

Consumer's Attitude and Buying Behaviour of Organic/Green Products with Reference to Erode District

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Abstract

Development has become a necessity for man's survival today and for every step put forward by man, nature has had to take three backwards. We have developed all kinds of technical know-how to make our lives simpler, swifter and better in all ways but there has been very little movement towards making our efforts "Greener" too. We have managed to put man on moon but not without first putting a hole on the ozone layer. But today the environment has been kicking back stronger and harder than ever, making it impossible for man to overlook it. Organic farming is a form of agriculture that relies on techniques such as crop rotation, green manure, compost, and biological pest control. The study has been conducted to assess the overall consumers attitude and buying behaviour of Organic/ Green Product.. It was analysed using the model and the overall hypothesis was framed to determine the overall perception of the respondents about the consumer's attitude.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organic food production is a heavily regulated hence some of the countries in European Union, United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, etc. are insisting the producers to obtain exclusive certification to market the organic foods within their borders. Generally organic farming are distinctive which needs site specific farming and crop conditioning through integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity. The screening is basically to avoid synthetic pesticides or chemical fertilizers. Only organically approved pesticides are allowed to limited conditions. It is evident that the there is considerable difference between the organic foods and conventional foods. This is due to inadequacy in manufacturing of organic foods and also insufficient to make claims that organic food is safer or healthier than conventional food. There is no evidence that the organic / green food products taste better than conventional food

products. However, there is a definite drawback using pesticides and fertilizers that will have effect on the health of the consumers. Hence, it becomes necessary to understand the attitude among the consumers to adopt organic food products to that of the conventional food products currently consumed. The study concluded that consumer should be involved with educational campaigns and advertisements to understand the importance of green products.

It is found that Mohammad Reza Iravani et. al. (2012) in their study on "Study of Factors Affecting Young Consumers to Choose Green Products" examined the social influence, consumer influence, perceived quality and environmental attitude and purchasing behaviour of green product from young Malaysian customers. Descriptive, correlation and regression analysis were applied to infer the data. Based on the analysis environmental attitude was a positive predictor for green purchase behaviour where in consumer beliefs marketer needs to have effective campaigns to motivate the young consumers.

2. CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Consumer attitudes are a composite of three elements: cognitive information, affective information and information concerning a consumer's past behavior and future intentions. In other words, attitude consists of thoughts or beliefs, feelings, and behaviors or intentions towards a particular thing, which in this case is usually a good or service. This particular study aims to understand the level of attitude among consumers towards organic food products. The consumers attitude differs significantly when they intend to purchase organic product it affects their purchase motive because of non-availability of the product, cost factors, low promotional efforts, etc. This makes the consumers distracted in their attitude towards organic products.

Rinal Shah and Preeti Pillai (2012) in their paper "Consumer's Environmental Concern and its Influence on their Purchase Intention: SEM Approach" tried to assess the purchasing intention of the consumer by highlighting five factor viz., recyclable products, not-used-on animal products, energy conservation, organically grown and ozone-friendly. Based on the factors objectives were framed to analyse the factors responsible in understanding the environmental concern and to measure the purchase intention in relation with environmental concern. The study used structural equation model and found that recycle product had strong impact towards environmental concern and their purchasing intention. The rest four factors have no impact on the objectives.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study examines the problems in the consumption of non-organic food products and the level of attitude of the consumers towards organic products and their buying behaviour associated with the organic food products. Eventhough, the attitude of the consumers are towards purchasing organic food the availability and other aspects like cost, promotional efforts, etc. are considered to be the major concern that affects the buying behaviour of the consumers. Hence it is necessary to study the promotional activities,

government initiatives, etc to promote the organic food market and the competition with the conventional products considerably intense competitor with regards to price and promotional activities. Hence it becomes necessary to findout the contribution of the organic food industry to the consumers and to assess the growth of the organic market in the near future

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To study the demographic factors of the consumers in Erode District.
- ❖ To understand attitude of the consumers towards organic food products.
- ❖ To find out the buying behaviour of the consumers towards organic food products.
- ❖ To contribute valuable suggestions for the market growth of organic food products.

5. FRAMEWORK OF HYPOTHESES

- ❖ There is no significant relationship between Age of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products.
- ❖ There is no significant relationship between educational qualification of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products.

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Green revolution and organic promotion thereby helps in protecting the environment and the health of the people as well. The present study attempts to examine the consumer attitude towards Organic / Green Products, which helps to understand the consumers point of view / perception towards the organic products in the region and to update / recommend the existing drawbacks and situations and the scope for the organic / green product producers.

7. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used descriptive type of research. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact finding inquires of different kind. In this study the research is analyzing the consumers attitude towards organic food products in Erode district. The organic food stores particularly in and around Erode are taken

for the study are called as sampling units. A list containing all such sampling units is known as sampling frame. There are about 12 well established and organized organic food products stores in the city limits of Erode. Considering the consumers attitude towards organic food products the stores were selected randomly covering all the geographically locations in all directions viz. east, west, north and south. The sample size of this study consists of 192 respondents. The researcher used convenient sampling method for primary data collection. Primary data are collected from 192 sample respondents with the help of well structured questionnaire, which is pre-tested. The primary data are supplemented by spat of secondary sources of data. The secondary sources being the published research and general articles collected from various journals, books and internet etc. For analyzing the data, the researcher transformed the data into Master Table and calculations were done using Simple Percentage Method, Garrett Ranking Method and Chi-Square Test.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to Erode City limits only and therefore findings may not be related to other areas. The survey includes all the limitations inherent in the questionnaire. Products considered for the study were only limited to organic food products and hence leads to limitations of the study.

9. RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

The study analyzed the demographics of the respondents, Reasons for preferring Organic Products, Opinion about preferring organic food products, frequency of purchase and reasons for purchase of organic food products. For the purpose of hypothesis testing Chi-square test is used to find the relationships between age and Educational Qualification compared to find the relationship with the reasons for preferring organic food products are compared.

It is observed from the table that the respondents categorized based on their demographics such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupational status, type of family, size of the family and finally their monthly family income.

Table 1 : Demographics of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Demographics	No. of Respondents (192)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Age		
	18 to 25	48	25.00
	25 to 40	59	30.73
	40 to 60	47	24.48
	Above 60	38	19.79
2.	Gender		
	Male	109	56.77
	Female	83	43.23
3.	Marital Status		
	Married	156	81.25
	Unmarried	36	18.75
4.	Educational Qualification		
	Under Graduate	60	31.25
	Post Graduate	63	32.81
	Professional	55	28.65
	Others	14	7.29
5.	Occupational Status		
	Government Employee	74	38.54
	Private Employee	57	29.69
	Business	45	23.44
	Home Maker	7	3.65
	Others	9	4.69
6.	Type of family		
	Joint	103	53.65
	Nuclear	89	46.35
7.	Size of the family		
	2 to 3 members	104	54.17
	3 to 6 members	66	34.38
	Above 6 members	22	11.46
8.	Monthly Family Income		
	Upto Rs.20000	29	15.10
	Rs.20000 to 40000	72	37.50
	Rs.40000 to 60000	44	22.92
	Above Rs.60000	47	24.48

The above table shows that more than half (56.77%) of the respondents are male and 43.23% of the respondents are female. It is understood that as high as 30.73% of the respondents belong the age between 25 and 40 years, 25% of the respondents

belong the age of 18 to 25 years, 24.48% of the respondents belong the age from 40 to 60 years and the remaining 19.79% of the respondents belong to the age above 60 years. It is clear that majority (81.25%) of the respondents' are married and 18.75% of the respondents are unmarried. Maximum (32.81%) of the respondents are post graduates, 31.25% of the respondents are under graduates, 28.65% of the respondents are having Professionals and the remaining 7.29% of the respondents have other qualification (Schooling, Diploma, ITI, etc.). It is evident from the above table that maximum (38.54%) of the respondents are government employees, 29.69% of the respondents are private employees, 23.44% of the respondents are engaged in business, 4.69% of the respondents are having other occupations and the remaining 3.65% of the respondents are home makers. More than half (53.65%) of the respondents are in joint family and 46.35% of the respondents are in nuclear family. It is understood that more than half (54.17%) of the respondents have 2 to 3 members in their family, 34.38% of the respondents have 3 to 6 members in their family and the remaining 11.46% of the respondents have above 6 members in their family. As high as 37.5% of the respondents are earning from ₹ 20000 to 40000, 24.48% of the respondents are earning above ₹ 60000, 22.92% of the respondents are earning between ₹ 40000 and 60000 and the remaining 15.10% of the respondents are earning upto ₹ 20000.

Table 2 :
Reasons for Preferring Organic Products

Reasons	Count	%
Healthier	10	5.21
Tastier	37	19.27
No preservatives	38	19.79
No added flavor	22	11.46
No pesticides	68	35.42
No food additives	14	7.29
No chemical fertilizers	3	1.56
Total	192	100.00

Source : Primary Data

The above table shows that 35.42% of the respondents opined that there is no pesticides in the organic food products is the reason for their preference, 19.79% of the respondents indicated no preservatives, 19.27% of the respondents stated tastier than any other products, 11.46% of the respondents expressed no added flavour, 7.29% of the respondents reported no food additives, 5.21% of the respondents felt healthier and the remaining 1.56% of the respondents opined no chemical fertilizers is the reason for selecting organic food products.

Table 3 :
Opinion about preferring organic food products

Preference	Count	%
Health Consciousness	83	43.23
Protect Natural Environment	41	21.35
Doctor's Advice	36	18.75
Health Problem	32	16.67
Total	192	100.00

Source : Primary Data

It is clear that maximum (43.23%) of the respondents preferred organic food products because of their health consciousness, 21.35% of the respondents preferred for protecting natural environment, 18.75% of the respondents preferred due to doctor's advice and the remaining 16.67% of the respondents preferred due to their health problems.

Table 4 :
Respondents ranking towards frequency of purchase of organic food products

Products	Rank						Garrett Score	Mean	Rank
	Rank-1	Rank-2	Rank-3	Rank-4	Rank-5	Rank-6			
Food Products (Grains, etc.)	52	41	68	10	9	12	11328	59.0	1
Dairy products	24	66	29	7	18	48	9664	50.33	4
Fruits and vegetables	47	32	30	10	32	41	9842	51.26	3
Cereals and pulses	58	41	35	12	31	15	10983	57.20	2
Snacks	9	3	12	83	76	9	8367	43.58	5
Others	2	9	18	70	26	67	7416	38.63	6

Source : Primary Data

It is evident from the above table that the highest ranking for the frequency of purchase of organic food products (M=59.00) was towards purchase of food grains, followed by second rank (M=57.20) was achieved by Cereals and Pulses, third position was achieved towards Fruits and Vegetables (M=51.26), fourth position was achieved towards dairy products (M=50.33), fifth position towards Snacks (M=43.58) and the final position (M=38.63) was achieved by Other Products (Masala products, etc.) as the list of organic products that are frequently purchased by the respondents.

Table 5 :
Reasons for buying organic food products

Reasons	Rank						Garrett Score	Mean	Rank
	Rank -1	Rank -2	Rank -3	Rank -4	Rank -5	Rank -6			
Self Motivated	86	70	13	2	16	5	12533	65.28	1
Health Conscious Advice	24	17	25	31	43	52	8482	44.18	5
Family Initiative	49	50	8	9	47	29	10175	52.99	2
Necessity	16	27	71	16	20	42	9209	47.96	3
Environmental Conscious	7	22	43	38	29	53	8287	43.16	6
Authentic and Harmless nature	10	6	32	96	37	11	8914	46.43	4

Source : Primary Data

It is evident that the reasons for buying organic food products was highly rated towards self motivation (M=65.28), followed by second position (M=52.99) was rated for family initiative, third position was towards necessity (M=47.96), fourth position was towards authentic and harmless nature (M=46.43), fifth position towards health consciousness advice (M=44.18) and the last position was achieved towards environmental concerns (43.16) as the main reasons for purchasing organic products by the respondents.

Table 6 :
Age and Reasons for Preferring organic food products

Age	Reasons for Preferring organic food products				Total
	Health Consciousness	Protect Natural Environment	Doctor's Advice	Health Problem	
18 to 25	22	10	6	10	48
	45.8%	20.8%	12.5%	20.8%	100.0%
25 to 40	27	11	14	7	59
	45.8%	18.6%	23.7%	11.9%	100.0%
40 to 60	21	11	10	5	47
	44.7%	23.4%	21.3%	10.6%	100.0%
Above 60	13	9	6	10	38
	34.2%	23.7%	15.8%	26.3%	100.0%
Total	83	41	36	32	192
	43.2%	21.4%	18.8%	16.7%	100.0%

Result

Chi-Square Value : 7.881

Degree of Freedom : 9

Table Value : 16.919

Result : Not Significant

The result of the chi-square test reveals that the calculated chi-square value (7.881) is less than the table chi-square value (16.919) at 5% level of significance and therefore, the relationship between Age of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products is not significant. Thus the hypothesis is that the relationship between the two factors does not hold good. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 7 :
Educational Qualification and Reasons for Preferring organic food products

Age	Reasons for Preferring organic food products				Total
	Health Consciousness	Protect Natural Environment	Doctor's Advice	Health Problem	
Under Graduate	20	16	9	15	60
	33.3%	26.7%	15.0%	25.0%	100%
Post Graduate	26	18	11	8	63
	41.3%	28.6%	17.5%	12.7%	100%
Professional	29	6	11	9	55
	52.7%	10.9%	20.0%	16.4%	100%
Others	8	1	5	0	14
	57.1%	7.1%	35.7%	0%	100%
Total	83	41	36	32	192
	43.2%	21.4%	18.8%	16.7%	100%

Result

Chi-Square Value	: 17.786
Degree of Freedom	: 9
Table Value	: 16.919
Result	: Significant

The result of the chi-square test reveals that the calculated chi-square value (17.786) is more than the table chi-square value (16.919) at 5% level of significance and therefore, the relationship between educational qualification of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products is significant. Thus the hypothesis is that the relationship between the two factors holds good. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

10. FINDINGS

- ❖ To sum-up, more than half of the respondents are male, while, 30.73% of the respondents belong the age between 25 and 40 years Majority of the respondents' are married. Maximum (32.81%) of the respondents are post graduates. Maximum of the respondents are government employees. More than half of the respondents are in joint family. More than half of the respondents have 2 to 3 members in their family. As high as 37.5% of the respondents are earning from ₹ 20000 to 40000.
- ❖ 34.42% of the respondents opined that there is no pesticides in the organic food products is the reason for their preference
- ❖ Maximum (43.23%) of the respondents preferred organic food products because of their health consciousness
- ❖ Highest ranking for the frequency of purchase of organic food products was towards purchase of food grains and finally, the least ranking was towards other products (Masala Products, etc.) as the frequency of organic products that are purchased by the respondents.
- ❖ It is clear that the reasons for purchasing organic food products was highly rated

towards self motivation and the least position was achieved towards environmental concerns as the main reasons for purchasing organic products by the respondents..

11. VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESES

- ❖ The hypothesis is that the relationship between Age of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.
- ❖ The hypothesis is that the relationship between educational qualification of the Respondents and reasons for purchasing organic food products is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

12. SUGGESTIONS

The study reveals that majority of the respondents preferred organic products for avoiding fertilizers and pesticides which are harmful for the mankind that leads to lots of diseases to the human. Apart from this, the consumers preferred organic products for not adding any preservative contents and flavour. Hence, it is recommended that mass of the consumers shall be made aware and initiate their buying motive towards organic products by the promoters and producers is the need of the hour.

It is evident that most of the consumers are health conscious before they contract with severe health issues. However, few of the respondents opted due to health problems, doctors advice and also to protect the natural environment. Government initiative to bring in organic / green products into the mind of the public is a must that will help to enhance the buying behaviour of the consumers.

The findings shows that snacks and other products are the least preferred organic products. Snacks is inevitable among the children consumers, hence, the consciousness needed focus by parents to inculcate their children to select only organic products that will always help them fit citizen.

Environmental consciousness and health conscious advice are the least factors rated by the

consumers which needed to be promoted through proper promotional campaigns, advertisement, etc.

When considering the hypothesis there is no significant relationship between age and reasons for preferring organic / green products whereas, there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and reasons for preference of organic/ green products. Hence, it is recommended that inducing faith and awareness about the organic products will always help the consumers, irrespective of their age, to prefer the organic / green products during their purchases.

13. CONCLUSION

Hence, the study concludes that the consumer's attitude is found to be high in avoiding

fertilizers and pesticides which are harmful to their health. It is also understood that maximum of the consumers are conscious about their health and they automatically opt for organic / green products. Hence, it is necessary to instill the good nature of the organic / green products in the minds of the consumers through promotional activities by the producers and the need of the hour is the involvement of the government to insist the producers to obtain exclusive certification for their produces and also make sure that the producers are realizing the necessary revenue for their produces that will elevate the consumer attitude towards organic/ green products and the growth of the organic market as well in future.

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