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A Consumer Awareness Study towards Purchasing of Organic Products in Hisar City

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Abstract

Organic products gained significant place in the minds of consumers. Everyone is concerned about their health and rely on the products that are produced, stored and processed without using any chemical residue and artificial fertilizers. This study is an empirical research has two main objectives i.e. to determine the relationship between kind of organic products customers buy and benefit of using Organic Products and secondly to determine the significant relationship between reasons for choosing organic products and benefit of using Organic Products. Data has been analysed with the help of a questionnaire on a Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Agree to 5= Strongly Disagree. The data is analysed using SPSS version 13.0. Findings of the study revealed that customers were agreed that organic products contribute to their better health followed by quality of product and preferring the taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 1.48, 1.92 and 1.92 respectively. Regarding preferring the organic product over non organic product, customers were consider that organic products were preferred for health concern followed by preferring the taste/texture/feeling and quality of product and the corresponding mean value was 1.48, 2.04 and 2.08 respectively.

Keywords: *organic products, organic food, chemical residue, artificial fertilizers, fertility and empirical research*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the present global scenario, Industrial development has taken fast speed to cater the increasing demands of growing population. Pressure has also put on agricultural to increase the yield of crop production. To increase the yield of crops, various chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and other substances available in markets were started put to use by farmers community a few years ago. But increased level of using fertilizers and pesticides started showing harmful effects to human beings as well as the environment.

Now the people are becoming aware of the harmful effects of inorganic crops and food products and benefits of organic food items, so they are gradually turning towards organic food products which are not treated with any kind of chemical substances or processes. “Consumer awareness of organic foods is the first step in developing demand for organic products” (Briz and Ward, 2009). Consumer is nowadays not concerned about the price but concern over quality. “Some of the prominent motivating factors to purchase organic foods include environmental concern, health concern and lifestyle, product quality and subjective norms”. (Basha, etal, 2015)

Different nations have defined Organic in different terms according to their standards for the products to be declared as “Organic”. Organic foods are nominally treated to retain the reliability of the food deprived of synthetic constituents, additives or contamination. Organic products are found by the methods which are environment friendly, by farming technology that study features of the ultimate product and the production process. Both in developed and the developing countries, demand for organic food is gradually increasing with an annual average growth rate of 20-25%. There is a rapid growth of organic farming in the agriculture sector. Due to all the above benefits, conservative farmers shifted towards the organic farming. (Magistris and Garcia, 2007).

1.1 Objectives

The present study is conducted to keep following two main objectives in mind:

- i) To determine the relationship between kind of organic products customers buy and benefit of using Organic Products.
- ii) To determine the significant relationship between reasons for choosing organic products and benefit of using Organic Products.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Yiridoe et al. (2005) identified the reasons that affect the purchasing intention of the customers: first absence of information, the major reason that elaborates why consumers do not want to purchase or select organic food; second, consumer opinion about the short of information available about the organic product. Hill and Lynchehaun (2002) focussed that awareness plays an important role and successful marketing of organic food. This reflects the confidence of consumers about the usage of organic food. Meanwhile reports suggested that awareness about

the food or the methods of production resulted in the progress of consumer opinion and augment the consumers acceptance of these foods (Berg,2004; McEachem & Willock,2004; Siegrist, 2000; Siegrist, et al.,2008). Ritson & Oughton (2007); Padel & Foster (2005) mentioned that consumer familiarity regarding organic product, compared with conservative product are measured as big obstacles to the progress of the organic food market. Consumers who are not aware about organic food and who do not purchase it, will not, if they are not literate about its benefits. Briz and Ward, 2009 explored the views of Spanish consumers regarding awareness of organic food and found that around 46 % had knowledge of the concept of organic foods. He also found that consumers level of awareness was dependent on their income, age, education, and region of the country wherein education influenced the most in level of their awareness and awareness levels ranged from a low of 29% to a high near 71%. Gupta (2009) discovered the consumer behaviour for organic food in India. The results of the study revealed that quality was considered as the most significant for food products buying decision, public did not see much progress in the quality related factors for food items in last decade. Individual ranking differ factors for different product groups. The findings also showed that food that is free from chemicals and pesticides was the significant benchmark for food products like grains, pulses, store quality, taste, texture, flavour showed the maximum variation in the buying pattern of fruits and vegetables. Chakrabarti (2010) studied the consumers' attitude as the most important factor that persuades the buying process of organic food consumers. The study was based on descriptive survey and explanatory survey. The outcome of the research was that persuading customer importance towards organic food product had an important impact to the customer loyalty for the organic food products. Voon et al. (2011) examined the factors of readiness to buy organic food among consumers in a Malaysian city, while using questionnaire survey. The results reflected that hard work to encourage utilization progress should aimed on persuading consumer attitudes. Sakthirama and Venkatram (2012) studied that the buying purpose of organic consumers in Coimbatore city, India and the results shows that the buying purpose of consumers towards organic food products was prejudiced by the outlook and information and acquaintance to consumers. Padiya and Vala (2012) mentioned in their study at Ahemdabad, exemplified the organic food buyers as less thoughtful about price, supporters of quality and knowledge, generally get information from magazine, newspaper and at the point of purchase. Shafie and Rennie (2012) analysed that price was the obstacle factor with regards to organic food

consumption. Balaji and Bhama (2012) analytically studied the consumer attitude towards the organic food in India. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the overall satisfaction of the consumer and the psychographic factors towards the organic food. Raghavan and Megeh (2013) analysed the buying purpose towards organic products in Chennai city. The results of the study showed that insights related to organic food product had the sturdiest association with the consumers purpose to purchase organic food. Basha, etal. (2015) identified the intentions of people in purchasing organic products and found that consumers were concerned of their health, life style and environment while purchasing organic products. Krishnakumare and Niranjan (2017) studied buying behavior of 240 consumers towards organic food products in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu and found that consumers bought organic food products due to their concern for health but some some consumers did not buy due to high price and inassurance of quality. Organic food consumers' perception for organic food products was better than non-organic food consumers. Sharma and Singhvi (2018) through their review study provided a complete overview of consumer perceptions for organic food products and revealed that in near future more demand there for organically grown food products will arise and thus suggested producer, traders, and government to focus over the niche market of organic . Carfora, etal. (2019) conducted a interview of 1509 consumers of Italy to know intentions and actual behavior in respect of organic milk purchase and found, among all the dimensions of trust in the different actors of the supply chain, only trust in farmers was supported. Chiciudean (2019) studied 568 consumers from North-West Development Region of Romania to identify the main barriers in consumption and; factors influenced the increase in demand for organic food products. They found that price of product was main barrier in consumption followed by perishability and availability. Other influencing factors were mistrust, and lack of proper promotion for organic food.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

People concerns' for health and lifestyle goes on increasing day by day that have attracted them towards intake of organic products. The food products free from fertilizers, synthetic chemicals and pesticides gained importance in the minds of consumers. Organic food helps in maintaining a balance between the creature, other living organisms and the natural

world. It also enhance that no artificial preservatives and preserve the freshness of the food. This would stop surplus use of dangerous ingredients and in this manner secures health.

The significance behind this study is that thoughtfulness for the atmosphere could come only from aware society and fully dedicated to human rights to a quality health and environment. However, it is essential to identify the present state of consumer understanding and knowledge. Hence customer awareness and willingness to pay high price for organic product and reasons for choosing organic product becomes the main plan of this study.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Convenience sampling is used. Data has been collected from 200 customers who used organic product and purchased either from local shops, retail shops and online as well were selected for the study. The study undertook the period of 3 months from January to March 2019 from the Hisar city of Haryana District.

4.1 Sources of Data

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. To collect primary data, a well semi-structured questionnaire is designed with two sections: section 1 captures demographic profile for the purpose of describing the sample and it consist of questions pertaining to gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, income, place of buying organic product and frequency of buying, and ANOVA has been used to calculate the significant difference between demographic variables i.e. kind of organic products customers buyand reasons for choosing organic productsand statements related to benefits of using like Organic products can contribute in better health, prefer organic products over non organic products, Production of organic products is totally environment friendly, Organic products and inorganic products are alike, Manufacturing of organic products must be highly subsidized, sense of satisfaction, part of organic movement by using organic products, pay even extra price for environment friendly products to save our environment. All the 22 questions from section 2 of the questionnaire used a Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Agree to 5= StronglyDisagree. The data is analysed using SPSS version 13.0. Secondary data is collected through research papers, journals, websites and books. The demographic variables affect two factors differently. A few related hypotheses, like the following, have been developed and tested:

H0 (1): There is significant relationship between Kind of organic products customers buy and benefit of using Organic Products.

H1 (1): There is no significant relationship between Kind of organic products customers buy and benefit of using Organic Products.

H0 (2): There is significant relationship between Reasons for choosing organic products and benefit of using Organic Products.

H1 (2): There is no significant relationship between Reasons for choosing organic products and benefit of using Organic Products.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

The present study has some unavoidable limitations.

1. Customer response may be subjected to bias.
2. The study has been limited to a sample of 200 customers from Hisar city of Haryana district.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Demographic Profile: The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. The table revealed that most of the respondents were male (58%) followed by female (42%). The sample customers are mostly in the age group of 18-25 (39%) followed by age group of 26-40 (28%). Further, a majority of the respondents (58%) were married. The respondents were predominantly graduates (37%) followed by post-graduates (35%) implying that sample comprises of high literate respondents. With regard to the employment status, service and professionals have (40%) share implying that respondents are well placed in their career. The sample had a majority of respondents (38%) earning to Rs50000 & more, followed by less than 10000(36%). Customers use to buy online most of the time (63%) mostly they buy once in month (70%). Majority of the customers buy organic food once in a month i.e.70% followed by once in a week (17%) and once in a year (13%). Regarding the kind of products, customers generally buy food/drink (40%) followed by cosmetics (35%) and clothes /fabric (25%). To know about the reason behind purchasing organic product are quality of the product (64%) considered by the majority of the customers followed by health concern (19%) and preferring the taste/texture/feeling (17%).

TABLE 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S. No.	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Married	116	58.0
	Unmarried	84	42.0
Age	18-25 year	78	39.0
	26-40 year	56	28.0
	41-55 year	52	26.0
	56 & above	14	7.0
Marital Status	Married	116	58.0
	Unmarried	84	42.0
Education Level	Under graduate	50	25.0
	Graduate	74	37.0
	Post graduate	70	35.0
	Doctorate	6	3.0
Employment Status	In service	80	40.0
	Own Business	46	23.0
	Student	74	37.0
Monthly Income	Less than 10000	72	36.0
	10001-25000	22	11.0
	25001-50000	30	15.0
	50001 & more	76	38.0
Place for buying organic products	Retail shops	44	22.0
	Local shops	30	15.0
	Online	126	63.0
Frequency of buying organic products	Once a week	34	17.0
	Once a month	140	70.0

	Once a year	26	13.0
Kind of organic products customers buy	Food/drink	80	40.0
	Cosmetics	70	35.0
	Clothes/fabric	50	25.0
Reasons for choosing organic products	Prefer the taste/texture/feeling	34	17.0
	Quality of product	128	64.0
	Health concern	38	19.0

5.2 Reason for Choosing Organic Product: Table 2 reveals that the null hypothesis H0(1) is accepted as all the factors are significant reason being customers use organic food/ drinks which contribute to better health, they prefer organic products over inorganic in food and cosmetics. Moreover they find organic products more environments friendly, respondents reveals that they find similarity in organic food as well as inorganic food products. On the other hand organic products users were in favour of subsidizing the organic product so that it will be afford by majority.

Customers were agreed that organic products contribute to their better health followed by quality of product and preferring the taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 1.48, 1.92 and 1.92 respectively. Regarding preferring the organic product over non organic product, customers were consider that organic products were preferred for health concern followed by preferring the taste/texture/feeling and quality of product and the corresponding mean value was 1.48, 2.04 and 2.08 respectively. Regarding the production of organic product that is totally environment friendly, customers were agreed that it is of concern of health, followed by quality and the corresponding mean value was 2.25 and 2.83, whereas customers were disagreed towards the taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 4.29. Regarding the organic and inorganic products alike, customers were neutral for quality of product followed by health concern and taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 3.12, 3.80 and 3.85 respectively. It can be concluded that organic products are very difficult to differentiate from non-organic product until and unless certification is there. Regarding subsidizing of organic products, customers were agreed that for the health concern of the

customers, it should be subsidized so that more companies could enter into manufacturing of organic products followed by quality of the product and taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 2.03, 2.53 and 3.75 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that if manufacturing of organic products got subsidized than more companies would enter into the market and accessibility, availability and at more affordable prices. It will be affordable by more new customers. Regarding the sense of satisfaction from using organic products, customers were strongly agreed that organic products are of quality and gave satisfaction while using it and the corresponding mean value was 1.50, whereas customers were also agreed that organic products usage leads to good health or not harmful for health and the corresponding mean value was 2.22. On the other hand, customers were strongly agreed to become a part of organic movement as it focuses on the taste/texture/feeling followed by quality of product and health concern and the corresponding mean value was 1.53, 1.58 and 1.98 respectively. Regarding paying extra money for environmental friendly product, customers were agreed to pay even extra money for the health concern and quality of product but customers were having neutral opinion regarding the taste/texture/feeling and the corresponding mean value was 2.35, 2.41 and 3.92 respectively.

TABLE 2: Reason for Choosing Organic Product and Benefits of using Organic product

Statements	Prefer the taste/texture/feeling	Quality of product	Health concern	Sig.	F
Organic products can contribute in better health.	1.92	1.92	1.48	.00*	5.88
I prefer organic products over non organic products.	2.04	2.08	1.48	.00*	14.31
Production of organic products is totally environment friendly.	4.29	2.83	2.25	.00*	45.94
Organic products and inorganic products are alike.	3.85	3.12	3.80	.00*	21.13
Manufacturing of organic products must be highly subsidized	3.75	2.53	2.03	.00*	44.33

so that more companies can enter into manufacturing of organic products.					
Using organic products gives a sense of satisfaction.	2.51	1.50	2.22	.00*	52.63
I want to be a part of organic movement by using organic products.	1.53	1.98	1.58	.02**	3.84
I would agree to pay even extra price for environment friendly products to save our environment.	3.92	2.41	2.35	.00*	25.84

*represents significant at 1% level of significance & ** represents significant at 5% level of significance

5.3 Kind of Organic Product and Benefits of using Organic product: Table 3 reveals that the null hypothesis H0 (2) is accepted as all the factors are significant reason being customers consumes in the form of food/drink, cosmetics and clothes/fabric. Regarding the contribution of organic products in better health, customers consuming in the form of clothes /fabric were strongly agreed that organic products are much better as compared to non-organic products followed by consumers were agreed towards using cosmetics and food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 1.55, 1.81 and 2.08 respectively. Regarding preferring organic over non organic, customers were strongly agreed towards the clothes/fabric while agreed towards using food/drink and cosmetics and the corresponding mean value was 1.55, 2.07 and 2.18 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that customers do not want to compromise on their health. Regarding the production of organic product is totally environment friendly, customers preferred using clothes/fabric, whereas on the other hand customers were having neutral opinion towards consuming cosmetics followed by food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 2.59, 3.05 and 3.30 respectively. The reason could be customers were not sure about the production as organic or non-organic. Regarding the organic and inorganic products is alike, customers were neutral towards consuming cosmetics followed by clothes/fabric and food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 3.00, 3.48 and 3.64 respectively. Regarding the

manufacturing of organic products must be highly subsidized so that more companies can enter into manufacturing of organic products, customers were agreed towards using clothes/fabric followed by cosmetics and food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 2.16, 2.41 and 3.28 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that customers were getting organic products in limited variety and very few stock was there, if it got subsidized than more companies would join and organic product become cheaper and more variety would be there. Regarding the sense of satisfaction from using organic products, customers were strongly agreed towards using cosmetics followed by clothes/fabric and food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 1.27, 1.87 and 2.27 respectively. The reason could be that customers were very frustrated by using chemical cosmetics that is why they need organic and environmental friendly products for their skin. Regarding part of organic movement by using organic products, customers were strongly agreed towards using clothes/fabric followed by food/drink and cosmetics and the corresponding mean value was 1.55, 1.81 and 2.04 respectively. The reason could be that customers who were using organic products would give feedback to others and set an example for non-users of organic product. Customers were agreed to pay even extra price for environment friendly products to save our environment and using clothes/fabric, cosmetics and food/drink and the corresponding mean value was 2.25, 2.26 and 3.38 respectively. Hence it can be concluded that customers were ready to pay extra amount for the organic products and do not compromise for the quality, taste and health.

TABLE 3: Kind of Organic Product and Benefits of using Organic product

Statements	Food/drink	Cosmetics	Clothes/fabric	Sig.	F
Organic products can contribute in better health.	2.08	1.81	1.55	.00*	10.64
I prefer organic products over non organic products.	2.07	2.18	1.55	.00*	20.74
Production of organic products is totally environment friendly.	3.30	3.05	2.59	.00*	5.88
Organic products and inorganic products are alike.	3.64	3.00	3.48	.00*	13.94

Manufacturing of organic products must be highly subsidized so that more companies can enter into manufacturing of organic products.	3.28	2.41	2.16	.00*	29.93
Using organic products gives a sense of satisfaction.	2.27	1.27	1.87	.00*	53.77
I want to be a part of organic movement by using organic products.	1.81	2.04	1.55	.04**	3.14
I would agree to pay even extra price for environment friendly products to save our environment.	3.38	2.25	2.26	.00*	19.66

*represents significant at 1% level of significance & ** represents significant at 5% level of significance

6. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to provide the significant light into the awareness and satisfaction level of organic consumer regarding kind of organic product and reasons for choosing organic products with reference to Hisar city. The study clearly reflects that the reasons behind choosing organic food for health concern, quality of product and the texture/taste /feeling. Consumers generally prefer organic product in the form of clothes/fabric, cosmetics and food/drink. Hence it can be concluded that customers were getting organic products in limited variety and very few stock was there, if it got subsidized than more companies would join and organic product become cheaper and more variety would be there. With the attempt of Government to rationalize regulatory mechanism like providing subsidies and grants for better progress of organic product and attentiveness among local consumers for household consumption will cover for quicker expansion of organic farming. Moreover the initial cost for starting organic farming is higher and in this direction government can help the farmer to grow the organic product.

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