

A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

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Abstract

Organic food comprises of those agricultural food products that are not treated with chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and other synthetic chemical substances during its production, processing and storage. In addition, organic food products are not containing genetically modified materials, with the purpose of reaching sustainable system of agriculture. The organic food products awareness towards the public is keep on increasing, because of the health consciousness and the environmental consciousness. The research is focused on consumer awareness and satisfaction towards organic food products.

Key words: Organic food, organic farming, sustainable agriculture, green products, buying behaviour, etc.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is a backbone of the Indian economy. Despite this, it is facing various constraints such as fragmentation of landholding, low productivity and conversion of agricultural and land to non-agricultural uses. Still there are increasing investment opportunities in the sector due to the rising need for quality and value added products. The use of oil cakes, cow dugs, neem leaves, etc, is still practiced in India to ward off pests and used as preservatives. The use of chemical fertilizers for increased productivity started from late 1850s. In India, the first use of chemical fertilizers creates many health issues. Hence, the consumer prefers organic products. Organic foods are promoted as superior and safer options for today's health conscious consumer. Manufacturers of organic food claim it to be pesticide free and better in term of micronutrients. Consumers have to pay heavily for these products and they are willing to provide they are assured of the claimed advantages.

2. Statement of the problem

The consumption of non-organic food products has significant effect in the health of the people who suffer with the ailments that vigorously affects the natural system. In the present era, the environmental issues, health consciousness and the usage of organic food products

have become more common. Thus, the increased negative cause of the food products produced with the help of synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilizers had a thoughtful effect on consumer behaviour, which ensures the worldwide growth of organic food products at a remarkable rate. In general, the intention to purchase organic food products is not upto the mark in India because of the less perception among consumers. Hence, this study plans to contribute to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the consumer awareness towards organic food products.

3. Review of literature

Nandi, et al. (2014) examined the consumer preferences and influencing factors for purchase places of organic food products. The study was conducted in Bangalore for 201 consumers using stratified random sampling technique. The study stated that the most preferred places to purchase organic food products were specialized organic stores and supermarkets and the least preferred place were local open markets and conventional retail shops. The researcher also stated the regression result that shows the preferences about places to purchase organic food products were mainly influenced by gender, education, family size, and income.

Saranya, et al. (2015) stated that the consumers concerns on food safety, quality and nutrition are increasingly becoming important across the world, which has provided growing opportunities for organic food in the recent years. The demand for the organic food products are steadily increasing in the developed countries, while developing countries still need to go a long way. The untapped potential markets for organic foods in the countries like India need to be realized with organized interventions various fronts, which require a better understanding of the consumer's preference on food. The study concluded that an analysis of consumers' awareness of various aspects of organic products may be considered as important ground to build the markets for organic food in the initial phase of market development.

Karpagavalli, et al. (2016) studied farmers' perception towards organic food crop cultivation in Tirupur city. For the study, 100 respondents were selected form Tirupur city. Both primary and secondary data were collected using convenience sampling technique. The study explains the socio-economic conditions of the farmers and also identified the factors influencing to cultivate organic products. The study stated the level of satisfaction towards cultivation of organic products. The researcher concluded that most of the respondents are satisfied regarding profit. Majority of the respondents recommend others to produce the organic products. The government can provide various loans and other facilities to the farmers. The government can reduce the export procedures of Indian organic foods. It would help to improve the export performance.

4. Objectives of the study

1. To study the consumer awareness towards organic food products.
2. To determine the factors influencing to purchase the organic food products.
3. To examine the level of satisfaction towards organic food products.

5. Scope of the study

The global demand for organic food products is growing at a very rapid rate. The market for organic food products has increased considerably over the last decade because of consumer increasing awareness of both health and environmental issues. The growth in demand is expected to continue in the coming years, even though the situation differs from one country to another in relation to type of products and qualities of production. Many efforts are needed to increase the growth of organic food products by communication its benefits to get potential consumers. The study also aims to reveal that the factors influencing the respondents to purchase organic food products.

6. Research methodology

The data were collected from the respondents in Coimbatore city. The study is based on primary data collection. To collect the primary data questionnaire is framed. The secondary data were collected from the articles, journals, newspaper and websites. The sampling technique in this study is convenient sampling. The sample size comprises of different types of consumers of the organic food products. The sample size is restricted to 208 respondents in the present study. The period of data collection is between September 2018 and November 2018. Collected data were analyzed with reference to each for the specific objectives of the study. The tools such as percentage analysis, rank analysis and chi-square analysis were used for the purposes of analysis.

7. Analysis and interpretations

7.1. Percentage analysis

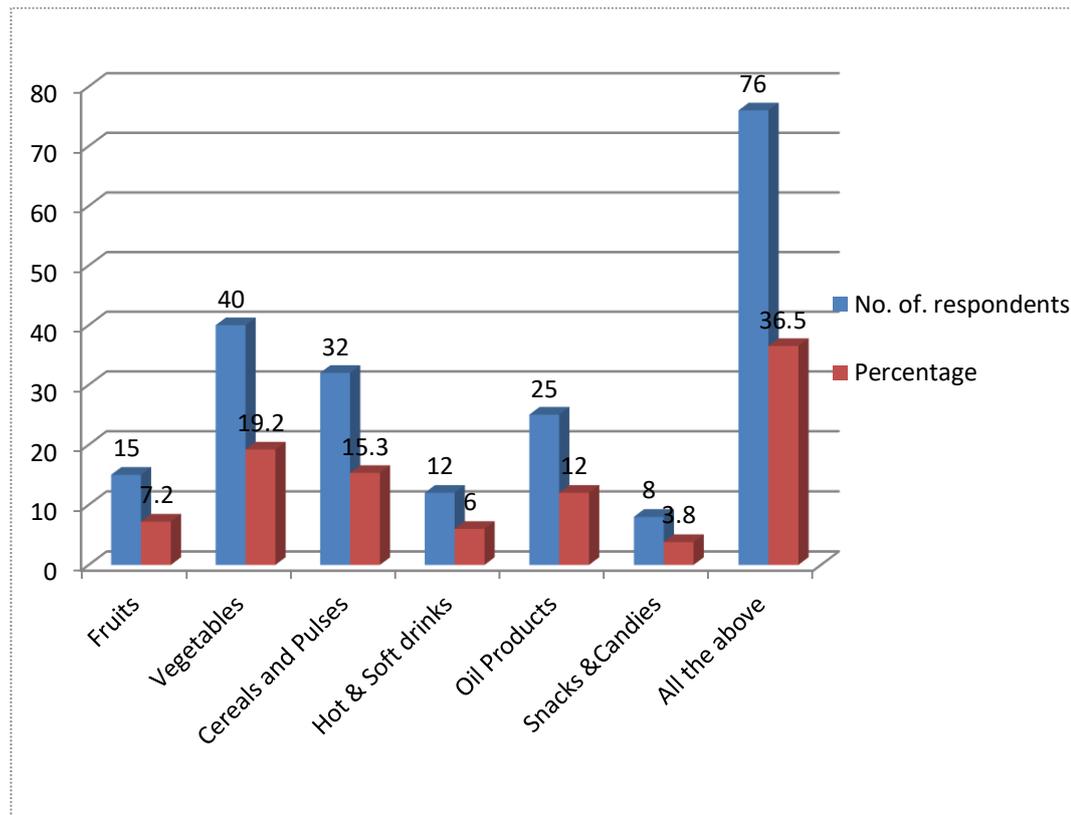
TABLE 1
Awareness Level of Organic Food Products

S.No	Organic Food Products	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Fruits	15	7.2
2	Vegetables	40	19.2
3	Cereals and pulses	32	15.3
4	Hot & soft drinks	12	6
5	Oil products	25	12
6	Snacks & candies	8	3.8
7	All the above	76	36.5
	Total	208	100

The above table describes that out of 208 respondents, 36.5 per cent of the respondents are aware of all the organic food products, 19.2 per cent of the respondents are aware of organic vegetables, 15.3 per cent of the respondents are aware of organic cereals and pulses, 12 per cent of the respondents are aware of organic oil products, 7.2 per cent of the respondents are aware about the organic fruits, 6 per cent of the respondents are aware about the organic hot & soft drinks and 3.8 per cent of the respondents are aware about the organic snacks and candies. The study concluded that most of the respondents (36.5 per cent) are aware of all organic food products.

FIGURE 1

Awareness Level of Organic Food Products



7.2. Rank analysis

TABLE 2

Factors Influencing to Purchase Organic Food Products

Factors	I	II	III	V	Total	Rank
Eco-friendly products	38 (190)	53 (212)	78 (234)	21 (21)	693	III
Benefits	67 (335)	89 (356)	34 (102)	8 (8)	821	II
High-Nutritional value	93 (465)	72 (288)	23 (69)	3 (3)	859	I
Easy availability	13 (65)	19 (76)	25 (75)	71 (71)	447	IV
Price	13 (10)	19 (44)	25 (51)	71 (102)	359	V

The above table shows that the factor influencing to purchase organic food products. The majority of the respondents state that the main factor influencing to purchase the organic food products is high nutritional value placed as first rank. A benefit for purchasing the organic food products is the second rank. The third important factor influencing to purchase the

organic food products is eco-friendly products. Easy availability for purchasing the organic food products placed as fourth rank. Price is the last important factor influence to purchasing the organic food products placed as fifth rank.

7.3. Chi-square analysis

There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the respondents and the level of satisfaction towards organic food products.

TABLE 3

Education Qualification and Level of Satisfaction

Education	HS	S	N	D	HD	Total
No formal education	7	12	3	1	-	23
School level	10	18	2	1	-	31
Under Graduate	16	52	9	-	1	78
Post Graduate	9	24	6	-	1	40
Professional	13	18	3	2	-	36
Total	55	124	23	4	2	208

* Significant at 5 per cent level

Note: HS - Highly Satisfied, S – Satisfied, N – Neutral, D – Dissatisfied, HD – Highly Dissatisfied.

The chi-square result shows that the calculated value is 7.96 and is more than the table value 26.29. Since calculated value is less than the table, the hypothesis is accepted. So it is inferred that there is no significant relationship between the educational qualification and satisfaction level of respondents.

8. Findings

1. Most of the respondents (36.5 percent) are aware of all organic food products.
2. The majority of the respondents state that the main factor influencing to purchase the organic food products is high nutritional value placed as first rank. A benefit for purchasing the organic food products is the second rank. The third important factor influencing to purchase the organic food products is eco-friendly products. Easy availability for purchasing the organic food products placed as fourth rank. Price is the last important factor influence to purchasing the organic food products placed as fifth rank.

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9. Suggestions

1. The creation of awareness level of organic food products is necessary among customers.
2. The price of the organic food products can be reduced to capture more market and consumers.
3. The government has to implement various schemes and subsidies for farmers to develop organic farming and also increase organic food products.

10. Conclusion

From the study the researchers have gained knowledge about the customer awareness towards organic food products. The study helped the researchers to know about the awareness of organic food. Consumer perception and attitude are playing the major role while buying not only organic food products but all other food products. Many people have even forgotten to use organic food products and these needs to be changed. In India, food sector is ready to take the centre stage but the need of the hour is to chalk out a definite nationwide strategy to ensure a balanced growth of supply and demand in domestic market. The marketers of organic food need to be innovative and dynamic in order to complete with the changing purchase behaviour in the organic food products among various consumers.

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