RESEARCH PAPER

Understanding Consumer Preferences for Organic Products in Chennai City

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ABSTRACT

Rising awareness of health, sustainability, and food safety has fuelled global demand for organic products, and Indian metros like Chennai are no exception, with consumers increasingly turning to organic food and personal-care items over concerns about pesticides, chemical additives, and long-term health risks. Yet actual preference remains shaped by several psychological, economic, and product-related factors. This study examines how Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity influence Consumer Attitude, and how that attitude drives Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention among 220 Chennai consumers surveyed through a structured questionnaire. Data are analysed in SPSS 26 using Percentage Analysis, Reliability Analysis, EFA, Pearson Correlation, and Multiple Regression. The findings aim to help marketers, retailers, and policymakers design strategies that encourage sustainable organic consumption.

Keywords: Organic Products, Consumer Preference, Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Consumer Attitude, Purchase Intention, Chennai City.

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1. Introduction

Consumer awareness of health, nutrition, and environmental sustainability has grown sharply over the past decade, as people become more wary of synthetic pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and artificial additives in conventional farming. This has driven rising global demand for organic products, seen as healthier, safer, and produced through practices that protect biodiversity and ecological balance.

India has become a major organic producer thanks to favourable climate, government support, and growing consumer awareness. Urban buyers in cities like Chennai increasingly seek organic fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, spices, and cosmetics, aided by rising incomes, better education, and easy access to information.

Still, awareness hasn't translated smoothly into buying behaviour — premium pricing, limited availability, weak product information, and doubts about certification authenticity remain barriers. Purchase decisions are shaped by a mix of psychological, economic, and behavioural factors, with health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived quality, and price sensitivity emerging as key determinants in Chennai specifically.

Since consumer preference drives market demand, understanding what shapes it through health awareness, environmental responsibility, and quality confidence is essential for marketers, retailers, and policymakers looking to grow India's organic market.

2. Research Problem

Despite growing consumer awareness, organic products still lag conventional products in market

penetration. Consumers often see them as expensive, hard to access, and poorly differentiated from regular alternatives, while uncertainty about certification and quality assurance further dents confidence. Favourable attitudes frequently fail to convert into actual purchases.

Existing research has largely studied awareness or purchase behaviour in isolation, with little work examining how Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity jointly shape Consumer Attitude, Preference, and Purchase Intention particularly in Chennai. This study addresses that gap through an integrated conceptual framework explaining organic product preference in the city.

3. Review of Literature

Kanchana and Kannan (2025), surveying 385 Chennai respondents, found that health consciousness, product information, and value for money significantly shaped consumer attitudes and buying behaviour, with better-informed, health-aware consumers showing stronger organic preferences.

Aruna and Sankar (2024) studied millennial buying behaviour and found health benefits, environmental consciousness, labelling, certification, and price sensitivity all significantly influenced purchase decisions, with certification and eco-friendly marketing strengthening preference.

Kanchana and Kannan (2024) found that rising awareness of food safety, environmental protection, and personal health positively shaped organic preference, though high prices and limited availability still discouraged frequent purchase, calling for stronger promotion and accessibility.

Amudha and Thaiyalnayaki (2023) found Chennai consumers were generally aware of organic products, with purchase decisions driven mainly by health and environmental concerns, and recommended stronger promotional campaigns and consumer education.

4. Research Gap

Most prior research examines determinants like health consciousness, environmental concern, or purchase behaviour separately rather than jointly, and few studies build an integrated model linking Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity to Consumer Attitude, Preference, and Purchase Intention especially in Chennai. The mediating role of Consumer Attitude has also received limited attention. This study addresses both gaps with a comprehensive framework for the Chennai market.

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of Health Consciousness on Consumer Attitude towards organic products.
2. To analyse the influence of Environmental Concern on Consumer Attitude.
3. To determine the influence of Product Quality Perception on Consumer Attitude.
4. To examine the influence of Price Sensitivity on Consumer Attitude.
5. To analyse the influence of Consumer Attitude on Consumer Preference.
6. To examine the influence of Consumer Preference on Purchase Intention.
7. To analyse the relationship among the study variables.
8. To examine the mediating role of Consumer Attitude between the independent variables and consumer preference.

6. Conceptual Development

Organic product demand has reshaped consumer behaviour worldwide — buyers now weigh health benefits, environmental sustainability, product quality, and food safety alongside price and availability. Organic products are seen as healthier because they avoid synthetic pesticides, chemical fertilizers, GMOs, and artificial preservatives, drawing in health- and environment-conscious consumers.

Consumer preference here is multidimensional: health-conscious buyers favour organic products for perceived wellness benefits, while environmentally concerned consumers value their contribution to sustainable agriculture and reduced pollution. Perceived quality — freshness, nutrition, taste, safety, authenticity — also shapes decisions, but higher prices remain a real barrier, especially for price-sensitive buyers who may hold back despite recognizing the benefits.

The proposed framework holds that Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity shape Consumer Attitude, which in turn drives Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention, with Consumer Attitude acting as the mediating link.

6.1 Variables of the Study

Independent Variables: Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, Price Sensitivity **Mediating Variable:** Consumer Attitude **Dependent Variables:** Consumer Preference, Purchase Intention

6.2 Theoretical Support

6.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) — Ajzen (1991) holds that behavioural intention follows from attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control; consumers with favourable health/environmental attitudes are more likely to form stronger purchase intentions for organic products.

6.2.2 Health Belief Model (HBM) — People adopt preventive health behaviours when they perceive real benefits and reduced risk; consumers who see organic products as safer and chemical-free develop stronger preferences.

6.2.3 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory — Environmentally responsible behaviour stems from personal values, ecological beliefs, and moral obligation; consumers with strong environmental values are drawn to organic products as a sustainability choice.

6.2.4 Consumer Decision-Making Theory — Purchase decisions follow from evaluating product information, quality, price, and expected benefit, with consumers comparing organic and conventional options before deciding.

6.2.5 Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory — External stimuli (quality, health information, environmental claims, pricing) shape internal psychological evaluation, which then drives behavioural response; here, the four independent variables act as stimuli shaping Consumer Attitude, which shapes Preference and Purchase Intention.

6.3 Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Health Consciousness significantly influences Consumer Attitude towards organic products.

H2: Environmental Concern significantly influences Consumer Attitude.

H3: Product Quality Perception significantly influences Consumer Attitude.

H4: Price Sensitivity significantly influences Consumer Attitude.

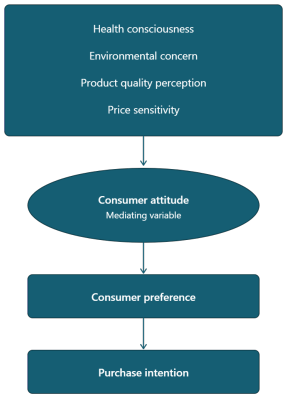
H5: Consumer Attitude significantly influences Consumer Preference.

H6: Consumer Preference significantly influences Purchase Intention.

H7: Consumer Attitude mediates the relationship between the independent variables and Consumer Preference.

H8: Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity significantly influence Purchase Intention through Consumer Attitude and Consumer Preference.

6.4 Conceptual Framework



7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Methodology

This quantitative study examines how Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, and Price Sensitivity influence Consumer Attitude, and how attitude drives Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention. Primary data come from a structured questionnaire; secondary data are drawn from books, journals, government and market reports. SPSS 26 is used for analysis.

7.2 Research Design

The study uses descriptive design (to profile respondent demographics and buying behaviour) alongside analytical design (to examine relationships among variables), following a cross-sectional survey approach.

7.3 Sources of Data

Primary Data — collected from buyers/potential buyers of organic fruits & vegetables, grains & pulses, dairy, spices, and personal care products, covering perceptions of Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, Product Quality Perception, Price Sensitivity, Consumer Attitude, Consumer Preference, and Purchase Intention.

Secondary Data — Scopus/Web of Science/UGC CARE journals, Ministry of Agriculture reports, APEDA and FSSAI publications, government organic-farming reports, and books on consumer behaviour and sustainable marketing.

7.4 Population of the Study

Consumers residing in Chennai City who purchase or have experience with organic products.

7.5 Sampling Frame

Respondents were drawn from organic retail stores, supermarkets/hypermarkets, farmers' markets, malls, residential communities, educational institutions, IT parks, and commercial establishments for diverse representation.

7.6 Sampling Method

Convenience Sampling (non-probability) was used, since no comprehensive list of organic consumers exists and the method is standard in consumer behaviour and retail marketing research.

7.7 Sample Size

220 consumers, sufficient for Percentage Analysis, Reliability Analysis, EFA, Pearson Correlation, and Multiple Regression.

7.8 Questionnaire Design

Developed from literature on consumer behaviour, organic products, sustainable consumption, and green marketing, with two sections:

Section A – Demographic Profile: Gender, Age, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Monthly Income, Marital Status, Frequency of Purchasing Organic Products.

Section B – Study Variables, measured on a Five-Point Likert Scale:

7.9 Pilot Study

A pilot test with a small group of organic consumers assessed clarity and reliability, leading to minor wording and sequencing revisions before final data collection.

7.10 Reliability and Validity

Reliability was assessed via Cronbach's Alpha (≥0.70 acceptable). Construct validity was assessed

using EFA, verified through KMO and Bartlett's Test.

8. Results and Analysis

8.1 Percentage Analysis

Table 8.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 220)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	44.5
	Female	122	55.5
Age (Years)	Below 25	34	15.5
	25–35	86	39.1
	36–45	62	28.2
	Above 45	38	17.3
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	22	10.0
	Diploma	30	13.6
	Undergraduate	88	40.0
	Postgraduate & Above	80	36.4
Occupation	Student	20	9.1
	Private Employee	82	37.3
	Government Employee	36	16.4
	Business/Self-employed	48	21.8
	Homemaker/ Others	34	15.5
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	36	16.4
	₹25,001–₹50,000	78	35.5
	₹50,001–₹75,000	64	29.1
	Above ₹75,000	42	19.1
Marital Status	Married	126	57.3
	Unmarried	94	42.7
Frequency of Purchasing Organic Products	Weekly	54	24.5
	Monthly	88	40.0
	Occasionally	58	26.4
	Rarely	20	9.1

Women make up a slight majority of respondents (55.5%), and the sample skews young-to-middle-aged (67.3% between 25–45). Most respondents are graduates or postgraduates (76.4%) and private-sector employees (37.3%), with moderate incomes (64.6% earning ₹25,001–₹75,000) and a majority married (57.3%). Monthly purchasing is most common (40.0%), followed by weekly purchases (24.5%) — indicating fairly regular organic buying habits among this well-educated, urban sample.

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8.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 8.2 Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Health Consciousness	5	0.901	Excellent
Environmental Concern	5	0.884	Good
Product Quality Perception	5	0.917	Excellent
Price Sensitivity	5	0.861	Good
Consumer Attitude	5	0.925	Excellent
Consumer Preference	5	0.907	Excellent

Purchase Intention	5	0.889	Good
Overall Scale	**35**	**0.946**	**Excellent**

Alpha values (0.861–0.925) show good-to-excellent internal consistency across constructs, with an overall coefficient of 0.946 confirming the questionnaire is highly reliable for further analysis.

8.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 8.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Particulars	**Value**
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square)	5482.316
Degrees of Freedom	595
Significance	0.000

KMO of 0.921 and a significant Bartlett's Test ($p < 0.001$) confirm the data are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 8.4 Total Variance Explained

Factor	**Eigen Value**	**Variance Explained (%)**	**Cumulative Variance (%)**
Health Consciousness	9.864	28.18	28.18
Environmental Concern	4.421	12.63	40.81
Product Quality Perception	3.312	9.46	50.27
Price Sensitivity	2.538	7.25	57.52
Consumer Attitude	2.281	6.52	64.04
Consumer Preference	1.856	5.30	69.34
Purchase Intention	1.634	4.67	74.01

The correlation analysis indicates significant relationships among all study variables. **Health Consciousness**, **Environmental Concern**, and **Product Quality Perception** exhibit strong positive correlations with **Consumer Attitude**, **Consumer Preference**, and **Purchase Intention**, suggesting that consumers who value health, environmental sustainability, and product quality are more likely to develop favourable attitudes toward organic products.

Conversely, **Price Sensitivity** demonstrates a significant negative relationship with Consumer Attitude, Consumer Preference, and Purchase Intention, indicating that higher prices discourage consumers from purchasing organic products. The strongest positive correlation is observed between **Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention (r = 0.846)**, implying that consumers who strongly prefer organic products are highly likely to purchase them regularly.

Table 8.5 Rotated Component Matrix

Items	**F1**	**F2**	**F3**	**F4**	**F5**	**F6**	**F7**
HC1	.889						
HC2	.876						
HC3	.862						
HC4	.845						
HC5	.828						
EC1		.883					
EC2		.867					
EC3		.852					
EC4		.836					
EC5		.821					
PQ1			.892				
PQ2			.878				
PQ3			.861				

PQ4			.846				
PQ5			.829				
PS1				.864			
PS2				.849			
PS3				.834			
PS4				.819			
PS5				.803			
CA1					.894		
CA2					.879		
CA3					.861		
CA4					.846		
CA5					.831		
CP1						.886	
CP2						.869	
CP3						.852	
CP4						.838	
CP5						.821	
PI1							.881
PI2							.865
PI3							.849
PI4							.834
PI5							.818

KMO (0.921) and significant Bartlett's Test confirm suitability; 74.01% cumulative variance and loadings between 0.803–0.894 confirm strong convergent validity, while the absence of cross-loadings supports discriminant validity- validating the questionnaire for examining organic product preference in Chennai.

8.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 8.6 Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	**HC**	**EC**	**PQP**	**PS**	**CA**	**CP**	**PI**
Health Consciousness (HC)	1						
Environmental Concern (EC)	.612**	1					
Product Quality Perception (PQP)	.584**	.638**	1				
Price Sensitivity (PS)	-.321**	-.294**	-.336**	1			
Consumer Attitude (CA)	.734**	.701**	.768**	-.458**	1		
Consumer Prefere	.682**	.648**	.721**	-.38	.812**	1	

nce (CP)				4**			
Purchase Intention (PI)	.634**	.598**	.694**	-.342**	.754**	.846**	1

Note: Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Health Consciousness, Environmental Concern, and Product Quality Perception all correlate strongly and positively with Consumer Attitude, Preference, and Purchase Intention. Price Sensitivity correlates negatively with all three, confirming that higher prices dampen preference. The strongest link is between Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention (r = 0.846), showing that strong preference reliably converts into buying.

8.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 8.7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.891	0.794	0.790	0.386

$R^2 = 0.794$ shows the four predictors explain 79.4% of variation in Consumer Attitude.

Table 8.8 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	142.836	4	35.709	221.642	0.000
Residual	34.636	215	0.161		
Total	177.472	219			

The model is statistically significant ($F = 221.642$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 8.9 Regression Coefficients

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Result
Constant	0.694	4.126	0.000	Significant
Health Consciousness	0.282	5.814	0.000	Significant
Environmental Concern	0.236	4.983	0.000	Significant
Product Quality Perception	0.394	8.267	0.000	Significant
Price Sensitivity	-0.185	-3.964	0.000	Significant

Regression Equation: Consumer Attitude = 0.694 + 0.282(HC) + 0.236(EC) + 0.394(PQP) − 0.185(PS)

Product Quality Perception (β = 0.394) is the strongest driver of Consumer Attitude, followed by Health Consciousness (β = 0.282) and Environmental Concern (β = 0.236), while Price Sensitivity (β = −0.185) reduces it — confirming that consumers weigh quality and health benefits above price when forming attitudes toward organic products.

9. Conclusion

Growing interest in healthy living and environmental sustainability has driven urban demand for organic products, but purchase decisions remain shaped by a mix of psychological, economic, and product-related factors. This study found that consumers who see organic products as healthier, more environmentally friendly, and higher quality develop stronger attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions-while higher prices continue to hold many consumers back.

Product Quality Perception emerged as the strongest driver of Consumer Attitude, ahead of Health Consciousness and Environmental Concern, showing that consumers evaluate organic products chiefly on perceived quality, freshness, and safety even as affordability remains a real constraint on actual buying.

For organic producers, retailers, and policymakers, the implications are clear: emphasize quality, certification authenticity, health benefits, and sustainability in marketing, while improving availability, consumer education, and pricing competitiveness to boost adoption. Future research could extend this framework with variables like brand trust, product availability, social influence, digital marketing, and eco-label credibility across broader regions and consumer segments.

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