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A Study on Awareness of Organic Food Products - Focusing on Trichy District

Dr. K. Padhmanaban[1], S. Mercygnanamani[2]

[1]Professor and Head, Department of Commerce, and Research Supervisor, Annamalai University, Tamilnadu, India

[2]Ph.D. Research Scholar in Commerce, Annamalai University, Tamilnadu, India

Abstract: ***The researcher has examined the extent of consumer awareness regarding organic food products in the Trichy district. To achieve this, the researcher identified 16 key aspects related to organic food products. A total of 400 respondents were selected using the simple random sampling method. A well-structured questionnaire was utilized by the researchers to gather primary data. The researchers employed statistical tools such as simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and chi-square test. The findings indicated that respondents exhibited a high level of awareness concerning the appearance of organic food products, followed closely by their awareness of the availability of organic food products, organic certification on these products, and the pricing of various organic food items. Conversely, respondents demonstrated a low level of awareness regarding the perishability of organic food products. Additionally, they showed limited awareness about the immunity benefits of organic food products, the medicinal advantages of using organic food products, and the durability of organic food products.***

Keywords: Organic food, conventional farming, awareness and fertilizer

1. Introduction

In today's world, individuals are afflicted by numerous new and unknown diseases. There are various factors contributing to this issue, with people's dietary habits playing a significant role. In the past, agricultural products were cultivated using traditional farming techniques, which were based on natural methods and provided essential nutrition, promoting a healthy lifestyle. However, over time, the global population, particularly in India, has surged rapidly. The existing agricultural production levels were insufficient to meet the food demands of the growing population. Consequently, governments implemented a conventional farming system. This system encouraged farmers to utilize chemical fertilizers, manures, insecticides, pesticides, and genetically modified seeds. While this approach resulted in increased production, it gradually diminished soil fertility and compromised the quality of food products. The consumption of food produced through this system failed to provide adequate nutrition to individuals. Additionally, it led to the emergence of new and unknown diseases. In recent decades, people have become aware of these issues and have begun to consume organic food products to maintain their health. Unlike conventional food products, organic options are characterized by quality, health safety, and the absence of chemicals. However, the actual level of awareness regarding organic products remains quite low in our country. Enhancing awareness about these products would assist consumers in making informed choices, assessing quality, verifying authenticity, and identifying stores where they are available, among other benefits. Therefore, the researcher aims to investigate the level of awareness among respondents regarding various aspects of organic food products in the study area.

2. Literature Review

Sangkumchaliang P. & Huang W.C. (2012) in their study found that the main motives to purchase of organic products were health, environmental benefits, support for local and small farmers. Increasing awareness about organic labelling and their trust on the labels as well as increasing the availability and range of organic food products might be the most effective way of increasing their market share. **Chandrashekar H.M** (2014) in their study evidenced that the people were well aware of images and availability, but not loyal entirely to organic food products. Knowledge and awareness about organic products could affect attitudes and perceptions about the product and ultimately, buying decisions of the consumers. **Ramesh R V and Divya M** (2015) found that the main reasons for purchase of organic products were healthy, environmentally friendly and to support local farmers. Main barrier of organic food market was increasing consumer awareness about organic product. **Venkatakrishanan D.T** (2016) evidenced that there was need for educating consumers and awareness about organic products. The awareness among the consumers about organic products played vital role in buying behavior of the consumers. **Anish K and Ramachandran K K** (2016) found that there was significant relationship between the consumers level of awareness and organic product benefits. There was no significant relationship between the consumers level of awareness and organic production methods. **Rengeeswari R and Palaneeswari T** (2017) found that consumer behavior was good indicator in analyzing the factor influencing the respondents buying behavior towards organic food products. The variables like perceived health, product attributes, social welfare, product feature, availability to buy and persvades organic products had greater influence.

Krishna R and Balasubramaniyan (2018) identified that major portion of the respondents were aware of the benefits of organic products consumption. On the other hand the awareness level was comparatively high among the educated respondents. **Shaveta M S and Manoj Kumar K** (2019) in their study evidenced that very less percent of respondents did not know about organic products and most people preferred non perishable organic products. The level of awareness was very low in India but concentrated in urban areas. **Kaur T.,**

and Kalotra A. (2024) made a literature review study and concluded that researchers saw the demand for organic food items both internationally and in India. Additionally, a number of variables that affect how consumers see organic food items have been found. **Gomathi A.C., and Narayan A. (2024)** investigated consumer purchase intentions towards organic foods in Tenkasi region. The study highlighted the significance of factors like health awareness, environmental consciousness, and product characteristics in influencing consumer decision-making within the organic food industry. **Sachdev N., and Sindhwani A. (2025)** found that internal drivers like health consciousness and environmental concern were positively associated with higher purchase intent, while barriers such as price sensitivity and limited product availability hinder consistent consumption. Trust in certification and digital marketing influenced purchase behavior significantly, especially among younger, socially aware consumers. **Gupta L., et al (2025)** analysed consumer behaviour towards organic food products in Udaipur, Rajasthan. The study concluded that while there were a strong awareness and positive perception of organic products among the student population, affordability and accessibility remain barriers to broader adoption.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study,

- To assess the level of awareness of sample consumers on organic food products in Trichy district and
- To study whether there is any significant association between level of awareness and socio-economic variables of the sample consumers.

3. Methodology

The researcher has examined the extent of consumer awareness concerning organic food products in the Trichy district. To achieve this, the researcher identified 16 key aspects related to organic food products. A total of 400 respondents were selected using the simple random sampling method. The researchers developed and distributed a well-structured questionnaire to gather primary data from the respondents. Statistical tools such as simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and chi-square test were employed by the researchers to analyze the data.

4. Results and Discussion

The research has been conducted to assess the respondents' awareness concerning different facets of organic food products in the Thanjavur district. To achieve this, the researcher examined the socio-economic backgrounds of the respondents and identified their awareness regarding 16 distinct aspects of organic food products. The findings from this study are detailed below. Table 1 illustrates the socio-economic backgrounds of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

S. No.	Gender	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Male	239	59.8
2	Female	161	40.2
Age			
1	Upto 25 Years	68	17.0
2	26 to 40 Years	99	24.8
3	41 to 55 Years	144	36.0
4	Above 55 Years	89	22.2
Education			
1	Upto SSLC level	23	5.8
2	HSC level	61	15.2
3	UG Degree	92	23.0
4	PG Degree	122	30.5
5	Professional Education	68	17.0
6	Others	34	8.5
Occupation			
1	Farmer	36	9.0
2	Government Employee	104	26.0
3	Private Employee	125	31.2
4	Self employed	49	12.3
5	House wife	86	21.5
Monthly Income			
1	Up to Rs.20,000	46	11.5
2	Rs. 20,001 - to Rs. 30,000	51	12.8
3	Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 40,000	46	11.5
4	Rs. 40,001 to Rs. 50,000	43	10.8
5	Above Rs. 50,000	214	53.4
Residential Place			
1	Rural area	90	22.5
2	Semi-urban area	190	47.5
3	Urban area	120	30.0
	Total	400	100.0

Source; Primary Data

Table 1 indicates that the majority of respondents (59.8%) were male. The table reveals that slightly more than one third of the respondents who purchased organic food products were aged between 41 and 55 years. Additionally, it was noted that individuals in the older age group consumed organic food products more than those in the younger age group. A significant portion of the respondents possessed a high level of education, having completed either undergraduate, postgraduate, or professional education. Highly educated respondents purchased more organic products compared to those who were uneducated. The aforementioned table illustrates that one third of the respondents were private sector employees, while one fourth were government employees. A majority of the respondents (53.4%) reported a monthly income exceeding ₹50000. Furthermore, it was observed that approximately half of the respondents (47.5%) resided in semi-urban areas.

Table 2 gives the results regarding level of awareness of the respondents regarding organic food products in the study area.

Table 2: Awareness Level of the Respondents

S. No.	Factors	EA	MA	SWA	SA	NAA	Total
1.	Farming methods of organic products	188 (47.0)	74 (18.5)	35 (8.7)	82 (20.5)	21 (5.3)	400 (100)
2.	Certification of organic products	186 (46.5)	110 (27.5)	21 (5.2)	65 (16.3)	18 (4.5)	400 (100)
3.	Know to compare with conventional products	108 (27.0)	52 (13.0)	43 (10.8)	142 (35.4)	55 (13.8)	400 (100)
4.	Price of various organic products	199 (49.7)	65 (16.3)	41 (10.2)	65 (16.3)	30 (7.5)	400 (100)
5.	Increase in the price of organic products	170 (42.4)	59 (14.7)	55 (13.8)	65 (16.3)	51 (12.8)	400 (100)
6.	Place of availability of the products	194 (48.5)	76 (19.0)	53 (13.2)	55 (13.8)	22 (5.5)	400 (100)
7.	Effects on health	115 (28.8)	45 (11.2)	40 (10.0)	148 (37.0)	52 (13.0)	400 (100)
8.	Nutritional value of organic products	122 (30.4)	65 (16.2)	39 (9.8)	129 (32.3)	45 (11.3)	400 (100)
9.	Immunity level of organic products	71 (17.8)	75 (18.7)	55 (13.8)	118 (29.4)	81 (20.3)	400 (100)
10.	Durability of organic products	83 (20.7)	55 (13.7)	110 (27.5)	85 (21.3)	67 (16.8)	400 (100)
11.	Appearance of organic products	220 (55.0)	119 (29.8)	19 (4.8)	22 (5.4)	20 (5.0)	400 (100)
12.	Testing quality of organic products	125 (31.2)	64 (16.0)	48 (12.0)	109 (27.3)	54 (13.5)	400 (100)
13.	Perishability of organic products	81 (20.2)	39 (9.7)	101 (25.3)	95 (23.8)	84 (21.0)	400 (100)
14.	Medicinal benefits of organic products	71 (17.7)	72 (18.0)	98 (24.5)	91 (22.8)	68 (17.0)	400 (100)
15.	About organic fertilizers / manures	101 (25.2)	98 (24.5)	49 (12.2)	75 (18.8)	77 (19.3)	400 (100)
16.	Organic pesticides and insecticides	79 (19.7)	98 (24.5)	51 (12.7)	113 (28.3)	59 (14.8)	400 (100)

Source: Primary Data; EA – Extremely Aware; MA – Moderately Aware; SWA – Somewhat Aware; SA – Slightly Aware; NAA – Not at all Aware

Table 1 indicates that the respondents exhibited a high level of awareness regarding organic farming techniques, the certification of organic products, the pricing of various organic food items, the increases in prices of organic food products, the locations where organic food products are available, and the visual appeal of organic food products. Conversely, the level of awareness was found to be low concerning the ability to compare organic products with conventional ones, the potential adverse health effects associated with organic food products, the immunity of organic food products, and the perishability of organic food products.

To determine the rank at which respondents exhibited a high level of awareness, the researcher computed the mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation. The factors were then ranked according to the mean value, with the results displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean, SD, CV and Rank of Awareness Level

S. No.	Factors	$\bar{x}$	σ	CV	Mean Rank
1.	Farming methods of organic products	3.82	1.33	34.86	5
2.	Certification of organic products	3.95	1.25	31.63	2
3.	Know to compare with conventional products	3.04	1.41	46.38	12
4.	Price of various organic products	3.85	1.35	35.11	4
5.	Increase in the price of organic products	3.58	1.47	41.06	6
6.	Place of availability of the products	3.91	1.27	32.46	3
7.	Effects on health	3.06	1.47	48.08	11
8.	Nutritional value of organic products	3.23	1.43	44.34	8
9.	Immunity level of organic products	2.84	1.41	49.60	16
10.	Durability of organic products	3.01	1.32	43.93	13
11.	Appearance of organic products	4.24	0.98	23.10	1
12.	Testing quality of organic products	3.24	1.44	44.41	7
13.	Perishability of organic products	2.85	1.36	47.80	15
14.	Medicinal benefits of organic products	2.97	1.33	44.82	14
15.	About organic fertilizers / manures	3.18	1.49	46.89	9
16.	Organic pesticides and insecticides	3.06	1.36	44.41	10

Source: Primary Data

It could be known from table 3 that the calculated mean value of the factor "Appearance of organic food products" was 4.24, it was found to be highest and the factor was ranked first, hence the respondents had high level of awareness about appearance of organic food products. Followed by the mean value of the factors "Certification of organic products", "Place of availability of the products" and "Price of various organic products" were 3.95, 3.91 and 3.85 respectively and they were ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively. Hence the respondents had also high level of awareness about place of certification of organic products, place of availability and price of various organic food products. The respondents also had good level of awareness on the factors organic farming methods and price hikes of organic food products. It was also noted that the calculated mean value of the factor "Immunity level of organic products" was lowest at 2.84, it was ranked last (16th), hence the respondents had least level of awareness about perishability of organic food products. Followed by, the respondents also had least level of awareness about Perishability of organic products, Medicinal benefits of organic products and Durability of organic products, their calculated mean values were low at 2.85, 2.97 and 3.01 respectively and they were ranked 15th, 14th and 13th respectively.

In order to determine if there exists a significant relationship between the respondents' awareness and their socio-economic backgrounds, the researcher formulated the following null

hypothesis. This hypothesis was tested using the Chi-square test, and the findings are displayed in Table 4.

Ho: There is no significant association between awareness about various aspects of organic food products and socio-economic variables.

Table 4: Chi-square Test between Awareness Level and Socio-Economic Factors

Sl. No.	Factors	Gender (df:4; TV:9.49)		Age (df:12; TV:21.03)		Education (df:20; TV:31.41)		Occupation (df:16; TV:26.30)		Income (df:16; TV:26.30)		Res. Place (df:16; TV:26.30)	
		x^2	P	x^2	P	x^2	P	x^2	P	x^2	P	x^2	P
1.	Farming methods of organic products	19.066	0.001	23.548	0.023	38.516	0.008	26.588	0.047	92.378	0.000	3.639	0.891
2.	Certification of organic products	12.937	0.012	26.673	0.009	34.282	0.024	23.860	0.093	93.855	0.000	7.477	0.490
3.	Know to compare with conventional products	6.135	0.190	22.356	0.034	25.590	0.179	26.976	0.042	18.566	0.315	5.480	0.710
4.	Price of various organic products	3.295	0.511	22.009	0.037	40.240	0.005	23.207	0.109	73.974	0.000	6.752	0.568
5.	Increase in the price of organic products	6.266	0.181	12.526	0.404	28.546	0.097	12.598	0.704	74.026	0.000	4.495	0.814
6.	Place of availability of the products	2.959	0.566	15.339	0.223	23.400	0.269	19.032	0.269	40.938	0.000	14.706	0.066
7.	Effects on health	3.821	0.431	9.338	0.674	38.884	0.007	13.471	0.640	19.336	0.504	17.106	0.029
8.	Nutritional value of organic products	2.389	0.666	22.923	0.031	19.008	0.520	15.324	0.503	30.654	0.015	2.195	0.976
9.	Immunity level of organic products	5.302	0.258	16.445	0.172	31.449	0.049	30.821	0.014	22.138	0.241	3.464	0.905
10.	Durability of organic products	12.357	0.015	44.889	0.000	51.028	0.000	54.453	0.000	71.107	0.000	10.973	0.206
11.	Appearance of organic products	2.220	0.696	16.093	0.187	26.483	0.150	23.031	0.114	60.556	0.000	11.575	0.173
12.	Testing quality of organic products	0.479	0.976	9.873	0.627	15.672	0.736	9.573	0.889	51.003	0.000	7.148	0.525
13.	Perishability of organic products	3.032	0.553	23.723	0.025	26.270	0.158	42.571	0.000	12.825	0.689	14.065	0.081
14.	Medicinal benefits of organic products	5.042	0.283	18.401	0.104	38.294	0.008	37.905	0.002	14.934	0.538	7.666	0.471
15.	About organic fertilizers / manures	2.370	0.669	28.215	0.005	44.085	0.001	32.302	0.009	38.757	0.001	13.915	0.085
16.	Organic pesticides and insecticides	2.823	0.589	4.071	0.982	25.838	0.171	28.608	0.027	37.981	0.001	14.549	0.069

Source: Primary Data, (T.V: Table Value; df: degrees of freedom)

It was established from Table 4 that a significant association exists between the level of awareness regarding organic farming methods and the respondents' gender, age, education, occupation, and income. A significant association was also identified concerning organic certification in relation to gender, age, education, and income of the respondents. Furthermore, age and occupation demonstrated a significant association with the level of awareness regarding comparisons with conventional food products. A significant association was noted in the awareness level about pricing, correlated with age, education, and income. The education and occupation of the respondents showed a significant association with their awareness of price increases in products. Additionally, the respondents' income was significantly associated with their awareness of the availability of products. A significant association was recognized regarding the awareness of adverse effects of the product, linked to the education and residential location of the respondents. Lastly, the age and income of the respondents exhibited a significant association with their awareness of the nutritional values of organic food products.

The research also identified a notable correlation between the awareness level regarding the immunity of organic food products and the education and occupation of individuals. Factors such as gender, age, education, occupation, and income of the participants demonstrated a significant relationship with the awareness level concerning the durability of organic products. A significant correlation was observed between the awareness level regarding both the appearance of products and the methods used to test their quality and the income of the respondents. The age and occupation of the respondents were significantly associated with the awareness level about the perishability of organic food products. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant correlation between the awareness level of the medicinal benefits of organic food products and the education and occupation of the respondents. A significant association was also found between the awareness level of organic fertilizers/manures and the age, education, occupation, and income of the respondents. Additionally, there was a significant relationship between the awareness level of organic pesticides and insecticides and the occupation and income of the respondents.

5. Conclusion

In recent decades, there has been a notable increase in the consumption of organic food products among individuals. The primary factors contributing to this rise are the growing awareness of the benefits of organic food products and the drawbacks associated with conventional food products. Trichy, a well-known city in the state of Tamil Nadu, serves as the focus of this research. Consequently, the researcher has examined the level of awareness regarding various aspects of organic food products. The findings indicate that respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness concerning the appearance of organic food products. Additionally, they exhibited significant awareness regarding the availability of organic food products, the organic certification of these products, and the pricing of various organic food items. However, the respondents showed a low level of awareness regarding the immunity benefits of organic products. Furthermore, they also had limited knowledge about the perishability of organic products, the medicinal advantages of consuming organic food products, and the durability of organic food items.

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