

IMPACT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON ORGANIC FOOD CONSUMPTION IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Organic food products have gained increasing attention due to rising health awareness, environmental concerns, and food safety issues. Organic foods are produced without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms and are considered healthier and environmentally sustainable. The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of consumer behaviour on organic food consumption in Coimbatore city. The study examines demographic characteristics, consumer preferences, and factors influencing purchasing decisions. Both primary and secondary data were used for the research. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 100 respondents using simple random sampling. The findings reveal that health consciousness, environmental awareness, product quality, and safety are major factors influencing consumer behaviour towards organic food products. However, higher prices and limited availability remain major barriers to wider adoption. The study concludes that increasing awareness, improving distribution channels, and promoting organic farming practices can enhance the consumption of organic food products.

Keywords: Organic Food, Consumer Behaviour, Health Awareness, Organic Farming, Coimbatore.

Introduction

Food is one of the essential requirements for human survival and plays a vital role in maintaining health and well-being. Hippocrates once stated, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food," emphasizing the importance of nutritious and healthy food for human life. In recent years, consumers have become more conscious about the quality and safety of food products due to increasing health issues and environmental concerns. Organic food products have emerged as a healthier alternative to conventional food products. These foods are produced using natural farming methods without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms. Organic farming promotes ecological balance, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability while ensuring safe and nutritious food for consumers. Coimbatore, a rapidly developing city with a strong agricultural background, has witnessed increasing demand for organic food products in recent years. Consumers in the region are gradually shifting towards organic food due to concerns about chemical contamination in conventional food. This study aims to analyze the impact of consumer behaviour on organic food consumption in Coimbatore city and to identify the factors influencing purchasing decisions.

Evolution of Organic Food Products

The evolution of organic food in India reflects a transition from traditional agricultural practices to modern sustainable farming systems. Traditionally, Indian agriculture relied on natural inputs such as compost, crop rotation, and organic manure. However, the Green Revolution in the 1960s introduced chemical

fertilizers and pesticides to increase agricultural productivity. Although the Green Revolution improved food production, it also caused environmental problems such as soil degradation, water pollution, and health risks. As awareness about these issues increased, farmers and consumers began to reconsider traditional farming methods. Organic farming gradually gained popularity as a sustainable agricultural practice. Today, India is one of the leading producers of organic agricultural products and organic cotton. The increasing demand for organic food in urban areas has encouraged farmers to adopt organic farming methods and expand organic markets.

Need for the Study

The demand for organic food products is increasing rapidly worldwide due to growing health awareness and environmental concerns. In India, the organic food market has experienced significant growth in recent years. However, consumer awareness and knowledge about organic food products remain limited in many regions. Understanding consumer behaviour towards organic food consumption is important for developing effective marketing strategies and promoting organic farming practices. Therefore, this study aims to examine consumer preferences, purchasing behaviour, and factors influencing organic food consumption in Coimbatore city.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the demographic profile of consumers purchasing organic food products in Coimbatore city.
2. To examine the impact of marketing mix factors on consumer behaviour towards organic food consumption.
3. To study the relationship between consumer behaviour factors and satisfaction levels in organic food consumption.
4. To identify the factors influencing consumer preference for organic food products.
5. To provide suggestions for improving the consumption of organic food products.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive and analytical research designs to examine consumer behaviour towards organic food products.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from organic food consumers in Coimbatore city. Secondary data were obtained from journals, research articles, websites, and government reports.

Sample Size

The study was conducted among 100 respondents who consume organic food products in Coimbatore city.

Sampling Method

A multistage sampling technique was adopted. Initially, organic food stores were identified through online sources. Coimbatore city was divided into four zones, and five stores were selected from each zone. Respondents were randomly selected from these stores.

Review of Literature

Previous studies have highlighted the increasing demand for organic food products due to health consciousness and environmental awareness. Chen (2009) found that consumers with greater knowledge about health and nutrition are more likely to prefer organic food products. Klockner and Ohms (2009) emphasized the importance of ethical values and environmental concerns in influencing organic food purchases. Hamzaoui and Zahaf (2009) observed that environmentally conscious consumers are willing to pay higher prices for organic products due to their perceived health benefits. Aertsens et al. (2011) identified consumer knowledge as a key factor influencing organic food purchase intentions. Several studies have also pointed out challenges in the organic food market. High prices, limited availability, and lack of consumer trust in certification systems are common barriers to organic food consumption.

Research Gap

Most previous studies focused on consumer awareness, purchase intentions, and attitudes towards organic food products. However, limited research has been conducted on the influence of marketing mix elements on consumer behaviour and post-purchase behaviour in the organic food market. Moreover, only a few studies have examined organic food consumption specifically in Coimbatore city. This study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the impact of consumer behaviour and marketing factors on organic food consumption in Coimbatore.

Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from respondents regarding the impact of organic food products among consumers in Coimbatore. The analysis is based on primary data collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, weighted average method, and Garrett ranking technique were used to analyze the data and interpret consumer awareness, preferences, satisfaction levels, and factors influencing the purchase of organic food products.

The demographic profile indicates that 63 percent of respondents are female and 37 percent are male, showing that women are more actively involved in purchasing organic food products. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 45–55 years (26 percent), followed by those above 55 years (20 percent) and 35–45 years (19 percent), indicating greater interest among middle-aged consumers due to health awareness. In terms of education, 32 percent studied up to school level, 27 percent are professionals, 24 percent are postgraduates, and 17 percent are graduates. The study also shows that 54 percent of respondents are unmarried and 46 percent are married. Regarding occupation, professionals form the largest group (24 percent), followed by government employees (21 percent), business people (16 percent), homemakers (15 percent), and private employees and students (12 percent each). Income analysis shows that 35 percent earn less than ₹20,000 per month. Respondents belong to both joint families (53 percent) and nuclear families (47 percent), and 55 percent are from urban areas while 45 percent are from rural areas.

The study reveals that consumers are aware of several characteristics of organic food products. Freshness and disease reduction (12.9 percent each) are the main reasons for choosing organic foods. Other

factors such as concerns about chemical fertilizers, certification symbols, and availability also influence awareness. However, satisfaction levels vary, with 46 percent reporting low satisfaction, 32 percent high satisfaction, and 22 percent medium satisfaction, indicating that high price and limited availability may affect consumer perception.

Preference analysis shows that organic dairy products are the most preferred (13 percent), followed by vegetables, pulses, sweets, and beverages. Organic fruits show the highest satisfaction level (15.8 percent), followed by vegetables and flour (13.9 percent each), suggesting that fruits and vegetables are the most trusted organic food products. Factors influencing purchase decisions include label identification (14 percent), health maintenance (12 percent), and taste (11 percent), while packaging has the least influence.

The weighted average analysis indicates that respondents strongly agree that organic food products have shorter durability and do not contain genetically modified ingredients. The Garrett ranking analysis shows that milk products rank first among preferred organic products, followed by spinach, honey, and flour. Among influencing factors, suitability for children ranks first, followed by quality, price, and quantity, while packaging, advertisement, and label identification have comparatively lower influence on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of consumer behaviour on organic food consumption in Coimbatore city. The findings indicate that awareness and interest in organic food products are gradually increasing among consumers due to growing concerns about health, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. Consumers prefer organic food mainly because they believe it is healthier, free from harmful chemicals, and produced through environmentally friendly farming practices. The demographic analysis shows that female consumers and middle-aged individuals demonstrate greater involvement in purchasing organic food products. Consumers from different educational and occupational backgrounds also show interest in organic food consumption. The study reveals that factors such as freshness, disease prevention, product quality, and health maintenance play an important role in influencing consumer preference for organic food products. The results also indicate that organic dairy products, fruits, and vegetables are among the most preferred organic food items. However, the level of satisfaction among consumers varies, as many respondents reported moderate or low satisfaction due to factors such as higher prices and limited availability of organic products in the market. These issues continue to act as major barriers to wider adoption of organic food products. Furthermore, the analysis highlights that factors such as label identification, product quality, and suitability for children significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers also recognize that organic food products are free from genetically modified ingredients and chemical fertilizers, which increases their trust in organic products. Overall, the study concludes that consumer behaviour plays a significant role in promoting organic food consumption in Coimbatore city. Increasing consumer awareness, improving distribution channels, ensuring proper certification and labeling, and making organic products more affordable can significantly enhance the demand for organic food products. Encouraging organic farming practices and strengthening marketing strategies will also help promote sustainable food consumption and support the growth of the organic food market in the future.

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