ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARKETING OF ECO-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS IN MYSORE & CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICTS

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Abstract: In India, eco-friendly food products are in the developing stage, which were encouraged and supported by the government and various other private initiatives. The consumers are also changing drastically towards consuming eco-friendly food products because most of the consumers want to maintain their health and they try to avoid various diseases caused by eco-friendly food. The main objective of the study is to explore the influence of consumers's psychological factors and demographic factors on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of eco-friendly food products. A research study was conducted in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts, selecting a sample of 788 eco-friendly food product consumers. A structured questionnaire was prepared containing the Likertscaling technique applied to measure the satisfaction level of customers on various quality aspects of eco-friendly food products. The research design is both descriptive and analytical. The purposive sampling technique was used to collect the primary data, and regression analysis was used as a statistical tool. It is found that the unique contribution of the variables of consumer's psychographic factors, such as the presence of children within the household, followed by the attractiveness of green products, health consciousness, naturally grown food, innovation in the agro-food system, increased consumer's interest, helping farmers indirectly, and eco-friendly product packaging, has a significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. The unique contribution of the variables of the consumer's demographic factors, such as age, followed by gender, work experience, family size, marital status, no. of children in the family, occupation, stage of life cycle, social status, and customer location, has a significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of eco-friendly food products.

Keywords: Consumer, Eco-Friendly, Food, Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, consumption of eco-friendly products is very popular in the world. Producing food through green agriculture is also one of the parts of sustainable marketing (Marija Radman, 2005). But it is totally a new concept in our country (Chekima, B., Oswald, A. I., 2017). In our country, local firms, even multinationals, do not practice green marketing. Most of the consumers of our country are also not acquainted with this term (Klaus G. Grunert, 2005). Terms like phosphate-free, recyclable, refillable, ozone-friendly, and environmentally friendly are some of the things that we consumers most often associate with green marketing. At present, the world is facing an environmental crisis, which influences us to change our actions and living patterns to save the world (Denver, S., & Christensen, T. 2015). The destructive consumption process of human beings is mainly responsible for environmental



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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degradation (Gracia A. and de Magistris T. 2007). In order to meet the growing needs of food and save our environment from destruction, the world is getting toward green food or green marketing for agricultural food systems (Radman M. 2005). Using too much chemical fertilizers and pesticides increases soil erosion, which imbalances our environmental condition (Konda Kalyani 2017). Since the beginning of agriculture, many human societies seem to have perished as a result of overwhelming environmental problems caused by overuse and pollution of natural resources (M. Aarthi, S. Balusamy 2020). So producing food by green agriculture is extremely important for the whole world as well as our country in safeguarding the planet for our future generation (Handranata, Y. W., Dewi, & Murbarani, K. 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the fact that environmental issues result in increasing pressure on society, sustainable consumption is perceived as one of the key factors that could solve this problem throughout consumers' choices (Nedumaran et al. 2019). On the one hand, it has been observed that a pro-environmental concern leads to a positive attitude towards sustainable consumption (Farah Ayuni Shafie & Denise Rennie, 2012). On the other side, some scholars believe that the consumer is not ready to change their consumption patterns even if a cognitive level of happiness is being associated with a pro-social behavior. The presence of children within the household is another factor in the influence of eco-friendly food consumption. (Abhinav Gupta 2016) in their article titled "Impact of Eco-Friendly Products on Consumer Behavior" believed that the perception of green products is negatively associated with customers's intention to purchase them if they are of lower quality and higher prices in comparison to attractive products; the attractiveness of the green products market would not be substantially altered unless a dramatic shift occurs (Hwang, J. 2016). The eco-friendly food market has grown continuously over the past decade, but the total share of eco-friendly food is still low compared to the total food market. Now-a-days, eco-friendly food product sales were raised to 3% of global food sales with the estimated annual growth of approximately 50% (KalaiselviS and MohanapriyaS. 2013). Environmentally friendly products are good for humans and nature. Some environmentally friendly products are costlier than 'traditional' types of products, but savings can be made if we go 'back to basics (Gottschalk, I. R., & Leistner, T. 2013). Gender is another predictor of eco-friendly food consumption. Many studies concluded that females are more environmentally concerned and willing to purchase eco-friendly products even if males have generally better knowledge about environmental problems (Renuka Bai.V. 2019). A Romanian study about eco-friendly food consumption indicated an almost equal segment of males and females who purchase green products. Education is also a strong predictor of eco-friendly food consumption, as the higher the education level is, the greater the probability of adopting a green behavior. (Adel S. and Foster C. 2005). (Padmathy and R. Saraswathy 2016) observed that for men, cognitive involvement was the prominent determinant, while for women, this was green-self-identity. It is well recognized that meals grown organically satisfy these needs (Kalaiselvi, S. 2017). Organically produced milk typically has a higher level of dry matter, fat, calcium, essential vitamins, and healthy conjugated linoleic acids than milk produced conventionally. Organic crops also contain fewer nitrates and chemical pollutants (Priva and M. Parameswari 2016)



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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than conventional ones (CLA) (Annunziata, A., & Vecchio, R. 2016). Organically grown oxen, pigs, and sheep exhibited higher unsaturated fatty acid content and a higher fatty acid ratio but lower total lipids and saturated fatty acids. Numerous studies have compared the advantages of organic vs. conventional diets in health (Bourn D., Prescott J. 2002). Ecofriendly food products among all types of consumers have healthy opinions. Purchasing ecofriendly food products through online mode improves the quality, reduces time, and increases customer satisfaction (Kapuge, K. D. L. R. 2016). The level of customer satisfaction towards online eco-friendly food products depends on the time, needful, and ordering options available in the mobile application or websites, which plays an important role in attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones (Sujaya, H. 2020). Eco-friendly food products promote a balance of humans, other living organisms, and nature (Ahsansadiq, Rajeshwari B. 2015). Consumers tend to buy eco-friendly food on the grounds of quality, naturally grown, and healthier food. Some studies had indicated that some consumers from the same state have a clear idea of eco-friendly food and some have a vague idea about it. Though consumers had shown willingness to pay a premium price, very few were ready to pay a high premium (Padiya J. and Vala N. 2012). Therefore, higher prices of eco-friendly food products compared to conventional products, market demand, and government support for organic producers have turned organic production into a lucrative system for the producers. (Bryła, P. 2016) in their final report on meta-analysis noted down the following points regarding consumers's perceptions and preferences regarding eco-friendly food. (Singh, A., & Verma, P. 2017) argued that consumers's eco-friendly buying intentions can reduce the negative environmental effect of food production, and eco-friendly food products supplied by higherimpact products can preserve the environment and public health (Krishnakumare B, Niranjan S. 2017). Thus, the authors examined the factors influencing people's decision to purchase green food and reported that the respondents' considerations about environmental pollution and/or deforestation can lead to a higher probability of purchasing eco-friendly food products. Prior studies noted that consumer attitude can be influenced by individual perceived value (SquireL, Juric B, and Cornwell T B. 2001). The increase in awareness has caused changes in consumers' tastes and preferences, which led to the domestic as well as global rise in demand for eco-friendly food products (Konvalina, P., Ed., 2012). According to a survey, early 30.4 million hectares were allotted for producing these eco-friendly food products. Consumers today have clear-cut knowledge about genetic manipulations, food production technology, and the impact of food on human health (Alvensleben, R. V. 1998). - (Rimal A. P., Moon W. 2017) suggested green food can be seen as the "controlled and limited use of synthesized fertilizer, pesticide, growth regulator, livestock and poultry feed additive, and gene engineering technology." With regard to research on green food products, Padmaja and Nikhil Parashar (2018) indicated that innovation in the agro-food system can be viewed as a novel product, a marketing strategy, and/or a business practice. They found that male consumers prefer eco-friendly food products. Mitsuoka, T. (2014) pointed out that because consumer choice can have a significant impact on the environmental characteristics of food supplied to the market, it is important to investigate the influences of consumers on food purchases. In the food sector, Manaloor V., Srivastava D. (2016) pointed out that the green food market has become one of the crucial market segments, and Michaelidou N. and Hassan LM. (2008) mentioned that the change for organic inputs can be viewed as offering support



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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for agriculture, which reduces environmental damage, and this change can be so-called a green product (Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. 2016).

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

It is also necessary to evaluate the current state of consumers's attitudes towards consumption of eco-friendly food products. Therefore, consumers's awareness, willingness to pay for eco-friendly food products, and satisfaction towards eco-friendly food products will be the main agenda of this study. The study aimed to understand consumer attitudes towards marketing eco-friendly food products in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts. Several food disputes and growing environmental consciousness throughout the course of conducting research on the quality of eco-friendly food and its impact on human health. It is with rising concern of health issues and food safety that many consumers have turned their site to eco-friendly food products. The increased consumer's interest in eco-friendly food has been attributed, among others, to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues that promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintains the originality of food. This prevents excessive use of harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. This study attempted to gain knowledge about consumers's attitudes towards eco-friendly product consumption. Eco-friendly marketing will be successful only if the marketer understands the eco-friendly product awareness and their behavior.

4. RESEARCH GAP

In India, eco-friendly food products are in the developing stage, which were encouraged and supported by the government and various other private initiatives. The consumers are also changing drastically towards consuming eco-friendly food products because most of the consumers want to maintain their health and they try to avoid various diseases caused by eco-friendly food. The consumer behavior also changed towards buying eco-friendly foods after consuming them by themselves and their families. Hence, the research was conducted to know the satisfaction level of consumers towards eco-friendly food as consumers got awareness about those eco-friendly foods and most of them started to buy eco-friendly food for their regular consumption, and the research concludes to be explicit about the positive impact of eco-friendly food and its satisfaction level to society. Keeping the above points, the intensive literature review was done as there is not much research work carried out in the field of studying consumer attitudes towards marketing of eco-friendly food products in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts. The following objectives have been developed:

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1. To explore the influence of consumer's psychological factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.
- 2. To examine the significant influence of consumer's demographic factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

6. HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant influence of consumer's psychological factors on buying



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behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

H1: There is a significant influence of consumer's psychological factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

H02: There is no significant influence of consumer's demographic factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

H2: There is a significant influence of consumer's demographic factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out the consumer attitude towards marketing eco-friendly food products in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts. The study is confined to exploring the influence of factors such as consumers's psychological factors and consumers's demographic factors on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of eco-friendly food products in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research study was conducted in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts, selecting a sample of 788 eco-friendly food product consumers. The first time data has been through a self-administered structured questionnaire, which was developed and asked to be filled out. Personal interviews were also done with respondents. A structured questionnaire was prepared containing the Likert-scaling technique applied to measure the satisfaction level of customers on various quality aspects of eco-friendly food products. A semi-structured interview with open-ended discussion was conducted in the Kannada language, which is the official language of Karnataka state. The research design is both descriptive and analytical. The reliability of the data was verified by using Cronbach's alpha. The data was analyzed with the help of statistical tools like regression analysis. The purposive sampling technique was used to collect the primary data. The secondary information was collected from economic reviews, research articles, research project reports, books, and online data sources like INFLIBNET and Google Scholar. All the respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire and had discussion related to consumers's attitudes towards eco-friendly food products. In the present study, the response rate is 100%.

Table 1. SAMPLE SIZE CALCULATION

Population Strength					
Mysore	1316000				
Chamarajanagar	1020791				
Total Population	2336791				



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/cities/21343/mysore/population

The sample size for the present study is determined by using the following formula:

$$n = [t^2 \times p (1 - p)] / m^2$$

n=required sample size

t = confidence level at 95% (standard value of 1.96)

p =response from the consumers of eco-friendly products in the pilot study

m = margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05)

Step - 1:

$$n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.7 (1 - 0.7) / (0.05)^2 = 323$$

Step - 2:

To correct the difference in the field survey, the sample size is multiplied by the design effect (D) and it is considered to be 2.00.

$$n \times D = 323 \times 2.00 = 646$$

Step - 3: Contingency

The sample is further increased by 10% to account for contingencies viz., nonresponse, or recording error.

$$n + 10\% = 646 + (646 \times 0.10) = 646 + 65 = 711$$

Hence, the sample size for the present study is 711. As per the ability of the researcher, in the present study 788 samples were selected. Eco-friendly products consumers are selected using a convenience sampling method. This sampling method is used because gathering the information is uncomplicated and is easily accessible. The convenience sampling method is efficient, economically viable, quick, simple to implement, readily available participants, and is almost a representation of the target population.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

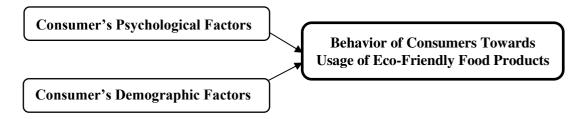
Multiple regression analysis was used as the main statistical tool to find out the significant influence of customer attitude on marketing of eco-friendly food products in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts. The reliability analysis is used to establish both the consistency and stability of the research instrument. Consistency shows how well the research instrument measures the model and the conceptual framework.



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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Figure 1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is restricted to Mysore and Chamarajanagara Districts only, and the result may not be applicable to other places. The result obtained is based on the respondents' opinion, so there is a chance of consumer bias. This study was based on primary data collected from a sample of retail outlet owners by the survey method. The collected data would be subjected to recall bias. Hence, the findings of the study may be considered appropriate for situations similar to the study area, and extra care should be taken while generalizing the results. An empirical investigation has been done to study the consumer attitude towards promotional strategies of all eco-friendly food product processing companies in Mysore and Chamarajanagara Districts of Karnataka State.

11. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Consumer's Psychological Factors

Table 2: Influence of Consumer's Psychological Factors on Buying Behavior of Consumers Towards Usage of Eco-Friendly Food Products.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate					
1	.878 ^a	.857	.857	.25			.25070		
ANOV	ANOVA ^b								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1 Regression		1091.271	14	77.948	1.240E 3				



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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	Residual 48.582			773	.063					
	Total	1139.853		787						
Coeffic	cients ^a					<u>, </u>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardi zed Coefficien ts						
Model			В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.			
1	(Constant)		6.47	0.26		23.834	.000			
	Presence of childr household	-0.525	0.113	-0.45	-4.124	.000				
	The attractiveness of green products		-0.254	0.067	-0.273	-3.06	.003			
	Willingness to pay	0.106	0.124	0.075	0.856	.433				
	Health consciousness		0.31	0.093	0.259	3.046	.004			
	Naturally grown f	0.249	0.078	0.219	2.883	.006				
	Prices of eco-friendly food products		0.007	0.086	0.005	0.18	.754			
	Market demand		-0.004	0.07	-0.005	0.081	.942			
	Government support		-0.107	0.057	-0.097	-1.4	.178			
	Innovation in agro-food system		-0.168	0.071	-0.149	-1.889	.055			
	Increased consumer's interest		-0.486	0.106	-0.404	-4.033	.000			
	Helping farmers indirectly		-0.172	0.05	-0.18	-2.585	.016			
	Eco friendly product packaging		-0.251	0.093	-0.195	-2.299	.026			
a Dam	Denominate Variable, During helpering of a group and towards upon of any friendly									

a. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products

A multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the effect of 12 variables of Consumer's Psychological Factors on Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. From the above table it is understood that, that Consumer's Psychological Factors (R= .878^a indicating high degree of correlation among the variables, t = 23.834, p <.000) had a positively significant effect on Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. Hence, it can be concluded that if the average level of Consumer's Psychological Factors were high, the average level of Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products would also be high. The analysis also reveals that Consumer's Psychological Factors was able to explain the total variation in



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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Buying behavior of consumers by the regression model about R² 85.7% being high indicating model fits the data well. Thus answering the hypothesis H1: There is a significant influence of consumer's psychological factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products, posited for this research is accepted. The coefficient table shows the contribution of each consumer's psychological factors. From the above table the beta values demonstrate the unique contribution for the variables such as Presence of children within the household (β = -0.525, p < .000), followed by The attractiveness of green products (β = -0.254, p < .003), Health consciousness (β = 0.31, p < .004), Naturally grown food (β = 0.249, p < .006), Innovation in agro-food system (β = -0.168, p < .055), Increased consumer's interest (β = -0.486, p < .000) and Helping farmers indirectly (β = -0.172, p < .016) and Eco friendly product packaging (β = -0.251, p < .026) in predicting Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

Consumer's Demographic Factors

Table 3: Influence of Consumer's Demographic Factors on Buying Behavior of Consumers Towards Usage of Eco-Friendly Food Products.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate					
1	.837 ^a	-	_		.56122				
ANOVA ^b									
Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F S		Sig.			
1	Regression	569.977	13	43.844			$.000^{a}$		
	Residual	243.785	774	.315					
	Total	813.761	787						
Coeffic	cients ^a								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients					
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.			
1 (Constant)		6.388	0.217		24.084	.000			
	Age		-0.431	0.075	-0.376	-3.104	.004		
	Gender		-0.237	0.033	-0.251	-2.298	.034		



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Education	0.009	0.08	-0.007	0.404	.643
Work Experience	0.395	0.057	0.324	4.103	.000
Family Size	0.276	0.038	0.238	3.663	.000
Qualification	-0.054	0.044	-0.053	-0.089	.845
Income	-0.068	0.028	-0.065	-0.275	.765
Knowledge	-0.109	0.016	-0.102	-0.944	.418
Marital Status	-0.211	0.031	-0.192	-2.036	.051
No. Children in family	-0.621	0.068	-0.522	-4.912	.000
Occupation	-0.223	0.003		-2.904	.006
Stage of Life cycle	-0.309	0.051	-0.248	-2.621	.013
Social Status	-0.379	0.047	-0.397	-3.428	.002
Customer Location	0.114	0.058	0.135	1.471	.014

a. Dependent Variable: Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products

A multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the effect of 14 variables of Consumer's demographic factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of ecofriendly food products. From the above table it is understood that, that Consumer's demographic Factors (R= .837^a indicating high degree of correlation among the variables, t = 24.084, p <.000) had a positively significant effect on Buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. Hence, it can be concluded that if the average level of Consumer's demographic Factors were high, the average level of buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products would also be high. The analysis also reveals that consumer's demographic factors was able to explain the total variation in buying behavior of consumers by the regression model about R² 70.0% being high indicating model fits the data well. Thus answering the hypothesis i.e H2: There is a significant influence of consumer's demographic factors on buying behavior of consumers towards usage of ecofriendly food products., posited for this research is accepted. The coefficient table shows the contribution of each Consumer's demographic Factors. From the above table the beta values demonstrate the unique contribution for the variables such as Age (β = -0.431, p < .004), followed by Gender (β = -0.237, p < .034), Work Experience (β = 0.445, p < .000), Family Size $(\beta = 0.276, p < .000)$, Marital Status ($\beta = -0.211, p < .051$), No. Children in family ($\beta = -0.621, p < .051$) <.000), Occupation (β = -0.223, p <.006), Stage of Life cycle (β = -0.309, p <-0.309) and Social Status (β = -0.379, p < .002), and Customer Location (β = 0.114, p < .014) in predicting buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products.

12. FINDINGS



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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The unique contribution of the variables of consumer's psychographic factors such as the presence of children within the household, followed by the attractiveness of green products, health consciousness, naturally grown food, innovation in the agro-food system, increased consumer's interest, helping farmers indirectly, and eco-friendly product packaging have significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. The unique contribution of the variables of the consumer's demographic factors, such as age, followed by gender, work experience, family size, marital status, no. of children in the family, occupation, stage of life cycle, social status, and customer location, has a significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of eco-friendly food products.

13. SUGGESTIONS

The government should take more initiative and make policies to promote eco-friendly products in the market, and the marketers and government agencies should create more awareness among the people about the need and utility of eco-friendly products. Along with that, customers should also develop their self-interest to use the eco-friendly products in their day-to-day lives.

14. CONCLUSIONS

Eco-friendly food product consumption is increasing because of concerns over environmental and health issues associated with food production. The increase in consumers' interest in ecofriendly food products has been attributed, among other issues, to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues. With the present study, an attempt is made to describe the existing situation regarding. The main motives to purchase eco-friendly food products are health and environmental benefits, plus support for local or small farmers. The main objective of the study is to explore the influence of consumers's psychological factors and demographic factors on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of ecofriendly food products. A research study was conducted in Mysore and Chamarajanagara districts, selecting a sample of 788 eco-friendly food product consumers. A structured questionnaire was prepared containing the Likert-scaling technique applied to measure the satisfaction level of customers on various quality aspects of eco-friendly food products. The research design is both descriptive and analytical. The purposive sampling technique was used to collect the primary data, and regression analysis was used as a statistical tool. It is found that the unique contribution of the variables of consumer's psychographic factors, such as the presence of children within the household, followed by the attractiveness of green products, health consciousness, naturally grown food, innovation in the agro-food system, increased consumer's interest, helping farmers indirectly, and eco-friendly product packaging, has a significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards usage of eco-friendly food products. The unique contribution of the variables of the consumer's demographic factors, such as age, followed by gender, work experience, family size, marital status, no. of children in the family, occupation, stage of life cycle, social status, and customer location, has a significant influence on the buying behavior of consumers towards the usage of eco-friendly food products.



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15. DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH

Future researchers can substantiate the research findings by conducting similar studies in various cities. This survey should cover a much wider range of areas. The study suggests that similar studies should be conducted following the conceptual model of environmental food supply, which will better identify the gaps left in the empirical research on the said subject. Moreover, sustainable food consumption was the least studied component, and studies related to food security can be done, so future research must consider it to fill the left research gap. Further research can be done on making comparisons of customers' sustainable food consumption patterns across the districts of Karnataka for better policy-making food product manufacturers.

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