

# Marketing Organic Fruits: An example of shopping behavior from Australia

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## Abstract

*The aim of this research was to investigate an aspect of marketing organic products that would facilitate the continued growth of this industry; namely, why some buyers chose organic products and others chose nonorganic products. A model to explore this choice for fresh fruits was developed from the existing literature and modified on the basis of the results from 20 in-depth interviews. Subsequently, 300 usable responses were obtained from a questionnaire randomly distributed in a regional town in Australia.*

*This is a wide range of fruit products available in Australia, ranging from staples, such as apples, to seasonal and tropical products like peaches and mangoes. Fresh fruits were found to be frequent, low-value purchases, with most people buying weekly and spending just less than 1.5€ per person per week. A small number of products account for the majority of expenditure, with the top ten accounting for almost 90%.*

*The results from this research showed that most food buyers used a fruit barn as their main source and topped up at a supermarket, purchasing from both on a weekly basis. For all retail outlets, product quality, range, and price were important. Rather than shopping from a list, these buyers tended to respond to what was available, using planned impulse.*

*The choice method used to purchase individual products varied, with nonseasonal fruits generally being purchased as staples, whereas seasonal fruits were purchased as a treat. Further, products for which hedonic attributes are important such as fruit, and especially seasonal fruit, were purchased out of impulse. Most fruits were not seen as destination products, and substitute products were readily available.*

*The identification of organic food buyers remained elusive as they were spread throughout the community in which they comprised a significant 37%. Interestingly, they are keen home gardeners. However, with an overall market share of around 1.5%, it is evident that most of them only purchased organic food occasionally. The reasons that they chose organic food were principally related to the hedonic attributes of health, taste, and, to a lesser extent, environment.*

*Virtually all nonorganic food buyers would purchase organic food if these products were of comparable quality, and if they were available where they do most of their shopping, that is, in fruit barns and supermarkets. The maximum price premium that they would be prepared to pay is around 20%.*

*In order not to lose sales revenue, all retail outlets should ensure that they avoid stock-outs of all the products for which substitutes are not readily available as well as all destination products. In addition, sales may be increased by displaying the substitute products in the same area as the out-of-stock product as well as displaying impulse products in prominent positions.*

*Finally, the results from this research suggest that increasing sales of organic fruits may be achieved by promoting their positive health aspects whilst ensuring that they meet high taste expectations and making them available in convenient retail outlets at a maximum price premium of around 20%.*

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