

AN EVALUATION OF DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

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Abstract: Consumer behaviour plays a major character in an Organic food products segment. The sellers of organic foods need to be ground-breaking and dynamic in order to complete with the changing purchase behaviour in the Organic food products market among rural and urban residents. The importance of organic food products was ignored for quite a long period. As results of environmental sustainability and its importance is shifted towards Organic food products rather than conventional farming. Today, many societies have assumed their duty to protect our surroundings. Thus, products and production process become cleaner. More companies introduce green products and it helps to change the polluted world. "Go green", because they realize that they can cut pollution and increase profits at the same time. Green marketing is a creative opportunity to innovate in ways that induce a difference and at the same time achieve business success. This paper investigates consumer perception towards eco-friendly merchandise. Environmental related perception factors. Producers marketing related perception factors and Personality related perception factors are the major contributors to the formulation of perception towards Eco friendly products.

Key Words: Eco-friendly Products, Consumer Perception, Green Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION:

There is no common definition for "organic" due to the fact that different countries have different standard for products to be certified "organic". In simplest words organic foods are minimally processed to preserve the integrity of the food without artificial ingredients, preservatives or irradiation. Organic products are obtained by processes friendly to the environment, by cultivation techniques that take both the properties of the final product and the production methods. A wide scope of consumers of organic food and non-organic food were addressed and scrutinized to obtain their observations and visions towards organic food. Whole organic food consumers are not taking in the same method of approach towards organic food. After the statistical process guides us to comprehend the relation and the exemplar of the consumer behavior courses in organic food in India. The Definition of the word "Organic", an ecological management, production system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on the minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance "ecological harmony" (National Standards Board of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

2. NEED FOR THE STUDY:

With growing concerns of health publications and food safety, many consumers have turned their site for organic products. The increased consumers' interest in organic food has been attributed among others, to the uprising requirement for food free from pesticides and chemical balances. Organic food promotes a balance of human, other living beings and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. Consumer interest in organic products is growing alongside a diversification of the supply. In club to serve consumers actual needs and wants regarding organic products, those involved in the marketplace need to be informed about consumers' perception of organic merchandise. Malappuram district and the people's consumption of organic products depends supply from nearby villages in general at this circumstance, it is better to study the perception of customers of Malappuram district towards organic product is considered as worth and this area is not touched by any researchers so far is an added advantage.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Sangeetha (2015) found out that consumers demand for organic food is strongly influenced by knowledge and attitude of consumers, price as well as food attributes of organic products.

Sathis Kumar and Dr. E. Muthukumar (2016) found out that consumers in Nilgiri district gave more importance to factors like health, environmental safety, knowledge and culture where organic food was concerned. However, they were in different towards the attributes of organic food like taste, color of the food etc.

Anu Varghese and Santhosh J (2015), made a study on consumers' perception with reference to Kollam district in Kerala. 80 consumers were selected on a convenience basis. According to the study, the majority of the respondents are aware about eco-friendly products. Organic vegetables and food products were mostly preferred by

customers. The major factor influencing the buying behavior of consumers is the quality of the product, and the problem faced, by the consumers are lack of availability of products, high price and low promotion.

Bhagwan Singh and Sachin Kumar (2015) in their study revealed that most of the respondents from North India are familiar with Green Marketing. Respondents, income, occupation, marital status and district have a strong relationship with awareness about Green Marketing, irrespective of their age, education, area and state. The marketers should plan out the strategies as per the respondent's characteristics to achieve better results. The genders from North India possess similar awareness about Green Marketing, so the gender specific strategies perhaps may not work in India. Rather, other demographic variables like income, occupation, marital status and district of respondents, if focused and targeted may provide better results. The study also explored that customer rising awareness about green or eco-friendly products; promotion of green or eco-friendly products by Web Based Marketing/ Internet; consumer focus on the environmental issues and necessary initiatives taken by the government and corporates are the main reasons for highlighting Green Marketing.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Growth in organic markets in India may come about for a number of causes. They may be linked to changes in consumers' lifestyles (promotion of a healthier lifestyle) or the growth in awareness of consumers regarding food quality. Likewise, consumer awareness of the need for environmental protection is increasing. Organic agriculture is often seen by consumers as environmentally friendly, and this may result in more attention given by consumers to organic agriculture. Nevertheless, consumer perception of organic farming may be linked to the availability of organic products in a specific arena. An increase in the popularity of organic products may be correlated with more positive perceptions of organics and greater intentions to purchase them. Malappuram district, surrounded by many villages is an interesting object lesson in which the availability of organic products varies and to identify factors contributing to consumer perceptions of organic food products.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To find out the factors influencing the consumer perception towards eco-friendly products

6. METHODOLOGY:

The Research design of the study is both descriptive and analytical nature. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected from selected consumers on Simple Random sampling techniques, with the help of questionnaires in regional language i.e in Malayalam. A sample of 110 consumers of organic products Malappuram district of Kerala was selected for the study. Descriptive statistics (Mean, Percentile), Likert scale technique and factor analysis were used to get good inferences.

7. RESULT:

Factors influencing perception towards Eco friendly products

There are many factors influencing on the formulation of perception towards Eco friendly products. Taking all 13 variables for next stage analysis is not necessary because respondents might have similar perception for one or two variables. To reduce 13 variables into a minimum manageable number of variables factor analysis is applied. The variables are grouped by exploring common dimensions available among the variables.

Table 1- KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.580
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	268.850
	Df	78
	Sig.	.000

Before going for factor analysis, suitability of data for the purpose of factor analysis has to be tested. KMO test and Bartlett's test are two such examinations. The value of KMO of 0.580 shows that a factor analysis is useful for the present data. Bartlett's test of Sphericity indicates whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would show that the variables are unrelated. The significance level gives the outcome of the trial. Hither, the significant value is 0.000 which suggests that there exist significant relationships among the variables. The resultant value of KMO test and Bartlett's test indicate that the present data is useful for factor analysis.

The next step in the process is to decide about the number of factors to be derived. The thumb rule is factors which are having 'Eigen values' greater than unity can be accepted. For the use of extraction Principal Component Analysis method is applied. The Component metrics so formed is further rotated orthogonally using a Varimax

rotation algorithm for convenience factors are cut to three. After the rotation all the program lines are loaded with the three ingredients. The results so obtained have been given in the tables separately along with factor loadings.

Table 2 Total Variance Explained on Interest

Comp onent	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.712	20.861	20.861	2.180	16.770	16.770
2	1.900	14.616	35.477	1.966	15.122	31.892
3	1.367	10.518	45.996	1.834	14.104	45.996
4	1.237	9.517	55.513			
5	1.124	8.648	64.161			
6	.975	7.500	71.661			
7	.792	6.089	77.750			
8	.655	5.038	82.788			
9	.616	4.735	87.523			
10	.481	3.697	91.220			
11	.456	3.511	94.731			
12	.414	3.181	97.913			
13	.271	2.087	100.000			

From the 13 statements only 5 statements have Eigen values more than 1. This means that these 5 statements can be used to explain maximum variance in the characteristics of people. The total variance accounted by all the three factors is 45.996 percent. This means that significant amount of variance is explained by the reduced three factors alone. Therefore it is better to take three variables alone for further analysis. Among the three factors, the first factor accounts for around 17 percent of variance.

Table 3 Rotated component matrix

Statements	Component		
	1	2	3
SMS advertisements are sending without prior permission	.754		
It reduces privacy	.752		
Getting unwanted messages	.698		
Fear of spam and unsolicited messages	.551		
SMS advertisements are misleading consumers		.702	
SMS advertisements are mainly focused for premium products		.660	
SMS advertisements are induce me to purchase		.609	
Getting sufficient knowledge of product for purchase		.403	
I would like to read SMS advertisements, which are easy to read and understandable			.718
Location based advertisements are good for further action			.603
SMS advertisements should be in regional language			.564
Short content of SMS advertisements are good			.553

From the rotated component matrix it is clear that the first factor is having four statements, the second factor is having four statements and the third factor is having four statements. Based on the statements included in the factors can be named. The reduced three factors are privacy and disturbance related perception factors, purchase intention related perception factors and finally content related perception factors

8. CONCLUSION:

Consumer behavior plays a major part in an organic food products segment. The sellers of organic foods need to be ground-breaking and dynamic in order to complete with the changing purchase behavior in the Organic food products market among rural and urban residents. The importance of organic food products was ignored for quite a long period. As consequences of environmental sustainability and its importance is shifted towards Organic food products rather than conventional farming hence from the analysis, which carried out in this study, we can reason out that the people have an awareness about the eco-friendly products and they establish a confident attitude towards green marketing and green products. Constant efforts should be required by Government, NGOs, Educational institutions, Business houses and company at a large to create consciousness among the consumers to promote eco-

friendly buying behavior. Hence the survey claims that while purchasing organic food products consumers are more concerned about the wellness of their loved ones rather than one's own health. This article will serve to extend the knowledge of marketers who attempt to understand the consumers who demand for sustainable food products. As the value orientation of these buyers is different from others, the research findings will assist the seller to focus their attention on the target group. Furthermore, the results will likewise assist the government to lead a successful public awareness campaign as the paper they should focus on is 'concern for others' and 'environment'.

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