

Determinants of Customer's Perception Towards Sustainable Food Products in Bengaluru District

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Abstract

Sustainable food proponents assert that foods cultivated organically are safer and more nutrient-dense than foods raised using non organic techniques, such as the use of pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, and hormones. Because food choices, preferences, and eating habits are such an integral part of people's lifestyles and sociocultural environments, they are renowned for being difficult to modify. The primary goal of the research is to investigate the variables affecting consumers' perceptions of and purchasing habits for sustainable food items in the Bengaluru district. Cluster sampling was used in this way. The district of Bengaluru was selected as the main study region. Four clusters were identified for this region: north, south, east, and west. The study population consisted of 242 individuals who regularly consume sustainable food products. The information was gathered by sending out organized questionnaires. A statistical tool that was employed was regression analysis. It has been discovered that a variety of personal factors, including eating habits, lifestyle choices, a preference for locally produced food, the desire for nutrient-dense food, and symbols of social status, can be used to predict the purchasing patterns of consumers in Bengaluru district when it comes to sustainable food products. Comparably, Commercial variables like the cost of sustainable food products, their accessibility, their quality, the company's ethical standards, and their packaging were utilized to forecast consumer purchasing patterns for sustainable food products in the Bengaluru district.

Keywords: Sustainable, Food, Products, Perception, Customer, Bengaluru

Introduction

Health and environmental concerns are causing changes in the ways that people consume food. Food grown organically is becoming more and more popular worldwide. The demand for sustainable food items is still high worldwide, with sales rising by more than \$5 billion annually (Abhinav Gupta, 2016). India's agricultural food production has been more industrialized and modernized in tandem with the country's swift socioeconomic progress. The sharp increase in the consumption of sustainable food ultimately led to the expansion of sustainable food markets. Additionally, eating sustainable food supports the harmony of the natural world, living things, the environment, and people (Anand D. and V.S. Palaniammal, 2016). Additionally, it keeps food from being produced without artificial preservatives and helps to preserve food's originality. This promotes

health by preventing the overuse of dangerous chemicals. Customers are also worried about how sustainable food is produced; in particular, they think that the certification and validity of sustainable food need to be strengthened. Therefore, when compared to conventional foods, sustainable foods are thought to be more healthful, nutrient-dense, and environmentally friendly (Budi Suprpto and Tony Wijaya, 2012). Foods that are grown organically are those that are made without the use of contemporary synthetic inputs like chemical fertilizers and synthetic insecticides. Additionally, no industrial solvents, radiation, or chemical food additives are used in the processing of sustainable foods. Historically, only tiny, family-run farms produced sustainable food, which was only sold at farmer's markets and tiny grocery stores (M. Aarthi, S. Balusamy, 2020). Sustainable food proponents assert that foods cultivated organically are safer and more nutrient-dense than foods raised using non-organic techniques, such as the use of pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, and hormones. Many people are unwilling to put these drugs into their bodies because they don't trust them. Purchasing sustainable food is the only method to avoid the pesticide, fertilizer, and other chemical residues found in almost all non-organically produced foods. Food goods must originate from farms and processing facilities that hold organic certification in order to be labeled as such. However, those that value their health above all else are willing to pay a little bit extra for sustainable food items (Padmathy and R. Saraswathy, 2016). Organic farming has the potential to relieve a great deal of the demands that are placed on modern farmers and farming methods. In the developed world, there is a sharp rise in the demand for sustainable food items and in consumer knowledge of sustainable foods. Customers have started spending more on natural, healthy, and eco-friendly meals as they have grown more health conscious in both developed and a few emerging nations. According to research by (Priya and M. Parameswari 2016), attitudes regarding sustainable food, health, consciousness, product information, value for money, accessibility, and trust are all significantly influenced by six key criteria. The study's findings indicated that younger and female consumers had a favorable attitude toward sustainable food and thought it was a healthier choice. They compared labels and were eager to learn about products as they chose wholesome foods. Women believed that eating sustainable food was a healthier choice. According to (Vinay Raj, 2020), customers are well aware of the health benefits of sustainable food because it is devoid of chemicals, which means there are no negative effects and no harm to the consumer. Urban consumers are more conscious of how eating sustainable food can lower stress levels and support an active lifestyle. According to Adel S. and Foster C. (2005), another finding of this study is that respondents are willing to pay even greater prices if it means their health will benefit.

Literature Review

The demand for sustainable foods has increased both domestically and internationally as a result of changes in consumer tastes and preferences brought about by increased awareness. An initial assessment indicated that 30.4 million hectares were set aside for the production of these sustainable food items. Today's consumers are well-informed about genetic engineering, food production methods, and the effects of food on human health. (Yiridoe E. K. and Bonti-Ankomah S. 2006). Although the market for sustainable food has expanded steadily over the last ten years, its overall share of the food market is still small. These days, sales of sustainable food products account for 3% of all food sales worldwide, with an approximate yearly rise of 50%. Thus, the increased cost of sustainable food items relative to conventional goods, consumer demand, and government assistance for organic growers have made organic farming profitable for the growers. In their final report on meta-analysis, (Govindasamy R, DeCongelio M. & Bhuyan S., 2008) noted the following points on consumer perceptions and preferences for sustainable food. Because sustainable food is higher-quality, naturally grown, and healthier, consumers are more likely to purchase it. According to certain surveys, certain state residents' perceptions of sustainable food are clear, while others

are hazier. Few customers were willing to pay a significant premium, despite their demonstrated desire to pay a premium price. A study on customer satisfaction with sustainable food items was conducted in 2016 by Manaloor V and Srivastava D, with particular reference to the Erode District. The primary and secondary data used in the study were both sources. 200 sample respondents provided the necessary primary data, which were gathered using a structured questionnaire. According to the findings, people in Erode City were aware of the availability and images of sustainable food products, but they were not totally devoted to them (Pandurangarao D, Chiranjeevi K, 2020). All kinds of people have positive ideas about sustainable food goods. Online shopping for sustainable food goods enhances quality, saves time, and boosts customer happiness. The time, necessary, and ordering options offered in the mobile application or websites determine the degree of customer satisfaction with online sustainable food items. These factors are crucial in drawing in new business and keeping hold of current clientele. According to (Aarthi and Balusamy 2018), sustainable food products support the harmony of humans, other living things, and the environment. A growing number of people are searching for sustainable food products due to concerns about food safety and health. Among other reasons, the growing need for food free of pesticides and chemical residues, which encourages the absence of artificial preservatives and preserves food uniqueness, has been cited as the reason for the increased interest in sustainable food among consumers. This ensures health by preventing the overuse of dangerous chemicals. The purpose of this study was to learn more about the consumption of organic products by consumers (Balachandran V, 2012). Only until a marketer comprehends the understanding and behavior of consumers of organic products can organic marketing be successful. Assessing the present level of consumer awareness and expertise is also essential. Thus, the primary goals of this study will be to determine consumer awareness of, willingness to pay for, and satisfaction with sustainable food products. The goal of the study (Chithra and Chandrashekar, 2018) was to comprehend how consumers in peri-urban areas perceived sustainable food and the significance of organic certification in their choices in order to get insight into their consumption of sustainable food. During the course of his research on the quality of sustainable food and its impact on human health, (Jyoti Ranaa and Justin, 2017) discovered that consumers' interest in food quality and safety has dropped in recent decades as a result of various food conflicts and increased environmental consciousness. Organically farmed food is known to meet these requirements (Kalaiselvi. S, 2017). Compared to conventionally produced milk, milk that is grown organically usually has higher levels of fat, calcium, critical vitamins, and beneficial conjugated linoleic acids. Additionally, compared to conventional crops (CLA), organic crops have lower levels of nitrates and chemical contaminants (Konda Kalyani, 2017). Sheep, pigs, and oxen raised organically showed reduced levels of total lipids and saturated fatty acids, but greater levels of unsaturated fatty acids and a higher fatty acid ratio. The health benefits of conventional and organic diets have been evaluated in numerous research (Krishnakumare.B and S. Niranjana, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Sustainable food items are still in their infancy in India, despite encouragement and support from the public sector as well as a number of private efforts. Because most consumers wish to maintain their health and attempt to prevent numerous ailments caused by in sustainable food, they are also radically shifting their consumption patterns to include more sustainable foods. After consuming food for themselves and their family, consumer behavior also shifted toward purchasing sustainable foods. Therefore, the study was carried out to find out how satisfied customers were with sustainable food since as consumers became more aware of these products, the majority of them began to purchase sustainable food for regular consumption. The study's conclusion makes

clear the benefits of sustainable food and how satisfied consumers are with it in society. The lucrative export potential offered to producers has led to the emergence of the sustainable food products market in India. Interestingly, the majority of organic produce grown in India is exported to other countries. Prearranged retail locations sell the remaining inventory. Therefore, the benefits of sustainable food items must inevitably reach the local populace of a country if the trend among producers is growing. This will also guarantee that the food products are high in nutrients because there will be less processing needed between the point of origin and consumption. The purpose of this study is to survey the Bengaluru District's sustainable food product consumers. All of these considerations have led to the current study's attempt to identify the variables influencing Bengaluru district consumers' decisions to purchase sustainable food items. The purpose of this study is to understand the issues associated with using non-sustainable food products that contain chemical fertilizers in an effort to increase product yield. In today's world, there needs to be new discussions and innovations to prevent potential consumers from using harmful products. As a result, consumers have started to perceive sustainable food products favorably and have begun purchasing them for regular consumption. The researcher is interested in the positive effects on society, which is why this specific study was conducted.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.
2. To explore the relationship between commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.

Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.
- H1: There is a relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between Commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between Commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.

Scope of the Study

The goal of this study is to identify and evaluate the variables affecting consumers' perceptions of and purchasing decisions for sustainable food items in the Bengaluru district. The study is limited to examining how customers' purchasing decisions about sustainable food products in the Bengaluru district are influenced by many elements, including personal and business aspects.

Research Methodology

To achieve the stated goal, a descriptive research methodology was used; convenient sampling was used to gather the necessary primary data from 242 customers who are aware and consumers of sustainable food products. The necessary primary data have been gathered in Bengaluru District through the use of a structured questionnaire and interview plan. Regression analysis has been used to analyze such data.

Population, Sampling Method and Sample Size

Cluster sampling was used in this way. The district of Bengaluru was selected as the main study region. Four clusters were identified for this region: north, south, east, and west. The study sample consisted of sixty customers who regularly purchase and eat sustainable food products. The study includes the respondents who offered their full cooperation in providing the necessary information. Cluster and easy sampling is the method used in this study. The sample size includes a variety of consumers of sustainable food products. In order to determine the factors that significantly influence the purchase of sustainable food items in the Bengaluru District, a sample of 242 respondents was considered.

Data Collection

Primary Data

A self-administered structured questionnaire that was created and requested to be completed was used to collect data for the first time. Respondents were also interviewed in-person. The “5-point Likert scale” was included in a structured questionnaire that was created. This semi-structured interview included an open-ended discussion in Kannada, the official language of the state of Karnataka.

Secondary Data

The secondary data was gathered from the following sources: Emerald, Science Direct, Scopus, Taylor & Francis online, Web of Science, Wiley (online library), and a few peer-reviewed publications that were selected and compiled into a bibliographic database. Based on their maximum influence on the study field and knowledge validity, peer-reviewed journals were taken into consideration. electronic resources available online, Journals, theses, research articles, periodicals, newspapers, and reports that have been published.

Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was the main statistical technique used to identify the factors influencing customers’ views of their decisions to purchase sustainable food items in the Bengaluru district. The reliability analysis is used to determine the consistency and stability of the research equipment. Consistency shows how well the research tool measures the conceptual framework and model.

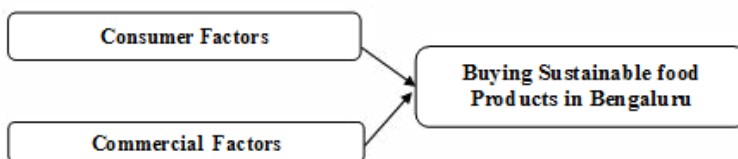


Figure 1.1 Research Framework

Limitations of the Study

This study’s main goal was to investigate the variables affecting consumers’ perceptions of and purchasing habits for sustainable food items in the Bengaluru area exclusively. The inability to determine a precise measure of the elements influencing consumers’ purchasing decisions of sustainable food items is a common limitation in the literature on the subject. For certain customer groups of sustainable food, this strategy is limited. The author’s limitations in obtaining thorough

data on exclusively sustainable food products are one of the study's weaknesses. The drawback of the expenditure survey is that, if the value of locally produced food is not noted or recalled, it has a tendency to underestimate expenditures on sustainable food products. Furthermore, a noteworthy constraint of this research is that all the data was provided by the participants themselves and relied on their subjective interpretations. The data included in this study are somewhat "outdated" and might not accurately represent the current situation because of chronological differences, which is one of its drawbacks. For the study, sophisticated statistical tools may have been employed. It's possible that the other important study variable was unnoticed. Because some of the respondents might not be interested in providing accurate information, the information they provided could be prejudiced.

Analysis and Interpretation

Personal Factors

H01: There is no significant relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.

H1: There is a significant relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.

| Model Summary | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------|-------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | | |
| 1 | .666a | .443 | .421 | .78877 | | |
| ANOVA ^b | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 112.896 | 9 | 12.546 | 20.164 | .000a |
| | Residual | 143.093 | 232 | .624 | | |
| | Total | 255.985 | 241 | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products | | | | | | |
| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.237 | .172 | | 30.692 | .000 |
| | Customers Eating Habits | -2.163 | .771 | -1.877 | -2.812 | .007 |
| | Preferences for sustainable food | -4.596 | 1.311 | -3.896 | -3.512 | .003 |
| | Quality Of Life | -1.114 | .975 | -.935 | -1.146 | .256 |
| | Consumer Lifestyle | 4.803 | 1.335 | 4.027 | 3.604 | .000 |
| | Preference to Locally produced Food | 3.803 | 1.067 | 3.182 | 3.571 | .000 |
| | Health Conscious | -1.002 | .597 | -.838 | -1.682 | .096 |
| | Seeking Nutrition food | -1.767 | .732 | -1.523 | -2.421 | .018 |
| | Symbol of Social Status | 1.930 | .660 | 1.727 | 2.932 | .006 |
| | Demand for sustainable food products | -.662 | .405 | -.558 | -1.642 | .104 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products | | | | | | |

According to the regression study, the value of “R” denotes a high degree of correlation (.666a) between customer purchasing behavior toward sustainable food goods in the Bengaluru district and personal variables. The regression model fits the data well, as indicated by the moderate R2 value of (.443), which measures the variation explained by the model. The substantial F change of less than 0.05 suggests a significant association between personal factors and customer buying behavior toward sustainable food products. In the Bengaluru district, nine personal factor characteristics were utilized to predict buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products.

Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products = (5.237) + (-2.163* Customers Eating Habits) +(-4.596* Preferences for sustainable food) +(-1.114* Quality of Life) +(4.803* Consumer Lifestyle) + (3.803* Preference to Locally produced Food) +(-1.002* Health Conscious) +(-1.767* Seeking Nutrition food) +(1.930* Symbol of Social Status) +(-.663* Demand for sustainable food products).

Since the above regression model indicates the personal factors and the values are highlighted in bold and italic are < than p value 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis statement. i.e, H1: There is a significant relationship between personal factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district, is accepted.

Commercial Factors

- H02: There is no significant relationship between commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district.

| Model Summary | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------|-------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | | |
| 1 | .773a | .597 | .579 | .78877 | | |
| ANOVA ^b | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 152.207 | 10 | 15.222 | 33.588 | .000a |
| | Residual | 103.780 | 229 | .455 | | |
| | Total | 255.985 | 241 | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products | | | | | | |
| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.467 | .349 | | 7.099 | .000 |
| | Sustainable food Product price | .083 | .073 | .109 | 1.146 | .027 |
| | Companies marketing strategies | .030 | .077 | .031 | .371 | .714 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------|------|-------|--------|------|
| | Availability of sustainable food Products | .240 | .098 | .231 | 2.471 | .016 |
| | Quality of the sustainable food products | .119 | .063 | .166 | 1.914 | .059 |
| | Advertising appeal | -.024 | .051 | -.027 | -.452 | .655 |
| | Government encouragement for the compa-nies | -.020 | .076 | -.024 | -.248 | .809 |
| | Companies ethical policies | .244 | .098 | .233 | 2.446 | .017 |
| | Companies environmental concern | .158 | .105 | .183 | 1.521 | .132 |
| | Product packaging | -.229 | .088 | -.265 | -2.637 | .008 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products | | | | | | |

According to the regression study, the value of “R” denotes a high degree of correlation (.773a) between commercial factors and consumers’ purchasing decisions for sustainable food products in the Bengaluru district. The regression model’s moderate R2 value of .597 indicates that the model fits the data quite well. The fact that the significant F change is less than 0.05 suggests that there is a substantial correlation between commercial factors and consumers’ purchasing decisions regarding sustainable food goods. In the Bengaluru district, nine commercial factors were used to forecast the buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products.

Buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products = (2.467) + (.083* Sustainable food Product price) + (.030* Companies marketing strategies) + (.240* Availability of sustainable food Products) + (.119* Quality of the sustainable food products) + (-.024* Advertising appeal) + (-.020* Government encouragement for the companies) + (.244* Companies ethical policies) + (.158* Companies environmental concern) + (-.229* Product packaging). Since the above regression model indicates the personal factors and the values are highlighted in bold and italic are < than p value 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis statement. i.e, H2: There is a significant relationship between commercial factors and buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district. is accepted.

Findings

Variables of personal factors such as customers eating habits, preferences for sustainable food, consumer lifestyle, preference to locally produced food, seeking nutrition food, symbol of social status were used to predict buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district. variables of commercial factors such as sustainable food product price, availability of sustainable food products, quality of the sustainable food products, company’s ethical policies and product packaging were used to predict buying behavior of customers towards sustainable food products in Bengaluru district

Suggestions

It is clear from the aforementioned studies that consumer perception positively influences customers’ decisions to purchase sustainable food products. Most people are switching to more ecologically friendly food products from conventional ones. Almost every product category exhibits this. This regulation does not apply to the FMCG sector. Because sustainable food items are healthier for the environment and customers, manufacturers and distributors should concentrate

more on developing and marketing them. Most people are willing to spend a little bit more for eco-friendly products than for conventional ones in order to safeguard the environment and their health.

Conclusions

Concerns about the health and environmental effects of food production have led to a rise in the usage of organic products. Among other reasons, the growing desire for food free of pesticides and chemical residues has been cited as the reason for the increase in customer interest in sustainable food items. An attempt is made to describe the current state of affairs dealing with this study. The primary reasons to buy sustainable food products are the advantages to your health and the environment, as well as your support of small or local farms. Customer information is another significant element that has been identified as impeding the development of organic products. The best strategy for growing their market share may involve raising consumer awareness of organic labeling, boosting their level of trust in organic labels, and expanding the selection and accessibility of sustainable food products. The study discovered that consumer perception and satisfaction is the valuable information that policy makers in organic farming at the national and regional levels can use. The groups of buyers and non-buyers found that the information provided is the biggest obstacle to organic product market share.

Directions for the Future Research

Further research can be conducted to compare the sustainable food consumption patterns of consumers throughout Karnataka districts, which will aid policy makers producing food products. Investigators after them may confirm the study's findings by doing similar studies in various cities. This survey ought to cover a lot more ground. The study suggests that similar investigations be conducted using the conceptual model of environmental food supply in order to better identify the gaps in the empirical research on the topic. In addition, studies on sustainable food consumption have received the least attention. Despite the possibility of studying food security, additional research on this subject is required to close the knowledge gap.

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