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ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ORGANIC MARKETS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL PRODUCTS IN HYDERABAD

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Original Article

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to compare how city dwellers feel about organic and conventional goods. Although awareness and preferences among consumers for organic products have grown in recent years, conventional products are still for many people's first choice. People are becoming more health-conscious and paying more attention to what they eat, which influences the health of individuals and the environment. Health benefits, pricing, and environmental safety were the main points of this paper's analysis of what motivates consumers to make certain purchases. Information for the sample size comes from the standard questionnaire. Consumers' perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of organic and conventional products are laid bare in the survey. This so-called study concluded that, when compared to conventionally grown food, organic products provided the better nutritional benefits to most respondents.

Keywords: Consumers' Perceptions; Conventional Products; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Opportunity; Organic Market; Organic Products

Introduction

When asked to choose between organic and regular conventional items, many individuals feel unsure. Although some argue that organic meals are better for you, many others maintain that traditional foods are the way to go.

Regarding Natural and Organic Items

Organic products refer to food items that have been farmed in an environmentally conscious manner. Naturally occurring agricultural goods are known as organic products because they are farmed without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, flavours, preservatives, or any other additions. Simply put, there has been a rise in the demand for eco-friendly and health-conscious lifestyle products among consumers [1]. There has been a tremendous uptick in interest in these items recently. When it comes to organic farming, the rules in each country will be unique. On order to be labelled as organic, items must meet the standards and certifications established by different nations. For the most part, farmers who practice organic farming adhere to strict guidelines, such as using only organic seeds, employing non-chemical pesticides, and providing their animals with a natural diet and unrestricted access to the outdoors. Fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, dairy products, and meat are all examples of crops that can be considered organic when grown in an organic manner. Products like this are in high demand because of the health benefits they claim to offer. Despite the many advantages, organic products aren't without their flaws. For example, they're more expensive than

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conventional items, which drives up manufacturing and labour expenses. Also, there are problems with organic products, such as poor crop yield, which implies that organic farming employs natural pesticides, which means that productivity is lower and that organic farming cannot fulfil the world's food need with that productivity [2].

To accomplish the following, organic manufacturing techniques are crafted:

- Decline pollution
- Foster a state of safe environment: As far as health and safety at home are concerned, 'improves soil fertility' is another benefit
- Producing organic goods in this way is not permissible
- Soil-enriching fertilisers

Toxins created from organic waste:

- Insecticides and other pesticide-like substances; genetic engineering to ensure high crop yields
- Growth hormone use

About Conventional Products

Everyday necessities are met by conventional food items. This category also includes foods that aren't grown using organic methods. These items are designed to appeal to a wide spectrum of consumers. Producing food items like fruits and vegetables in a traditional manner involves the use of harmful substances like pesticides, fertilisers, and others [3]. The organic food movement and farming practices are diametrically opposed to this. Because they are more affordable and widely used, conventionally grown products are having a very high impact on yield level, product availability, and growth of the production from many years. The packaging and labelling adhere to the standards set by law to ensure the safety of consumers, and you may locate them in many different stores and supermarkets. In contrast, traditional farmers use a wide variety of pesticides, chemical ingredients, and fertilisers to boost plant development, which in turn increases yield, increases the plant's lifespan, and produces a generally large quantity of products [4, 5].

Short History of Organic Products

Noting the evolution and improvement of organic goods by location is crucial, as is the fact that each nation has its own set of rules and laws. Organic product creation is booming, thanks in large part to the never-ending quest for knowledge about how to raise food in a sustainable way.

- Around the turn of the last century, the notion of organic farming emerged in response to analyses about the impact of industrialization and changing inputs in agriculture.
  The rise of organic agricultural practices, which emphasised the interdependence of land, vegetation, and livestock, occurred during the 1920s and 1930s [7]. This set the stage for what is now known as modern organic farming.
- Between the years 1940 and 1950, the organic movement favoured the use of natural fertilisers and an increase in agricultural production.
- 1960s: Led to an increase in interest in organic farming as the public became more aware of the negative effects of natural additives.
- The organic farming has gained the growing of healthy food and safe environment in the 1970s [8]. The core mission of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is to promote and enhance organic farming practices worldwide [9].
- In the 1980s, many international organisations and governments have begun establishing regulations and criteria for organic farming and labelling.
- The demand for organic products started to rise in the 1990s and 2000s as people became more conscious of the importance of these items to their health and the environment. Many grocery shops and retail establishments stepped up to the plate, volunteering their shelves [10, 11].
- With the establishment of the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) in 2002 came the standardisation of regulations for organic certification and labelling [12].

- The present organic products have become more important and widely available in the 2010s. Products for organic personal care and cosmetics are just a few examples of how the industry has grown [13, 14].

Statement of the Problem

The rise of organic products recently has prompted many to consider how shoppers assess both the benefits and adverse effects of these alternatives compared to more traditional manufacturing methods. So that companies can make informed decisions about their marketing strategies and sustainability initiatives, the study compared consumer perceptions of organic and conventional products.

Research Gap

Consumer attitudes towards organic and conventional products have been the subject of prior research articles that have examined various issues, such as health and environmental limitations. While this study does investigate how consumers in certain parts of Hyderabad feel about organic and conventional products—taking all relevant factors into account—it does not address a "research gap" concerning the nutritional benefits of organic versus conventional food consumption.

Research Questions

1. Are you aware of organic products and conventional products?
2. What are the factors influencing the buying behaviour of organic and conventional products?
3. How much better are the organic products when compared with conventional products?

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the buying behaviour of the urban consumers with special reference to organic & conventional products.
- To study the socio-economic profile of the urban consumers who are interested in organic products.
- To measure the factors which are influencing the urban consumers in the consumption of organic and conventional products.
- To make suggestions on the findings of the study.

Methodology

Research design: Descriptive study, as it is used to observe and explain the features of a certain subject. The descriptive study is used in the early stages when knowledge and information about the research are limited.

Source of data: The data is collected from both primary data and secondary data.

Primary data: The type of information that is collected by conducting surveys, interviews and personal interactions, etc. In this research the data is gathered through a questionnaire. The questionnaire is directly given to the participants individually who are located in the neighbourhood cities of Hyderabad. The research is done with the time restriction, so I have ended up collecting the data only from this area. This research may not be useful for the other state individuals but can provide information for referral purposes. The questionnaire consists of 27 questions.

Secondary data: It is a kind of data that is already available on the internet, in books, in articles, in research papers, etc., from which the data is collected and presented in this study, which makes it easy and simple to understand the study.

Sampling procedure: Structured questionnaire
Sample size: 160 responses
Sampling methods: Convenient sampling
Analytical tool: With SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), the chi-square test & weighted average method are performed.

Limitations of the study

- Data collection leaves other decision areas unaffected. Data collected may leave other decision-making areas unaffected.
- The time factor is the major limitation of the study.
- Analysed data may or may not provide the accurate results for making decisions.
- The study made on the entrepreneurial opportunity by consumer perception towards organic and traditional products is from the urban area only.

Literature Review

Stoleru et al. [15] conducted a study on perceptions towards organic and conventional products in Romania. The report considered organic foods to consist of high levels of nutrition and to be much healthier compared with conventionally produced products. When it comes to audience perception towards the quality of organic products, it is said that most of the customers find organically grown products less appealing but instead tastier. Overall, the results of this report have shown a positive perception of the consumer regarding the taste of organic products.

Vigar et al. [16] carried out a systematic review on organic versus conventional food consumption: is there a measurable benefit on human health? The research has shown a positive outcome from the observational studies in various areas. According to the report, intake of organic products reduces the birth defects, high BMI, allergies, and metabolic syndrome and betters the dietary practices and lowers the overweight & obesity. As a result, consuming organic products will improve the overall health outcomes for consumers.

Yiridoe [17] conducted a study on organic and conventional food: A literature review of the economics of consumer perceptions and preferences. This paper studied the consumer preference for organic products based on a general opinion that organic products had better characteristics than conventionally grown products. Human health, food & environment safety, along with other factors such as nutritional benefits, taste and freshness, influence the consumer preferences. Different studies have given various conclusions. Overall, the consumers in the world's different regions tend to buy locally grown products.

Galgano et al. [18], in their study carried out on conventional and organic foods: A comparison focused on animal products. In all animal foods there are few differences observed between organic and conventional. At times the differences affect the appearance of food, other times the nutritional values of the products. The different fatty acids in organic products are an advantage for the consumers' health. The fatty acids found in organic products have appeared to prevent diseases. Overall, the consumers stated that the organic products are more nutritious and safer than the conventional products.

AI Mutiri et al. [19] performed a study as organic food boosts higher levels of nutrients & antioxidants, by which consumers may benefit immensely by consuming them. From various studies, both foods have their own benefits, but the biggest drawback of conventional foods is that they contain heavy toxic elements, and that does not prevent cancer in consumers. Whereas consuming organic products helps in reducing obesity and other diseases. They stated that future studies need to have a clear picture about organic foods and whether they make for good health and reflect positively on individual consumer health.

Stolz et al. [20] carried out a study which aims to sort irregular organic consumers based upon their likes and dislikes for organic, conventional and combined products. The conventional-plus products lie between organic and conventional products. The study aimed at the differences between consumers based on the price and preferences towards food. The head-to-head interviews were conducted to collect the information based on references. By this it came to know that the consumers who choose products which are economically better prefer hybrid products or conventional products but not the organic products. Based on the marketing tool of the organic and conventional products, the differentiation is made in the aspects of price and performance of products.

The aim of the study by Kumar and Anand [21] is to differentiate the organic products from conventional products. Consumers need accurate information to make informed decisions. Additionally, the report assists marketers in creating promotional tools that effectively communicate the awareness and benefits of organic products. This report made a comparison of conventional products, like jute bags, LED lights, papers, and organic food. Overall, this paper was made by using secondary sources of information to address the importance of organic products compared with conventional products.

The increased adoption of toxins in the agricultural sector disturbs the healthy relationships that support soil, plants, animals, and human health [22]. The widespread use of chemicals and pesticides in conventional products has led consumers to prefer organic products. According to the study, organic food tastes better and is healthier than the conventionally grown products. Furthermore, the government needs to take action to create an independent marketplace for organic products that offers reasonable prices, raises consumer awareness about the benefits of organic products, and enhances the infrastructure for developing organic farming practices.

The most important aspect covered in this study is that consumers are gaining awareness of health risks and the need for environmental safety, and that can be increased by organic products. The demand for organic products is significantly increasing in the market and positively influencing consumers' perceptions. Additionally, organic farming has become the most popular trend in agriculture in India. This report includes health, safety, and price comparisons with conventional products; however, it primarily focusses on price because it influences consumers' buying behaviour. It also covered how various consumers view organic products [23].

The study by Sharma and Singhvi [24] stated that consumers' food habits are shifting around the globe, and they now prefer food that is free from chemicals, pesticides, and toxins. These chemicals, pesticides, and toxins are only found in non-organic products. The productivity level of organic products is low, so their price in the market is higher. The study focused on two elements: raising awareness about the use of organic products and promoting them more effectively to consumers in order to encourage farmers to produce an increasing quantity of Various factors influence consumers worldwide regarding organic products, including preferences, knowledge, and levels of satisfaction. organic products. Various factors influence the consumers around the world regarding organic products, including preferences, knowledge and level of satisfaction.

Better health emerged as the most important factor for the purchase of organic products. Furthermore, they were included with safety, hygiene, and richness in nutrients. Organic food is found to be free from pollutants and non-hazardous for the consumers. As a result, the research ended up by taking into consideration two perception attributes (choice = tasting + absence of additives) [25].

Result

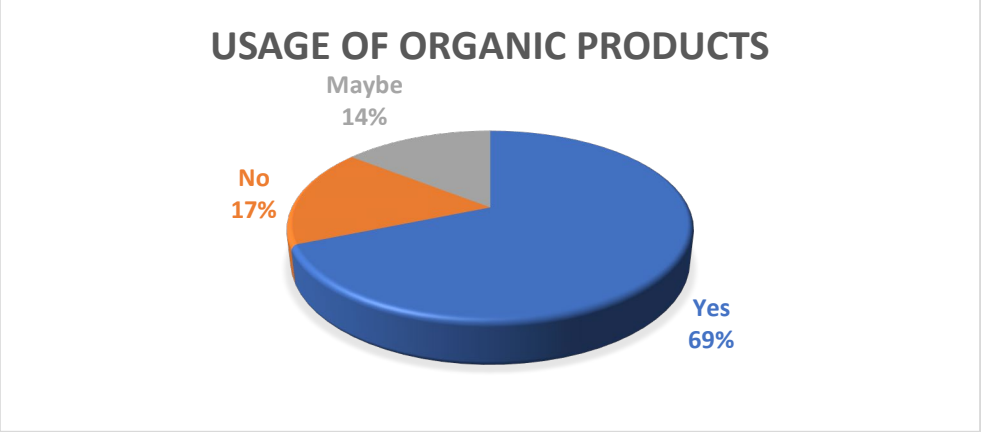
Usage of Organix Products

Table 1: Usage of Organic Products

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	110	68.8%
No	27	16.9%
Maybe	23	14.4%
Total	160	100%

Source: Collected by Author

Figure 1: Usage of Organic Products



Source: Collected by Author

Interpretation:

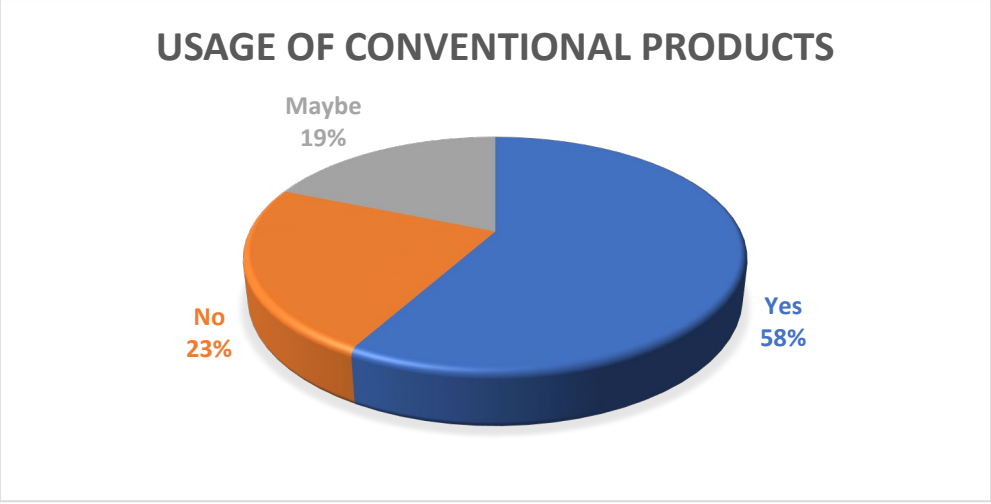
The chart represents products and the usage of organic products. Out of 160 respondents, 68.8% are involved with the usage of organic products, 16.9% do not use organic products, and 14.4% of respondents may or may not use organic products (refer to Table 1 & Figure 1).

Table 2: Usage of Conventional Products

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	93	58.1%
No	37	23.1%
Maybe	30	18.8%
Total	160	100%

Source: Collected by Author

Figure 2: Usage of Conventional Products



Source: Collected by Author

Interpretation:

The graph represents the use of conventional products. 58.1% of respondents use conventional products, 23.1% do not use conventional products, and 18.8% of respondents may or may not use conventional products (refer to Table 2 & Figure 2).

Hypothesis: I

H_0: There is no significant difference between the usage of organic products with respect to conventional products.

H_1: There is a significant difference between the usage of organic products with respect to conventional products.

Table 3: Summary Statistics

Do you use organic products vs do you use conventional products?					
			Do you use conventional products?		
			Yes	No	Maybe
Do you use organic products?	Yes	**Count**	68	26	16
		% within do you use organic products?	61.8%	23.6%	14.5%
		% of Total	42.5%	16.3%	10.0%
	No	Count	13	9	5
		% within do you use organic products?	48.1%	33.3%	18.5%
		% of Total	8.1%	5.6%	3.1%
	Maybe	Count	12	2	9
		% within do you use organic products?	52.2%	8.7%	39.1%
		% of Total	7.5%	1.3%	5.6%
Total		Count	93	37	30
		% within do you use organic products?	58.1%	23.1%	18.8%
		% of Total	58.1%	23.1%	18.8%

Source: Collected by Author

Table 4: Chi-Square Test

	Value	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	10.294a	4	0.036
Likelihood Ratio	9.689	4	0.046
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.108	1	0.043
N of Valid Cases	160		

Source: Collected by Author

1 cell (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.31.

Table 5: Symmetric Measures

		Value	**Approximate Significance**
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.254	0.036
	Cramer's V	0.179	0.036
	Contingency Coefficient	0.246	0.036
N of Valid Cases		160	

Source: Collected by Author

Solution: Hence, the hypothesis test with statistical analysis by chi-square, the calculated value is more than the table value, i.e., (10.294a > 9.488). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted (refer to Tables 3, 4 & 5).

Hypothesis: II

H_0: There is no significant difference between the nutritional benefits of organic products than the Conventional products.

H_1: There is a significant difference between the nutritional benefits of organic products than the Conventional products.

Weighted-Average Method

On a scale of 1-5 rate about the nutritional benefits of the organic products.

Table 6: Weighted-Average Method

Options	Respondents	Percentage
1	2	1.3%
2	3	1.9%
3	26	16.3%
4	59	36.9%
5	70	43.8%
Total	160	100%
Options	Respondents	Percentage

Source: Collected by Author

Calculation:

1 = (-2)
2 = (-1)
3 = (0)
4 = (+1)
5 = (+2)
= 2(-2) + 3(-1) + 26(0) + 59(1) + 70(2)/160
= 192/160
= 1.2

Solution: The hypothesis test using chi-square statistical analysis shows that the calculated value, 10.294a, is greater than the table value of 9.4884. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted (refer to Table 6).

Hypothesis: III

H_0: There is no significant difference between conventional products are more valuable in making money than organic products.

H_1: There is a significant difference between conventional products are more valuable in making money than organic products.

Conventional products are better value for money compared to organic products.

Table 7: Conventional products offer better value for money than organic products

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	5%
Disagree	24	15%
Neutral	66	41.3%
Agree	50	31.3%
Strongly agree	12	7.5%
Total	**160**	**100%**

Source: Collected by Author

Calculation:
Strongly disagree = (-2)
Disagree = (-1)
Neutral = (0)
Agree = (+1)
Strongly agree = (+2)

=8(-2) + 24(-1) + 66(0) + 50(1) + 12(2)/160
=34/160
=0.2125

Solution: The value is 0.2125, which lies between 0 and 1. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected (refer to Table 7).

Discussion

- According to the study, it is identified that the majority of the respondents are private employees, between the age group of 26-35.
- Most of the respondents are aware of organic and conventional products, and the usage of organic products is higher compared with conventional ones, due to the huge impact and rapid growth in recent times [26].
- According to the survey, most of the respondents are aware of organic products through family/friends and social media [27].
- Most of the respondents use organic products for their better health, as the respondents stated organic products have the best nutritional benefits compared to conventional products.
- Respondents majorly purchase organic products from the farmers market and retail outlets [28].
- It is found that the discounts on the organic products are much less compared to conventional products, because promotional activities are more for conventional ones [29].
- The respondents felt that prices fixed for organic products are reasonable, as most of the respondents' income levels are above 5 lakhs, and they are comfortable in using organic products [30, 31].
- 78.1% of respondents felt that the pandemic has increased the usage of organic products, as they have better health benefits.
- It is found that 53.8% of respondents felt organic products sold in the market may or may not be really organic in nature.
- According to the study, it is identified that the respondents agreed with the statement, Conventional products are better value for money compared to organic products [32].
- 58.8% of respondents who use conventional products thought of switching to organic products, because the difference in taste and quality is found when compared.

Suggestion

- The organic products usage has rapidly grown for its better nutritional benefits than conventional ones; still, the reach can be increased by applying various promotional activities and strategies.
- The availability of organic products at retail outlets has to be increased because most consumers prefer to purchase any kind of product from them.
- Discounts or offers for the organic products should be a bit more satisfactory for the consumers/respondents who use them.
- The price of organic products is a bit high compared to conventional ones; it has to be economical so that consumers from any income level can afford to purchase organic products.
- The organic product sellers/any organic product company need to give clear clarity to the consumers that the organic products that are sold in the market are really organic in nature.
- Instead of selecting a few organic goods from regular supermarkets, health-conscious consumers choose one-stop locations for organic shopping.

- There is a lot of doubt among buyers regarding the veracity of organic goods labels. Building trust and loyalty is the goal of direct farm-to-home businesses.
- Healthy eating is becoming more popular in Hyderabad, particularly among the city's young professionals and foreign workers.
- People are starting to pay more attention to what they put on their bodies as well as what they put in their mouths.
- Customers like not having to think about what to buy every time they want it, and subscription services make buying organic products a breeze.
- Customers who are well-informed about the differences between organic and conventional products are more loyal and prepared to pay a premium for them.
- Many people in Hyderabad choose well-known, certified brands when they buy organic products; thus, brand trust is important.

Conclusion

Opinions, preferences, and variables impacting buying decisions were investigated in the study. First, it's obvious that city dwellers are more health conscious, environmentally conscious, and interested in organic products than conventional ones. Their preference is due to the health advantages, environmental friendliness, and dietary shifts that organic products bring to their tables. According to their beliefs, chemical-free, all-natural, and safer-to-eat organic products are those that come from conventional farming. Secondly, there is a barrier to broad adoption owing to greater cost and limited availability, even if consumers are showing more interest in organic ones. Traditional products continue to have a solid relationship with customers, even when there are new tendencies towards organic items. Despite evolving customer preferences, the market for traditional goods remains steadfast. Within the scope of this study, the present findings indicate that organic goods have superior nutritional advantages over conventional ones. The current state of organic farming, the ideal soil and weather conditions, and the best practices for maintaining the quality and longevity of organic goods are all areas that might use additional research in the future.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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