

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ORGANIC FOOD VERSUS CONVENTIONAL FOODS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ATTITUDE IN VADODARA

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ABSTRACT

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As people become more informed about their health and diet, the interest in organic food products is increasing. This research makes a comparison in consumer attitude towards organic food products and non-organic ones in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, India. By collecting data through a structured questionnaire from 170 respondents selected through stratified random sampling technique, the attitude of consumers was measured towards both the categories. The results were encouraging for organic food products. The overall attitude was found to be positive and people were willing to purchase them. The only issue was price and availability of these products in the local markets. Also, there were some apprehensions regarding the authenticity of them being organic.

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern age, with information available at finger tips, people are becoming more aware about things happening around them. With pollution on the rise, global warming and other evils of economic development, people are searching for environmental friendly ways of sustenance. As a part of that, they are becoming more health conscious by trying to remain physically and mentally fit. In this quest for good health, people are searching for better options. One such option is organic food. A lot of manufacturers are now offering branded and non-branded organic food products in India. Some of the brands offering such food products are-

Certified Organic Food Brands



Aamrai is a Mumbai based organic brand that sells 100% organic premium organic mangoes in India and the Asian Sub continent.



Abali is one of the most trusted brand for the quality of organic tea that transports you to the surreal world of aromatic tea estates.

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The range of food products by Aum Fresh is 100 % natural, pure, fresh and organic certified by the most reputed certification bodies in India.



Azafra Oils & Infusies is a range of extra-virgin organic olive oils infused with organic spices. Available in six flavors.



Chamong produces some of the world's finest organic teas and enjoys an enviable reputation in the tea world.



Conscious Food boasts of sourcing its major produce from small organic farming communities to encourage the production of organics in India.



All Dear Earth food products are certified by OneCert Asia for US NOP and Indian NPOP Organic Standard.



The oldest and the most trustworthy in the industry, Deha Assam Tea Co. is an ISO 22000:2005 and HACCP Certified organic company that finds its roots in early 1900s.



Down To Earth is an organic food brand by the Morarka Foods Private Limited which brought the organic revolution in India.



Greensense is an organic food company that is well acclaimed outside India for the quality of its organic spices, pulses and other food items.



Grenera is the largest manufacturer of Nutraceuticals, Herbal Extracts, Natural Oils, Carrier Oils, Organic Spices and Herbal Teas in India.



Healthbuddy is proud to feature the very best of certified organic green tea. This organic tea procured from the slanting hills of the famed region of Darjeeling.



Based in Amritsar, Khalas brings the premium quality and goodness of organics which is pure, ethical and completely eco-friendly.



From the aromatic organic estates of Kodaikanal, South India, Marson Coffee brings to you the ultimate High Grown Arabica Gourmet Coffee.



Nature N Me is an organic food and personal care brand that is owned by ASHCOM Agro Products & Consumer Goods Pvt. Ltd.



Organica is the most loved brand in the organic food brands brigade at Organishop.in. Producing real foods that count chemicals and not calories.



Group of young professionals who were astounded when Ethiopian Sidama coffee was served fresh. Explore the coffee nation of Ethiopia and fresh coffee culture.



Organic India is now a symbol of organic tea in India. Organic India is in itself a brand name to reckon with in India for organic teas.



Enjoy the benefits of nature and relish nutritious, healthy, pure and chemical-free Organic food, an important factor contributing to overall wellbeing.



Panchvati Apary was established with the purpose of processing of raw honey obtained from honey combs into high quality edible grade.



Phalada Pure & Sure is a range of certified organic food products stemmed from the belief to modernize the entire supply chain of organic products.



Sattvic products are completely Organic and Natural just the way their identity says. Accredited by APEDA and USDA.



Nourish your body with Sun Organo Products with higher nutritional value. Sun Organo Foods supports sustainable farming.



Sunrise offers best range of Organic Herbal Juices, Organic Tea & Coffee, Organic Foods & Vegetables, Organic Spices, Organic Grains & Pulses etc.



Vedantika Herbals provides high quality Herbal Energy Drinks and Soups. It combines the knowledge of ancient Indian Medicine with modern research and technology.



From the pink city, Vision Fresh is extremely popular amongst the city organic consumers for their products, quality and customer delight.



Woods and Petals is a conscious organic company that offers a range of high quality certified Organic Darjeeling Tea and Food Products. (Source: <http://organicsshop.in/brands/organic-food-brand>). This research paper attempts to study consumer attitude towards organic food products in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, India. The research also tries to study if people prefer organic food products and reasons for the same. In the end it also tries to identify the major problems faced in consumption of these products.

Literature Review

S Priya, M Parameswari, (2016), investigated about consumer attitude towards organic food products in Coimbatore city. They observed that there is a general rise in the overall awareness regarding organic food products. Further, it was found that the actual buying behavior is due to a strong intent and attitude towards these products. In another study conducted by Krishnakumare B, Niranjan S, (2016), it was found that most of the consumer especially in urban people prefer organic food product. Health was the main purpose for purchase. At the same time some people did not prefer organic food products due to lack of trust as well as difficulty in availing these products. They found the attitude of respondents to be positive towards these products. Mohamed Bilal Basha, *et al.* (2015) analysed consumer attitude towards organic food. They found that the factors that motivate consumers to buy organic food include environmental concern, health concern and lifestyle, product quality and subjective norms. It was found that factors like product quality, concern for the environment, personal health and lifestyle were the motives for preference of organic foods.

Sathyendra Kumar AD, H. M. Chandrashekar, (2015), in their research tried to understand the consumer perception about organic products and their marketing. They also found that that majority of the consumers especially in urban people prefer organic food product. They remarked that marketing of organic product is very poor which has resulted in demand not being met by supply. Tina Vukasovič, (2015), conducted a research also tried to understand and obtain knowledge about consumer attitudes towards organic fruits and vegetables in European Union (EU) consumers. Results showed that consumers of organic food tend to be younger and higher educated than those who do not buy them. Further, consumers' trust in the authenticity of the goods and price are also issues. An important task for the producers and marketers will be to enhance consumers' knowledge of what an organic product is and how to differentiate it in the marketplace. Along with knowledgeable and educated consumers, consumption could be raised on another level. S. Suganya and S. Aravindh (2014) conducted a research on consumers' preference towards organic food products on the basis of price. They found that though there is a strong demand for organic food products, there is a lot of resistance in purchasing them due to price

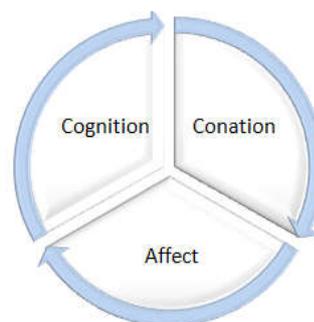
difference as compared to non-organic food products. They observed that this variation plays a vital role in consumers towards these products. Rupesh Mervin, Velmurugan R, (2013) studied the attitude of consumer towards organic products. They a positive relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents and consumer attitude. However, the research showed an inverse relationship between consumer awareness and attitude towards organic food. They suggested that Government and social organizations should take necessary steps in creating awareness in the midst of consumers on the merits of using organic foods and extend necessary assistance in cultivating high quantum of organic foods by the majority of the farmers.

Theoretical Construct

Attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way toward a given object. It could be a product, brand, service, price, package, advertisement, promotional medium, or the retailer selling the product. In other words, attitude shapes your action towards a given object. Attitude is shaped by lot of factors which include personal experiences, reference groups, the internet and social media, etc. Of all the factors, it has been identified that direct experience of consumers has the biggest and strongest impact on attitude formation. Positive direct experience is likely to result in favourable attitude and vice-versa. According to research carried out in this field, it has been found that marketers are interested in the study of attitude formation for product categories, especially new product categories. It has also been observed that the diffusion of specific brands in different markets happens only when awareness about the new product category is created and this is followed by building up favourable attitude towards it. In a market, if a new product category is launched, there are few brands available. Attitude formation starts when a small portion of consumers actually try the product by using it. Based on their experience, this product category gets diffused through spread of word of mouth and other promotional strategies adopted by marketers. As number of customers using the product category increases, a familiarity with the product category is established. Research has also suggested that it takes time for a category to be created in the minds of a larger section of the market.

On the basis of these major findings regarding attitude formation for products, various theories were also propounded. Some of the theories have been listed below

- The Tri-component Attitude Model
- Multi-attribute Attitude Models
- Elaboration Likelihood Model
- Attribution Theory



(Source: Schiffman *et al.*, 2016)

Cognitive Component

Cognitive component comprises the knowledge and perceptions a person holds about the attitude object (product/service). They are acquired from their direct experience with the attitude object as well as information sources.

Affective Component

This component is about consumers' emotions and feelings about the attitude object. They are also called evaluations as they give insight about the overall assessment of the attitude object as being "good" or "bad" or as "favourable" or "unfavourable".

Conative Component

This component highlights the probability or likelihood that person will behave in a particular way with regard to the attitude object. Conative component is also considered as purchasing intention.

Attitude = Cognition + Affection + Conation

Multi-Attribute Attitude Models

These models show consumer attitude as a function of their assessments of the objects' prominent attitudes (Schiffman, *et al.*, 2016). There are four major models in this.

- Attitude-toward-object Model.
- Attitude-toward-behavior Model.
- Theory of Reasoned Action.
- Theory of trying to consume.
- Attitude-toward-ad Model.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

ELM states that attitudes can be changed by two different routes to persuasion. A central route which is extensive method of problem solving. On the other side, the peripheral route involves limited problem solving.

Attribution Theory

This theory explains how people assign causality to events on the basis of either their own behavior or the behavior of others.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample size of this exploratory and descriptive research was 170. For the purpose of selection of sample, probabilistic sampling was carried out. The population was divided into five strata and stratified random sampling was done. The population was divided on the basis of occupations like service, business, profession, homemaker and others. Others included students. Primary data was collected in the form of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. First part of the questionnaire was to identify the demographic profile of respondents. The second part studied the cognitive component of attitude, followed by affective component. The third part of the questionnaire was to study the conative component or the purchasing intention of the respondents towards organic food in Vadodara. Fourth part of the questionnaire was to study preference towards organic food products and non-organic food products.

The last part of the questionnaire was to identify problems in availing organic food products as compared with non-organic ones in Vadodara. These last two parts of the questionnaire were based on ranks where 1 was considered as highest rank. Part two, three and four of the questionnaire which measured the three components of attitude towards both the product categories were on a five point Likert scale with 5 as "strongly agree" and 1 as "strongly disagree". After collecting data, it was analysed by use of proper statistical techniques. Before conducting further analysis of the data, reliability test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha. The data was found to be highly reliable with an alpha value of 0.821. Further, Q-Q Test showed that the data was normal and hence statistical analysis could be conducted. For the purpose of testing the hypotheses, measures like Chi-Square, ANOVA, Mean analysis, Correlation and Regression was used.

Objectives

- To compare the knowledge and awareness levels for organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.
- To compare and analyse emotions towards organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.
- Compare and study the purchasing intention for organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.
- Compare and study the overall attitude towards organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.
- Study and analyse reasons for preference of organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.
- Study and analyse the problems in consumption of organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant difference in knowledge and awareness about organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara

H2: There is no significant difference in feelings towards organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.

H3: Purchasing intention for organic food products is same as non-organic food products in Vadodara.

H4: There is no significant difference in the overall attitude towards organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara.

Data Analysis

Table No.1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents for this research. The "others" category in occupational profile represents students.

H1: There is no significant difference in knowledge and awareness about organic and non-organic food products in Vadodara

From Table No.2, it can be seen that overall cognition towards non-organic food products was observed to be higher as compared to organic ones. However, it is clear from the table that respondents viewed organic food products (Mean = 1.74) as healthier option than non-organic ones (Mean = 3.96). The results also suggested that respondents found organic food safer to consume than non-organic ones. The mean value for the variable "healthier option" was reverse coded for the purpose of statistical accuracy. Hence, a lower mean value suggests that respondents agreed to this fact that organic food

products are healthier option. The mean value for the variable “safe to consume” was also higher for organic food products (Mean = 3.96) as compared to non-organic food products (Mean = 3.14). All the results were highly significant when subjected to chi-square test. Therefore, from the mean analysis and chi-square results, H1 was rejected and the alternate hypothesis that there is more awareness and knowledge about non-organic food products as compared to organic food products in Vadodara.

organic ones with respect to the overall goodness, attractiveness. However, the major difference in rating was noticed in terms of price of both the categories of products. Respondents felt that organic food products were costly (Mean= 1.02) as compared to the non-organic ones (Mean= 3.79). Also, the overall preference for non-organic food products (Mean = 3.67) was found slightly better than organic ones (Mean = 3.04). Thus, because of the price, the overall mean values for this factor for non-organic food products were found to be higher than non-organic ones.

Table 1. Showing Demographic Attributes of Respondents in Vadodara

Feature		N	%	Feature	N	%	
Age	20-30	107	62.94	Income	< 1.5 Lac	31	18.24
	31-40	34	20.00		1.5 - 3.00	36	21.18
	41-50	14	8.24		3.01-4.5	37	21.76
	Above 50	15	8.82		4.51 - 6.00	17	10.00
Total	170	100.00	Above 6		49	28.82	
Gender	Male	98	57.65	Total	170	100.00	
	Female	72	42.35	Family Size	1-4	118	69.41
Total	170	100.00	5-7		28	16.47	
Education	Under Graduate	12	7.06		Above 7	24	14.12
	Graduate	38	22.35	Total	170	100.00	
	Post Graduate	88	51.76	Family Type	Nuclear	113	66.47
	Professional	32	18.82		Joint	57	33.53
Total	170	100.00	Total	170	100.00		
Occupation	Service	54	31.76	Marital Status	Married	94	55.29
	Business	42	24.71		Unmarried	76	44.71
	Professional	31	18.24	Total	170	100.00	
	Homemaker	14	8.24				
	Others	29	17.06				
Total	170	100.00					

Table 2. Showing Mean Values for Cognitive Factors affecting Attitude of Respondents towards Organic and Non-Organic Food Products in Vadodara

Particulars	Organic Food Products				Non-Organic Food Products			
	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value
Tastes Good	3.54	0.869	100.857	0.00	4.32	0.671	112.345	0.00
Healthier Option	1.74	0.661	110.857	0.00	3.96	0.742	104.451	0.00
Good Quality	3.75	0.741	56.000	0.00	3.89	0.682	59.761	0.00
Safe to Consume	3.96	0.938	30.857	0.00	3.14	0.811	44.782	0.00
Value for Money	3.43	0.845	40.857	0.00	4.03	0.784	57.841	0.00
Overall Cognition	3.28	0.811	32.000	0.01	3.87	0.738	41.028	0.00

Table 3. Showing Mean Values for Affective Factors affecting Attitude of Respondents towards Organic and Non-Organic Food Products in Vadodara

Particulars	Organic Food Products				Non-Organic Food Products			
	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value
Generally Good	3.29	0.963	55.143	0.00	3.08	0.921	70.768	0.00
Appealing	3.68	0.762	94.857	0.00	3.28	0.886	92.571	0.00
Costlier	1.02	0.821	49.143	0.00	3.79	0.896	58.659	0.00
Prefer over other	3.04	0.948	58.000	0.00	3.67	0.674	69.004	0.00
Overall Affection	2.76	0.873	35.714	0.00	3.45	0.844	46.801	0.00

Table 4. Showing Mean Values for Conative Factors affecting Attitude of Respondents towards Organic and Non-Organic Food Products in Vadodara

Particulars	Organic Food Products				Non-Organic Food Products			
	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value
Buy	3.77	0.963	55.143	0.00	4.23	0.528	57.092	0.00
Spending	3.55	0.762	94.857	0.00	4.12	0.678	91.237	0.00
Recommend	3.76	0.821	49.143	0.00	3.27	0.649	54.072	0.00
Not mind	3.69	0.948	58.000	0.00	4.06	0.831	68.371	0.00
Overall Conation	3.69	0.874	35.714	0.00	3.92	0.672	41.927	0.00

The overall mean values for non-organic food products (Mean = 3.45) were on the higher side as compared to the organic ones (Mean = 2.76). A detailed look at the table reveals that respondents rated organic food products as better than the non-

Based on the highly significant results, the hypothesis H2 was rejected and the alternate hypothesis that there is more affection for non-organic food products as compared to the organic ones. The overall purchasing intention for non-organic

food products (Mean = 3.92) was observed slightly higher than organic food products (Mean = 3.69) as is clear from Table No.4. The overall response to organic food products was a bit low as compared to the non-organic food products as can be seen from the mean values of all factors determining conation or purchasing intention. The only variable where organic food was taken as better was the fact that respondents did not mind recommending the same to others. The positive aspect of the data is that there is not a lot of difference in the opinion between the two products. There is a positive purchasing intention towards organic food products, though it is less than that for non-organic ones. On the basis of results obtained, the hypothesis H3 was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted.

categories. Thus, it cannot be said that the attitude is same for both the categories of products. Though positive, the attitude is more favourable for non-organic food products as compared to the organic ones in Vadodara. After identifying the attitude levels for both the categories of products in Vadodara, further data was collected and analysed to study the reasons for preference of both the categories of foods. The following Table No.6 reveals the results found. The above table clearly reveals where there is preference for organic foods and where preference is more for non-organic food products in Vadodara. In terms of taste the mean values are more or less similar indicating that taste was not a dominant factor for preference of either category of foods. But, when it came to health, the mean value of organic foods (Mean = 1.46) was observed

Table 5. Showing Mean Values for Overall Attitude of Respondents towards Organic and Non-Organic Food Products in Vadodara

Particulars	Organic Food Products				Non-Organic Food Products			
	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	P-Value
Cognition	3.28	0.665	32.000	0.00	3.87	0.741	33.621	0.00
Affection	2.76	0.651	35.714	0.00	3.45	0.765	38.962	0.00
Conation	3.69	0.651	55.143	0.00	3.92	0.814	62.281	0.00
Overall Attitude	3.24	0.655	16.571	0.00	3.75	0.773	28.021	0.00

Table 6. Table Showing Reasons for Preference towards Organic and Non-Organic Foods in Vadodara

Reasons	Organic Foods				Non-Organic Foods			
	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Tastes Better	2.43	0.620	15.862	0.000	2.58	0.48	18.893	0.000
Good for Health	1.46	0.948	16.338	0.000	3.41	0.57	17.653	0.000
Eco-Friendly	2.39	0.797	19.525	0.000	3.49	0.43	15.372	0.000
Easily available	3.89	0.867	16.402	0.000	1.59	0.59	16.842	0.000
Medication	3.50	0.836	12.997	0.000	3.23	0.54	14.329	0.000

(S.D. – Standard Deviation, significance at 0.05)

Table 7. Table Showing Problems in Availing Organic and Non-Organic Foods Products in Vadodara

Problems	Organic Foods			
	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
High Price	2.14	0.716	10.501	0.000
Not available everywhere	2.07	0.587	13.817	0.000
Lack of awareness	3.04	0.644	19.547	0.000
Limited Products	3.32	0.842	19.088	0.000
False marketed as organic	2.68	0.995	12.354	0.000
Familiar taste	4.04	0.691	15.871	0.000
No noticeable benefit	4.04	0.860	14.931	0.000

(S.D. – Standard Deviation, significance at 0.05)

Table 8. Showing Correlation between Factors Affecting Attitude towards Organic and Non-Organic Food Products in Vadodara

		Organic Food Products				Non-Organic Food Products			
		Cog.	Aff.	Con.	Attitude	Cog.	Aff.	Con.	Attitude
Cognitive	Correl.	1	0.73	0.682	0.929	1	0.77	0.79	0.884
	Sig.		0	0	0		0	0	0
Affective	Correl.	0.73	1	0.458	0.841	0.77	1	0.531	0.82
	Sig.	0		0	0	0		0	0
Conative	Correl.	0.682	0.458	1	0.826	0.79	0.531	1	0.836
	Sig.	0	0		0	0	0		0
Attitude	Correl.	0.929	0.841	0.826	1	0.884	0.82	0.836	1
	Sig.	0	0	0		0	0	0	

(Correl. – Correlation, Sig. – Significance at 0.01, Cog. – Cognitive, Aff. – Affective, Con. – Conative)

Attitude is formed on the basis of interaction of the above mentioned three factors. From Table No.5, it was observed that on a five point scale, the overall attitude for both the categories of products was found to be positive. However, in Vadodara, people still preferred the traditional non-organic food products (Mean = 3.75) over the organic ones (Mean = 3.24). Of all the factors, affection scored the least in case of both the categories, while the highest score was found to be different for both the

significantly more than that for non-organic ones (Mean = 3.41). So, respondents clearly felt that organic foods were better for health. Respondents also felt that organic foods are environment friendly (Mean = 2.39) as compared to the non-organic foods (Mean = 3.49). However, when it came to the ease of availability, non-organic foods had a higher mean (Mean = 1.59) as compared to their organic counterparts (Mean = 3.89). Thus, the ease of availability was a major

factor in preference of non-organic foods. The mean values for both the categories were found to be similar when it came to usage as a part of medication advised by doctor. The final part of this paper was to identify and compare the problems found in availing both the categories of food products in Vadodara. The following Table No.7 shows the perceived problems. As is clear from the above Table No.7, since non-organic food products are those which are used on a daily basis by all, there were no noticeable problems in availing them. Hence, we could not get data regarding the same. On the flip side, respondents did opine that they faced certain problems in availing organic food products in Vadodara. The biggest issue was that these products are not available commonly (Mean = 2.07). Another problem faced was that respondents felt that the price charged for these products was too high as compared to the conventional products (Mean = 2.14). Another problem faced was the reliability about the fact that the products purchased as organic were really organic since there is lack of awareness about agencies certifying them as organic (Mean = 2.68).

Inter-relationship between dimensions of Attitude

In the previous research, through correlation analysis it was established that there is a strong positive correlation between (i) The three components and attitude and (ii) The three components internally for organic food products (Sandhe, Joshi, 2017). In this research also correlation was found separately for both the categories of products in Vadodara. As mentioned previously, there was strong positive relationship between all the factors affecting attitude for organic food products. A look at the relationship between non-organic food products reveals similar trends. There was positive strong relationship between all the variables affecting attitude as well as between all the variables and attitude itself. This similarity of relationship is a good sign for organic food products. This implies that as cognition increases, attitude will become more positive. Similarly, positive cognition will lead to positive conation which is purchasing intention.

FINDINGS

Some of the major findings of the study were

- Overall cognition towards non-organic food products was observed to be higher as compared to organic ones
- Respondents viewed organic food products as healthier as well as safer than non-organic ones.
- Respondents rated organic food products as better than the non-organic ones with respect to the overall goodness, attractiveness
- Respondents felt that organic food products were costly as compared to the non-organic ones.
- The overall purchasing intention for non-organic food products was observed slightly higher than organic food products which is natural due to awareness factor.

- Overall attitude for both the categories of products was found to be positive
- People still preferred the traditional non-organic food products over the organic ones.
- Affection scored the least in case of both the categories, while the highest score was found to be different for both the categories.

Conclusion

From the data analysis and results, it was clear that in the current scenario, non-organic food products are preferred over the non-organic ones. However, the attitude towards organic food is positive and changing in the correct direction. There is positive cognition, affection and conation which implies that in the future, if some of the problems faced in availing organic food products are resolved, there is no lack of demand for them.

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