ORGANIC TODDLER FOOD – AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF USERS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Understanding the factors influencing the rising levels of organic toddler food consumption, such as motivation, is essential to maximizing the market’s potential for organic toddler food.

Theoretical framework: Perception and attitude of organic toddler food customers with reference to the perceived benefits. This study involves the investigation of perception and attitude towards organic toddler food of the customer in the context of India and the analogy worldwide.

Method: Purposive sampling procedure has been used to collect data. With a sample size of 384. Researcher has used the following tools:
- Correlation
- Multiple regression
- Chi-square test

Results and conclusion: Age and gender of respondents and users perception are associated with each other. The users perception and perceived risk are related. The perceived benefits have a greater impact on user’s perception towards organic food than the perceived benefits.

Implications of the research: majority of people know about the term organic, its understanding and usage and their health benefits. Now the responsibility lies on the shoulder of the marketers to use the best source of information cropped by this study and by the mediums such as through internet, print media and through specialized organic stores to influence the perception of customers.

Originality/value: Educated retailers can easily persuade the customers by upgrading the knowledge and convincing about the associated benefits of organic food. Marketer should expand their distribution channel using National or local retail chain store and provide more variety in organic products as per the consumer demand.

Keyword: Organic Toddler Food, Perceived Benefits, Perceived Risk, Customers.

ALIMENTOS ORGÂNICOS PARA CRIANÇAS – UMA ANÁLISE DA PERCEPÇÃO DOS USUÁRIOS

RESUMO

Objetivo: Compreender os fatores que influenciam os níveis crescentes de consumo de alimentos orgânicos para bebês, como a motivação, é essencial para maximizar o potencial do mercado de alimentos orgânicos para bebês.

Referencial teórico: Percepção e atitude de consumidores de alimentos orgânicos para bebês com referência aos benefícios percebidos. Este estudo envolve a investigação da percepção e atitude em relação à comida orgânica infantil do cliente no contexto da Índia e a analogia mundial.

Método: O procedimento de amostragem intencional foi usado para coletar dados. Com um tamanho de amostra de 384. O pesquisador usou as seguintes ferramentas:
- Correlação
- Regressão múltipla

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ORGANIC TODDLER FOOD – AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF USERS

1 INTRODUCTION

A tremendous and rapid increase in demand for food supply has pressurized agriculture to use more and more extensive techniques for a greater yield of production. As a result of which, there has been non-judicious use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides which definitely has hampered the health and wellbeing of people. Noticing these scenarios, the conventional form of agriculture would not be proved sustainable in coming times ensuring a safe and healthy food production system. Simultaneously, there has been noticeable shift in social, demographic, and economic aspect of the consumers purchase behavior. To combat the issue of environmental degradation and deterioration of human health, organic food comes to the rescue. Consumers like never before, are much more aware and conscious about food safety and health aspect. Organic food has a potential to secure good points as it restricts the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, additives, and artificial preservatives. This is shown to have an impact on the demand for organic food for a better life and future ultimate aim of any market is to provide benefit to all the stakeholders associated. It is now well understood and accepted universally that the customer has to be kept in focus to survive and sail through the competition. So, it is appropriate to understand that what provides the value to the customer should be involved in the business process for which he is ready to pay. All the strategies of a business organization are eventually aimed at maximizing the value or benefit perceived by the customer or its end user. Apart from the benefit perception, a marketer is also liable to apprehend various barriers or hindrances that occur or are perceived during the purchase process. Eventually, the benefit and barrier perception will shape the attitude of the consumer and prompt the willingness to pay for a product. Hence, a research about organic toddler food and the consumer buying behavior are fitted well into the given scenario.

As per the results, majority of people know about the term organic, its understanding and usage and their health benefits. Now the responsibility lies on the shoulder of the marketers to use the best source of information cropped by this study and by the mediums such as through internet, print media and through specialized organic stores to influence the perception of customers. The presence of the exclusive outlet or specialized organic store and retailer’s knowledge are also an important aspect which impacts the consumers perception and purchase intention. The producers or marketer should provide good incentives, promotional perks or...
Organic Toddler Food – an Analysis of the Perception of Users

schemes. There is an urge for promotional programs with adequate systematic information sharing regarding to production procedure, health benefits and how these organic food products are beneficial for environment and sustainable development movements. Educated retailers can easily persuade the customers by upgrading the knowledge and convincing about the associated benefits of organic food. Marketer should expand their distribution channel using National or local retail chain store and provide more variety in organic products as per the consumer demand. The purchase pattern shows that fruits and vegetables and milk products have wider demand within the food categories hence their supply should be consistent and adequate else consumer will easily be shifted to conventional products and not be much convinced. Proper display and visibility of these logo’s, certification marks and standards could possibly shape up the consumer attitude and purchase intention side by side enhancing the customer’s awareness.

Organic Cultivation is nothing new to our country and has been practiced since ancient period. At the present time, safety of food and the environment at large have been posed to threat. In addition to this, consumers are alarmed for their health and quality of food they consume which makes them interested in food devoid of any chemicals or synthetic material. Organic toddler food is the same as any other organic food products. Just that it is produced for the consumption of toddler i.e., for kids between the age of 6 months to 2 years. It can play a vital role in health of the kids as it has no artificial ingredients and are high on nutritional values, also far better than providing them synthetic food. The objective of this study is to
(a) examine and classify the factor, which determines the perceived benefits of organic toddler food.
(b) To examine the customers perception towards organic toddler food and perceived benefits and perceived risk.
(c) To examine demographic factors of respondent and perception towards organic toddler food.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCES

Jelena et. al., (2018) come out with a finding of willingness is gauged and dependent upon income, socio-demographic factors, level of education, etc. Numerous researchers have statistically analyzed regression models and have arrived at a conclusion that propensity to buy and disposition to pay extra price for organic food depends on perceived advantages and risks from typical counterparts (Gifford and Bernard 2006).

Olbrich et. al., (2015) find of the study clearly depict an intriguing relationship between the consumer socio-economic status and psychographics. Premium price associated with the organic food product is often found as a hindrance in purchase behavior.

Fagerliand Wandel (1999) Consumers who care about natural foods, the sensory and emotional appeal of food, and who are more inclined to conduct environmentally friendly consumption habits are more likely to consume organic food in higher quantities. Given their significant roles in determining a family's nutrition, women are found to possess better health consciousness and to be innovators for change toward healthier diets. Additionally, they are more concerned about the negative effects of chemical residues and preservatives on their health. Women are more motivated for consuming organic foods, respecting environmental principles, and believing that it is appropriate to pay extra for environmental advantages. Compared to conventional foods, organic foods had a higher vitamin C concentration. Comparing the sensory qualities of organic and conventional food revealed inconsistent results. Customers said that organic orange juice tasted better than conventional orange juice, and organic and conventional milk tasted the same.

Dreezen et. al., (2005) Organic food has seen an increase in customer demand in recent years. This market trend towards organic foods has been fueled by a number of factors. Organic
food was regarded by British customers as a way to uphold personal and social values for themselves and their families. The health element is the main justification for choosing organic food, followed by the environmental and animal welfare factors. Some shoppers choose organic food because they believe it has a different quality. Sensory parameters are among the few expressed particular factors, followed by safety and nutrition. Organically produced feed slightly enhances the biological function and performance of animals. This study must be interpreted carefully, and any extrapolation to humans must be taken into account when the physiological and metabolic differences between people and animals.

Magnusson et. al., (2003) mentioned health and environmental benefits together, notably, a negative attitude and value toward GM food implies a positive attitude toward organic food. GM food is perceived as manipulative and altering nature, but organic food is considered as preserving the environment's "naturalness". In addition to consuming organic food, composting food wastes and eating locally produced food are two of the most frequently mentioned food-related behavior by consumers. It is necessary to increase awareness of the benefits of eating organic foods and to eliminate the barriers. To stimulate consumer interest, the relation between health and environmental benefits should be enhanced

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling Plan

Descriptive study through sample survey propagated the need to devise a sampling plan beforehand the process of data collection. After an initial investigation through reading the books and journals on research methodology.

3.2 Sample Size

Consumers' choices for organic toddler food are affected by things including food safety, child health, environmental issues, and sensory attributes like nutritional value, flavor, freshness, and appearance. The accurate sample size by the mean method is presented below.

\[ N = \frac{z^2 \cdot s^2}{\mu^2} \]

As the thumb rule is larger the sample size, the greater the accuracy; even though the minimum statistically accepted sample size should be 384.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling procedure is used for this study.

3.4 Data Source

For this investigation, both data are employed. Secondary data are gathered from various secondary causes and primary data are obtained through structured questionnaires.

3.5 Tools used for Analysis

- Correlation
- Multiple regression
- Chi-square test
4 RESEARCH GAP

At the end of the literature review, organic toddler food is found to give a new paradigm to the food habit of modern-day conscious consumer. Review of literature provides the gap for the perception of consumers in relation to various attributes of organic toddler food along with the restriction to accept organic toddler food owing to its high premium price. Most of the study has considered the aspects like health, safety, environmental concerns, trust etc. but other dimensions are also needed to be apprehended. Additionally, certain factors become restrictions or obstacles in buying process which needs to be critically examined like product ambiguity, lack of trust, inconsistently availability, Price consciousness has been observed in various past studies worldwide.

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

H₀: There is no link between consumers' perceptions of organic toddler food and their perceptions of the advantages of organic toddler food.

H₁: There is association between customers perception towards organic toddler food and perceived benefits of toddler organic food.

Table 1 Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users perception</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Perceived benefits</th>
<th>778(**)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived benefits</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.778(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

The above result reveals that the association about perceived benefits and customers perception towards organic toddler food is 0.778. It means there is a positive link between the two variables. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value is 0.000. This value is less than 0.05. Here it indicates that Null hypothesis is rejected. That is, there is association between perceived benefits and customer’s perception towards organic toddler food.

H₀: There is no relation between consumer perception of organic toddler food and perceived benefits of organic toddler food and perceived risks of organic toddler food.

H₁: There is relation between consumer perception towards organic toddler food and perceived benefits of organic toddler food and perceived risks of organic toddler food.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adj.R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.106(a)</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.59198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

Predictors: (Constant), perceived benefits of organic toddler food and perceived risks of organic toddler food

b. Dependent Variable: Users perception towards organic toddler food

The values of R ranges from -1 to +1. The sign of R indicates the direction of the connection (positive or negative). So, value of R is 106(a), that is getting close to one however since the value is positive 100 one indicating a positive relationship between the variables. The value of R indicates the strength, with larger absolute values indicating stronger relationships.
Table 3 ANOVA (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1.491</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>2.128</td>
<td>.121(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>132.116</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133.608</td>
<td>379</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

a. Dependent Variable: Z score: Users perception towards organic food independent variables, PBOF Dimensions and PROF Dimensions

If the significance value of the F statistic is lesser than 0.05, then the independent variables perform a good job explaining the variation in the dependent variable. If the significance value of P is less than 0.05 then the independent variables do not explain the variation in the dependent variable. In the resultant table, as the significance value of F-statistic is 0.000<0.005, therefore it can be concluded that the independent variable

Table 4 Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>2.743</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Benefit</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived risk</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

It is observed from the data analysis that t values for all the variables are above 2 for perceived benefits of organic food and t values is below 2 for perceived risks of organic food. Multiple regression analysis conducted for the study shows that the perceived benefits have functional value that have a greater impact on user’s perception towards organic food than the perceived benefits. Also, considering the negative side with respect to the risks and barriers perceived by the consumer towards organic food, it can be summed up through the Beta- value which is least in case of perceived benefit coefficient (0.117), therefore it can be concluded that inauthenticity in major cases doesn’t impact the consumer attitude towards organic food.

H₀: There is no significance difference between demographic variables of the respondents and attitude towards organic toddler food.

H₁: There is significance difference between demographic variables of the respondents and attitude towards organic toddler food.

5.1 Crosstab of age and Users Perception

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Perception toward toddler foods</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below-40 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)
5.2 Crosstab of Gender and Users Perception

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Users perception</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

5.3 Crosstab of Income and users Perception

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Users perception</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to Rs.60000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.60001-75000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 75001-100000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above Rs. 100000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

5.4 Chi – Square Test

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Chi-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Significant value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age* Perception towards</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>5.378</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic toddler Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Perception</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towards Organic toddler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income* Perception</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>19.054</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towards Organic toddler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

The above table reveals that p value (Pearson Chi-Square) is higher than 0.05, and hence the Ho is accepted at 5 percent level so there is no significance difference between, age, gender and perception towards organic toddler food.

The above table reveals that p value (Pearson Chi-Square) is below the critical value, and hence the Ho is rejected so concluded that there is significance difference between income and perception towards organic toddler food.

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chi-square value reveals that age and gender of the respondents and users perception are associated with each other.
Correlation test between users perception and perceived risk show that they are correlated with each other.
Multiple regression analysis conducted for the study shows that the perceived benefits have functional value have a greater impact on user’s perception towards organic food than the perceived benefits.
There is no significance difference between, age gender and perception towards organic toddler food.

7 CONCLUSION

Findings of the study reveals that income of the respondent and users perception towards organic toddler foods show significance difference, therefore producers should try to increase the awareness programs in general public. Marketing campaigns and promotional events should be conducted on a regular basis to promote and create awareness regarding appropriate National and International standards for organic food.

Negative perception that these products are perceived as rather having less scientific evidence justifying to the health claims and difficulty to access the products. The review of admissible literature shows that these factors namely price, availability, environment conscious, health, and safety, plays a pivotal role when consumer purchase organic food products, in case of experienced organic food buyers.

The present research study was restricted to a limited area and its results cannot be generalized in others due to socio cultural and economic differences. In the context of the organic baby food industry, the study was limited to buyer’s perception on organic toddler food only. This research study is consumer based so it can be said that with passage of time and change in place or different consumer characteristics the study might become useless overtime and place.

REFERENCES


Food Science, vol. 72, no. 2, pp. 87-91.


