



REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior with regard to food consumption is changing globally, and consumers now prefer food that is produced without the use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, or chemicals; in other words, they prefer to eat organic food, which is not only sustainable for their health but also environmentally friendly. Due to farmers' poorer production of organic produce and consequently the high market price of organic food, customers do not favor organic items as much. People need to be made aware of the benefits of organic food items and encouraged to utilize them, but the main focus should be on encouraging farmers to choose organic farming. An investigation of customer perceptions of organic food could be helpful for the growing organic food market in India and elsewhere. Numerous insights for the study have been gained through the review of related literature in the market for organic foods and customer perception in that area. It has also given guidance for designing the current study. Researchers have seen the demand for organic food items both internationally and in India. Additionally, a number of variables that affect how consumers see organic food items have been found. Conventional meat and dairy products are those that come from animals that were developed with the use of antibiotics and growth hormones. Conventional vegetables and fruits are those that are cultivated by the application of fertilizers and pesticides. Initially, people did not give much thought to the safety, quality, and effects that conventional or inorganic food products can have on their health. Studies on preferences, knowledge, and contentment with organic food products have also been conducted. After reviewing a number of researches and determining the gap, the investigator decided it was imperative to carry out the current investigation.

Keywords: Organic food products, Consumer Perception, Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Organic farming is a farming method that has been practiced by farmers since the dawn of time. It forgoes the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth promoters, and additions to animal feed. According to the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission's definition from 2007, organic farming is an integrated production management approach that fosters and improves the health of the agro-ecosystem, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It places a focus on using natural inputs (such as minerals and products obtained from plants) and avoiding synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. The fundamental principles that distinguish organic agriculture from conventional farming systems include the improvement in soil structure and fertility, the use of natural inputs, environmentally friendly techniques like intercropping, crop rotation, mulching, etc., and a commitment to sustainability. Organic farming is currently accepted in practically every nation in the globe and is growing in popularity. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), organic and environmentally friendly farming methods are quickly replacing chemical-based agriculture as a primary source of concern on a national and international scale. The most recent assessment indicates that India has 6,50,000 organic growers and 5.2 million hectares of organic land. The majority of organic growers are located in India. A product from an organic farming system, which forgoes the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, is referred to as organic food. The demand for organic food is rising as a result of consumers' support for this shift toward organic farming in light of their increased awareness of health risks. Consumption of organic food



products is rising globally among consumers. This tendency results from consumer awareness of environmental and health issues. The consumer's attitude toward purchasing organic food is favorably influenced by demographic characteristics such as health, accessibility, and education. According to Paul and Rana (2012) [13], customers are more satisfied with organic food overall than they are with inorganic food. However, based on the state of affairs at the moment, the market for organic goods in India is still in its infancy, and many customers are ignorant of the advantages that come with the products and the environment we live in. In order to get into the Indian market for organic products, marketers must concentrate on breaking down these barriers, which include pricing and availability of organic items (Laheri and Arya, 2015). When compared to non-organic food, the consumption of organic food is still insignificant (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). A case like this highlights the value of researching customer behavior, especially attitudes toward purchasing organic food. Additionally, the research on the attitude and intention model of eating organic food has not produced consistent findings (Chen, 2009). According to Magnusson et al. (2001; Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002), customers' attitudes regarding organic food are negatively impacted by the organic food product price variable. According to certain studies, customers are willing to pay more for organic food (Davis et al., 1995). This study looked at how different buyer types affected consumers' attitudes, perceptions, intentions, and beliefs regarding buying organic food.

Age and income, according to Lockie et al. (2004), are significant drivers of the desire to purchase organic food. Onyango et al. (2008) looked into what customers thought about how several food characteristics and individual characteristics affected organic food. They have demonstrated that the frequency with which organic items are purchased is a crucial factor in establishing the identification of the products, including their natural ingredients, vegetarianism, and site of manufacture. Deliana (2012) came to the conclusion that consumers view organic products as being more expensive than conventional ones, devoid of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and chemicals, and friendly to the environment. Based on the findings of the American organic food retailer "Whole Foods Market," Winter and Davis (2006) came to the conclusion that eating organic food was preferable for several reasons, including avoiding the negative effects of agricultural chemicals and consuming genetically modified foods in addition to enjoying a fresh and healthy diet. According to Olivas and Bernabeu (2012), consuming organic food can be viewed as the result of the interplay between having a good diet, being environmentally conscious, and being sociable. Additionally, they have demonstrated the disparity in sentiments between Spanish men and women consumers of organic food.

RESEARCH DESIGN ADOPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF STUDY

The demand for organic food items is rising quickly, yet there has always been global concern about how people perceive buying and consuming organic products. To comprehend and meet the demand for organic food items, producers (farmers) and retailers (business owners) must have a thorough awareness of consumer perceptions and attitudes about buying those products. Numerous research on organic products have been undertaken over the past several years; however, the main objective of the current study is to offer a thorough overview of consumer perceptions of organic food items. Information was acquired from numerous research publications published in reference journals as well as in internet databases relevant to the organic market in the global and Indian contexts in order to review the comprehensive literature. The perceptions of customers regarding organic food items were later the subject of a thorough analysis of the literature. The journals offer the excellent work of numerous researchers from over the world, which finally aids in conducting their work in an ideal manner. Additionally, an effort was made to track down references listed in a number of papers and published articles about organic food products. The majority of the information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the literature review, the specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

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1. To provide updated and efficient review of organic market and organic food (World and Indian scenario)
2. To study various research aspect widespread in the ground of consumer perceptions of organic food products through academic research papers

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When opposed to non-organic food that has been processed with synthetic preservatives and chemicals, natural organic food has a number of advantages. Since these are all organic consequences of pesticides and other pollutants, including these items in regular meals can genuinely guarantee health benefits. Corporate interest in organic marketing led to significant developments and innovations, as a result of environmental consciousness, growing consumer interest in organic products, and willingness to pay for organic features. A study has been done to determine consumer preferences for natural, organic foods.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The annual market growth for organic food has been increasing globally, and in 2010 it was 23 percent. Market size for organic food was estimated at 59.1 billion US dollars. The United States (17272 acres) had the most land acquisition for organic apples in 2001. Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria are the top producing nations of organic fruits among all of the European nations (Yadav et al, 2010)

According to their research article, there are various ways that organic farming systems differ from conventional farming systems. For example, organic farms often use a wider crop rotation strategy and have greater areas of non-crop ecosystems (Seyed, 2010)

Organic food sales have been growing annually; in 2010, they increased by 23% globally. The organic food market was valued at 59.1 billion US dollars. The largest area of land was acquired for organic apple production in 2001 in the United States (17272 acres). The top producing countries of organic fruits in Europe include Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria (Yadav et al., 2010). (Balaji and Injodey, 2017)

Both in industrialized and developing nations, there have been a notable increase in the demand for and consumption of organic food. Because consumers are getting more and more concerned about their health, this is the case. Despite making up a relatively small portion of the food market, organic food has seen tremendous expansion, which has attracted the attention of consumers and businesses as well as researchers. The impression and understanding of organic food production in Malaysia is based mostly on the avoidance of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. In Malaysia, the organic food business is dealing with a number of difficulties. Although there is an increasing demand for organic food in Malaysia, the supply of locally produced organic goods cannot keep up with the growth in demand (Somasundram et al., 2014).

India's organic food market is likewise just starting to expand. The domestic demand for organic food has increased as a result of rising disposable income and rising health consciousness. Selling organic products offers a significant premium, not only to export markets but also to wealthy, health-conscious domestic consumers (Manaloor et al., 2016). Unexpected growth has been seen in the organic food sector in recent years. The entire area of certified organic agricultural land in the globe, at 43.16 million hectares, is still only about 1% of all agricultural land. This is approximately four times the area that was used for organic farming in 1999, when 11 million hectares were registered (Lernoud and Willer 2016). The domestic demand in developing countries has remained a barrier for the organic food market even while consumption in wealthy countries is expanding. It is suggested that a number of issues hampered the domestic expansion of organic foods in emerging nations. Some of these included high cost, accessibility, brand trust, awareness of organic foods, etc (Sangkumchaliang and Huang, 2012).

This research makes an effort to identify and comprehend the factors influencing the Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase of Organic Food inside the Indian Urban Market in light of the UGC CARE Group-1, Sr. No.-155 (Sciences)



potential expansion of Organic Food in the Asia area. The findings show that quality, health, and environmentally friendly production methods are the main factors influencing customers' purchase intentions. However, when it comes to actual purchases, the fact that a product was made using environmentally friendly methods has no bearing on the customer's decision. This is anticipated to assist marketers in moving customers from purchase consideration to actual purchase (Ralston, Raj Vaidya, Abha and Wankhede, 2018)

According to the report, customers' strong belief that organic products are clean and safe has increased the demand for organic food and products in recent years. Descriptive and empirical researches are included in the current publication. The physical and physiological well-being of an individual is closely related to food preference and selection. The purpose of this study was to determine how people view organic foods, how they choose them, and how these foods' indicators are measured. Three distinct sections in Punjab that included independent and dependent variables benefited greatly from the input that this study gave. The Punjab region's organic products are the only ones covered in this paper (Shaveta, Manoj Kulshreshtha, 2019)

The primary goal of the study was to identify the key variables influencing customers in Dharmapuri Town's inclination to purchase organic beef. Finding out if psychological or motivational factors can both separately and jointly account for the desire to purchase organic beef is particularly intriguing. The goal of this study is to examine the attitudes of customers regarding purchasing and utilizing organic products in Dharmapuri Town and to determine the degree of consumer satisfaction with organic food products. The results would be helpful for developing policies and programs for the country's organic meat industry, especially for relevant agencies like the Ministry of Agriculture. The appropriate authorities and agencies should encourage people to consume and buy organic meat rather than conventional meat (Karthika and Senthilkumar, 2019)

The study demonstrated that although consumers were aware of pictures and availability, they did not always support organic food products. As a result, it is advised that marketers develop morally sound and realistic advertisements. They should also make sure that their items are readily available in both quantity and variety (Kataria Singh and Vashishat Tarun, 2019)

This research paper also seeks to comprehend people's consumption habits in Kolkata. The study's primary goals were to provide insight into factors influencing Kolkatan consumers' use of organic food as well as a quick analysis of their consumption habits. The consumption of organic food has increased over the past five years, according to the statistics interpreted, but it should have increased more than it has. People are aware of organic food and the advantages it provides (Anwasha Chattopadhyay and Priyanka Khanzode, 2019)

The authors' study provided empirical evidence for the idea that consumers' environmental literacy or understanding was a significant predictor of their preference for organic foods and other environmentally friendly behaviors (Nabsiah Abdul Wahid and Rahbar, 2011)

ORGANIC FOOD PREFERENCE

Consumers typically examine product information, product features, and weighing the risks of using the product while making decisions. Before purchasing a product, consumers take their health into account. There are several reasons why consumers choose to purchase organic foods. Due to certain of their demographic traits, customers like organic food. Graduates were less likely to purchase organic food than were families with young children, who were more inclined to do so. Food that is harmful to health is a topic that is more familiar to women and those with higher incomes and educational levels. According to the research, the profile of an organic customer comprises environmental attitudes in addition to lifestyle and demographic factors. The typical consumer of organic food is educated, wealthy, and from a higher socioeconomic level.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS ARE HEALTHY AND SAFE FOR CONSUMPTION



Previous studies have shown that when consumers choose organic food goods, they are very health conscious and give less weight to issues with food safety and religion. In addition, among those who buy organic food, health and children were identified as the top two factors. Numerous studies discuss various reasons why people choose organic food, including food safety, sensory factors, environmental concerns, ethical concerns, and value systems.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS HAVE GOOD NUTRITION VALUE

The health element is the main justification for choosing organic food, followed by the environmental and animal welfare reasons. Some people choose organic food because they believe it has a higher nutritional value and a higher level of food quality. Sensory parameters are among the few expressed particular factors, followed by safety and nutrition. The demand for organic products has increased for a number of reasons, including the fact that they taste better than conventionally produced food, health concerns, the nutritional content of the products, and environmental concerns. Concerns over the use of herbicides and pesticides in conventional farming, soil erosion, and animal welfare are other considerations.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS FRIENDLINESS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmentalism, alternative medicine, vegetarianism, and organic food consumption are all examples of alternative lifestyles. Herbicides, pesticides, antibiotics, chemical fertilizers, and growth hormones are not used in the production of organic food. Due to their behavior, which is environmentally friendly, consumers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly organic food goods. According to the research, Spanish consumers showed that GM food has no unique benefits and is seen as interfering with nature and carrying a significant danger. Contrarily, organic food serves a valuable function and is both environmentally responsible and healthy.

CONSUMER READY TO PAY PREMIUM PRICES

According to the survey, customers in India are still getting used to the higher prices of organic food and are willing to pay prices that are similar to the current ones. Compared to consumers who have never purchased organic food before, consumers of organic food place less weight on price. Organic food's higher cost is justified by its superior taste, nutritional value, and environmental benefits. Few customers believe they must spend more for healthy food, and some consumers just assume organic food is out of their price range.

CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

The way that consumers eat is continuously changing in the modern world. The organic niche industry is about to explode. Since a few years ago, there has been a surge in the manufacturing of organic products, which has had a substantial impact on the economy. Because organic food is healthier and less likely to contain chemicals than conventional food, many people have begun to favor it over conventional food. This type of shopping behavior is crucial in determining consumer impression and attitude toward buying organic food. Additionally, a thorough assessment of past studies has allowed for the identification of the problems, concerns, and key causes. Gender, age, income, education level, and the presence of children in the household all play a significant role in how people approach buying organic food (Magnusson et al., 2001; Wier et al., 2003). The primary drivers behind consumer preference for organic food were discovered by Hughner et al. in 2007. Concerns about nutrition and health, superior flavor, environmental protection, food safety, distrust of traditional foods, concern for animal welfare, support for the local economy, freshness, curiosity, or because they are seen trendy are the key drivers. People eat this kind of food for a variety of reasons, but most of them are connected to animal welfare and environmental friendliness, according to Chiciudean et al. (2012). Results show that age and gender are important influencing factors for consumers. The taste and quality of organic food are primarily praised. Price and the fashionable



aspect of being "organic" have an impact on women as well. People of different ages exhibit significant variances when it comes to promotions, personal recommendations, and advertising. Adults are impacted by promotions; however children are more influenced by advertising than any other age group. Shafie and Rennie (2012) studied consumer perceptions of organic food and discovered that sensory factors such nutritional value, flavor, freshness, and appearance, as well as concerns about food safety, human health, and the environment, has an impact on customer preferences for organic food. Organic food consumption continues to be stifled by premium prices. Understanding the factors that are driving people to consume more organic food, such as motivation, is essential to realizing how the market for organic food might grow. The attitudes of consumers towards the consumption of organic food are influenced by five variables: food safety, cost, environmental friendliness, nutrition, and sensory qualities. As a result of environmental and health concerns, food consumption patterns are constantly shifting. According to Mukul et al. in 2013, "interest in organically produced food is changing throughout the world." Six important elements were found by Mehra and Ratna (2014) to have an impact on people's attitudes regarding organic food. They included attitudes toward eating organic food, health awareness, product information, product value, accessibility, and trust. The study's findings indicated that women and younger customers had a favorable attitude toward organic food and thought eating it was a healthier alternative. When choosing nutrient-dense foods, they were eager to compare labels and obtain product information. Women thought eating organic food was a healthier choice. In 2014, Sharma and Bali came to the conclusion that customers are well aware of the benefits of organic food for their health and that these items are safe for them to purchase because they don't contain any chemicals. Urban customers are more knowledgeable about organic food options. The consumer thinks that eating organic food contributes to maintaining an active lifestyle and lowering stress levels. This study also discovered that respondents are willing to pay even greater rates when it comes to health benefits. Another researcher, Sivathanu, added and stated that people prefer to purchase organic food goods because they believe these foods to be safe, wholesome, and environmentally beneficial. Labels, health concerns, environmental concerns, brand advertising, brand safety, accessibility, price, freshness, and shop location were identified by Pandurangarao et al. (2017) as the top ten factors influencing consumers to purchase organic food. Out of them, the most important determining criteria are safety, the environment, and health.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand how Indian consumers felt about eating organic food. It has been discovered that while analyzing consumer behavior and decision-making about organically grown products, consumers' attitudes and preferences were most strongly influenced by worries about their health, safety, taste, and environment. The availability of the market can affect consumers' preferences and decisions for buying organic food goods, according to the study review. Given that food is the primary determinant of one's health, consumers in the current environment are much more health concerned and selective about what they eat. Consumers began promoting the use of foods produced using organic farming practices as soon as they realized the detrimental effects of synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides on their health. With the opening of exclusive organic outlets, specific organic counters in super markets, special booths in exclusive farmer markets, and farm-side selling, the demand for organic food is constantly growing, particularly in the urban market. Thus, this study gives crucial information about the increasing demand for food products made from organically cultivated ingredients in the future. As a result, it is imperative that producers, traders, consumers, and the government itself concentrate on the niche market for organic goods.

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