
A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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Abstract

This paper made a humble attempt to understanding the consumer preference about organic product and marketing in Coimbatore city. Marketing of organic product is so poor in study area so the demand for organic product is increases but supply is very low. The major reasons are organic producer are low, adequate market facility is not there, few number of shops, lack of awareness, and so on.

Keywords: *Organic Food Products, consumer preference.*

Introduction

The organic food market has grown continuously over the past decade, but, the total share of organic food is still small compared with the total food market. Organic agriculture not only preserves the environment but it also improves public health, bringing significant benefits both to the economy as well as to the social cohesion of rural areas. The interest of consumers and public institutions in organically produced foods has increased, mainly in developed countries, in response to consumers' concerns about food safety, human health and the environment.

Organic farm production and trade has emerged as an important sector in India as in other parts of the developing world, and is seen as an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development. The development of organic agriculture in India is receiving increasing attention among the farmer/ Producers, processors, trader, exporters and consumers.

Organic products are grown under a system of agriculture without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides with an environmentally and socially responsible approach. This is a method of farming that works at grass root level preserving the

reproductive and regenerative capacity of the soil, good plant nutrition, and sound soil management, produces nutritious food rich in vitality which has resistance to diseases.

Literature Review

Consumers Level of Awareness About Organic Food Products

Dhanalakshmi (2011)¹ in her study, “**Viability of Organic products’ business among the non-organic product consumers - A Descriptive study**” measured the awareness about organic products among non-organic product consumers. Results showed that 74.8 percent of the respondents are very well aware about the organic products and only 25.2 percent do not have any idea about organic products. The study also stated that non-organic product consumers who are aware about organic products were queried about the advantages of using organic products.

Sushil and Jabir (2011)² in their paper “**Analyzing the factors affecting consumer awareness on Organic foods in India**” measured the level of understanding about different aspects of Organic foods among consumers. Further, the study also identified the most likely socio-demographic, food safety and consumer information factors affecting awareness level using logit regression model. Out of 200 respondents surveyed in New Delhi and Lucknow, 117 respondents have reported awareness on organic foods i.e. 58.5 percent of total respondents. The results indicated that consumer’s of organic food is strongly and significantly affected by factors such as education, stream of education and use of information and communication Technology and slight affected by factors such as gender and income level.

John Paull (2011)³ in this study “**Organics Olympiad 2011; Global indices of leadership in organic agriculture**” explained about global indices of leadership of organic agriculture. He stated that organic agriculture is a worldwide phenomenon which is practiced in 160 countries and it present 12 indices of global organic leadership, each at three levels. It yields 26 countries as global organic leaders and reveals that organic leadership is diversely distributed across countries, large and small, rich and poor, developed and less, as well as across linguistic and cultural barriers. Australia leads the world in organic agriculture hectares finland leads in organic wild culture hectares, china leads in organic aquaculture hectares and Portugal leads in organic forest hectares, as well as with the number of member of the international federation of organic agriculture movement (IFOAM) and in publishing more number of organic research papers. India is in the lead position for the number of organic producers, the Falkland Islands, Malvinas leads in terms of percentage of agricultural land dedicated as organic and Denmark leads with the value of organic consumption per capita. Uruguay leads in the relative increase in organic hectares over the past decade and Japan leads in the number of organic certifiers. The author also stated that overall global organic leaders on the basis of aggregated scores, are Germany, India and Denmark in position one, two and three, respectively.

Consumers Attitude Towards Organic Products

Rupesh and Velmurugan (2013)⁶ in their research work, “**Consumer’s attitude towards organic food products**” analyzed attitude towards Organic products. With the use of convenience sampling method, 750 respondents have been selected from Kozhikode district of Kerala in India. The results, revealed that gender, monthly income, area of residence, family status, period of consumption, level of awareness on organic foods and state of health were associated with consumers’ positive attitude towards organic foods.

Ragavan and Mahesh (2013)⁷ in their research paper, “**A study on Consumers’ purchase intention towards Organic products**” studied the consumers purchase intention towards organic products in Chennai city, Tamil Nadu. Three hundred consumers were selected using random sampling technique. The results showed that perception towards organic food products depicted the strongest relationship with buyers’ intention to buy organic food products followed by the buyers’ belief that consuming organic food products is contributed to preserve the environment. The study also identified that perception towards organic products; beliefs about safety for use, belief about product friendliness to the environment and availability of product information were the major determinants for the consumers’ purchase intention towards organic products.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the Awareness of the respondents towards Organic Food Products.
- To study the socio-economic profile and Purchase Behaviors of the respondents.
- To examine the relationship between Demographics of customer And Level of Perception, Attitudes towards Organic Food Products.

Methodology

The study has the following methodological components.

Sources of Data

For the purpose of the study, the required data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collected from the consumption and non-consumption consumer of organic food products in the Coimbatore District with the help of interview schedule method. Secondary data were collected from annual reports, journals, magazines, website and books.

Area of the Study

Coimbatore city was selected as the area of the study owing to the reason that, it is the third biggest city in Tamil Nadu. It is an industrial hub with educated population, middle class, active environmental organization spreading awareness on environmental degradation at the pioneer stage guiding towards organic food consumption. More than 50,000 acres across the state have been brought under

organic certification programme by Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department's efforts. It has head office in Coimbatore and branches in Tiruchi, Madurai and Vellore. The increasing population and migrant peoples across the states are important concern. The continuous increase of people statistically destructs the environment as well as the food and life habits. Due to this, there are wide range of people are aware about the organic food products and defects of genetically modified food grains. Hence, there arises the necessity and importance undertakes such research on this area.

Period of the Study

The Secondary data for the study were collected and compiled from various organic food product industries and farm house and its websites for the period from 2014-2015 to 2016 to 2017. The researcher has conducted a survey for twelve months from January 2015 to December 2016.

Selection of Sample

The Coimbatore District has Ten Taluks, namely Annur, Coimbatore North, Coimbatore South, Kinathukadavu, Mettupalayam, Pollachi, Sulur, Valparai, Madukarai and Perur. For measuring the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of consumers towards organic food products the population frame could not be properly defined during the period of collection of data with regard to the consumers, the researcher had to approach the consumers who were available in the Supermarkets, Organic food shop and departmental stores at the time of interview. The respondent whom the researcher met accidentally is included in the sample. Hence, the respondents were selected on the basis of convenience sampling and selected ten Taluks of the Coimbatore District to get more holistic view. Hence, the sample design is not free from the defects of convenience sampling but there is no other alternative than to use the convenience sampling. Furthermore, there are six hundred respondents were selected according to the convenience sampling method at the rate of sixty from each Taluk have been taken for the study.

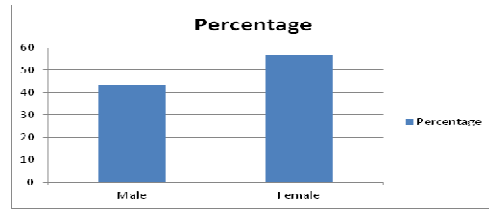
Pilot Study

In order to collect the primary data from the consumers in the study area, a structured interview schedule was developed. A pilot study has been conducted with ten respondents from some of the taluks in the Coimbatore District. Some inconveniences were found out in answering the interview schedule by the respondents and so the interview schedule was modified in order to avoid bias in collecting the data. Based on the interview schedule, the data were collected from the individual sample units by the researcher.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 The Classification of Respondents Based on Gender

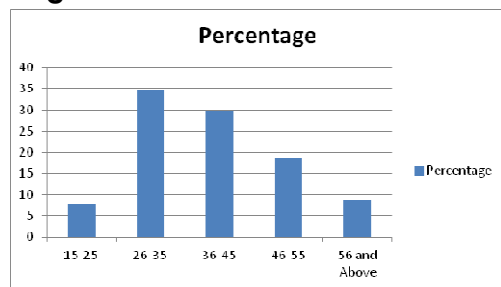
S.No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	%
1	Male	65	43.3
2	Female	85	56.7
		150	100



The above table 1 reveals that the 43.3% of Respondents were belonging to Male, remaining of the 56.7% of the respondents were Female. Therefore majority of the female respondents were purchased organic products.

Table 2 The classification of Respondents on their Age

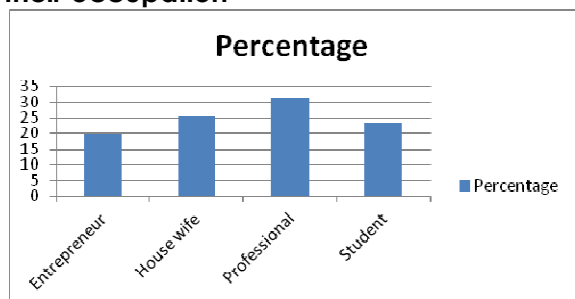
S.No.	Age	No. of Respondents	%
1	15-25	12	8
2	26-35	52	34.67
3	36-45	45	30
4	46-55	28	18.66
5	56 and Above	13	8.67
		150	100



The table 2 shows that 8 percent of the respondents are in the Age between 15-25 Years old, 34.67 percent of respondents are in age between 26-35 years, 30 percent of respondents are in between 36-45 years old age, 18.66 percent of respondents are in between 46-55 years old age and remaining 8.67 percent of respondents are Above 56 years old out of 150 Respondents. The ages between 26-35 years are well aware about organic products, so that they purchase more in the study area.

Table 3 The classification of Respondents on their occupation

S.No.	Occupation	No. of consumers	%
1	Entrepreneur	30	20
2	House wife	38	25.33
3	Professional	47	31.33
4	Student	35	23.33
		150	100



The table 3 shows that 20 % of Entrepreneur, 25.33 % of House wife, 47 % of Professional, 23.33 % of Students out of 150 respondents while buying organic product respectively in study area, so we observe that table and figure it says that more professional peoples are prefers organic food product.

Table 4 Reasons for purchase of the Organic Food Products

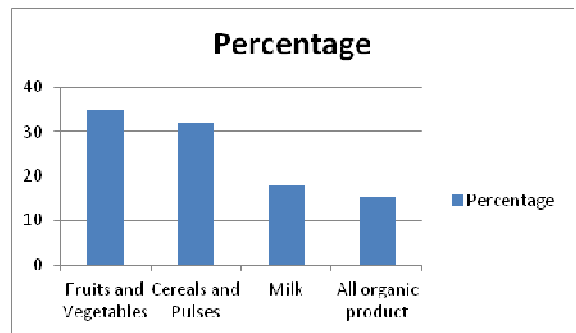
S.No.	Important Factors	No. of consumers	%
1	Maintain Good Health	42	28
2	Quality	48	32
3	Low Price	31	20.67
4	Service	29	19.33
		150	100



The table 4 shows that the 28 percent of respondents prefer organic food to maintain good health, 32 percent of respondents for its quality and other 20.67 percent of respondents to Low Price and remaining 19.33 percent of the respondent were prefers as good service provided by organic shop out of 150 respondents.

Table 5 Purchase of Different Kinds of Organic Food Products

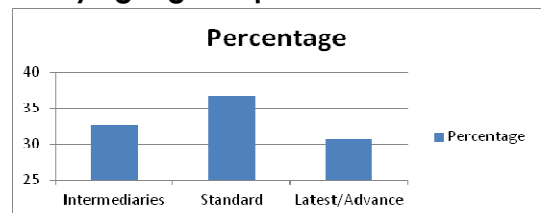
S.No.	Types of Food Products	No. of consumers	%
1	Fruits and Vegetables	52	34.67
2	Cereals and Pulses	48	32
3	Milk	27	18
4	All organic product	23	15.33
		150	100



The table 5 clearly shows that the majority of the respondent(34.67 %)are usually purchase of fruits and vegetables because of the fruits and vegetables are perishable in nature, 15.33 percent of people are using all organic products, 32 percent of people are purchasing Cereals and Pulses remaining 18 percent of respondents are using milk.

Table 6 Respondent preferences for quality while buying organic product

S.No.	Qualities	No. of consumers	%
1	Intermediaries	49	32.66
2	Standard	55	36.67
3	Latest/Advance	46	30.67
		150	100



The Table 6 clearly shows that the majority of the respondent (36.67 percent) while prefer standard quality of organic product, 30.67 percent of respondent referees Latest/Advanced organic products and remaining 32.66 percent of respondents prefers intermediaries organic products respectively.

Findings of the Study

The study reveals that a lot of problems are faced by respondents while purchasing the organic products in the markets. The Findings of the study are as follows.

- Irregular availability of organic product in shop. Because fruits and vegetables is supplied weekly once in shop.
- There is a lack of awareness about organic products to consumers.
- The organic products shops are limited.

Conclusion

The consumer's concerns on food safety, quality and nutrition are increasingly becoming important across the world, which has provided growing opportunities for organic foods in the recent years. The demand for organic food is steadily increasing in the developed countries, while developing countries like India still need to go a long way. The untapped potential markets for organic foods in the countries like India need to be realized with organized markets for organic foods in the countries like India need to realized with organized interventions various fronts, which require a better understanding of the consumers' preference on food. Therefore, an analysis of consumer's awareness of various aspects of organic products may be considered as important ground to build the markets for organic food in the initial phase of market development.