**ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARD ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS**

**Abstract**

The growing awareness of health and environmental sustainability has increased interest in organic food consumption. This study was conducted in Udaipur to analyse consumer behaviour towards organic food products. One hundred respondents were randomly selected from various colleges of MPUAT, Udaipur, Rajasthan, and data were collected through a structured Google Form based on a modified, tailor-made questionnaire. The study employed descriptive statistical tools, including Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Mean Per Score (MPS), and ranking. The findings revealed a high level of awareness regarding organic food products, with 92% of respondents reporting familiarity. Health benefits, environmental concerns, and quality assurance influenced purchase behaviour. Most respondents (86%) purchased organic products, particularly vegetables, grains, and fruits, with local stores and farmers' markets being the most common sources. However, price sensitivity and availability were significant concerns. While many were willing to pay a premium for organic products, a substantial number also expressed that such purchases affected their family budgets.

The study concludes that while there is a strong awareness and positive perception of organic products among the student population, affordability and accessibility remain barriers to broader adoption. Strategic awareness campaigns and policy interventions could further promote organic food consumption.

**Introduction:**

The organic food market, often viewed as a symbol of health, sustainability, and responsible consumption, has witnessed significant global growth in recent years. This expansion is primarily driven by increasing consumer awareness of organic products' health and environmental benefits. The demand for organic food in India is rapidly rising, particularly among health-conscious individuals who are increasingly seeking chemical-free and eco-friendly alternatives to conventionally produced food. This shift in consumer preference is not limited to developed countries but is also evident in developing economies such as China and India (*Patel et al., 2007*). Factors fuelling this demand include growing concerns over food safety, environmental sustainability, and the desire for a healthier lifestyle. Research indicates that organic foods often contain higher nutrient content and lower pesticide residues (*Lu et al., 2006; Asad, 2021; Baranski et al., 2014; Ellis et al., 2006*). Moreover, organic farming contributes positively to the environment by improving soil quality and promoting biodiversity (*Tuck et al., 2014; Ponisio et al., 2015*).

India’s organic food market was valued at ₹22 billion in 2021 and is projected to reach ₹64 billion by 2025 (Minhas, 2024). This growth has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has heightened consumer focus on health and immunity. Demographically, regular organic food consumers tend to be female, well-educated, physically active and belong to higher-income groups (*Baudry et al., 2015*).

Despite its promising outlook, organic farming in India faces several challenges. These include higher production costs, lower crop yields, and limited awareness and expertise among farmers. Organic products are typically priced higher than their conventional counterparts, making them less accessible to low-income groups.

To address these challenges, regulatory bodies like the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have introduced certification systems such as the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) to ensure authenticity and build consumer confidence. With appropriate policy support and investment in farmer training, research, and infrastructure development, organic farming can enhance rural livelihoods and contribute significantly to India’s sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation goals.

**Methodology:**

The study was conducted at Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology (MPUAT), Udaipur, in 2024. One hundred respondents were selected randomly from various constituent colleges under MPUAT to ensure a representative sample. Data were collected using a structured Google Form developed based on a tailor-made questionnaire. This questionnaire was slightly modified to suit the objectives of the study. The Google Form was disseminated to the selected students electronically. The collected data were subjected to appropriate statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics such as Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and Mean Per Score (MPS) were calculated. Additionally, the responses were ranked based on the MPS values.

**Results and Discussion:**

**Personal Profile:**

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals diverse backgrounds, providing a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour towards organic food products. Out of the 100 respondents, a majority were male (73%), while 27% were female. Regarding marital status, the sample was predominantly unmarried (91%), with only 9% of the respondents being married. This aligns with the target group, which primarily consisted of students. In terms of educational qualification, the majority of respondents were graduates (44%), followed by postgraduates (24%), individuals with professional degrees (18%), higher secondary (12%), and a small percentage with only high school education (2%). This indicates that the respondents were generally well-educated, which may influence awareness and attitudes toward organic food consumption.

**Table 1: Personal Profile of the Respondents n= 100**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Parameters** | **F** |
| 1. **Gender** | | |
|  | Male | 73 |
|  | Female | 27 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Marital Status** | | |
|  | Married | 9 |
|  | Unmarried | 91 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Educational Qualification** | | |
|  | High School | 2 |
|  | Higher Secondary | 12 |
|  | Graduate | 44 |
|  | Postgraduate | 24 |
|  | Professional Degree | 18 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Occupation** | | |
|  | Students | 100 |
| 1. **Type of Family** | | |
|  | Nuclear | 65 |
|  | Joint | 35 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Number of Family Members** | | |
|  | Up to 4 (Small Size) | 31 |
|  | 5–6 (Medium Size) | 43 |
|  | More than 6 (Large Size) | 26 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Earning Members** | | |
|  | Only One | 48 |
|  | Two | 32 |
|  | More than Two | 20 |
| Total | | 100 |
| 1. **Annual Income** | | |
|  | Low | 17 |
|  | Medium | 67 |
|  | High | 16 |
| Total | | 100 |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Place of residence** | | |
|  | Urban | 19 |
|  | Semi-Urban | 24 |
|  | Rural | 57 |
| Total | | 100 |

F= Frequency, n= Number

Family type analysis showed that 65% of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 35% were from joint families. This distribution suggests a greater representation of individuals from modern nuclear family setups. Considering the size of the family, 43% of respondents belonged to medium-sized families (5–6 members), 31% to small-sized families (up to 4 members), and 26% to large-sized families (more than six members).

Regarding the number of earning members in the family, 48% had only one earning member, 32% had two earning members, and 20% had more than two. This data reflects moderate income dependency patterns within the families. Regarding annual income, most respondents (67%) reported a medium income level, while 17% and 16% belonged to low and high-income groups, respectively. This suggests that most respondents come from economically moderate backgrounds.

As for the place of residence, 57% of the respondents resided in rural areas, followed by 24% in semi-urban areas and 19% in urban settings. This indicates a higher participation of rural students, which could influence perceptions and accessibility to organic food products. (Kaur & Mogra, 2025).

**Table 2: Awareness of organic products among respondents n=100**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Statements** | **F** |
| 1. **Are you aware of organic Food products?** | | |
|  | Yes | 92 |
|  | No | 8 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **What do you understand by the term "organic"?** | |  |
|  | Chemical-free | 39 |
|  | Eco-friendly | 24 |
|  | Sustainable | 9 |
|  | Healthier | 16 |
|  | All | 12 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **How did you first learn about organic products?** | | |
|  | Social media | 36 |
|  | Friends/Family | 46 |
|  | Advertisements | 6 |
|  | Health Professionals | 12 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you believe organic products are better for health?** | |  |
|  | Yes | 87 |
|  | No | 8 |
|  | Maybe | 5 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you think organic products are environment-friendly** | | |
|  | Yes | 85 |
|  | No | 6 |
|  | Maybe | 9 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you know that organic food products have high nutritional Values?** | | |
|  | Yes | 77 |
|  | No | 10 |
|  | Maybe | 13 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you know how organic food products are produced?** | | |
|  | Yes | 79 |
|  | No | 15 |
|  | Maybe | 6 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you know about the organic certification?** | | |
|  | Yes | 74 |
|  | No | 18 |
|  | Maybe | 8 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do you know about agencies of organic certification?** | | |
|  | Yes | 66 |
|  | No | 33 |
|  | Maybe | 1 |
|  | total | 100 |
| 1. **Do You think organically cultivated produce is safer than conventional products?** | | |
|  | Yes | 77 |
|  | No | 13 |
|  | Maybe | 10 |
|  | total | 100 |

F= Frequency, n= Number

The findings indicate a high level of awareness regarding organic food products among the respondents. A significant majority (92%) reported being aware of organic food, while only 8% were not familiar with the term. When asked about their understanding of the term "organic," 39% associated it with being chemical-free, 24% with eco-friendliness, 16% with health benefits, and 9% with sustainability. Notably, 12% recognised organic food as encompassing all these attributes, reflecting a well-rounded understanding among a subset of respondents.

In terms of the source of initial information, friends and family were the most common influencers (46%), followed by social media (36%), health professionals (12%), and advertisements (6%). This highlights the importance of personal networks and digital platforms in shaping consumer awareness. A large proportion (87%) believed that organic products are better for health, 8% disagreed, and 5% remained uncertain. Similarly, 85% agreed that organic products are environment-friendly, underscoring a strong perception of sustainability associated with organic goods.

Regarding nutritional value, 77% of respondents acknowledged that organic foods have higher nutritional content. Meanwhile, 13% were uncertain, and 10% were unaware of this benefit. This suggests that while a majority are informed, there is still a need for broader educational outreach.

Awareness about the production process of organic food was also relatively high, with 79% stating they knew how such products are produced. However, 15% indicated a lack of knowledge, and 6% were unsure.

Regarding organic certification, 74% were aware of its existence, 18% did not know, and 8% were unsure. Awareness slightly decreased when asked about specific certification agencies, with 66% indicating familiarity, 33% unaware, and 1% uncertain.

Finally, when asked about the safety of organically cultivated produce compared to conventional products, 77% believed organic options were safer, 13% disagreed, and 10% were uncertain. This reflects a positive consumer perception of the safety and quality of organic food. (Kaur & Mogra, 2025).

**Table 3: Purchase behaviour of customers for organic food products n=100**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Statement** | **F** |
| 1. **Do you purchase organic products?** | | |
|  | Yes | 86 |
|  | No | 14 |
|  | Maybe | 0 |
|  | total | 100 |
|  | Purchase Behaviour |  |
| 1. **If yes, which organic food products do you purchase?** | | |
|  | Fruits | 7 |
|  | Vegetables | 20 |
|  | Grains | 16 |
|  | Fruits, Vegetables | 5 |
|  | Vegetable Grains | 1 |
|  | All above | 51 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **How often do you purchase organic products?** | | |
|  | Daily | 25 |
|  | Weekly | 18 |
|  | Monthly | 17 |
|  | Occasionally | 33 |
|  | Rarely | 7 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **Where do you usually buy organic products?** | | |
|  | Local Stores | 36 |
|  | Supermarkets | 16 |
|  | Online Platforms | 14 |
|  | Organic Specialty Stores | 9 |
|  | Farmers' Markets | 25 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **What motivates you to buy organic products?** | | |
|  | Health Benefits | 68 |
|  | Environmental Concerns | 6 |
|  | Quality Assurance (Certifications) | 20 |
|  | Brand Reputation | 4 |
|  | Peer/Family Influence | 2 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **What factors influence your decision to buy organic products?** | | |
|  | Price | 19 |
|  | Quality | 54 |
|  | Availability | 14 |
|  | Packaging | 2 |
|  | Brand | 4 |
|  | Certifications (e.g., Eco Mark, AGMARK) | 7 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **How much are you willing to spend on organic products compared to non-organic products?** | | |
|  | 10–20% More | 34 |
|  | 20–30% More | 35 |
|  | 30–50% More | 13 |
|  | Above 50% More | 18 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **How much Expensive organic food products are?** | | |
|  | Too Much Expensive | 23 |
|  | Expensive | 46 |
|  | Average priced | 29 |
|  | Not Expensive | 2 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **Buying organic food products affects family budget?** | | |
|  | Strongly Agree | 17 |
|  | Agree | 40 |
|  | Neutral | 32 |
|  | Disagree | 9 |
|  | Strongly Disagree | 2 |
|  | Total | 100 |
| 1. **What would encourage you to buy more organic products?** | | |
|  | Lower Prices | 16 |
|  | Better Availability | 54 |
|  | More Awareness Campaigns | 21 |
|  | Government Subsidies | 9 |
|  | Total | 100 |

F= Frequency, n= Number

The study reveals that most respondents (86%) actively purchase organic food products, indicating a positive inclination towards healthier and more sustainable food choices. Only 14% reported not purchasing organic products, suggesting limited resistance among the surveyed group.

Among the buyers, 51% indicated purchasing all organic food categories, including fruits, vegetables, and grains. Vegetables (20 %) and grains (16 %) were also purchased as individual categories, while 7% opted specifically for organic fruits. This suggests that vegetables are the most commonly sought-after organic items, potentially due to higher daily consumption and health considerations.

Regarding purchase frequency, 25% reported buying organic products daily, 18% purchased weekly, and 17% every month. A significant portion (33%) purchased occasionally, indicating that while regular use is every day, there is room to increase consistent consumption. Only 7% indicated rare purchases.

Regarding the place of purchase, local stores (36%) emerged as the most common source, followed by farmers' markets (25%) and supermarkets (16%). Online platforms (14%) and organic speciality stores (9%) were less frequented, indicating a preference for accessible and possibly trusted physical marketplaces.

Health benefits were the primary motivation for buying organic products, as cited by 68% of respondents. Quality assurance through certifications (20%) and environmental concerns (6%) were secondary motivators, while brand reputation and peer/family influence were less significant. This underscores the role of health consciousness in driving organic food demand.

When evaluating influencing factors, product quality (54%) was the most critical, followed by price (19%) and availability (14%). Other factors like certifications, branding, and packaging played a minimal role, highlighting that consumers prioritise tangible attributes over marketing or branding cues.

Price sensitivity was evident, with 34% of consumers willing to pay 10–20% more for organic products and 35% willing to pay 20–30% more. Notably, 18% were willing to pay over 50% more, suggesting a niche but strong commitment among specific consumers.

However, cost remains a concern, with 46% perceiving organic food as “expensive” and 23% describing it as “too much expensive.” Only 2% felt it was “not expensive,” reflecting a general perception of higher costs associated with organic goods.

The impact on household budgets was mixed: 17% strongly agreed, 40% agreed that purchasing organic products affects their family budget, while 32% remained neutral. Only 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed, confirming that affordability is a barrier for many.

Finally, better availability (54%) was cited as the top factor that would encourage increased purchases, followed by more awareness campaigns (21%) and lower prices (16%). Government subsidies (9%) were the least mentioned but still relevant, highlighting the potential role of policy in promoting organic consumption (Kaur & Mogra, 2025).

**Conclusion:**

The present study highlights a strong awareness and positive perception of organic food products among students at MPUAT, Udaipur. Most respondents were well-informed about organic foods' health and environmental benefits and showed a favourable attitude toward their consumption. Health consciousness emerged as the primary motivator for purchasing organic products, while factors such as quality, availability, and price significantly influenced buying decisions.

Despite the willingness of many consumers to pay a premium for organic products, cost and limited accessibility remain key challenges. Additionally, concerns related to certification awareness and the impact on family budgets indicate the need for enhanced education and supportive policies.

To promote the broader adoption of organic food products, improving availability, ensuring affordability, and strengthening consumer trust through transparent certification processes are essential. Government initiatives, awareness campaigns, and infrastructural support can play a pivotal role in addressing existing barriers and encouraging sustainable consumer practices.

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