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A critical study on consumer behaviour towards organic foods with special reference to Bhagalpur city

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Abstract

The demand for organic food is continuously growing. The level of knowledge about the advantages of consuming organic food is already substantial, and given the current instances of damage to human health resulting from the intake of unhealthy food items, it is anticipated to further escalate.

As a result, people are becoming more conscious of the benefits of non-conventional food. Consequently, advertising are now required to develop innovative strategies that successfully include these highly desired organic items. This project seeks to provide significant theoretical and practical advancements in the study of customer purchasing intentions for organic food items. The research offers valuable insights into determining the elements that influence the attitude and behavior of customers towards organic food, a trend that is now gaining traction in Bhagalpur City. Several influential elements were discovered that affect individuals' attitudes towards organic food. Their attitudes included perception of organic food, health awareness, product information, value for money, accessibility, and trust. Demographic characteristics seemed to influence individuals' attitudes towards organic food, but they did not account for their actual purchasing behavior. This report aims to provide empirical data on the less-studied topic of attitudes and behaviors towards organic food in the rapidly developing metropolis of Bihar.

Keywords: Perceptions, health awareness, organic food, attitudes

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, research on the factors that influence people's intents to buy organic food has been more popular. However, there are still some unsolved concerns despite the significant amount of attention given to this topic. Recently, there has been a noticeable increase in the popularity and demand for organic food, which may be attributed to growing discontent and worries over the safety of conventionally produced food. Consumers often doubt the modern food system's capacity to provide safe food, yet consuming conventionally cultivated food is associated with significant dangers. According to Baldo *et al.* (1998) ^[1], this growing tendency is driven by customers' desire for safer options, particularly organically produced food. Organic products, such as fruits and vegetables, had a much-reduced risk of pesticide contamination compared to conventional food, with a reduction of 30%. Although organic food is said to provide advantages, the higher prices for these products have been noted as a significant obstacle to consumers choosing organic food over cheaper conventional options. It is crucial to acknowledge that customers in some regions may have difficulties in finding organic goods.

1.1 The organic food industry in India

The Indian organic food business is seeing fast growth, supported by government measures to enhance its capabilities. In contrast, the Indian organic food business mostly emphasizes the export market rather than the local market. This incident demonstrates the very limited nature of Indians' use of organic food. Compared to the sales of organic food goods in other nations, the previous point has significant importance. The consumer demand for organically cultivated food items in India is projected to increase at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of over 25% from 2015 to 2020.

The present projected value of domestic demand for organically cultivated food goods in the Indian market is 40,000 million Indian rupees. The projected increase in this number is estimated to be between 100,000 million and 120,000 million Indian rupees by the year 2020.

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This growth is anticipated to be accompanied by a proportional increase in the export of organic food items. India's share of the global market for organic food items grew to 17% in the 2015-16 year and by 17.3% in 2016-17. Delhi, India is now seeing a surge in customer demand for organic food goods. The growing customer demand has resulted in the establishment of several stores that offer organic food goods in the aforementioned four cities.

2. Literature review

Mishra and Kaushik (2013) ^[9] the objective of the research is to determine the primary elements that influence the intention of Indian consumers to make a purchase. A sample size of 599 was selected and the questionnaire was used to obtain primary data. The data is gathered by administering questionnaires and then analysed using SPSS in this study.

The main objective of this research is to identify four key factors that influence the intention to purchase organically grown foods, based on existing studies. The aim is to determine the significance of the relationship between these factors and buyers from the Indian cities of Bengaluru and Chennai.

Jafersadhiq and Mahadevan (2016) ^[4]. This article will analyse the elements that impact the change in customer behaviour towards organic food. We analyse findings from diverse studies undertaken in several nations, evaluate them, and provide suggestions for future study.

It has been observed that health-conscious individuals are showing a growing preference for organic food as opposed to conventionally cultivated food. The increasing incidence of lifestyle illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease and depression, has greatly influenced the shift in consumer views. Purchasing organic food to improve one's quality of life would have significant implications for the retail, distribution, and marketing operations of businesses.

Rana and Paul (2017) ^[10] the term 'organic' is widely used by consumers worldwide in contemporary times. The research is focused on the issue that people now live in regions that are contaminated in several aspects, including air, water, and soil. Additionally, the study highlights the fact that the food they consume is often tainted with fertilizer, pesticides, and other chemicals. The objective of the research is to investigate consumer awareness about the acquisition of organic food items, assess the reasons that drive the purchase of organic food, examine the purchasing habits related to organic food, and get insights into customer satisfaction and the obstacles they encounter.

Krishnan & Nandhini, (2018) ^[8] It is critical to understand consumers' attitudes and intentions when selecting vegetables, especially organic vegetables, since the market for organic vegetables in Kerala is rapidly expanding. Purchase behavior research will undoubtedly assist the retail industry in learning more about the consumer's behavior when selecting organic vegetables, allowing them to focus their marketing efforts more effectively. The current study attempts to measure consumers' buying behavior against organic vegetables, with a focus on the Kottaym District in Kerala. Primary and secondary data were used in the analysis.

The judgment sampling approach was used to collect a sample of 120 respondents from four residential areas in Kottayam, Kerala. Customers are inspired to buy organic vegetables because of rising health consciousness, organic

farming is better for the environment, contains more nutrients, word-of-mouth advertising, marketing, and so on. Lal *et al.*, (2019) ^[11] the findings of this research indicated a clear need for the Indian government, strategists, growers, and marketing professionals to concentrate more attention on the advantages of organically grown foods in order to rapidly expand this significant market.

3. Objectives of study

- To understand organic food industry in Indian Context
- To gain knowledge about consumer attitude towards organic food products Consumption and Market potential of Organic food product in study area.

4. Methodology

The study based on primary data. The primary data had collected from selected consumers on Simple Random sampling techniques and Retail outlets of Organic products, Organic Products Marketing Agencies, by administering the structured questionnaires.

In order to understand the demand factors in organic products and the consumer's perception of organic products in Bhagalpur City the following sample size will be used to collect the primary data. Parentage analysis and SPSS will be adopted to analysis the consumer's response towards organic food product in Bhagalpur City.

The study confined to organic marketing shops in Bhagalpur City and organic food product. The inference drawn purely on the basis of respondent responses in the study area.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1: The Classification of Respondents Based on Gender

S. No	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	23	46
2.	Female	27	54
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The above table 1 reveals that the 46% of Respondents were belonging to Male, remaining of the 54% of the respondents were Female. Therefore, majority of the male respondents were purchased organic products.

Table 2: The classification of Respondents on their Age

S. No.	Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	15-25	3	6
2.	25-35	11	22
3.	35-45	14	28
4.	45-55	10	20
5.	55 and above	12	24
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 2 shows that 6 percent of the respondents are in the Age between 15-25 Years old, 22 percent of respondents are in age between 25-35 years, 28 percent of respondents are in between 35-45 years old age, 20 percent of respondents are in between 45-55 years old age and remaining 24 percent of respondents are Above 55 years old out of 50 Respondents. The ages between 35-45 years are well aware about organic products, so that they purchase more in the study area.

Table 3: Reasons for purchase of the Organic Food Products

S. No.	Important Factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Maintain Good Health	30	60
2.	Quality	10	20
3.	Low Price	2	4
4.	service	8	16
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 3 shows that the 60 percent of respondents prefer organic food to maintain good health, 20 percent of respondents for its quality and other 4 percent of respondents to Low Price and remaining 16 percent of the respondent were prefers as good service provided by organic shop out of 50 respondents.

Table 4: How Long Interested in Consumption of Organic Food Products

S. No.	Duration	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Since 1 year	12	24
2.	2 year	6	12
3.	3 year	10	20
4.	More than 3 year	n	44
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 4 describes the 24 percent of the respondents are purchasing organic food product from one year, 12 percent of the respondents are using in the last two years, 20 percent of respondent are using three years, and remaining 44 percent of respondent are using organic food product more than three years.

Table 5: Purchase of Different Kinds of Organic Food Product

S. No.	Types of Food Products	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Fruits and Vegetables	19	38
2.	Cereals and Pulses	7	14
3.	Milk	6	12
4.	All organic product	18	36
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 5 clearly shows that the majority of the respondent (38%) are usually purchase of fruits and vegetables because of the fruits and vegetables are perishable in nature, 36 percent of people are using all organic products, 14 percent of people are purchasing Cereals and Pulses remaining 12 percent of respondents are using milk.

Table 6: Information about organic product shops to respondent

S. No.	Information centers	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	By friends Family	31	62
2.	Direct mailers	11	22
3.	Press advertisement	3	6
4.	Reference websites	4	8
5.	T.V. advertisement	1	2
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 6 shows that information about organic shops to respondent is more from friends/family i.e. 62 percent and second is Direct mailers i.e. 22 percent, 8 percent from Reference websites, 6 percent Press advertisement, and finally only 2 percent T.V advertisement. So, the

information will be flow about organic shops only by a friends/ Family is more when compared to other information sources.

Table 7: Respondent preferences for quality while buying organic product

S. No.	Qualities	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Intermediaries	4	8
2.	Standard	31	62
3.	Latest / Advanced	15	30
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 7 clearly shows that the majority of the respondent (62 percent) while prefer stander quality of organic product, 30 percent of respondent referees Latest/Advanced organic products and remaining 8 percent of respondents prefers intermediaries' organic products respectively. Table 7: Consumer responses about satisfaction about quality of organic product.

6. Findings of the study

The survey uncovers several challenges encountered by respondents while buying organic items in the marketplaces. The study's findings are as follows.

- Inconsistent availability of organic products in the store. Due to the weekly supply schedule, fruits and vegetables are only available at the store once a week.
- There is currently no effective packaging method for the product.
- Due to a lack of participation from farmers, there is a limited supply of organic products accessible throughout the week.
- There are several challenges associated with preserving and storing organic products. Chemical pesticides are not used throughout the cultivation and storage process. Therefore, it is very prone to decay or spoilage in its natural state.
- The high cost of organic products significantly impacts customer purchasing decisions. Price of the goods should not be affordable for the average consumer.
- Consumers lack understanding about organic goods.
- The promotion of organic goods is far less than that of non-organic items. The educational background of customers is a significant factor that influences their decision to buy organic goods.
- The findings indicate that none of the respondents are illiterate, and the bulk of customers have obtained a graduate degree.

7. Conclusion

Consumer behavior is a significant factor in the purchase of any goods, including organic products. The availability of organic shops and products is currently limited, despite a higher demand. Consequently, the government, farmers, and other stakeholders are considering ways to enhance organic production. This includes improving packaging, quality, and the market system. Such efforts aim to improve the standard of living for farmers and promote environmental health, while also benefiting the government.

The vendor of the organic goods is also seeing growth. In order to compete with the evolving purchasing behavior of urban inhabitants in the organic food products industry,

marketers of organic foods must demonstrate innovation and adaptability. The results demonstrate that this research can facilitate comprehension of the growing market demand for organically cultivated food items in India.

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