

Understanding the Demographics of Organic Grocery Shoppers in the National Capital Region.

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Abstract

The market for organic food has grown significantly worldwide over the past decade. The organic food industry in India is expected to experience a significant Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 19% from 2012 to 2017. The primary purpose of this study is to investigate how specific demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, occupation, household income, and the presence of children in a household impact the purchase frequency of organic grocery products. Using convenience sampling, the researchers collected 556 completed questionnaires in the National Capital Region. The study found that all demographic characteristics, except for gender, have a significant impact on the purchase frequency of organic groceries. Precisely, young age, high education level, high-income level, presence of children, and occupation (professionals and employed) positively influence the purchase frequency of organic groceries. These findings are significant for those interested in consumer behavior regarding organic food consumption and the continued growth of the organic food industry in India, particularly in the National Capital Region.

1. Introduction

There has been a worldwide increase in food-related diseases and scandals, which has led to consumers becoming increasingly concerned about food quality and safety. Many people are seeking healthy and safe alternatives. Organic food products that integrate all aspects of chemical pesticide-free and fertilizer-free production and adhere to the agricultural standards specified by the authorities are produced naturally (Lampkin, 1999). This eliminates consumers' concerns regarding regular conventional food. Nowadays, organic food consumption is closely associated with health concerns and social, economic, and ecological sustainability (Salleh et al., 2010). Experts in the food industry believe that the peak of organic food products has yet to be reached, but there is enormous growth potential in the organic food market (Ebrahimi, 2007).

Global retail sales of organic food and drink has reached more than 106 billion Euros (Willer et al., 2021). From developed countries, the trend of organic food is expanding to developing countries like India and China. India has the maximum number of organic food producers in the world. Although, most of the organic food products are exported to developed countries but with the rising awareness, increasing disposable income and initiatives by the government, Indian consumers are also getting increasingly conscious about their health and the environment; thus, organic food is gaining widespread attention and acceptability. In the

year 2015, size of the certified organised domestic market was about Rs. 250-300 crores and the uncertified, unorganised market was about Rs. 300-500 crores (Yes Bank, Ingenus Strategy & Creative Research, 2016). Although, the domestic organic food market is exceptionally nascent (Kapoor and Garyali, 2012), in the recent years, domestic market grew at about forty per cent, which is even faster than exports, which grew at about 25-30 per cent (Wai, 2016). The size of the Indian domestic organic food market reached 40 million INR in the year 2018 and is expected to grow in the coming years and reach INR 1,00,000 to 1,20,000 Million by 2020 (Assocham & EY, 2018). It reflects the potential of organic food market growth in the coming years. It is highly important to examine the underlying factors that might influence the trend of consumers to purchase organic food products. Across the globe, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the link between demographic characteristics and likeliness to purchase organic food; but till date, research yields conflicting findings. There are demographic differences in organic food acceptance and consumption behavior. This study aims to find the effect of demographic characteristics (Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Household Income, Presence of Children in Household) of organic food consumers on the purchase frequency of organic grocery products. The results of the study will contribute to the literature by assessing how demographic characteristics influence purchase of organic food in National Capital Region of India.

2. Theoretical Framework

Some of the past studies indicate an association between socio-demographics and attitudes and willingness to purchase. Like Tsakiridou et al. (2007) found that attitudes seem to be affected by age. Older (aged over 51) have more positive attitudes towards organic food than all other age groups and buy despite being expensive. And Public sector employees and pensioners indicate a slightly stronger preference in buying organic food than the private sector employees and the self-employed. Attitudes towards organic food products seem to be correlated with income levels. Higher income respondents are more likely to buy organic food despite being more expensive. Consumers with a higher education believe in the value of organic food, compared to elementary and high school graduates. Attitudes towards organic food do not seem to be influenced by gender, although, differences recorded indicate that women require more information about organic food production methods and would rather buy organics despite their higher price. While, Family size seems to have a minor effect on consumers' attitudes. On the other hand, some studies indicate that socio-demographic factors like age, gender, education, income, occupation and life-cycle stage do not constitute to be the determinants of organic willingness to purchase. Like Santhi (2012) found that there exists no association between the age, gender, occupation, education, income and willingness to purchase. He further pointed a positive association between marital status and food habits (vegetarian) of the respondents and willingness to purchase.

Following studies found significant *positive associations* between demographic characteristics and buying behaviour towards organic food

Table. 1

High level of Income	Kumar and Ali (2011), Tsakiridou et al. (2007), Thogersen and Zhou (2012), Dettmann and Dimitri (2007), Kuhar and Juvancic (2010), Smith et al. (2009), Deliana (2012), Gracia & Magistris (2008)
High level of Education	Kumar and Ali (2011), Tsakiridou et al. (2007), Thogersen and Zhou (2012), Shamsollahi et al. (2013), Dettmann and Dimitri (2007), Dettmann (2008), Sangkumchaliang and Huang (2012), Smith et al. (2009), Deliana (2012), Paul and Rana (2012)
Gender – Male Female	Kumar and Ali (2011) Tsakiridou et al. (2007)
Age – Young Older	Kumar and Ali (2011) Govindasamy et al. (1998), Tsakiridou et al. (2007), Sangkumchaliang and Huang (2012), Smith et al. (2009), Deliana (2012)
Family size & Children	Santhi (2012), Latacz-Lohmann and Foster (1997), Smith et al. (2009)

Following studies found that there is *minor or no association* between demographic characteristics and buying behaviour towards organic food.

Table. 2

Age	Santhi (2012), Gracia & Magistris (2008)
Gender	Santhi (2012), Basha et al. (2015)
Occupation	Santhi (2012), Deliana (2012)
Education	Santhi (2012), Mohsen and Dacko (2013), Gracia & Magistris (2008)
Income	Santhi (2012), Mohsen and Dacko (2013), Omar et al. (2016)
Family Size	Tsakiridou et al. (2007), Harris & Burrell (2000), Gracia & Magistris (2008)

This study aims to find the demographic characteristics (Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Household Income, and Presence of Children in Household) of organic food consumers and their purchase frequency of organic grocery products in National Capital Region (NCR) of India.

Hypotheses

- H1: Age of consumers is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.
H2: Gender of consumers is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.
H3: Education of consumers is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.
H4: Occupation of consumers is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.
H5: Children in Household is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.
H6: Household Income is associated with the purchase of organic grocery.

3. Research Methodology

The research process had three main steps. Firstly, secondary data was gathered from published research papers, articles, and reports to study existing literature in detail.

Secondly, a survey was conducted to collect primary information. The survey used a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice questions to determine the demographic characteristics of organic food consumers in the National Capital Region (NCR), including Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonapat, Panipat, Bhiwadi, Ghaziabad, Noida, and Meerut. The survey was conducted at various points of purchase, such as weekly organic farmers' markets, exclusive organic food stores, and online organic food community pages on social media. The study aimed to contact 600 consumers, but only 556 questionnaires were completed and used for analysis.

Lastly, a quantitative study was conducted to statistically analyze the association between demographic factors and the purchase of organic groceries. Data was collected on a nominal scale for both variables. Cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were performed using SPSS.

4. Data Analysis and Results

To investigate whether consumer's demographic characteristics – age (young adults, adults, senior); gender (male/female); education (undergraduates/ graduates, postgraduates/professionals); and income (high/medium/low) influence purchase of organic food, cross tabulation and chi square statistics were performed. Grocery is a non-perishable product; it can be bought and stored for a period of a month. Respondents who buy organic grocery at least once in a month are also considered as regular users.

It was found that out of total 556 respondents – 56 respondents (10.1%) buy organic grocery once a week, 91 respondents (16.4%) buy it once in a fortnight, 167 respondents (30%) once in a month, therefore, we can say that only 314 respondents (56.5%) buy organic grocery on a regular basis and remaining 176 respondents (31.7%) buy occasionally and 66 respondents (11.9%) have never purchased organic grocery.

4.1 Age and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 3 show the cross – tabulation and indicate that there is difference in the distribution of responses between consumers across different age groups. Respondents in the age group of 25 to 44 years buy organic food more often. The p-value 0.009 (Table 4) is significant at 5% level of significance and hence, H1 is accepted, age of consumer's influence purchase of organic food.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation - Age * Frequency of Organic Grocery Purchase

	Frequency - Organic Grocery					Total
	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased	
Count	4	1	11	9	2	27
18 to 24 % within Years Freq Org Grocery	7.1%	1.1%	6.6%	5.1%	3.0%	4.9%
Count	19	47	79	92	43	280
25 to 34 % within Years Freq Org Grocery	33.9%	51.6%	47.3%	52.3%	65.2%	50.4%
Count	19	22	39	45	13	138
Age 35 to 44 % within e Years Freq Org Grocery	33.9%	24.2%	23.4%	25.6%	19.7%	24.8%
Count	8	17	24	10	7	66
45 to 54 % within Years Freq Org Grocery	14.3%	18.7%	14.4%	5.7%	10.6%	11.9%
Count	6	4	14	20	1	45
Greater than % within 54 Years Freq Org Grocery	10.7%	4.4%	8.4%	11.4%	1.5%	8.1%
Count	56	91	167	176	66	556
Total % within Freq Org Grocery	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table. 4 Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.225 ^a	16	.009
Likelihood Ratio	35.921	16	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.424	1	.020
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 4 cells (16.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.72.

4.2 Gender and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 5, 6 show the cross – tabulation & chi-square results and indicate that there is no major difference in the purchase frequency of organic food between males and females. The p-value 0.225 is insignificant at 5% level of significance and hence H2 is not accepted, gender does not influence purchase of organic grocery.

Table 4: Cross-tabulation - Gender * Frequency of Organic Grocery

		Frequency - Organic Grocery					Total	
		Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased		
Sex	Male	Count	27	39	84	81	40	271
	% within Freq Org Grocery	48.2%	42.9%	50.3%	46.0%	60.6%	48.7%	
Female	Count	29	52	83	95	26	285	
	% within Freq Org Grocery	51.8%	57.1%	49.7%	54.0%	39.4%	51.3%	
Total	Count	56	91	167	176	66	556	
	% within Freq Org Grocery	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.669 ^a	4	.225
Likelihood Ratio	5.696	4	.223
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.538	1	.215
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.29.

4.3 Education and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 7, 8 show the cross – tabulation & chi-square results and indicates that there is a difference in the frequency of purchase of organic grocery between under graduates, graduates, postgraduates, and professionals. Respondents with a post-graduate degree buy organic grocery more often than graduates, professionals, and undergraduates. The p-value 0.046 is significant at 5% level of significance and hence H3 is accepted, education influences purchase of organic grocery.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation - Education * Frequency of Organic Grocery

		Frequency of Organic Grocery					Total
		Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased	
Undergraduate	Count	6	5	23	11	5	50
	% within Frequency of Organic Grocery	10.7%	5.5%	13.8%	6.2%	7.6%	9.0%
Graduate	Count	8	28	46	57	20	159
	% within Frequency of Organic Grocery	14.3%	30.8%	27.5%	32.4%	30.3%	28.6%
Post Graduate	Count	33	33	64	76	30	236
	% within Frequency of Organic Grocery	58.9%	36.3%	38.3%	43.2%	45.5%	42.4%
Professional	Count	9	25	34	32	11	111
	% within Frequency of Organic Grocery	16.1%	27.5%	20.4%	18.2%	16.7%	20.0%
Total	Count	56	91	167	176	66	556
	% within Frequency of Organic Grocery	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.344 ^a	12	.046
Likelihood Ratio	21.455	12	.044
Linear-by-Linear Association	.852	1	.356
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.04.

4.4 Occupation and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 9, 10 show the cross – tabulation & chi-square results and indicate that there is difference in the frequency of purchase of organic grocery between various occupations. Professionals and employed (service) buy organic grocery more often than businessman/woman, homemakers, and students. The p-value 0.049 is significant at 5% level of significance and hence H4 is accepted occupation influences frequency of purchase of organic grocery.

Table 9: Cross-tabulation - Occupation * Frequency Organic Grocery

		Frequency - Organic Grocery					Total
		Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased	
Occupation	Home maker	Count 9	Count 14	Count 20	Count 19	Count 3	Count 65
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	16.1%	15.4%	12.0%	10.8%	4.5%	11.7%
	Professional	Count 22	Count 38	Count 48	Count 59	Count 20	Count 187
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	39.3%	41.8%	28.7%	33.5%	30.3%	33.6%
	Service	Count 11	Count 25	Count 68	Count 67	Count 34	Count 205
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	19.6%	27.5%	40.7%	38.1%	51.5%	36.9%
Business	Count 10	Count 13	Count 23	Count 20	Count 7	Count 73	
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	17.9%	14.3%	13.8%	11.4%	10.6%	13.1%
Student	Count 4	Count 1	Count 8	Count 11	Count 2	Count 26	
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	7.1%	1.1%	4.8%	6.2%	3.0%	4.7%
Total	Count 56	Count 91	Count 167	Count 176	Count 66	Count 556	
	% within FreqOrgGrocery	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.361 ^a	16	.049
Likelihood Ratio	28.591	16	.027
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.594	1	.032
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 3 cells (12.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.62.

4.5 Children in Household and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 11, 12 show the cross – tabulation & chi-square results and indicate that presence of children in the household influences the purchase frequency of organic grocery. Respondents with 1-2 children in the household buy organic grocery more often than households with more than 2 or no children. The p-value 0.003 is significant at 5% level of significance and hence H5 is accepted occupation influences frequency of purchase of organic grocery.

Table 11: Cross-tabulation Children in Household * Frequency Organic Grocery

		Frequency - Organic Grocery					Total
		Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased	
No Child	Count	16	22	53	60	28	179
	% within Freq Org Grocery	28.6%	24.2%	31.7%	34.1%	42.4%	32.2%
Children in HH 1-2 Children	Count	38	60	90	110	30	328
	% within Freq Org Grocery	67.9%	65.9%	53.9%	62.5%	45.5%	59.0%
More than 2 Children	Count	2	9	24	6	8	49
	% within Freq Org Grocery	3.6%	9.9%	14.4%	3.4%	12.1%	8.8%
Total	Count	56	91	167	176	66	556
	% within Freq Org Grocery	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.413 ^a	8	.003
Likelihood Ratio	24.791	8	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.092	1	.079
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 1 cells (6.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.94.

4.6 Household Income and Purchase of Organic Food

Table 13, 14 show the cross – tabulation & chi-square results and indicate that household income influences the purchase frequency of organic grocery. Respondents with household income more than Rs.85000 per month buy organic grocery more often than households with less income. The p-value 0.001 is significant at 5% level of significance and hence H6 is accepted, household income influences frequency of purchase of organic grocery.

Table 13: Cross-tabulation - Household Income * Frequency Organic Grocery

		Frequency - Organic Grocery					Total
		Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Occasionally	Never Purchased	
HH Income	Rs.17,000 - Rs.42,000	Count: 9 % within Freq Org Grocery: 16.1%	Count: 21 % within Freq Org Grocery: 23.1%	Count: 47 % within Freq Org Grocery: 28.1%	Count: 32 % within Freq Org Grocery: 18.2%	Count: 13 % within Freq Org Grocery: 19.7%	122 21.9%
	Rs. 42,001 - Rs. 85,000	Count: 7 % within Freq Org Grocery: 12.5%	Count: 24 % within Freq Org Grocery: 26.4%	Count: 53 % within Freq Org Grocery: 31.7%	Count: 58 % within Freq Org Grocery: 33.0%	Count: 29 % within Freq Org Grocery: 43.9%	171 30.8%
	Greater than Rs. 85,000	Count: 40 % within Freq Org Grocery: 71.4%	Count: 46 % within Freq Org Grocery: 50.5%	Count: 67 % within Freq Org Grocery: 40.1%	Count: 86 % within Freq Org Grocery: 48.9%	Count: 24 % within Freq Org Grocery: 36.4%	263 47.3%
Total		Count: 56 % within Freq Org Grocery: 100.0%	Count: 91 % within Freq Org Grocery: 100.0%	Count: 167 % within Freq Org Grocery: 100.0%	Count: 176 % within Freq Org Grocery: 100.0%	Count: 66 % within Freq Org Grocery: 100.0%	556 100.0%

Table 14: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.517 ^a	8	.001
Likelihood Ratio	27.094	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.061	1	.080
N of Valid Cases	556		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.29.

5. Conclusion

According to the study, certain factors such as age, occupation, income, education, and the presence of children in the household are associated with purchasing of organic groceries. The survey found that people between the ages of 25 and 44 tend to buy more organic grocery items, as do professionals and those employed in the service industry. Additionally, those with higher education and income levels are more likely to purchase organic food. This suggests that younger, educated, and higher-income consumers are more aware of the benefits of organic food and are willing to pay more for it despite its higher cost. The presence of 1-2 children in the household also influences the decision to buy organic food, indicating that parents are more concerned about their children's health.

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