



International Journal of Research in Academic World



Received: 30/May/2023

IJRAW: 2023; 2(7):01-05

Accepted: 01/July/2023

A Survey on “Consumer Perceptions and Purchase Behavior of Youths towards Organic Food Products in Karnataka”

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Abstract

Organic food product is an agricultural product that avoids the application of fertilizers, pesticides. The objective of the study is to understand of consumers' perceptions and purchase behavior of youths towards Organic food products. Consumer perception is influenced by various factors such as price, health consciousness, knowledge level, availability and environmental concern. Data was collected through questionnaire through online mode. Total 251 respondents are responded to the questionnaire. It shows that majority of respondents are aware of organic food products. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between price, consumer knowledge, health consciousness, availability and environmental consciousness and the purchase behavior of organic food. Perceived food quality has mediating effect on the link between environmental consciousness and organic food purchase intention.

Keywords: Organic food, consumer perception, consumer intention, purchase behavior

Introduction

In a significant development, India may have already surpassed China as the world's most populous country. According to World Population Review (WPR), India's population was 141.7 crore by the end of 2022. The growth is driven by India's large, dynamic and young population, with 65% of Indians being under 35 years old.

Organic and natural farming are promoted in India through various schemes such as the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, and others. Organic food production also includes farming techniques that do not use genetically modified organisms, growth hormones, and antibiotics

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, as people become more aware of the benefits of organic foods, they are gravitating toward them. In both domestic and international markets, demand has been particularly strong since the advent of Covid-19. The value of these products' exports increased by 51% in 2020-21, but moderate in 2021-22.

Organic products are grown in an agricultural system that avoids the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides while also being environmentally and socially responsible. Processed foods, oil seeds, cereals and millets, sugar, spices and condiments, pulses, tea, fodder, and coffee are among the top ten organic products exported by India in the last three years.

Young consumers are making wilful choices to avoid processed foods, and are concerned about the environmental impact of processed foods as they strive to eat healthier.

Organic food has grown in popularity in recent years, with a focus on localization, health, and environmental friendliness. They understand that organic food products provide disease-free lifestyle and saving their money on future medical expenses.

According to an EY India survey, Indian consumers are willing to spend more money on fitness classes and activities, natural foods, health supplements, and specialized diets because the Covid-19 pandemic has caused the country to experience "the biggest seismic shift," putting health and immunity at the forefront.

According to the report, approximately 94% of Indians are concerned about their families' health, compared to 82% globally, and while functional meals and supplements have gained popularity in Europe and Asia, the Indian consumer still prefers 'better for you' cuisine and home remedies.

Literature Review

Mr. Pardeep Kumar, Dr. Hema Gulati (2017), conducted the study on Consumer's perception towards Organic food products in rural area of Haryana. The study found that, the Organic products are not easily available in rural area. The irregular availability of organic products affects the choice of the consumer. The organic products are more expensive in comparison to non-organic products. So, low income people cannot afford these products. There are limited varieties of products available in the market.

MR, Sanjeeb Kumar c (2020), conducted a research on the topic "consumer purchase intention towards organic foods". The study was found that environmental concern, trust, and availability were the important factors which motivate the organic food purchase intention. It was found the health concern and awareness were not affect the purchase intention of organic foods. To generate trust, marketers have make their organic food easily available in the markets.

Mrs. D. Mythili and Ms. S, Priya Darshini (2020) [13], conducted a research study on the topic "Consumer Perception towards organic products with reference to Coimbatore City. The study was found that, consumers were attracted towards Organic products. So the marketers and producers must conduct promotional activities to grab the attention of the consumers and the availability of products in terms of quantity, quality and variety are required to become successful in the market of organic food products. Organic products play an important role in improving the perception of the consumer towards organic products.

Athena Prince (2018), studied consumers' perception towards organic food products. The study found out that the majority of the consumer purchase the organic food products because they are considered to be safe. One of the major problems faced by the consumer was the high price of the product. The study also found out that majority of the consumers are highly satisfied in buying organic food products.

Mr. R. Sangeetha (2018) [4], studied the consumer's perception and attitude towards organic food. The objective of this study to find out the factors influencing consumer to buy organic food, to find out the opinion about the price of organic products, to find out the level of satisfaction of the consumers. The result of this research health is an important aspect in our life. So the level of consumption and perception towards the organic has been increased. Other than food safety, health and environmental consideration, several other characteristics such as nutritive value, taste, freshness influenced consumer preference.

Research Methodology

The target population for this study will be youths (age range: 18-30 years) residing in various cities and towns across Karnataka. The research is based on primary and secondary data. A survey was used to collect primary data, and 251 respondents were used in the final analysis. The data has collected by the structured questionnaire and journals and articles. The data in the survey is statistically tested, and the study's conclusions will be drawn from concrete empirical evidences.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the awareness level of young consumer about organic food products.
2. To assess the factors influencing the buying behavior of youths
3. To examine the perception of youths towards organic food product in Karnataka.
4. To analyze consumer behavior towards organic food product.

Limitations of the Study

There may be certain limitations to this research. First, the study's findings may be subject to response biases, such as social desirability bias or recall bias. Efforts will be made to minimize these biases through careful questionnaire design and data collection procedures. Second, the generalizability of

the findings may be limited to the sampled population and may not represent the entire youth population in Karnataka. However, efforts will be made to select a diverse and representative sample to enhance the external validity of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data was collected and analyzed with the help of Statistical tools explained with the help of Charts and tables.

Table 1: Gender classification of respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Female	162	64.54
Male	89	35.46
Total	251	100

The above table shows that out of 251 respondents, 64.54% respondents (162) are female and remaining 35.45% respondents (89) are male. Females are more interested to buy organic food products than male, because they are more conscious about health.

Table 2: Age-based classification of respondents

Age	Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-27	167	66.53
28-37	38	15.13
38-47	36	14.34
48-57	10	4.00
Total	251	100

The above table shows that the majority, 66.53% of respondents are in the age between 18-27 years old, 15.13% of respondents are in the age between 28-47 years old, 14.34% of respondents are in between 38-47 years old age and remaining 4% of respondents are in the age between 48-57 years old.

Table 3: Educational classification of respondents.

Qualification	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Undergraduate	168	66.93
Post graduate	68	27.09
Others	15	5.98
Total	251	100

The above table shows that, the majority of respondents (66.93%) are graduates, 27.09% are postgraduates, and 5.98% of respondents are fall under other category.

Table 4: Occupation of the respondents.

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Student	59	23.52
Private service	147	58.57
Self employed	10	3.98
Government employee	15	5.97
House wife	20	7.96
Total	251	100

The Table 4 shows that, majority of the respondents are private employees. It evident that occupation plays major role in consumer buying behavior

Table 5: Awareness of Organic Food Products of the respondents

	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	231	92.03
No	20	7.97
Total	251	100

The table 5 shows that majority of the respondents are aware about organic food products.

Table 6: The source of information about Organic Products

Source of Information	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Friends/Relatives/acquaintances	103	41.04
TV Advertisements	43	17.13
Educational events	15	5.97
Health magazine	10	3.98
social media	75	29.89
Not aware	5	1.99
Total	251	100

It was found that the most of the respondents are aware about organic products. Major source of information about organic food are from friends, relatives or acquaintances and social media also plays a major role.

Table 7: Factor induced to buy Organic food products:

Factors	Respondents	Percentage
Price	25	9.96%
Brand Reputation	50	19.92%
Certification and labeling	50	19.92%
Health Benefits	86	34.28%%
Recommendations from friends or family	20	7.96%
Product availability	20	7.96%
	251	100

Several factors influence the purchase behavior of youths towards organic food products. Brand reputation, certification and labeling, availability, and recommendations from peers and family also influence purchase decisions. Consumer trust in organic claims and labeling systems, as well as the perceived credibility of organic certification labels, are crucial factors that impact purchasing behavior.

Table 8: How much more are you willing to pay for organic food products compared to conventional alternatives?

Payment	Respondents	Percentage
0-10% more	111	44.22%
10-25% more	99	39.44%
25-50% more	26	10.35%
50% or more	15	5.97%
	251	100

Price is a significant consideration, as organic food products tend to be priced higher than conventional alternatives. Studies suggest that while price is a concern for consumers,

they are willing to pay a premium for organic food due to perceived health benefits and environmental sustainability.

Table 9: Frequency of using organic products

Level of frequency	Respondents	Percentage (%)
less than 1 year	88	35.05
1 to 3 years	49	19.52
3to 6 years	20	7.98
more than 6 years	94	37.45
Total	251	100

It was found that, out of 251 respondents' majority of the respondents are using the organic products for more than 6 years.

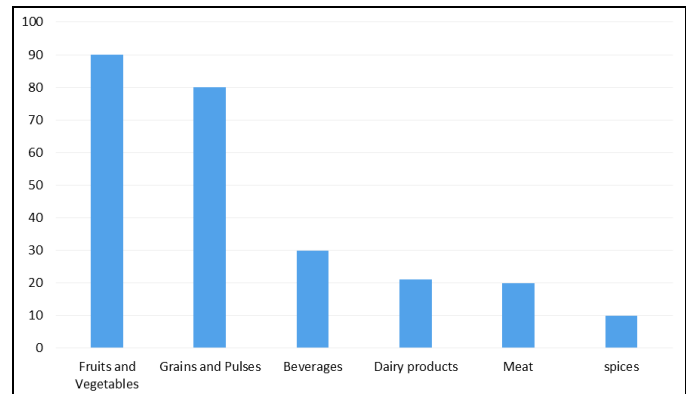


Fig 1: Range of products preferred by respondents

Youths in Karnataka show a preference for organic fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and grains and cereals. The consumption of organic packaged foods, such as snacks and beverages, is also gaining popularity among youths

Table 10: Market outlets preferred by consumer to buy Organic food:

Market Outlets	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Super market	60	23.90%
Departmental stores	40	15.93%
Online	80	31.87%
Local Markets	20	7.96%
Speciality stores	51	20.31%
Total	251	100%

It was discovered that majority of respondents preferred to buy organic products online, from super markets and Speciality stores.

Findings

A significant percentage of youths in Karnataka are familiar with the term "organic food," indicating a growing awareness of organic food products. Online sources, such as websites and social media, are the primary means through which youths gather information about organic food products. Youths perceive the main benefits of consuming organic food products in Karnataka to be health benefits, environmental sustainability. Concerns about organic food products among youths may include higher prices compared to conventional alternatives, limited availability in stores, and uncertainties about organic labeling and certification.

A considerable portion of youths in Karnataka regularly purchase organic food products, indicating a strong market demand. Factors influencing their purchase decisions may include price, brand reputation, health benefits, certification and labeling, and recommendations from friends or family. Youths in Karnataka are willing to pay a premium for organic food products, with a majority indicating a willingness to pay 10% more than conventional alternatives. Youths in Karnataka show a preference for organic fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and grains and cereals. The consumption of organic packaged foods, such as snacks and beverages, is also gaining popularity among youths.

Suggestions

Suggested areas for future research on the topic "Consumer Perception and Purchase Behavior of Youths towards Organic Food Products in Karnataka" include:

In-depth qualitative research: Conducting qualitative studies, such as focus groups or in-depth interviews, can provide deeper insights into the underlying motivations, attitudes, and beliefs of youths towards organic food products in Karnataka. Qualitative research can uncover specific factors influencing their purchase decisions, barriers to consumption, and the role of cultural and social influences.

Comparative Analysis: Comparing the consumer perception and purchase behavior of youths towards organic food products in Karnataka with other regions or states in India can provide a broader understanding of regional variations and influences. Examining the similarities and differences can offer valuable insights into the factors shaping consumer preferences and behaviors in different contexts.

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies that track the changes in consumer perception and purchase behavior of youths towards organic food products over time can capture evolving trends and dynamics. This approach can shed light on the sustainability of their attitudes and behaviors and identify any emerging patterns or shifts in preferences.

Factors influencing purchase decisions: Further exploration of the factors that influence purchase decisions among youths in Karnataka, such as the role of marketing strategies, labeling and certification systems, and price sensitivity, can provide more nuanced insights. Investigating the relative importance of these factors and how they interact can help marketers and policymakers develop effective strategies to promote organic food products.

Online Platforms and Digital Marketing: Given the increasing use of digital platforms among youths, studying the impact of online platforms and digital marketing techniques on their perception and purchase behavior towards organic food products in Karnataka is crucial. Analyzing the influence of social media, online advertising, e-commerce platforms, and user-generated content can provide valuable insights into effective digital marketing strategies.

Behavior-Intention Gap Analysis: Exploring the potential gaps between youths' attitudes, intentions, and actual purchase behavior towards organic food products can provide valuable insights into the barriers or obstacles that may hinder their consumption. Understanding the underlying reasons for any discrepancies can help develop targeted interventions to bridge the gap and promote increased organic food consumption among youths.

Sustainable Food Systems: Investigating the broader context of sustainable food systems in Karnataka, including the role of organic farming, local food networks, and community-supported agriculture, can provide a holistic understanding of

youths' perception and purchase behavior towards organic food products. Examining their awareness of and participation in sustainable food systems can help identify opportunities for engagement and support.

By addressing these areas in future research, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the consumer perception and purchase behavior of youths towards organic food products in Karnataka can be achieved. These insights can inform the development of effective marketing strategies, policies, and interventions to promote sustainable and healthier food choices among youths in the state.

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