

Understanding Post Purchase Behaviour among the Consumers towards Organic Food Products – A View from Health Management

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction: Post-purchase behavior is actions and responses of consumers when they have purchased a good. This stage is important to understanding how the consumer perceives his or her purchase or whether it meets his expectations, which can affect decisions in future purchases and in brand loyalty. In the case of organic food products, post-purchase behavior encompasses various psychological, social, and behavioral factors that shape how consumers assess their experience with the product and determine whether they will continue purchasing organic food. Although organic food consumption decisions are driven by consumer interest in health and ethical principles, the post-purchase behavior of consumers is key to maintaining long-term growth.

Objectives: The study mainly aimed at understanding post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products in Erode District of Tamil Nadu, India.

Methods: 100 samples were chosen by convenience sampling in Erode District of Tamil Nadu, India. The questionnaire was designed to collect data from the samples. The Kruskal Wallis test was used in the study.

Results: Higher age groups of consumers perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour towards organic food products. The gender group "Male" has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other groups. The medium family size group, urban residents and professional group has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other groups.

Conclusions: As the market for organic food expands, companies require greater insight into these post-purchase behaviors as a means towards developing loyalty and long-term customer satisfaction. Enhancing on quality of product, maximizing customer buying experiences, and the issue in relation to price and affordability will best serve a consumer and ensure an organic demand for a food product. The study concluded that to create a long-term customer relationship, understanding the factors influencing post-purchase behavior towards organic food is a key priority.

Keywords: Post-purchase behaviour, Loyalty, Consumers, Priority, Organic food products.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last couple of decades, organic food products have gained an ever-increasing demand in light of health and sustainability, coupled with growing awareness concerning environmental factors. In addition, due to heightened consciousness regarding what they consume, organic food is regarded as a more secure and safer choice instead of non-organic, as this tends to avoid more chemicals, pesticides, and dangerous preservatives compared to its traditional counterpart (Smith & Lee, 2020). Although organic food consumption decisions are driven by consumer interest in health and ethical principles, the post-purchase behavior of consumers is key to maintaining long-term growth. Post-purchase behaviors include the actions, responses, and attitudes of customers toward a product after a purchase, which determine whether the customer will return for further purchases and remain loyal to the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Post-purchase behavior is actions and responses of consumers when they have purchased a good. This stage is important to understanding how the consumer perceives his or her purchase or whether it meets his expectations, which can affect decisions in future purchases and in brand loyalty. For organic food items, post-purchase behavior involves several psychological, social, and behavioral aspects that influence the way consumers evaluate their experience with the product and decide whether they will keep buying organic food. This includes aspects such as customer satisfaction, usage of the product, perceived value, and repurchase or recommendation intention for the product. For organic food, post-purchase behavior can be highly influential, particularly with the high prices that these products tend to carry. Studies have indicated that consumers generally remain satisfied at different levels depending on perceived health benefits, taste, and quality of organic foods, all of which contribute to repeat purchase behavior (Hughner et al., 2007). Furthermore, consumer beliefs about the environment and ethical aspects of organic food production determine post-purchase satisfaction and loyalty as well (Grankvist & Biel, 2007). The choice to purchase organic products is not simply a function of price or product quality but frequently involves more profound values that are associated with sustainability and social responsibility (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Therefore, companies in the organic food industry need to consider these varied factors when creating marketing strategies and customer interaction practices. This research intends to examine the post-purchase consumer behavior towards organic food products in terms of satisfaction, perceived value, and future purchase intent. The consumer behaviors will be understood more effectively to enable companies to look forward to enhanced customer loyalty, maximizing product offerings, and promoting the advantages of organic food to target customers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Increasing demand for organic food items is one of the strong trends that illustrates a change in consumer behavior grounded in heightened sensitivity regarding health and environmental concerns. Organic food is seen as cleaner, healthier, and more environmentally friendly and is being adopted by an increasingly larger base of customers globally (Smith & Lee, 2020). Whereas most of the current research has been concerned with identifying the drivers of the first-time purchase of organic foods, there is scant research on post-purchase behavior. This is important because post-purchase behavior directly influences brand loyalty, repurchase intentions, and consumer advocacy, all of which are vital for the long-term success of organic food brands. Post-purchase behavior is significant for a number of reasons. Initially, as organic foods are normally costlier, consumers' satisfaction becomes an essential criterion for the customers' purchase intentions towards repeated buying and recommendation of the product to other consumers. Literature reveals that the consumers' attitudes and post-purchase behavior towards the product depend on such variables as the product's quality, taste, health effects, and ecological compatibility (Hughner et al., 2007; Grankvist & Biel, 2007). If they are not met, even a dedicated organic food shopper will leave the brand behind, which is why a firm must understand what constitutes satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Organic food is a specialty product, and companies must gain a greater understanding of what drives repetition and customer loyalty. Research has indicated that customer satisfaction after a purchase is directly linked to retaining customers, and disgruntled customers will drop products or post negative reviews (Oliver, 2014). Hence, it is crucial for companies to know the reasons behind good post-purchase experience in a bid to maintain long-term relationships with customers and remain competitive in the market. Third, organic foods have special selling points like environmental advantages, ethical production, and health benefits. It is essential to study the effects of these qualities on consumer attitude after purchase in formulating marketing tactics and products. Consumers might be influenced by values that are ethical or environmental, and a company might have to be capable of knowing how values influence long-term behavior as a means of getting its messages in line with what consumers expect (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Improved knowledge of post-purchase behavior enables companies to refine their marketing strategies and improve their brand reputation. Organic food companies also rely more on consumer reviews to improve their products and services. Post-purchase behavior

analysis assists in understanding the consumers' expectations, which can be utilized in identifying the areas that need improvement in the product, packaging, and promotional efforts (Kotler & Keller, 2016). There is a considerable gap in the research on post-purchase behavior of consumers of organic food items. This research aims to bridge the gap in current research by examining the determinants of post-purchase satisfaction and loyalty in this growing market, offering insights for marketers, companies, and researchers. The use of organic food has become very fashionable over the past few years because it's linked to a number of health, environmental, and moral values. With more and more consumers seeking organic alternatives, this consumer post-purchase behavior has become critical for businesses and marketers alike in the organic food industry. In the scenario of post-purchase behavior, it includes what the consumer perceives and does after a purchase, thereby influencing the customer's subsequent purchases, loyalty, and possible word-of-mouth. It includes various aspects such as levels of satisfaction, experience regarding the use of a product, perceived value, and whether the consumer will opt for repeated purchase or persuade others to purchase that specific product. Since organic food products usually carry a much higher price tag compared to conventional items, consumers' post-purchase experience goes a long way in altering their perception and patterns of buying altogether. Understanding these behaviors can provide valuable insights for businesses aiming to improve customer retention, enhance product offerings, and effectively target potential buyers. By exploring factors like product quality, health benefits, sustainability claims, and overall satisfaction, this study seeks to shed light on how consumers interact with organic food products after the initial purchase and the influence it has on their future consumption habits. The research primarily focused on identifying post purchase behaviour of the consumers towards organic food products in Erode District of Tamil Nadu, India.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Various organic food product-related challenges confront consumers as well, which can impact both their purchasing decisions and eventual consumption patterns. Such practical issues include price and availability, while subjective concerns in terms of product perceptions and understanding also come into the picture. The main hurdle to organic food consumption relates to its higher price when compared to conventionally grown products. Organic foods tend to be expensive mainly because the production is labor intensive and produces less yield than conventional foods. Many customers find this increase in cost a serious disincentive, mainly because the added value from the product will not outweigh the increased expenditure (Liu & Wang, 2019). Seasonal availability often makes the supply of organic food unreliable. Some products may not be available year-round, thereby disrupting consumer purchasing habits, especially for those who prefer a constant supply of organic options (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Organic food availability may also be limited in areas where there are fewer organic farming practices or in regions with underdeveloped distribution networks. Purchasability is a problem for consumers since it is difficult to regularly acquire organic products, and therefore, one has to wait for special stores that can be far away or less convenient (Suki, 2016). Limited access will prevent consumers from fully embracing organic food despite their willingness to change. Organic foods, fresh produce, are usually perishable compared to conventional counterparts. Due to the absence of synthetic preservatives, organic products typically have shorter shelf lives, leading to higher waste rates as consumers may not consume them quickly enough before they spoil. This waste risk is especially alarming when purchasing in bulk (Hughner et al., 2007). Organic food is also seen by some consumers to taste differently, typically assuming it will be of lesser quality than standard food. These assumptions can be based on the notion that organic farming practices, not using chemical fertilizers or pesticides, will affect the taste and texture of the products (Kareklas et al., 2014). Additionally, the majority of consumers will not possess knowledge about the environmental benefits of organic agriculture or be conscious of the possible trade-offs: land use inefficiencies and soil erosion due to poorly managed agricultural practices (Hughner et al., 2007). Misconceptions regarding the environmental sustainability of organic food due to the complexity of organic farming systems might cause consumers to lose faith in organic consumption advantages. Negative perception on quality and taste will oppose consumers from buying regular supplies, even though organic products may have health and environmental benefits. Consumers encounter misunderstanding on organic food certifications and labels. Terms such as "natural," "eco-friendly," and "green" are used without any clear definition or certification in marketing, which confuses consumers and makes them skeptical about the authenticity of organic products (Grankvist & Biel, 2007). Organic food consumption may need a change in consumer habit, such as changing their shopping routine or learning to know new types of products. For others, it becomes too much work, or it becomes a psychological challenge because of the effort: finding brands, knowing their certifications, or adjusting tastes, which becomes a difficult switch, especially if consumers already have foods that answer their needs. Another hindrance to consumer behavior when purchasing organic food is an unclear or

misleading marketing message, which creates difficulty for them in determining the benefits and drawbacks of organic food. Organic food marketing frequently focuses on health or environmental advantages, but without clear scientifically supported information, consumers find it challenging to make decisions. Disconnection between the marketing claim and consumer knowledge can result in confusion and mistrust in the organic food market (Pino et al., 2012). Lack of transparency in labeling further erodes consumer trust, making them reluctant to buy organic foods. Some consumers may even question whether organic farming practices are truly more sustainable or environmentally friendly, particularly if certification standards are perceived as inadequate or inconsistent (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). While ethical concerns—such as animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and fair trade—motivate many consumers, there may also be a perception that organic food does not fully align with these ethical ideals. For example, some organic production processes still carry environmental impacts like pesticide use in certain organic practices or concerns over energy consumption related to growing and transporting organic products. In case consumers feel that organic food does not meet their ethical standards, they would avoid it (Grankvist & Biel, 2007). The perishability of organic produce presents a significant challenge for consumers, especially those who may not be able to consume organic items before they spoil (Liu & Wang, 2019). Among the various factors influencing consumer behavior toward organic food is concern over the spoilage and shorter shelf life of these products. Unlike conventionally grown foods, organic products are mostly free from synthetic preservatives or chemicals which are used to extend the shelf life of products and, therefore, organic goods are more susceptible to getting spoiled, especially fresh commodities such as fruits and vegetables (Hughner et al., 2007). Grankvist & Biel (2007) further found that marketing terms like "natural" or "eco-friendly," when not defined or certified, can cause confusion among consumers and decrease trust in organic food, thus discouraging purchases. Product labels and marketing claims are ambiguous and make it difficult for consumers to differentiate between genuinely organic products and those merely labeled as "natural" (Pino et al., 2012). This perception that organic food tastes different or inferior to the conventional food can scare the consumer away from purchasing the product, even if he is aware of the potential health and environmental advantages it offers (Kareklas et al., 2014). According to Vermeir & Verbeke (2006), consumer perceptions of the quality of organic food influence their purchasing decisions and their long-term satisfaction, so marketers in the organic food sector must address these perceptions. Hughner et al. (2007) also noted that many consumers are not fully aware of the environmental trade-offs involved in organic farming, which can impact their view of its overall sustainability. The possibility that consumers do not see organic certification as being strong or transparent might make them unwilling to pay extra for organic products (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Additionally, the absence of organic products in the large grocery stores might dissuade consumers from embracing organic alternatives because the convenience element is lost (Grankvist & Biel, 2007). The absence of distribution networks in other areas also lowers consumer access to organic food, thereby inhibiting its adoption (Suki, 2016).

OBJECTIVES

The study mainly aimed at understanding post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products in Erode District of Tamil Nadu, India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Zepeda and Deal (2009) examined US consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards organic food with a focus on price sensitivity, perceptions of health, and social influences on post-purchase behavior. Based on this research, the satisfaction of the consumer with the organic products results in loyalty for extended periods; however, an issue regarding the price and quality may prevent repeat purchase. It gives effective insights into problems organic food companies encounter in the competitive environment and offers suggestions to establish long-term customer relationships. Pino et al. (2012) examined how consumers' values including health consciousness, environmentalism, and ethics are affecting purchasing decisions and post-purchase behavior concerning organic food. The research indicates that individuals with high health or sustainability values are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase and therefore exhibit positive post-purchase behavior like word-of-mouth recommendation or repeat purchases. This indicates that organic food marketers can leverage these values in order to induce long-term loyalty and word-of-mouth. The "green gap" paradox of Kareklas et al. in 2014 explained when customers purchase organic food and do not entirely perceive its health or environmental advantages. Such a belief-behavior incongruence can influence the consumer's satisfaction after purchasing and willingness to purchase a product again. Hence, the research concluded that social influence and habit tend to encourage some consumers to buy organic foods instead of actual belief, which is that marketing messages must be aligned with consumer beliefs for stronger loyalty in the long run. Chakrabarti

and Saha (2015) studied the Indian market. The variables influencing the consumption of organic food are examined in the study, including environmental consciousness, health consciousness, and perceived quality of the product. Based on the conclusion, both intrinsic (health) and extrinsic variables (environmental sustainability) influence post-purchase behavior. Knowledge of these factors enables companies to create marketing strategies that will enable them to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, induce repeat buying, and stimulate advocacy for organic products. Suki (2016) discussed drivers of consumer behavior towards organic food, including perceived value, health consciousness, and environmental concern. The authors noted that post-purchase satisfaction is contingent on the perceived benefits of organic food, which are health and sustainability. The greater perceived value in organic food implies that customers will increasingly re-purchase the items and pass on the word to others. The present research contributes to the knowledge of what drives cognitive and emotional behavior after the purchase, to the formulation of strategies by which organic food marketers build perceived value and customer loyalty. Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) researched consumer behavior towards "green" products in the organic food industry. This study was important to draw attention to the fact that eco-friendly perceptions have an impact on post-purchase behavior. The authors showed that beliefs in environmental and sustainability benefits of organic foods have a significant impact on consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. It shows how ethical concerns about production methods, eco-friendly packaging, and sustainable farming practices have an influence on the value perception of consumers and their post-purchase behavior. Liu and Wang examined, in 2019, the role of trust and satisfaction in determining organic food consumers' post purchase behaviors in China. Findings indicated that consumer beliefs both in the brand as well as product quality strongly impact satisfaction, which drives further repurchase intentions as well as loyalty. Organising certification and product label-based trust is the determinant variable in post-purchase behaviors. From this, companies will require organic certification to be clear and consistent so that a higher level of trust would be developed by the customers, thus higher retention rates and advocacy. Sangar and Yadav in 2020 have critically reviewed consumer behavior towards organic food, which was aggregated from different studies. A summary of these findings included key factors affecting post purchase behavior such as quality, price sensitivity, environmental consciousness, and social influence. This review focuses on the fact that satisfaction with organic products is formed both by tangible attributes such as product quality and price, and intangible factors, including ethical considerations. This provides a very broad overview of the factors affecting repurchase behavior and brand loyalty in the organic food market.

Methodology is the systematic approach to addressing research problems. It describes the steps usually followed by the researcher in investigating the research issues, along with the rationale behind them. This research work makes use of both primary and secondary data. To collect primary data, the field survey method was adopted. The researcher collected 100 samples from organic food product consumers in Erode district through questionnaires. This research design has been chosen for this study. It is descriptive because it describes the current situation. The convenience sampling technique was used in order to have a representative sample when the population from which the sample is drawn is not homogeneous. The Kruskal Wallis test has been conducted for further analysis of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 – Age and post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products

Age	No. of Sample	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Below 25 years	26	51.46	9.344 (DF-3, Sig. 0.025)
25-35 years	29	51.90	
36-45 years	25	37.36	
More than 45 years	20	63.65	
Total	100		

Since the p-value is 0.025, which is less than 0.05, It can reject the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the impact variable between the age groups on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. This suggests that age does have a significant effect on the reported impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. Specifically, the age group "More than 45 years" has a higher

mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other age groups.

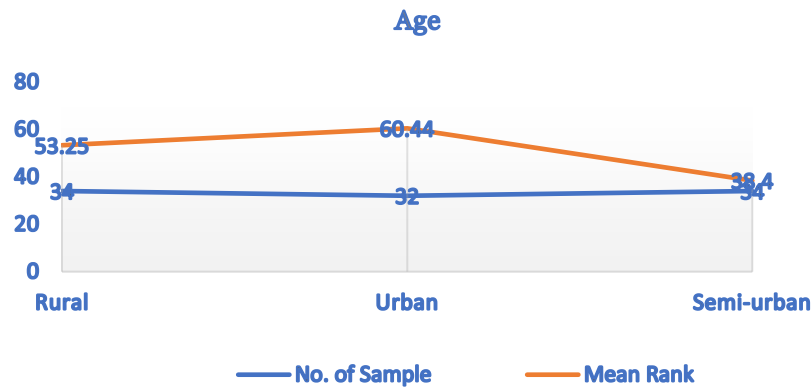


Table 2 – Gender and post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products

Gender	No. of Sample	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Male	44	62.53	13.535 (DF-1, Sig. 0.000)
Female	56	41.04	
Total	100		

Since the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01, it can reject the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the impact variable between the gender groups on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. This suggests that gender does have a significant effect on the reported impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. Specifically, the gender group "Male" has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other groups.

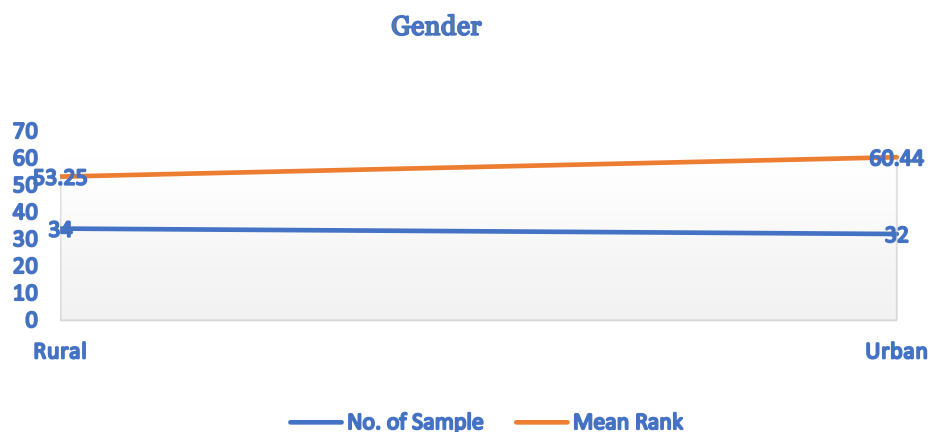


Table 3 – Family size and post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products

Family size	No. of Sample	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Small	33	49.83	0.104 (DF-2, Sig. 0.949)
Medium	44	51.55	
Large	23	49.46	
Total	100		

Since the p-value is 0.949, which is higher than 0.05, it can accept the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the impact variable between the family size groups on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. This suggests that family size does not have a significant effect on the reported impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. Specifically, the medium family size group has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other groups.

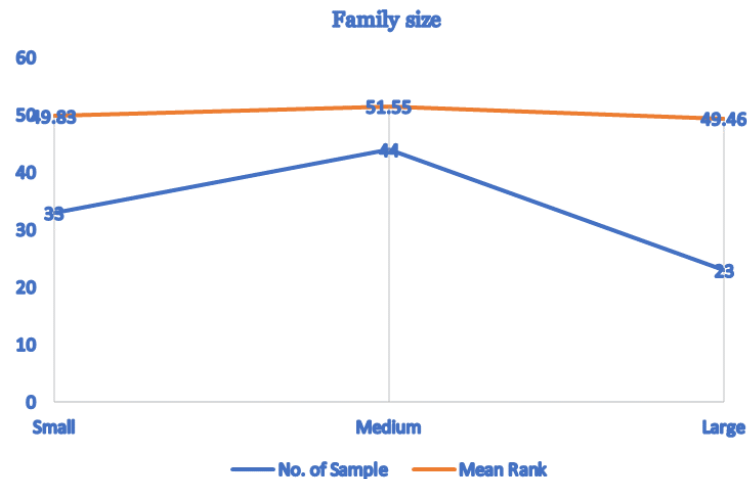


Table 4 – Residential area and post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products

Residential area	No. of Sample	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Rural	34	53.25	9.989 (DF-2, Sig. 0.007)
Urban	32	60.44	
Semi-urban	34	38.40	
Total	100		

Since the p-value is 0.007, which is less than 0.01, it can reject the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the impact variable between the residential groups on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. This suggests that residential area does have a significant effect on the reported impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. Specifically, the residential group "Urban residents" has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other residential groups.

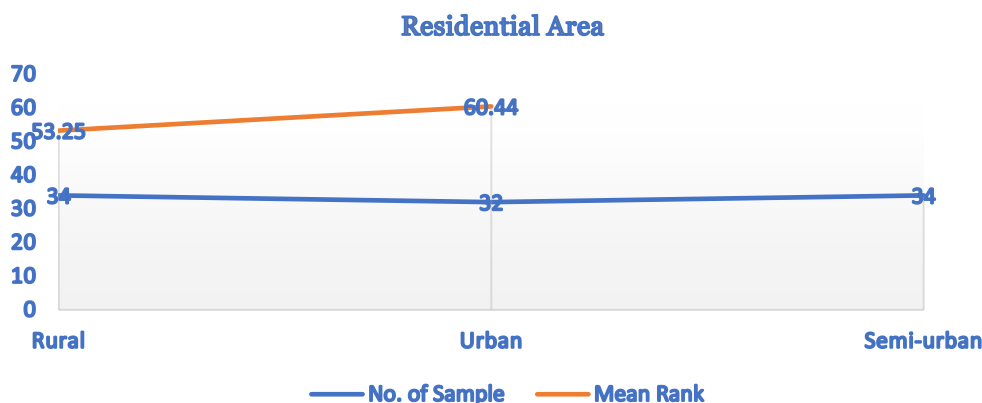
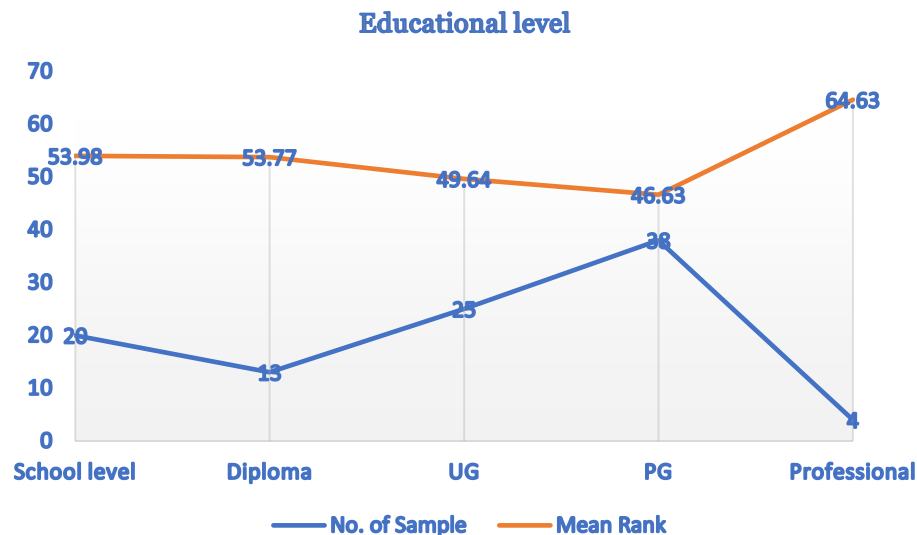


Table 5 – Educational level and post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products

Educational level	No. of Sample	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
School level	20	53.98	2.100 (DF-4, Sig. 0.717)
Diploma	13	53.77	
UG	25	49.64	
PG	38	46.63	
Professional	4	64.63	
Total	100		

Since the p-value is 0.717, which is higher than 0.05, it can accept the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the impact variable between the educational groups on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. This suggests that educational level does not have a significant effect on the reported impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products. Specifically, the professional group has a higher mean rank, indicating they perceive a higher impact on post purchase behaviour among the consumers towards organic food products compared to other groups.



SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Customers are ready to spend more money for organic goods if they feel these goods offer better health benefits or provide environmental protection (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). In addition, the experience after buying the product can influence further purchases. Good quality products that are flavorful and have good value will also lead to a higher rate of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nguyen, 2021). Though organic foods provide a lot of prospects for health and environmental values, there are quite many challenges that can discourage or limit its widespread usage. Such challenges include expensive high prices, unavailability at all times, perishable, taste perceptions, or skepticism about the certificate for such products. Addressing these barriers is the crucial aspect for marketers, retailers, and policymakers with intentions for the better promotion of the usage of organic food. To create a long-term customer relationship, understanding the factors influencing post-purchase behavior towards organic food is a key priority. Companies and marketers must aim at higher levels of consumer satisfaction, build trust, and employ healthy and eco-friendly content on organic products for repurchase repetition and positive word of mouth. Furthermore, attempts to minimize the cost and maximize availability could make these organic food products more accessible. Consumer post-purchase behavior towards organic food products is greatly driven by variables such as product satisfaction, perceived value, health consciousness, and environmental concerns. Consumers, after purchasing organic food, often exhibit behaviors such as repeat buying, positive word-of-mouth, and brand loyalty when the

product is associated with their values towards health and sustainability. But the affordability and accessibility of organic products continue to be out of reach for the majority of consumers, often discouraging them from purchasing these kinds of products regularly. Alternatively, negative post-purchase consumption, including dissatisfaction with price or product quality, can lead to low future purchase intentions and consumer loss of trust in the brand. In fact, although consumers purchase organic foods for health or ethical purposes, their post-purchase behavior is still influenced by convenience, product availability, and confidence in the genuineness of the brand (Goh et al., 2019). As the market for organic food expands, companies require greater insight into these post-purchase behaviors as a means towards developing loyalty and long-term customer satisfaction. Enhancing on quality of product, maximizing customer buying experiences, and the issue in relation to price and affordability will best serve a consumer and ensure an organic demand for a food product.

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