

**A STUDY ON THE CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT AND PURCHASE PATTERN OF
ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCT IN CHENNAI CITY**

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ABSTRACT

Consumers are becoming more and more concerned about the environment and other global problems. This shift has prompted and forced consumers to produce "environmentally friendly" products in response. The industry for organic foods is expanding quickly, and consumers are becoming more conscious of the benefits and risks to their health. The current paper addresses consumer involvement and buying habits for organic products. 120 participants made up the sample size for this research, which was conducted in Chennai. The poll was conducted using a questionnaire-based approach. The majority of consumers were found to be conscious of organic products. However, buyers' intentions to buy were influenced in relation to buying organic goods. Therefore, it is determined that businesses should create marketable advertisements to increase consumer interest in buying organic food.

Keywords: Consumer involvement, Eco- friendly, Consumer purchase pattern, Purchase intention, Organic food products. Green Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the current cutthroat and fashionable marketplace, green marketing has cemented a prominent position. The ability to sell organic products while raising public knowledge of environmental protection, the green world, and eco-systems is a fantastic marketing skill. The modernisation of society and human activities on the planet are contributing to an increase in environmental degradation. Non-green items are to blame for the various types of pollution, including air, water, and soil pollution. Using green marketing is currently the best option for everyone.

The meaning of terms like "eco-friendly products," "green marketing," "environmentally friendly products," and "organic products" is the same: they all refer to goods that do not hurt the environment. Potential customers of organic food include those who think that improving their lifestyle will improve their health, taste, and environmental protection. Customers are also prepared to "pay for the privilege of shopping green." Customers were concerned about how environmental harm would affect their safety and health. The marketers were driven by their anxiety to consider environmental issues when making decisions. Also, consumers' confidence in food and health consciousness have emerged as their top motivators for purchasing organic goods.

Organic Food Products - An overview

Food that has been farmed organically has not used ionising radiation, biotechnology, synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, or sewage sludge (USDA, 2002a). As different nations have varying requirements for items to be certified "organic," there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a "organic" product. Simply said, organic foods are those that have undergone minimal processing to preserve their nutritional value, free of artificial additives, preservatives, or irradiation. Organic food is defined as being produced without the use of conventional pesticides. According to the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, "the animal shall not be provided antibiotics or growth hormones in terms of food that comes from living animals - meat, eggs, and dairy products."

The term "organic" refers to foods that are produced in an environmentally friendly manner without the use of modern synthetic inputs like pesticides and chemical fertilisers, are free of genetically modified organisms, and were not exposed to radiation, industrial solvents, or chemical food additives during processing. Families who believe organic food is healthier are more inclined to buy it and are more willing to pay for it than other families (Andersen, 2007).

Consumer's Involvement in Organic food:

Green consumers are those who want to use eco-friendly items now or in the future. Consumers who are interested in incorporating green practises into their lifestyle and who have a good attitude towards green products are said to exhibit green consumer behaviour. Although some people are still sceptics, organic foods are becoming more and more popular due to their superior quality and health advantages. People may choose not to purchase organic foods because they believe them to be too expensive or because they are unaware that such goods exist. Organic food may cost a bit more, but it is worth it for the health advantages, and it would be more widely consumed if more people were aware of these much healthier alternatives. The primary issues for consumers of organic products are the inconsistent availability of organic items and the high cost of organic products. In order to prevent organic consumers from buying additional products (H.M. Chandrashekhar). According to a number of studies, the general public frequently views organic food as a healthy and environmentally responsible choice (Tregear, Dent and McGregor 1994).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study consumer involvement in organic food products.
2. To study attitude of consumers buying and using of organic products.
3. To analysis the factors influencing to buy organic products among the consumers.
4. Study consumers' purchase pattern towards organic food products.
5. Provide suggestions to enhance the purchase of organic products among the consumers of Chennai city.

Need for the Study:

All firms should reevaluate their strategies and procedures now in order to lower the degree of environmental pollution. All living things in the earth require food in order to do their daily responsibilities. People are spending more money than usual and are more concerned with their health today. The intention of consumers to buy organic food products must be understood. As there are so many research concentrating on consumers' intentions to buy organic goods, this study places special emphasis on those intentions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study's literature has been compiled from a variety of sources. Nonetheless, the majority of studies on consumer involvement reveal that consumers view organic food to be safer than conventional food. (Balasubramanian and Rimal 2005). The majority of respondents in a Lea and Worsley (2005) survey conducted in Australia stated that organic food was healthier, tastier, and more environmentally friendly than conventional food. In 2005, Chen and Michel C. conducted study on the advantages and disadvantages of eating organic fruits and vegetables. They discovered that while conventional produce may not always be worse for the consumer's health than organic fruit, it may be more advantageous.

According to Zanoli et al. (2002), organic products are linked to both health and flavour. According to the respondents, the three most important values that influence their decision to purchase organic products are health, wellbeing, and enjoyment. On the downside, organic products are thought to be

hard to find and pricey. Combs, Zhu, and Chipoopirutana (2011) took into account four factors: attitude towards green-label items, price quality inference, food safety concerns, and green product labelling. Chinese customers participated in a study that the researchers conducted, and only organic food items were chosen.

The researchers found no connection between customers' actual purchases of food items with a green label and price-quality. Consumers of organic food are categorised as either classic or emerging consumers by Essoussi & Zahaf (2008). An educated, professional or white-collar worker who is willing to spend more for organics and look for sources of organic food goods is the former (e.g. producer or farm markets). The latter is likewise well educated, a professional who is dedicated to their own health, and they buy at supermarkets since convenience is a key component in their decision to make a purchase.

According to Carrate, Castana, Felex, Centeno, and Gonzalez (2012), marketers must explain the advantages of green products to consumers because low-income consumers have a lot of potential in the long run and are more interested in personal benefits than environmental values. Low-cost green alternatives should also be made available.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, a descriptive research strategy was chosen. Simple random sampling, one of many sampling techniques, was utilised to help with the requirement to generalise the population parameter results. To gather the information, a self-administered questionnaire was created. The respondents were first asked if they knew anything about green products, and if they did, they were then given the questionnaire. There are two parts to the questionnaire. The purpose of the first section of the questionnaire was to collect personal information. The second section was created to gather information on consumer awareness, attitudes, and plans to buy organic foods.

It was decided to use a five-point Likert scale to gauge how organic food consumers behave. There were 135 responses in the sample. The city of Chennai (East) served as the study's location. The respondents were chosen with care from a variety of categories, including workers, students, and businesspeople. Version 14 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to enter the data. The data were analysed using a variety of statistical methods and tools.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

With the aid of statistical methods like ANOVA single factor, Chi-square test, Regression analysis, and percentage analysis, the primary data gathered from the respondents has been examined. The intention to purchase organic foods is shown in the analysis that follows.

According to Table 1, the respondents' general characteristics are shown. 41% of respondents are women, compared to 59% of respondents who are men. It is clear that 9% of respondents fall into the 30 to 51 age range, while the remaining respondents fall into the 31 to 50 age range. Regarding respondents' educational backgrounds, 51% of respondents are undergraduates, 26% have done postgraduate coursework, and the other respondents fall into other categories.

Out of 135 respondents, 36% are private sector workers, 21% are government workers, 35% are businessmen, and the remaining 8% are others. Regarding monthly income, 7% of respondents fall into the category of having less than \$10,000, while 36%, 30%, 22%, and 4% fall into the 20,000, 30,000, 40,000, and 50,000 ranges, respectively. [Table 1].

Table 1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

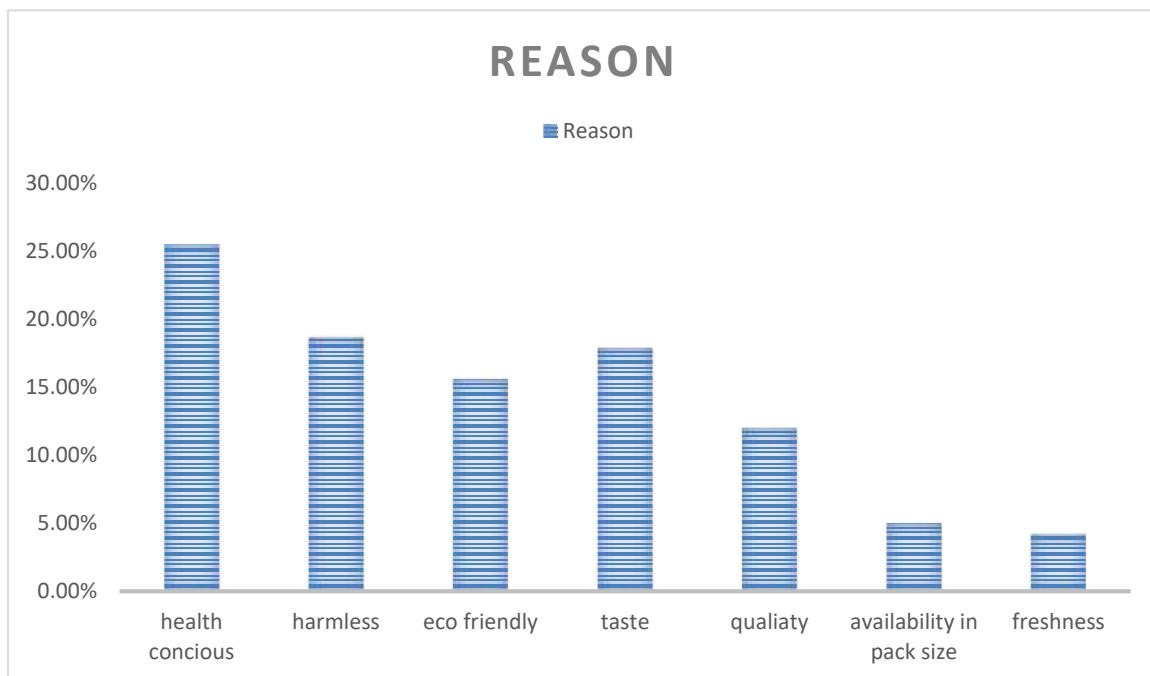
Gender	No of Respondents	%
Male	80	58.8

Female	56	41.2
Total	136	100
Age(Years)	No of Respondents	%
Below 30	11	8.08
31-40	67	49.3
41-50	45	33.08
Above 51	13	9.5
Total	136	100
Qualification	No of Respondents	%
UG	70	51.4
PG	35	25.7
Others	31	22.7
Total	136	100
Occupation	No of Respondents	%
Private Employee	48	35.3
Government	29	21.3
Businessman	48	35.3
Others	11	8.08
Total	136	100
Income per month	No of Respondents	%
Less than 10,000	10	7.3
10,001-20,000	49	36.2
20,001-30,000	41	30.1
30,001-40,000	30	22.1
40,001-50,000	6	4.4
Total	136	100

Source : Primary Data

H1: Reasons for purchasing organic food

Health consciousness was cited by respondents as the primary justification for buying organic food (25.50%). Environmental friendliness (15.60%), flavour (17.90%), quality (12%), availability in pack size (5%), and freshness (4.20%) (Figure 1). Consumers of today are given greater attention with regard to their health. Consumers who perceive that risk are (18.70%) Organic cuisine is provided with -free ingredients.

Figure 1: Reasons for purchasing organic food**H2: No Association between occupation and purchasing pattern of the respondents.**

The hypothesis (H2), is there any relationship between occupation and pattern of organic food purchase, was tested using regression analysis. According to the outcome, P value of 0.058 was below the level of significance (0.1). It supports the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the respondent's career and their organic food buying habits (H2). (Table 2).

Table 2: No Association between occupation and purchasing pattern of the respond

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.71	0.267		6.43	0.000
purchase pattern	6.271	0.141	0.164	1.91	0.058
				5	

H3: No Association between Price and Regular purchase of the respondents

To test H3 by using regression analysis, is there any association between price and regular purchase of organic food. The result revealed that the P value of 0.075 was less than the level of significance

(0.1). It supports H3 which means no association between price and regular purchase of organic food. (Table 3).

Table 3: No Association between Price and Regular purchase of the respondents

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.050	0.070		14.972	0.000
price	0.049	0.027	0.154	1.797	0.075

DISCUSSION

All consumers, regardless of age, are now aware of organic food products. Men and women who are married and who are older than 31 and under 40 have a greater knowledge of it. Organic food satisfied consumers for a variety of reasons. They prioritised good health over safe and environmentally friendly technologies. Also, it aids in preserving their social standing. Customers seemed to enjoy this cuisine a lot. A certain percentage of consumers think organic food is expensive. But, they also think that a higher price can be justified for the family's overall health. Regardless of occupation, a certain percentage of consumers made regular purchases. Due to inconsistent availability, they had to transition from eating organic food to eating inorganic food. It follows that the marketers must adjust their marketing tactics to successfully meet the needs of potential customers.

CONCLUSION

Customer intent is very important in the market for organic food goods. Marketers of organic foods must be creative and dynamic to adapt to consumers' shifting purchasing habits. The survey revealed that although consumers were aware of imagery and availability, they were not wholly committed to buying organic food. Consumers' health concerns are given more attention these days. Although there is an increasing demand for such products, there are only a limited number of organically cultivated products available in the markets. Customers are willing to pay more for organic goods, which could be seen as the price of making an investment in people's health. Consumer involvement and views about the product, and ultimately their purchasing decisions, may change as a result of increased knowledge and awareness of organic products. Fruits and vegetables are the most popular and in great demand among the responders. Consumer preferences for organic products are influenced by quality factors, with flavour, freshness, and general appearance ranking as the most significant. Continuous supply, availability in packages, consumer attitude, satisfaction of evolving taste, and retaining status in society all have an impact on consumers' propensity to buy.