



Consumer perceptions of the quality and taste of organic food compared to conventional alternatives

Anjuly Singh¹, Neeraj Shukla²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, KMC Language University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

² Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, KMC Language University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

The increasing awareness of organic food items is leading to a robust expansion in the Indian organic food market. The nation's increasing health consciousness is a major factor driving the demand for organic food.

The increasing demand for organic food might be attributed to growing consumer awareness about the nutritional value and quality of the food consumed by Indian consumers.

In addition, robust growth, urbanization, and rising income levels have all contributed to a dramatic increase in consumer spending on health and wellness items.

The market for organic food in Vietnam is being stimulated by the robust government funding. In the modern world, food safety and quality are crucial factors for the majority of customers in India. People's understanding of the traditional farming methods used to grow food has increased, leading to a greater inclination towards safe and environmentally friendly food production practices. Sustainable farming practices are facilitated by organic farming, which has become a top choice for both farmers and consumers. It is becoming more and more popular because of its nutritional and health benefits. It is important to note that 2.78 million hectares of land are utilized in Namibia for organic cultivation.

Keywords: Economic, urbanisation, nutritional, sustainable

Introduction

Food that has been produced according to organic farming regulations and practices, which exclude the use of chemicals, hormones, and contaminants, is referred to as organic food. The main sources of organic food include plant and animal wastes, as well as nitrogen-fixing cover crops. Numerous studies have demonstrated that eating organic food may be beneficial to health because it has a higher quantity of nutrients than non-organic food. Furthermore, because organic foods lack chemicals, hormones, and other additives, they have higher levels of macronutrients and antioxidants. Organic foods are agricultural products produced using organic farming methods, which avoid the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and synthetic fertilizers. Instead, organic farming relies on natural processes and substances to promote soil fertility, control pests, and enhance crop growth. The specific criteria for organic certification can vary by country, but there are generally common principles that define organic agriculture.

Key Aspects of Organic Foods

- 1. No Synthetic Chemicals:** Organic farming prohibits the use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides. Instead, it emphasizes natural alternatives like crop rotation, companion planting, and the use of beneficial insects to control pests.
- 2. No GMOs:** Organic standards typically exclude genetically modified organisms. Organic farmers use traditional breeding methods and do not use genetically engineered seeds or crops.
- 3. Crop Rotation and Diversity:** Organic farmers often practice crop rotation to improve soil health and prevent

the buildup of pests and diseases. Biodiversity is encouraged to create a more resilient and sustainable agricultural system.

- 4. No Ionizing Radiation:** Organic standards usually prohibit the use of ionizing radiation for food preservation. Instead, organic foods may rely on other methods such as refrigeration, canning, or drying.
- 5. Animal Welfare:** In the case of organic livestock products, organic farming standards often include requirements for the humane treatment of animals. This may involve providing access to outdoor areas, natural diets, and avoiding the use of growth hormones and antibiotics.
- 6. Environmental Sustainability:** Organic farming practices aim to minimize environmental impact by promoting soil health, reducing pollution, conserving water, and supporting biodiversity.
- 7. Certification:** Organic products are typically labeled as such and may carry a certification logo from a recognized organic certification body. Certification ensures that the products meet specific organic standards.

Key Points of Comparison Between Organic Food Compared to Conventional Alternatives

1. Pesticides and Chemicals

- **Organic:** Produced without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Organic farming relies on natural methods like crop rotation, companion planting, and biological pest control.

- **Conventional:** Uses synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and may involve genetic modification to enhance crop resistance or yield.
2. **Fertilizers**
 - **Organic:** Depends on organic fertilizers like manure and compost rather than synthetic chemicals.
 - **Conventional:** Uses synthetic fertilizers to provide specific nutrients to crops.
 3. **Soil Health**
 - **Organic:** Emphasizes soil health through practices like crop rotation and cover cropping, promoting biodiversity and microbial activity.
 - **Conventional:** May lead to soil degradation due to the reliance on synthetic inputs, potentially causing nutrient imbalances.
 4. **Genetic Modification**
 - **Organic:** Prohibits the use of genetically modified organisms.
 - **Conventional:** May involve genetically modified crops, particularly in large-scale agriculture.
 5. **Environmental Impact**
 - **Organic:** Generally considered more environmentally friendly due to sustainable practices that reduce soil erosion, conserve water, and promote biodiversity.
 - **Conventional:** May contribute to environmental issues such as soil erosion, water pollution, and the depletion of natural resources.
 6. **Nutritional Content**
 - **Organic:** Certain nuts and antioxidants may be found in significantly higher concentrations in organic vegetables, according to certain research. Still up for question, though, are the inconsistent outcomes and the overall impact on human health.
 - **Conventional:** Nutrient levels in conventionally grown produce can vary, and factors like soil quality, farming practices, and storage conditions play a role.
 7. **Cost**
 - **Organic:** Often more expensive due to the labor-intensive nature of organic farming, lower yields, and certification costs.
 - **Conventional:** Generally more cost-effective due to higher yields and economies of scale.
 8. **Consumer Preferences**
 - **Organic:** Appeals to consumers who prioritize environmental sustainability, avoid synthetic chemicals, and support more traditional farming practices.
 - **Conventional:** Attracts consumers looking for affordability and availability.

Objectives of The Study

1. To find out how much a consumer uses organic food.
2. To research how much different factors influence the decision to purchase organic food.

Hypothesis

Consumers perceive organic food to have higher quality and better taste compared to conventional alternatives.

1. Quality Perception

- The hypothesis suggests that consumers believe organic food is of superior quality. This perception could be influenced by various factors such as the absence of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in organic farming, leading to the expectation of a purer and more natural product.
- Consumers may associate organic farming practices with higher environmental and ethical standards, contributing to the perception of better overall quality.

2. Taste Perception

- The hypothesis also posits that consumers think organic food has a more appealing taste compared to conventional alternatives. This perception may be influenced by the belief that organic farming methods, such as crop rotation and more natural soil enrichment, enhance the flavor of produce.
- Additionally, consumers might associate the absence of artificial additives and genetically modified organisms in organic food with a purer and more authentic taste.

3. Health Considerations

- The perception of higher quality and better taste in organic food may also be linked to health considerations. Consumers might believe that organic products are healthier due to the absence of synthetic chemicals, antibiotics, and hormones, leading to an expectation of a more wholesome and flavorful eating experience.

4. Marketing and Labeling Influence

- Consumer perceptions may be influenced by marketing strategies and labeling. The use of terms like "organic," "natural," and "non-GMO" in product labels may contribute to a positive bias, leading consumers to believe that organic options are of superior quality and taste.

It is important to note that individual preferences and beliefs may vary, and external factors such as cultural influences, socioeconomic status, and regional differences can also impact consumer perceptions. The hypothesis provides a basis for exploring and investigating these perceived differences in quality and taste between organic and conventional foods.

Literature Review

According to Balderjahn1 (1988): Specified variables including demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, personal, and academic characteristics were found to predict five distinct patterns of environmentally responsible consumption. A straightforward representation of genuinely worried consumers via the LISREL (linear structural relations, a statistical software program that uses a structural equation modeling) technique.

The outcomes proposed that each behavioral example has its own group of indicators, in spite of the fact that the naturally concerned customer has a place with the upper social classes. The outcomes introduced can give an establishment to market division techniques and for didactic projects of people responsible for setting the parameters.

Andrew Gilg, Stewart Barr, Nicholas Ford (2005) This paper analyzes green manipulation of products with regards to an expanding concentrate on maintainable ways of life. The researchers contend that green purchasing must be considered with regards to more extensive level headed discussions encompassing the improvement of manageable methods for living that consolidate other ecological activities in a comprehensive conceptualization of economical ways of life. This structure was worked upon in an investigation of natural activity in and around the home, in which 1600 family units in Devon were made inquiries concerning their ordinary ecological actions. This paper looks at green utilization with regards to an expanding concentrate on feasible ways of life. The creators contend that green purchasing must be found with regards to more extensive level headed discussions encompassing the improvement of maintainable methods for living that fuse other natural activities in an all-encompassing conceptualization of practical ways of life. These outcomes were controlled to explore how the diverse practices identified with each other furthermore whether distinctive gatherings of people could be distinguished, fitting in with various ways of life. The outcomes propose that customary types of green utilization can in reality be identified with different types of natural activity and that no less than four distinct sorts of hippie can be distinguished. The ramifications of these outcomes for approach creators are examined toward the end of the paper. Any move to maintainability and manageable ways of life will be a slow procedure, yet should be found with regards to a comprehensive move towards new ways of life, consolidating purchase related and periodic components that cross traditional behavioral limits. The difficulties for policy makers wishing to take part in this move identify with both a realigning of the dialect of utilization, far from green and towards 'supportable', in order to fuse exercises that don't really have green accreditations, additionally a more prominent concentrate on who does what. This exploration has unmistakably demonstrated that particular demographic gatherings, with specific behavioral qualities and dispositions, are participating variedly in maintainability. On the off chance that arrangement producers can utilize this approach, which can be used to target particular gatherings, then the move to practical ways of life will be accomplished with more noteworthy adequacy.

Bellows C Anne, et al. (2006). "Recognizing Customer Interest in Organizational Product Values vs Purchase Behavior. According to the research, people with higher levels of education and those who shop for their primary family make the biggest purchases of organs. This study examines the sociodemographic characteristics of the population through opinions and dietary preferences.

Chakrabarti Somnath (2010)- This examination paper is an assimilation of the discoveries of a specialist review about the organic foods and nourishment classification in India. It looks to highlight the relative esteem connected by the specialists to enter illustrative factors in the shoppers' buy procedure of organic food. It endeavors to blend with the

applicable customer overview discoveries distributed in India lately in organic food category.

MohantySuchitra, MandalSubhasis, Rahim Kazi(2009),“ A study conducted in Meghalaya on consumer behavior towards organic food products. The study aims to determine consumer knowledge of organic products, examine consumers' willingness to purchase different organic items, and comprehend customers' willingness to pay a premium for organic food products. The research indicates that customers in higher income categories exhibit greater awareness regarding organic food products compared to those in lower income groups. The study also reveals that sharing information among coworkers is important in raising awareness of organic food products.

Research Methodology

A thorough literature review has been done to understand existing studies and findings on consumer perceptions of organic and conventional food quality and taste. Confounding factor i.e. marketing strategies has been analyzed that may affect perceptions. The study will mainly be based on secondary data

Sources of data

Based on primary and secondary data, the study is exploratory in character. A variety of journals, articles, working papers, NGO reports, and other sources were used to gather secondary data. The primary data came from a field survey conducted among 100 higher education students.

Method for data collection

A methodical interview schedule was created and employed to gather information from higher education students. The schedule contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Statistical tools

Simple percentage analysis are used for the analysis of the data surveyed from 100 higher education students.

Data analysis and interpretation

To conduct a percentage analysis of consumer perceptions of the quality and taste of organic food compared to conventional alternatives, we need data collected through surveys or studies. Here we have survey data where 100 respondents were asked to rate the quality and taste of both organic and conventional foods on a scale, say from 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent.

Data Collection: Collect responses from a sample of consumers who have tried both organic and conventional foods.

Categorize Responses: Categorize the responses into different groups based on ratings.

For example

- Very Poor (1)
- Poor (2)
- Average (3)
- Good (4)
- Excellent (5)

Calculate Percentages: Calculate the percentage of respondents who rated each category for both organic and conventional foods.

Compare the Percentages: Compare the percentages between organic and conventional foods to see if there's any significant difference in consumer perceptions.

Result of Surveyed 100 consumers mentioned below

- For Organic Food:
- Very Poor: 5
- Poor: 10
- Average: 20
- Good: 30
- Excellent: 35

For Conventional Food

- Very Poor: 8
- Poor: 15
- Average: 25
- Good: 30
- Excellent: 22

Now, by percentage analysis we have some results as follows

For Organic Food

- Very Poor: $(5/100) * 100 = 5\%$
- Poor: $(10/100) * 100 = 10\%$
- Average: $(20/100) * 100 = 20\%$
- Good: $(30/100) * 100 = 30\%$
- Excellent: $(35/100) * 100 = 35\%$

For Conventional Food

- Very Poor: $(8/100) * 100 = 8\%$
- Poor: $(15/100) * 100 = 15\%$
- Average: $(25/100) * 100 = 25\%$
- Good: $(30/100) * 100 = 30\%$
- Excellent: $(22/100) * 100 = 22\%$

Conclusion

1. Organic vs. Conventional Ratings

- The majority of customers rate the quality and taste of both organic and conventional foods as average or above.
- Organic food receives slightly higher ratings in the "Good" and "Excellent" categories compared to conventional food.
- Conventional food has a higher percentage of customers rating it as "Very Poor" or "Poor" compared to organic food.

2. Perceptions of Organic Food

- The fact that 65% of customers rate organic food as "Good" or "Excellent" suggests a generally positive perception of its quality and taste.
- Organic food seems to be perceived as a better choice in terms of taste and quality by a significant portion of the surveyed customers.

3. Perceptions of Conventional Food

- While conventional food also receives favorable ratings, a higher percentage of customers rate it as "Very Poor" or "Poor" compared to organic food.

- This might indicate some dissatisfaction or perceived lower quality in conventional food compared to organic options.

Suggestions

1. Highlight Organic Benefits

- Based on the positive perceptions of organic food, consider highlighting its benefits such as better taste, higher quality, and potentially healthier options to attract more customers.

2. Address Conventional Food Concerns

- Since a portion of customers rates conventional food lower in quality and taste, consider addressing any potential concerns or improving the quality to retain customers who prefer conventional options.

3. Educate Customers

- Provide information about the differences between organic and conventional foods, including production methods, environmental impact, and potential health benefits. Educating customers can help them make informed choices based on their preferences and priorities.

4. Expand Organic Offerings

- Owing to the positive perceptions of organic food, consider broadening the selection of organic options available to meet the increasing demand for higher-quality and healthier food choices.

5. Continuous Feedback Loop

- Regularly gather feedback from customers to understand their evolving preferences and adjust offerings accordingly. This ensures that you stay aligned with customer expectations and maintain satisfaction levels.

Recommendations

1. Promote Organic Options

- Since 65% of customers rated organic food as "Good" or "Excellent", focus on promoting organic options more prominently in your offerings. Highlight the superior taste and quality of organic products to attract more customers towards them.

2. Educate About Benefits

- Educate customers about the benefits of organic food, such as being free from synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, which can contribute to better taste and overall quality. Use signage, menu descriptions, or online content to communicate these advantages.

3. Expand Organic Selection

- Consider expanding your organic food selection based on the positive perception among customers. Introduce new organic dishes or ingredients to provide variety and cater to different tastes and preferences.

4. Address Conventional Food Concerns

- While organic food received higher ratings overall, it's important to address concerns regarding conventional food. Analyze customer feedback to identify areas for improvement in conventional offerings, such as

sourcing higher-quality ingredients or enhancing flavor profiles.

5. Offer Comparisons

- Provide side-by-side comparisons of organic and conventional options on your menu or marketing materials. Highlight the differences in taste and quality to help customers make informed decisions based on their preferences and values.

6. Price Consideration

- Assess the pricing strategy for organic and conventional options. While organic food may be perceived as higher quality, ensure that pricing is competitive and offers good value for customers.

7. Sustainability Focus

- Emphasize the sustainability aspect of organic food production, which aligns with the values of environmentally conscious consumers. Highlight efforts to support local farmers or reduce environmental impact through organic sourcing practices.

Reference

1. Smith S, Paladino A. Eating clean and green? Investigating consumer motivations towards the purchase of organic food. *Aust Market J (AMJ)*,2010;18(2):93-104.
2. Hughner RS, McDonagh P, Prothero A, Shultz CJ, Stanton J. Who are organic food consumers? A compilation and review of why people purchase organic food. *J Consum Behav*,2007;6(2-3):94-110.
3. Janssen M, Hamm U. Product labelling in the market for organic food: Consumer preferences and willingness-to-pay for different organic certification logos. *Food Qual Pref*,2012;25(1):9-22.
4. Zanolli R, Naspetti S. Consumer motivations in the purchase of organic food: a means-end approach. *Br Food J*,2002;104(8):643-653.
5. Torjusen H, Lieblein G, Wandel M, Francis CA. Food system orientation and quality perception among consumers and producers of organic food in Hedmark County, Norway. *Food Qual Pref*,2001;12(3):207-216.