

Organic Food Products And Consumer Buying Behavior: A Study Of Telangana State (Hyderabad) Consumers' Experience

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Abstract:

Organic foods are becoming increasingly popular in today's culture as people become more health concerned. We all know how important it is for customers to know what goes into their bodies. When trying to live a healthy lifestyle, it's critical to understand where our food originates from. Organic food is grown, processed, and packaged without the use of synthetic fertilizers or hazardous chemical sprays. People prefer them over ordinary foods because of the perceived benefits they offer. Resources are conserved and the environment is protected rather than intensified in biodynamic agriculture. In the end, long-term sustainability is achieved. Variables Influencing Consumer Buying Behavior and Awareness towards Organic Food: A Investigate of Hyderabad Consumers" intends to focus and determine the awareness of organic food items and study the buying behavior, preference and factors impacting towards organic food of the selected area. Based on an initial survey of 100 persons in Hyderabad, this study was carried out by researchers. To randomly choose and contact clients, structural questionnaires were utilized. Information will be collected via a questionnaire about people's attitudes about food safety and purchase habits, as well as how much money they spend on organic food and how successful internet resources are at providing organic information. Customers will be more aware of organic food produced by organic enterprises as a result of this study.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness & Preferences, Organic Food, Organic, Awareness

Introduction

Organic food is rapidly growing in India. A shift in client tastes is the most important element impacting the development and use of organic products. Consumers are flocking to organic foods in response to food safety worries. Consumers are willing to spend an extra 5-7 percent on organic food because of the increased safety. According to the USDA National Organic Standards Board, "Organic agriculture is an ecological production management method that promotes and improves biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity." It is based on using as little off-farm inputs as feasible, as well as management strategies that restore, maintain, and improve ecological balance. Organic food is grown without the use of

synthetic pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, hormones, fertilisers, or other potentially dangerous substances. There are no artificial flavours or colours used in the production of organic foods.

Benefits of Eating Organic Food

Consumers today prefer to buy or eat organic products, and they should be able to trust that organic food is more nutritious than conventional produce, and that it may help to extend people's lives and prevent disease. Organic products meet stringent standards. The taste of organic food is great. It also reduces health risks. It also builds healthy soil and utilizes the water resources. It also works in harmony with nature and does innovative research. The production process helps to keep the rural community healthy. According to a study by the European Union, "organic vegetables and fruits have antioxidant qualities and also help to reduce cancer and heart disease risk." Organic food also helps to improve the immune system and promote better sleeping habits. It is also less likely to be overweight than eating conventional food. Organic foods are also tastier and pure than conventional food. Without the use of synthetics such as chemical fertilizer's and pesticides, organic food is also helpful in saving the environment and also the welfare of animals. This also produces less waste.

Status of Organic Farming in India

Organic farming covers the whole land area, with 45715 certified organic farms. This equates to about 0.326 percent of total agricultural land. The Indian organic agricultural sector is valued at \$80 million and is nearly completely export-oriented. According to research, there are two sorts of organic food: certified and uncertified. A recognized agency guarantees the manufacturing process of certified items. The product packaging must be quality assured. The cost of certification is too expensive, keeping small farmers out of business. There are a few agencies in India that perform checks and offer certificates for organic food, such as IMO Control and FKAL International. The OCA has developed a number of national campaigns to protect organic standards in food. Food branded "USDA organic" is the gold standard for health and sustainability. Farming was completely organic in old India. At the time, fertilizers and pesticides could only be acquired from plants and animal products. Organic farming was once the backbone of the Indian economy. The study reveals the many interests and beliefs that inspire their organic food purchase habit.

Review of Literature

When buying organic food, customer perceptions are influenced by health awareness, environmental concerns and food safety concerns (Makatouni, 2002; Aertsens et al. 2011; Basha and Ramesh, 2010). According to Roitner Schobesberger, Dornhofer, Somosook and Vogl (2008), health is one of the main factors driving the increased demand for organic food. Consumers do not want to compromise the health characteristics of their food in any way. The main motivation that creates a link between customers and organic food is health (Makatouni, 2002). The customer wants "safe food" and organic food appears to be

an excellent solution as organic farming adheres to strict regulations and standards that limit the use of synthetic pesticides and chemicals on certified pastures and farmland. According to a previous study, additional factors such as rising education levels, consumer understanding of healthy food and concern for organic food have had a major influence on increasing consumer interest in cultivated foods. Biologically (Canavari et. Al., 2003;

Padel and Foster, 2005; Somosook and Vogl, 2008). The vast majority of people are familiar with organic food. Consumers believe that consuming these products is a safer and healthier alternative to traditional foods, as they lack synthetic fertilizers (Baker et al., 2002; Padel and Foster, 2005; Mohomad, Rusdi and Hashim, 2010). According to Radman (2005), customers have a favorable attitude towards organic products and are willing to pay a premium for them. According to Gill et al. (2000), 50 percent of respondents in their sample were willing to spend 15 to 25 percent more on organic food. Furthermore, Canavari et al., 2003 found that 65.8% of Italian organic customers were willing to pay a premium for organic peaches and apples. Based on previous research results, customers have a good opinion of these products. However, this does not imply that a favorable opinion and willingness to pay a higher price for organic food converts potential customers into real buyers. Organic food is still far from being in the food baskets of well-informed people (Shafie and Rennie, 2012).

However, other studies show poor value assessment in the context of organic food. There are many barriers, such as higher prices than conventional foods (Jolly, 1991; Roody et al. 1996; John Thogersen, 2010; Vitterso and Tangeland, 2015), the lack of availability of organic food (Wandel and bugge, 1997 ; AlTaie, Rahal, ALSudani and ALFarsi, 2015), doubts about product certification and lack of knowledge (Woener and Meierplo Superior quality, fair costs and adequate knowledge of organic feeding methods and pesticide residues can be attractive to potential buyers (Vitterso and Tangeland, 2015).).

Honkanen and Frewer (2009) found that proper knowledge of food affects customers' purchasing decisions. According to Mohomad, Rusdi and Hashim (2010), urban customers are more aware than rural consumers. Workers buy organic food every day because they believe it helps them reduce stress and maintain an active lifestyle. Both male and female consumers are eager to spend more on organic foods and gain more and more adequate knowledge of these items due to the health benefits.

Consumer attitudes towards organic food are strongly influenced by factors such as health awareness, environmental concerns and organic experience. Furthermore, customers' purchasing intentions are influenced by the quality, appropriate information, familiarity and availability of organic food. The unique dimension of familiarity was found to have a substantial association with customer buying intent and organic buying behavior. Raising awareness of organic through educational efforts not only makes

consumers more aware and familiar with organic food, it also increases their intention to purchase organic products (Smith and Paladino, 2010). Consumers' beliefs and knowledge about organic and organic items have influenced their intentions to purchase organic food products (Ahmad and Juhdi, 2010).

Objective of the Study

- To determine consumer awareness of organic food in the State of Telangana (Hyderabad).
- To investigate buying habits, preferences and variables that influences the purchase of organic food.

Methodology

This study was based on primary survey of 100 respondents living in the Hyderabad. Customers were approached randomly using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to record the responses on food safety concerns, Frequency of buying behavior, from where they buy the products, awareness, attitude, factors effecting buying behavior, price effect on purchasing, behaviors towards organic food and effectiveness of sources for organic information. The socio- demographic profiles of the respondents were also recorded on the parameters such as gender, age, education level, occupation, household income and marital status. Simple data analysis techniques were adopted to analyze the data.

Statements on which data has been collected

S.No	Statement	Question No.
1	Organic food is healthier than conventional food.	Q1
2	Organic food is good in taste.	Q2
3	Organic food does not contain any preservative.	Q3
4	Organic food is better in quality than conventional food	Q4
5	Organic food is more Hygienic.	Q5
6	Fruits and vegetables are the healthiest organic food.	Q6
7	Organic food is less consumed and brought because of lesser availability in the market.	Q7
8	Organic food is less consumed and brought because of lack of awareness.	Q8
9	I would rather buy organic food products even though its expensive	Q9

10	I prefer to purchase from supermarket/ mall.	Q10
11	I prefer to purchase from local market.	Q11
12	I prefer to purchase organic food once a week.	Q12
13	I prefer to buy organic food every fortnight.	Q13
14	I Prefer to purchase organic food monthly	Q14
15	I Prefer to purchase organic food every two months.	Q15
16	Organic food is comparatively expensive than Conception food	Q16
17	Organic food does not offer too much variety.	Q17
18	Organic food is available in good packaging to attract customers	Q18
19	The buying of organic food is rationally proportional to monthly income	Q19
20	Buying and Consuming organic food has become status symbol for the rich	Q20

Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Demographic profile of Respondents		
1	Age	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	18-25	46	46%
	25-35	32	32%
	above 35	22	22%
	Total	100	
2	Gender	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	Male	48	48%
	Female	52	52%
	Total	100	
3	Education	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	High school	5	5%

	Under graduate	35	35%
	Graduate	28	28%
	Above graduate	32	32%
	Total	100	
4	Monthly Income	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	<15000	14	14%
	15000 to <30000	34	34%
	31000 to <45000	12	12%
	>45000	8	8%
	dependent	32	32%
	Total	100	
5	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	Single	52	52%
	Married	48	48%
	Total	100	
6	Job Field	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	Corporate	10	10%
	Professional	56	56%
	Students	34	34%
	Total	100	

Organic Food is healthier than Conventional Food

Opinion	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
			Percent	Percent
Strongly	46	46	46	46
Agree				
Agree	42	42	42	88
Neutral	10	10	10	98

Disagree	2	2	2	100
Total	100	100	100	

Interpretation

According to the above data, the majorities of respondents (about 88 percent) agree or strongly agree that organic food is healthier than conventional food, while just 2 percent of consumers disagree with the assertion. However, 10% of those polled are agnostic in this regard. It demonstrates that people are well aware of the benefits of organic food.

Organic Food is healthier than Conventional Food

Opinion	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
			Percent	Percent
Strongly	46	46	46	46
Agree				
Agree	42	42	42	88
Neutral	10	10	10	98
Disagree	2	2	2	100
Total	100	100	100	

Interpretation

According to the above data, the majority of respondents, almost 88 percent, agree or strongly agree that organic food is healthier than conventional food, while just 2 percent of customers not agree. However, 10% of those polled are agnostic in this regard. It demonstrates that people are well aware of the benefits of organic food.

Organic Food is good in Taste

	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
			%	%
Strongly agree	16	16	16	16
Agree	40	40	40	56
Neutral	38	38	38	94
Disagree	4	4	4	98
Strongly Disagree	2	2	2	100

Total	100	100	100	
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Interpretation: According to the findings, 56% of respondents believe that organic food tastes better than conventional food. Organic food, they say, has more nutrients. It aids in the treatment of cancer, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. However, 38% of respondents are unconcerned with the taste of organic and conventional food. Minorities were divided on whether organic food tastes better than regular food.

Organic Food is less preservative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Agree	56	56.0	56.0	72.0
	Neutral	26	26.0	26.0	98.0
	Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: According to the survey, 72% of buyers believe organic food has fewer preservatives. Consumers believe that organic farming is better for the earth. Organic fields include deeper vegetation, greater weed cover, and 88% more "epigeal arthropods" (squiggly soil invertebrates, Ecology and Farming Magazine, IFOAM, September/December 1996). Because the items are chemical-free, they have no negative impacts and do not harm individuals who consume organic food.

Organic Food is better in Quality than Conventional Food

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	58	58.0	58.0	88.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: When we surveyed customers about the quality of organic food, 88 percent believed that organic food was of higher quality than conventional food. According to the report, consumers are increasingly worried about environmental and health issues. They demonstrate an increased emphasis on health, nutrition, and safety. Many studies have found that the value of dietary nutrition and cleanliness are intertwined.

Organic Food is more hygienic

Fruits and Vegetables are the healthiest Organic food

	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
			Percent	Percent
Strongly Agree	46	46	46	46
Agree	36	36	36	82
Neutral	10	10	10	92
Disagree	4	4	4	96
Strongly Disagree	4	4	4	100
Total	100	100	100	

	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
			Percent	Percent
Strongly Agree	32	32	32	32
Agree	48	48	48	80
Neutral	18	18	18	98
Strongly Disagree	2	2	2	100
Total	100	100	100	

Interpretation: According to the poll, people feel that fruits and vegetables are the healthiest organic foods. Only 8% of individuals disagree with this assertion. There is evidence that some organic fruit is drier than conventionally cultivated fruit; slightly dry fruit may also have a more intense flavour due to a higher concentration of flavouring compounds. There is a strong necessity to make customers in rural and semi-urban regions aware of the benefits of organic food through marketing initiatives.

Organic food is less consumed and bought because of lack of availability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Agree	32	32.0	32.0	68.0
	Neutral	18	18.0	18.0	86.0
	Disagree	12	12.0	12.0	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Organic food is less consumed and bought because of lack of awareness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	70.0
	Neutral	18	18.0	18.0	88.0
	Disagree	12	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: As the table shows majority of people were agreed from these statements that the availability and lack of awareness is the major reason for less

I would rather buy Organic food products even though it is expensive

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree		16	16	16
Agree	44	44	44	60
Valid	32	32	32	92

Neutral				
Disagree	8	8	8	100
Total	100	100	100	

Interpretation: People are willing to pay a higher price for organic food if they are adequately informed about it. The statement was agreed upon by 60% of those polled, while the remaining 32% were undecided.

I prefer to purchase from supermarket

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	48.0
	Neutral	28	28.0	28.0	76.0
	Disagree	22	22.0	22.0	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Purchase from local market

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Neutral	38	38.0	38.0	76.0
	Disagree	18	18.0	18.0	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Organic food is comparatively expensive than Conventional food

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	20	20	20	20
Agree	44	44	44	64
Neutral	32	32	32	96
Disagree	4	4	4	100
Total	100	100	100	

I prefer to purchase Organic food once a week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	48.0
	Neutral	26	26.0	26.0	74.0
	Disagree	16	16.0	16.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

I prefer to purchase Organic food every fortnight

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Neutral	38	38.0	38.0	58.0
	Disagree	24	24.0	24.0	82.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

I prefer to purchase Organic food monthly

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	16.0
	Neutral	44	44.0	44.0	60.0
	Disagree	34	34.0	34.0	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

I prefer to purchase Organic food every two months

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Agree	12	12.0	12.0	18.0
	Neutral	24	24.0	24.0	42.0
	Disagree	40	40.0	40.0	82.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: According to the survey, consumers are willing to buy from their local market if it is easily accessible. The availability of any product has a significant impact on the increase in product purchases and consumption. Customers buy organic food based on their needs, as shown in the table. The statement that organic food is more expensive than conventional food was agreed upon by the majority of customers.

Organic food is available in good packaging to attract customers

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Agree	32	32.0	32.0	44.0
	Neutral	26	26.0	26.0	70.0
	Disagree	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Even if 26 percent are neutral, 44 percent of customers strongly agree or agree with the assertion that organic food packaging is designed to attract buyers, while 30 percent disagree.

The buying of Organic food is rationally proportional to monthly income

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	46.0
	Neutral	32	32.0	32.0	78.0
	Disagree	18	18.0	18.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Customers believed that purchasing organic food was reasonably proportionate to monthly income in 38% of cases. While 32% are against, the remaining 32% are undecided. A devoted consumer disagrees with the assertion. They have become accustomed to the meal and will not budge. It demonstrates that income has a significant impact on the consumption of organic foods. Organic food has become a status symbol for the wealthy in metropolitan areas. According to the results of the study, 68 percent of consumers agreed with the statement, while 18 percent disagreed.

Discussion & Suggestions for Improvement of Awareness of Organic food

Organic food companies should step ahead to create awareness amongst consumers about organic food. The organic food companies should try to explore the consumers' behavior to prepare tempting offer for them. The findings of this study have ramifications for organic product manufacturers, retailers, and market regulating organisations. Customers' awareness and understanding about organically produced food play an important part in purchasing decisions. The study can help health and wellness organisations realign their production and marketing strategies. The strategy should focus specific consumer segments, increasing consumers' awareness and knowledge of organic food products by maintaining customer satisfaction and delight. The findings of this study have ramifications for organic product manufacturers, retailers, and market regulating organisations. Customers' awareness and understanding about organically produced food play an important part in purchasing decisions. The study can help health and wellness organisations realign their production and marketing strategies. According to the study, 45.78 percent of respondents believe "organic food products" taste better. According to 56.79 percent of respondents, the market's selection of organic products is restricted. According to the report, 40% of respondents believe that customers are unaware of organic products. There are only a few organic product shops and outlets in the city. The majority of respondents (30.15 percent) believe that television advertisement and other forms of marketing help to raise awareness about organic products.

- There should be a local market for organic food.
- Organic shops are required in both rural and urban locations.
- Can also supply wayside booths in the countryside.
- Organic food is available for purchase straight from the farm where it was grown.
- Online ordering of organic food delivered to your door.
- Supermarkets can broaden their selection of organic foods.
- Organic food can be included in school meals, canteens, cafeterias, and high-profile businesses' menus.
- Maximum number of organic production units.
- Setting up packaging equipment for organic food.
- Organic food market development at the local and regional levels.

Conclusion

This study discovered that consumers are well aware that organic foods are healthy for their health, that they are devoid of chemicals, that they have no negative effects, and that they do not hurt consumers who consume organic foods. Organic food products are becoming more popular among city dwellers. According to the findings of this survey, the majority of respondents want to buy organic food, but the main barrier is a lack of availability. The results have revealed four factors (health consciousness, knowledge of organic foods, subjective norms and perceived price) that influence the consumer attitude towards organic food products. However, purchase intention towards organic foods is affected by these four factors along with one additional factor (i.e., availability). As store location matters to consumers while making purchase related decisions. They also feel that

eating organic food helps to decrease stress and live an active lifestyle. Another feature discovered by this study is that respondents are prepared to pay even greater costs if it is advantageous to their health.

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