



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Agricultural Science

A STUDY ON PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CONSUMERS ABOUT ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

KEY WORDS: natural food, problems, organic farming and government support

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ABSTRACT

Organic produce is considered as a healthy, natural and safe choice by consumers everywhere. A lot of efforts and measures were taken to promote organic farming, production and trade in the recent years in different parts of the world at various levels. Organic food promotes a balance of human, other living organisms and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. The problems and constraints also need attention. Inadequate Government Support, Lack of Awareness of Consumers and Producers, Output Marketing Problems, Shortage of Bio-mass, Inadequate Supporting Infrastructure, High Input Costs, Marketing Problems of Organic Inputs, Lack of Financial Support, Low Yields, Inability to Meet the Export Demand, Market Development for the Organic Products etc., are the major problems faced by the organic industry. The rapid growth in the industrial development together with the population explosion is increasing the pressure on the agricultural production methods to improve the yield of the crops. For this study, primary data was collected from 64 sample respondents by using a well-structured questionnaire. Convenient sampling method was used in this study. Such collected data was analysed with the help of Garrett's Ranking Technique and Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance Test ('W'). The study concludes with findings and suitable suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

Food consumption patterns are changing as a result of health and environmental issues. Interest in organically produced food is increasing throughout the world. Organic food consumption is increasing because of concerns over environmental and health issues associated with food production. The increase in consumers' interest in organic food products has been attributed among other issues to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues.

Organic food promotes a balance of human, other living organisms and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. By keeping all these in mind, this study is an attempt to find out the problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products towards Non availability, High Price and Irregular supply. To identify the problems faced by the consumers, a Pilot study was conducted with 14 problems. These problems have been generated on the basis of Review of previous studies, on the basis of consultation with Academic Experts and discussion with my Guide. On the basis of outcome of the pilot study and by using Item Analysis Technique, three factors have been dropped. Finally, 11 factors have been used in the final interview schedule.

In the Interview Schedule, the consumers have been asked to rank each factor on the basis of their opinion. Each consumer has been initiated to indicate their opinion of the factors by giving rank one to the most significant factor influenced them, rank two to the second important factors and so on. Required primary data have been collected from the selected sample consumers. Such collected data have been analyzed with the help of statistical tools like Garrett's Ranking Technique and Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance Test ('W').

Review Of The Literature

By realising the significance of the review of the previous study, the following reviews have been made.

Vasanthi and Kavitha (2016) made a study on consumer awareness and purchasing behaviour of green products - an analytical study. This study was based on both primary data and secondary data. The required primary data have been collected from 100 sample respondents through a well Structured Questionnaire. Such collected data have been analysed with the help of statistical tools like Simple

percentage, Descriptive statistics and Rank analysis. Secondary data sourced from various official and unofficial research agencies and newspapers. They found that the most of the consumers in Tirupur city are aware of environmental problems and green products in the market. There is a positive attitude and behaviour towards green products. The green consumerism gains momentum in Tirupur city.

Padmathy and Saraswathy (2016) conducted a study on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food products. This study was based on primary data. The required primary data have been collected from 175 sample respondents through questionnaire. Such collected data have been analysed with the help of statistical tools like percentage and chi-square test. It is concluded that consumers have positive behaviour towards purchasing organic food products, when it comes to actual purchase, price, environmental concerns and quality are still the key factors influencing their purchase decisions.

Lina Thatte et al. (2016) conducted a study with analyzing consumer behavior towards Organic Food with Special reference cities - Mumbai & Than. They found out in their study majority of consumers were aware and consume organic food products because of the health benefits associated with it. Educated consumers are more interested in consuming organic products, but due to some prominent reason such as regular availability, lack of information and risk of getting cheated make them to avoid the organic products. Better knowledge regarding the agricultural practice and time taken for cultivation would express the true value of organic products and it has to be communicated to the consumers.

Rushdi Ahmed and Khadiza Rahman (2015) made a study on "Understanding the Consumer Behavior towards Organic Food: A study of the Bangladesh Market". The study was based on primary data. The required primary data have been collected from 120 respondents through a well-structured questionnaire. Such collected data have been analysed with SPSS V 17.0. They confirmed that during the research period that retail stores are popular for purchasing organic products as there is a lack of awareness regarding other sources to obtain the products. They found that the consumers expect more shop that sells organic food products in their locality and also more ranges in the organic products available in the stores. They also found that the consumers prefer discounts for organic products and need specialized organic stores.

Many of the consumers are unaware about rules related to certification and policies of organic products.

Reza Asgharian et al. (2018) made a study on Green products quality, green customer satisfaction and green customer loyalty. They found that the green product quality likely influences green customer satisfaction and green customer loyalty. Next, the study showed that green satisfaction had potential impact on green customer loyalty.

Rupesh and Velmurugan (2018) made a study on consumers' attitude towards organic food products. For their study, both primary and secondary data were used. The primary data have been collected through a well structure questionnaire from 750 sample respondents. The collected data have been analysed at making use are analysis of variance (ANOVA) 'T' test and chi-square test. They reported that the Government and social organizations have to take necessary steps in creating awareness in midst of consumers on the merits of using organic foods and extend necessary assistance in cultivating high quantum of organic foods by the majority of the farmers.

Tsarkiridou et al. (2018) found from their study that organic food products are believed to be healthier and higher quality than conventional food products. They found that care for environment and health were important factors in the purchase of organic food products.

Farah Ayuni Shafie and Denise Rennie (2018) conducted a study on consumer perceptions towards organic food. They suggested that concerted effort from all parties especially the government in promoting the advantages of consuming organic food may help shift consumers' behaviour.

Chakrabarti (2018) in his research indicated that the influence of customers' value towards organic food products had a significant influence to the customer loyalty for the organic food products.

Lina Thatte et al. (2016) conducted a study with analyzing consumer behavior towards Organic Food with Special

Problems Faced By The Consumers While Using Organic Food Products: Garrett's Ranking Technique

PROBLEMS	Rank	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	Total	TS	MS	Rank
	Scores (x)	82	71	64	59	54	50	45	40	35	28	17				
Non availability	F	122	28	38	50	49	95	56	68	22	101	54	683	74,908	69.45 (2)	V
	Fx	8036	3763	3264	590	3726	500	2205	8520	9030	3752	255				
High price	F	74	24	44	70	44	115	123	78	103	31	64	683	76,381	74.38 (1)	IX
	Fx	12628	1704	2816	5310	2376	6750	7335	3120	4655	868	1088				
Don't trust the certificate	F	71	30	61	28	10	244	246	21	36	135	78	683	65,237	59.65 (6)	III
	Fx	5822	2130	3904	1652	540	12200	11070	840	1260	3780	1326				
Less durable	F	35	129	20	43	141	45	26	252	65	145	59	683	63,865	57.91 (7)	VII
	Fx	2870	9159	1280	2537	7614	2250	1170	10080	2275	4060	1003				
Less variety	F	129	251	87	25	42	25	35	85	50	211	20	683	67,456	61.01 (5)	V
	Fx	10578	17821	5568	1475	2268	1250	1575	3400	1750	5908	340				
Need for more maintenance	F	193	70	134	106	20	61	21	15	102	159	79	683	60,394	52.78 (8)	VIII
	Fx	15826	4970	8576	6254	1080	3050	945	600	3570	4452	1343				
Adulteration	F	57	27	76	172	169	69	30	15	146	24	175	683	69,874	63.89 (4)	IV
	Fx	4674	1917	4864	10148	9126	3450	1350	600	5110	672	2975				
Not attractive	F	41	216	144	76	186	77	51	42	25	20	82	683	59,873	50.56 (9)	IX
	Fx	3362	15336	9216	4484	10044	3850	2295	1680	875	560	1394				
Irregular supply	F	84	21	79	290	30	15	208	115	77	20	21	683	70,210	65.21 (3)	III
	Fx	6888	1491	5056	17110	1620	750	9360	4600	2695	560	357				
Poor package	F	26	124	157	32	100	178	64	64	20	46	149	683	57,205	49.90 (10)	X
	Fx	2132	8804	10048	1888	5400	8900	2880	2560	700	1288	2533				
No discounts/ gifts	F	72	15	107	88	149	101	67	60	48	35	218	683	53,645	46.34 (11)	XI
	Fx	5904	1065	6848	5192	8046	5050	3015	2400	1680	980	3706				
TOTAL Σf	683	683	683	683	683	683	683	683	683	683	683	683				

Source: Primary Data. Note: x = Scale value, f = No. of consumers, fx = Score value, TS = Total score and MS = Mean Score ;

reference cities – Mumbai. They found out in their study majority of consumers were aware and consume organic food products because of the health benefits associated with it. Educated consumers are more interested in consuming organic products, but due to some prominent reason such as regular availability, lack of information and risk of getting cheated make them to avoid the organic products. Better knowledge regarding the agricultural practice and time taken for cultivation would express the true value of organic products and it has to be communicated to the consumers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the problems faced by the consumers about organic food products
2. To offer suitable suggestions.

METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

To attain the framed objective, the required primary data have been collected from the 64 sample respondents by using convenience sampling technique. In Erode district, there are ten taluks. Of them, Gobichettipalayam it has been purposively selected. Block wise the sample consumers have been selected. The required primary data have been collected by using a well-structured pre-tested interview schedule. Such collected data have been analysed with the help of Garrett's Ranking Technique and Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance Test ('W').

Data Analysis And Interpretation

Garrett's Ranking Technique is adopted to identify the most significant problems faced by the sample consumers. By referring the Garrett's Table, the per cent position estimated is converted into scores. Accordingly, score value as per Garrett Ranking Analysis for first rank to eleven ranks is calculated.

The ranking analysis of the problems faced by the consumers while using organic food products through garrett's ranking technique is presented in table 1.

Figures in Parentheses are Rank

The Table 1 clearly reveals that the main problem felt by the consumers is High Price (highest mean score 74.38) proves to be the most significant problem, this is followed by Non-availability, Irregular supply, Adulteration, Less durability, Don't trust the certificate, Less variety, Need for more maintenance, Not attractive, Poor package and the least importance is given to No discounts/ gifts (46.34) to their problem.

It is concluded that High Price is an important problem faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products.

Ranking Analysis: Kendall's Co-efficient Of Concordance Test ('w')

Further, to identify the problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products, it is decided to use Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance. Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance also known as Kendall's 'W'. It is a non-parametric statistic. It is a normalization of the statistic of the Friedman test and can be used for assessing agreement among raters. Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance has been applied to find whether there is any similarity among the consumers in assigning the ranks to the given factors. Kendall's 'W' ranges from 0 (No agreement) to 1 (Complete agreement). Higher the value of Kendall's 'W' more will be the similarity among the consumers in assigning the ranks whereas, lower the value of Kendall's W less will be the similarity among the consumers in assigning the ranks.

Mean scores have been calculated for the problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products. Lower mean score shows higher performance of the respective factor and are disclosed in Table 2.

Table 2 Problems Faced By The Consumers To Prefer Organic Food Products: Kendall's Co-efficient Of Concordance ('w')

PROBLEMS	TS	MS	Rank	Kendals's ('W')
Non availability	3087	4.52	II	0.0026
High price	2951	4.32	I	
Don't trust the certificate	5139	5.62	VI	
Less durable	4965	5.27	V	
Less variety	5450	5.93	VII	
Need for more maintenance	5922	6.24	VIII	
Adulteration	4112	5.02	IV	
Not attractive	6129	6.63	IX	
Irregular supply	3401	4.98	III	
Poor package	6359	7.99	X	
No discounts/ gifts	6578	8.01	XI	

Table 2 discloses that the mean score for the problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products varies between the score of 4.32 and 8.01. The Kendall's 'W' is calculated for the above problems which is found to be 0.0026. It shows that there is less similarity among the consumers in assigning the ranks to the problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products. Looking at the mean score, it is understood that the highest preference has been given to High price (lower the mean score and higher the priority) constituting the mean score 4.32 and the lowest preference is given to No discounts/ gifts (8.01). The moderate problems are given to Non-availability(4.52), Irregular supply(4.98), Adulteration(5.02), Less durability(5.27), Don't trust the certificate(5.62), Less variety(5.93), Need for more maintenance(6.24), Not attractive(6.63) and Poor package(7.99). It is identified that the calculated value of 'W' is 0.0026 which is closer to '0'. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a low similarity among the sample consumers in assigning the ranks to the various problems faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products.

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

Suggestions

In this study, by using both Garret Ranking Technique and Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance ('W') test, it is found that the factor of reasonable price has been ranked as tenth by the sample consumers. It is concluded that High Price is an important problem faced by the consumers to prefer organic food products. This scenario can be changed if manufactures of organic food products and retailers are coming forward to take various price reducing mechanism for the satisfaction of the consumers, undoubtedly number of consumers using organic food products will increase.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that consumers have positive behaviour towards purchasing organic food products, when it comes to actual purchase, price, environmental concerns and quality are still the key factors influencing their purchase decisions.

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