



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON BUYING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture was changed into a contemporary world, and agriculturists used new technologies, synthetic fertilisers, and chemicals to increase production. Consumer needs, wants, and demand fluctuate with lifestyle and time due to changes in demographic, social, and economic aspects of life. Individual food consumption preferences are influenced by a number of existing and new food trends. Fast food, quick food, ethnic food, fusion cuisine, processed food, organic food, functional food, genetically modified food, and foods that promote health are only a few examples. Chemical-based food consumption continues to cause health and environmental problems. Organic farming was introduced to address these challenges, limiting the use of synthetic fertilisers and chemicals in the pasture. As a result, consumers are becoming more conscious of health and food safety issues, and are increasingly demanding organic foods for better health and the environment. This study looks into customer buying habits when it comes to organic foods. This research investigates why customers choose organic foods and where they are willing to buy them.

Key words: Consumer, Organic Foods, Buying Behaviour, Places.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Everyone requires air, water, and food to survive in this world since the beginning of time. Although air and water are inherent elements, deciding whether or not to eat is a challenging task. Food is a basic need for all creatures and one of the basics of life. Food has an important

function in human life. "Any nourishing substance that people or animals consume or drink, or that plants absorb in order to preserve life and growth," according to the definition. Several paleoanthropologists discovered that homo sapiens (modern humans) first appeared 1.5 million years ago and obtained eatable food by killing animals or gathering food from plants such as wild vegetables and fruits. Human consumption patterns change in 11,000 BC, shifting from hunter-gatherer to farmer (cultivating crops). Agriculture has become a prevalent practise over time, requiring more time and energy than hunting but providing abundant food that can be stored for longer periods of time. From 10,000 BCE to 1000 BCE, abundant food production fostered considerable population growth, increasing from 4 million to 50 million, and by 1880, it had reached 1.2 billion. Some of the research scholars explained the consumer behaviour towards organic food products as well some other products [9][10][11][12][14][15].

1.1. Origin and Evolution of Organic Food

The food system is always developing as human life evolves from hunter-gatherer to farmer. With the passage of time, new technologies in various domains emerge, resulting in significant agricultural progress [13] [16] [17]. Researchers are motivated by the rise in population and the advent of industrialization to introduce chemicals as fertilisers in agriculture for mass output. To comprehend the idea of organic food, one must first comprehend the origins of organic agriculture.

Organic farming is not a new concept in India. Organic farming has been used by the renowned Indian civilization since ancient times. Until the British invaded and dominated India, it was thriving. Organic farming practises were employed throughout the old Indian agriculture system. Using domestic animals such as cows and buffalos in agriculture for bullocks and their dung and plant waste as a manure or fertiliser to improve the fertility of land was the backbone of the Indian economy [7][8].

Following independence, the country faced food constraint due to a rapid growth in population and numerous natural disasters. As a result, the government had little choice but to import food from other countries. As a result, in the 1960s, the central government was forced to implement the green revolution concept under the supervision of Dr. M. S. Swaminathan. The government made the historic decision to introduce hybrid seeds into the agriculture system in order to enhance food production for millions of disadvantaged people. In 1978, the government developed Rashtriya Chemical Fertilizers to replace organic and natural manure. Every year, the widespread use of synthetic fertilisers improved food production while lowering imports. On the one hand, the green revolution increased food grain surpluses and made India a food grain exporter; on the other hand, it had negative consequences on the environment, such as soil fertility loss, contaminated ground water, and increased nitrous oxide emissions. Farmers needed massive quantities of stronger, more expensive fertilisers for their fields, which had a negative impact on the environment and human health.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

David, Arokiaraj [1] The purpose of this article is to define customer behaviour when it comes to organic food purchases. Several research have demonstrated the benefits, issues, and significance of organic food. Organic or natural farming encourages customers to purchase organic food. The goal is to determine what factors influence customers' decisions to buy organic food and to discover the most compelling reasons to buy organic in a developing country.

Rao, Dasari Panduranga, Ramanjaneyulu Mogili, and Samala Nagaraj [2] The goal of this study is to see what variables inspire people to buy organic food and how those motivations influence people's intention to buy and actual purchase of organic food.

Das, Neel, et al [3] The goal of this study was to learn more about the perspectives and motives of Indian millennial organic food consumers, a large cohort that is driving organic food consumption in the country. This chapter begins by examining the embryonic but rapidly expanding Indian organic food sector, which may be reflective of organic consumers in emerging economies in general and for which less information exists than for Western markets.

Sharma, Nayana, and Ritu Singhvi [4] A study of customer perceptions of organic food could help the burgeoning organic food industry in India and around the world. The study benefited greatly from a review of related literature in the field of the organic food market and customer perception. It has also guided the design of the current research. The desire for organic food products has been noticed by a number of researchers both globally and in India. Also addressed are the numerous aspects that influence customer perceptions of organic food items.

Pandey, Deepak, et al [5] This study provided a research model and used a semi-structured questionnaire on 200 organic clients. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed in the data analysis, and it was discovered that all of the indicating variables reflected their underlying constructs. Following CFA, it is also determined if the measurement model has reflected the acceptable fit to the data. Path analysis was also utilised to verify the expected causal relationship between the latent constructs (structural model). The goal of mature organisations is to contribute to a sustainable environment. The proposed relationship model for purchase intention could be beneficial to organic food businesses.

Tandon, Anushree, et al [6] The moderating influence of food safety concerns and buying involvement is investigated in this study. The mediating role of reasons and attitudes is also investigated. According to the findings, value was positively connected with reasons (both for and against), whereas attitude and reasons (for) resulted in favourable purchase intentions. The relationship between value and attitude is totally mediated by reasons (for and against). Furthermore, attitude has a role in the relationship between reasons and buy intentions.

3. DATA COLLECTION

This confirmatory research study looks at how people react to organic products. The number of people who consumed organic products in the Tiruchirappalli District research area is difficult to quantify. For the research, both primary and secondary data were gathered. Primary data: To confirm the consumer buying behaviour items and determine the most affecting indicators, a structured questionnaire was created. There are 31 questions in the structured questionnaire. There are 9 questions about the sample respondent's personal demographic information, and the remaining 22 questions are about the key topic of research, which is consumer buying behaviour. All 22 core questions are assessed using the likert scale approach, which uses a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Secondary data: To further comprehend the theoretical notion of consumer behaviour, the researcher gathered material from a variety of sources including journals, books, reports, magazines, and articles.

Table 1 illustrates the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Table 1 shows the respondents' Socio-Demographic profile in terms of Gender, Age, Education, Employment Status, Income, and Area, which has been further studied to gain a better knowledge of the sample under study.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic profile of Respondents

Gender	Male	212
	Female	132
Age	0-19 Years	50
	20-39 Years	200
	40-59 Years	95
	60 Years and Above	10
Education	Up to School	50
	Under Graduate	180
	Post Graduate	120
	Other	8
Employment Status	Full Time	50
	Part Time	60
	Unemployed	85
	Retired	8
	Self Employed	130
	Other	5
Income Group	less than 30000	20
	30000-60000	43
	60000-90000	60
	90000-120000	5
Area	Urban	240
	Rural	120

4. RESULT ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD

This section expands on the research study by focusing on the characteristics of respondents' buying behaviour toward organic food, when they went to buy organic food, their assumptions, responsible factors, discontinuing purchase, organic food category, monthly expenses spent on organic food, place of purchase, and the most commonly used brand for the same.

4.1. Responses of the respondents why did they decide to buy organic food for first time

The responses to the question "Why did you initially decide to buy organic food?" are shown in Table 2. Respondents were given seven different multiple alternatives from which to choose. Health awareness (n=96), Nutritional value (n=67), Friend's Suggestion (n=37), Fear of Illness (n=28), Environmental concern (n=45), Doctor's Recommendation (n=82), and Curiosity (n=11) were the primary data collected, and they were ranked from Rank 1 to Rank 7 on the basis of highest to lowest frequency.

Table 2 Responses of the respondents why did they decide to buy organic food for first time

Responses of the respondents	N	%	Rank
Health Awareness	96	26	1
Doctor's Recommendation	82	22	2
Nutritional Value	67	18	3
Environmental concern	45	12	4
Friend's suggestion	37	10	5
Fear of ill health	28	8	6
Curiosity	11	3	7
Number of Respondents	366	100%	

Respondents were given seven different multiple alternatives from which to choose. Only 96 people out of 366 have health awareness, which means that only 26% of people have health awareness and are seen as innovators for change towards healthier diets because of their important roles in shaping a family diet. They are also more concerned about the consequences of chemical residues and preservatives, earning them Rank 1 for the highest percentage given to the aspect Health Awareness.

Poor accountability, low-quality service, a lack of health awareness, and limited access to health facilities are all major issues in the health-care sector. As a result, the vast majority of Indians,

People are advised to adopt healthy habits and take various preventive steps in order to address all of these issues. People are also encouraged to increase their daily nutritional intake. They are also taught how to incorporate and maintain hygiene into their daily lives. (Second Place) 22 percent of the population consumes organic food on doctor's advice since they are more likely to be overweight and suffer from ailments such as anaemia, depression, learning and behavioural issues. Obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes are all illnesses that are heavily influenced by food in adults. They're told to eat nutrient-dense, perishable foods like vegetables, fruit, seafood, and low-fat dairy products. There should be a greater emphasis on organic food, regardless of whether or not a doctor has prescribed it.

Organic food contains nutritional value and is distinct from conventional food, according to rank 3- 18 percent statistics. Organic foods are also shown to be higher in Vitamin C.

Organic food is ranked 4–12 percent of respondents as the most important health aspect, followed by the environment and animal welfare. Concern about the environment is also a major role in food selection. Organic fertilisers do not have readily available nutrients. When fertilisers are introduced into the soil, soil microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi must work on the fertiliser to break it down and release the nutrients. Because this is a lengthy process, there is no risk of the plant receiving too many nutrients. As a result, there is no risk of 'plant burn' while using our organic fertilisers. Synthetic fertilisers, on the other hand, contain these nutrients in a ready-to-use form that, when mixed into the soil, may be taken by the roots immediately, posing a significant risk of the roots absorbing more nutrients than necessary, causing the roots and plant to burn up. It also boosts productivity while preserving the environment.

Because of a friend's recommendation, rank 5–(10%) of 100 people consume organic food. While the demand for organic food continues to rise, many people wonder if going organic is truly better for their health, the environment, and the economy than going conventional—

especially because organic food frequently comes with a long list of health benefits. Choosing an organic diet as a way of life appears to be becoming more popular among consumers. As a result, choosing a certain diet can be viewed as conveying a story about a person and suggesting how one wishes to be defined by others. In general, early eating experiences, such as persistent thoughts, feelings, techniques, and actions, can be considered as influencing a person's identity in connection to his or her diet choice. Consumers are more confidence in consuming organic food when friends, relatives, and close friends recommend it.

Rank 6-8% of respondents eat organic food as a precaution, for health reasons, and because they are afraid of getting sick. Organic food, according to consumers, is free of pesticides and is also in its natural state. In today's world, we all have Fear of illness is a good reason to eat organic food on a regular basis. Everyone wishes to be in good health. At the same time, we must recognise that once we have a body, illness, ageing, and death are all natural life processes. Taking care of the body is unquestionably our responsibility, but once we have one, we recognise that illness might strike at any time. However, if we are conscious that we are ill, we will seek all necessary care and, without a doubt, change our eating habits. Fear of illness makes our lifestyle more powerful and intelligent.

It is only possible if we eat decent organic food to obtain adequate nourishment.

Curiosity predicts purchasing motivation in a straightforward way (rank 7) The lowest percentage stated that their first time buying organic food was because they were intrigued to try new goods; curiosity is the most common reason for buying organic food. They are having for no particular cause, and it is also unknown if they will consume for a short time or for many years. Curiosity about new products can affect organic and non-organic product purchases. Organic food should be promoted through the media so that everyone can benefit from the product. As a result, this category received rank 7 for very low frequency.

4.2. Places for Purchasing Organic Food

Table 3 shows that consumers prefer to buy from Super Markets because they believe the required brand will be readily available there, while 20% prefer to buy from open markets due to distance or price, 19% prefer to buy from specialised organic food shops such as Banyan Root's, Miraj, Reliance, Srishti Organics, and others because they do so frequently, and 17 percent prefer to buy from open markets due to distance or price.

According to the table, respondents buy organic food through Super Markets, Open Markets, direct from producers, specialised organic food stores, and online shopping.

Table 3 Responses of the respondents place for purchasing organic food

Places where the consumers purchase the organic food	N	%
Super Markets	125	34
Open Markets	74	20
Specialized Organic Food Shops	70	19
Online Purchase	62	17
Directly From the Products	35	100
No. of Respondents	366	100

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The table reveals that respondents buy organic food from Super Markets, Open Markets, Direct from the Producers, and specialised organic food stores, as well as online.

The highest ranking 1 was given to Supermarket since the results suggest that 34% of respondents visit Supermarkets because they are concerned about untested and unlabeled genetically modified substances in regularly marketed supermarket items. Everyone wants to save time, so they can buy a large number of natural and organic items under one roof. Also, respondents agree that their desired brand will almost certainly be accessible in supermarkets.

Open Markets received the number two ranking because they continue to be fantastic venues for communities to meet, shop for fresh, healthy food, and get to know local farmers and ranchers. The sale of organic agricultural products is also facilitated by open markets.

Rank 3 – 19% of respondents are familiar with specialised organic food stores; nevertheless, there are fewer organic food stores in Udaipur, such as Banyan Root, Srishti Organics, Bio-Fresh, and others. According to the data, respondents frequent these locations and purchase organic food products because they value the pricing and food quality. It is also clear that these few respondents are regular clients of that particular establishment.

4–17% of respondents express an interest in online buying. Due to digital marketing approaches, time has changed and things can now be done with a single click. We can arrange our ideal goods at home with just one click. Because these people don't have time to travel somewhere, going online is their best alternative. Amazon, Green Basket, and Save Earth are some of the websites where we can get organic food and have it delivered to our homes. It will undoubtedly save us time.

Rank 5- Because most people are unfamiliar with agriculture and rural areas, only 10% of respondents would like to buy organic food straight from the producers. They prefer to shop in adjacent regions. After the crops are harvested, the items are immediately sold by the growers, eliminating the need to visit the farm to purchase green products.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to emphasise the crucial features for customers in organic food and to gain a better knowledge of the factors influencing consumer behaviour when choosing organic and non-organic food products. A better understanding of consumer behaviour would enable marketers to create a service structure that is desirable and appealing to all customers, as well as manage corporate operations in accordance with client requests. The perception of organic food among consumers is mostly based on the final step of the manufacturing process. The selective nature of consumer perception restricts the amount of information that can be presented concerning complicated subjects like organic farming or food quality.

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