

CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic world, people are facing numerous health issues due to poor eating practices and minimal significance to healthy life style. It's the right time for the people to concentrate on their health and adapt to natural food habits. Organic foods have become one of the most sensitive areas of today's Indian market due to increase in literacy levels, thrust for fitness, unnamed health disorders, etc. Hence, an effort has been made to divulge the consumer preference towards organic foods in Coimbatore city.

Keywords: Organic products, Consumer, Health, Novelty, Nutrition, Food safety, Quality.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary era, Indian consumers are attracted by natural foods due to the unlighted goodness filled with organic food products. "Eat healthy and live healthy" is the appropriate mantra for the consumers of current scenario. Since organic foods are grown with natural fertilizers and pesticide free products, it is ensured for safe consumption for the public. Natural foods are an endowment for the consumers and it is a budding opportunity for the human community as a whole. The consumption of organic foods enhances the immune system whereby numerous mysterious health disorders can be controlled by such idle consumption. The Indian Government has organized several programmes corresponding to natural food product cultivation and it includes the official recognition bodies, standard for organic production, endorsement and advertisement of organic farming. Consumer choice on organic products is based on the common insight that organic products have added enviable distinctiveness than usually developed substitutes. A number of supplementary characteristics namely novelty, nutritional value, taste, manifestation, ensigns and other physical features create an impact on the consumer preference towards organic products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Goldman and Hylton (1972) stated that naturally cultivated food products are coined with the prime terms namely 'green' and 'friendliness'. Collins, Cartwright (1992) A survey of super market customers in Oklahoma and Texas highlighted that majority of the consumers were alarmed about the adverse effects of pesticide deposits on their health in usage of chemical fertilizers and they were ready to afford over 10% price premium for pesticide free food products. Klosky and Tourte (1998) defined the friendly production of food products such as 'ecological' or 'natural cultivation method'. FAO (1999) highlighted that naturally produced

food accentuates the slender use of artificial fertilizers in organic production. Baker, Benbrook (2002) a recent study by consumer union showed that organically grown food have fewer and generally lower pesticide residues than conventionally grown foods. Giannakas (2002) consumers may not discover the presence or absence of organic characteristics even after procurement and consumption. Consumers may only know that the product is organic when they are informed. Vindigni (2002) stated that the elements allied with organic food may be challenging to ascertain by optical assessment alone, consumers need to acquire organic products because of an insight that these products have distinctive characteristics paralleled to conservatively developed substitutes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the factors influencing the consumer to purchase organic products
- To find out the level of satisfaction of the consumers towards organic products

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted on the basis of Descriptive research methods. The survey to know about "Consumer preferences towards organic products in Coimbatore city" lasted for the period of 4 months. The researcher has used both primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to the selected consumers. Secondary data have been collected from various sources outside from journals, magazines, other research works and also from other authenticated websites. Convenient sampling technique has been implemented in the research and the sample size is 100 respondents. Various statistical tools namely percentage analysis, chi square analysis and rank correlation were used in the study to examine the collected data. The research study was conducted only in Coimbatore city.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The demographic profile of the respondents is exhibited below.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Factors	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 25 years	11	11
	25-35years	18	18
	36-45years	33	33
	Above 45 years	38	38
Gender	Male	31	31
	Female	69	69
Marital Status	Married	77	77
	Unmarried	23	23
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	18	18
	School Level	45	45
	Undergraduate	27	27
	Post graduate	10	10

Occupation	Homemaker	55	55
	Employee	19	19
	Entrepreneur	18	18
	Professional	8	8
Family income	Below 15000	18	18
	Rs.15000-25000	27	27
	Rs.25000-35000	22	22
	Above 35000	33	33
Type of family	Nuclear	62	62
	Joint	38	38
Number of family members	2	7	7
	3	27	27
	4	43	43
	5 & above	23	23
Earning members	1	51	51
	2	22	22
	3	16	16
	4 & above	11	11

From the above table, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents 38% of respondents were in the age group of above 45 years and also 69% of respondents were female. 77% of them were married, 45% of the respondent's educational qualification is school level and 55% of respondents were homemakers. Regarding income, the majority of the respondents 33% belong to income group above Rs. 35000, 62% of respondents belong to nuclear family type, 43% of the respondents have 4 members in their family and 51% of respondents have only one earning member in the family.

Awareness on Organic Products

Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Sources of Awareness		
Magazine	10	10
Expo	22	22
Friends & relatives	28	28
Internet	40	40
Period of Awareness		
Less than 1 Year	19	19
1-2years	35	35
2-3years	31	31
Above 3 years	15	15

From the above table, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents 40% of respondents were aware about organic products through internet and 35% of respondents were aware about organic products for 1-2years.

Factors that Influence towards Purchase decision of Organic Products

Factors	Total points	Rank
Nutritional value	311	I
Food Safety	255	II
Quality	226	III
Taste	208	IV
Eco-friendly nature	201	V
Trust	192	VI
Absence of synthetic fertilizers	181	VII
Availability	154	VIII

From the above table, it is inferred that first rank is assigned to nutritional value, second rank is assigned to food safety, third rank is assigned to quality, fourth rank is assigned to taste, fifth rank is assigned to eco-friendly nature, sixth rank is assigned to trust, seventh rank is assigned to absence of synthetic fertilizers and eighth rank is assigned to availability.

Satisfaction level towards Organic Products

Organic Products	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total points	Mean score
Organic fruits & vegetables	47	39	7	4	3	425	4.25
Organic cereals & pulses	41	45	8	4	2	417	4.17
Organic Rice	51	33	11	2	3	426	4.26
Organic Oil	38	50	5	3	4	416	4.16
Processed Organic foods	43	44	6	5	2	423	4.23
Organic cosmetics	46	36	11	4	3	421	4.21
Organic meat	40	46	9	2	3	414	4.14

Most of the respondents are satisfied with organic products, since the mean value obtained by all the organic products is higher than the normal mean value.

Consumer Purchase Shift from Conventional to Organic products

Cause	Total points	Rank
Hazardous to health	628	I
Food contamination	627	II
Insecticides	625	III
Environment pollution	580	IV
Unsafe additives	461	V

Irradiation	395	VI
Soil corruption	379	VII

The above table reveals the ranking of causes for consumer purchase shift from conventional to organic food products. The most of the respondents transformed their purchasing choice from conventional to organic products because of conventional products are hazardous to health.

CHISQUARE ANALYSIS

Hypothesis: There is no relationship between personal factors and level of satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction				
S. No	Personal Factors	Calculated value	Table Value	Result
1	Age	20.60	21.01	NS
2	Gender	3.12	9.46	NS
3	Marital status	7.48	9.49	NS
4	Educational Qualification	9.97	21.01	NS
5	Occupation	27.01	21.03	S

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Farmers should be given adequate training in organic cultivation system
- Organic farming can be enhanced by providing various support by the statutory bodies
- Paying attention on promotional activities of organic products among the public is essential
- Mandatory of organic product certification by the government
- The quantity of purchasing organic products can be increased by minimizing the cost
- Government should take necessary efforts to satisfy the demand levels of organic products
- Indian organic market can be industrialized by boosting the organic market players
- Ensuring the availability of organic products in all trade areas
- More advertisement can be given for the organic products to enhance the level of awareness among the people
- Eco friendly nature of organic farming must be insisted to the civic at large

CONCLUSION

As per the say, "Health is Wealth" human community should give more importance to healthy life style. Success of the life lies behind good health of a human. So health is indispensable. Currently people are found unhealthier due to the consumption of contaminated and noxious food stuffs. Hence this is the right stage to adapt our food habits towards organic products to sustain with sound health. In present scenario, people are becoming more conscious about organic products and its consumption level has been improved to a greater extent which aids to provide an uncontaminated surrounding. health aspect, food safety and environmental concern plays a vital role in consumer decision making towards organic product purchases and several other faces namely nutritive value, quality, taste, pesticide free nature and appearance also additionally influences the consumer preference.

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