

Coimbatore College Student's Perception and Buying Intention towards Organic Food products

K. Sundaresh & Dr. S. Babu

Research Scholar Management, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
Assistant Professor, M.R Govt Arts and Science College, Mannarkudi

Abstract : *The study focused on perceptions and buying intention of organic food, and motives for choosing/not choosing foods that are produced in an ecofriendly way. It particularly investigates the purchase behavior in the light of several variables like health consciousness, perceived quality, value, concern over food safety, etc., Data were collected through a survey conducted on 455 college students as consumers studying in Coimbatore District. While significant differences were observed between consumer perceptions of organic products and monthly incomes*

Keywords: *Consumer, Perception, buying behavior, Organic Food, etc*

1. Introduction

The organic food industry has grown considerably over recent years on a worldwide basis and has been the subject of much media attention over the past decade. Organic food is regarded as one of the biggest growth markets in the food industry and consequently investigating the drivers or motives for organic food consumption is an important research issue.

Consumer generally act based on the knowledge they perceive. Knowledge change the consumer perception either positive or negative attitude. The more information we get, the more we have either favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the product. Since organic food is good for environmental, and health it's very important people should be informed about the benefits, which in turn may lead the consumer towards the purchase intention. Consumers who have a lack of knowledge on organic food and those who do not buy it, will not, unless they are educated about its real benefits.

Organic consumer is that person who is responsible for buying food for the household and who buys organic food at least once or twice per month. So, if there are people who buy randomly or less than once a month then they are not considered regular organic consumers. An organic consumer has more positive beliefs concerning organic

products. For example, this product tastes better, is more natural, is healthier-they believe that more than non-organic consumers.

2. Review of Literature

Few notable and worthy research literatures were reviewed in this paper. Raghavan and Megeh (2013) in their research found out that perceptions towards organic food product had the strongest relationship with the buyer's intention to buy organic food product. Balaji and Bhama (2012) critically analyzed the consumer perception towards organic food products in India. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between various psychographic factors on the overall satisfaction of consumers towards organic food products. A study carried out by Padiya and Vala (2012) in Ahmedabad city, illustrated the organic food consumers as less price sensitive, believers in quality and information; generally seek information from newspaper, magazines and at the point of purchase.

The global organic food market grew by 9.7% in 2009 to reach a value of \$60 billion. In last 3 years, the global organic food market has grown by 25%. In 2014, the global organic food market is forecast to have a value of \$96.5 billion, an increase of 60.7% since 2009. The fruit and vegetables segment generated 31.5% of the global organic food market's overall revenues. Central strategy on organic foods has always slanted toward the global market, leaving the critical mass of domestic consumers out in the cold. Currently, about 70 per cent of organic agriculture items produced in India are being exported. Organic products fetch a 20-30 per cent higher price than inorganic products in the world market.

Shafie and Rennie (2012) study found that price was the obstacle factor towards organic food consumption. Sangkumchaliang and Huang (2012) their study results indicated that the main reasons for purchasing organic food products are expectations of a healthy and environmentally friendly means of production and mostly older educated buyers tend to buy organic foods. Saleki

et al. (2012) in their study in Iran, determined the influence of organic knowledge, quality, price consciousness, subjective norms and familiarity on attitude and organic buying behavior. Sakthirama and Venkatram (2012) analysed the purchase intention of organic Tea in Coimbatore city, India and the findings revealed that purchase intention of consumers towards organic food products was influenced by attitude and knowledge and familiarity to consumers.

Vlahovic et al. (2011), examined a study in Serbia and found out that most of the consumers were not adequately informed about the importance of organic food consumption; high price was found to be a limiting factor and fruits and vegetables were the mostly preferred and purchased organic products. Voon et al. (2011) in their study examined the determinants of willingness to purchase organic food among consumers in a Malaysian city, using a questionnaire survey. The results indicated that efforts to promote consumption growth should focus on influencing consumer attitudes.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To know the demographic variables of the college students as consumers using organic products in Coimbatore District
2. To find the perception of consumer about the organic products.
3. To identify the factors influencing the college students to buy organic products.

4. Statement of the Problem

This is a serious problem understood by all the consumers; however, the transition based on willingness among the consumers is happening on a slow pace. The poverty situation had forced the people of India to select only the available products instead of opting alternative choices. The transition has happened to an extent by few retail outlets exclusively promoting only organic food products, which is good sign of initiative and progress. However, the study has been conducted only considering the respondents perception and buying behavior in consuming organic food products and their preference towards the same. It becomes pertinent to understand whether proper promotional activities influenced the consumer preference and what type of initiative needed to make the consumers prefer organic products.

5.1 Area of the Study

The population covers the college student's as consumers of organic food in Coimbatore District.

5.2 Sources of Data

The study is based on primary data collection. The data was collected through a structured

questionnaire prepared and contacted personally. The secondary data was collected with the help of books, internet and journals.

5.3 Research and Sampling Design of the Study

The researcher used descriptive type of research. This research design deals with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or of groups. Descriptive research describes the state of affairs as it exist at present. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact finding inquires of different kind. In this study the research is analyzing the consumer's perception and buying behavior towards organic food products in Coimbatore district. So, the descriptive is selected for this study. The organic food stores particularly in and around Coimbatore are taken for the study are called as sampling units. The sample size of this study consists of 455 respondents. The researcher used stratified random sampling method

5.4 Tools for Analysis

The following are the tools applied on the respondents given by the respondents to analyze and derive the result.

1. Simple Percentage analysis
2. Chi- square analysis

5.5 Limitation of the study

1. The responses given by the respondents have been taken as genuine no further verification is made.
2. Time is a limiting factor in carrying out an extensive research work

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

| Age | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Particulars | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Up to 18 Years | 36 | 7.9 | 7.9 |
| 19 - 20 Years | 265 | 58.2 | 66.2 |
| 21 - 22 Years | 54 | 11.9 | 78 |
| Above 22 Years | 100 | 22 | 100 |
| Total | 455 | 100 | |
| Gender | | | |
| Particulars | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Male | 254 | 55.8 | 55.8 |
| Female | 201 | 44.2 | 100 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Total | 455 | 100 | |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Particulars | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Married | 137 | 30.1 | 30.1 |
| Unmarried | 318 | 69.9 | 100 |
| Total | 455 | 100 | |
| No. of Children's in your Family | | | |
| Particulars | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| 1 Child | 190 | 41.8 | 41.8 |
| 2 Children | 200 | 44 | 85.7 |
| 3 Children | 47 | 10.3 | 96 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Above 3 Children | 18 | 4 | 100 |
| Total | 455 | 100 | |
| Monthly Income | | | |
| Particulars | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Up to Rs. 20,000 | 190 | 41.8 | 41.8 |
| Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 40,000 | 110 | 24.2 | 65.9 |
| Rs. 40,001 - Rs 60,000 | 108 | 23.7 | 89.7 |
| Above Rs 60,000 | 47 | 10.3 | 100 |
| Total | 455 | 100 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Age * How would you rate the difference between ordinary foods and organic foods Cross tabulation | | | | | | |
| Count | | | | | | |
| Particulars | | How would you rate the difference between ordinary foods and organic foods | | | | Total |
| | | Very slight difference | Slight difference | Large difference | Very large difference | |
| Age | Up to 18 Years | 0 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 36 |
| | 19 Years - 20 Years | 18 | 37 | 118 | 92 | 265 |
| | 21 Years - 22 Years | 0 | 9 | 36 | 9 | 54 |
| | Above 22 Years | 10 | 0 | 72 | 18 | 100 |
| Total | | 28 | 64 | 235 | 128 | 455 |

Chi-Square Tests

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Particulars | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 83.805 ^a | 9 | 0 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 90.655 | 9 | 0 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 0.005 | 1 | 0.942 |
| N of Valid Cases | 455 | | |

The minimum expected count is 2.22.

7. Conclusion

From the analysis, it is incidental that socio-economic variables are associated with consumer

positive attitude towards organic foods. Family, self decision and friends play a vital role in the purchase decision making process of organic foods. The

factors eco friendly and chemical or pesticides free factor have a great impact on the decision making process. Some of the consumers are not still aware about the organic food which those sections are yet to derive the benefits of organic food consumption.. The Government and NGO have to take essential steps in creating awareness in the minds of consumers on the qualities of using organic foods and lengthen necessary assistance in cultivating high quantum of organic foods by the greater part of the farmers.

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