

A Study on Consumers Awareness and Attitude on Organic Food Products in Karur District

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Abstract

The production of organic food products is paying an increasing popularity to consumers because of the growing interests of people in health, food safety, and the sustainability of the environment. This research paper analyses the awareness and attitude of the consumers towards organic foodstuff in Karur District. The research is anchored on primary data that was collected on 120 respondents by use of a structured questionnaire. Descriptive research design was followed and percentage analysis, mean score analysis, ranking method and Chi-square test were the tools in the data analysis. The results show that most of the respondents have heard and understand about organic food products and their perception of the product is that it is healthier and safer than ordinary food products. Among the key factors that affect preference of consumers towards organic food products, it implies health benefits, quality, and environmental concerns. Nevertheless, the reasons why prices have increased and the lack of certifying label understanding still are critical to broad acceptance. The research concludes that consumption of organic food products would be improved through promotion of higher consumer education, availability and reinforcement of promotional programs. The study results can be effective to policymakers, marketers, and producers of organic foods to encourage sustainable consumption.

Keywords: Organic Food, Consumer Awareness, Consumer Attitude, Health Consciousness, Purchase Behaviour

Introduction

The manner in which the world consumes foods has tremendously changed over the past few decades as more questions emerge regarding the health, environmental sustainability and food safety. The increasing consumption of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and artificial additives in traditional farming have cast grave doubts to consumers on the quality and safety of food items. Due to this, there has been a slow move towards consumers being more favorable to traditionally manufactured food products and more to organic food products.

Organic food can be defined as farm products that are grown and processed without the help of synthetic fertilizers, chemicals pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), growth hormones or artificial preservatives. The organic farming methods are focused on natural farming, ecological stability, conservation of biodiversity, and soil fertility. These practices are not only improving dietary nutritional value of food but also help in protecting the environment and developing farming sustainably.

Over the last few years, there has been significant growth in the consumer consciousness on the health benefits of organic food. Most consumers consider organic food products safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly, as opposed to conventional food products. Consumer preference towards organic food is influenced by an element of health consciousness, environmental awareness as well as awareness on food safety. Moreover, the global escalation of the lifestyle related diseases has made people start adopting healthier eating habits, thus boosting the demand of the organic food stuffs.

The organic food market in India has been recording gradual growth over the last 10 years because of the rising consumer awareness, government initiatives on the development of organic agriculture, and the developing retail networks. Organic food products including fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, dairy products are slowly establishing a presence in the supermarkets, specialty organic stores and online markets. This increase in interest has not led to the widespread adoption of organic food products despite various reasons that include increased costs, low product availability, poor awareness about the standards of certification as well as doubts in the consumers on the authenticity of the products.

The consumer interest in the consumption of organic food in Tamil Nadu has been gradually rising because people have greater health awareness and shifted to different lifestyle patterns. Specifically, the consumers in districts like Karur are increasingly aware of quality and safety of food they take. Nevertheless, the degree of awareness and consumer attitude towards the organic food products in the area should be effectively studied systematically.

The knowledge on consumer awareness and attitude to organic food products is of significance to policymakers, marketers and producers to facilitate sustainability food consumption and growth of market of organic food products. As such, the current research aims at investigating the consumer awareness and attitude of the organic food products within the Karur District and determining the factors that will dictate their buying behaviours.

Review of Literature

The growing interest in organic food products has attracted considerable attention from researchers, policymakers, and marketers across the world. Organic food consumption is closely associated with health consciousness, environmental awareness, and concerns about food safety. Several studies have examined the factors influencing consumers' awareness, attitudes, and purchasing behaviour towards organic food products.

Early research highlighted the motivations behind organic food consumption. Hughner et

al. (2007) conducted a comprehensive review of studies on organic food consumers and found that health concerns, environmental protection, food safety, and superior quality were the major reasons influencing consumers to purchase organic food. Similarly, Aertsens et al. (2009) emphasized that personal values, environmental consciousness, and trust in organic certification significantly affect consumers' preferences for organic food products.

Paul and Rana (2012) analysed consumer behaviour and purchase intention towards organic food products and found that factors such as health benefits, product quality, and environmental concerns significantly influence consumers' willingness to buy organic food. The study also revealed that consumer knowledge and awareness play a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards organic products.

The role of consumer attitude and behavioural intention was further examined by Yadav and Pathak (2016), who extended the Theory of Planned Behaviour to analyze young consumers' intention to purchase green products in India. Their findings suggested that environmental concern, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control positively influence consumers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products, including organic food.

Similarly, Singh and Verma (2017) investigated factors influencing Indian consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food products and identified health consciousness, environmental concern, and product availability as the primary determinants of purchase decisions. However, the study also reported that high price and limited availability act as major barriers to the widespread adoption of organic food products. Recent studies have focused on the changing trends in consumer awareness and purchasing patterns. Jakubowska, Grzywińska-Rapca, and Grzybowska-Brzezińska (2024) examined the socio-economic factors influencing organic food consumption and found that higher education levels, income, and environmental awareness significantly increase the likelihood of purchasing organic food products. The study

also highlighted that consumers with greater knowledge about organic certification are more likely to trust and purchase organic products.

In the Indian context, several recent studies have explored consumer awareness and attitudes towards organic food. Ramesh and Divya (2023) conducted a study in Coimbatore district and found that consumers generally possess moderate awareness of organic food products and associate them with better health and nutritional value. However, the study reported that price sensitivity and limited accessibility restrict regular purchase among many consumers.

Similarly, Yadav, Goyal, and Ghalawat (2024) analyzed consumer awareness and perception towards organic food in the NCR region and found that consumers increasingly recognize the health and environmental benefits of organic food. Nevertheless, lack of proper labeling, inadequate information about certification, and higher prices remain significant challenges affecting purchase decisions.

A study by Avantika and Rathore (2024) in Ludhiana city examined consumer perception towards organic food and found that product quality, health benefits, and environmental sustainability strongly influence consumer preference. The research also highlighted that effective marketing strategies and awareness campaigns are necessary to increase the consumption of organic products.

Further, Rathod et al. (2024) studied consumer awareness and behaviour regarding organic food in Nagpur district and concluded that although consumers are generally aware of organic food products, their actual purchasing behaviour is influenced by factors such as price, availability, and trust in certification.

Research focusing on younger consumers has also gained attention. Kavipriya, Kumarasamy, and Sreenidhi (2024) examined the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers and found that social media influence, environmental concern, and health awareness significantly shape their attitudes towards organic food products.

Another regional study conducted by Kanchana and Kannan (2024) in Chennai city revealed

that consumers generally possess a positive attitude towards organic food products due to their perceived health benefits and safety. However, the study also emphasized that awareness programs and improved distribution channels are essential to increase consumer adoption.

Overall, the literature indicates that consumers generally perceive organic food products as healthier, safer, and environmentally friendly compared to conventional food products. However, factors such as high price, lack of availability, limited awareness about certification, and inadequate promotional activities continue to hinder the widespread adoption of organic food products. Despite the growing number of studies in this field, limited research has been conducted specifically in Karur District. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by analyzing consumers' awareness and attitudes towards organic food products in Karur District.

Research Gap

Several studies have examined consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchasing behaviour towards organic food products at national and international levels. These studies mainly focus on factors such as health consciousness, environmental concern, food safety, and product quality as key determinants influencing organic food consumption. However, many of these studies have been conducted in metropolitan cities and developed markets.

In the Indian context, limited research has been carried out in smaller districts where consumer awareness, accessibility, and purchasing behaviour may vary significantly. Particularly, there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on consumers' awareness and attitudes towards organic food products in Karur District. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the level of consumer awareness, attitude, and factors influencing the purchase of organic food products in Karur District.

Statement of the Problem

Over the recent years, organic food products have become a subject of increasing attention,

owing to the rising concern on issues of health, food safety, and food sustainability to the environment. Consumers are increasingly aware about the negative impacts of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and chemical additives in traditional agricultural methods. Consequently, most consumers are taking interest in organic food products which are considered to be healthy and safe substitutes.

Nonetheless, although there is an emerging trend of the awareness of the organic food products, they have not been sufficiently consumed by most consumers. Expensive cost, low stocking, absence of appropriate certification details, and poor awareness that organic food products have in terms of benefits are some of the greatest hindrances to its massive use. Consumers in most areas have still doubts about the genuineness and credibility of organic food labels.

This is because the demand of organic food products in the Karur District is slowly rising with the increasing health awareness and lifestyle changes. The amount of consumer awareness, attitudes, and determinants affecting buying organic food products in the district are however not clear. Thus, the awareness and attitude level of consumers towards organic food products in Karur District is to be analyzed and the factors affecting their buying behaviour have to be established.

Objectives of the Study

- To test the socioeconomic demographics of consumer in Karur District.
- To examine the consumer awareness rate regarding organic food products.
- To research the attitude of the consumers towards organic food products.
- To establish the determinants that have an impact on the purchase of organic food products.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Demographic variables have a high connection with the awareness of consumers to the organic food products.

H2: Income is a major determinant of buying of organic food products on a monthly basis.

H3: There is a favorable perception towards organic food products amongst the consumers.

Research Methodology

The research methodology explains the methodologies and the procedures to be used to gather and analyze the data to meet the objective of the study.

Research Design

The current research takes the research design as descriptive to examine the awareness, as well as the attitude of consumers about organic food products.

Area of the Study

The investigative report is carried out in the Karur District Tamil Nadu where knowledge and consumption of organic food products is slowly gaining momentum.

Sources of Data

It is a research based on primary and secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data were also obtained by administering questionnaire to consumers directly based on a structured questionnaire which sought to carry out data collection about awareness, attitude, and factors that determine purchase of organic food products.

Secondary Data

The secondary data was gathered in the form of books, journals, research articles, and governmental reports and official publications regarding the consumption of organic foods.

Sample Size

There were 120 respondents chosen in the study.

Sampling Technique

The research used a convenient sampling method in identifying the respondents.

Tools for Data Analysis

The obtained data were processed with the help of the following statistical tools:

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean Score Analysis
- Ranking Method

- Chi-Square Test

These tools were used to make sense of the data and to make relevant conclusions about how the consumers are familiar and willing to embrace organic food products.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 120 respondents regarding their awareness and attitude towards organic food products in Karur District. The data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean score analysis, ranking method, and chi-square test to derive meaningful conclusions related to the objectives of the study.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	66	55
	Female	54	45
Age	Below 30 years	36	30
	31–40 years	42	35
	41–50 years	24	20
	Above 50 years	18	15
Education	School Level	22	18
	Graduate	56	47
	Postgraduate	42	35
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	30	25
	₹20,000–₹40,000	46	38
	Above ₹40,000	44	37

Interpretation

The table shows that 55% of the respondents are male and 45% are female. A majority of respondents (35%) belong to the 31–40 years age group. Regarding education, 47% are

graduates and 35% are postgraduates, indicating a relatively educated sample. In terms of income, 38% earn between ₹20,000 and ₹40,000 per month, followed by 37% earning above ₹40,000.

Table 2: Awareness of Organic Food Products

Awareness Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Heard about organic food products	98	82
Aware of health benefits	91	76
Aware of certification labels	49	41
Know where to purchase organic food	70	58

Interpretation

The results indicate that 82% of respondents have heard about organic food products, and 76% are aware of their health benefits. However, only 41% of respondents are aware

of certification labels, showing limited knowledge about organic certification standards. Around 58% know where to purchase organic food products.

Table 3: Attitude towards Organic Food Products (Mean Score Analysis)

Statement	Mean Score
Organic food is healthier than conventional food	4.3
Organic food is environmentally friendly	4.1
Organic food is safer than conventional food	4.2
Organic food products are expensive	4.5

Interpretation

The mean score analysis reveals that consumers strongly agree that organic food products are healthier (4.3) and safer (4.2) compared to conventional food. Respondents also believe

that organic food is environmentally friendly (4.1). However, the highest mean score (4.5) indicates that consumers strongly perceive organic food products as expensive.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Purchase of Organic Food Products (Ranking Method)

Factor	Mean Score	Rank
Health benefits	4.4	I
Quality and safety	4.2	II
Environmental concern	4.0	III
Brand reputation	3.6	IV
Advertising	3.3	V

Interpretation

The ranking results show that health benefits are the most important factor influencing consumers to purchase organic food products.

Quality and safety rank second, followed by environmental concern. Brand reputation and advertising have comparatively less influence on consumer purchase decisions.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test: Relationship between Monthly Income and Purchase of Organic Food Products

Variable	Chi-Square Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level	Result
Income vs Purchase Behaviour	12.46	4	0.05	Significant

Interpretation

The chi-square test result indicates that there is a significant relationship between monthly income and purchase of organic food products. Consumers with higher income levels are more likely to purchase organic food products because these products are generally priced higher than conventional food items.

Overall, the analysis indicates that consumers in Karur District possess a reasonable level of awareness and generally hold a positive attitude towards organic food products. However, high price, limited awareness about certification, and availability issues remain major factors influencing their purchasing behaviour.

Findings

The major findings of the study based on the analysis and interpretation of the data are summarized as follows:

- The socio-economic profile indicates that 55% of the respondents are male and 45% are female, with the majority belonging to the 31–40 years age group.
- In terms of educational qualification, 47% of the respondents are graduates and 35% are

postgraduates, indicating that a considerable proportion of the respondents possess higher education.

- Regarding income level, 38% of the respondents earn between ₹20,000 and ₹40,000 per month, while 37% earn above ₹40,000, suggesting a moderate income distribution among the respondents.
- The study reveals that 82% of the respondents have heard about organic food products, indicating a relatively high level of general awareness.
- About 76% of the respondents are aware of the health benefits associated with organic food consumption, which reflects increasing health consciousness among consumers.
- However, only 41% of the respondents are aware of organic certification labels, indicating limited knowledge regarding certification standards and authenticity of organic products.
- Approximately 58% of the respondents know where organic food products are available for purchase, suggesting moderate accessibility and market awareness.

- The mean score analysis indicates that respondents strongly agree that organic food products are healthier (4.3) and safer (4.2) compared to conventional food products.
- Respondents also perceive that organic food products are environmentally friendly (mean score 4.1).
- The highest mean score (4.5) indicates that consumers strongly perceive organic food products as expensive, which acts as a major barrier to regular consumption.
- The ranking analysis shows that health benefits are the most influential factor motivating consumers to purchase organic food products, followed by quality and safety.
- The chi-square test confirms that there is a significant relationship between consumers' monthly income and their purchase of organic food products, indicating that higher income groups are more likely to purchase organic food products.

Overall, the findings indicate that consumers in Karur District demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward organic food products. However, factors such as high price, limited awareness of certification, and product availability continue to restrict their regular consumption.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to promote consumer awareness and increase the consumption of organic food products in Karur District:

- **Enhancing Consumer Awareness:** Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and organic food producers should conduct awareness programs, workshops, and campaigns to educate consumers about the benefits of organic food products and their role in promoting health and environmental sustainability.
- **Improving Certification Awareness:** Efforts should be made to increase consumer knowledge about organic certification labels and standards. Proper labeling and certification by authorized bodies can help

build consumer trust and reduce confusion regarding the authenticity of organic products.

- **Price Reduction Strategies:** Since high price is identified as a major barrier, policymakers and producers should explore strategies to reduce production and distribution costs. Providing subsidies and incentives to organic farmers can help make organic food products more affordable to consumers.
- **Increasing Product Availability:** Organic food products should be made easily available through supermarkets, retail outlets, farmers' markets, and online platforms. Expanding distribution channels will improve accessibility and encourage consumers to purchase organic products more frequently.
- **Effective Marketing and Promotion:** Digital marketing, social media platforms, and promotional campaigns can be effectively used to create awareness and influence consumer attitudes towards organic food products.
- **Encouraging Local Organic Farming:** Supporting local farmers to adopt organic farming practices can increase the supply of organic food products and reduce costs. Government initiatives and training programs can help farmers transition to sustainable agricultural practices.

Implementing these measures can significantly enhance consumer awareness, improve accessibility, and promote the regular consumption of organic food products in Karur District.

Conclusion

The present study examined consumers' awareness and attitudes towards organic food products in Karur District. The findings indicate that consumers possess a reasonable level of awareness regarding organic food products and generally exhibit a positive attitude toward their consumption. Health consciousness, food safety, and environmental concerns are the major factors influencing consumers' preference for organic food products.

The analysis also reveals that consumers perceive organic food products as healthier, safer, and environmentally friendly compared to conventional food products. However, certain barriers such as high price, limited availability, and lack of awareness regarding certification standards continue to restrict the regular consumption of organic food products. The study highlights the need for increasing consumer awareness, improving certification transparency, and expanding the availability of organic food products in the market. Greater promotional efforts and supportive government policies can also encourage consumers to adopt organic food products as part of their regular consumption patterns.

Overall, with growing health awareness and environmental concerns, the demand for organic food products is expected to increase in the future. Strengthening awareness programs, improving market accessibility, and ensuring proper certification can significantly enhance consumer trust and promote the sustainable growth of the organic food market.

Future Research Directions

Future studies may be conducted with a larger sample size to obtain more reliable and generalizable results. Comparative research between urban and rural consumers can provide deeper insights into differences in awareness and attitudes towards organic food products. Further research may also examine the influence of digital marketing and social media on consumer purchase behaviour. In addition, studies can explore consumer trust in organic certification and labeling systems, which play a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions.

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