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An Investigation into Consumer Behaviour and Its Impact on Organic Food Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

The organic food industry has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, driven by increasing consumer awareness of health and environmental sustainability. This study examines consumer behaviour toward the purchase intention of organic food products among Generation Z consumers in Panjab, India. The research investigates the influence of key determinants, including consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms, on consumers' purchase intentions. Data were collected from a sample of 133 respondents and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques to examine the relationships among the study variables. The findings reveal that consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms are all positively and significantly associated with purchase intention. Among these factors, health consciousness emerged as the strongest predictor of consumers' intention to purchase organic food products. Despite these findings, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size and focus on a single demographic group and geographic location, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research is recommended to include larger and more diverse samples to provide broader insights into consumer behaviour toward organic food products.

Keywords: Organic Food Products, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Intention, Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms.

Introduction

The organic food industry has experienced significant growth in recent years due to increasing consumer awareness of health, food safety, and environmental sustainability. Organic food products are produced using agricultural practices that exclude the use of synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, growth hormones, antibiotics, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As consumers become more conscious of the health and environmental implications of conventional farming methods, the demand for organic food products continues to rise worldwide.In India, organic farming has emerged as an important segment of the agricultural sector, contributing to sustainable development while addressing growing concerns about chemical contamination in food production. The increasing awareness of the adverse effects of chemical residues on human health and the environment has encouraged consumers to shift towards organically produced food. Organic farming emphasizes natural cultivation methods throughout the production process, from planting to harvesting, ensuring food quality while minimizing environmental degradation.

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The growing popularity of organic food has attracted considerable attention from researchers seeking to understand the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions. Modern agricultural practices involving excessive use of chemicals, pesticides, and synthetic fertilizers have raised concerns regarding food safety, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution. In contrast, organic food products are perceived as healthier, safer, and more environmentally friendly, making them an increasingly preferred choice among health-conscious consumers.

Understanding consumer behaviour toward organic food products has therefore become an important area of academic and managerial research. Several factors, including consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms, are believed to influence consumers' purchase intentions. Examining these determinants provides valuable insights into why consumers choose organic products, the types of organic foods they prefer, their preferred purchasing channels, and their overall perceptions of organic food.This study aims to examine consumer behaviour toward the purchase intention of organic food products among Generation Z consumers in Panjab, India. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by identifying the key factors influencing purchase intention and providing practical implications for organic food producers, marketers, retailers, and policymakers. A better understanding of consumer behaviour will enable stakeholders to develop effective marketing strategies, enhance consumer awareness, and promote the sustainable growth of the organic food market.

Review of Literature

Aslinda Mohd Shahril et al. (2021) conducted a study titled "Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Organic Food in Selangor, Malaysia" to examine the factors influencing consumers' intention to purchase organic food products. The study employed a quantitative research approach and collected data from 140 respondents in Selangor, Malaysia. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that attitude, subjective norms, and health consciousness have a significant and positive influence on consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

Rozainun Abdul Aziz et al. (2022) investigated the "Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Organic Food." The study focused on identifying the determinants of consumers' purchase intentions and collected data from a sample of 500 respondents. The findings demonstrated that consumer attitude, health consciousness, perceived price, perceived availability, environmental concern, and subjective norms all have a significant and positive relationship with consumers' intention to purchase organic food products.

Carlos Arturo Hoyos-Vallejo et al. (2023) examined the influence of consumer skepticism (SKP) on purchase intention toward organic food products. The study was conducted using data collected from 446 respondents. To analyze the data, the researchers employed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results indicated that consumer skepticism does not have a direct influence on consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

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Shubham Garg et al. (2024) conducted a study titled "An Impetus for the Research Paradigm of Determinants of Purchase Intention of Organic Food Consumers: Empirical Insight from India." The study aimed to identify the key determinants influencing consumers' purchase intentions toward organic food products. Data were collected from 603 respondents and analyzed to examine the proposed relationships. The findings revealed that health consciousness, trustworthiness, social innovativeness, functional value, subjective norms, and organic product knowledge positively and significantly influence consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

Research Gap

A review of the existing literature indicates that numerous studies have investigated the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions toward organic food products. However, limited research has specifically examined consumer behaviour and the underlying determinants of purchase intention among Generation Z consumers, particularly in the Indian context. Furthermore, there is a need to simultaneously assess the influence of consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms on purchase intention. This study addresses this research gap by examining consumer behaviour toward the purchase intention of organic food products among Generation Z consumers in Panjab, India, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge and providing practical insights for marketers and policymakers.

Objectives of the Study

1.To examine consumers' perceptions of organic food products.

2.To identify the factors influencing consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

3.To assess the influence of consumer knowledge, health consciousness, and environmental concern on consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

Research Methodology

Sampling Method: The study adopted a convenience sampling technique to select the respondents.

Number of Participants: A total of 133 consumers participated in the study.

Data Sources: Both primary and secondary data were used to achieve the research objectives. Primary data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire administered to the respondents, while secondary data were obtained from journals, books, reports, and other relevant sources.

Data Collection Period: The data collection was conducted during May 2025.

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Analytical Tools: The collected data were analyzed using Frequency Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, and Multiple Regression Analysis to examine the relationships between the study variables and consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

Research Instrument: A well-structured questionnaire was created and distributed to the respondents for data collection.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of respondents

S. No	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Gender**		
	Male	86	64.7
	Female	47	35.3
2	**Age group (in Years)**		
	18-25	**29**	21.8
	26-35	**23**	17.3
	36-45	**43**	32.3
	Above 45	**38**	28.6
3	**Marital Status**		
	Married	**75**	56.4
	Unmarried	**58**	43.6
4	**Educational Qualification**		
	School Level	**7**	5.3
	ITI/Diploma	**7**	5.3
	Undergraduate	**30**	22.6
	Post-graduate	**67**	50.4
	Others	**22**	16.5
5	**Family Monthly Income (In Rs.)**		
	Up to 50,000	**44**	33.1
	50,000-1,00,000	**39**	29.3
	Above 1,00,000	**50**	37.6
6	**Occupation**		
	Home-maker	**18**	13.5
	Business	**12**	9.0
	Employed	**83**	62.4
	Self-employed	**20**	15.0

Source: Primary Data

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The demographic analysis indicates that 64.7% of the respondents are male. The largest proportion of respondents (32.3%) belongs to the 36–45 years age group. A majority of the participants (56.4%) are married, while 50.4% possess a postgraduate qualification. Regarding family monthly income, 37.6% of the respondents earn above ₹1,00,000 per month. In terms of employment status, 62.4% of the respondents are employed.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for all the factors

S. No	Particulars	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Consumer knowledge	4.40	0.594
2	Health consciousness	4.47	0.528
3	Environmental concern	**4.49**	0.587
4	Personal norms	4.39	0.636
5	Subjective norms	4.39	0.636
6	Purchase intention of organic food products	4.46	0.562

Source: Primary data

The table above presents the overall weighted mean scores related to consumer behavior towards the intention to purchase organic food products. It shows that the scores for all six factors exceed 3, signifying that respondents consider these aspects significant in their purchasing decisions. Among these factors, environmental concern stands out with the highest score of 4.49, suggesting that sustainability is a major factor influencing organic food products. Following closely are health consciousness at 4.47 and consumer knowledge at 4.40, along with personal norms and subjective norms, both at 4.39. Lastly, the purchase intention for organic food products also scores high at 4.46.

Table No 3 Showing the Correlation between Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms, and Purchase Intention of Organic Food Products

S. No	Particulars	CK	HC	EC	PN	SN	PI
1	Consumer knowledge	1	0.667**	0.568**	0.762**	0.762**	0.559**
2	Health consciousness	0.667**	1	0.734**	0.692**	0.692**	0.908**
3	Environmental concern	0.568**	0.734**	1	0.627**	0.627**	0.656**
4	Personal norms	0.762**	0.692**	0.627**	1	1.000**	0.575**
5	Subjective norms	0.762**	0.692**	0.627**	1.000**	1	0.575**
6	Purchase intention of organic food products	0.559**	0.908**	0.656**	0.575**	0.575**	1

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

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Table 3 illustrates the connections among various variables. The correlation coefficient for Consumer Knowledge and Purchase Intention of organic food products is 0.559. Health Consciousness shows a strong correlation of 0.908 with Purchase Intention. Environmental Concern has a coefficient of 0.656, while both Personal Norms and Subjective Norms share a coefficient of 0.575 concerning Purchase Intention for organic food products. Notably, Health Consciousness exhibits the highest correlation with Purchase Intention at 0.908, followed by the other factors. As a result, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms, and Purchase Intention of organic food products.

Table No: 4 Showing Regression Analysis of Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms, and Purchase Intention of Organic Food Products.

Model	**Unstandardised Coefficient**		**Standardized Coefficient**	**T**	**Sig**
	B	**Std. error**	**Beta**		
Purchase intention of organic food products (constant)	0.223	0.185		1.206	0.230
Consumer knowledge	-0.040	0.056	-0.042	-0.713	0.477
Health consciousness	1.049	0.066	0.986	16.006	**0.000**
Environmental concern	0.005	0.053	0.006	0.100	0.920
Personal norms	0.508	0.063	0.575	8.054	**0.000**
Subjective norms	-0.070	0.055	-0.079	-1.269	0.207

Source: Primary Data

Independent variables: Consumer Knowledge, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms.

Dependent variable: Purchase Intention of organic food products

Table No 5 Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**F value**	**P Value**
1	**0.911**	**0.830**	**155.865**	**0.000**

The multiple R value of 0.911 indicates a strong positive relationship between the intention to purchase organic food products and the independent factors involved. The R Square value of 0.830 reveals that approximately 83% of the variance in purchase intention can be attributed to aspects of consumer behavior, including consumer knowledge, health consciousness,

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environmental concerns, personal norms, subjective norms, and the intention to buy organic food products. When examining the significance of these relationships, if the P-value is below 0.05, it suggests a significant connection, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, if the P-value is at or above 0.05, it indicates no significant relationship, and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Notably, as shown in Table 5, unstandardized beta values reveal that security has the most substantial positive impact on the intention to purchase organic food products. Furthermore, health consciousness and personal norms exhibit a significant relationship ($P<0.05$), demonstrating a noteworthy influence on the purchase intention for organic options. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis in this case.

Findings

1.The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of the respondents were male (64.7%), belonged to the 36–45 years age group (32.3%), were married (56.4%), possessed postgraduate qualifications (50.4%), had a family monthly income above ₹1,00,000 (37.6%), and were employed (62.4%).

2.The study found that a large proportion of the respondents were employed and had attained postgraduate-level education.

3.The results of the correlation and regression analyses indicate that consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms have a positive and statistically significant influence on consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products.

4.Environmental concern was found to have a significant positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products, highlighting the importance of environmental awareness in influencing purchasing decisions.

5.Among all the factors examined, health consciousness emerged as the strongest predictor of consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products, indicating that health-related considerations play the most influential role in motivating organic food purchases.

Conclusion

The growing adoption of organic farming practices in India reflects increasing consumer awareness of the health and environmental benefits associated with organic food products. Rising concerns about the adverse effects of chemical residues in conventionally produced food have encouraged consumers to prefer organic alternatives. In addition, awareness campaigns promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible consumption have contributed to the expanding demand for organic food products.

This study examined consumer behaviour toward the purchase intention of organic food products among consumers in Panjab. The findings reveal that consumer knowledge, health consciousness, environmental concern, personal norms, and subjective norms have a positive

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and significant influence on consumers' purchase intention. Among these factors, health consciousness emerged as the strongest determinant, indicating that consumers are primarily motivated by health-related considerations when purchasing organic food products.

The study also highlights that high product prices and limited consumer awareness regarding organic food standards and certification remain major barriers to purchasing organic food products. Therefore, efforts should be made by producers, marketers, and policymakers to improve consumer education, strengthen awareness of organic certifications, and enhance the affordability and accessibility of organic food products. These initiatives can encourage greater consumer adoption and support the sustainable growth of the organic food market in India.

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