

A Study on Consumer Awareness towards the Organic Food Products in Coimbatore District

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Abstract

Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It emphasizes the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, taking into account that regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfill any specific function within the system.

Key Words: Organic foods, health beneficial and organic food awareness

1. Introduction

Organic food has gained considerable popularity in recent years. From the above definitions it can be understood that the term organic 'refers to a product or a commodity derived from organic farming. The agricultural mode of production is natural and does not use synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, chemical herbicides, artificial fertilizers or growth hormones. Recycled natural organic materials and the principle of crop rotation are used. Organic farming is a method of cultivation that uses agricultural techniques that respect the environment and animals. Organic farming favours natural raw materials and bans additives, fertilizers and other artificial pesticides. The organic sector has become democratized in recent years, and many organic products can now be found in different distribution channels: from local producers to supermarkets, specialized shops and markets.

2. Rational of the Study

This study is confined to Coimbatore urban, semi-urban and rural. Coimbatore is the third largest city of the state and it the headquarters of the Coimbatore district. It is one of the most industrialized cities in Tamil Nadu. The study considers the organic food products only which is mostly used in Coimbatore District. Other organic products such as textile items are not dealt in the present study.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the awareness of consumers towards the organic food products in Coimbatore District.
- To evaluate the beliefs and attitudes of consumers towards the organic food products in Coimbatore District.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing begins with an assumption made about the parameter. Hypothesis is a supposition made. It is a quantitative statement about the population. In this study, suitable hypotheses were framed and tested for their significance at 5% level.

Research Methodology

It deals with the systematic method comprising of declaring the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analyzing the facts and reaching certain conclusions. Certain conclusions are in the form of solution(s) towards the problems concerned. It's also the certain generalizations for some theoretical formulation.

Research Design

The Coimbatore District is divided into 5 zones, namely central, east, west, north and south. For the purpose of the study convenient sampling method was administered. One thousand questionnaires were distributed among respondents from which 290 were received from regular organic food consumers. Only 290 respondents who have completed the entire survey instrument were considered for the present study.

Tools to Be Used

1. Simple percentage analysis
2. Chi-square test

Limitation of the Study

There may be some other aspects other than awareness, belief and attitude and having influence on the purchase behaviour or consumer towards purchase of organic food products are not considered for this study.

The present study has been conducted by taking a sample of 290 respondents.

Result Analysis and Discussion

Table: 2.1.1, Details of Demographic

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
GENDER		
Male	120	41.3
Female	170	58.6
Total	290	100.0
AGE		
Up to 25 years	68	23.4

26 to 40 years	82	28.2
41 to 60 years	92	31.7
Above 60 years	48	16.5
Total	290	100.0
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
Upto School level	52	17.9
Diploma/Degree	136	46.8
Post-Graduation& above	65	22.4
Professionals	37	12.7
Total	290	100.0
OCCUPATION		
Employed	140	48.2
Self Employed/Business	35	12.0
Professionals	13	4.4
Agriculturist	102	35.1
Others	0	0
Total	290	100.0
INCOME		
Up to Rs.20,000	71	24.4
Rs.20,001-Rs.40,000	107	36.8
Rs.40,001-Rs.60,000	82	28.2
More than Rs.60,000	30	10.4
Total	290	100.0
MARITAL STATUS		
Unmarried	92	68.2
Married	198	31.7
Total	290	100.0
NO OF FAMILY MEMBERS		
Small Size	201	69.3
Medium Size	46	15.8
Large Size	43	14.8
Total	890	100.0
PLACE OF RESIDENCE		
Urban	97	33.4
Semi-Urban	95	32.7
Rural	98	33.7
Total	290	100.0

Source: Primary Survey 2021

The above table depicts that details of demographic have been explained. The majority of the consumers are female. The most of the consumers are using organic foods 41 – 60 years ‘age of people. The majority of the consumers are graduate/diploma. The most of the consumer’s occupation is agriculture. The majority of the consumers come under Rs. 20,000 to 40,000 income levels. The most of the consumers

are married. The majority of the consumers are having small size family the most of the consumers are rural peoples.

Gender Factor and Awareness Towards Organic Food Products

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between gender and awareness towards organic food products.

TABLE:2.1.2, Relationship between Gender and Awareness towards Organic Food Products

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.666 ^a	2	<0.001**
Likelihood Ratio	18.569	2	<0.001**
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.618	1	<0.001**
N of Valid Cases	290		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 51.15.			

Since p-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between gender and awareness towards organic food products.

Age and Awareness towards Organic Food Products:

In this study, the relationship between age and awareness towards organic food products was tested and the results of the study are given below:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between age and awareness towards organic food products.

TABLE:2.1.3

Relationship between Age and Awareness towards Organic Food Products

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.104 ^a	6	0.028
Likelihood Ratio	18.294	6	0.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.729	1	0.053
N of Valid Cases	820		
a. a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.75.			

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. And, it can be concluded that there is

relationship between age and awareness towards organic food products.

Findings of the Study

1. The majority of the consumers are female.
2. The most of the consumers are using organic foods 41 – 60 years 'age of people.
3. The majority of the consumers are graduate/diploma.
4. The most of the consumer's occupation is agriculture.
5. The majority of the consumers comes under Rs. 20,000 to 40,000 income levels.
6. The most of the consumers are marries.
7. The majority of the consumers are having small size family
8. The most of the consumers are rural peoples.
9. There is association between gender and awareness towards organic food products.
10. There is relationship between age and awareness towards organic food products.

Recommendations

Considering the place preference for organic products, all of the respondents expressed their preference to purchase organic food products in organic stores. And majority preferred super market also. Hence, super markets can have a separate section for these products. Since, regarding the information almost 50% get information from Internet and social media, it not surprises that 73.17% preferred to purchase organic goods online. It should be considered seriously by the marketers of organic food. They can plan their strategy with online marketing platforms like Big Basket and the like.

Conclusion

The study concludes that consumer awareness of organic food products in Coimbatore District is gradually increasing, mainly due to growing concerns about health, food safety, and environmental sustainability. Many consumers recognize that organic food is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides and believe that it provides better nutritional value and promotes a healthier lifestyle. These perceptions play an important role in influencing consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward organic food products. However, the findings also indicate that the overall level of awareness is still moderate, and only a small proportion of consumers possess a high level of knowledge about organic certification, labelling, and the difference between organic and conventional food products. In some studies, conducted in Coimbatore, only about 14% of respondents were highly aware, while a larger proportion were either partially aware or had limited knowledge about organic foods.

Price, availability, and lack of adequate information were identified as major barriers preventing consumers from purchasing organic food regularly. Many consumers perceive organic products as expensive compared to conventional food items, which restricts frequent buying, especially among middle-income groups. At the same time, limited availability in local markets and insufficient promotional activities reduce consumer exposure to organic products. Despite these challenges, the study reveals a positive attitude among consumers toward organic food consumption. With effective awareness campaigns, improved distribution channels, proper certification systems, and reasonable pricing strategies, the demand for organic food products in Coimbatore District is likely to grow significantly in the future.

References

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