

“A STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL TRENDS AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS” – AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the demand for organic food products has increased across the world as people have become more aware of their health, environmental issues, and changing lifestyles. This study focuses on understanding global trends in the organic food market and how these trends influence the buying behaviour of consumers in India. It looks at important factors such as health awareness, product quality, price, availability, certification, and trust in organic labels. The study shows that global movements towards sustainable and eco-friendly consumption are gradually shaping the preferences of Indian consumers, especially in urban areas. At the same time, it also highlights certain challenges, including higher prices, limited awareness in rural areas, and concerns about the authenticity of organic products. By examining consumer opinions and preferences, the study provides a better understanding of the growing acceptance of organic food in India and how it connects with international trends. The findings indicate that while awareness and demand are increasing, there is still a need for better marketing efforts, stronger government support, and improved consumer education to support the growth of the organic food sector in India.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Behaviour, Health Awareness, India, Organic Food Market, Sustainable Consumption

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, people have become more aware of their health and environmental issues, which has increased interest in organic food products. Organic foods are considered safer and more eco-friendly as they are produced without harmful chemicals. Globally, the demand for organic food is growing, and these trends are also influencing consumers in India. In India, the demand for organic products is rising, especially among urban consumers due to better awareness, income, and concerns about food safety. However, factors like high prices, limited availability, and doubts about certification still affect their adoption. This study aims to understand how international trends influence the buying behaviour of Indian consumers and the key factors that affect their purchasing decisions.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the major sources influencing Indian consumers about international trends in organic food products.
- To examine the buying behavior of consumers towards organic food products.
- To identify the key factors influencing international purchase decisions of organic food products.
- To study the challenges and opportunities in the global organic food market.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mrs. S. Sreedevi and Dr. Jasti Katayani (2024)¹ highlight the rapid growth of the organic sector over the past decade, driven by increasing health awareness among consumers. The study focuses on factors affecting organic agro-food producers and promotional strategies in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Using a quantitative approach with convenience sampling, data was collected from 100 producers. The findings show that chemical-free production and improved living conditions significantly influence demand for organic products. Additionally, promotional methods such as newspaper advertisements and public posters play an important role in improving business performance and market reach.

Emilia Lamonaca & et.al (2022)³ in their journal “Consumer Perception of Attributes of Organic Food in Italy: A CUB Model Study”, this study examines the security, healthfulness, and environmental sustainability of organic food from the standpoint of the consumer. The study also examines the influence of consumers' socio demographic characteristics and the presence of quality-related information on food labels on their perceptions of the perceived quality of organic food.

Tasi, P.H., et.al (2020)⁴ evaluated brand image effects on consumer's purchase in Organic Products. Analysed evolution indicators and sub-indicators influence on network relationship in Organic Products. Study found that improve the tangible effects of their Organic Products strategies by stimulating consumer's purchase intentions of the environmental consumers in Organic Products.

RESEARCH GAP

While many studies have explored organic food consumption, most of them focus on developed countries where the market is already well established. This creates a gap in understanding how global trends influence consumers in India. In India, existing research is often limited to specific areas or small groups and mainly focuses on awareness or attitudes rather than actual buying behaviour. There is also less attention given to practical factors such as price, availability, and trust in certification, which play an important role in shaping consumer decisions. Therefore, there is a need for a more

detailed study that connects international trends with the real purchasing behaviour of Indian consumers, while also considering the unique challenges in the Indian market.

International Trends in Organic Food Consumption

The demand for organic food is growing worldwide as people become more health-conscious and prefer natural, chemical-free products. Consumers are increasingly concerned about food safety and quality, leading them to choose products without artificial additives. Transparency in production and labelling has also become important in building consumer trust. Certified organic labels help assure buyers about the authenticity of products. Many countries have strong certification systems to maintain standards. Overall, these trends are encouraging the global growth of the organic food market.

Organic Food Market in India

India is gradually emerging as an important player in the global organic food market, with many small farmers adopting organic farming practices. Several states, including Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Kerala, are actively promoting sustainable agriculture. The demand for organic food is increasing, especially in urban areas, where supermarkets, specialty stores, and online platforms offer a wide range of products such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy items. However, the market still faces challenges like higher prices, limited availability in rural regions, and low awareness about organic certification. Although many consumers show interest in organic products, they often hesitate to purchase them due to the higher cost compared to regular food items.

Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Organic Food

Consumer behaviour plays an important role in the growth of the organic food market. Many people choose organic products because they believe they are healthier and free from harmful chemicals. Increasing awareness about environmental issues also encourages consumers to support organic and sustainable farming practices. Buying decisions are influenced by factors such as product quality, certification, brand image, price, and availability. In addition, opinions of family, friends, and media also shape consumer preferences. Understanding these behaviours is useful for businesses and policymakers to develop better strategies that make organic food more accessible and attractive to consumers.

FACTORS INFLUENCING BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

- ✓ **Health:** Consumers today are more concerned about their health and well-being. Many believe that organic food is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides. This makes them feel safer while consuming such products. As a result, health consciousness becomes a major reason for choosing organic food. It strongly influences regular buying decisions.
- ✓ **Product Quality:** Organic food is often perceived as fresh, natural, and of better quality. Consumers feel that it has better taste and nutritional value compared to conventional products. This positive perception increases their preference for organic items. Quality plays an important role in building customer satisfaction. It also encourages repeat purchases.
- ✓ **Price:** Price is one of the most important factors affecting buying behaviour. Organic products are usually more expensive than regular food items. Some consumers may hesitate to buy them due to this higher cost. However, a few are willing to pay more for better quality and health benefits. Price sensitivity varies among different income groups.
- ✓ **Availability:** Easy availability of organic products influences purchasing behaviour. If these products are not found in nearby stores, consumers may switch to other options. Convenient access encourages regular buying. Availability in supermarkets and online platforms helps increase sales. It makes organic food more accessible to a wider audience.
- ✓ **Awareness and Knowledge:** Higher awareness of organic food benefits encourages consumers to choose it, while lack of knowledge reduces interest. Education and information help shape positive attitudes and increase demand.
- ✓ **Trust and Certification:** Consumers rely on certification and proper labeling to ensure authenticity; without trust, they may avoid buying. Strong branding and credibility help build confidence and long-term loyalty.
- ✓ **Environmental Concern:** Consumers prefer organic food for its eco-friendly and sustainable nature. Their sense of responsibility toward the environment influences their purchasing decisions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, organic food products have gained global attention due to rising health awareness and environmental concerns. International markets show strong growth in the acceptance of organic foods. In India, awareness about organic products is increasing among consumers. However, this awareness does not always translate into actual purchasing behaviour. Several factors such as high prices, limited availability, and lack of knowledge influence consumer decisions. There are also concerns regarding the authenticity and certification of organic products. The impact of international trends on Indian consumers is not clearly understood due to cultural and economic differences.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse these influences and identify the key factors affecting consumer buying behaviour in India.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important as it connects global trends in the organic food market with the behaviour of consumers in India. It helps to identify key factors such as health awareness, environmental concern, trust in certification, price, and availability that influence purchasing decisions. The study also provides a better understanding of how international trends shape the perceptions and buying habits of Indian consumers. In addition, the findings are useful for marketers and retailers in developing effective strategies related to pricing, promotion, and distribution. It also supports the promotion of sustainable consumption by creating awareness about eco-friendly practices. Overall, the study contributes to understanding consumer behaviour, including their attitudes, motivations, and preferences towards organic food products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examines consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products in India in the context of international trends. It focuses on factors such as health awareness, price, quality, availability, and trust in certification. The analysis is based on primary data collected from selected respondents. It mainly explores consumer perceptions and preferences rather than production aspects. The study also highlights the influence of global trends on the Indian organic market. However, findings may vary across regions due to differences in income, awareness, and location.

LIMITATIONS

- The study mainly examines consumer buying behaviour and does not cover other aspects like production or supply of organic products.
- Consumer preferences may differ based on factors like location, income, and awareness, so the results may not be universally applicable.
- The findings rely on the answers provided by respondents, which may sometimes be influenced by personal views or lack of clarity

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1) PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	No. of respondent	Percentage %
Below 20 Years	32	19
21 - 30 years	64	38
31-40 years	31	18
41-50 years	23	14
Above 50 years	18	11
TOTAL	168	100

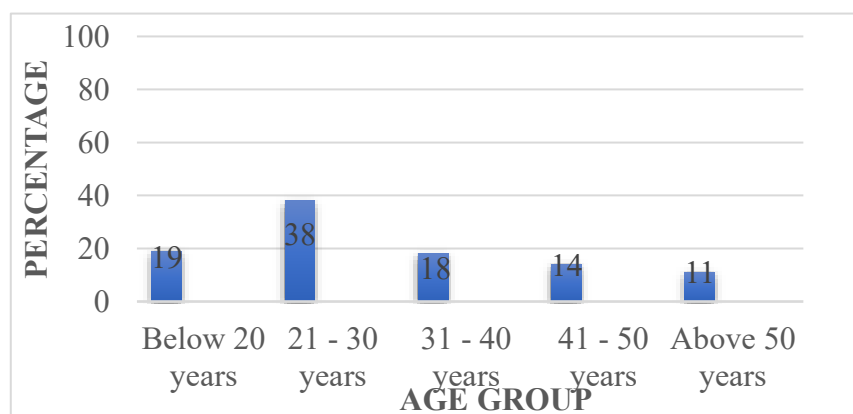
Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:

The table presents the age-wise distribution of the respondents included in the study. Out of the total 168 respondents, the largest group consists of individuals aged 21–30 years, accounting for 64 respondents (38%). This is followed by 32 respondents (19%) who are below 20 years. Respondents in the age group of 31–40 years make up 31 individuals (18%), while 23 respondents (14%) fall under the 41–50 years category. The smallest group includes 18 respondents (11%) who are above 50 years of age. Overall, the data indicates that a majority of the respondents belong to the 21–30 years age group, which may have an impact on the overall views and responses observed in the study.

Majority, 64 (38%), of the respondents are 21-30 years

Age group of the respondents



2) RANKING ANALYSIS

Factors influencing purchase of organic food products

Influencing Factor	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Weighted Average	Rank
Price	71	56	29	7	5	685/168	4.077	2
	355	224	87	14	5			
Product quality	78	63	12	11	4	704/168	4.19	1
	390	252	36	22	4			
Certification	10	26	93	27	12	499/168	2.97	3
	50	104	279	54	12			
Brand reputation	7	23	37	86	15	425/168	2.52	4
	35	92	111	172	15			
Availability	6	5	23	24	110	277/168	1.64	5
	30	20	69	48	110			

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The weighted average method was used to understand the main factors that influence consumers when purchasing organic food products. The results show that product quality is the most important factor, as it received the highest score of 4.19. This indicates that consumers give top priority to the quality and perceived benefits of the product while making their choices.

Price is the next important factor, with a score of 4.077, suggesting that consumers also consider affordability before deciding to buy. Certification holds the third position with a score of 2.97, which means that while consumers do look for authenticity and official labels, it is not as important as quality and price. Brand reputation comes next with a score of 2.52, showing that brand image has only a limited influence on buying decisions. Lastly, availability has the lowest score of 1.64, indicating that it is the least important factor among those considered. Overall, the analysis clearly shows that consumers mainly focus on product quality and price, while other factors like certification, brand reputation, and availability play a smaller role in their decision-making process.

3) CHI – SQUARE ANALYSIS

“RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONTHLY INCOME AND ROLE OF PRICE IN ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE DECISION”

HYPOTHESIS

H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant association between monthly income and the role of price in purchasing organic food products.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant association between monthly income and the role of price.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Monthly income of the respondents * Role of price in organic food purchase decision	168	100.0%	0	0.0%	168	100.0%

Monthly income of the respondents * Role of price in organic food purchase decision Crosstabulation							
Count		Role of price in organic food purchase decision					Total
		Major deciding factor	One of several factors	Considered occasionally	Rarely considered	Not considered	
Monthly income of the respondents	below 15,000	10	25	26	3	3	67
	15,001 to 30,000	2	4	5	1	1	13
	30,001 to 45,000	8	9	7	3	0	27
	45,001 to 60,000	4	17	10	4	0	35
	Above 60,000	10	7	4	4	1	26
Total		34	62	52	15	5	168

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.487 ^a	16	.199
Likelihood Ratio	21.691	16	.153
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.382	1	.240
N of Valid Cases	168		
a. 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .39.			

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

A Chi-square test was used to understand whether there is any relationship between the monthly income of consumers and the importance they give to price while purchasing organic food products. The results show a Chi-square value of 20.487 with a p-value of 0.199, which is higher than the standard significance level of 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between monthly income and the influence of price on purchasing decisions.

4) ANOVA

AGREEMENT THAT REDUCING PRICES INCREASES ORGANIC FOOD CONSUMPTION

H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant difference in the opinion that reducing prices increases organic food consumption among different income groups.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant difference in the opinion among different income groups

Descriptives								
Agreement that reducing prices increases organic food consumption								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
below 15,000	67	3.43	.821	.100	3.23	3.63	1	5
15,001 to 30,000	13	3.38	1.325	.368	2.58	4.19	1	5
30,001 to 45,000	27	3.52	1.051	.202	3.10	3.93	1	5
45,001 to 60,000	35	3.49	.781	.132	3.22	3.75	2	5
Above 60,000	26	3.81	.801	.157	3.48	4.13	2	5
Total	168	3.51	.896	.069	3.38	3.65	1	5

ANOVA					
Agreement that reducing prices increases organic food consumption					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.929	4	.732	.911	.459
Within Groups	131.047	163	.804		
Total	133.976	167			

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

An ANOVA test was carried out to find out whether opinions differ among various income groups regarding the idea that reducing prices would increase the consumption of organic food products. The results show a p-value of 0.459, which is higher than the standard significance level of 0.05.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in opinion among respondents from different income groups on this matter. The average values for each income group are also quite close, ranging from 3.38 to 3.81, which further shows that people share similar views regardless of their income level. Overall, the findings suggest that the perception that price reduction can increase organic food consumption is common across all income groups, and income does not play a major role in influencing this opinion.

5) REGRESSION

AGREEMENT THAT ORGANIC FOOD IS HEALTHIER THAN CONVENTIONAL FOOD

H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

Agreement that organic food is healthier does not significantly influence the preference level for purchasing organic food products.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

Agreement that organic food is healthier significantly influences the preference level for purchasing organic food products.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.428 ^a	.184	.179	.749
a. Predictors: (Constant), Agreement that organic food is healthier than conventional food				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.921	1	20.921	37.332	.000 ^b
	Residual	93.026	166	.560		
	Total	113.946	167			
a. Dependent Variable: Preference level for purchasing organic food products						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Agreement that organic food is healthier than conventional food						

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.165	.229		9.463	.000
	Agreement that organic food is healthier than conventional food	.376	.061	.428	6.110	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Preference level for purchasing organic food products						

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

A regression analysis was conducted to understand whether the belief that organic food is healthier than conventional food has an impact on consumers' preference for purchasing organic products. The results show a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that this belief has a meaningful influence on purchase preference. The model summary shows an R value of 0.428, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between the perception of health benefits and the preference to buy organic food. The R Square value of 0.184 indicates that about 18.4% of the variation in purchase preference can be explained by the belief that organic food is healthier. In addition, the coefficient value is positive ($B = 0.376$) and statistically significant, which means that as consumers increasingly believe that organic food is healthier, their preference to purchase such products also increases. Overall, the findings highlight that health perception is an important factor influencing buying decisions, although other factors may also play a role.

FINDINGS

- 38% of the respondents belong to the age group between 21-30 years
- 37%, of the respondents are Under Graduates
- 38% of the respondents depend on advertisements as their primary source of information about organic food products.

- 31% of the respondents believe that government incentives are the most important opportunity for promoting and expanding the organic food market.
- 8% of the respondents feel that clear and transparent labelling is the most important factor for improving organic food products.

RANKING ANALYSIS

The study shows that product quality and price are the most important factors influencing consumers when purchasing organic food products. Consumers give top priority to the benefits and affordability of the products. Other factors such as certification, brand reputation, and availability have a smaller impact on their decisions. Overall, quality and price play a major role in shaping consumer preferences for organic food.

CHI – SQUARE ANALYSIS

The Chi-square test shows that there is no significant relationship between consumers' monthly income and the importance they give to price when buying organic food products. The p-value of 0.199, which is higher than 0.05, indicates that consumers across different income levels perceive the role of price in a similar way. In other words, regardless of income, price influences purchasing decisions for organic food products in a comparable manner.

ANOVA

There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents from different income groups regarding the effect of price reduction on organic food consumption. The p-value of 0.459, which is higher than 0.05, indicates that income does not influence consumers' views. People across all income levels share a similar perception that lowering prices could encourage more purchases of organic food.

REGRESSION

The regression analysis shows that consumers' belief that organic food is healthier has a significant impact on their preference for purchasing it. With a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), the results indicate a positive relationship between the two variables. In simple terms, the stronger a consumer's belief in the health benefits of organic food, the more likely they are to prefer and choose it when making purchases.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Adopt Affordable Pricing:** Introduce subsidies, discounts, or cost-effective strategies to make organic products accessible to a wider audience.
- **Enhance Availability:** Expand distribution through supermarkets, local stores, and online platforms to ensure easy access for consumers.
- **Ensure Clear Labelling and Certification:** Provide transparent labels and standardized certification to build trust and help consumers identify genuine organic products.
- **Promote Sustainable Farming and Government Support:** Encourage eco-friendly farming practices and strengthen government policies and incentives to support producers and boost consumer confidence.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the growing importance of organic food in India, driven by increased health awareness and environmental concerns. Health benefits and environmental impact are the main factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions, while social media and traditional media play a key role in creating awareness. Challenges such as high prices, limited trust in certification, and restricted availability still affect adoption. Consumers across different demographic groups share similar perceptions, and the belief that organic food is healthier strongly influences purchase preference. To support sustainable growth, it is essential to improve awareness, ensure clear labelling, and adopt effective pricing and distribution strategies. These measures can build trust, increase accessibility, and encourage informed and healthier food choices among consumers.

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