

Title: Influence of Local and Organic Food Products on College Student's Buying Decisions

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Objective: The objective for this project was to identify characteristics and barriers of college students who consume local or organic products and determine if differences exist between off and on-campus students

Background: Many influential factors assist an individual's food consumption choices such as perceived benefits, taste, income, and several other considerations. Organic sales and local farmers markets have grown significantly over the past several years.

Design: Cross-sectional survey design was used

Methods: On-line Qualtrics Survey took 10 minute to complete. Questions included demographics, definition of organic and local, whether they consumed organic and local foods, frequency, and barriers. Survey was available to two weeks in the Fall of 2016. Project was approved by IRB as an exempt project for Human Subjects.

Results: 115 students completed the survey (105 females; 10 males) with a good distribution of college year. 81 students were identified as off campus and 34 as on-campus. More students reported consuming organic and local foods compared to those who do not. The percent of commuter vs. on-campus students who consume organic products were similar (58.82%, 59.25%) as well as the percent who consume local products (64.71%, 67.9%). For both local and organic, off and on-campus students reported consuming these food products more often when purchased or prepared by others (n=57, 49.57% organic and n=40, 34.78% local). The biggest selected barrier for commuters and on-campus students when consuming organic was cost (82.35%, 82.73%), followed by lack of knowledge on the subject.

Conclusion: More research and nutrition education needs to be done on how college students identify and consume local and organic foods.