



A STUDY ON USER PREFERENCE TOWARD ORGANIC PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PALAKKAD CITY

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Abstract

People nowadays are very health conscious and they started using environmentally friendly and natural products in their everyday lives. Organic personal care products are becoming very popular, and they occupy a strong market place. The purpose of this study is to identify the preference and satisfaction of consumers towards organic personal care brands consumers towards green products at Palakkad city, Tamil Nadu.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing consumer preferences toward organic products. The target population in this research includes consumers of Palakkad city. By making use of convenience sampling method 250 respondents have been selected. Data required for the study have been collected with the help of questionnaire. Organic food considered as healthy product and it is more preferred by the green consumers. The research result suggest that Government and social organizations have to promote organic farming at the households among general public and to take necessary steps for creating a regulatory system for authenticated organic certification and labelling in order to build-up the trust and confidence in consuming organic food products.

Keywords- Customer Preference, Personal Brand, market Place

INTRODUCTION

The organic food market has grown continuously over the past decade, but, the total share of organic food is still small compared with the total food market. There is no common definition of “organic” due to the fact that different countries have a different standard for products to be certified “organic”. In simplest words, organic foods are minimally processed to maintain the integrity of the food without artificial ingredients, preservatives or irradiation. Organic products are obtained by processes friendly to the environment, and by cultivation techniques that consider both the attributes of the final product and the production methods. A wide range of consumers of organic food and non-organic food was addressed and scrutinized to obtain their observations and visions of organic food. All organic food consumers are not having the same method of approach toward organic food. Subsequently, the statistical process guides us to comprehend the relation and the model of the consumer behaviour trends in organic food in India.

The approach and outlook toward agriculture and the marketing of food have seen a quantum change worldwide over the last few decades. Whereas earlier the seasons and the climate of an area determined what would be grown and when today it is the “market” that determines what it wants and what should be grown.

The focus is now more on quantity and “outer” quality (appearance) rather than intrinsic or nutritional quality, also called “vitality”. Pesticide and other chemical residues in food and the overall reduced quality of food have led to a marked increase in various diseases, mainly various forms of cancer and reduced bodily immunity.

This immense commercialization of agriculture has also had a very negative effect on the environment. The use of pesticides has led to enormous levels of chemical build up in our environment, in soil, water, air, in animals and even in our own bodies. Fertilizers have a short-term effect on productivity but a longer-term negative effect on the environment where they remain for years after leaching and running off, contaminating ground water and water bodies. The use of hybrid seeds and the practice of monoculture have led to a severe threat to local and indigenous varieties, whose germplasm can be lost forever. All of this is for “productivity”. In the name of growing more to feed the earth, we have taken the wrong road of unsustainability. The effects already show - farmers committing suicide in growing numbers with every passing year; the horrendous effects of pesticide sprays by a government-owned plantation in Kerala some years ago the pesticide-contaminated bottled water and aerated beverages are only some instances.

The bigger picture that rarely makes news however is that millions of people are still underfed and where they do get enough to eat, the food they eat has the capability to eventually kill them. Yet, the picture painted for the future by agrochemical and seed companies and governments is rosy and bright. Another negative effect of this trend has been on the fortunes of farming communities worldwide.

This is where organic farming comes in. Organic farming has the capability to take care of each of these problems. Besides the obvious immediate and positive effects organic or natural farming has on the environment and quality of food, it also greatly helps a farmer to become self-sufficient in his requirements for agro-inputs, and reduce his costs. Chemical agriculture and the agriculture and food distribution systems have developed, propagated, and sustained and now share a symbiotic relationship which affects each of us in many ways. Organic farming was practiced in India for thousands of years. The great Indian civilization thrived on organic farming and was one of the most prosperous countries in the world, till the British ruled it. In traditional India, entire agriculture was practiced using organic techniques, where fertilizers, pesticides, etc., were obtained from plant and animal products.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The green concept and the developing of organic food are still in the infant stage in Coimbatore District. Therefore, there is a need to gain knowledge about the consumer's behaviour towards organic food products. Specifically, this study attempts to examine consumer's perception, purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour and the interrelationship between them in the context of organic food products.

The Organic food has been grown without the use of toxic chemicals, pesticides or fertilizers. The food is as natural as can be, safer for the environment and usually tastes better too. Organic food has plenty of advantages when compared to the non-organic food that have been processed with artificial preservatives and chemicals. But till people are not aware quietly.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the awareness of the respondents on organic food products.
- To know the satisfaction level of the respondents towards the organic food product.
- To identify factors that influence to purchase of organic food among consumers.
- To offer suggestions based on the findings of the study

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The validity of any research depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analysing the same in a logical and sequential order. In the present study, an extensive use of both primary and secondary data was made.

Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

Sampling Design

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study for analysis purpose. For collecting primary data, field survey technique was employed in Coimbatore District. A well framed questionnaire was also used to collect the primary data.

Sampling Method

The sampling used for the study is convenient sampling. This sampling is selected by the researcher for the purpose of convenience to access. A pilot study is conducted to validate the questionnaire and to confirm the feasibility of the study. Based on the pilot study, the questionnaire is modified suitably to elicit response from the sample group.

Sampling Size

A sample of 100 respondents from the different locations from in and around of Palakkad District. Samples for the purpose of the study are selected systematically.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study are of two types: -

Primary data

Secondary data

Primary Data

Primary data is the data is collected from the respondent for the first time; it is original in character they are collected for the particular purpose.

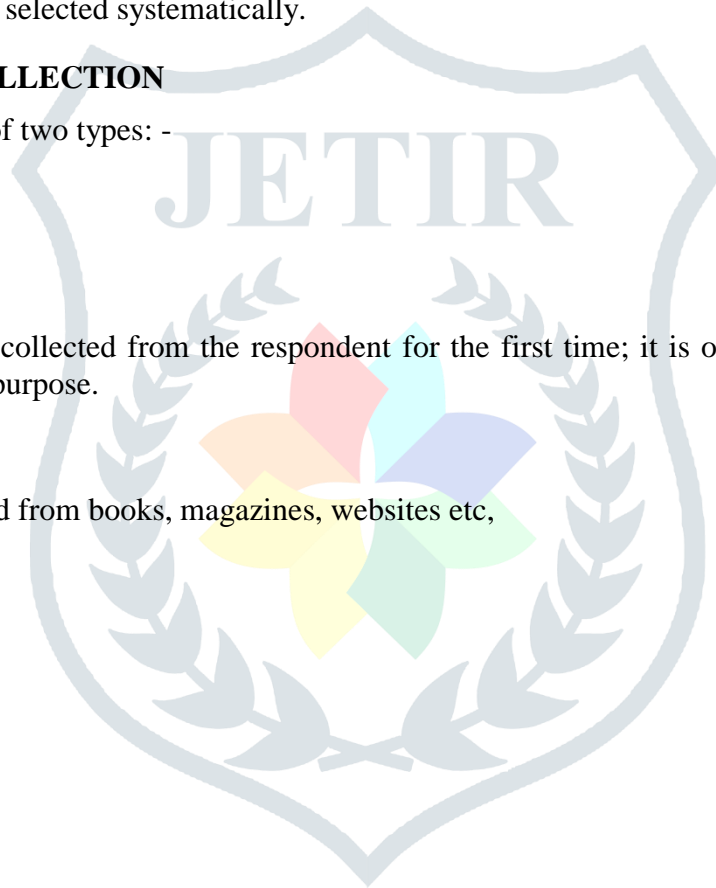
Secondary Data

Secondary data are collected from books, magazines, websites etc,

STATISTICAL TOOLS

Simple Percentage Analysis

Chi Square Test



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shafie and Rennie (2012), “Assessed consumer perceptions towards organic food and found that food safety”, human health and environmental concern along with sensory attributes such as nutritive value, taste, freshness and appearance influence organic food consumer preferences. Premium price continues to suppress organic food consumption. Understanding the grounds of increasing level of organic food consumption such as motivation are most critical in understanding the potential of the organic food to became a genuinely main stream market.

Mohamed Bilal Basha (2015), “Consumer Acceptance Towards Organic Food”. Consumer, nowadays are more concern about food safety. Policy makers at the same time putting more attention towards the concern and changing in the consumer behavior. Such awareness has influenced the pattern of food purchasing.

Ihsan Effendi (2018), “Analysis of Consumer Behavior of Organic Food in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia”. This research is driven by lack of knowledge of the marketers about organic consumers and to understand the motivations behind organic purchases. This study explores the effects of variables of organic food knowledge, environmental knowledge, health knowledge, culture, product attribute, subjective norms, and familiarity on organic attitudes, purchase intentions and behavior.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographics Profile	Value Labels	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	129	51.4
	Female	119	47.6
	Prefer not to say	2	0.8
Age	15-25	13	5.2
	26-35	231	92.4
	36-45	4	1.6
	46+	2	0.8
Education	Primary (SSLC)	3	1.2
	Secondary (+2)	67	26.8
	Degree	166	66.4
	Post Graduate	14	5.6
Occupation	Private	87	34.8
	Govt	73	29.2
	Self	83	33.2
	Wage	7	2.8

The table reveals that the 92.4 percentage respondents were between the age group of 26 to 35 years. That means most of the respondents were youth who has the access to the internet through which the survey was conducted. Also, these age group people have more awareness and accessibility to organic products. Although we sent the questionnaire to the middle and old age consumers, the number of responses received was less. The reason may be the less access or less time to spend on digital medias. Around 51.4 per cent of the respondents were male and 47.6 per cent are female. Hence the majority was of male respondents, despite the difference is meagre. Being an online survey, it is foreseeable that majority of respondents (66.4 per cent) are degree holders.

Table-2 Factors influencing the Preferences towards organic food

Factors	Mean score	Rank
Farm fresh	21.6	I
True organic	13.9	II
Price	13.7	III
Taste	15.0	IV
Value for Money	15.0	V
Brand	10.6	VI
Packing	10.2	VI
Farm fresh	21.6	1

From the table it could be inferred that fruits and vegetables (20% and 19%, respectively) are the first and majority of the consumer's choice when comes to organic products. Milk and Food grains are the next most selected organic products each with 12% of the total share. Followed by pluses, oils, meat and masalas with the percentage contribution of 10%, 8%, 7% and 7%, respectively. Contradictorily the respondents give least preference to organic baby products.

Table – 3 Significant differences between independent variable and Consumer's preference towards organic food products

Variables	Calculated Value	Variables
Gender	11.500**	Gender
Age	92.399**	Age
Educational Qualification	1.091	Educational Qualification
Occupation	70.578**	Occupation
Monthly Income	40.146**	Monthly Income
Area of Residence	1.094	Area of Residence
Family size	1.145	Family size
Family Status	47.524**	Family Status
Period of Consumption	1.222	Period of Consumption
Level of Awareness on Organic Foods	66.115**	Level of Awareness on Organic Foods
State of Health	58.728**	State of Health
Environmental Engagement	31.797**	Environmental Engagement
Diet	1.220	Diet
Level of Affective Attitude	1.682	Level of Affective Attitude

Five per cent level ** One per cent level

From the Chi-square test it is inferred that there exists a significant association between gender, age, occupation, monthly income, family status, level of awareness, state of health, environmental engagement and consumer preference towards organic products. Female consume more quantum of organic food products than male consumers. Consumer 's whose age ranges between 26 years and 50 years prefer more organic food products. Professional peoples like doctors, lawyer, chartered accountants etc., prefer more organic foods than inorganic foods. Consumers with high monthly income prefer more organic food products. Consumers, whose monthly income above Rs. 20000 prefer more organic food products. Consumer health condition and their preference towards the organic food products are closely related. Consumers whose health conditions are weak prefer more organic food than consumers with good health condition, as they considered it as a healthy food. As far as family status is concerned, family members are more favour towards organic foods. Consumers who have low awareness on organic foods varieties prefer high level of organic products, considering on their benefits to be derived from organic foods. Environmental engagement and organic food consumption have linear relationship. The consumers, with high environmental engagements prefer more organic food products than the consumers with low environmental engagements.

FINDINGS

The Majority 43 percentage respondents have one year consuming organic food products.

The Most 37 percentages of the consumers are buying organic food products from Organic shops.

The Most 32 percentage respondents are a few times a week consuming organic food products.

The Most 79 percentages of respondents said Health factor influenced to purchase the most too rganic food products.

The Most 94 percentages of the respondents are recommended organic food products to others.

SUGGESTIONS

- The current awareness programmes about the organic products will be overruled. Instead of proclaiming the benefits of using organic foods, organic farming at the households shall be promoted. The Government and other social clubs like Rotary, Lions etc., will provide the seeds of Organic products among general public and promoting to organic farming at their households.
- Organic foods may be offered at cheaper price (i.e.) organic foods may be distributed through fair price shops
- Government and organic farmers should frame a regulatory system for organic certification and authenticated labeling for ensuring quality organic food and thereby taken an effort to build-up a trust and confidence about the consumption of organic food product in the midst of organic consumers.
- Farmers should concentrate on organic cultivation and supplying it in the local market through direct marketing which will increase the availability and revenue.

CONCLUSION

- Level of awareness about the organic food product and organic food product preference has inversely related. A certain section of consumers are not aware on the demerits of conventional foods and certain sections are not preferring organic foods, even though they are highly aware on demerits of conventional foods, due to high cost and lack of trust.
- As the level of awareness increases, the consumers are more serious about the authenticated labeling and certification of organic food product.
- A little regulatory system for organic food products are badly affected the consumer preferences. Hence, the Government and social organizations have to take necessary steps in creating awareness in the midst of consumers on the merits of using organic foods.
- At the same time, the effort must be taken for creating a regulatory system for authenticated organic certification and labeling in order to build-up the trust and confidence in consuming quality organic food products.

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