

1. Introduction:

An investigation of consumer preferences regarding organic produce and certification as well as an individual's likelihood for supporting small-scale and local farmers was conducted in the Cusco region. An individual's preferences can influence his or her attitudes and ultimately, his or her behaviors (Anojan & Subaskaran, 2015). While on vacation, the same decision-making process applies, where "decisions are thought to follow a sequence of attitude to intention to behavior," (Decrop, 2010). The goal of this survey was to gather information on how people (primarily tourists visiting Peru for vacation) seek out information on their food choices, what they value in where and how their food is sourced, and how willing they are to support small-scale, local, and/or organic farmers while on their travels. With this information, we can identify what motivates people in terms of buying decisions and restaurant choice. It is our hope, that by passing along this information to small-scale, local, and/or organic farmers, they can better market themselves to restaurants and consumers to increase their economic opportunities.

2. Methods/Techniques

The survey was administered by undergraduate and graduate students working for the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development from July 16th to July 26th of 2018. The survey sample population was chosen at random by pairs (and one group of three) of students as well as staff members of the organization. The primary target audience was international and domestic tourists in the Cusco Region. Surveys were given orally in English, Spanish, and Chinese and recorded on paper. Pairs divided up into a main speaker and a data recorder, switching roles when desired. Many of the participants were shown the survey in order to see the various suggested options, though they did not fill it out themselves (Attached is an example of the survey administered as well as sample answer sheet). The cities chosen for the study were: Calca, Pisac, Ollantaytambo, and Cusco. Subjects were given a AASD business card with contact information and encouraged to visit the website. Demographic information was also collected.

3. Description of Questions

There were twelve questions in total on this consumer survey, three of which were demographic questions about age, gender, and nationality. The first two questions were targeted

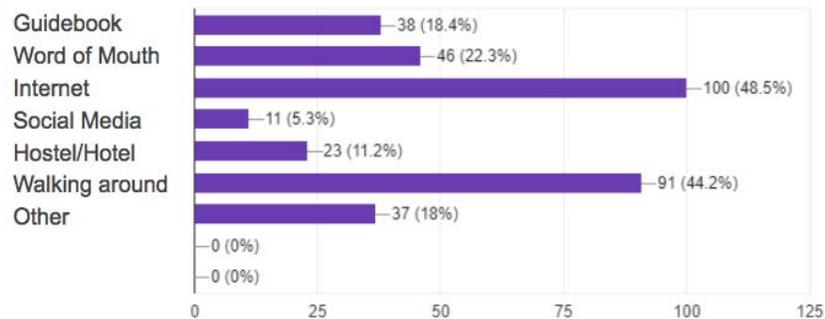
at consumer attitudes regarding restaurant choice in Cusco, consisting of six suggested answers for question 1, while question 2 had 10 suggested answers. Questions 3 and 4 were both done on a scale of 1 (highly unlikely) to 5 (highly likely); addressing consumers' willingness to pay more for restaurants that source organic produce and restaurants that support small-scale local farmers (under the assumption that those two may or may not be the same). Question 5 inquired about what information consumers would like to know regarding where their food is coming from; it had six suggested options. Question six asked how consumers would like to receive the information they desired (taken from question 5); it consisted of six suggested answers. Question 7 was written with the purpose of measuring how frequently consumers are visiting restaurants that offer organic produce, restaurants that support local farmers, and restaurants that support small-scale farmers (under the assumption that restaurants may or may not fall under one or more of these labels). Question 8 was a simple yes or no question addressing whether consumers thought organic produce should be certified. Questions 1-8 included additional options such as "other", "none of the above", "don't know" and "prefer not to answer". At the end of the survey, participants were asked about their reasons for visiting Peru in order to confirm their status as tourists. Of the 206 survey responses taken, participants gave varying responses on each survey. The trends that rose out of said responses, both positive and negative, will be discussed in the following section.

4. Summary and Interpretation of Data

Question 1: When conducting preliminary searches for restaurants, 48.5% of participants use the internet as their primary source. Many mentioned using the website and/or application TripAdvisor, which gives reviews and ratings of restaurants in the surrounding area. 44.2% of participants said alternatively or in addition that they chose restaurants simply by walking around Cusco. Of the six suggested answers given in question one, social media had the lowest response rate (5.3%).

How do you find out information about a restaurant (Sacred Valley, Cusco)?

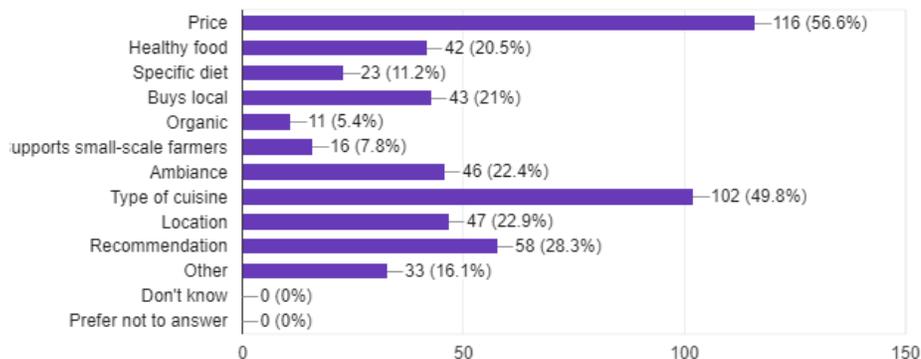
206 responses



Question 2: This question sought specific factors for individuals' restaurant choice, with the ability to choose more than one factor. The top answer, out of the ten suggested, was price with 116 (56.6%) participants electing it as their deciding factor in picking restaurants. "Type of cuisine" came in a close second, chosen by 49.8% of participants, while recommendations was chosen by 28.3% of participants. The three lowest factors were as follows: specific diet (11.2%), supports small-scale farmers (7.8%), and organic (5.4%).

Which factors influence your decision the most in picking a restaurant? (the three most important)?

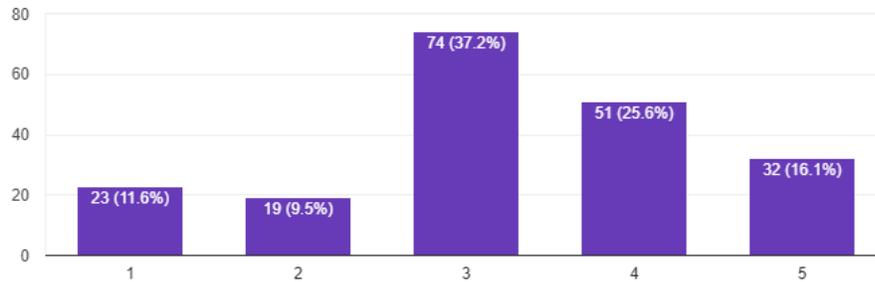
205 responses



Question 3: 37.2% of participants chose "3" on a scale of 1 to 5, stating they would be willing to pay more for a restaurant that sources organic produce. The scale was only loosely defined, so the rating of "3" could mean various things, such as that they would not pay more for organic or they would only pay a little more. However, we can be certain that they would not want to pay less than normal if the restaurant sourced organic. 25.6% of participants chose a "4" rating and 16.1% chose a "5" rating, meaning they would pay more for a restaurant that sources organic produce. The participants that chose a rating of "1" (11.6%) and "2" (9.5%) were not willing to pay more for organic produce, or if so, only a very small increase in price.

How willing are you to pay more for a restaurant that sources organic produce:

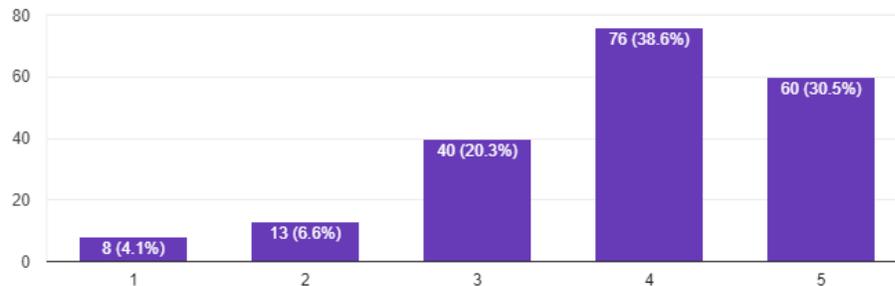
199 responses



Question 4: The responses for this question show that customers are much more willing to pay for restaurants that support local small-scale farmers in contrast to organic. 38.6% chose a rating of “4”, 30.5% chose a rating of “5”, and 20.3% chose a rating of “3”. It is not possible to determine from the questions how much more they are willing to pay for this type of restaurant.

How willing are you to pay more for a restaurant that supports small-scale local farmers:

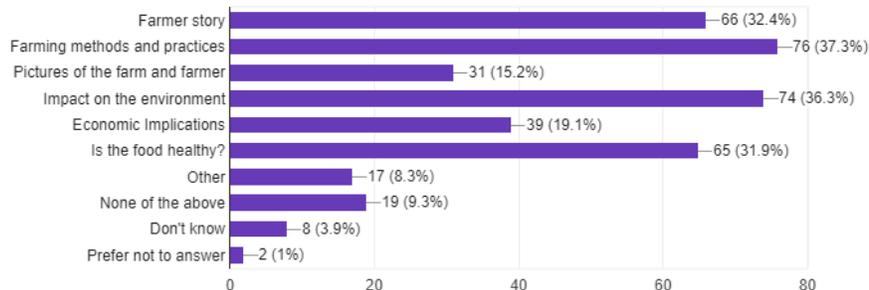
197 responses



Question 5: Farming methods and practices (37.3%), impact on the environment (36.3%), and the farmer’s story (32.3%) were the top three themes people wanted to know regarding their food source. Individuals were not as interested in pictures of the farm and farmer (15.2%).

What information would you like to know about where your food comes from? (check all that apply)

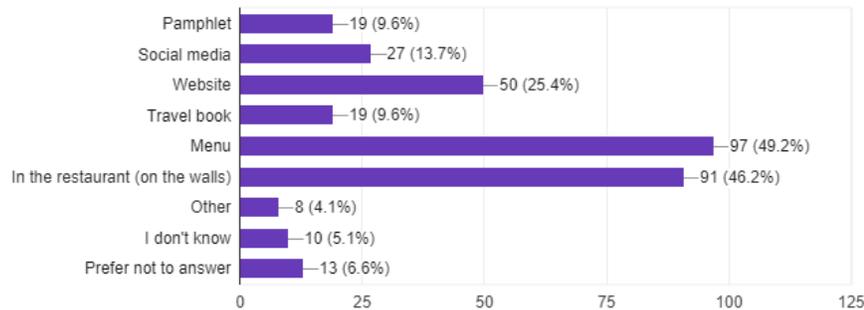
204 responses



Question 6: In regards to the manner of receiving this information, people wanted to have the information displayed on the menu (49.2%) and in the restaurant (46.2%). Very few people wanted to receive the information via social media (13.7%), travel book (9.6%), or pamphlet (9.6%).

How would you like to receive information? Check all that apply:

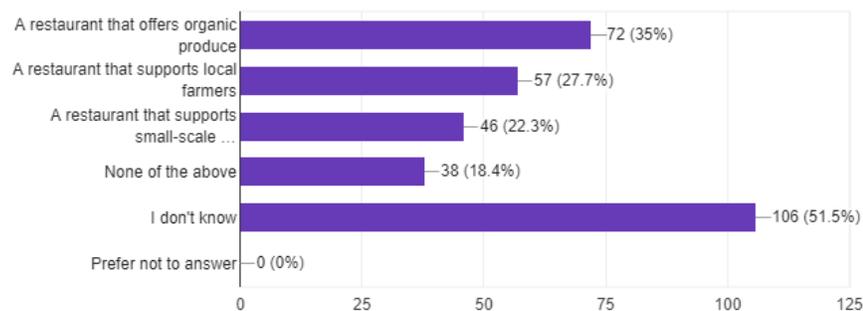
197 responses



Question 7: Over half (51.5%) of the individuals surveyed did not know, in the past week, whether they had eaten at a restaurant that sourced organic produce, supported local farmers, or supported small-scale farmers. 35% of individuals stated that they had eaten at a restaurant that sourced organic produce, but many people voiced uncertainty in whether the produce was organic or simply “thought” the produce was organic and trusted what the restaurant stated as organic.

In the past week, have you eaten at: (check all that apply)*ask if it is the same restaurant

206 responses

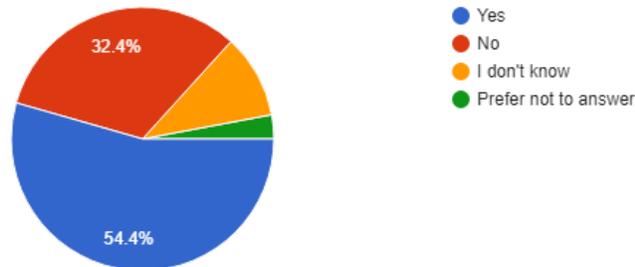


Question 8: The majority of individuals stated that it is important to them that organic produce is certified (54.4%). 35% of those who responded stated that organic certification was not important to them, either because the certification was “not trustworthy”, “the personal story and farmer’s life is more important than certification”, or that they were simply not sure about certification standards in Peru. 10.3% of respondents did not know whether certification of

produce was important to them. Several people stated that “they think about organic food and certifications at home, but not while traveling” or “they care about organic, but do not actively search for it”.

Is it important to you that organic produce is certified?

204 responses



5. Demographics

Are you:	N	Respondents (%)
Male	84	40.8%
Female	102	49.5%
Prefer not to say / Inconclusive	20	9.2%
What is your age group?	N	Respondents (%)
18-25	63	30.9%
26-44	86	42.2%
45-64	38	18.6%
65- over	12	5.9%
Prefer not to say	5	2.5%
What is your nationality?	N	Respondents (%)
United States	48	23.3%
Peru	22	10.7%
Great Britain	21	10.2%
Argentina	16	7.8%
France	13	6.3%
Other	90	43.7%

<i>(Continent)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Respondents (%)</i>
<i>Europe</i>	82	40.3%
<i>North America</i>	57	28%
<i>South America</i>	57	28%
<i>Australia</i>	7	3.4%
<i>Asia</i>	3	1.5%

6. Conclusion

After compiling and analyzing the data from this survey, it was found that consumer preferences tended towards supporting small-scale and local farmers rather than food labeled as “organic”. In terms of their food choices, respondents stated they were much more likely to pay more for restaurants that supported small-scale local farmers than restaurants that offered organic produce. Many people placed emphasis on the “cleanliness” of the food and making sure they were visiting a restaurant with “healthy produce”. If individuals did choose to eat organic or local, they tended to want a “guarantee” that the produce was actually organic or sourced from a local farmer, especially if they were paying more for the product. While individuals surveyed stated they were more likely to want local produce, they were often unsure of where to find restaurants that offered local produce and/or supported small-scale farmers. Individuals responded that there should be more advertising in the restaurants regarding where the food was sourced. Often, people made a distinction between their food choices at home versus abroad, stating that when they are on vacation, they were less likely to be concerned with where their food is sourced.

In moving forward, we recommend that both farmers and restaurants invest in more advertising, such as signage outside of restaurants and inserts in menus. They should emphasise the aspects of their farm/produce that support a local narrative, their ties to the sacred valley, the history of their family in the region, heirloom varieties of plants and native plants to the Andean region that they grow, etc. Restaurants should also do more advertising of the “cleanliness” of their food, which could be as simple as a sentence in the menu saying “all produce was washed in filtered water,” or perhaps health inspector certifications posted on the walls. Restaurants do not need to focus as much on advertising their food as “organic”, as it is not a term that the average tourist is responding to positively. In fact, the majority of tourists who cared about the

organic label also wanted it to be certified, which is not something the majority of farmers have. Rather than having to deal with circumventing the certification questions, farmers and restaurants should use other labels for their produce (i.e. ecological, environment-friendly, etc.). Information given in menu inserts and other marketing materials should highlight the farmer's story, their methods and practices, and their impact on the environment.

7. *Further Research*

For others interested in this topic, we advise conducting additional research on certifications, specifically on what certifications mean to consumers, how that meaning changes depending on nationality, and in particular, whether consumers equate certified produce with "healthy" or "clean" produce. It would be useful to understand whether individuals are actually seeking organic certification or a simply a "guarantee" or trust that the produce is good quality. Further research could also look into the distinctions people make in food choices when at home and abroad. It would be helpful to investigate the reasons behind traveler's choices and if this is an area in which individuals behaviors can be modified.

8. *Works Cited*

Decrop, A. (2010). Destination choice set: An inductive longitudinal approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), 93-115.

Anojan, V. & Subaskaran, T. (2015). Consumer's Preference and Consumer's Buying Behavior on Soft Drinks: A Case Study in Northern Province of Sri Lanka. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: E-Marketing*, 15(2), 11-33.