

Consumer Perception and Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions Towards Organic Food Products: A Study of Vadakara City

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Abstract: The growing awareness of health, food safety, and environmental sustainability has increased consumers' interest in organic food products. This study examines consumers' perceptions and identifies the factors associated with their purchase decisions regarding organic food products in Vadakara City, Kerala. The study is based on primary data collected from 120 consumers through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling. The data were analysed using percentage analysis and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The findings show that 63.3% of the respondents were female, 58.3% belonged to the 30–45 years age group, and 41.7% were graduates. Social media was the major source of information about organic food products (43.3%), while 74.2% of respondents reported satisfaction with organic food products. The principal component analysis identified six factors explaining 69.822% of the total variance, product information, family well-being and purchase intention, safety, economic and environmental benefits, certification trust and environmental benefits, health, nutritional and sustainable farming benefits, product accessibility and social influence and immune-system benefits. The study recommends improving product availability, strengthening transparency in organic certification, increasing consumer awareness, and adopting effective promotional strategies to encourage the wider adoption of organic food products.

Keywords: Organic Food Products, Consumer Perception, Purchase Decisions, Consumer Behaviour.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The global organic food market has witnessed remarkable expansion in recent years, fuelled by heightened consumer awareness regarding health, environmental sustainability, and food safety issues (Rana & Paul, 2017; Singh et al., 2025). India, with its rich agricultural legacy and an expanding middle class, has positioned itself as a significant participant in this market, with a notable rise in organic food consumption across various states (Rahman et al., 2024). Recently, there has been a notable shift in consumer preferences towards healthier, safer, and more environmentally sustainable food options, resulting in a substantial increase in the demand for organic food products. Organic foods, which are grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms, or artificial additives, are regarded as more natural, nutritious, and eco-friendly. This change in consumer behavior indicates a growing awareness of health concerns, food safety matters, and environmental sustainability, especially among urban and educated demographics.

The increasing recognition of the importance of a healthy lifestyle among Indian consumers has resulted in a consistent rise in organic food sales among Indian retailers. Although factors such as health benefits, safety, taste, and nutritional value of organic food significantly impact consumer behavior, there are additional unspoken challenges that may hinder the purchasing process, including high prices, lack of understanding of the organic concept, and limited availability. In recent years, organic farming and the consumption of organic food products have gained popularity due to increasing consumer dissatisfaction with non-organic food products stemming from health and environmental issues. As a result, customers are becoming more mindful of their purchases and better informed (Furlow and Knott, 2009), leading to a growing inclination among consumers to seek environmentally friendly product alternatives (Jains and Kaur, 2006).

The appeal of organic food, perceived as healthier and more environmentally sustainable than its non-organic counterparts, is drawing significant consumer interest

(Ditlevsen et al., 2019). Once considered a niche market, the organic food sector is now experiencing growth across all demographics, particularly as educated youth and stay-at-home parents become increasingly aware of the health advantages associated with these products. In India, the demand for organic food is projected to reach unprecedented heights in the coming years, driven by the nation's rising digital literacy rate. As awareness grows regarding the harmful effects of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers on both the environment and public health, more individuals are recognizing these impacts. Consumers are becoming increasingly informed about the nutritional and environmental benefits of organic food products. In this context, the study investigates consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviours related to organic food products.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bashaa et al. (2015) emphasized that consumers exhibit heightened concern regarding health and nutritional values. The current study corroborates these findings, indicating that customers prioritize health and perceive organic food as more nutritious. Jyoti et al. (2017) discovered that health-conscious consumers are increasingly favoring organic food over conventionally grown alternatives. This change in consumer attitudes is significantly driven by the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, including heart conditions and depression. The necessity to purchase organic food to enhance quality of life will have substantial implications for the retail, distribution, and marketing sectors of businesses. Ananda Kumar et al. (2025) found that consumers are becoming more aware of the health advantages and environmental significance of organic foods. Positive perceptions, health awareness, and environmental concerns are crucial in influencing purchasing intentions. Nevertheless, challenges such as high prices, limited availability, distrust in certifications, and lack of awareness pose significant obstacles to widespread adoption. The findings underscore the necessity for enhanced consumer education, greater transparency in certification processes, and targeted marketing initiatives to promote organic food consumption. Mangalapuri et al. (2026) noted that income levels significantly affect consumer attitudes ($p < 0.05$), with higher-income individuals more inclined to purchase organic food. The study advocates for policy measures to enhance the accessibility and affordability of organic food. Marketing strategies should concentrate on price adjustments, broader availability, and promotional efforts to boost adoption rates. In summary, while organic food is generally accepted and preferred, issues of affordability and accessibility persist as major concerns. Future initiatives should aim to lower costs, expand distribution channels, and build consumer trust in organic certifications.

➤ *Need for the Study*

The demand for organic food products has seen a notable rise in recent years, driven by an increasing awareness of health, food safety, environmental sustainability, and the negative impacts of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Consumers are progressively searching for healthier and safer food options, positioning the organic food market as one of

the most rapidly expanding sectors within the food industry. However, despite this growing interest, the actual purchasing of organic food products is still affected by various factors, including price, product availability, quality perception, trust in organic certification, awareness, and social influence. Vadakara City has experienced a steady increase in the availability of organic food products through supermarkets, organic stores, and online platforms. Nonetheless, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding how consumers in this area perceive organic food products and the factors that affect their purchasing decisions. Gaining insight into consumers' perceptions and purchasing behavior is crucial for organic food producers, retailers, marketers, and policymakers. The results of this study will assist in identifying the primary factors that motivate consumers to buy organic food products, as well as the obstacles that prevent them from making regular purchases.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the selected consumers.
- To examine consumers' perceptions regarding organic food products.
- To identify the factors associated with purchase decisions of organic food products among the consumers.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study adopted a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine consumers' perceptions and the factors associated with their purchase decisions regarding organic food products in Vadakara City, Kozhikode District, Kerala. Vadakara City was selected as the study area considering the availability and consumption of organic food products through organic stores, supermarkets, local shops, and online platforms. The target population consisted of consumers who purchase organic food products in Vadakara City. Since a complete sampling frame of organic food consumers was not available, a non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted, and a total of 120 consumers who had experience purchasing organic food products were selected for the study.

Primary data were collected directly from the selected respondents using a structured questionnaire, which included questions relating to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, sources of information, satisfaction with organic food products and perceptions regarding the quality, safety, health, environmental, accessibility, certification, and social-influence aspects of organic food products. Secondary data were collected from books, academic journals, research articles, magazines, newspapers, and credible online sources to develop the conceptual framework and support the review of literature. The study also followed basic ethical considerations by informing respondents about the purpose of the study and using the information collected solely for academic and research purposes. Participation was voluntary, and the confidentiality of respondents' information was maintained. The study is limited to consumers of organic food

products in Vadakara City, and the use of convenience sampling and a sample size of 120 respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings to the wider population.

➤ Findings of the Study

The socio-demographic profile of the consumers provides an overview of the characteristics of consumers participating in the study on organic food products.

Table 1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Selected Consumers

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	36.7
	Female	76	63.3
Age	Less than 30 years	33	27.5
	30–45 years	70	58.3
	Above 45 years	17	14.2
Educational Qualification	SSLC	19	15.8
	Higher Secondary	40	33.3
	Degree	50	41.7
	Postgraduate	11	9.2
Marital Status	Married	84	70.0
	Unmarried	18	15.0
	Separated	10	8.3
	Widowed	8	6.7
Occupation	Government Sector	50	41.7
	Private Sector	25	20.8
	Self-employed	33	27.5
	Others	12	10.0
Monthly Income	Less than ₹25,000	57	47.5
	₹25,000–₹50,000	50	41.7
	Above ₹50,000	13	10.8
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The socio-economic profile of the participants indicates that 63.3% were female and 36.7% were male. In terms of age, the largest group (58.3%) was in the 30–45 years category, followed by 27.5% who were below 30 years and 14.2% who were above 45 years. Regarding educational attainment, 41.7% were graduates, 33.3% had completed higher secondary education, 15.8% had SSLC qualifications, and 9.2% were postgraduates. Concerning marital status, 70.0% were married, while 15.0% were unmarried, 8.3% were separated, and 6.7% were widowed. The occupational distribution shows that 41.7% were employed in the government sector, 27.5% were self-employed, 20.8%

worked in the private sector, and 10.0% were engaged in other occupations. In terms of monthly income, 47.5% earned less than ₹25,000, 41.7% earned between ₹25,000 and ₹50,000, and 10.8% earned above ₹50,000.

➤ Consumer Perception Towards Organic Food Products

Table 2 presents consumers' perceptions towards organic food products in terms of their sources of information, satisfaction level, purchase frequency, preferred place of purchase, amount spent, and duration of consumption.

Table 2 Consumer Perception Towards Organic Food Products

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sources of Information	Television/Radio	28	23.3
	Newspaper	18	15.0
	Social Media	52	43.3
	Friends & Relatives	22	18.4
Satisfaction with organic food products	Yes	89	74.2
	No	31	25.8
Frequency of purchase of organic food products	Daily	27	22.5
	Weekly	47	39.2
	Monthly	34	28.3
	Occasionally	12	10.0
Preferred place of purchase for organic food product	Online	21	17.5
	Organic store	49	40.8
	Super market	33	27.5

	Local shop	17	14.2
Amount spent to purchase organic food product	Less than Rs 1500	29	24.2
	Rs 1500-3000	77	64.2
	Above Rs 3000	14	11.6
Duration of consuming organic food products	Less than 1 year	31	25.8
	1-2 years	68	56.7
	Above 2 years	21	17.5
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Social media (43.3%), including platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, was the major source of information regarding organic food products among the respondents. This was followed by television/radio (23.3%), friends and relatives (18.4%), and newspapers (15.0%). The findings indicate that digital media has become an important channel for creating awareness and disseminating information about organic food products. Regarding consumer satisfaction, 74.2% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with organic food products, while 25.8% reported dissatisfaction. With respect to purchase frequency, 39.2% purchased organic food products weekly, followed by monthly purchases (28.3%), daily purchases (22.5%), and occasional purchases (10.0%). These findings indicate that organic food products form a regular part of the purchasing behaviour of a considerable proportion of respondents.

Regarding the preferred place of purchase, organic stores (40.8%) were the most preferred shopping destination, followed by supermarkets (27.5%), online platforms (17.5%), and local shops (14.2%). In terms of expenditure, 64.2% of respondents spent ₹1,500–₹3,000 on organic food products, while 24.2% spent less than ₹1,500 and 11.6% spent more than ₹3,000. With regard to duration of consumption, 56.7% had been consuming organic food products for 1–2 years, 25.8% for less than one year, and 17.5% for more than two years. Overall, the findings indicate a favourable perception and growing adoption of organic food products among the respondents.

IV. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Consumer purchasing decisions regarding organic food products are shaped by a blend of health, environmental, economic, and social considerations. As awareness of healthy living and sustainable consumption rises, consumers are increasingly discerning in their food selections. Organic food items are frequently viewed as healthier, safer, and more environmentally sustainable compared to conventionally produced alternatives. The factors influencing consumers' decisions to purchase organic food products are numerous and interconnected, encompassing health awareness, product quality, environmental issues, pricing, availability, and lifestyle choices. Given the correlation among these variables, factor analysis serves as a suitable statistical method for uncovering the fundamental dimensions that affect consumers' purchasing choices related to organic food products.

To determine the appropriateness of applying factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.1. The KMO value was 0.712, indicating adequate sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 786.643$, $df = 153$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test Measures

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy	.712
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity – Approx. Chi-square	786.643
Degrees of freedom	153
Significance level	.000

Source: Estimation based on field survey, 2026

The communalities for the variables were assessed to determine the proportion of variance accounted for by the extracted components. All the variables had communalities greater than 0.50, indicating that substantial proportions of their variance were explained by the extracted components. Table 3.2 presents the rotated component matrix for the 18 variables.

Table 4 Rotated Component Matrix

Factors	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organic food products Enhances the immune system						.854
It is Nutrient-rich and flavourful in taste				.739		
Organic food products are easily accessible in local stores and markets					.703	

The consumption of organic food products supports overall health				.781		
Influences from social media and health experts affect my buying choices					.761	
Organic foods are free from pesticide residues		.644				
Organic food contributes to improved soil quality			.664			
Investing more in organic food products is beneficial		.756				
Organic foods are safer than their conventional counterparts		.780				
Organic foods provide a natural means of environmental protection		.627				
Product information influences my purchasing decisions.	.680					
Organic foods do not contain food additives	.743					
Organic food products for the well-being of my family.	.843					
I plan to keep purchasing organic food products in the future.	.692					
I have confidence in the quality of organic food products.	.786					
Organic certification boosts my trust in the product			.931			
Organic farming helps reduce air pollution			.923			
Organic farming promotes sustainable agricultural practices				.835		
Eigen value	4.146	2.465	2.030	1.625	1.286	1.016
Percentage of variance	23.032	13.694	11.276	9.029	7.147	5.644
Cumulative percentage	23.032	36.726	48.003	57.031	64.178	69.822

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Rotation Method: Varimax With Kaiser Normalization

➤ *Rotation converged in 9 iterations*

Factor 1 comprises five dimensions: product information influences purchasing decisions, organic foods do not contain food additives, organic food products contribute to family well-being, respondents plan to continue purchasing organic food products in the future, and respondents have confidence in the quality of organic food products. These dimensions account for 23.032% of the total variance and are considered Product Information, Family Well-being and Purchase Intention. Factor 2 comprises four dimensions: organic foods are free from pesticide residues, investing more in organic food products is beneficial, organic foods are safer than their conventional counterparts, and organic foods provide a natural means of environmental protection. These dimensions explain 13.694% of the total variance and are categorized Safety, Economic and Environmental Benefits.

Factor 3 comprises three dimensions: organic certification boosts trust in the product, organic farming helps reduce air pollution, and organic food contributes to improved soil quality. These dimensions explain 11.276% of the total variance and are categorized Certification Trust and Environmental Benefits. Factor 4 comprises three dimensions: organic food products are nutrient-rich and flavourful, organic farming promotes sustainable agricultural practices, and consumption of organic food products supports overall health. These dimensions account for 9.029% of the total variance and are considered Health, Nutritional and Sustainable Farming Benefits.

Factor 5 comprises two dimensions: organic food products are easily accessible in local stores and markets, and influences from social media and health experts affect buying choices. These dimensions explain 7.147% of the total variance and are categorized Product Accessibility and Social Influence. Factor 6 consists of the dimension that organic food products enhance the immune system, accounting for

5.644% of the total variance, and is considered Immune-System Benefits. Overall, the six components explain 69.822% of the total variance. Overall, the six factors explain 69.822 per cent of the total variance, indicating that the identified dimensions provide substantial coverage of the factors associated with consumers' purchase decisions towards organic food products. These findings indicate that consumers' decisions regarding organic food products are associated with multiple dimensions, including product information, perceived safety, health benefits, environmental concerns, certification, accessibility, social influence, and family well-being. The findings of the study are consistent with Yadav and Pathak (2016), who found that environmental concern, health awareness, and consumer attitudes significantly influence consumers' intentions to purchase organic food. Similarly, Kalyani and Prabhavathi (2023) reported that food safety and other personal and influential factors play an important role in consumers' decisions to purchase organic food products. These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of consumer preferences and purchasing decisions in the organic food market.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumers have a generally favourable perception towards organic food products, with health, safety, environmental concerns, accessibility, and social influence emerging as important dimensions associated with consumers' purchase decisions. Social media was identified as the major source of information about organic food products, while organic stores were the most preferred purchase destination. The Principal Component Analysis identified six dimensions: Product Information, Family Well-being and Purchase Intention; Safety, Economic and Environmental Benefits; Certification Trust and Environmental Benefits; Health, Nutritional and Sustainable Farming Benefits; Product Accessibility and Social Influence; and Immune-System Benefits. Together, these six

components explained 69.822% of the total variance, indicating that the identified dimensions capture a substantial proportion of the variation in consumers' perceptions regarding organic food products.

The findings highlight the importance of providing reliable product information, ensuring product safety and accessibility, strengthening transparency in organic certification, and communicating the health and environmental benefits of organic food products. Therefore, organic food producers and retailers should focus on improving product availability, maintaining quality and certification standards, and adopting effective promotional strategies, particularly through digital and social media platforms. Policymakers can support the wider adoption of organic food products by strengthening consumer awareness programmes, promoting transparent certification practices, and improving access to organic products. These measures can contribute to greater consumer confidence, informed purchasing decisions, and the promotion of sustainable food consumption.

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