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ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN IN SHAPING CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD

Dr. E. Renuga**ABSTRACT**

In recent years, consumer choices have been greatly impacted by environmental deterioration, climate change, and growing knowledge of sustainable living. Environmentally conscious consumers are increasingly drawn to organic food items, which are made utilizing sustainable and eco-friendly farming methods. This study looks at how consumer perceptions of organic food items are influenced by environmental concerns. It investigates how customer views and purchase intentions are influenced by sustainability beliefs, perceived ecological benefits, and understanding of environmental challenges. According to the study, consumers' opinions are positively impacted by environmental concerns, which increases their propensity to prefer organic food. However, actual purchasing behavior may be hampered by elements like cost, accessibility, and ignorance. The results imply that raising consumer awareness of environmental issues and encouraging sustainability can boost favorable consumer perceptions and boost the uptake of organic food items.

KEYWORDS: Environmental Concern, Organic Food, Consumer Attitude, Sustainability, Green Consumption

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues include soil degradation, air and water pollution, climate change, global warming, and the loss of natural resources have all significantly increased in the last several decades. Ecosystems, human health, and general quality of life have all been impacted by these problems. As a result, people are becoming more conscious of the significance of sustainable living and environmental preservation. Environmentally conscious consumption patterns have emerged as a result of this consciousness change, with customers favoring safe, natural, and environmentally friendly items more and more.

In this context, organic food items have become more popular since they are made using environmentally friendly farming methods that steer clear of synthetic chemicals, pesticides, and genetically

modified organisms.

These methods aid in protecting biodiversity, lowering pollution, and maintaining soil fertility. As a result, eating organic food is frequently seen as being both healthier and better for the environment. Consumer perceptions of these products are significantly influenced by environmental concerns. It shows how conscious, emotionally invested, and dedicated people are to environmental issues. Customers who care more about the environment are more likely to adopt sustainable lifestyle habits and have favorable opinions about organic food. Even so, real purchase behavior is frequently impacted by pragmatic factors like cost, availability, and confidence in the legitimacy of the goods. Therefore, understanding the role of environmental concern is essential to bridge the gap between positive consumer attitudes and

actual buying behaviour, and to promote sustainable consumption effectively.

CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The degree to which people are aware of, interested in, and emotionally invested in environmental issues is referred to as environmental concern. It includes attitudes, convictions, and principles concerning sustainability and environmental preservation.

Customers who are really concerned about the environment:

- Acknowledge how human activity affects the environment
- Encourage environmentally friendly goods and methods
- Demonstrate responsible consumption.

Education, social consciousness, media exposure, and individual values all have an impact on environmental care. It has a big impact on how consumers think and act, especially when it comes to eco-friendly and sustainable goods.

ORGANIC FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

By using farming methods that are in balance with the environment, organic food significantly contributes to environmental sustainability. By avoiding the use of chemical pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms, organic farming reduces soil and water pollution in contrast to conventional agriculture. It highlights organic methods that support soil fertility and ecological balance, such as crop rotation, composting, and biological pest management. By sustaining a variety of plant and animal species, these methods not only maintain the land's health but also increase biodiversity.

Furthermore, because organic farming uses fewer energy-intensive chemical inputs and encourages soil carbon absorption, it helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, it supports sustainable land management techniques and the effective use of natural resources like water. Organic farming guarantees long-term agricultural yield by preserving soil structure and

preventing erosion.

Choosing organic food shows a consumer's dedication to sustainable living and environmental preservation. Because organic products encourage eco-friendly production methods and lessen ecological impact, they are frequently preferred by environmentally aware consumers. Therefore, eating organic food is not only good for one's health but also essential for protecting the environment and advancing sustainable development for coming generations.

CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD

The general perception, convictions, and emotions that people have about organic food items are referred to as consumer attitude toward organic food. Due to increased awareness of food safety, environmental sustainability, and health, this attitude has grown more positive in recent years. Because organic food is free of artificial chemicals and pesticides, consumers tend to view it as safer, healthier, and more nutrient-dense than conventionally produced food. Their inclination and desire to buy organic goods are greatly influenced by this notion.

Additionally, consumer views are significantly influenced by environmental concerns. People who care about the environment typically see organic food as an environmentally benign choice that promotes sustainable farming methods and lessens environmental harm. Positive sentiments regarding organic food are also influenced by elements including flavor, quality, and ethical issues. Adoption is encouraged and these views are further reinforced by social factors such as classmates, family, and the media.

Despite their optimistic outlook, customers might not always translate their preferences into real purchase behavior because of factors including high costs, limited supply, and mistrust of certification. Therefore, even if consumers have a generally positive view toward organic food, purchasing decisions are shaped by both practical constraints and motivating factors.

ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN IN SHAPING CONSUMER ATTITUDE

- **Impact on Perception:** Customers' image of organic food as sustainable and eco-friendly is improved by environmental care. Customers' attitudes are positively impacted since they believe that organic products cause less harm to the environment.
- **Effect on Intention to Buy:** Customers who are highly concerned about the environment are more likely to have strong intents to buy organic food. They are prepared to back goods that share their environmental beliefs.
- **Moral and Ethical Issues:** Ethical consumption practices are frequently the result of environmental concerns. Customers buy organic food goods because they feel morally obligated to safeguard the environment.
- **Willingness to Pay a Higher Price:** Because organic food is thought to be better for the environment, people who care about the environment could be willing to pay more for it. However, this readiness differs according to awareness levels and finances.
- **Long-Term Modification of Behavior:** Long-term behavioral changes brought about by environmental concern include the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and the regular consumption of organic food products.

FACTORS MODERATING THE RELATIONSHIP

- **Price:** High prices can weaken the positive relationship between environmental concern and actual purchase behaviour.
- **Availability:** Limited availability of organic products may restrict consumer choices.
- **Awareness and Knowledge:** Lack of awareness about organic food benefits can reduce the impact of environmental concern.
- **Trust and Certification:** Consumers need assurance that products labeled as organic are genuine.

CONCLUSION

In summary, customer views about organic food items have been found to be significantly influenced by environmental concerns. Customers are become more aware of the ecological effects of their buying decisions as knowledge of sustainability

and environmental deterioration rises. People are encouraged to choose organic food items because they are thought to be sustainable, safe, and kind to the environment.

According to the study, consumers' intentions to embrace eco-friendly consumption patterns are reinforced by their care for the environment. Strong environmental beliefs frequently make consumers feel morally obligated to help safeguard the environment, which has a favorable effect on their opinions of organic food.

But it's not always easy to go from having an optimistic attitude to making actual purchases. Consumers may find it difficult to regularly choose organic products due to factors like high prices, limited availability, lack of awareness, and trust concerns.

Marketers and legislators must concentrate on raising environmental awareness, expanding accessibility, and fostering trust via efficient certification processes in order to address these issues. The significance of eating organic food can be further emphasized through educational initiatives and environmentally friendly marketing techniques.

In general, encouraging customers to care about the environment can be very important for encouraging sustainable consumption habits and guaranteeing the long-term health of the environment.

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