. (2021) similarly studying the Brazilian economy assert attitude as the leading influencer to purchasing OFPs, alongside perceived behavioural control and subjective norms. Attitude mediated perceptions on health benefits with intentions to purchase, and between sustainability perceptions with intention to purchase.

Mkhize and Debbie (2020) reported a low uptake and consumption of organic foods in South Africa, despite the perceived benefits on consumers' health and environmental sustainability. The researchers observed that South Africans, similar to other countries, were sensitive environmental conservation, however this concern did not influence consumption of OFPs. The availability, price and organic labelling issues however appeared to be the barring factors, wherefore the authors recommended creative marketing to dispel information asymmetry among South African consumers on organic products. Melovic et al., (2020) assert that there is an imbalance between demand and supply in the developing economies, especially in Montenegro, which prohibits future growth. Product promotion and pricing played key roles in motivating consumers to accept and buy food products in Montenegro: market offers of organic foods were perceived as captivating or not based on price-quality ratio, distribution barriers and the modern media used in promotions (Melovic et al., 2020). Marketing therefore should be appropriate and should capture consumer- centric product-market factors that may move consumers to develop positive attitudes toward organic products thus intend to purchase.

**Table 2: Summary of Findings**

Author	Context/Description	Findings/Implications
Melovic et al. (2020)	The analysis of marketing factors influencing consumers' preferences and acceptance of organic food products.	Marketing imperfections and information asymmetry derailing the consumer awareness of organic products existence and uptake. However, observes a bright future for organic food market given increasing uptake by consumers.
Nemes et al. (2021)	The impact of COVID-19 on alternative and local food systems and the potential for the sustainability transition: Insights from 13 countries.	Suppliers lost connection with long-distance food products: consumers grew preference for local products.
Ben Hassen et al (2021)	Food Behaviour Changes during the COVID-19 Pandemic: statistical analysis of consumer survey data from Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Covid-19 pandemic shifted consumer preferences toward local products that were easily accessible near them.
Zhang et al. (2022)	Impact of consumer global–local identity on attitude towards and intention to buy local foods.	Covid-19 promoted local food consumptions as consumers lost faith in global products, and opted for local products considering to promote ecological sustainability.
Kang et al. (2022)	Millennial consumers' perceptions on luxury goods: capturing antecedents for brand resonance in the emerging market context.	Brand resonance increasing among consumers, with biases towards toward local products.
Jensen et al. (2019)	Heterogeneity in consumers' perceptions and demand for local (organic) food products.	Denmark, as a country, promoted organic agriculture to eradicate chemicals and genetically modified organisms. This consequently promoted local production and consumption. It depicts also the government's hand in promoting both local and organic food consumption.
Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas, (2020)	Why not green marketing? Determinates of consumers' intention to green purchase decision in a new developing nation.	Health concerns and perceived behavioural control alongside environmental concerns derive consumers' preference for organic foods.
Salnikova and Grunert (2020)	The role of consumption orientation in consumer food preferences in emerging markets	Consumers in emerging markets continue to grow preference for local products, while also relying on product differentiation attributes to make choices.
Kilders et al. (2021)	Consumer ethnocentric behaviour and food choices in developing countries: The case of Nigeria.	Consumers are increasing growing a bias towards locally produced products.

**Source: Author**

## 5. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Organic food production systems are considered an integral component of the future economic development (Melovic et al., 2020). Consumers too are increasingly emphasizing the benefits of local food products focusing on the parameters of quality, safety, animal welfare and sustainability. As such the marketers are working on shifting the economic benefits and supply chain efficiency as known of the globalising economy to the local economies. The suppliers are noticing a loss of connection of the long-distance foods with consumers as more preference grows toward the locally produced foods (Nemes et al., 2021). Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic presented the local producers and marketers with opportunities for promoting local production initiatives as consumers lost faith with long-distance food products and shifted consumption to their near products (Ben Hassen et al, 2021; Nemes et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). The shifts were not only on the basis of Covid-19, but coupled with the increasing attitude change over quality: that local is better, available and sustainable. Merlino et al. (2022) observed the notions above to derive the increased demand for local dairy products in South-east Italy, where a considerable portion of the consumers requested for availability and visibility of local dairy products in their near local markets. Kang et al. (2022) associates the brand preference of products in developing countries with consumers' brand identification and subsequent assessment process which help them achieve brand resonance.

The initial attention to organic foods was propelled by the proposals to address climate change effects and economic consequences: many economies grew concerns to adverse economic effects, environmental degradation and social challenges that conventional farming derived, such as loss of biodiversity and derailing animal welfare (Jensen et al., 2019). Industrialisation and globalisation of organic food thus took effect to exit the use of chemicals and genetically modified organisms, GMOs, (Świergiel et al., 2017, in Jensen et al, 2019). Denmark ranks among the countries with the highest share of organic food consumption globally, which is partly attributed to a high integration of organic food in the retail market (Denmark, 2017 cited in Jensen et al., 2019). Jensen and associates observe that the integration of OFPs was promoted by the Danish government's 1987 introduction of organic labelling scheme.

## **Varying Consumer Awareness levels on Organic Foods**

The results of literature review in this study indicate that there is growing concern over health issues, environmental concerns and perceived behavioural control over food consumption (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). As a result, consumers continue to shift their attention toward non-chemical and non-genetically modified organisms, which in other words is called organic products (Tandon et al., 2020; Sultan et al., 2020). Many attributes are attached to the organic products including: safety, taste, environmental and animal friendliness among other attributes. However, information asymmetry exists in markets whereby consumers are not fully aware of the existence, where to get the products and what they cost to purchase (Dangi, Gupta & Narula, 2020; Melovic et al., 2020; Mkhize & Debbie, 2020). This has consequently left many to believe in rumours about the products, even to the extent of believing that all local products are organic (Jensen et al., 2019). The varying information distribution and market imperfections thus hinder consumer awareness of organic foods existence thus the intention to purchase. This thus confirms the first hypothesis of this study that consumers in emerging markets have varying levels of awareness and perception regarding the difference between buying locally produced organic food products.

## **Consumers in emerging markets exhibit a preference for locally produced food products**

Research confirms that consumers in emerging markets are growing ethnocentric consumption behaviours (Salnikova and Grunert, 2020; Kilders et al., 2021). That consumers are increasingly growing brand resonance, with a bias toward local producers (Kang et al., 2022). Furthermore, with the growing governmental promotion of consumption of local products, consumers have risen to the task to promote local economies, improve local environments and support local farmers. Furthermore, the health concerns alarmed by the outbreak of the corona virus refuelled consumption paradigm to the favour of local products (Zhang et al. (2022). The consumer has become sceptical about product origins thus the trend of consuming locally produced products is thus on the rise (Kumar et al., 2021). Therefore, the findings herein confirms the second hypothesis of this study that consumers in emerging markets exhibit a preference for locally produced food products.

## **Promoting Consumption of Local Products Influence Decisions to Purchase Organic Foods**

The third hypothesis of this study stated that the promotion of locally produced food products within the supply chain positively influence consumer purchasing decisions and market demand



for organic food products in emerging markets. First, there were found limited studies addressing this matter. Even with the few studies existing, there is a mix of opinion. Some consumers are not able to distinguish between local and local organic (Jensen et al., 2019). They consider all local products as organic. Additionally, some consumers are scared with the premium pricing of the products (Dorce et al., 2021; Melovic et al., 2020; Mkhize and Debbie, 2020). However, Melovic et al. (2020) blame the problem with marketing imperfections while Mkhize and Debbie (2020) recommend creative marketing strategies to influence consumer attitudes. Luckily, the Covid-19 pandemic aroused consumer attention to health, subjective norms, and perception of behavioural control of foods. This due to the Covid-19 influence consumers' attitudes were drawn to the liking of local organic products. Basing on this reason the researcher here allude that heightened campaigns toward organic food products may create awareness and dispel doubts to improve production and consumption of the products locally in the emerging markets. However, more context specific research should be advanced in this line.

### **Implications of the Findings**

There is a growing evolution of demand for organic foods in the emerging economies implying a growing potential for demand and supply. Consequently the increasing emphasis on buying local products should increase the demand for the organic products thus production economies must also scale up. However, the production and retail managers ought to understand what propels the consumers' preference for organic products to help shape marketing to the desired market needs (Molinillo et al., 2020). Producers should step up the their efforts to meet the market demand while also cooperate with marketers to advance relevant marketing mix to avert information asymmetry and promote positive attitudes among consumers toward local organic food products.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The goal of this study was to assess how the concept of buying locally produced products, even if not necessarily certified organic, influence organic food purchasing decisions in emerging markets. The results confirm a paradox: increasing preference for organic products and local products, but with a considerable failure to differentiate between local and local organic products. However, there is a potential for increase in consumption of organic products if marketing imperfections are addressed to dispel consumers' information asymmetry. The research however identified that very limited research has been extended in line with this topic to highlight any direct links between the concepts of buying local products with intentions to purchase local organic food product. The researcher therefore recommend that: 1) an extensive context-specific study be conducted identify the relationship between the two concepts both quantitatively and qualitatively; 2) Governments and marketers to stage extensive campaigns to popularise local organic foods create consumer awareness on their existence and benefits over conventional foods.

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