

BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD IN SIVAKASI

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Abstract: *In last few decades, organic food sector is growing rapidly. Consumers have a great interest in their food habits like healthy, tasty, high nutrition, environmental and social welfare concern and also sustainability. The objective of this paper is to gain knowledge about factors influencing the consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food. The paper investigated the perception of the respondents towards organic food such as perceived health, product attribute, product feature, social welfare and availability. It also focuses on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food in Sivakasi. Factor analysis has been applied to analyse the perception towards the purchase of organic food products. Correlation analysis has been used to find the significant relationship among factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic food. Multiple regression analysis used to find the factors influencing the purchase behaviour indicates that the product feature highly influences the purchase behaviour and hence, it was suggested by the researcher that a sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic food products. Positioning organic food products in the minds of consumers would influence consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming. It was concluded that concluded that the consumers' health conscious, quality, safety and value for money would lead to purchase organic food.*

Keywords: consumer behaviour, organic food, perception

INTRODUCTION

At present, there has been a tremendous change in the global organic food market. There is an escalating consumers' apprehension for food safety and quality and, at the same time, there has been a momentous market augmentation in differentiated or high value products consumption, admitting organic products. Organic food is invariably catching up pace among the Indian retailers due to the increasing awareness among Indian consumers towards leading a healthy life. Though, healthy, safety, taste and nutritious value of organic food influence the buying behaviour, there are some hiding factors like high price, lack of awareness about organic concept and their availability that form obstacles in buying process. Fresh fruits and vegetables are of vital importance to the organic sector as they are the entrance point for many customers and account for one-third of sales. The present study focuses on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food in Sivakasi.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Organic food promotes a balance of human, other living organisms and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use of harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. This study attempted to gain knowledge about Consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food and to see whether there is any potential that might change their behaviour. However, before any behaviour can be changed, it is necessary to evaluate the current state of consumers' perception. Therefore consumer's behaviour towards organic food and perception to purchase organic food will be the main scope of this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is a worldwide phenomenon that people have become more and more separated from the origins of their food. Worried about their health, consumers seek out certified products to protect themselves from toxins and carcinogens. With an increasing awareness of the domestic problems regarding pesticide poisoning and diseases from fresh food products, the Thai government overhauled its approach to food safety (Srithamma, Vithayarungruang Sri and Posayanonda, 2005). The attributes which are affecting the consumer attitude to buy organic food which in turn affects the purchasing intention. Health consciousness, environmental consciousness, personal norms and, subjective norms are the four predictor variables were significantly influencing customer attitude towards organic purchase (Madhan Kumar P, 2016). The quality of food products was one of the most important parameters for food product purchase decision. People rated various parameters differently for different product groups. The results has indicated that cleanliness and free from pesticides were the most important criteria for products like food grains, pulses; store quality, marketing mix and taste, flavour explained the maximum variance in the purchase decision of fruit and vegetables(Gupta, 2009).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Analyse the factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic food.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey has been undertaken to analyze the consumer's buying behaviour towards purchase of organic food. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The data collected are classified and analyzed keeping in view the objectives of the study. For the purpose of analysis the statistical tools such as Percentage, Correlation and Multiple Regression have been used.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile of the respondents was obtained by using five parameters namely gender, age, monthly income, educational qualification and occupational status. The same is presented in the Table 1

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Descriptive Statistics	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	180	72.0
	Female	70	28.0
	Total	250	100
Age	Below 20	23	8.2
	21 – 40 years	182	72.8
	41 – 60 years	39	15.6
	Above 60 years	6	2.4
	Total	250	100
Monthly Income	Below Rs.5000	30	12.0
	5000 – 10000	131	52.4
	10000 – 15000	46	18.4
	Above 15000	43	17.2
	Total	250	100
Educational Qualification	School Level	81	32.4
	Graduate	128	51.2
	Post Graduate	29	11.6
	Professional	12	4.8
	Total	250	100
Occupational Status	Government \ Private Employees	118	47.2
	Professional	4	1.6
	Cooly	54	21.6
	Home Maker and Retired People	74	29.6
	Total	250	100

It is seen from Table 1 that male (72.0%) constituted majority of the respondents in the sample data when compared to female (28.0%). Most of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21- 40 years of age (72.8%) while the number of respondents above 60 years of age was the least (2.4%). It was also observed that majority of the respondents in the sample had a monthly income of Rs.5000 – 10000 (52.4%), Majority of the respondents was graduates (51.2%) and majority of the respondents are government \ private employees (47.2%).

PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD

The adoption of organic production and processing is highly determined by market demand. Therefore, this is reflected in consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards organic food products. Factor analysis has been applied to analyse the perception towards the purchase of organic food products. Before applying factor analysis, Table 2 exhibits the test of goodness of fit for factor analysis.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.753
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2184.789
	D. f.	300
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary Data

KMO test and Bartlett's Sphericity test has been applied to check whether the data is fit for factor analysis or not. Then Kaiser Meyer Oklin (KMO) Test and Bartlett's test of Sphericity are carried out to ensure the adequacy of the data. The value of KMO statistic test is 0.753 which is above 0.5 which is taken as minimum level of acceptance. The value of chi square for Bartlett test of Sphericity was also significant. These test confirmed that the data are adequate for factor analysis.

Before grouping the variables into factors, variances are calculated. Table 3 exhibits the factor loadings for the perception of consumers towards the purchase of organic food products

Table 3 Factor Loading - Perception of Consumers towards the Purchase of Organic Food Products

Variables	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Health					
High quality	.694	.093	.119	.045	.186
Guarantee certification	.668	.088	.318	.224	.028

Healthy	.613	.196	-.105	.128	-.144
Freshness	.604	.096	-.092	-.167	.225
Value for money	.576	.090	.283	.391	-.118
Maintain diet balance	.532	.167	.097	.050	.413
Product Attribute					
Enhance energy	.090	.739	.138	.106	.151
Protect environment	-.151	.704	-.015	.333	0.01
Improve immunity power	.348	.687	-.080	.043	.101
High nutritional value	.278	.653	.302	-.092	-.102
Natural ingredients	.250	.612	.294	0.01	.028
Social Welfare					
Local economy	.161	.067	.684	.133	.325
Savings Resources	.044	.153	.638	.112	.159
Positive image	.115	.264	.521	-.165	.104
No additives	.123	-.042	.496	.297	.087
Animal welfare	-.286	.291	.486	.341	.095
Product Feature					
Fashion \ more appealing	.097	-.040	.082	.668	.128
Low price	-.145	.212	.057	.650	.373
Taste better	.283	.110	0.01	.573	-.087
Sustainability	-.226	.153	.427	.569	.059
Attractive packaging	.260	.035	.022	.365	.029
Availability					
Easily available	.059	-.105	.131	.307	.680
Seasonal product	.115	.023	.406	.102	.664
Produced without pesticides	.079	.168	.348	-.180	.657
Safety	.115	.284	-.459	.298	.504

Table 4 shows the result of factor analysis for the given twenty five statements (factors) relating to perception towards purchase of organic food. It is clear that all the twenty five statements had been extracted into five factors and each statement is now identified with the corresponding variables namely perceived health, product attribute, social welfare, product feature and availability.

Table 4 Variables with the Highest Factor Loading

Factor	New identified name	Selected Statement	Factor loading
F1	Perceived Health	High quality	.694
F2	Product Attribute	Enhance energy	.739
F3	Social Welfare	Local economy	.684
F4	Product Feature	Fashion \ more appealing	.668
F5	Availability	Easily available	.680

The factor analysis reveals that above five factors influence the perception of the consumers towards organic food. The five factors are identified from variables loading on specific factors. The reliability scores of these factors are found to lie within acceptable limits.

Impact of Factors on the Buying Behaviour towards Organic Food

The impact of factors that are identified on the buying behaviour of the consumers is measured using multiple regression. The reliability of the items under each factor is measured using cronbach's alpha. The results are exhibited in the Table 5.

Table 5 Factors influencing the Purchase of Organic Food

S.No.	Attributes	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Perceived Health	6	0.852
2.	Product Attribute	5	0.831
3.	Social Welfare	5	0.879
4.	Product Feature	5	0.818
5.	Availability	4	0.893

Table 5 upshots that the scale determines the factors influencing purchasing of organic food are more reliable since the Cronbach's Alpha values are more than 0.8. Product Attribute is reduced to 5, since the variable about the respondents opinion about their natural ingredients has less correlation value it is removed. Social Welfare consists of 5 variables and a variable related to their opinion towards Animal welfare has less correlated and hence removed.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS AMONG FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD

H_0 : There is no significant relationship among factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic food

Table 5 Significant relationship among Factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic food - Result of Correlation Analysis

	Perceived Health	Product Attribute	Social Welfare	Product Feature	Availability
Perceived Health	1				
Product Attribute	.339** .000	1			
Social Welfare	.376** .000	.355** .000	1		
Product Feature	.552** .000	.491** .000	.459** .000	1	
Availability	.325** .000	.228** .000	.326** .000	.423** .000	1

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is understood from the Table 5 that there is a low degree of positive correlation between Perceived Health and Product Attribute (0.339), Social welfare (0.376) and Availability (0.325) at 1 per cent level of significance. But the relationship between perceived health and product feature is moderate (0.552). Thus, among the four variables Product feature has dominant correlation with Perceived Health.

There is a low degree of positive correlation between Product Attribute and Social welfare (0.355) and Availability (0.228) at 1 per cent level of significance. But the relationship with Product feature is moderate (0.491). Thus, among the three variables, Product feature has a dominant correlation with Product Attribute.

There is a moderate degree of positive correlation between Social welfare and Product feature (0.459), and a low degree of positive correlation between Social welfare Availability (0.326). Among the two variables, Product feature has a dominant correlation with Social welfare.

There is a moderate degree of positive correlation between Product feature and Availability (0.423).

MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS FOR FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD

Regression analysis involves identifying the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Here, regression analysis is used to study the significant relationship between dependent variable, the buying behaviour of the respondents and independent variables such as Perceived Health (X_1), Product Attribute (X_2), Social Welfare (X_3), Product Feature (X_4) and Availability (X_5) by formulating the following null hypothesis.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between dependent variable and each independent variable keeping about other independent variable being held constant.

Table 6 ANOVA and Model Summary

Multiple R	0.863				
R ²	0.745				
Adjusted R ²	0.740				
Standard Error	0.194				
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p value
Regression	51.483	9	5.720	150.640	.000 ^b
Residual	17.658	465	.038		
Total	69.140	474			

It is found from the Table 6 that the value of R (0.863) indicates a good level of prediction of the dependent variable. The value of R² (0.745) points out that the independent variables in these analysis explain 74.5% of the variability of the dependent variable and adjusted R² (0.740), which is close to R² (0.745) confirms that the independent variables make a contribution of 74% in explaining the dependent variable.

$F_{(9,465)} = 150.640$ and $p < 0.005$ explains that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable. It reveals that the regression model is considered to be a good fit of the data.

Table 7 Factors influencing the Buying Behaviour of the Respondents towards Organic Food - Multiple Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	49.428	9.894		4.996	.000
Perceived Health	.667	.197	.105	3.389	.001
Product Attribute	.895	.184	.165	4.871	.000
Social welfare	.663	.166	.122	4.005	.000
Product Feature	.975	.103	.305	9.500	.000

Availability	.787	.190	.162	4.148	.000
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The multiple regression equation is

$$Y=49.428 + 0.667 (X_1) + 0.895 (X_2) + 0.663 (X_3) + 0.975 (X_4) + 0.787 (X_5)$$

In a nutshell,

- Product Feature influences the purchase behaviour to the extent of 97.5 per cent.
- Product Attribute influences the purchase behaviour to the extent of 89.5 per cent.
- Availability influences the purchase behaviour to the extent of 78.7 per cent.
- Social Welfare influences the purchase behaviour to the extent of 66.7 per cent.
- Perceived Health influences the purchase behaviour to the extent of 66.3 per cent

Based on Standardized co-efficient value, X_4 (Product Feature factor) is the most important factor influencing the buying behaviour of the respondents towards organic food followed by X_2 (Product Attribute factor), X_5 (Availability factor), X_1 (Health factor), X_3 (Social Welfare factor).

SUGGESTIONS

1. Since the product feature highly influences the purchase behaviour, a sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic food products.
2. Positioning organic food products in the minds of consumers would influence consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming.
3. The availability organic food products need wider advertisement.

CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour is a good indicator in analyzing the factors influencing the buying behaviour of the respondents towards organic food. The variables like perceived health, product attribute, social welfare, product feature and availability to buy persuades a consumer to buy organic foods, and have greater influence. Nutritional value, natural ingredients food safety, availability and awareness about availability are some of the indirect intention for buying organic food. The consumers believe that the organic food is valuable for their lives as there exists a high degree of correlation between perceived health and product features. As perceived health is the least influencing factor among all, it is necessary to pay attention towards guarantee certification and price of the goods which should be minimized. The researcher concluded that the consumers' health conscious, quality, safety and value for money would lead to purchase organic food.

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