Influencing Factors on Consumers' Perceptions and Awareness of Food Health and Organic Food in Iran

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Introduction

Consumer attitude and perception of environmentally and safe products, according to certain studies on healthy and organic foods, determines success with development of organic foods.

Consumers in Iran still have little knowledge about organic products, and a lack of permanent markets could lead to a decline in demand for such products.

• The purpose of this research : was to provide some insights on Iranian consumers' attitudes toward safe products and organic food, as well as the elements that influence their awareness of these items.
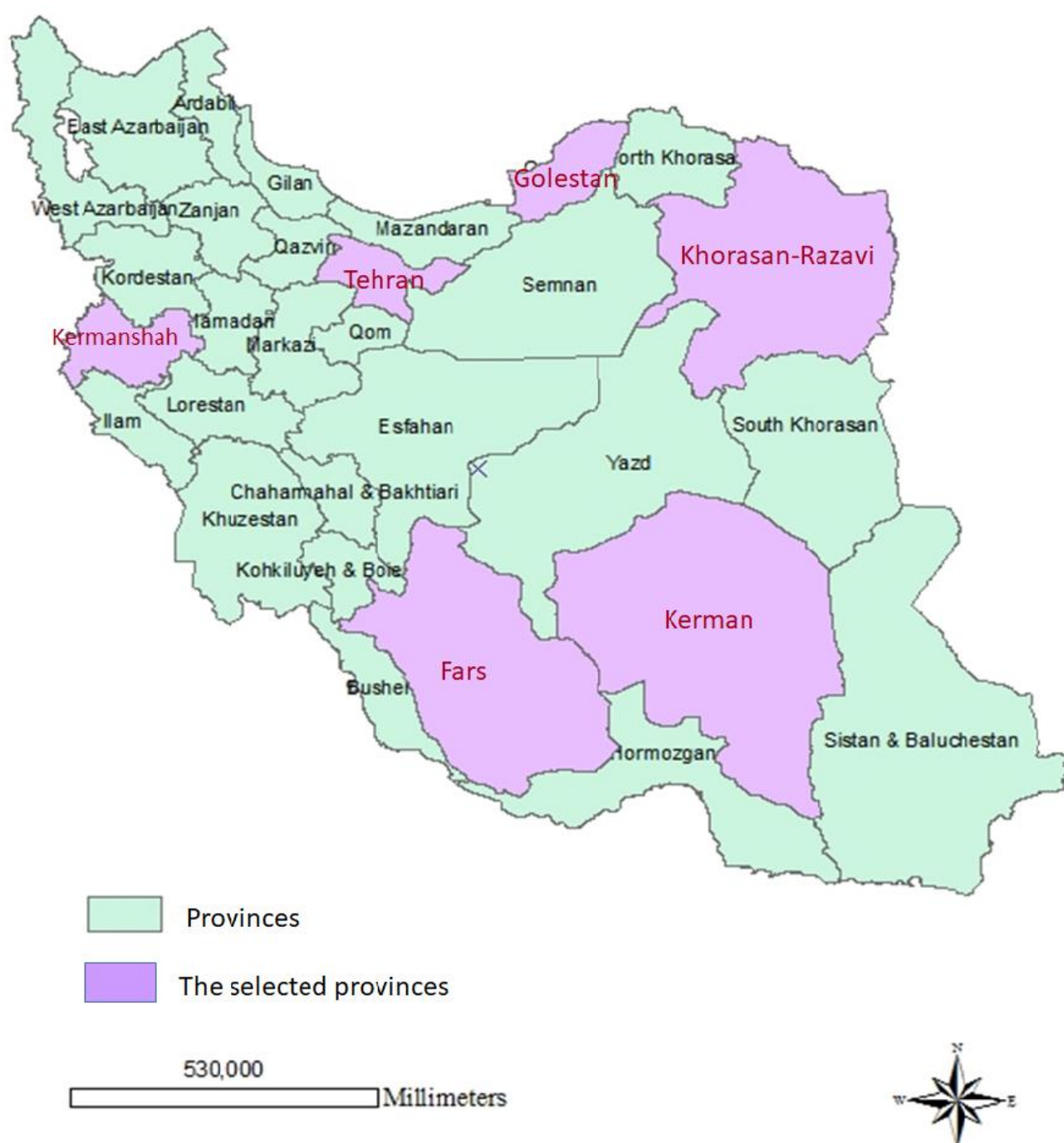
Fig. 1- Provinces Selected for Sampling in Iran

Research Method

• The method of this study was survey method, and data gathering has been done among Iranian consumers of city markets.

• 454 customers, who regularly visit vegetable markets, from six provinces of Iran have been asked by a questionnaire.

• SPSS 22 software was used to analyze demographic characteristics, knowledge of organic production, and sources of information about this type of food.

• A regression model was also utilized to identify the characteristics that influence consumer awareness as well as the disparities between those who are aware and those who are not.

Table 1- Sample size and stratums of sample

Provinces	Cities	Number of questionnaire
Tehran	Tehran	143
Khorasan-Razavi	Mashhad	107
Fars	Shiraz	82
Kerman	Kerman	53
Kermanshah	Kermanshah	35
Golestan	Gorgan	34
Total	-	454

Results

• The findings show that people who are aware of organic food items are more educated, have higher incomes, and live in large cities.

• About 81.3 percent of the respondents had never heard of organic foods before, but 12.3% of those interviewed knew enough about organic farming
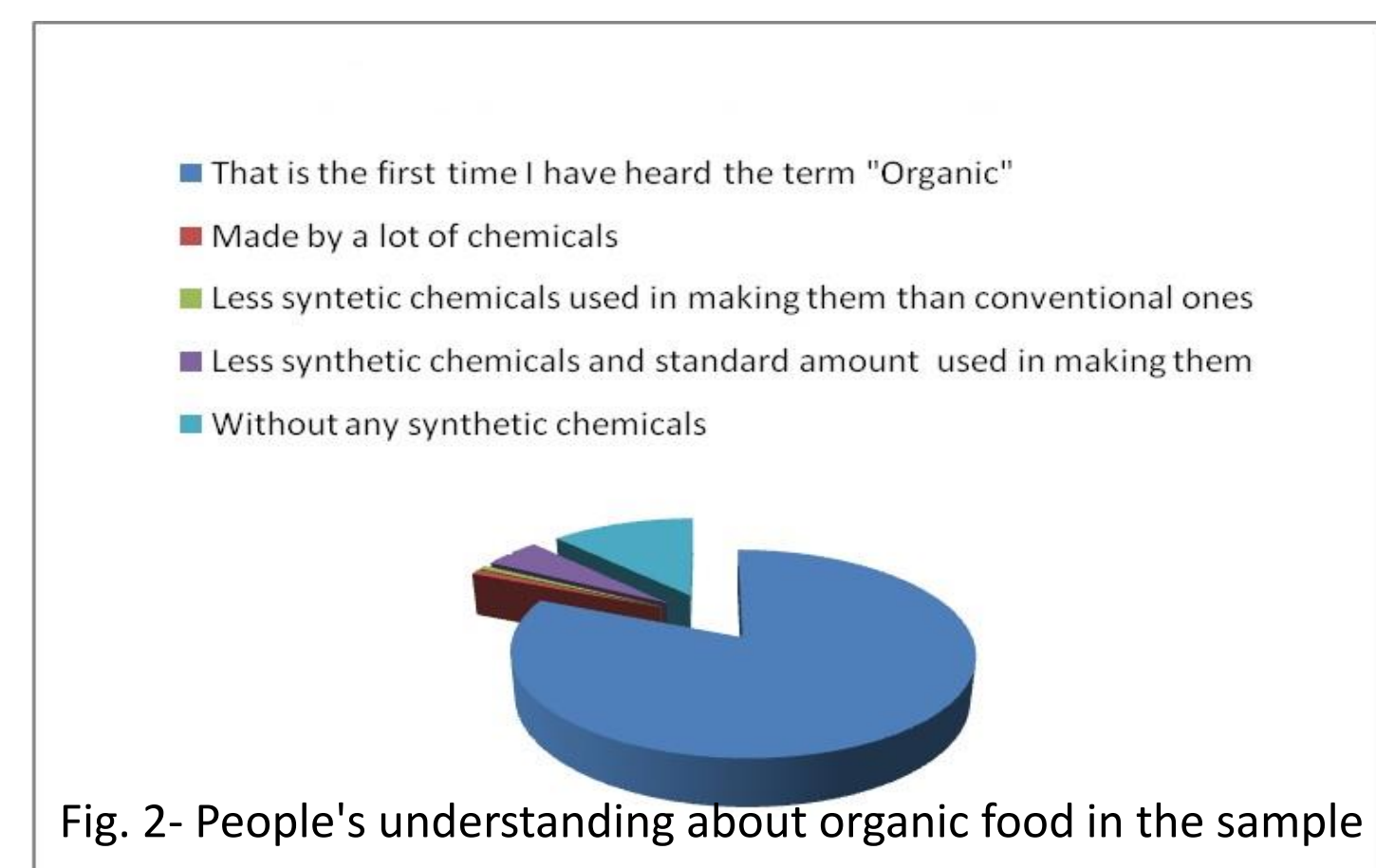
■ That is the first time I have heard the term "Organic"
■ Made by a lot of chemicals
■ Less syntetic chemicals used in making them than conventional ones
■ Less synthetic chemicals and standard amount used in making them
■ Without any synthetic chemicals

Fig. 2- People's understanding about organic food in the sample

• The opinions of two groups of respondents (aware vs. not aware of organic products) were significantly different in response to the question of whether Iranian authorities are careful about proper use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Table 2- The difference between attitudes of aware and non-aware respondents towards using chemicals in agricultural production in Iran

Attitudes	Chi-square coefficient	Sig.
− Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are used in agricultural production in a responsible and safe way	5.60	0.061
− Authorities and institutions are careful about proper using of chemical fertilizers and pesticides	20.00	0.000**
− Without Chemical fertilizers and pesticides, more people will be hungry	4.62	0.099
− Foods which are produced by Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are safe.	33.095	0.000**
− Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are not so strong to make illnesses in human body	15.47	0.001**
− Farmers are careful about standards when they use Chemical fertilizers and pesticides.	28.652	0.000**

**: Statistically different at 1% significant level

• Living in Tehran, education, and employment all play a role in predicting consumer awareness, according to the regression model..

Table 3- Variables affecting consumers' awareness of organic food in Iran

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(β)
City of living	.993	.267	13.795	.000	2.698
Job	-.899	.354	6.455	.011	.407
Gender	.182	.327	.310	.578	1.199
Level of Education	1.501	.353	18.091	.000	4.485
Household size	.059	.103	.327	.568	1.061
Household income	.000	.000	.501	.479	1.000
Number of children	-.104	.187	.307	.580	.902
Food safety concern	.029	.014	4.133	.042	1.030
Constant	-4.540	1.000	20.631	.000	.011
Sample size	454				
Percentage of correct prediction	81.3				
Nagelkerke R²	0.273				
Value of log-likelihood function	366.347				
Chi-squired (df=1)	85.79**				

**: Statistically different at 1% significant level

Conclusion

• The primary barriers to purchasing organic certified foods in Iran's major cities are high prices and lack of availability in local marketplaces.

• Some factors such as attitudes regarding the use of chemicals in the food production system and food safety concerns also influence perception of organic foods.

• Informing consumers about food safety issues through the media is the first step toward establishing an organic market in Iranian cities.