

A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON ORGANIC PRODUCTS AND ITS CERTIFICATION OVER MAKING PURCHASE DECISION IN CHENNAI

Magesh R, Anna University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Rajeswari M, SRMIST Vadapalani, Chennai Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

The international socio-economic environment has dramatically changed the living standard of people in a developed manner in terms of occupation, income, education, spending pattern, purchasing power, health etc. This has led the people to get better things in life and fulfill their needs. In case of consuming food and food products, people are becoming aware through media, campaign, seminars and conferences, health and nutritional education, doctor's advice and so on. Hence, in today's world people's food habits are rapidly changing. The food market, particularly organic food market is on the verge of a boom. In the last few years the organic food production and availability in the market has been increased and made a significant development in the economy. Several people have started to consider organic foods instead of conventional food because; it is healthier and less prone to chemicals. This kind of purchasing behavior plays an important role among the consumer perception towards buying organic food products. According to Indian Organic Food Market Forecast & Opportunities 2020, the market for organic food in India is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 25% during 2015-20. A noteworthy trend that is being observed is the gradual emergence of organic food as an essential part of daily diet among the upper and middle upper class population in India. With growing awareness towards healthy foods, surging income levels and shifts of consumer behavior leads India's nascent organic food market, fast and transforming into the world's fastest growing organic food.

Keywords: Food, Organic Products, Consumer, Purchase Decision.

INTRODUCTION

Review of Literature

Seethal et al. (2015), found three factors of organic knowledge, awareness and price significantly affecting the intention to consume organic food among the Generation Y in Malaysia. Thus, the findings state that Malaysian Generation Y's attitude and consumption behaviour toward organic food is useful to the scholars in green purchasing area and marketers of organic food. By understanding the reasons behind consumer organic food behaviour, productive strategies can be established by marketers and policymakers to respectively increase the involvement towards organic food and as well as society and environmental benefit Aertsens et al (2009).

Teng and Wang (2015) found that, higher levels of knowledge regarding organic foods cannot directly lead to more positive attitudes. Instead, the increase of organic knowledge can effectively reduce consumer uncertainty and create trust in organic foods, and ultimately

increases consumer attitudes of buying organic foods. The organic knowledge of consumers is mainly determined by the level of understanding of science and technology and the sources of the information by the public. If consumers' perception is good towards organic food production processes, they are more likely to generate confidence in identifying organic foods, which leads to positive influences in their attitudes towards organic foods.

Liz & Meike (2015), asked for perception on four different food origins: locally produced organic food, organic food from China, imported organic food, and locally produced conventional food. Hong Kong consumers have a positive attitude towards organic food. These three attributes (high food safety, high quality and freshness) turned out to be the most important aspects for consumers when purchasing food in general Ranjbarshamsi et al. (2016).

Hill et al. (2014) found that the knowledge factors influence buying behaviour of consumer because it was evident that most consumers do not understand the meaning of organic. Consumers therefore have to be more educated about organic and its benefits-both to health and to the environment, which may influence them to buy it in the future. This also needs to be supplemented by knowledge of the organic system.

Vega et al. (2013) concluded that the word 'organic' plays a vital role as organic foods are purchased by the consumers who give importance to health concern, food quality, safety and genuineness in food. Thus, the preservation of the environment is not a final motivation, but mediator. There is a relationship between organic food and environmental preservation. The consumers have reinterpreted the meaning of 'organic' to suit their consumption behaviour. The use of the word 'organic' induces about a product that certainly increases its value to consumers. Organic means better, not because the manufacturer communicates it, but because the consumer thinks it Buder et al (2014).

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the consumer awareness and perception on organic products and its certification over making purchase decision in Chennai
2. To evaluate the satisfaction of consumers using organic food products
3. To find out the standardization and certification of organic products

Hypothesis of the study

- H_0 There is no association between gender & awareness about organic food products
 H_1 There is a relationship between gender & awareness about organic food products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose for applied research is discovering, interpreting, and the development of methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of scientific matters of our world and the universe. Research can use the scientific method, but need not do so. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The research methodology in the present study deals with research design, data collection methods, sampling methods, survey, analysis and interpretations.

Approaches to Research

Descriptive approach: In this approach, a problem is described by the researcher by using questionnaire or schedule.

This approach enables a researcher to explore new areas of investigation. It is also called Statistical Research. The main goal is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied. The idea behind this type of research is to study frequencies, averages, and other statistical calculations. It can provide a rich data set that often brings to light new knowledge or awareness that may have otherwise gone unnoticed or encountered.

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.

1. A well-structured questionnaire is framed.
2. Findings are made and necessary suggestions and recommendations are given.

Data Collection

Data collection is one of the most important aspects of research. Two types of data are, Primary Data and Secondary Data.

Primary Data

Primary data is gathered from direct observation or data personally collected. It refers to that data which is collected for a specific purpose from the field of enquiry and are original in nature. For the project, primary data is collected from respondents using a questionnaire. A structured questionnaire has to be designed with series of close-ended and open-ended questions along with appropriate rated scale.

Sampling

Sampling is that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of concern, especially for the purposes of statistical inference.

Sampling Method: In this research, simple random sampling method is used. This is coming under probability sampling method Table 1.

Results of the study

Table 1 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS			
		Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	71	65
	Female	39	35
Age	Below 25 years	25	23
	25 – 30 years	30	27
	30 – 35 years	22	20

	Above 35 years	33	30
Income	Below 25,000	23	21
	25,000 – 35,000	40	36
	35,000 – 45,000	21	19
	Above 45,000	26	24
Qualification	UG	22	20
	PG	42	38
	Professional	35	32
	Others	11	10

1. From the above table it was noted that 65% of the respondents were male, 35% of the respondents were female.
2. This table shows that 23% of the respondents were in the age group of below 25 years, 27% of the respondents were in the age group of 25 – 30 years, 20% of the respondents were in the age group of 30 – 35 years, 30% of the respondents were in the age group of above 35 years. Hence majority of the respondents were in the age group of 25 – 30 years.
3. The above table presents the income of the respondents. 21% of the respondents are in the income group of below 25000, 36% of the respondents are in the income group of 25000 – 35000, 19% of the respondents are in the income group of 35000 – 45000, 24% of the respondents are in the income group of above 45000. So majority of the respondents belongs to the income group of 25000 – 35000.
4. The above table highlights that 20% of the respondents were completed UG, 38% of the respondents were completed PG, 32% of the respondents were completed professional courses, 10% of the respondents were completed other courses Table 2.

Table 2 AWARENESS ABOUT ORGANIC PRODUCTS			
		Number of respondents	Percentage
Awareness	Fully aware	38	35
	Partly aware	41	37
	Somewhat aware	31	28
Organic products are safe & healthier	Yes	99	90
	No	11	10
Food safety factor may influence more	Yes	100	91
	No	10	9
Certification of organic food products to protect the society	Yes	96	87
	No	14	13
Organic food products to get NPPC certification	Mandatory	76	69
	Not compulsory	23	21
	Not sure	11	10
Fitness may improve due to organic food consumption	Yes	92	84
	No	18	16

1. From the above table it was observed that 35% of the respondents were fully aware of organic products, 37% of the respondents were partly aware of organic products, 28% of the respondents were somewhat aware of organic products.
2. From the above table it was inferred that 90% of the respondents were accepted that organic products are safe & healthier, 10% of the respondents were not accepted over it.
3. From the above table it was noted that 91% of the respondents were accepted that food safety factor may influence more, 9% of the respondents were not accepted over it.
4. This table shows that 87% of the respondents were accepted that certification of organic food products to protect the society, 13% of the respondents were not accepted that certification of organic food products to protect the society.

5. It was identified that 69% of the respondents were felt mandatory over getting NPPC certification, 21% of the respondents were felt not compulsory and 10% were felt not sure on this fact.

6. This table identifies that 84% of the respondents were accepted that fitness may improve due to organic food consumption, 16% of the respondents were not accepted over it.

Table 3		
SATISFIED WITH THE ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Highly satisfied	32	29
Satisfied	29	26
Neutral	25	23
Dissatisfied	14	13
Highly dissatisfied	10	9
Total	110	100

This table presents the opinion regarding satisfaction level of organic products. 29% of the respondents were highly satisfied with the organic food products, 26% of the respondents were satisfied, 23% of the respondents were neutral, 13% of the respondents were dissatisfied & 9% of the respondents were highly dissatisfied with the organic products Tables 3 & 4.

Table 4		
ABLE TO BUY ORGANIC PRODUCTS THROUGH ONLINE		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	86	78
No	24	22
Total	110	1

This table highlights that 78% of the respondents were agree that they are able to buy organic products through online, 22% of the respondents were not agree that they are able to buy organic products through online Table 5.

Table 5		
ORGANIC PRODUCTS WILL REDUCE POLLUTION		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	90	82
No	20	18
Total	110	100

From the above table it was observed that 82% were accepted that organic products will reduce pollution, 18% of the respondents were not accepted that organic products will reduce pollution Table 6.

Table 6		
CONSUMING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS WILL PROTECT YOUR LIFE		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	84	76
No	26	24
Total	110	100

The above table shows that 76% of the respondents were accepted that consuming organic food products will protect their life, 24% of the respondents were not accepted that consuming organic food products will protect their life Table 7.

Table 7		
YOUNGER GENERATION PREFERS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Accepting	48	44
Neutral	39	35
Not accepting	23	21
Total	110	100

It was noted that 44% of the respondents were felt that younger generation was preferring organic food products, 35% of the respondents were felt neutral and 21% of the respondents were not accepting that younger generation was preferring organic food products Table 8.

Table 8		
RATE THE ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS		
Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	26	24
Fair	24	22
Good	30	27
Poor	18	16
Very poor	12	11
Total	110	100

This table reveals that 24% of the respondents rated excellent for organic food products, 22% of the respondents rated fair, 27% of the respondents rated good, 16% of the respondents rated poor, 11% of the respondents rated very poor for organic food products.

Tool Used – Correlation Analysis

To find out the relationship getting certification for organic food products & preference of younger generation towards organic food products.

Tool Used – Chi Square Analysis

To find out the significant association between, gender and their awareness about organic food products.

H_0 – *There is no association between gender & awareness about organic food products*

H_1 – *There is a relationship between gender & awareness about organic food products.*

Major Findings of the Study

1. 37% of the respondents were aware about organic products partially.
2. 90% of the respondents were accepting that organic products were safe & healthier.
3. Majority of the respondents accepting over organic food products gives immunity power
4. Most of the respondents were agree on organic food products consumption will protect ecology.
5. Most of the respondents were accepting on taste, quality & flavour in organic products.

6. 91% of the respondents were accepting that food safety factor may influence more.
7. 85% of the respondents were accepting that proper certification is there for organic products.
8. 87% of the respondents were felt that certification if organic food products protects the society.
9. Most of the respondents were accept over getting NPOP certification for organic food products.
10. 84% of the respondents were agree that fitness may improve due to organic food consumption.
11. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the organic food products.
12. 78% of the respondents were accepting over having the ability to buy organic products through online.
13. 82% of the respondents were accepting that organic products will reduce pollution.
14. Majority of the respondents were accepting that organic products may get demand based on standard certification.
15. Most of the respondents were accepting that younger generation preferred organic food products.
16. Majority of the respondents were felt excellent over using organic food products.

Results and Discussion

Through analysis it is noted that most of the respondents were satisfied with the organic food products, there was no association between gender & awareness about organic food products. It is inferred that the respondents were accepting that organic products may get demand based on standard certification. Young generation consumers mostly prefer organic food products. Majority of the respondents are having very good satisfaction on consuming the organic food products.

Scope for Future Research

1. A study can be planned for identifying the factors that motives them to buy the organic food products
2. Future study can be organized on the area of factors influencing purchase behavior of organic foods among young generation customers
3. To study the consumer buying behavior and customer satisfaction towards the organic food products.

CONCLUSION

Food is a basic need for each and every human being, but the food habit significantly differs from person to person according to their nature of living and standard, geographic region, religion, culture, climate, community practice and soon. Generally, human beings are consuming food as vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Among these two forms, vegetarian plays a predominant role in human life from birth to death. The vegetarian food is natural from plants and agriculture, which include rice, wheat, food grains, vegetables, fruits, green leaves, roots, etc. These products are having high nutritional value and produced by agricultural activities. Simply to say, if there is no agriculture, there is no food for human beings. Agriculture is a primary sector, which alone provides food and food products for peoples' daily needs. The drastic growth of population creates a great demand for food and food products. To meet this high demand of food and food products, the farmers, governments, authorities, agencies and organizations put more and more efforts to get high yields of food products.

This resulted to introduction of advance technology and innovations in agricultural farming by applying of chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides, etc. The modern technologies have vigorously reduced and converted the traditional farming methods of agriculture to modern and it becomes an emerging trend. Even though the conventional farming method is modernized, high yielded, profitable and met the great demand, it gives only chemical applied food and food products, which are unhealthy, create various side effects, diseases and affect human health significantly, and it has proved by researchers all over the world after made an in depth

examination.

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