

# An Assessing the Relationship between Environmental Concern and Consumer Preference: With Reference to Organic Products' Promotional Approach in India

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## ABSTRACT

In recent times, the producers and the consumers exhibit more concern regarding the effect of production process of goods over the environment. From the previous decades, it can be seen that there is an enhancement of the organic trend, both in production and consumption. The study presented here has been undertaken to depict the effect of environment concern over the consumer preference for the organic food products. The information needed for the study has been collected with the help of questionnaire and the number of responses got is 100. Simple random sampling has been adopted for selecting the respondents. The sample population comprises of the consumers of organic products. Findings show that there is a relationship of environmental concern with the consumer preference for the organic products.

**Keywords:** environmental concerns, consumer perception, organic products

## I. INTRODUCTION

Organic consumers are defined as the consumers who have the awareness regarding the ecological issues. Those type of consumers have the perception and belief that all types of products & services possess the tendency of affecting the environment. Such consumers undertake steps to bring down the damage to the maximum possible level. But, it is not essential that a person who is concerned about the environment need to behave or purchase organic products.

Organic products are defined to be the ones that are produced through methods of farming that avoid the usage of artificial fertilizers as well as pesticides. Organic farming system makes use of the principles in modern scientific technologies for providing a highly sustainable production.

Environmental concern is seen to be high in recent times and this can be attributed to features like exhaustion of the natural resources, exhaustion of the ozone layer, global warming, acid rain, land degradation and so on. All these facts force the consumers to consider the organic product purchase for their healthy survival which is possible only if the environment is taken good care of (Mintel, 1991). The concept of eco-friendly has been witnessed to be widespread and is also seen to be highly appealing to all types of people all through the world. Preservation of the natural resources of earth is found to be a huge challenge for the consumers and the business organizations. Hence, the consumers have started to take serious steps for environmental concern for establishing the ecological balance through the practice of green consumption behavior.

The production process in organic as well as conventional farming is based on the crop plants and livestock, however, the using process differs. The organic production theory works along with nature and has got varied complications, on the contrary, the goals of conventional farming are just to simplify the systems (Williams, 1999). For meeting the increasing demand for food products, organizations use huge extent of mineral fertilizers and chemicals. The methods of crop rotation, management of the land fertility in natural ways, using natural manures etc., have been not adopted for past several decades and this have resulted in damaging the consumer's health as well as damaging the ecological balance.

Individuals give preference for the organic food products for varied reasons since such products are healthy and fungicides or pesticides are not used for its production. Further, organic products are produced in farm land where no chemicals have been used at all earlier and the organic animals are not fed with hormones or antibiotics. In organic products, chances for the presence of chemicals are zero. The present-day consumers give preference for the purchase of products which are not produced with modern synthetic inputs and which proves to give them benefits of a long-term nature. This is the reason

for the growth of the stores holding organic products. On the basis of the information regarding the product, features of the product and evaluation of the results of its usage, the consumers prefer to purchase the product. In buying organic products, they consider health as the significant parameter to consider.

## **II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

As far as India is concerned, the market for organic products is only at its emergent phase. However, the stage of growth is seen to be fast and steady from the previous few years. Safe for consumption and health aspect are the driving force of the present-day growth of the organic market. The current growth in the organic market is driven by health factor and safe consumption. Focus is increasing for environmental concern and the consumers are giving more importance for the green product and their effect over the environment.

## **III. NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Present study is essential for increasing awareness among the consumers regarding the knowledge of organic products. The present competitive environment forces the customers to be aware of the negative and positive aspects of the organic products.

## **IV. OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the study which has been undertaken here is for analyzing their impacts of the environmental concern over the consumer preference for the Organic Food.

## **V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Shafie & Rennie (2012) had examined the aspects like food safety and environmental concern and had concluded that such factors pose noteworthy effect over the consumer preferences. There was no significant relationship of demographic variables with the organic consumers. It had also been found that the organic products were preferred by the consumers because they are produced with natural procedures, safeguards the environment and also assures welfare of the animals. The consumption pattern of the organic food was determined mainly by the high price of the product.

Kim & Chung (2011) had the opinion that product appearance and environment consciousness had an optimistic effect over the consumer attitudes when they make decisions for purchasing the personal care products. For analyzing the TPB (theory of planned behavior), the relationship of attitude with intention was seen to be moderated by PBC (perceived behavioral control) with prior experience as the predictor of buying intention.

Roos & Tjarnemo (2011) stated that extent of consciousness of the persons regarding the environment is improving and hence they prefer to make organic food purchase, since such products are regarded as environment-friendly. Also, the factors like increased prices, low product accessibility in markets, decreased level of promotion and absence of confidence regarding the organic labelling method etc., bring down the demand as well as sales of the organic products.

Gracia and Magistris (2008) performed a research study for discovering the purchase behavior of the consumers towards the food products that are grown in organic methods. The study had been done with reference to the consumers of Italy. The sample size of the study was 200. SEM had been performed to analyze the data collected for the study. Findings showed that concern for environment-friendliness and health consciousness were the highly predicting variables which affected the purchase behavior of the consumers towards the organic food products. Among both these variables, high prediction was done by health factor. The authors had also explored that the knowledge regarding organic products helped in establishing a positive attitude towards the organic food products. The study proved the fact that the household income of the consumers was related with the purchase behavior of the consumers with respect to the organic food products.

## **VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data which is collected directly from the consumers and is not at all processed is referred to as primary data. Primary data is highly specific and is directly collected from the respondents. Secondary data offers second hand information and is collected from the sources in which the data collected by others prevail. The present study has collected data through surveys carried out among the respondents with the help of questionnaires. Sample size of the study is 100. Statistical analysis has been done for assessing the consumer preference and the environment concern. Respondents of the study have been

selected through convenience sampling and analysis of the data has been done through multiple regression. Scale to assess the environmental concern has been adopted from the study of Cruz & Manata (2020).

## VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Influence of Environmental Concern on Consumer Preference  
 Model Summary**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	P-Value
0.798(a)	0.637	0.614	27.252	0.000(a)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.201	.257		4.681	0.000
If mankind is going to survive at all, environmental pollution must be stopped.	-.134	.076	-.173	-1.768	0.080
I am worried about future children’s chance of living in a clean environment.	.120	.068	.170	1.756	0.082
People should buy (and return) beverages only in returnable containers.	.126	.043	.220	2.905	0.005
People should use less detergent than the manufacturer recommends helping preserve water quality.	.356	.057	.578	6.216	0.000
Every couple in America should try not to have more than two children.	.293	.065	.332	4.489	0.000
Overpopulation is a major source of environmental problems today.	-.174	.060	-.233	-2.920	0.004

**H01:** There is no relationship between environmental concerns on consumer preference

The R2 value 0.637 shows high variation in consumer preference which could be explained by environmental concern. In the present case, 63.7% is explained, which is quite big. The summary table of the model shows that R<sup>2</sup> of the model is different from zero. The value of F =27.252 and p< 0.000. The table above shows that consumer preference is predicted by the regression model in a significant way. The value of p < 0.0005 and this is less than 0.05. It shows that the regression model predicts consumer preference. Hence, H01 is not accepted.

## VIII. FINDINGS

Outcomes of the research study reveals that environment concern has got a significant and positive effect over the consumer preference in the context of organic food products.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the present study, it has been clearly proved that concern for environment serves to be a source of primary motivation for the consumers to prefer the organic food products. Findings showed that there is a positive relationship of environment concern with consumer preference.

## **LIMITATION AND FUTURE SCOPE**

The major drawback of the study is that the statistical analysis of data is done only over the information given by a small sample population and hence the results cannot be generalized. Future studies can be done with respect to the consumer preference towards products of self-care, products for skin-care, apart from food products, in the context of organic production.

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