

**CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PROPENSITY TO BUY ORGANIC FOOD IN  
RELATION TO CHENNAI CONSUMERS.**

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**Abstract**

Organic food is a rapidly growing industry, and this research intends to investigate what variables impact customers' opinions regarding the product and how those sentiments impact their intents to buy. The organic food industry is booming, with growth even in India's most populous cities. Consumers' attitudes and actions towards organic food can be better understood with the help of this study. Attitudes towards organic food are impacted by six major elements. The following factors were considered: trust, accessibility, value for money, health consciousness, product information, and perception of organic food. This report makes an effort to fill a gap in the literature by examining how people in Chennai feel and act in relation to organic food. The development of a hypothesis-based research paradigm followed a review of relevant literature. In order to put the model through its paces, customers in Chennai took part in an online poll. There is no doubt that health awareness, consumer knowledge, and personal standards influenced the attitudes of consumers in Chennai. Furthermore, the theory proposes that attitude and purchasing intention are positively correlated.

**Keywords:** Consumer attitude, Organic food, Health, Consumer knowledge and Purchase intention.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer attitude towards organic food has witnessed a significant shift over the years. With the increasing concern for health and wellness, individuals are now more conscious of the quality and safety of the food they consume. This has led to a rise in the consumption of organic food, which is believed to be healthier and free from harmful chemicals. Organic food refers to the produce that is grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth hormones, or genetically modified organisms. It emphasizes sustainable farming practices that prioritize environmental conservation and animal welfare. The demand for organic food has been on the rise, leading to a surge in organic farming and a broader range of organic products available in the market.

Health is the primary driver behind the consumer inclination to purchase organic food. People are becoming increasingly aware of the potential risks associated with consuming conventionally produced food that may contain harmful residues from pesticides or genetic modifications. Organic food, on the other hand, is seen as a healthier alternative, as it is believed to be more nutritious and freer from potentially harmful substances. Numerous studies have shown that organic food contains higher levels of essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, compared to conventionally grown food. For instance, a study published in the British Journal of Nutrition found that organic crops had significantly higher levels of vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus. These findings have further reinforced the perception that organic food is healthier and more beneficial for overall well-being.

How consumers see and feel about organic food is greatly influenced by their level of consumer education. Customers are increasingly prepared to shell out more cash for organic foods when they get knowledge about its advantages and the dangers of conventional alternatives. So, it's crucial to educate customers on organic agricultural methods, certification requirements, and the advantages of organic food if we want them to buy it. To aid shoppers in recognizing authentic organic goods, many measures have been put in place, including certifications and labelling systems. Guaranteeing that the product satisfies certain organic criteria, labels such as USDA Organic, EU Organic, and others are used. Customers are more likely to be interested in and likely to buy organic products when these labels are present, as they inspire trust and confidence.

Moreover, the perception of organic food extends beyond health benefits. It also encompasses environmental sustainability and animal welfare. Consumers who are concerned about the ecological impact of conventional farming practices, such as chemical pollution and soil degradation, are more likely to opt for organic products. By choosing organic food, these individuals express their support for sustainable agricultural practices that promote biodiversity, conserve natural resources, and reduce the carbon footprint associated with food production. Despite the growing popularity of organic food, there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

One significant obstacle is the higher price associated with organic products compared to conventionally produced alternatives. The perceived high cost often deters consumers from purchasing organic food regularly. However, it is important to note that the higher price is a reflection of the higher production costs involved in organic farming, which doesn't rely on inexpensive synthetic inputs. To overcome this challenge, efforts are being made to improve the availability and affordability of organic food. Government and non-governmental organizations are offering subsidies and financial incentives to organic farmers, making it easier for them to adopt sustainable farming practices and reduce the production costs. Furthermore, the increasing demand for organic food has prompted larger-scale production, resulting in economies of scale and potentially reducing prices in the future.

"The green aspect" and the goods' impact on the planet are becoming more important to customers as environmental consciousness grows among the general public. In contrast, customers are increasingly prioritizing health while making purchases, particularly for food. This seems to be the primary motivator for people to buy organic food. (Yin *et al.*, 2010).

## **2.CONSUMER ATTITUDE:**

A person's attitude may be described as their mental framework through which they favourably or negatively assess a certain thing (Eagly and Chaiken, 2007). Consumers' attitudes and the personal attractiveness of an activity determine their preferences and attitudes toward purchasing a certain product. One's attitude toward a conduct is determined by their expectations and beliefs about the repercussions of that activity. **Chen (2007)**

## **3.CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWRDS ORGANIC FOOD**

One of the most compelling arguments in favour of buying organic food is the positive impact on one's health, according to research. Some people think organic food tastes better than conventional food, and they also think it's healthier for the environment. The significance that consumers place on the environment is directly related to their attitude towards organic food items, according to several researches. (Aertsens et al 2009)

## **4.FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CONSUMER ATTITUDE**

The way people feel about buying organic food is impacted by a number of different things. This section summarizes and examines the impact of these elements on customer sentiment based on a study of relevant publications and prior literature. The development of hypotheses was based on the evaluation of each notion.

**4.1 Health benefits:** Health concerns have surpassed environmental and dietary concerns as the most important element influencing consumer choice. The greater price tag reflects their perception of its dominant nature (**Brugarolas and Rivera, 2005**). The term "health

consciousness" refers to an attitude in which individuals are aware of the positive effects that their food and lifestyle have on their health.

**4.2 Consumer Knowledge:** Consumer understanding has a favourable impact on their attitude towards organic food. Consumer knowledge may be classified as subjective knowledge, objective information, and previous experience. Subjective knowledge pertains to the customers' perception of their own understanding.

**4.3 Environmental Concern:** Positive attitudes and strong intentions to buy organic food are common among customers who are more engaged in organic and environmentally friendly related concerns, such environmental conservation. Everything that humans do that has a major impact on the natural world, like using up natural resources, is considered environmental behaviour.

#### **4.4 Availability**

Organic food is now available at conventional supermarkets, which have responded to customer demand. More people can now afford to buy organic produce thanks to the increased marketing of organic items in mainstream supermarkets and big box stores as well as the more traditional venues of specialised stores. **(Dettmann and Dimitri, 2007)**

**4.5 Personal Norms:** Schwartz (1973), personal norms are the convictions that one has about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. According to research, consumer self-beliefs and personal standards have a significant role in shaping consumers' choices between organic and non-organic food.

**4.6 Subjective Norms:** Consumer attitudes regarding organic food are positively impacted by subjective norms, which are a favourable effect.

## **5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

**Prasanth U and Sivakanni S (2023)**, Research on How People Use Organic Products, finding out how people in Chennai feel about organic products is the driving force for this study. A total of 101 people were chosen at random for this descriptive study, which aims to provide an accurate portrayal of the participants. This study makes use of SPSS-assisted statistical tools, including frequency tabulations, correlation analysis, weighted average analysis, regression analysis, and percentage analysis. According to the study, organic food can be promoted as a pleasant and nutritious option for various age groups, including children, young adults, and the elderly, since flavour is the most important factor in customers' purchasing decisions.

**Anamika Chaturvedi et al (2022)**, An Analysis of Consumer Behaviour and Intentions to Buy Organic Food, the researcher delves into a thorough examination of the several aspects that impact consumer behaviour in relation to organic food. Extracted from studies done all across the world, this article analyses relevant elements and offers recommendations for further study. The author sourced all four hundred papers for the literature review from online databases such as Google Scholar, EBSCO, Scopus, and social science research networks, with the publication dates ranging from 1985 to 2020. The last sample that determines customer attitude, purchase intention, and factors influencing organic food purchasing behavior. Attitude, health consciousness, consumer

knowledge, and trust are the key elements that impact customers' decisions to purchase organic food, according to the paper's conclusion.

**B. Krishnakumarea and S. Niranjana (2017)**, The Preference of Customers for Organic Food Items 240 samples were collected from different consumers in Tirupur District in Tamil Nadu through a well-structured personal interview method in order to analyze the psychological aspects impacting consumer purchase behavior towards organic food goods. Percentage analysis, chi-square test, rank-based quotient, and multi-dimensional scaling techniques were the analytical tools utilized in the study. While most people who don't eat organic food think that organic food commodities are all-natural, the majority of those who do eat organic food think that organic food items don't contain any pesticides. Concern for one's health was the driving force for the purchase of an organic food item.

**Brijesh Sivathan (2015)** Organic items are considered healthy due to their natural ingredients. Organic items are grown without fertilisers, chemicals, or pesticides. Though new, the Indian organic food business is growing fast. Consumers prefer organic food for safety, health, and environmental reasons as well as its nutritional value, taste, freshness, and beauty. Techniques/Statistics: Multiple linear regression was used to uncover organic food preference characteristics. Statistics were used to describe demographics. Demographics influence customers' desire for organic food, according to the report. Female respondents prefer organic food, according to research. Many educated people choose organic food. The 29-39 age group prefers organic food. Rich people buy organic food. Consumers like organic food because it's healthy, safe, nutritious, and eco-friendly. Application and Improvement: This study examines organic food customer preference to help marketers create effective tactics. Marketing and customer preferences across social groupings can be informed by this research.

**Saloni Mehra and P.A. Ratna (2014)** Organic food is gaining popularity in India, with increase in tier 1 and 2 cities, indicating widespread acceptability. The study examines the factors impacting customers' attitudes and behaviours towards organic food, which is growing in tier 2 Indian cities. Six major elements influenced organic food attitudes. They were organic food perception, health awareness, product information, value, accessibility, and trust. Demographic characteristics affected organic food attitudes but not buying behaviour. This report investigates the understudied topic of organic food attitudes and behaviour in India's developing cities.

## 6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What is the perception of consumers towards organic food?
2. What variables impact customer attitudes towards organic food?
3. What kind of connection exists between the mindset of the buyer and their desire to make a purchase?

## 7. OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore the factors that influence consumers' attitudes regarding organic food in a market that is expanding quickly, as well as how such attitudes affect consumers' intentions to make purchases.

## **7. METHODOLOGY**

This section provides an overview of the study's methodology by outlining the many research methods already in use and providing rationale for the methods that were ultimately determined to be most appropriate for testing the hypotheses. Included in this section are the research's methodology, design, data sources, strategy, data collecting technique, data analysis method, and quality standards. A synopsis of the selected methods will be provided at a later stage.

## **8. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **8.1 Inductive vs. Deductive research**

The deductive and inductive methods are both useful in business research (Hyde, 2000). How theory and data are interrelated is where these two methods diverge. When researchers examine empirical evidence in light of pre-existing domain theory, they are engaging in deductive research. In accordance with pre-existing ideas and practices, the researchers persist in gathering data. On the other hand, inductive research relies on insufficient evidence to develop conclusions and add to the theory (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Gray, 2009).

### **8.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research**

There are two main types of business research methods: quantitative and qualitative. The goal of qualitative research is to have a thorough knowledge of the phenomena under study. The groundwork for subsequent quantitative research is laid by qualitative research, which sheds light on the issues and makes an effort to provide solutions.

### **8.3 Research Design**

The groundwork for doing the study is laid forth by the research design. It laid forth the rules on how to collect and analyze data. By making sure the empirical data is relevant, a good study design helps researchers answer the research issue with limited time and resources.

### **8.4 Explanatory research design**

Finding the interrelationships between the variables in an effort to provide light on a mystery is the goal of an explanatory research design. The relationship is described in the question of “why” (Robson, 2002)

### **8.5 Data Sources:**

Primary and secondary data sources are used to compile this information. Data gathered by researchers initially to address a specific topic, sometimes with the expectation of limited replies, are known as primary data. Researchers gather secondary data for reasons unrelated to resolving the current issue.

### **8.6 Questionnaire Design**

In Chennai, a poll was administered to the general public. Because of the ease of access, online questionnaires were distributed using social communication channels. Two sections made up the

questions: one dealt with general concepts like attitude and purchasing intention, while the second was structured according to demographic criteria including gender, age, and income.

### 8.7 Sample Size

The duration of the data gathering procedure was fifteen days. The total 250 replies were captured and compiled for further study after removing 34 incorrect ones.

**Table:1**

GENDER						
Details	Male		Female		Total	
Frequency	119		97		216	
Percentage	55		45		100	
AGE						
Details	up to 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	Above 55	Total
Frequency	35	28	42	65	46	216
Percentage	16.21	12.96	19.44	30.09	21.30	100
INCOME						
Details	up to 10000	10001-30000	30001-50000	50001-70000	Above 70000	Total
Frequency	42	48	58	32	36	216
Percentage	19.44	22.22	26.85	14.82	16.67	100

Source: primary

### Inference:

The results show that out of 216 Chennai respondents, 119 were male and 97 were female, for a participation rate of 55%. Looking at the age breakdown, we have 35 responses in the up to 25 age brackets, 28 in the 26–35 bracket, 42 in the 36–45 bracket, 65 in the 46–55 bracket, and 46 in the above 55 bracket. In terms of income, 58 respondents indicated a range of 30000 to 50000 as their preferred, while 42 indicated a range up to 10000. Of those who participated, 48 chose an income range of 10000-30000, while 32 chose an income range of 50001-70000.

**Table:2**

### Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attitude	5.54	1.32	1	7	-						
Consumer Knowledge	5.56	1.33	1	7	0.664**	-					



Health benefits	4.9 7	1.0 7	1	7	0.647 **	<b>0.627</b> **	-				
Availability	5.7 3	0.9 8	1	7	0.559 **	0.524 **	0.673 **	-			
Environmental Concern	5.1 1	1.3 0	1	7	0.667 **	0.676 **	0.617 **	0.587 **	-		
Personal / Subjective Norm	4.1 3	1.1 6	1	7	0.396 **	0.429 **	0.447 **	0.349 **	0.515 **	-	
Purchase Intention	4.1 8	1.2 5	1	7	0.652 **	0.613 **	0.627 **	0.519 **	0.725 **	0.523 **	-

Note: n=216, \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

#### Inference:

One way to check for construct validity is with a correlation analysis, which compares the degree of relationship between two datasets. The Pearson's correlation coefficient provides a graphical representation of this. If the correlation coefficient is less than 0.8 or 0.9, then the results are considered valid. The results showed that there is little to no relationship between the two groups of concepts, since all of the values were less than 0.8. To rephrase, these ideas were not quantified in the same way.

**Table:3**  
**Consumers Buying Behaviour of Organic Products**

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	22	10.19%
weekly	40	18.52%
Monthly	136	62.96%
Occasionally	18	8.33%
Total	216	100%

#### Interpretation

Based on the table provided, the majority of respondents, accounting for 62.96%, purchase organic products on a monthly basis. This is followed by 40 respondents who buy organic products weekly, constituting 10.19% of the total. Additionally, 8.33% of respondents purchase organic products sometimes, while the remaining 18 respondents also fall into this category.



**9. FINDINGS and SUGGESTIONS**

- ❖ Concerning the influence of control variables (demographic characteristics) on the study model.
- ❖ Age is the sole element that has exhibited a clear impact on both consumer attitude and purchase intention.
- ❖ The key predictors of consumer attitude are health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and availability.
- ❖ The key predictor that influences customer purchase intention is attitude, even though age, as a control variable, is still found to have a certain impact.
- ❖ Overall, consumers in Chennai exhibit a favourable disposition towards organic food.
- ❖ Most of them preferred organic products for their health and wealth.
- ❖ Additionally, the majority of respondents purchase an organic product on a monthly basis.
- ❖ A large portion of the population has the view that organic food items are chemical-and preservative-free.
- ❖ Many different kinds of organic items are available to buyers thanks to the Internet.
- ❖ Since product attributes greatly impact buyers' choices, it stands to reason that improving a good's qualities will lead to more people buying organic food.
- ❖ Organic products can be more easily obtained at affordable prices because the government is actively working to make them more accessible.

**10. CONCLUSION**

Organic food was well-received by consumers for several reasons. They prioritised healthy content over environmentally safe content because it caters to clients' shifting tastes and attitudes and helps them preserve their social position. Customers of organic foods also placed a premium on product quality. Customers were more satisfied with organic food overall than with inorganic food. What this indicates is that the dish was well-received by its buyers. Organic food is perceived by consumers as expensive. On the other hand, some think that the product's healthful components and eco-friendliness justify a higher price. People didn't limit themselves to buying exclusively organic foods. Along with organic food, they also purchased inorganic food. The more conscious consumers are of their health, the more knowledge/experiences they obtained, or the more positive in their individual beliefs regarding the good effects of consuming organic food, it results as the more positive in their attitude.

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