

A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS ORGANIC PRODUCTS WITH REFERENCE TO GUNTUR CITY

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ABSTRACT:

India, the second-largest country in the world by population, relies heavily on agriculture. Today, organic agriculture is growing. Organic farming is not an alternative in India. We all live busy lives. Due to time constraints, lifestyle changes, tastes, and nutritional choices, there is a trend towards supermarket-available vegetables, fruits, dairy, and meat. Conventionally grown vegetables and fruits use fertilisers and pesticides, while conventional meat and dairy products come from animals fed growth hormones and antibiotics. People were initially unconcerned about the safety, quality, and health effects of conventional or inorganic food products. This survey examines customer perception of organic products with 160 respondents. Results were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics. Organic food has better nutritional characteristics and would improve public health if consumed in the same quantities as conventionally farmed food.

Key words: Organic, farming, consumer, perception, food

INTRODUCTION

As government rules increase organic growing space, the Indian organic food market would rise over 23%. Organic products are booming, and the organic food industry will grow significantly. People understand pesticides and chemicals are toxic. Due to pollution and decreased life expectancy, parents are feeding their kids and seniors organic food. Online access boosted organic product demand. Organic products improve farmers' health and avoid pesticide damage to the land.

Organic produce sales are hindered by poor supply chain management. New costs raise production time and product costs, making it hard to meet demand. Logistics will export and distribute bulk items, raising certified organic farm prices. Other factors like reduced shelf life can make supply tougher. Organic product sales are affected by mistrust and certification. Without trust, people doubt its authenticity and credibility. A focus on food quality and nutrients. The situation has changed in the last 2-3 years because people trust and understand about these products, manufacturers issue labels, and numerous companies educate consumers about their benefits. Supporting this administration led to organic agricultural laws. Its demand and growth increase constantly. I considered this topic and the key factor determining Guntur organic food purchasing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

B.Krishnakumare & S.Niranjan (2017) revealed that most organic food buyers thought their products were pesticide-free but not natural. Demographics and SPSS chi square analysis affect these factors: Gender-62.02%, Age-103.03%, Residance-1.15%, Education-153.65, Occupation-2.011, Annual Income-228.27. Due to high pricing and quality concerns, several health-conscious organic goods buyers didn't buy. Consumers are largely affected by perception, attitude and buying intention, three of four psychological aspects. Anwasha Chattopadhyay, Priyanka Khanzode (2019) found that 95% of Bengaluru inhabitants know organic items. The bulk of organic food buyers will be 30-35. Women eat more than males. Married people eat more organic food and are more mindful than singles. Outsiders consume more than Bengalurians. Rich 8lakh-plus folks cook organic food. The poll by Dr.H.M.Chandrashekar (2014) found that Mysore males like organic food. 25-40-year-olds eat these. Regular consumers earn 10–20,000. Graduates are product-focused and buy more. 3-5-person families use these things more. These organics are used daily by 64 respondents. This study also found that many people consume organic for health. Most have used and known them for 3 years. Fruits and vegetables dominate organic items. Low product availability and expensive premiums are the biggest challenges. Due to public misinformation, consumption drops. Organic product procurement technology lacking. Rushdi Ahmed, Khadiza Rahman (2019) said most Bangladeshis utilise pesticide-, fertiliser-, hormone-, genetic-, and antibiotic-free products. It was tasty, fresh, natural, non-processed, and animal-free. Some dismiss them as "food being marketed with new fancy names & charging them very high" due to a lack of knowledge. Some think it requires more

certification and issue expertise to help the product. Consumers demand more product variety and availability to buy more often. Gabriela, Rezhen, Marioara, Daniel, Felix, Garofita, and Iulia (2019) determined three variables marketers and managers should consider in Romania. Marketing and impact suggest organic food promotion is low. Mistrust—not seeing organic food's benefits Personal finances, price.

Waqas, Aslam, Chen Hong (2019) observed no health knowledge influence on Pakistani organic food purchasing. The sample is 83% under 30. They're mostly students. Higher-income, middle- and elderly married and educated people buy organic food more. It also revealed consumers support health-consciousness.

Dr. Lina Thatte, Sucheta S.Pawar, Geeta Zankar (2016) found that many Mumbai and Thane customers knew about organic food's benefits and conventional food's harm. Organic products are known by more educated people. In the analysis, high prices, lack of awareness, product availability, and unfair fraud practises (inability to differentiate real from imitation) influenced organic product purchases.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar, Dr. Hema Gulati (2017) observed many impediments to rural Haryana residents consuming organic products. Some indicated product availability, which is tougher and more expensive than normal foods, was the major problem. Many poor individuals loathe these. Lack of availability of information can cause this tendency.

OBJECTIVES:

- To know the socio-economic characteristics of consumers of organic products and examine the relationship with consumers purchase decisions making.
- To study consumer awareness towards organic products.
- To access the perception of consumer about organic food products

SCOPE:

The study covers Guntur just. This research intends to inform organisations about customer views of organic product use and the factors that influence them. Understanding these elements can help companies boost organic product demand and attract customers.

LIMITATIONS:

One disadvantage of this study is the short data collection period. Only certain themes are covered in the questions. This study has 160 participants. Therefore, not all buyers can use it. Consumer information may be biased. Convenience sampling may make this study

unrepresentative. This study only examined Guntur markets; thus, its conclusions may not apply to other markets.

METHODOLOGY:

The sample was selected from the population using convenience sampling. The researcher selects the sample unit using convenience sampling. The study sample size was determined. This study uses 160 people.

The data collection approach in this study was carefully chosen and applied. Primary data in research is often collected via questionnaires.

Analysis and interpretation of data to find patterns, linkages, and insights. Data analysis is the methodical evaluation of data collected during data collection. The study used multiple data analysis methods. Percentage analysis uses percentage ratios to quantify. This method is used to compare several data sets. To determine data correlation, percentages are used. Calculating relative difference is easier using percentages.

Data is presented using graphs in graphical analysis. Data visualisation helps understand and compare data elements. Cronbach's Reliability Analysis measures question internal consistency. It measures how cohesively various objects are related. Scale reliability is a key statistic. A high alpha does not necessarily mean the measure is unidimensional. Further analyses may be needed to determine the scale's unidimensionality and internal consistency. Dataset dimensionality is often assessed using exploratory factor analysis. Technically, Cronbach's alpha is a dependability or consistency measure, not a statistical test.

A nonparametric statistical test called the Mann-Whitney U test determines if two independent groups have significantly different means. The Mann-Whitney U Test compares independent samples, especially when the data is not normally distributed.

The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric alternative to one-way ANOVA. When ANOVA assumptions are not met, or the dependent variable is ordinal, nonparametric tests should be used. This SPSS KW test guide is simple and easy to follow.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS:

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS:

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Mean	SD
(i)	Advertisements	3.82	0.808
(ii)	Friends and Family	3.92	0.809

	recommendations		
(iii)	Fitness center's	3.64	1.078
(iv)	Doctor's suggestion	3.42	1.141
(v)	For a change or trail	3.25	1.229

Interpretation:

From the analysis it was observed that the sources of information for customers on organic food products is mostly friends and family recommendations (3.92), followed by advertisements (3.82), fitness centre's (3.64), doctor suggestion (3.42) and for a change or trail (3.25).

REASON FOR PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS: Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Credibility	43	1	5	3.33	1.107
Availability	43	1	5	3.49	1.009
Influence from friends and family	43	1	5	3.44	1.007
Knowledge	43	1	5	3.86	.941
Advertisement	43	1	5	3.81	.958
Health conscious	43	1	5	4.26	.928
Valid N (list wise)	43				

CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS PREFERRING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS: Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organic food products provide healthiness	160	2	5	3.91	.799
Organic food products are considered because of their quality	160	2	5	3.75	.727
Consuming organic food products is safe	160	1	5	3.78	.814
Organic food products are having high nutritional value	160	2	5	3.77	.818

Organic food products have good taste	160	1	5	3.66	.990
Organic food products save environment	160	2	5	4.01	.876
Price of organic food products are high than the conventional food products	160	2	5	4.34	.869
Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	160	1	5	3.54	1.063
Valid N (listwise)	160				

NOT PURCHASING ORGANIC PRODUCTS: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Non-Availability	117	2	5	3.94	.698
High price	117	1	5	3.86	.776
Less shelf time	117	2	5	3.95	.797
Less knowledge	117	1	5	3.85	.940
Not attractive	117	1	5	3.85	1.088
Difficult to identify real organic products	117	2	5	4.19	.900
Valid N (listwise)	117				

INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS:

Mann-Whitney U test: (Gender and CP factors)

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Gender		Z value	p value
		Male	Female		
CP1	Organic food products provide healthiness	75.69	83.56	1.151	0.250
CP2	Organic food products are considered because of their quality	75.72	83.54	1.163	0.245
CP3	Consuming organic food products is safe	79.00	80.83	0.271	0.786
CP4	Organic food products are having high nutritional value	79.16	80.70	0.223	0.823

CP5	Organic food products have good taste	78.98	80.84	0.267	0.790
CP6	Organic food products saves environment	77.59	81.99	0.634	0.526
CP7	Price of organic food products are high than the conventional food products	81.58	78.69	0.441	0.660
CP8	Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	83.35	77.23	0.864	0.388

Interpretation:

Male and female mean ranks for customer perception aspects are similar. The null hypothesis for customer perception components is accepted at 5% since the p value is greater than 0.05.

Mann-Whitney U test

Interpretation:

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Marital Status		Z value	p value
		Married	Unmarried		
CP1	Organic food products provide healthiness	78.91	82.70	0.548	0.584
CP2	Organic food products are considered because of their quality	69.54	95.71	3.844	<0.001**
CP3	Consuming organic food products is safe	75.28	87.75	1.828	0.068
CP4	Organic food products are having high nutritional value	77.68	84.41	0.967	0.334
CP5	Organic food products have good taste	80.28	80.81	0.074	0.941
CP6	Organic food products save environment	78.67	83.04	0.621	0.535
CP7	Price of organic food products are high than the conventional food products	84.67	74.72	1.495	0.135
CP8	Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	83.15	76.83	0.881	0.378

The null hypothesis for CP2 is rejected at 1% since p is smaller than 0.01. Thus, marital status mean ranks differ significantly from CP2. Customer perception elements are not significantly affected by marital status. The null hypothesis for customer perception factors is accepted at 5% since the p value is greater than 0.05.

Kruskal-Wallis test

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Age				Chi-square value	p-value
		Below 25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	Above 46 years		
CP1	Organic food products provide healthiness	89.60	79.60	72.23	75.48	4.138	0.247
CP2	Organic food products are considered because of their quality	98.08	82.77	62.54	66.69	18.719	<0.001**
CP3	Consuming organic food products is safe	94.95	80.88	66.50	70.65	11.625	0.009**
CP4	Organic food products are having high nutritional value	87.51	78.68	72.69	81.04	2.724	0.436
CP5	Organic food products have good taste	85.14	78.97	75.49	81.21	1.148	0.765
CP6	Organic food products save environment	85.03	84.23	75.73	71.42	2.373	0.499
CP7	Price of organic food products are high	75.60	79.94	87.49	80.98	1.850	0.604

	than the conventional food products						
CP8	Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	84.48	74.61	82.81	78.75	1.322	0.724

Interpretation:

For CP2 and CP3, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% because p value is less than 0.01. Thus, age ranks differ significantly from CP2 and CP3 customer impression components. No substantial difference exists between age mean rank and other customer perception parameters. The null hypothesis for customer perception components is accepted at 5% since the p value is greater than 0.05.

Kruskal-Wallis test

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Educational Status				Chi-square value	p-value
		SSC	Intermediate	UG	PG		
CP1	Organic food products provide healthiness	88.61	52.33	83.09	85.26	9.971	0.019*
CP2	Organic food products are considered because of their quality	84.61	67.35	79.37	85.47	2.878	0.411
CP3	Consuming organic food products is safe	70.86	69.25	80.95	86.27	3.173	0.366
CP4	Organic food products are having high nutritional value	70.50	66.75	79.57	88.90	4.916	0.178
CP5	Organic food products have good taste	74.68	73.97	86.37	77.11	2.236	0.525

CP6	Organic food products saves environment	81.29	87.75	81.43	76.64	1.023	0.796
CP7	Price of organic food products are high than the conventional food products	79.61	83.38	83.03	76.65	0.848	0.838
CP8	Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	63.57	67.30	86.38	82.17	5.018	0.171

Interpretation:

Since p value is less than 0.05, CP1 null hypothesis is rejected at 5%. Thus, educational status differs significantly from CP1. Educational status does not affect other customer perception elements. Since $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% for other customer impression parameters.

Kruskal-Wallis test

S.No	Respondents Opinion	Monthly Family Income				Chi-square value	p-value
		Less than 25k	26k-50k	51k-1Lakh	Above 1 Lakh		
CP1	Organic food products provide healthiness	97.04	82.07	79.20	76.95	2.240	0.524
CP2	Organic food products are considered because of their quality	82.29	84.54	81.10	76.54	0.881	0.830
CP3	Consuming organic food products is safe	101.58	83.01	76.49	77.82	3.768	0.288
CP4	Organic food products are having high nutritional value	88.21	78.24	81.91	79.16	0.596	0.897
CP5	Organic food products have good taste	98.79	74.57	81.54	79.95	2.837	0.417
CP6	Organic food products	91.08	71.82	84.98	80.43	2.848	0.416

	saves environment						
CP7	Price of organic food products are high than the conventional food products	91.04	73.82	84.20	79.68	2.267	0.519
CP8	Organic food products are becoming fashionable and craze (Social status)	93.42	74.79	86.13	76.61	2.908	0.406

Interpretation:

Customer perception characteristics do not differ by monthly family income mean rank. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis for customer perception factors is accepted at 5%.

FINDINGS:

The study's findings can be summarised as follows:

- The high prices of organic products pose a barrier to purchasing them in large quantities, in contrast to nonorganic products.
- The availability of the product/service is restricted.
- The absence of adequate knowledge
- The absence of trust and a limited understanding regarding the certification process
- Approximately 33% of organic consumers fall into the age bracket of below 25 years.
- The majority of organic consumers own an undergraduate degree, comprising 43.1% of the total, while postgraduates account for 35.6% of the population.
- Among the total population, a significant proportion of 54.4% comprises individuals who identify as females and engage in the consumption of organic food.
- According to the data, 45.6% of those who are self-employed identify as organic food consumers, while 27.5% of individuals who are homemakers also fall into this category.
- Approximately 58.1% of individuals who are married engage in the consumption of those items.
- Approximately 66.9% of individuals are utilising nuclear family structures.
- Approximately 54.4% of individuals are engaging in consumption patterns inside households characterised by a family size ranging from 4 to 5 members.

- Approximately 34.4% of those with an annual income exceeding 1 lakh are subject to consumption.
- The utilisation of organic products is primarily driven by recommendations from friends and relatives.
- One of the primary factors motivating individuals to purchase organic products is their commitment to maintaining good health.
- The primary factor contributing to the decision not to purchase organic products is a lack of confidence in their certification.
- It is often held that organic items are priced higher compared to conventional or non-organic ones.
- There is no statistically significant disparity observed in the mean rank between males and females in relation to customer perception criteria.
- There is a lack of statistically significant variation in the average rank of married status in relation to customer perception elements.
- There is a lack of statistically significant variation in the average rank of age when considering other factors influencing customer impression.
- Therefore, there exists a notable disparity in educational attainment in relation to CPI. There is no statistically significant disparity observed in customer opinion when considering educational status in relation to other parameters.
- There is no statistically significant disparity observed in the average rank of monthly family income in relation to customer impression elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There exists a necessity to establish retail establishments dedicated to the promotion of organic products within each locality of Guntur city.
- It is imperative to foster customer knowledge regarding organic products.
- The consumption of organic food items is likely to experience an increase as a result of continuous enhancements in product attributes.
- The heightened frequency of exposure to organic food product advertisements, along with an enhanced sensory experience in terms of flavour, is likely to exert a significant influence on the consumer's decision to purchase organic food goods. The impact of advertising organic food items has been observed to correlate with a rise in

consumer education levels. There is a need for broader promotion of organic food products in order to enhance their accessibility.

- The topic of discussion pertains to the allocation of distinct portions for organic food products within departmental stores.
- The modification of customer attitudes towards "never buying" could be achieved by the provision of education regarding the advantages associated with organic food items.
- The primary obstacle preventing consumers from purchasing organic food products is the higher price premium associated with them. Customers require motivation to make a purchase, even when faced with a slight increase in price, rather than simply avoiding the product altogether. Additionally, it is necessary to effectively manage the costs associated with cultivation and marketing.
- The products should be initially introduced in key markets and subsequently expanded to encompass all retail establishments.
- An educational programme focused on the environment and the advantages of organic products, as well as the use of organic food items, has the potential to enhance consumers' environmental awareness and foster a "Green Consumer" mindset.
- The concept of "organic" is being advocated as a holistic lifestyle choice rather than only a commodity.
- The assistance of the agriculture marketing and co-operative departments is sought to facilitate farmers in obtaining a favourable remuneration for their organic produce.
- The Organic Certification Department plays a crucial role in guaranteeing the quality of organic produce by certifying farmers. This certification not only ensures the adherence to organic farming practices but also enables farmers to command a favourable price for their products.
- The simultaneous development of demand, large-scale manufacturing, and availability of organic food products is essential. Based on a more conscientious perspective, responsible advertising can assume a constructive and advantageous function.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the study, results, and conclusions, it can be concluded that in Guntur, the presence of several stores is accompanied by a multitude of factors that exert effect on customers'

decisions to purchase organic products. In order to make informed purchasing decisions, it is necessary to acquire knowledge and understanding regarding the advantages and certifications associated with the products or services in question. There is a need to enhance the accessibility of organic products, ensuring their availability in various retail establishments, including departmental shops. In contemporary society, individuals exhibit a heightened sense of self-consciousness and are more likely to make choices based on the availability and level of awareness surrounding a particular option.

There is a need to enhance the promotion of organic products and implement government policies that prioritise the welfare of farmers, thereby benefiting both consumers and agricultural workers. Although there is a growing demand for organically cultivated products, their availability in the marketplaces is still limited. Organic vegetables and fruits are among the most commonly purchased goods.

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