



## Consumer's attitude towards organic food products

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### General Note

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### ABSTRACT

Organic marketing is a holistic marketing system. Organic food market is very challenging in Indian food market. Indian consumers have raised great interest to healthy and quality food with high nutritional value, environmental concern and food safety. An individual with a positive attitude towards a organic food product is more likely to make a purchase; this makes the study of consumer attitudes highly important for a marketer. The main purpose of this study was survey consumer attitude toward organic products. The target population in this research includes citizen of Kozhikode district of Kerala state of India. By making use of convenience sampling method 750 respondents have been selected. The finding of the research work revealed that gender, monthly income, area of residence, family status, period of consumption, level of awareness on organic foods and state of health are associated with consumer positive attitude towards organic foods. The research work shows an inverse relationship between consumer awareness and positive attitude towards organic food. The research result suggest that Government and social organizations have to take necessary steps in creating awareness in the 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.

**Key words:** Organic food, Green marketing, Consumer, Consumer attitude, Health consciousness, Food safety, environmental concern, environmental engagement, State of health and Conventional food.

**Abbreviations:** GMOs –Genetically Modified Organisms; ANOVA – Analysis of Variance.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The organic food industry has grown considerably over recent years on a worldwide basis and has been the subject of much media attention over the past decade. Global demand for organic products remains robust, with sales increasing by over five billion US dollars a year (Willer and Yussefi Menzler, 2002). Over the past several years, the organic food industry in India has been experiencing an annual growth between 20-22 per cent. The nation has the potential to be largest organic food producer. In India, there are over 15,000 certified organic farms and the number is growing fast over the year. Apart from this, there are many small farmers growing organic food by using the organic practices (Menon, 2009). The future of organic agriculture will, to a large extent, depend on consumer demand. Thus, a consumer-oriented approach to understanding holistic and green marketing is important not only in its own right, but also in terms of response to shifting market dynamics. From a marketing perspective, it is important to understand the sustainable attitude of consumers regarding organically produced foods, and how consumption can be promoted. Product development and marketing strategies are also affected by consumer beliefs, attitudes and responses. This could vary depending on the region of the world. Thus, a clear understanding of consumer attitudes and the motivations underlying actions in responding to organically grown products in India is important.

There is no common definition of "organic" due to the fact that different countries have different standard for products to be certified "organic". Research has shown that consumers have a basic understanding of the term 'organic' (e.g., Bourn and Prescott, 2002; FAO, 1999; Klosky and Tourte, 1998; Goldman and Hylton, 1972). Indian consumers gives their personal definition of the Organic food products as Organic produce or products are those produced and processed through environment friendly techniques, non chemically treated, fresh or minimally processed, non pesticide, free from genetically modified organism, having organic certificates, traditional/indigenous products, herbal product and naturally grown.

The market of organic products is growing as the number of people willing to eat organic food and attitude towards organic food products is increasing. The future of organic agriculture will, to a large extent, also depend on favorable attitude and motivational factors towards organic food products. Several studies have been undertaken to examine issue in the wider context of comprehensive in the area of consumers' behaviour and consumers' attitudes toward organic food (Gracia and de Magistris, 2007; Grankvist and Biel, 2001; Zanolli and Naspetti, 2002; Chen, 2007; Harper and Makatouni, 2002; Padel and Foster, 2005). The researcher has also found out positive attitude towards organic food products in India, Grankvist and Biel (2001), Gracia and de Magistris (2007), Chen (2007), and Ajzen (1991) Pirjo Honkanen, Bas Verplanken and Svein Ottar Olsen (2006); Victoria Kulikovski and Manjola Agolli (2010) also reinforce this, finding that positive attitudes also will be created toward organic food purchases.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review emphasizes important variables to examine the consumers' attitude towards Organic food products like health concern, environmental concern, animal welfare, food safety, sensory variables, prestige, organic food knowledge, ethical concerns, price premium and socio-demographical factors (Grankvist and Biel, 2001; Gil and Soler 2006; Aryal et al (2009); Briz and Ward 2009; Chinnici et al., 2002; Magnusson et al., 2003; Chen, 2007; Baker et al., 2004; Blackwell, 2001; Jolly, 1991; Lea and Worsley, 2005; Padel and Foster, 2005; Lockie et al., 2004; Pirjo Honkanen1, Bas Verplanken and Svein Ottar Olsen (2006); Asli Ucar and Ayse Ozfer Ozcelik (2009).

Pirjo Honkanen, Bas Verplanken and Svein Ottar Olsen (2006) have found that Environmental and animal rights issues had a strong influence on attitudes towards organic food. He also established that the more people are concerned about ethical issues, the more positive attitude they have towards organic food, and the more likely it is that they will consume organic food. Asli Ucar and Ayse Ozfer Ozcelik (2009) found out that the students' attitudes are positive but their buying rates are rather low. Hanna Stolz (2011) in research work reported that positive assessments of organic production referred to 'better taste', 'healthier', 'no artificial additives', and 'no chemical synthetic pesticides', 'limited use of antibiotics', and 'no GMOs', etc. Samantha Smith and Angela Paladino (2009) research result showed that strong support for the relationship between organic knowledge, subjective norms and environmental concern on organic attitudes. Grankvist and Biel (2001) pointed out that the relationship between environmentalism and consumer attitudes have strong correlation. Health conscious also play as a vital role to shape consumer attitudes and behaviour (Magnusson et al, 2003). Aryal et al (2009); Briz and Ward 2009; Gil and Soler 2006; found that more information about the organic food market, which increases consumers' organic food knowledge, is important because it positively influences consumers' attitudes towards organic food products. Budi Suprpto and Tony Wijaya (2012) has found that that healthy consumption life style are a good predictor for attitude toward organic food, meanwhile attitude toward organic food directly influence to purchase intention toward organic food. The particular people who are important for them have favourable though toward organic food; they are more willing to pay for organic food (Chen, 2007). Victoria Kulikovski and Manjola Agolli (2010) spot out that organic food is often related to specific lifestyles that include healthy eating, vegetarianism, alternative medicine, religious or societal considerations etc. Organic food buyers tend to be younger than non-buyers (Jolly, 1991). Overall, more positive attitudes towards organic food have been detected in women as opposed to men (Lea and Worsley, 2005). People with higher education are more likely to express positive attitudes towards organic products, require more information about the production and process methods of organics (Magnusson et al., 2001; Hill and Lynchehaum, 2002; Wier et al., 2003), have the confidence to negotiate conflicting claims in relation to organic food (Padel and Foster, 2005), and are more willing to pay a premium for organic food (Jolly, 1991; Wandel and Bugge, 1997). Moreover, demand for organic food seems to be positively correlated to income (Von Alvensleben, 1998). Higher income households are more likely to form positive attitudes and to purchase more organic food (Grunert and Kristensen, 1991; Magnusson et al., 2001). Salvador V Garibay and Katke Jyoti (2003) have found that in India, organic consumers are generally found in the urban upper-middle class or upper class.

## 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this research study is to identify the determinants of consumer's attitude towards organic food products.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Opinion survey has been conducted with consumers belonging to Kozhikode district, Kerala. By making use of convenience sampling methodology 750 respondents have been selected. With the help of a structured questionnaire the required data has been collected.

## 5. TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

The collected data have been analyzed by making use of Analysis of variance (ANOVA), 't' test and Chi-square test. To measure mean difference exists between groups ANOVA and 't' test has been employed. To identify to nature of association that exists between select personal variable and consumer's attitude towards organic food, Chi-square test has been employed. Level of significance chosen is one and five per cent level. The variables chosen for the analysis are Gender, Age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, Area of Residence, Family size, Family status, Period of consumption on Organic food, level of awareness on Organic food, state of health, environmental engagement and diet; with level of consumer's attitude.

## 6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

From the ANOVA and 't' test analysis it is inferred that mean attitude score differs among consumers on select variables. Further, there exists a significant association between gender, monthly income, area of residence, family status, period of consumption, level of awareness and state of health on consumer attitude towards organic products. Female consumers have positive attitude towards organic foods than male members. Consumer's whose monthly income is above Rs. 20000/- have

Variables	ANOVA / 't' value	Calculated $\chi^2$ Value
Gender	3.308**	30.051**
Age	111.895**	1.813
Educational Qualification	13.617**	1.932
Occupation	16.205**	1.828
Monthly Income	6.139**	15.189**
Area of Residence	12.193**	50.933**
Family size	48.951**	2.401
Family Status	8.133**	23.837**
Period of Consumption	39.690**	81.206**
Level of Awareness on Organic Foods	17.991**	55.254**
State of Health	6.227**	43.196**
Environmental Engagement	50.678**	1.794
Diet	16.798**	1.195
	* Five per cent level	** One per cent level

positive attitude towards organic products. Urban consumer's attitude towards organic products is found to be high whereas consumer's residing in Semi-urban area has low level of positive attitude towards organic products due to the poor awareness with regard to organic goods. As far as family status is concerned, family members are more favour towards organic foods. Consumers who consume organic food for the period more than four years have high level of positive attitude towards organic foods than consumers who consume organic foods for the period less than two years. Consumers who have low awareness on organic foods varieties possess high level of positive attitude, considering their benefits to the derived on consuming organic foods. Consumers who consume high quantum of organic food are with good health condition.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

To improve consumer's positive attitude towards organic foods following suggestions have been put forth:

- Organic foods may be offered at cheaper price (i.e.) Organic foods may be distributed through fair price shops.
- Subsidies and incentives may be offered by the Government to the farmers who cultivate organic foods. Organic fertilizers may be distributed through

Co-operative societies at the affordable rate to the farmer community.

- Agriculture universities should offer necessary training programme for farmers in inculcating the method of preparing Organic pesticides
- Awareness programmes about the benefits of using Organic goods are to be organized by the Government in association with Social Clubs like Rotary, Lions etc., in the midst of general public

## 8. CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it is inferred that gender, monthly income, area of residence, family status, period of consumption, level of awareness on organic foods and state of health are associated with consumer positive attitude towards organic foods. The consumer's are to be more cautious on the impact of consuming conventional foods. Conventional foods resulted in piling up of new dreaded diseases, which are incurable. A certain section of consumers are not aware on the demerits of Conventional foods and certain sections are not preferring organic foods, even though they are highly aware on demerits of Conventional foods, due to high cost. Hence, the Government and social organizations have to take necessary steps in creating awareness in the 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. By offering non poisonous goods a strong foundation may be laid down for the future generation!

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