

# Consumer Attitude Towards Organic Food Products In Trichy – Empirical Study

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**Abstract-** *The present study was an attempt to understand the consumer behavior and attitude concerning organic foods in Tiruchirappalli. The primary purpose was to analyse the consumer attitude with the procurement of organic products an overall view of Tiruchirappalli organic food market. The statistical chi-square analysis showed that the variables such as age, taste, income, buying behaviour of organics and health were mainly influenced the organic product consumption. The results of statistical significant also clearly relate the consumer attitude towards the organic food products. The study sought to understand the main attitude of the organic consumers and necessity of the organic products in their social life. Also, this work clarifies the importance of the organic food products and the marketing in Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu.*

**Keywords-** Organic food, consumer attitudes, Chi-square analysis, organic consumption data

## I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper aims to gain knowledge about consumer attitude and behavior towards organic food products in the Trichy district of Tamil Nadu. The author explores to investigate factors that might influence the people's intention to purchase organic products and also analyses the demographic characteristics of respondents by looking at their buying pattern towards organic food. Due to technological progress and increasing consumer dissatisfaction with traditional food, the organic agriculture has steadily expanded worldwide over the past few years. Now days, organic food production has gained wide attention as concerns and awareness about the negative impacts from intensive farming affecting the environment, public health, community, and economy have increased considerably.

Trichy Public officials have continuously promoted organic agriculture as an environmentally friendly production method, and consumer response towards organic products has attracted growing research attention. In most parts of the Trichy, organic food has become an attractive and fast-developing sector of the overall food market. Organic agriculture is the solutions to overcome the negative

consequences of industrialized agriculture. Based on holistic crop management systems, organic agriculture is a multifunctional and very sustainable method; it delivers various public benefits and ethical values including preservation of natural resources, the welfare of humans and animals, internal environmental costs, etc.

Today's society has raised a great interest in the healthy lifestyle with high nutrition values, food safety, and animal welfare. The higher consumer demand for higher quality produce and food safety makes organic food one of the most promising alternatives. Due to many recent food scandals, people are suspicious towards conventional products which include the use of GMOs, pesticides, additives, or fertilizers. As a result, consumers are ready to pay the premium price for organic food to employ the benefits of natural production and to mitigate the ill-effects of aggressive farming.

Like mainstream agriculture, organic agriculture is met with the challenges of globalization and sustainable improvement. Although the organic market has developed in recent years, it occupies small market share in food consumption. Some researchers showed that consumers' lack of knowledge concerning organic food is one of the barriers to increasing the market share. In this work, Chi-square statistical technique was used to analysis the relationship between the consumer attitude and food products.

## II. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

### Sampling and Data Collection

In this research case, the sampling units were residents in Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu, India. The population of this study focused on all consumers who regularly purchase organic foods. A total of 150 respondents had taken part in the survey with the structured questionnaire. The data was obtained through primary and secondary sources to answer the research question.

### Secondary Data

Literature was reviewed in depth to attain a deep understanding of the research field. Secondary data tends to be readily available and inexpensive to obtain. Also, it can be examined over a long period. The main sources of secondary data in this research were collected from various online sources such as reports, surveys, published books, online journals, and papers. Furthermore, the data also accessed from online databases from Arcada'sNelli Portal E-resources to obtain the literature theories concerning organic products consumption used in this research. Care was taken off to ensure the data was not outdated.

### Primary Data Collection

Reliability of the primary data is very significant because the researchers mainly depend upon the respondent's opinions. The method used for collecting the primary data in this study surveyed questionnaire to measure the respondent's attitude toward organic food. A highly structured 31 questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literate review comprising of different formats such as categorical, numerical, multiple choices, and Likert-scale questions. People are more likely to respond if it does not engage a lot of time and efforts.

The questionnaire was prepared in English and only targeted to organic consumer people. The questionnaire was filled and collected from respondents on generic supermarkets and specialized shops during the March and April 2017.

### Data analysis

The collected data were subjected to the interpretation and analysis. In this work attempted to present the data in a well-structured and easy way to understand. The data had been analyzed by utilizing quantitative analysis techniques with the support of the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) application, and Chi-square analysis was used to determine whether there is the significant association between the collected variables.

## III. RESULTS

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The above statistical analysis results showed that the correlation between the age, taste, income, buying behaviour of organics, health, and influence of attitude.

### Chi-Square Tests

#### 3.1 Age and taste of consumers

### Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant association between age and taste of organic products.

H1: There is a significant association between age and taste of organic products.

Table 1. Age and Taste Cross tabulation

Age	Taste preference			Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra I	
18-25	37	62	19	118
26-35	5	19	8	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>150</b>

### Result

Calculated value = 3.550  
 Tabulated value = 5.991  
 Degrees of freedom = 2  
 Significance level= .170  
 $3.550 < 5.991$

### Interpretation

Calculated chi-square value was greater than the tabulated value. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H1) was rejected and H0 is accepted so There is no realationship between age and taste of organic products,  $\chi^2 (2, N=150)$ .

### 2. Income and Buying organic products

### Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant association between Income and Buying organic products.

H1: There is a significant association between Income and Buying organic products.

Table 2. Income and Buying organic products Cross tabulation

Income	buy organic				Total
	Several times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Few times a year	
up to Rs. 6,000	17	41	17	6	81
6,000-15,000	7	22	14	0	43
16,000-21,000	6	6	0	0	12
above 30,000	6	0	0	8	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>150</b>

**Result**

Calculated value = 61.996  
 Tabulated value = 16.919  
 Degrees of freedom = 9  
 Significance level= .000  
 61.996 > 16.919

**Interpretation**

Calculated chi-square value was less then the tabulated value. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted.. There is a significant association between Income and Buying organic products.  $\chi^2$  (9, N=150).

**3. Age and Health**

**Hypothesis:**

H0: There is no significant association between age and Health of organic products.

H1: There is a significant association between age and Health of organic products.

Table 3. age and health Cross tabulation

Age	Health			Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	
18-25	31	66	21	118
26-35	6	26	0	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>150</b>

**Result**

Calculated value = 8.903  
 Tabulated value = 5.991  
 Degrees of freedom = 2  
 Significance level= .012  
 8.903 > 5.991

**Interpretation**

Calculated chi-square value was less then the tabulated value. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted. There is a significant association between age and Health of organic products,  $\chi^2$  (2, N=150).

**4. Gender and Influences**

**Hypothesis:**

H0: There is no significant association between Gender and Influences of organic products.

H1: There is a significant association between Gender and Influences of organic products.

Table 4. Gender and Influences Cross tabulation

Gender	Influence					Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	5.00	
Male	12	25	3	9	5	54
Female	23	25	22	20	6	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>150</b>

**Result**

Calculated value = 11.285  
 Tabulated value = 9.49  
 Degrees of freedom= 4  
 Significance level= .024  
 11.285 > 9.49

**Interpretation**

Calculated chi-square value was less then the tabulated value. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H1) was

accepted. There is a significant association between Gender and Influences of organic products,  $\chi^2$  (4, N=150).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the study gave an overview of today's Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu organic food market and consumer's attitudes towards the organic consumption. The findings showed that most of the people living in Tiruchirappalli buying organic food at least sometimes, only a small percentage of consumers who do not. The main explanations from organic non-buyers were a lack of availability, no perceived benefits, and higher price which are relatively consistent with the theory. From the literature revealed that some of the main reasons that prevent consumers from buying organic food are expensiveness, limited availability, lack of trust, lack of perceived value, and unsatisfactory quality (Larue et al., 2004).

The results indicated that in Tiruchirappalli females are a more likely to buy organics due to the women are the main food purchasers in the household. Thus, they buy more organic food than men. The age group 36-45 is the dominant group of organic food consumption, followed by the age group 18-35. It is an evidence of the fact that younger consumers in Tiruchirappalli are emerging and driving organic sales. Furthermore, the results clearly reflected the correlation between employment status, income, living situation and consumer behavior. A majority of organic consumers was a relatively high income every month. These statistics fit the theory part totally, which stated that well-educated people and professional workers with good income are likely to consume more organic food. Similarly, households with children under 18 are a larger consumer segment, because purchasing organic food would benefit all the members of their family group (Thompson and Kitwell, 1998).

In the second part, the findings revealed organic consumer behavior and attitudes. The preponderance of respondents stated that they had bought an organic product since five years ago, and supermarkets and discounters are the most used channels of distribution. The Tiruchirappalli market seems to be highly dominated by supermarkets. From the survey results, it can also be concluded that fresh organic fruits and vegetables are very vital to the organic food sector as they are the organic product groups most purchased by consumers.

Trust is an essential element when the decision is related to food (Green et al., 2005). The findings indicated that news, articles and television play an important role in knowledge enrichment and most affect respondent's interest in

organic food. Also, most of the organic consumers look for country of origin and the Tamilnadu organic seal when selecting food.

According to the European Consumer Organization BEUC member survey (2012), 70% of the respondents said the origin country of products is a key criterion when purchasing food. Nowadays, a clear majority of shoppers want more and more to be able to identify the specific country their food comes from because all the confusion about reliable sources of food is increasing as well as the distinction between a local and non-local origin of food brands or labels is becoming unclear. Therefore, the country of origin label and the Indian organic seal have the big potential to increase consumer confidence when selecting food.

Attitudes towards the consumption of organic food are generally positive. Concerning the motivations for organic food consumption in Tiruchirappalli, consumers rated health, the environment and support of local farmers as principal values. The increase of the health and environmental consciousness has had a thoughtful effect on consumer behavior. Additionally, they perceive organic food as being fresher, tastier and high quality compared to conventionally grown food. This is consistent with previous studies that discovered health, environmental concerns and perceived benefits are related to positive organic food attitudes (Lockie et al., 2002). Further, the strongest perceived barrier toward organic food consumption is considered to be overly high prices, followed by other factors such as accessibilities, availability, and scientific evidence. For the future of Indian organic food market, most of the consumers suggested that there should be more locally fresh organic produce and an increase of products in shops and supermarkets. They also believed organic meals should be developed at work, school, or restaurant. In fact, according to European Commission's website of Ecological Agriculture, there has been an increase of organic restaurants in India recent years; along with this many businesses such as office, school canteens have also started to include organic food to their menu. All the sectors are now following the tendencies of consumers and gradually adding organic food to their offering.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Ecological agriculture is practiced almost in every country and has transformed to be one of the most dynamic sectors of Europe, especially in India. The driving forces behind this growth are the conservation of environment and trend of consumer markets in healthy food products. Organic food is becoming a great opportunity for food producers in Europe; it has contributed to farm incomes and created the job

for more than three decades now. The level of success of organic produce in one country depends on various factors such as society, attitudes, values, agricultural practices, etc.

Consumers are becoming more advanced in their buying decisions. Given the study results, it can be concluded that perceived values significantly influenced consumers' purchase intention of organic food products. A likely scenario for future demand is that the relative gap between the prices of organic and conventional food becomes smaller, and the increase of locally fresh organic products in various distribution channels. The current development in consumption of organic products reflects a greening of consumer lifestyles. However, the future challenges facing agriculture and food production are considerable.

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