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CONSUMER CHOICES AND VIEWS REGARDING NATURAL AND ORGANIC LABELLED PRODUCTS IN THE SUPERMARKET

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Abstract: *The natural and organic labelled product market is developing. Recently, this market has experienced rapid growth, and supermarkets have become the last link in the sales channel, with the largest market share. They are the main drivers for further advancement. However, different supermarkets implement diverse strategies with regard to natural and organic labelled products, as some of them are showcasing themselves as exclusive natural and organic labelled supermarkets, while others provide space for a wide to limited range of natural and organic labelled products along with other products in the store. The supermarkets in this context can have a competitive advantage only by optimising their product mix decisions. Knowledge regarding consumer choices and views regarding natural and organic labelled products are of critical importance, to design and implement the retail product mix strategies for natural and organic labelled products. This study is carried out by the author as a part of his independent research study for a Master's degree in business administration. The study tries to expose the consumer choices and views on natural and organic labelled products in the supermarket.*

Keywords: *Natural and Organic Labelled Products, Consumer Choice, Consumer Views, Retail Product Mix, Supermarket*

INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty about the safety of food (Ortega et al., 2017) is reflected by the postings in social media; media reports about food-related diseases has increased the consumer perception of riskiness about food (Steffen et al., 2019). This has enhanced the demand for sustainable foods that are safe for human health (Mohamad et al., 2014). Natural and organic labelled products are the choice of consumers who wish to avoid health risks from chemical contamination (Nelson et al., 2019). The growth in organic sales reflects the concern of consumers with food safety issues, like pesticide residues in the food and anxiety regarding genetically modified organisms (GMOs), hormones, and antibiotics present in food (Klonsky, 2000). Consumer interest in naturalness is being addressed by the industry as a current and future trend on the market (Ingredion, 2019). Naturalness addresses "how the food is grown" and "how the food is produced" (Asioli et al., 2017). Studies show that consumers prefer naturally synthesised vitamins to chemically synthesised vitamins (Li et al., 2012), and prefer natural sweeteners and colourants compared to artificial ones (Bearth et al., 2014). Customers avoid artificial ingredients (Nielsen, 2016) and synthetic or chemical-sounding ingredients (Kerry, 2017).

This study focuses on the frequency of purchase, consumer choice regarding the types of natural and organic labelled products purchased from a supermarket, and consumer's view regarding natural and organic labelled products. People are more concerned about the direct health benefits, rather than its indirect benefits to the environment or animal welfare (Wier et al., 2002), which had made this study focus only on the views of consumers regarding natural and organic labelled products related to human health and safety. All other aspects are out of the scope of this study.

Objectives of the study are:

- To identify how frequently consumers purchase natural and organic labelled products.
- To identify the types of natural and organic labelled products purchased from a supermarket.
- To analyse the difference across demographic variables of age, income, status, and gender in consumer's view, regarding the effect of natural and organic labelled products on human health and safety.

Consumer Choices

The study identifies the type of natural and organic labelled products that consumers choose to purchase from a

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supermarket. In the early stages, the market was concentrated around fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat (Dean et al., 2008). Now, the market has extended to processed and convenience foods (Klont, 1999).

Retail Product Mix

Natural and organic labelled products are moving towards the mainstream. As a result, retailers like Walmart and Target have restructured their product mix with more organic foods (Ellison et al., 2016). Organic products are so widely available among mainstream retailers in the UK that they represent over 80 per cent of total sales (Sahota, 2009). In the US, organic foods are widely available in supermarkets, club stores, mass merchandisers, and grocery stores (Sahota, 2009). The number of dedicated organic food shops is rising, with many new stores opening in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan (Sahota, 2009). Most leading food retailers, including Walmart, are marketing organic products under their private labels (Sahota et al., 2004). The success of natural food supermarkets like Whole Foods Market is leading some mainstream retailers to develop dedicated retailers for organic foods (Sahota et al., 2004).

In India, the growing demographics of young, educated individuals who are increasingly concerned about chemicals and pesticide residue in food products will further increase the demand and domestic consumption of organic products (Chandra et al., 2020). Retail outlets in the form of supermarkets, convenience stores, and hypermarkets like Nature's Basket, Fabindia, Star Bazaar, More, Organic India, and so on, remain the most visible distribution channels for certified organic products, and the retail industry has been providing increased shelf space for the organic category to fuel demand (Chandra et al., 2020).

Natural and Organic Labelled Products

Natural foods are derived from natural sources and are free of pesticides, additives, preservatives, and refined ingredients to varying degrees (Madan, 2017). Organic foods or organic labelled foods are not only free of chemicals, pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics, but go beyond the human health consequences of conventional farming and food manufacturing, to embrace principles of sustainable farm management, humane treatment of animals, and the social impacts of food production (Madan, 2017).

Economic development, competition, and an explosion of market information have increased consumers' purchasing power and consumption knowledge (Leaniz et al., 2017). Today, product information is easily accessible due to the development of digital technology and the Internet (Wang et al., 2020). Presence of competing alternatives gives consumers the power to choose from various product options (Leaniz et al., 2017). This power, backed with information, makes the consumers demand high quality (Lin et al., 2012), green, and healthy products (Chekima et al., 2019).

Natural and organic labelled products are often viewed as healthy products which provide more nutrition and are less harmful to human health (Chekima et al., 2019). Consumers are concerned about the use of pesticides in agriculture (Aktar et al., 2009) and the use of artificial ingredients, additives, or colourants (Lucová et al., 2013). Natural and organic products today constitute a major growth segment in the cosmetics industry (Apaolaza et al., 2014), as their sales register an annual increase of 20%, against the 2% for cosmetics as a whole (Álvarez, 2013).

Knowledge about consumers' buying behaviour with regard to the consumption of organic products will help the researchers and retail entrepreneurs construct better product decisions and policies (Kriwy et al., 2012).

Demographic Variables in the Study

It will be interesting to know the demographic details to identify the segments to be targeted. This leads to the formation of the following hypotheses.

Studies reveal that compared to female customers, male customers visited supermarkets more frequently (Jeyachandran et al., 2019) and women continue to be the principal buying agent in a majority of the families (Alreck et al., 2002). Research indicates that women have a positive attitude towards shopping, while men tend to be negative towards shopping (Kuruvilla et al., 2009). However, increase in the population over the retirement age and working wives has involved husbands and children in the purchase, preparation, and cooking of food, which has changed the consumer food choices (Rees, 1992) and purchase pattern. This leads to the formation of the first hypothesis.

H1: Males and females have similar views regarding natural and organic labelled products.

Relating to age, studies show that people in the age group 35 and above prefer organic products, while people in the age group < 35 prefer inorganic products; this is because people who are 35 and above have a job, career, and a relatively high monthly income (Deliana, 2012). A study by McCarthy (2015) states that consumers aged 36 and above were more likely to buy certified organic food. A study exploring consumer perceptions of green restaurants in the US by Schubert et al. (2010) states that those aged less than

35 years were more likely to believe that dining at 'green' restaurants would be healthier. This led to the formation of the second hypothesis.

H2: People below 35 years and greater than or equal to 35 years have similar views regarding natural and organic labelled products.

Studies reveal that higher income households buy organic products more frequently (Loureiro et al., 2001) and establish that there is a significant positive relationship between household income and organic food purchases (Voon et al., 2011). The dilemma to know whether the lower income groups in the society are also playing their role in contributing to the growth in the demand of natural and organic labelled products led to the formation of the third hypothesis.

H3: People with a monthly income of less than 30,000 and greater than or equal to 30,000 have similar views regarding natural and organic labelled products.

Studies reveal that students and the self-employed groups have a relatively stronger preference for buying organic food (Mehra et al., 2014). Penetration of the demand for natural and organic labelled products among the unemployed, especially the new generation students and homemakers, forms the basis of the fourth hypothesis.

H4: Employed and unemployed customers have similar views regarding natural and organic labelled products.

RESEARCH METHOD

A survey was developed and conducted among people who visit supermarkets. The survey started by checking whether the respondents purchase natural and organic labelled products. If so, they were asked to provide the type of natural and organic labelled products that they purchase from a supermarket. Respondents were then asked about the frequency of purchase, followed by their perception regarding natural and organic labelled products. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).

Samples were selected using convenience sampling method and a questionnaire was sent to 150 households. A total of 114 usable questionnaires were returned. Among them, only 109 (95.6%) respondents purchase natural and organic labelled products, which was used for analysing data.

Table 1: Respondents Purchasing Natural and Organic Labelled Products

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	109	95.6
No	5	4.4
Total	114	100.00

Demographic Findings

The sample is composed of 109 respondents and have more men than women; however, the difference is not huge. Around 59 respondents (54.13%) were men and the remaining 50 respondents (45.87%) were women.

Table 2: Composition of the Respondents by Gender

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	50	45.87
Male	59	54.13
Total	109	100.00

Around 60.55% of the sample is composed of people in the age group 15-35 and 39.45% are in the age group 35-64.

Table 3: Composition of Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 35	66	60.55
35 and Above	43	39.45
Total	109	100.00

Data was rearranged by combining the unemployed (9) and students (44) into one group called 'unemployed'; and employed (47), self-employed (5), businessperson (3), and retired (1) into a single group called 'employed'. The retired person was added to the 'employed' group as he was receiving pension.

Table 4: Composition of Respondents by Status

	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	56	51.38
Unemployed	53	48.62
Total	109	100.00

It was found that most of the sample respondents had a monthly income of up to 30,000 (73.39%); the remaining 26.61% had a monthly income of 30,000 and above.

Table 5: Composition of Respondents by Income

	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 30,000	80	73.39
30,000 and Above	29	26.61
Total	109	100.00

Frequency and Type of Natural and Organic Labelled Products Purchased from a Supermarket

Table 6: Comparison of Means (Products Purchased)

	Gender		Age		Income		Status		Total
	Male (59)	Female (50)	Up to 35 (66)	35 and Above (43)	Up to 30000 (80)	30000 and Above (29)	Employed (56)	Unemployed (53)	(109)
Fruits and vegetables	2.69	3.14	2.88	2.93	2.89	2.93	3.11	2.68	2.90
Dairy products	2.34	2.40	2.23	2.58	2.18	2.90	2.66	2.06	2.37
Fish and meat	2.32	2.40	2.36	2.35	2.31	2.48	2.34	2.38	2.36
Cereals and pulses	2.05	2.36	1.94	2.58	2.09	2.48	2.45	1.92	2.19
Spices and curry powders	2.61	2.74	2.56	2.84	2.59	2.90	2.84	2.49	2.67
Processed food and beverages	2.10	1.60	1.86	1.88	1.89	1.83	2.00	1.74	1.87
Home care products	2.24	2.38	2.33	2.26	2.28	2.38	2.46	2.13	2.30
Personal care products	2.25	2.38	2.32	2.30	2.25	2.48	2.61	2.00	2.31

In a supermarket, men give more priority to purchasing natural and organic labelled food and beverages than women. People in the age group 35 and above purchase cereals and pulses more than those in the age group up to 35. Employed people purchase natural and organic labelled dairy products, cereals and pulses, and personal care products more than unemployed people. While considering the income, respondents with a monthly income of 30,000 and above purchase more dairy products than respondents with a monthly income up to 30,000. However, when the entire sample of respondents are considered, more priority is given to natural and organic labelled fruits and vegetables and less priority to natural and organic labelled processed food and beverages.

Table 7: Purchase Frequency of Natural and Organic Labelled Products from a Supermarket

	Gender		Age		Income		Status		Total
	Male (59)	Female (50)	Up to 35 (66)	35 and above (43)	Up to 30000 (80)	30000 and above (29)	Employed (56)	Unemployed (53)	(109)
Frequency	3.44	3.48	3.48	3.42	3.44	3.52	3.32	3.60	3.46

While checking the mean concerning purchase frequency of natural and organic labelled products, women (3.48) have a slightly higher purchase frequency than men (3.44). Even though both men and women shop for their household requirements, it is the women who decide the frequency and type of products to be purchased. It was interesting to note that purchase frequency of respondents belonging to the age group up to 35 (3.48) is greater than those belonging to the age group 35 and above (3.42). This shows the positive attitude of the young generation towards natural and organic labelled products. However, we should not forget the influence of COVID-19 in the society, as elderly people are reluctant to go to a supermarket to shop during the pandemic. Respondents with an income of 30,000 and above (3.52) purchase natural and organic labelled products more frequently than respondents with an income up to 30,000 (3.44). Unemployed (3.60) people purchase natural and organic labelled products more frequently than employed (3.32) people. This may be due to the active involvement of students and homemakers in shopping at a supermarket for their family.

Consumers' View Regarding Natural and Organic Labelled Products

Table 8: Comparison of Means (Consumers' View)

	Gender		Age		Income		Status		Total
	Male (59)	Female (50)	Up to 35 (66)	35 and Above (43)	Up to 30000 (80)	30000 and Above (29)	Employed (56)	Unemployed (53)	(109)
Are Healthy	3.88	4.10	3.95	4.02	3.86	4.24	3.98	3.98	3.98
Have superior quality	3.64	3.84	3.71	3.77	3.62	4.03	3.73	3.74	3.73
Are better than non-organic/non-natural products	3.59	3.62	3.55	3.70	3.52	3.83	3.70	3.51	3.61
Are tastier than non-organic/non-natural products	3.56	3.40	3.50	3.47	3.45	3.59	3.41	3.57	3.49
Are free from chemicals	3.53	3.66	3.61	3.56	3.59	3.59	3.57	3.60	3.59
Are free from pesticides	3.49	3.46	3.44	3.53	3.43	3.62	3.48	3.47	3.48

It is seen that respondents with a monthly income of 30,000 and above agree more with the statement that natural and organic labelled products are healthy (4.24), have superior quality (4.03), are better than non-natural and non-organic products (3.83), are tastier than non-natural and non-organic products (3.59), and are free from pesticides (3.62). It is the women who agree more to the statement that natural and organic labelled products are free from chemicals (3.66). While considering the total, it is seen that respondents agree more to the statement that natural and organic labelled products are healthy (3.98).

Comparing the Variance and Mean

Using gender as the base, the following results were obtained while comparing males and females. From Table 9, while considering the frequency of purchase and all other statements, it is found that the variance and mean are not significantly different.

Table 9: Independent Sample Test – Gender

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Frequency of purchase	Equal variances assumed	1.030	.312	−.248	107	.805	−.039	.159	−.354	.275
	Equal variances not assumed			−.250	106.918	.803	−.039	.157	−.351	.272
Are Healthy	Equal variances assumed	.929	.337	−.857	107	.394	−.219	.255	−.725	.287
	Equal variances not assumed			−.863	106.285	.390	−.219	.253	−.721	.284
Have superior quality	Equal variances assumed	1.097	.297	−.828	107	.410	−.196	.237	−.665	.273
	Equal variances not assumed			−.831	105.414	.408	−.196	.236	−.664	.272

Are better than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.005	.944	−.103	107	.918	−.027	.260	−.543	.489
	Equal variances not assumed			−.103	104.741	.918	−.027	.260	−.542	.488
Are tastier than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.004	.948	.664	107	.508	.159	.240	−.316	.635
	Equal variances not assumed			.666	104.948	.507	.159	.239	−.315	.634
Are free from chemicals	Equal variances assumed	2.202	.141	−.520	107	.604	−.135	.259	−.648	.378
	Equal variances not assumed			−.524	106.531	.601	−.135	.257	−.643	.374
Are free from pesticides	Equal variances assumed	.183	.670	.124	107	.902	.032	.254	−.472	.536
	Equal variances not assumed			.124	105.174	.901	.032	.253	−.471	.534

Using income as the base, the following results were obtained while comparing the two income groups. While considering the frequency of purchase and all other statements, there is no significant difference in variance and mean between the two groups.

Table 10: Independent Sample Test – Income (Up to 30,000 and 30,001 and Above)

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Frequency of purchase	Equal variances assumed	2.226	.139	−.446	107	.657	−.080	.179	−.434	.275
	Equal variances not assumed			−.497	62.405	.621	−.080	.160	−.400	.241
Are Healthy	Equal variances assumed	1.574	.212	−1.234	107	.220	−.354	.287	−.922	.215
	Equal variances not assumed			−1.362	60.928	.178	−.354	.260	−.874	.166
Have superior quality	Equal variances assumed	1.663	.200	−1.546	107	.125	−.409	.265	−.934	.115
	Equal variances not assumed			−1.581	51.823	.120	−.409	.259	−.929	.110
Are better than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.653	.421	−1.037	107	.302	−.303	.292	−.881	.276
	Equal variances not assumed			−1.041	50.053	.303	−.303	.291	−.887	.281

Are tastier than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.005	.947	−.503	107	.616	−.136	.271	−.673	.400
	Equal variances not assumed			−.498	48.754	.621	−.136	.273	−.686	.413
Are free from chemicals	Equal variances assumed	.062	.804	.004	107	.996	.001	.292	−.578	.581
	Equal variances not assumed			.004	50.784	.996	.001	.289	−.579	.581
Are free from pesti-cides	Equal variances assumed	.442	.508	−.684	107	.495	−.196	.286	−.763	.371
	Equal variances not assumed			−.702	52.278	.486	−.196	.279	−.755	.363

Using age as the base, the following results were obtained while comparing the two age groups. From Table 11, while considering the frequency of purchase, it is found that the variance is significantly different and mean is not significantly different. For all other statements, it is found that the variance and mean are not significantly different.

Table 11: Independent Sample Test – Age (Up to 35 and 35 and Above)

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		**T-Test for Equality of Means**						
		F	**Sig.**	**T**	**Df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**	
									Lower	**Upper**
Frequency of purchase	Equal variances assumed	4.157	.044	.409	107	.683	.066	.162	−.255	.387
	Equal variances not assumed			.432	103.610	.667	.066	.154	−.238	.371
Are Healthy	Equal variances assumed	.059	.809	−.263	107	.793	−.069	.261	−.586	.449
	Equal variances not assumed			−.265	92.416	.791	−.069	.259	−.583	.445
Have superior quality	Equal variances assumed	.536	.466	−.229	107	.820	−.055	.242	−.535	.424
	Equal variances not assumed			−.224	83.672	.823	−.055	.247	−.547	.436
Are better than non-organic/non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.168	.683	−.575	107	.567	−.152	.265	−.677	.373
	Equal variances not assumed			−.577	91.034	.565	−.152	.264	−.676	.372
Are tastier than non-organic/non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.900	.345	.142	107	.887	.035	.245	−.451	.521
	Equal variances not assumed			.139	82.685	.890	.035	.251	−.464	.534

Are free from chemicals	Equal variances assumed	.094	.759	.181	107	.856	.048	.264	−.476	.572
	Equal variances not assumed			.183	92.459	.855	.048	.262	−.472	.568
Are free from pesticides	Equal variances assumed	.341	.561	−.369	107	.713	−.095	.259	−.609	.418
	Equal variances not assumed			−.373	93.278	.710	−.095	.256	−.604	.413

Using status as the base, the following results were obtained while comparing the employed and unemployed groups. From Table 12, while considering the frequency of purchase, it is found that the variance is significantly different and mean is not significantly different. For all other statements, it is found that the variance and mean are not significantly different.

Table 12: Independent Sample Test – Status

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Frequency of purchase	Equal variances assumed	8.551	.004	−1.810	107	.073	−.282	.156	−.592	.027
	Equal variances not assumed			−1.796	95.933	.076	−.282	.157	−.594	.030
Are Healthy	Equal variances assumed	.102	.750	.004	107	.997	.001	.255	−.505	.507
	Equal variances not assumed			.004	106.816	.997	.001	.255	−.505	.507
Have superior quality	Equal variances assumed	1.258	.265	−.016	107	.988	−.004	.237	−.473	.466
	Equal variances not assumed			−.016	106.305	.987	−.004	.236	−.471	.464
Are better than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	.102	.750	.723	107	.471	.187	.259	−.326	.700
	Equal variances not assumed			.723	106.833	.471	.187	.259	−.326	.700
Are tastier than non-organic/ non-natural products	Equal variances assumed	2.954	.089	−.650	107	.517	−.155	.239	−.629	.319
	Equal variances not assumed			−.653	105.643	.515	−.155	.238	−.627	.317
Are free from chemical	Equal variances assumed	.007	.932	−.125	107	.901	−.032	.258	−.544	.480
	Equal variances not assumed			−.125	106.853	.901	−.032	.258	−.544	.479
Are free from pesticides	Equal variances assumed	.019	.891	.041	107	.967	.010	.253	−.492	.513
	Equal variances not assumed			.041	106.640	.967	.010	.253	−.492	.513

To check whether the items for measuring the consumers' view are related to each other, correlation was used. From the table, it is revealed that each statement is positively correlated with other statements.

Table 13: Paired Sample Correlations

Correlations							
		Are Healthy	**Have Superior Quality**	**Are Better than Non-Organic/ Non-Natural Products**	**Are Tastier than Non-Organic/ Non-Natural Products**	**Are Free from Chemicals**	**Are Free from Pesticides**
Are Healthy	Pearson Correlation	1	.849**	.747**	.729**	.735**	.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Have superior quality	Pearson Correlation	.849**	1	.802**	.763**	.775**	.771**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Are better than non-organic/ non-natural products	Pearson Correlation	.747**	.802**	1	.767**	.734**	.718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Are tastier than non-organic/ non-natural products	Pearson Correlation	.729**	.763**	.767**	1	.687**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Are free from chemicals	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.775**	.734**	.687**	1	.883**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Are free from pesticides	Pearson Correlation	.700**	.771**	.718**	.699**	.883**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

To confirm that $t^2 = F$, one-way ANOVA was used. From the one-way ANOVA for different gender, income, age, and status groups, it was found that for frequency of purchase and all other statements, since the calculated value of F is less than the table value of F at 5% level, with d.f (1,107) 3.92, there is no difference in means. Thus, we can conclude that difference in frequency of purchase and other statements by different groups is insignificant.

RESULT

From the study, it was found that there is no significant difference in the purchase frequency of natural and organic labelled products based on gender, age, status, and income; however, with respect to status, it was found that unemployed (3.60) people purchase more frequently than employed (3.32) people. This may be due to the active involvement of students and homemakers in shopping at a supermarket for their family.

Regarding the type of natural and organic labelled products purchased from a supermarket, it was found that men give more priority to food and beverages, showing that they have a positive tendency towards purchasing packaged food items. People in the age group 35 and above give priority to cereals and pulses, as they may be more health conscious than their younger peers. Employed people purchase dairy products, cereals and pulses, and personal care products. This shows the concern of the employed category with relation to personal care. Respondents with a monthly income of 30,000 and above purchase more dairy products. However, when the entire respondent population is considered, it is seen that supermarkets should concentrate more on the product mix strategies of natural and organic labelled 'fruits and vegetables' and 'spices and curry powders'.

The four hypotheses were accepted, and confirmed that there is no significant difference based on the age, income, status, and gender. Demographic variables under study do not cause a significant difference in the frequency of purchase and views regarding natural and organic labelled products. Education, social media, and application of modern technologies in information sharing have created greater awareness among the consumers and developed serious concerns about human health and safety.

The study reflects and justifies the growing demand for natural and organic labelled products in the society, which is evident by the increase in the number of exclusive organic supermarkets and an increase in shelf space provided by traditional retailers for organic products.

Retail Product Mix Strategies for Natural and Organic Labelled Products

All the six items have a crucial influence on the views of supermarket customers towards natural and organic labelled products, irrespective of their demographics, which is evident from the mean (shown below). This is because supermarket customers think that natural and organic labelled products:

- Are healthy (3.98)
- Have superior quality (3.73)
- Are better than non-organic/non-natural products (3.61)
- Are tastier than non-organic/non-natural products (3.49)
- Are free from chemicals (3.59)
- Are free from pesticides (3.48)

Results of the study show that there is no significant difference in the frequency, based on age, gender, income, and status of the respondents. There is growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues (Fotopoulos et al., 2002). Organic food products are often perceived as environmentally friendly, healthy, and tasting better than conventional food (Gottschalk et al., 2013). Previous studies have concluded that organically produced foods have a nutrient composition superior to that of conventional foods (Magkos et al., 2003).

While designing product mix strategies and selecting segments to target, the supermarkets may consider the following findings related to natural and organic labelled products.

- Should take measures to increase the frequency of purchase by employed customers.
- Should concentrate more on the product mix strategies of fruits and vegetables and spices and curry powders, as they are the types of products mostly purchased by customers.
- Dairy products are purchased more by high-income, employed, and elderly people.
- Customers are of the opinion that natural and organic labelled products are healthy; have superior quality; are better than non-organic/non-natural products; are tastier than non-organic/non-natural products; are free from chemicals; and are free from pesticides.

Retail supermarkets should make a holistic promotional strategy with regard to human health and safety to tackle the demographic variables effectively and efficiently so that they can reap the benefits from the growing global demand for natural and organic labelled products.

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