



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARD ORGANIC AND NATURAL FOOD PRODUCTS

¹A. K. Makwana, ²Mehul Y. Patel

¹ Associate Professor, ² PG Student, MBA (Dairy and Food Business Management)

¹ SMC College of Dairy Science, Kamdhenu University, Anand, India.

Abstract

The present study aims to examine consumer awareness, perception, and purchasing behavior toward organic and natural food products. Primary data were collected from 43 respondents through a structured Google Form questionnaire. The survey covered areas such as awareness, purchase frequency, factors influencing purchase decisions, and willingness to shift to organic products. Results indicate that most consumers are aware of organic and natural foods and associate them with health benefits and environmental safety. However, high prices and limited availability remain key barriers to regular purchase. The findings highlight a positive attitude among consumers toward organic products, with many expressing willingness to switch if prices are comparable to conventional foods. The study concludes that while awareness is high, actual purchasing behavior is still shaped by economic considerations.

Keywords: Organic food, Natural food, Consumer perception, Awareness, Purchase behavior, Health consciousness

Introduction

The global shift toward healthier and more sustainable food habits has brought increasing attention to organic and natural food products. These products are produced without synthetic chemicals, fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms and are perceived to be safer and more environmentally friendly. In India, the organic food market has expanded rapidly, supported by rising health awareness and initiatives such as the 'Jaivik Bharat' certification scheme. Despite this, many consumers still perceive organic foods as expensive and less accessible. College students and young professionals are emerging consumers with evolving attitudes toward health and sustainability. Understanding their perception and behavior provides valuable insights for marketers and policymakers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the awareness level of consumers toward organic and natural food products.

2. To analyze consumer perception regarding the health benefits and authenticity of organic foods.
3. To study consumers' willingness to purchase or switch to organic products based on price and availability.

Research Methodology

The present study employs a descriptive research design to analyze consumer perception and awareness toward organic and natural food products. Primary data were collected from 43 respondents through a structured questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. A convenience sampling method was used. Collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, applying percentage and frequency analysis to interpret the results.

Results and Discussion

1. Awareness and Knowledge of Organic Foods

The study reveals that 88.4% of respondents have heard of organic food products, indicating high awareness. Most (53.5%) purchase occasionally, and 20.9% buy regularly. Around 79% believe organic food is healthier than conventional food. However, affordability and accessibility limit regular consumption. About 62.8% agree that higher prices are justified, and 51.2% consider certification logos such as FSSAI or India Organic crucial in trusting products. A significant 69.8% would switch to organic foods if prices were comparable, and 79% would recommend them. These results show strong awareness but moderate behavioral change, as economic and trust factors influence buying behavior.

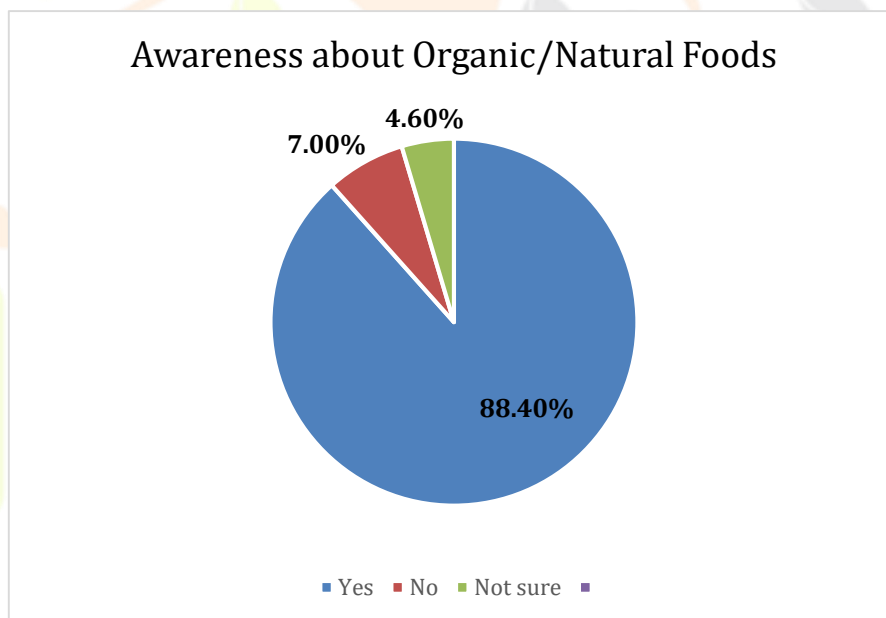


Figure 1: Awareness about Organic/Natural Foods

2. Frequency of Purchase and Health Perception

More than half of the respondents (53.5%) purchase organic or natural food products **occasionally**, suggesting that while interest is high, consistent consumption is limited. Only 20.9% reported regular purchase, mainly due to price constraints and limited availability. Furthermore, 79.1% of respondents believed that **organic food is healthier** than conventional products, validating the perception that health consciousness is a primary motivator.

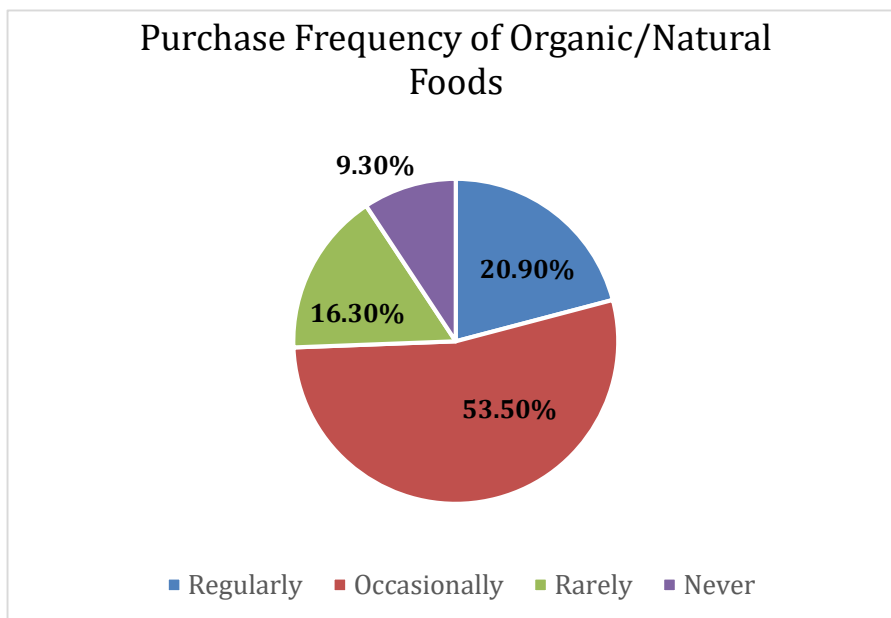


Figure 2: Frequency of Purchase and Health Perception

3. Price Sensitivity and Value Perception

A combined **62.8%** of respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the higher prices of organic products are justified by their health and environmental benefits. However, **23.3%** remained neutral, and **13.9%** disagreed, suggesting that while awareness of benefits is high, **economic affordability remains a decisive factor** in actual purchase behavior.

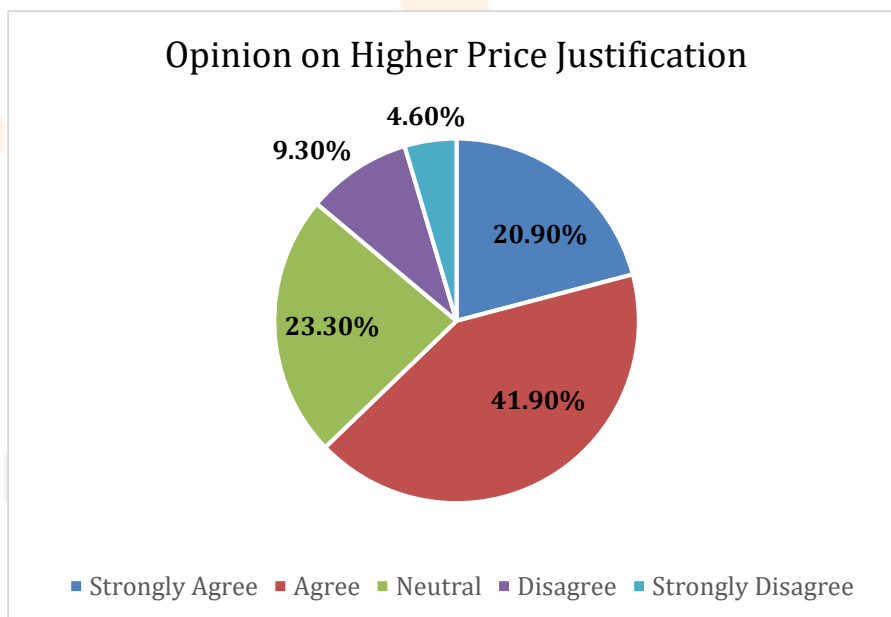


Figure 3: Price Sensitivity and Value Perception

4. Trust and Certification

More than half of respondents (**51.2%**) considered **certification labels** highly important when purchasing organic foods, indicating significant reliance on official verification for authenticity. This suggests that **trust and labeling transparency** are critical in shaping consumer decisions and reducing skepticism about product genuineness.

Table 1: Importance of Certification (FSSAI / India Organic)

Importance of Certification (FSSAI / India Organic)	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Important	22	51.2%
Somewhat Important	12	27.9%
Neutral	5	11.6%
Not Important	4	9.3%

5. Future Intentions and Recommendations

A promising **69.8%** of respondents stated they would **switch to organic foods** completely if prices were comparable to regular foods. Similarly, **79%** of respondents indicated they would **recommend organic foods** to others. These responses highlight a **positive perception and readiness to adopt** organic consumption, provided the barriers of price and availability are addressed.

Table 2: Future Intentions and Recommendations

Willingness to Switch if Prices are Similar	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Definitely	14	32.6%
Probably	16	37.2%
Not Sure	7	16.3%
Unlikely	4	9.3%
Never	2	4.6%

Limitations

Although the survey was distributed among a large number of respondents, only 43 valid responses were received, which may limit generalizability. The use of convenience sampling may not fully represent diverse consumer segments.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly indicate that consumers are increasingly aware and informed about organic and natural food products, with **88.4%** of respondents having prior knowledge of such items. A majority of them associate organic foods with health benefits, purity, and environmental sustainability, demonstrating a strong positive perception. However, only **20.9%** of consumers reported purchasing these products regularly, and **53.5%** occasionally, which reflects a significant gap between awareness and consistent buying behaviour. The higher price of organic products, limited market availability, and lack of trust in certification remain the primary deterrents to regular consumption. Although **62.8%** of participants agreed that the premium price of organic food is justified, affordability still plays a decisive role in actual purchase decisions.

Despite these constraints, the study highlights a promising shift in consumer attitudes. More than **69.8%** of respondents expressed willingness to switch to organic products if prices were comparable to conventional ones, and **79%** indicated that they would recommend them to others. This demonstrates that consumer perception is evolving toward health-conscious and sustainable choices. To encourage consistent adoption, the study suggests strengthening **certification systems**, improving **price accessibility**, and ensuring **wider availability** of organic products. Furthermore, government initiatives, awareness campaigns, and retailer participation in transparent marketing could enhance consumer confidence. Overall, the research concludes

that the organic food market in India holds significant potential, provided affordability and authenticity challenges are effectively addressed.

References

1. Joseph, N., Nelliyanil, M., Rai, S., YP, R. B., Kotian, S. M., Ghosh, T., & Singh, M. (2015). Fast food consumption pattern and its association with overweight among high school boys in Mangalore city of southern India. *Journal of clinical and diagnostic research: JCDR*, 9(5), LC13.
2. Madan, S., Verma, R., & Mathur, G. (2021). Junk food consumption pattern by undergraduate students of Dayalbagh educational institute, Agra. *Indian Journal of Public Health*, 12(3), 241.
3. Roy, A., Ghosh, A., & Vashisht, D. (2023). The consumer perception and purchasing attitude towards organic food: a critical review. *Nutrition & Food Science*, 53(3), 578-599.
4. Balaji, V., & Injodey, J. I. (2017). Organic food products: A study on perceptions of Indian consumers. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 47(1), 26-40.

