

A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards organic products in Kanchipuram District. With a growing awareness of health and environmental sustainability, understanding consumer behavior towards organic products is crucial for businesses and policymakers. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive insights. Statistical analysis and thematic analysis are utilized to explore the relationship between consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intention towards organic products. Additionally, demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education level are examined to understand their influence on consumer behavior. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders interested in promoting sustainable consumption patterns and supporting the growth of the organic products market in Kanchipuram District. Therefore it is concluded that The increasing demand for organic products in Kanchipuram District is driven by multiple interrelated factors. By addressing health and environmental concerns, improving product quality and safety perceptions, and enhancing consumer awareness, stakeholders can effectively tap into the growing market for organic products.

Keywords: Consumer, Attitude, Purchase Intention, Organic Product.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides an overview of the significance of the study, highlighting the importance of understanding consumer behavior towards organic products in Kanchipuram District. It presents the research problem, objectives, and scope of the study, setting the context for the subsequent chapters. Understanding the factors that shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products in Kanchipuram District is vital for several reasons. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into the dynamics of consumer behavior in a specific geographic context, shedding light on the preferences and motivations of local consumers. Secondly, it offers critical information for organic product producers and retailers, enabling them to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to better meet consumer needs. Lastly, it informs policymakers and advocacy groups about the potential for promoting sustainable consumption practices and supporting the growth of the organic sector. Against this backdrop, this research endeavors to delve deeper into

the nuances of consumer behavior towards organic products in Kanchipuram District. By examining the underlying factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in the context of organic product consumption. Through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the research seeks to uncover the drivers and barriers to adoption, demographic variations, and emerging trends in consumer preferences.

By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this study aspires to offer actionable insights that can empower businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders to make informed decisions. Ultimately, the findings of this research endeavor to contribute to the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns, the empowerment of local producers, and the enhancement of consumer welfare in Kanchipuram District and beyond.

Background of Organic Products and Their Significance

Organic products have emerged as a prominent component of the contemporary consumer landscape, embodying a paradigm shift towards healthier, environmentally sustainable, and ethically produced goods. The term "organic" refers to products that are cultivated, processed, and handled without the use of synthetic chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Instead, organic agriculture relies on natural and sustainable practices that prioritize soil health, biodiversity conservation, and ecological balance.

The significance of organic products stems from several interconnected factors:

1. **Health Benefits:** Organic products are often perceived as healthier alternatives to conventional products due to their reduced exposure to synthetic chemicals and additives. Consumers associate organic food with higher nutritional value, better taste, and lower risk of pesticide residues, making them an appealing choice for health-conscious individuals.
2. **Environmental Sustainability:** Organic farming practices prioritize environmental sustainability by minimizing the use of synthetic inputs, conserving natural resources, and promoting soil health and biodiversity. By eschewing chemical fertilizers and pesticides, organic agriculture reduces water pollution, soil erosion, and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a more resilient and ecologically balanced food system.
3. **Ethical Considerations:** Many consumers choose organic products for ethical reasons, such as concerns about animal welfare, fair labor practices, and support for small-scale farmers. Organic certification standards often include criteria related to animal welfare, fair wages, and social responsibility, providing assurance to consumers that their purchasing decisions align with their values.
4. **Food Safety and Quality Assurance:** Organic certification standards mandate rigorous quality control measures and traceability requirements throughout the production and supply chain. As a result, consumers perceive organic products as safer and of higher quality compared to conventional alternatives, leading to increased trust and confidence in organic brands.
5. **Sustainable Agriculture:** Organic farming practices prioritize regenerative and sustainable agricultural techniques that promote soil health, conserve water resources, and mitigate climate

change impacts. By fostering biodiversity, minimizing chemical inputs, and promoting crop rotation and conservation tillage, organic agriculture offers a viable alternative to conventional farming methods that rely heavily on synthetic inputs and monoculture cropping systems.

Factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products are multifaceted and can vary depending on individual preferences, demographic characteristics, and contextual factors. Here are some key factors that commonly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products:

1. Perceived Product Quality: Consumers often associate organic products with higher quality, freshness, and taste compared to conventional products. Positive experiences with organic products, such as superior flavor and texture, can enhance consumer attitudes and willingness to purchase.
2. Health Benefits: The perception that organic products are healthier and safer than conventional alternatives is a significant driver of consumer demand. Consumers may choose organic products due to concerns about pesticide residues, synthetic additives, and genetically modified ingredients, as well as perceived health benefits such as higher nutritional content.
3. Environmental Concerns: Environmental sustainability is a motivating factor for many consumers when purchasing organic products. Organic farming practices, which prioritize soil health, biodiversity conservation, and reduced chemical inputs, resonate with consumers who are environmentally conscious and seek to minimize their ecological footprint.
4. Ethical Considerations: Consumers may be influenced by ethical considerations such as animal welfare, fair labor practices, and support for small-scale farmers when choosing organic products. Organic certification standards often include criteria related to animal welfare, fair wages, and social responsibility, providing assurance to ethically minded consumers.
5. Price Sensitivity: The perceived higher cost of organic products relative to conventional alternatives can act as a barrier to purchase for price-sensitive consumers. While some consumers may be willing to pay a premium for perceived quality, others may prioritize affordability and opt for conventional products.
6. Product Availability and Accessibility: The availability and accessibility of organic products in local markets, grocery stores, and online platforms influence consumer purchase intentions. Limited product availability, especially in rural areas, can deter consumers from purchasing organic products regularly.
7. Marketing and Branding: Effective marketing strategies, including product labeling, branding, and promotional campaigns, play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products. Transparent labeling, certification seals, and educational marketing initiatives can enhance consumer trust and confidence in organic brands.
8. Social Influences: Social factors such as word-of-mouth recommendations, social media influence, and cultural norms can impact consumer attitudes towards organic products. Positive peer perceptions and social trends towards organic consumption may influence individual purchase decisions.

9. Personal Values and Lifestyle Choices: Consumers' personal values, lifestyle choices, and dietary preferences shape their attitudes and behaviors towards organic products. Health-conscious individuals, environmental activists, and proponents of sustainable living may be more inclined to purchase organic products as a reflection of their values and beliefs.

10. Demographic Characteristics: Demographic variables such as age, gender, income level, education, and urban/rural residence can influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products. For example, younger consumers may prioritize environmental sustainability, while older consumers may prioritize health benefits.

Overall, a combination of factors, including product quality, health benefits, environmental concerns, price sensitivity, marketing strategies, social influences, personal values, and demographic characteristics, collectively shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products. Understanding these factors is crucial for businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable consumption patterns and support the growth of the organic products market.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Suchitra et al. (2017), scrutinized the buyer attitude towards organic products consist of interest shown to buy the product, preference for different products, for example, cereals, vegetables, fruits and so forth to comprehend the perception of the buyers towards organic items in a better manner. Increasing health consciousness among the individuals and the demand for organic products among the people in the current situation prompted the researcher to examine about the buyer attitude towards the organic items, its pricing, and knowledge of buyers towards organic items and so on in an increasingly concentrated manner. Meghalaya, one of the best states for organic items, most part of the ranches of the state cultivate the conventional way without or least utilization of composts and plant protection synthetics. Some of the significant organic crops generated naturally in Meghalaya and having great market demand are orange, pineapple, ginger, cashew nut. Customers are additionally liked to buy numerous organic product items, especially in large urban communities. But because of inappropriate market linkage, ignorance of the individuals about organic produce, no product distinction among organic and inorganic items and so on came about into cost advantage (premium cost) to the organic products created in the state. The outcomes vividly demonstrated that fruits are the utmost favoured organic item favoured by the respondents between the organic buying merchandises in all the salary groups, followed by vegetables and various merchandises, while oats was the least favoured merchandise. The inclinations for grains are enhanced with the enhancement in the salary of the respondents. Cost premium of the organic items were relying upon factors like salary design, sorts of products, distribution channels, and present economic situations and so on. Yet, this exceptional cost was not acknowledged by the customers for a wide range of merchandise. Buyers communicated their eagerness to pay greater cost premium for fruits and other merchandises, which are expended straightforwardly and lesser cost premium for different merchandise, for example, cereals and pulses.

Rengeswari, (2019) conducted a study on buying behaviour of consumers towards organic product. In last few decades, organic product sector is growing rapidly. Consumers have a great interest in their organic habits like healthy, tasty, high nutrition, environmental and social welfare concern and also sustainability. The objective of this paper is to gain knowledge about factors influencing the consumers' buying behaviour towards organic product. The paper investigated the perception of the respondents towards organic product such as perceived health, product attribute, product feature, social welfare and availability. It also focuses on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic product in Sivakasi. Factor analysis has been applied to analyse the perception towards the purchase of organic product products. Correlation analysis has been used to find the significant relationship among factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic product. Multiple regression analysis used to find the factors influencing the purchase behaviour indicates that the product feature highly influences the purchase behaviour and hence, it was suggested by the researcher that a sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic product products. Positioning organic product products in the minds of consumers would influence consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming. It was concluded that concluded that the consumers' health conscious, quality, safety and value for money would lead to purchase organic product. In last few decades, organic product sector is growing rapidly. Consumers have a great interest in their organic habits like healthy, tasty, high nutrition, environmental and social welfare concern and also sustainability. The objective of this paper is to gain knowledge about factors influencing the consumers' buying behaviour towards organic product. The paper investigated the perception of the respondents towards organic product such as perceived health, product attribute, product feature, social welfare and availability. It also focuses on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic product in Sivakasi. Factor analysis has been applied to analyse the perception towards the purchase of organic product products. Correlation analysis has been used to find the significant relationship among factors influencing the buying behaviour towards organic product. Multiple regression analysis used to find the factors influencing the purchase behaviour indicates that the product feature highly influences the purchase behaviour and hence, it was suggested by the researcher that a sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic product products. Positioning organic product products in the minds of consumers would influence consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming. It was concluded that concluded that the consumers' health conscious, quality, safety and value for money would lead to purchase organic product.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used in the study. It describes the process of administering surveys and conducting interviews to gather primary data from consumers in Kanchipuram District. Statistical analysis and thematic analysis are employed to analyze the collected data.

Significance of the study

This study on factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products in Kanchipuram District holds significant importance for several reasons. This understanding can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies to meet consumer needs and preferences. Businesses can use the insights to develop products that align with the health and environmental concerns of consumers, thereby increasing their market share in the organic products sector. By understanding the consumer demand for organic products, policymakers can create incentives and support systems for farmers to adopt organic farming practices, leading to sustainable agricultural development. The study adds to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior and organic products, providing a foundation for future research in this field.

Statement of the problem

Despite the growing popularity of organic products worldwide, there remains a gap in our understanding of consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products in specific geographic contexts such as Kanchipuram District. While organic farming practices have gained traction in the district, driven by increasing awareness of health and environmental sustainability, it is essential to examine the factors influencing consumer behavior towards organic products to inform market strategies and policy interventions effectively. The primary problem addressed by this study is the lack of comprehensive insights into the drivers and barriers shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products in Kanchipuram District. Identifying the key factors that influence consumer purchase intentions towards organic products is essential for businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders. Factors such as perceived product quality, health benefits, environmental concerns, pricing, availability, and marketing strategies may impact consumer decision-making and adoption of organic products. Assessing market opportunities and challenges for organic products in Kanchipuram District is essential for promoting sustainable consumption patterns and supporting the growth of the organic sector. Identifying barriers to adoption, such as price sensitivity, limited product availability, and lack of awareness, can inform strategies to overcome these challenges and capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study on factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products in Kanchipuram District encompasses several key dimensions. The study focuses specifically on Kanchipuram District, situated in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. While the findings may have broader implications for other regions, the primary emphasis is on understanding consumer behavior within this specific geographic context. The study examines consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards a wide range of organic products, including but not limited to food items, beverages, personal care products, and household goods. By encompassing a diverse array of product categories, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the organic products market. The study explores a range of factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products, including perceived product quality, health benefits, environmental concerns, price sensitivity, marketing strategies, social

influences, personal values, and lifestyle choices. By examining these factors, the study aims to provide insights into the drivers and barriers to adoption of organic products.

Objectives of the study

- To analyse the interrelationship among the various factors of consumer attitude and purchase intention towards Organic products.
- To develop and test the research model which integrates the factors of consumer attitude and purchase intentions towards Organic products using the SEM approach.

Hypothesis of the study

- There is no significant difference between various factors of consumer attitude and purchase intention towards Organic products.
- There will be no significant difference between consumer attitude and purchase intentions towards Organic products using the SEM approach.

Sampling

Sampling procedure is the process of choosing part of a population that represents the entire population. The Convenience sampling (Non-probability sampling technique) is adopted to select the samples from the target population. Hence, the final sample size of the present research is 793.

Statistical techniques used

The responses obtained from the respondents through questionnaire has been analyzed by using statistical techniques viz., Mean, Standard Deviation, Weighted Average Method, Regression, Correlation and Friedman Tests and SEM.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results section presents the findings of the study, including quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights from interviews. It highlights key factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards organic products in Kanchipuram District, as well as demographic variations in consumer behaviour.

Table 1
Distribution of respondents on the basis of professional

S. No	Professional	Frequency	Percent
1	Govt. Employee	220	27.7
2	Private employee	327	41.2
3	Businessman	137	17.3
4	Student	74	9.33
5	Others	35	4.41
	Total	793	100.0

The above table exhibits the details about the distribution of the respondents based on professional. It is observed from the table that 27.7 percent of the respondents are Govt. employee, 41.2 percent of the respondents are private employee, 17.3 percent of the respondents are businessman, 9.33 percent of them student and 4.41 percent of the respondents are others. So, majority of the respondents are private employee.

Figure 1
Distribution of respondents on the basis of professional

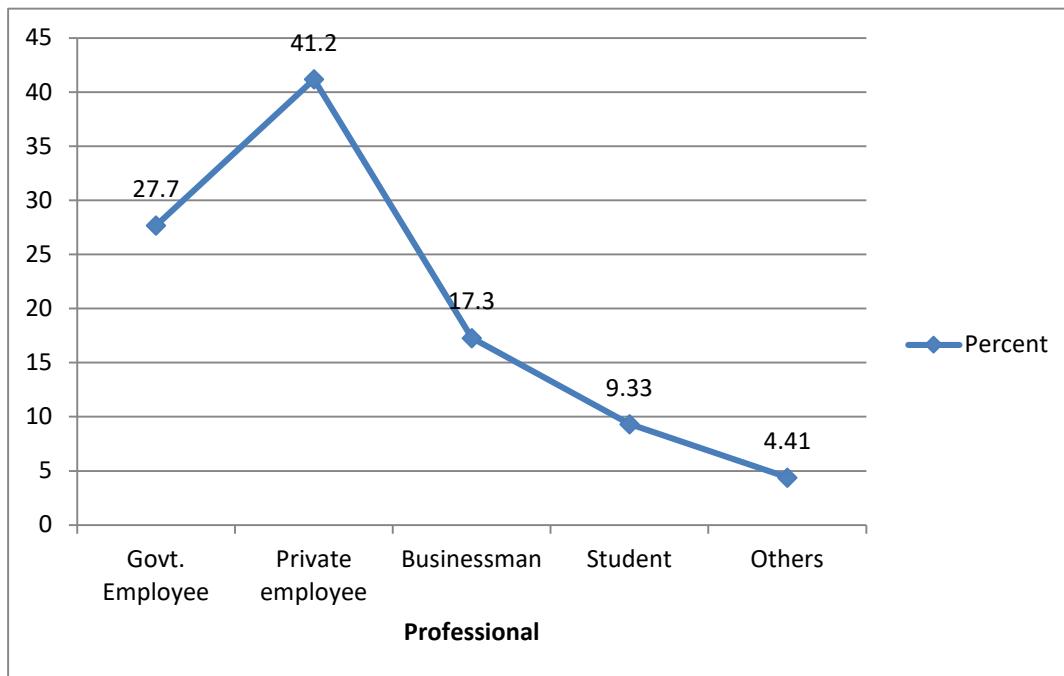


Table 2 Classification based on type of family

S. No	Type of family	Frequency	Percent
1	Joint	313	39.5
2	Nuclear	480	60.5
3	Total	793	100.0

Table 2 exposes that classification based on type of family, the majority (60.5%) of the sampled consumers responded area nuclear family and 39.5% of the respondents are joint family.

Figure 2

Classification based on type of family

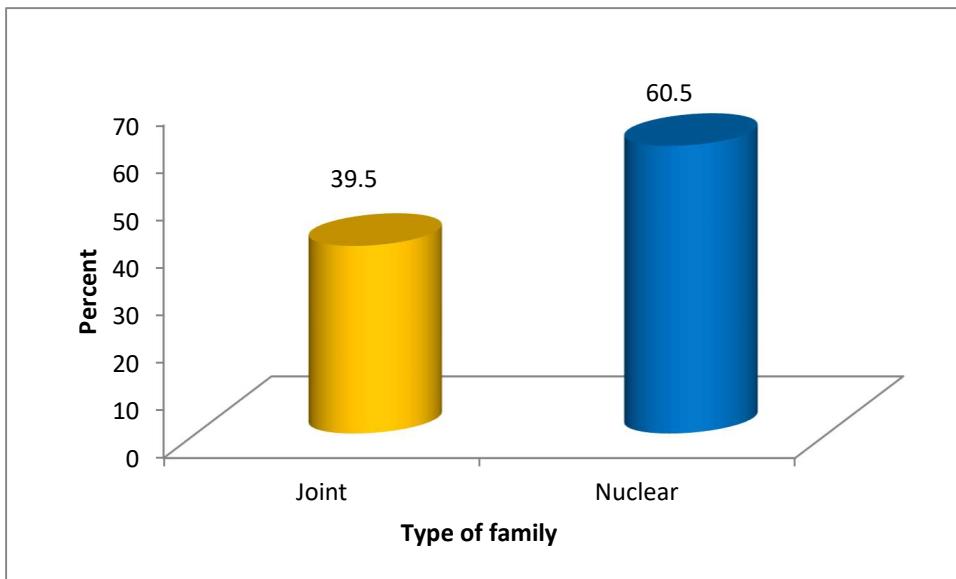


Table 3

Most preferred shopping place for the purchase of organic products

S. No	Preferred shopping place	Frequency	Percent
1	General store	59	7.4
2	Supermarket	113	14.2
3	Exclusive organic retail outlet	621	78.3
	Total	793	100.0

Table 3 presents the consumers' opinion towards the most preferred shopping place for the purchase of organic products. Most (78.3%) of the sampled consumers opined that they purchase their organic products in the nearest exclusive organic retail outlets, few consumers (14.2%) of them opined that they preferred to buy organic products from the supermarket, and very few respondents (7.4%) of them stated that they prefer general store to purchase organic products for the consumption of their family.

Figure 3**Most preferred shopping place for the purchase of organic products****Table 4****Model Summary – Impact of various factors on consumer attitude towards the Organic products**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F Change	Sig. F Change
0.870	0.757	0.755	489.189	<0.001**
Predictors:(Constant),Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms and Subjective Norms				

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) of the analysis is 0.870, which specifies the magnitude of association between the computed values and the predicted values of consumer attitude based on the independent variables. Hence, the forecast values have accomplished as a linear combination of consumer knowledge (X_1), health consciousness(X_2), environmental concern (X_3), personal norms (X_4) and subjective norms (X_5). The multiple correlation coefficient value of 0.870 specifies that the relationship between consumer attitude and the five independent variables are positive.

R-square value of the given regression model is 0.757 which shows that the independent variables of the model such as consumer knowledge (X_1), health consciousness(X_2),

environmental concern (X_3), personal norms (X_4) and subjective norms (X_5)explains more than 75.7% variance in the dependent variable i.e. consumer attitude and it is significant at 1 % level. The F statistic of the model is 489.189.

Table 5

Regression coefficients- Impact of various factors on consumer attitude towards the Organic products

Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coefficient s	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.399	0.536	-	2.611	0.009**	-	-
Consumer Knowledge (X_1)	0.195	0.019	0.257	10.052	<0.001**	0.474	2.109
Health Consciousness(X_2)	0.278	0.024	0.334	11.397	<0.001**	0.361	2.772
Environmental Concern(X_3)	0.154	0.019	0.196	8.193	<0.001**	0.538	1.858
Personal Norms (X_4)	0.133	0.045	0.118	2.938	0.003**	0.191	5.235
Subjective Norms (X_5)	0.141	0.046	0.126	3.068	0.002**	0.183	5.454

Dependent Variable: Consumer Attitude

The following regression equation can be formed based on the above-mentioned regression coefficients in table5.

$$\text{Consumer Attitude}(Y) = 1.399 + 0.257X_1 + 0.334X_2 + 0.196X_3 + 0.118X_4 + 0.126X_5$$

From table 5, it is acknowledged consumer knowledge (X_1) has the regression coefficient value of 0.257, which specifies that one unit of increase in consumer knowledge would result in 0.257 unit of consumer attitude towards the Organic products. Also, the coefficient of X_2 is 0.334, which designates that one unit of increase

in health consciousness would result in 0.334 unit of consumer attitude towards the Organic products. It is also accepted from the analysis that the regression coefficient of environmental concern (X_3) is **0.196**, which signifies that one unit of increase in environmental concern would result in 0.196 unit of consumer attitude towards the Organic products.

Likewise, it is also found that X_4 which has a coefficient value of **0.118**, displays the partial effect of personal norms on consumer attitude by holding other designated factors as stable. Therefore, the estimated positive sign accomplishes that consumer attitude Organic products would raise by **0.118** each unit of increase in personal norms.

It is also established from the above analysis that subjective norms (X_5) which have a coefficient value of **0.126**, which displays the limited effect of subjective norms on consumer attitude by holding other designated factors as stable. Henceforth, the estimated positive sign concludes that consumer attitude Organic products would raise by **0.126** each unit of the rise in the Subjective norms. All the above-mentioned relationships are positive and significant at 1% level.

It is concluded from the Regression analysis, that the standardized coefficient value, X_2 i.e., "Health Consciousness" is the most influencing factor which has a major impact on consumer attitude towards Organic products. Health consciousness reflects individuals' thoughts on health issues and their readiness to undertake actions to ensure their health.

The consumers' believe that Organic products are healthy which creates their positive attitude Organic products, so they prefer to consume Organic products in regular manner, hence health consciousness is therefore a key determinant of positive consumer attitude towards organic food consumption.

FINDINGS

- ✓ From the percentage analysis carried out to measure the perception towards the purchase of Organic product, it is found that significant proportion (57.4%) of the consumers opined that it is their self-responsibility to the purchase products at their home and majority (78.3%) of the sampled consumers opined that they purchase their product from the nearest exclusive organic retail outlets. Nearly, one-fourth (27.4%) of the sampled consumers stated that the online sources and promotions are the source of awareness about the benefits and availability of Organic product and one-third (36.6%) of the sampled consumers opined that the first thought comes to their mind while thinking of Organic product is its health benefits (i.e. healthy food).
- ✓ With regards to the frequency of purchase of Organic product, majority (53.7%) of the sampled consumers opined that they always purchase Organic product for the consumption of their family

members and majority (58.0%) of the sampled consumers pronounced that the benefits that they derived from the Organic product are the most important factor that encouraged the consumer to purchase the Organic product.

- ✓ The researcher has carried out regression analysis to examine the impact of various factors on consumer attitude towards the Organic product. In this analysis, consumer attitude is assumed as a dependent variable and the independent variables are consumer knowledge (X_1), health consciousness(X_2), environmental concern (X_3), personal norms(X_4),and subjective norms(X_5).The outcome of the analysis shows that the standardized coefficient value, X_2 i.e., "Health Consciousness" is the most influencing factor which has a major impact on consumer attitude towards Organic product. Health consciousness reflects individuals" thoughts on health issues and their readiness to undertake actions to ensure their health. Positive attitude of consumers towards organic product is originated from the belief that organic product is good for their health. Health consciousness is therefore a key determinant of positive consumer attitude towards organic product consumption.

✓ CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards organic products in Kanchipuram District. Recommendations for promoting sustainable consumption patterns and supporting the growth of the organic products market are offered based on the research findings. The literature highlights multiple factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards organic products, including health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived quality, socio-demographic characteristics, consumer awareness, and cultural influences. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective marketing strategies, informing policy decisions, and promoting the growth of the organic product market in Kanchipuram District. This study adds to the existing literature by providing region-specific insights into consumer behavior towards organic products. Future research can build on these findings to explore further dimensions and trends in the organic product market.

The results of the analysis using structural equation modeling show that a number of variables, including consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms, positively impact consumers' attitudes and intentions to purchase organic products. Further research demonstrates that male and female consumers have different attitudes and intentions when it comes to purchasing organic products, which supports the findings of earlier studies that suggest gender influences consumer behavior. The female consumer tends to pay more attention to health and environment which results in the positive attitude and intention towards purchase of Organic product.

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