



Organic Food Market Segmentation in Lebanon

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Organic farming in Lebanon is not a new concept. It started with the efforts of the private sector more than a decade ago and is still present even with the limited agricultural production. The local market is quite developed in comparison to neighboring countries, depending mainly on imports. Few studies were addressed to organic consumption in Lebanon, were none of them dealt with organic consumers analysis. Therefore, our objectives were to identify the profiles of Lebanese organic consumer and non organic consumer and to propose appropriate marketing strategies for each segment of consumer with the final aim of developing the Lebanese organic market. A survey, based on the use of closed-ended questionnaire, was addressed to 400 consumers in the capital, Beirut, from the end of February till the end of March 2014. Data underwent descriptive analyses, principal component analyses (PCA) and cluster analyses (k-means method) through the statistical software SPSS. Four cluster were obtained based on psychographic characteristics and willingness to pay (WTP) for the principal organic products purchased. "Localists" and "Health conscious" clusters constituted the largest proportion of the selected sample, thus were the most critical to be addressed by specific marketing strategies emphasizing the combination of local and organic food and the healthy properties of organic products. "Rational" and "Irregular" cluster were relatively small groups, addressed by pricing and promotional strategies. This study showed a positive attitude among Lebanese consumer towards organic food, where egoistic motives are prevailing over altruistic motives. High prices of organic commodities and low trust in organic farming, remain a constraint to levitating organic consumption. The combined efforts of the public and the private sector are required to spread the knowledge about positive environmental payback of organic agriculture and for the promotion of locally produced organic goods.