

## A PERCEPTUAL STUDY ON ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

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### ABSTRACT

*In the rapidly moving world, food habits also changing aggressively. Consumers are more conscious of their health. For a healthy lifestyle, the important thing is food habits. Nowadays organic foods are more widely spreading in every corner of the world. Consumers are swapping to organic food products vastly. Organic food products are entirely derived from agricultural practices that avoid the use of synthetic chemicals and pesticides. Agriculture forms the backbone of India's economy, and the increasing consumption of organic products is proving to be a significant advantage for the agricultural sector. A variety of food items, both raw and processed, are now available in the market, all cultivated without the use of harmful pesticides. This study aims to explore the factors that encourage consumers to switch to organic food products and to gain insight into their preferences. The sample of 250 respondents of organic product user was surveyed using a structured questionnaire.*

**KEYWORDS** Organic Food Products, Healthy Lifestyle, Factors, Preferences.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Today trend, organic food products are becoming more popular in the marketing field which attracts consumers. Since from 1930s, the term "ecological product" has been in usage. Organic food products are characterized by the strict exclusion of synthetic fertilizers, artificial flavorings, and chemical additives during their production, ensuring the maintenance of high standards in biological food quality. Each country has its own set of regulations for organic certification, reflecting differences in standards and practices. In India, organic products must be certified under the National Program for Organic Production (NPOP), which sets the guidelines for organic farming and product labeling to guarantee authenticity and quality. Growing health consciousness among consumers has led to an increased preference for organic foods, with many individuals adopting long-term diets centered around these products rather than conventional alternatives.

Consumers are motivated to purchase organic food products due to several key factors:

- **Absence of Pesticides:** Organic foods are cultivated without synthetic pesticides, reducing exposure to harmful chemicals.
- **No Genetic Modification:** These products avoid genetic engineering, appealing to those who prefer natural food sources.
- **Free from Artificial Additives:** Organic foods do not contain artificial flavors or preservatives, supporting a cleaner and more natural diet.

Choosing organic products is associated with a healthier and safer lifestyle, as these foods are perceived to be more nutritious and less harmful to health. Additionally, the expansion of organic food production supports agro-based farming, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and strengthening rural economies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**I Effendi (2015)** conducted a study on the Analysis of Consumer Behaviour of Organic Food. The aim is to identify the effects on organic attitudes, purchasing intentions, and behaviour of the following variables: familiarity, product attributes, culture, health, environmental and organic food knowledge. The survey is conducted with a structured questionnaire by collection of 270 respondents. The analysis was done with the likert scale method and the model was confirmed by the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approaches; however, the appropriate method for model confirmation should be chosen depending on the type of investigation. The Author opens up that environmental knowledge, price, and

culture cannot define consumer behaviour toward organic food. It is simpler for the consumer to make an organic food purchase if they already have a solid understanding of organic food and health.

**Dr. S. Gomathi et al., (2016)** intends to determine the degree of consumer knowledge, contentment, and challenges. Data was gathered via a structured questionnaire from 150 members of the public. Age, gender, and awareness level were found to be significantly correlated in the study. There are other factors on the satisfaction and awareness level.

**B. Yilmaz (2023)** focused to identify the association between factors, perceived value, and purchasing behaviour of organic products. Data was gathered using a well-structured questionnaire. Respondents are collected from 330 organic food consumers. The study found that perceived values did not have a significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ☐ To identify the demographic outline of the respondents.
- ☐ To assess the consumption level of organic food products.
- ☐ To observe the difference between demographic and perception of organic food product.
- ☐ To investigate the factors influencing consumer perception regarding the purchase of organic food products.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive research and adopted a convenience sampling method to collect information and data for decisions making. The sample was collected from 250 organic product consumers from Chennai city. A well-structured questionnaire was circulated for the responses. Primary data was used for my research purpose. The tools used were percentage analysis, one way ANOVA, factor analysis and secondary data was collected from journals and websites.

## DATA ANALYSIS:

### 1. Percentage Analysis

**Table 1 Demographic profile**

| Profile                 | Category                          | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Gender                  | Female                            | 61.6    |
| Age                     | 18 - 30                           | 59.6    |
| Education Qualification | Under graduate                    | 36.4    |
| Employed Status         | Private sector and Self employed  | 38.4    |
| Family Income           | Below 20,000 and 20,001 to 40,000 | 39.6    |
| Marital Status          | Single                            | 52      |

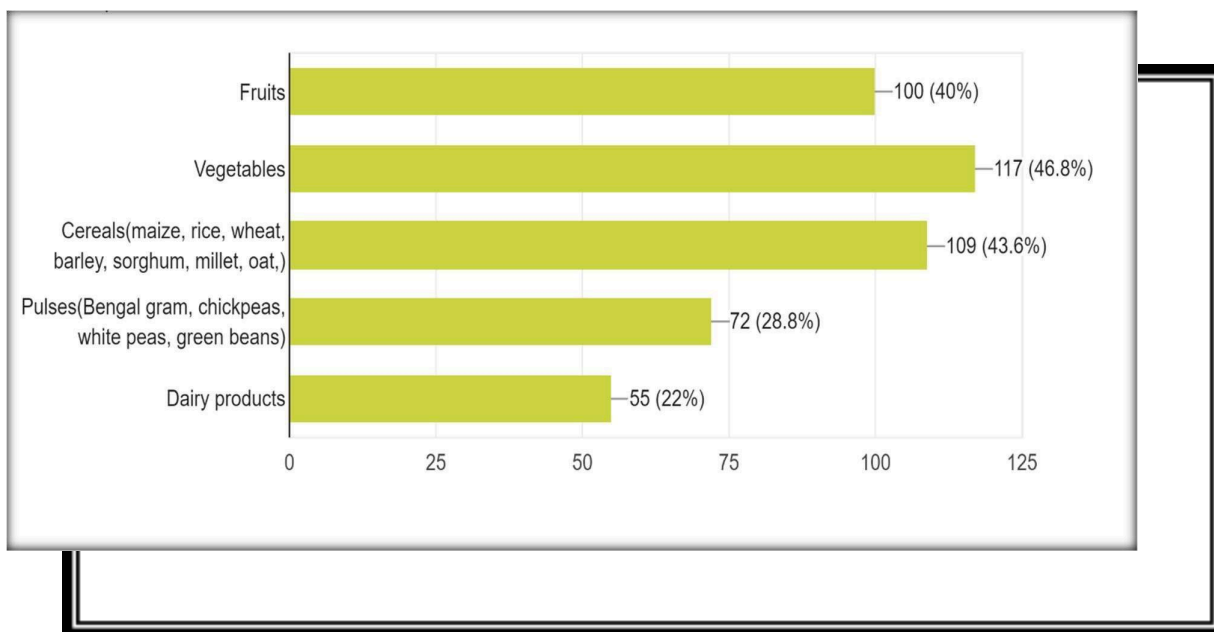
- According to the gender, 61.6% of the respondents were female and 38.4% of the respondents were male.
- According to the age, 59.6% of respondents were between 18 years to 30 years, 17.2% were between 31 years to 40 years, 16% were between 41 years to 50 years and 3.6% were between below 18 and above 50.
- 36.4% were under graduate, 33.2% were post-graduation, 13.2% were diploma and higher secondary, and 4% were professionals.
- In terms of employed status, 38.4% of respondents were in the private sector and self-employed, 15.2% were salaried in the public sector, 8% were professionals.
- 39.6% Monthly income were below 20,000 and Rs. 20,001 - Rs. 40,000, 12.8% were 40,001 - 60,000 and 8% were above 60,000.
- Marital status, 48 % of respondents were married, while 52% were unmarried.

**Table 2 Perception on organic food products**

| Variable  | Classification     | Percentage |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| Source of awareness                                   | Social media       | 43.2       |
| Purchase place  | Organic food shops | 44.4       |
| Frequency of consumption                              | Often              | 30         |
| Cost of organic food products                         | Yes                | 70.4       |
| Playing major role in health conscious                | Yes                | 88.8       |
| Familiarisation of organic food products among public | Post pandemic      | 57.6       |
| Factors influence to purchase organic food products   | Health conscious   | 49.2       |
| Amount that spent on organic food products            | Rs. 500- Rs.1000   | 30.8       |
| Usage of organic products                             | Less than 1 year   | 45.6       |

- **Source of Awareness:** Through social media 43.2%, through friends and family 30.8% then 13.6% through neighbours and 12.4% through the newspaper.
- **Purchasing place:** Purchasing in organic food shops (44.4%), followed by departmental stores (25.2%), while the purchase place in online mode is (17.6%), then local petty shops (12.8%).
- **Frequency of consumption:** often (30%), rarely (28%), sometimes (26.4%), most often (15.6%).
- **Cost of organic food:** the respondents accepted that 70.4% of the price is high and 29.6% of the respondents accepted that the price is low.
- **Health conscious:** playing a major role in health conscious is accepted by 88.8% and rejected by 11.2%.
- **Familiarized:** pre pandemic were 42.4% and post pandemic were 57.6%.
- **Influence on purchase:** health conscious was 49.2%, quality was 27.6%, taste was 11.6%, quantity was 7.6% and price was 4%.
- **Monthly amount spent:** 30.8% of respondents were spending Rs. 500 - Rs. 1000, 29.2% were spending Rs. 1000 - Rs. 1500, 20.8% were spending monthly below Rs. 500 and 19.2% were spending above Rs. 1500.
- **Usage of organic products:** less than 1 year was 45.6%, 1-3 years were 29.6% and more than 3 years were 24.8%.

## 2. Multiple Response Analysis



**Figure 1: Preference of Organic Food Products**

- 46.8% of respondents agree that they prefer to purchase vegetables.
- 43.6% of respondents purchased the cereals.
- 40% of respondents prefer to purchase organic fruits.
- 28.8% of respondents selected the pulses.
- 22% of respondents prefer to purchase dairy products.

### 3. One-Way ANOVA

**H<sub>0</sub>:** there is no significant difference between the demographic and perception of organic food products.

**Table 3 Difference between Demographic and Perception of Organic Food Products**

| Demographic                    | Category         | Mean  | Standard deviation | F value | Significance | H <sub>0</sub> is |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------|--------------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                  | Male             | 3.788 | 0.655              | 3.271   | 0.072        | Accepted          |
|                                | Female           | 3.92  | 0.55               |         |              |                   |
| <b>Age</b>                     | Below18          | 3.659 | 0.574              | 0.686   | 0.601        | Accepted          |
|                                | 18-30            | 3.889 | 0.573              |         |              |                   |
|                                | 31-40            | 3.849 | 0.587              |         |              |                   |
|                                | 41-50            | 3.837 | 0.712              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Above50          | 4.1   | 0.484              |         |              |                   |
| <b>Education Qualification</b> | Higher secondary | 3.745 | 0.673              | 3.038   | 0.018        | rejected          |
|                                | Diploma          | 3.977 | 0.535              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Under graduate   | 3.814 | 0.647              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Post graduate    | 3.994 | 0.497              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Professional     | 3.453 | 0.533              |         |              |                   |
| <b>Employment</b>              | Public sector    | 3.659 | 0.667              | 2.078   | 0.104        | Accepted          |
|                                | Private sector   | 3.928 | 0.578              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Self employed    | 3.908 | 0.564              |         |              |                   |
|                                | Professional     | 3.831 | 0.637              |         |              |                   |

|                       |               |       |       |       |       |          |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| <b>Income</b>         | Below 20,000  | 3.792 | 0.616 | 1.759 | 0.155 | Accepted |
|                       | 20,001-40,000 | 3.915 | 0.577 |       |       |          |
|                       | 40,001-60,000 | 3.838 | 0.606 |       |       |          |
|                       | Above 60,000  | 4.095 | 0.525 |       |       |          |
| <b>Marital Status</b> | Single        | 3.87  | 0.558 | 0.017 | 0.895 | Accepted |
|                       | Married       | 3.867 | 0.636 |       |       |          |

From the above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted for the significant value is more than p value (0.05). The result of this analysis, there is no significant relationship between gender, age, employment, income, marital status and perception of organic food products except education qualification.

#### **4. Factor Analysis**

Factor Analysis is used to identify complex relationships between items and groups of items that are part of a unified concept.

**Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test:**

|  |                    |        |
|--|--------------------|--------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .945   |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 3472.2 |
|  | df                 | 406    |
|  | Sig.               | 0.000  |

In this study, Excellent sample adequacy was indicated by the study's Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sample Adequacy rating of 0.945. This outcome demonstrates that the data is appropriate for factor analysis.



**Table 5 Total Variance Explained**

| Component  | Initial Eigen values |               |              | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              |
|--|----------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|  | Total                | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                             | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1  | 11.97                | 41.28         | 41.28        | 11.971                              | 41.28         | 41.28        | 5.24                              | 18.069        | 18.06        |
| 2  | 1.493                | 5.149         | 46.429       | 1.493                               | 5.149         | 46.42        | 5.2                               | 17.932        | 36.00        |
| 3  | 1.224                | 4.219         | 50.648       | 1.224                               | 4.219         | 50.64        | 4.24                              | 14.647        | 50.64        |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. |                      |               |              |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |

Total 29 variables were reduced to 3 predominant factors of cumulative variance 50.648. These factors individually possess the variances of 18.069, 17.932 & 14.647.

**Table 6 Rotated component matrix**

|  | Component |      |   |
|--|-----------|------|---|
|  | 1         | 2    | 3 |
| I try to keep a healthy work life balance by consuming organic food product                      | .490      |      |   |
| I enjoy spending money on organic food products  | .742      |      |   |
| I get pleasure from eating organic foods   | .654      |      |   |
| Purchasing organic food makes me feel good about myself  | .613      |      |   |
| I get organic food products in regular basis   | .524      |      |   |
| For me, organic food products contain more vitamin and minerals than conventional product        | .554      |      |   |
| Increase in demand of organic food product will increase the agriculture and environment welfare | .574      |      |   |
| For me, consuming organic food product is trend and it is increasing gradually                   | .606      |      |   |
| Organic food products should increase their durability   | .603      |      |   |
| I have the resources and the knowledge and the ability to purchase organic food                  |           | .516 |   |
| I am aware of procedures involved in making of organic food product                              |           | .557 |   |
| I am aware of the key ingredients that are mentioned in the packaging                            |           | .556 |   |
| Even though it is expensive I prefer to buy organic food products                                |           | .574 |   |
| I believe that the organic food products do not contain artificial additive                      |           | .551 |   |

|   |  |      |      |
|---|--|------|------|
| I think that the organic food products are low in fat   |  | .453 |      |
| Nowadays organic food product increase demand among the public  |  | .602 |      |
| Production of organic food product (organic farming) will consume less energy   |  | .663 |      |
| From my perception those who are aware about organic food products are purchasing it constantly                         |  | .489 |      |
| I believe that purchasing organic food products in an organic shop avail discounts and coupons                          |  | .743 |      |
| I trust that the organic food products are processed under the guidelines of Government (food department)               |  | .497 |      |
| I think that organic food products should bring multi flavors and taste to attract consumers                            |  | .541 |      |
| I believe that eating organic food will improve one's health.   |  |      | .707 |
| I think eating organic food helps me lead a healthier lifestyle.  |  |      | .708 |
| I Believing in honesty of organic food is a good idea   |  |      | .525 |
| Organic food is trustworthy   |  |      | .477 |
| I think that organic food is rich in quality  |  |      | .554 |
| I believe that organic foods can be consumed by all age group of people   |  |      | .540 |
| For me, diabetic patients can consume organic food more, compared to conventional food items                            |  |      | .517 |
| From my perception, if government provides organic food products in (ration shops) it will be useful for general public |  |      | .619 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.<br>Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.                 |  |      |      |
| a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.  |  |      |      |

Source: Primary Data

**Component 1:** In this component named as KNOWLEDGE. There are 9 variables and the highest loading value is 0.742

**Component 2:** In this component named as TRUST WORTHINESS. There are 12 variables; the highest loading value is 0.743

**Component 3:** In this component named as HEALTH CONSCIOUS. There are 8 variables and the highest loading value is 0.708

## **SUGGESTIONS**

The markets for organic products are rapidly changing in marketing strategy. Consumers changing eating habits have a significant impact on organic food industry. It is popularized, and people became more aware during the pandemic and post pandemic periods. Even though awareness and basic knowledge about these products are low in rural areas, consumers are willing to pay higher prices for pest free food. A few suggestions are:

- The Government and NGO's should conduct awareness programs for them.
- The Government should avail organic products in fair price shops at low rate which people in average and below average can be beneficial.
- In specialized shops, they can make more discounts, which will encourage people to purchase organic foods.
- Trustworthiness is important for any kind of product. A problem for the manufacturer arises if there is any issue with trust of products.

## **CONCLUSION**

Organic food products are becoming more and more popular these days since living a healthy lifestyle through good eating habits increases demand for them. The market and demand are increasing. The larger intake will give a longer life. All the products are produced with chemicals and fertilizers. So, there should be no more compromise for food. The hard work done by the entire human race is to lead a healthy and happy life. To lead a healthy life, healthy food should be consumed. Organic food products are high in vitamins and minerals. The Organic Food Products are all eco-friendly in nature and are also good for health.

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