Research Paper
Impact Factor: 3.029
Peer Reviewed & Indexed Journal

IJMSRR
E- ISSN - 2349-6746
ISSN -2349-6738

A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS ABOUT THE ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN CHENNAI CITY AMONG STUDENTS AND EXECUTIVES

V.Vardhini* Dr. P. Raja Dr. Kabirdoss Devi*****
**Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.*
***Professor, Sri Ramanujar Engineering College, Chennai.*
****Associate Dean, Indian Institute of Knowledge Management, Chennai.*

Abstract
Today's generation is at higher risk over obesity and heart diseases. Even children are exposed to the obesity due to change in life style and food habits. Main reasons being the flare for the junk and adulterated food products. Therefore this study is conducted to understand the level awareness towards organic products. Consumers should be educated that paying high price for organic products today is an investment for tomorrow's good health. The main objective of this study is to understand the level of awareness about the organic products among students and executives. This study is a descriptive study in which first hand information is been collected through questionnaire from students and executives. In this study it is found that there is a relationship between occupation of the respondents and purchase of organic product but there is no relationship between annual income of the respondents and purchase of organic product. Majority of respondents give most preference to quality while purchasing. With the help of these findings we can suggest that creating awareness regarding the benefits of organic products from school level itself by including it in the syllabus and students should be taken to trip to agricultural field and sample organic products should be distributed in supermarkets so that customers can experience the quality of organic products also.

Key Words: Organic Products, Awareness, Quality, Good Health.

Introduction

Today's generation is at higher risk over obesity and heart diseases. Even children are exposed to the obesity due to change in life style and food habits. Main reasons being the flare for the junk and adulterated food products. Therefore this study is conducted to understand the level awareness towards organic products. Since today is not about taking preventative measure or saving environment or protecting ozone layer but today is about taking care of your own health and the generations to come. Currently the demand for the qualitative and healthy agricultural products is increasing rapidly due to the increased awareness regarding one's own health. The negative relationship between the growths of population over the availability of per capita cultivable land poses the challenge for the agricultural products. Measures should be taken to increase the productivity of agricultural land by using organic farming through organic manures and fertilizers to enhance the enrichment of soil productivity without any harmful impact on atmosphere to satisfy the demand for agricultural products. Organic farming works on the principle of "Whatever you take from the mother nature give it back to the mother nature" thus retaining the soil quality after cultivation, increasing the productivity with no bad effect on environment.

There are even more reasons for consumers to demand for organic food today than in past as this protects their health and helps to protect the environment. Consumers should be educated about the merits of consuming organic products and the consumers who feel that price of organic products are premium they should also consider the risk of consuming unsafe products and consequently allocating huge amount for health care. Paying high price for organic products today is an investment for tomorrow's good health. Creating awareness regarding organic products should be included in the educational programs which aim in educating the young people. The next generation should understand the benefits of consuming healthy and safe foods which in future would lead to a healthier workforce and therefore contributes to a higher productivity in the production process.

The Government of India has implemented the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). The national programme involves the accreditation programme for certification bodies, norms for organic production, promotion of organic farming etc. The NPOP standards for production and accreditation system have been recognized by European Commission and Switzerland as equivalent to their country standards. Similarly, USDA has recognized NPOP conformity assessment procedures of accreditation as equivalent to that of US. With these recognitions, Indian organic products duly certified by the accredited certification bodies of India are accepted by the importing countries. India is bestowed with lot of potential to produce all varieties of organic products due to its various agro climatic regions. In several parts of the country, the inherited tradition of organic farming is an added advantage. This holds promise for the organic producers to tap the market which is growing steadily in the domestic market related to the export market.

Review of Literature

In a research conducted **by Loureiro et al., 2001, Nair, 2005; Briz and Ward, 2009** found that the demand for environmentally friendly products such as organic foods has significantly increased due to increasing awareness on health, food safety and environmental concerns. Ottman in her book mentioned that Green foods consist of two groups. The first group of green foods allows for the use of a certain limit of chemicals but the second group refers to organic foods. Therefore, the first group lays a good foundation to develop the second group. Consumers consume green foods or green products when their needs and wants for quality, availability, convenience, performance and affordability are met and when consumers realize that green foods and products can help to solve environment problems.

Annelies Verdurme, et al, (2002) found that there are three consumer segments: the opponents; the proponents; and the neutrals. The opponents, reject the use of genetic modification in organic food production. The neutrals are neither against nor in favour of genetic modification food, while the proponents support genetic modification in food production. Besides attitude towards genetic modification food, the proponents differ from the other two segments in terms of beliefs, general attitudes and purchase intentions.

Freeland-Graves and Nitzke, (2002) Soler et al., (2008) believe that awareness and knowledge has become critical factor in changing the attitude and behaviour of consumers towards organic foods, which in turn is expected to drive the growth in the organic food markets. While Squires, 2001 argued that the consumer awareness & knowledge as well as consumption of organic foods are significantly higher in developed countries as compared to developing countries. In countries like India, where organic food markets are still in the early phase of its growth, comparatively have low level of awareness.

Chinnici et al., (2002); Harper and Makatouni, (2002); O'Donovan and McCarthy, (2002); Radman, (2005) found that in general, consumers have positive attitudes towards organic products and perceived as healthier than conventional alternatives.

O'Donovan and McCarthy, (2002); Hill and Lynchehaun, (2002); Magnusson et al., (2001); Stefanic et al., (2001); Gil et al., (2000) argue that market size for organic foods remained low due to both supply and demand side constrains.
Suganya and Aravinth, (2014) in their research paper found that though people are aware of organic products and its benefits, there is a general mistrust about the product among the general public. This coupled with higher price of the organic products hinder the possible sale of the same.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the level of awareness about the organic products among students and executives
- To understand the relationship between occupation and the intention to purchase organic products.
- To understand the relationship between annual income and the intention to purchase organic products.
- To understand the consumer attitudes and preferences while buying organic products.

Need of the Study

The organic farming concept although is not new but is not primitive as focused. But there is need because of the reasons;

- The nutritive value improving the quality of produce
- Sustainable and eco friendly
- Safeguard the consumer's health
- Physical, chemical and biological health of soil is improved by its concerted effort
- Minimize pollution and health hazard
- Promote healthy use of natural resources
- Dependence on branded fertilizers and pesticides reduces farmers debt thereby no cause of farmers suicide rather remunerative and fetches foreign exchange
- Organic farming is true alternative for marginal farmers because it offers alternative market where sellers command the price of the commodity
- No fear of pest resurgence rather promotes biotic control for crop pests which do not have health hazards.

Scope of the Study

Organic farming works on the principle of "Whatever you take from the mother nature give it back to the mother nature" therefore it retains the soil quality after cultivation, increases the productivity and it has no bad effect on environment also. Organic farming is the method of farming in which crop residual, cow dung, tree leaves, food wastages and other organic

materials has been used as fertilizer for maintaining the soil health, crops health without affecting the natural ecosystem and avoid the application of chemical and synthetic fertilizers. Therefore the demands for organic products are increasing day by day. This study attempts to understand the level of awareness about organic products among students and executives. The underlying principle of the study is to understand whether the education and income plays an important role in purchase of organic products. However, before taking any actions to change the scenario regarding organic products whether one must understand the current state of organic products in the market and what steps can be taken to change the scenario will be the main agenda of this study.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive design was been used in this research.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Chennai city.

Sources of Data

The study was based on primary data. The data had been collected mainly from students and executives. The secondary data was collected from the articles, journals, newspapers and various websites.

Sampling Design of the Study

The sampling technique used in this study was convenient sampling. The sample size comprises of students and executives who were using organic food products. A sample of 50 respondents was taken into account for finding their uses for the organic food products.

Tools for Analysis

The following were the tools applied on the responses given by the respondents to analyze and to arrive on any conclusion:

- Chi- square analysis
- Spearman's Ranking Correlation

Limitations of the Study

- The study was confined to the responses of students and executives.
- The sample size was small to make the conclusions universally accepted.
- Possibility of bias would be there since convenient sampling through questionnaire was used for collection of data.

Analysis and Interpretation

I. Chi Square Analysis

1. Chi Square Analysis

H_0: There is no relationship between occupation of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.

H_1: There is a relationship between occupation of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.

Table 1,Table Regarding Chi Square Analysis

	Students	**Executives**	**Marginal Row Total**
Bought	6	20	26
Never bought	16	8	24
Marginal Column Total	22	28	50

The chi square statistic is 9.6237. The P value is 0.001921. Significance level $P < 0.05$

According to the chi square calculation, null hypothesis (H_0) has been rejected and there is a relationship between occupation of the respondents and purchase of organic product.

2 .Chi Square Analysis

H_0: There is no relationship between annual income of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.

H_1: There is a relationship between annual income of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.

Table -2, Table Regarding Chi Square Analysis

	2 – 4 (in Lacs)	6 – 8 (in Lacs)	8 – 10 (in Lacs)	Marginal Row Total
Bought	3	6	11	20
Never bought	2	2	4	8
Marginal Column Total	5	8	15	28

The chi square statistic is 0.3967. The P value is 0.820096. Significance level P < 0.05
According to the chi square calculation, null hypothesis (H_0) has been accepted, there is no relationship between annual income of the respondents and purchase of organic product.

3 .Chi Square Analysis
H_0: There is no relationship between gender of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.
H_1: There is a relationship between gender of the respondents and purchase of Organic products.

Table 3, Table Regarding Chi Square Analysis

	Male	Female	Marginal Row Total
Bought	11	13	24
Never bought	21	5	26
Marginal Column Total	32	18	50

The chi square statistic is 6.6111. The P value is 0.010134. Significance level P < 0.05
According to the chi square calculation, null hypothesis (H_0) has been rejected, there is a relationship between gender of the respondents and purchase of organic product.

II. Average Ranking Analysis

Table 4, Ranking the factors while shopping

Factors	**Rank 1**	**Rank 2**	**Rank 3**	**Rank 4**	**Rank 5**	**Total**	**Mean**	**Rank**
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**			
Price	11	20	5	9	5	50	3.46	2
Score	55	80	15	18	5	173		
Quality	20	16	5	4	5	50	3.84	1
Score	**100**	64	15	8	5	192		
Brand	7	11	16	9	7	50	3.04	3
Score	35	44	48	18	7	152		
Availability	2	4	26	5	13	50	2.54	4
Score	10	16	78	10	13	127		
Environmental Impact	7	5	2	22	14	50	2.38	5
Score	35	20	6	44	14	119		

The above table reveals that the respondents have given the most preferences to the quality of the products while purchase and next to price then brand and least preference to the environmental impact
Majority of respondents have given the most preferences to the quality upon purchasing.

III. Spearman's Rank Correlation
When you go for shopping what is your preferences. Rank it from 1 to 5 (Most preferred-1 to least preferred- 5)

Table 5
Table regarding Spearman's Rank Correlation

	Price	Quality	Brand	Availability	Environmental Impact
1	11	20	7	2	7
2	20	16	11	4	5
3	5	5	16	26	2
4	9	4	9	5	22
5	5	5	7	13	14

To calculate the Spearman's Rank Correlation coefficient different pairs from the above table were considered.

$$R = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

d = Difference between two ranks
n = Number of respondents

1. Brand and Environmental impact

Table 5.1

Brand	Environmental Impact
7	7
11	5
16	2
9	22
7	14

The value of R is -0.625. This was a moderate negative correlation, which means if one buys a better brand the environmental impact would be less. If brand scores higher, the environmental impact score would be less.

2.Price and Environmental impact

Table 5.2

Price	Environmental Impact
11	7
20	5
5	2
9	22
5	14

The value of R is -0.025. Although technically a negative correlation, the relationship between variables was weak. Hence there is no relationship between price and environmental impact.

3. Price and Quality

Table 5.3

Price	Quality
11	20
20	16
5	5
9	4
5	5

The value of R is 0.6. This shows the moderate positive correlation, which means customer expects higher quality for high priced products. If price factor increases then the quality factor would also increase.

Findings

- There is a relationship between occupation of the respondents and purchase of organic product.
- There is no relationship between annual income of the respondents and purchase of organic product.
- There is a relationship between gender of the respondents and purchase of organic product.
- Majority of respondents give most preference to quality while purchasing.
- There is a moderate negative correlation between brand and environmental impact, if the brand is higher, then the environmental impact will be lesser.
- There is no relationship between price and environmental impact.

- There is a moderate positive correlation between quality and price. If price factor increases then the quality factor will also increase.

Suggestions

- Creating awareness regarding the benefits of organic products from school level itself by including it in the syllabus and students should be taken to trip to agricultural field.
- Sample organic products should be distributed in supermarkets so that customers can experience the quality of organic products also.
- The availability of organic products should be increased by increasing the number of shops. Door delivery option should also be introduced.

Conclusion

In today's world giving more attention towards organic products is important than ever, because today is not about taking preventative measure or saving environment or protecting ozone layer but today is about taking care of your own health and the generations to come. With the increase in awareness regarding health, the demand of qualitative and healthy agricultural products increased rapidly. To satisfy the demand of agricultural products, increase the productivity of agricultural land by using organic farming because of organic manures and fertilizers are responsible for enrichment of soil productivity without any harmful impact on atmosphere. More awareness should be created in all level, among people with different educational qualification and occupation. More outlets should be opened; government should aid farmers cultivating organic products.

Reference

1. Chandrashekar H.M. (2005) Changing Scenario of organic farming in India: An Overview, International NGO Journal.
2. Chakrabarti, S., Baisya, R.K. (2007), "Purchase motivations and attitudes of organic food buyers", Decision.
3. Gil, J.M., Gracia A., Sanchez M. (2000) Market Segmentation and Willingness to Pay for Organic Products in Spain. International Food and Agribusiness Management Review.
4. Menon, M. (2009), "Organic agriculture and market potential in India".
5. Willer, H. and Kilcher, L. (Eds), The World of Organic Agriculture – Statistics and Emerging Trends 2009.
6. Ms. S. Suganya, Dr. S. Aravinth, "Consumer awareness and attitude towards organic foods", Journal Of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary, January 2014.