

# Factors Influencing Organic Food Purchase of Young Indian Consumers

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## Research Article

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# Abstract

As organic food consumption rises throughout the world, there is a greater need for study on the factors that influence organic food consumption. Previous research yielded mixed results and failed to present a complete picture of organic food consumers in India. The goal of this study is to figure out what factors influence young Indian consumers' desire to buy organic foods. A comprehensive questionnaire study of Indian young consumers aged 15 to 30 years old was created in order to examine the relationship between the established key factors. Data was acquired from 289 young Indian customers in New Delhi, India, using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The findings show that young consumers' organic food purchase intention is largely determined by their environmental concern, product quality, and social pressure. However, the impact of health consciousness, fear, trust, and price, on organic food purchase intention has been found insignificant. The findings have ramifications for organic food producers, marketers, and policymakers in India who are working to increase organic food consumption.

## 1. Introduction

The introduction of technology in the agricultural industry resulted in the 'Green Revolution,' which had a negative impact on the environment and human health (Sahota, 2018; Krishna and Balasubramanian, 2021). Pesticides are present in high concentrations in the foods we eat, with fruits and vegetables containing the most pesticides. Concerns over these urge for organic farming that uses natural fertilisers and pesticides. Organic farming is a requirement for long-term food consumption as well as a means of achieving long-term livelihood and development. The organic food market is expanding very fast and it has revenue over 60 billion euros with more than 45 million hectares of land is used worldwide for organic farming (Pandey, et al., 2019). North America and Europe dominate the organic market, accounting for more than 90 percent of all organic food sales globally (Sahota, 2018). According to recent research, consumers in Asian countries have also been growing at a large rate (Willer and Lernorud, 2019).

While we recognise the inherent relevance of organic food in our much-needed way of life, excitement for acquiring and consuming organic items is low in India. By and large, the organic food market in India is limited to megacities where most of its production is exported to developed countries. A few customers purchase organic foods on a regular basis, while others do so just occasionally. Recently, the organic food sector in India has been steadily growing. The use of organic food products in India is being driven by increased awareness of the benefits of consuming organic food products, as well as rising health concerns (Pandey, et al., 2019). Organic food manufacturers have long been interested in learning more about the elements that influence purchase intention. Previous research has shown some of the decisional elements that influence consumers' intentions to purchase organic foods. Therefore, this study try yo understand the characteristics that encourage or discourage young Indian customers in Delhi from purchasing organic food. Delhi, being the capital city of India and outsiders coming from diverse backgrounds and states to pursue their careers has made the respondents' profiles heterogeneous and relevant for this study. It is relevant to investigate the relationship between consumers' attitudes, product

characteristics, fear, trust, social pressure and intentions to measure the behavior of young Indian consumers in Delhi, India.

The study is organised into six sections. Firstly, section 1 deals with the introduction of the study, research gaps, and objectives of the study. Section 2 provided a detailed theoretical framework and literature reviews of various constructs used in the study along with their linkage between the constructs. Section 4 delves into the study methodology in detail, including the constructions and items investigated, the data collection procedure, sampling method, and statistical tools utilised for data analysis, as well as the respondents' profile. The results of the data analysis, including hypotheses testing research implications, are discussed in Section 5. Finally, section 6 deals with the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## 2. Conceptual Framework And Literature Reviews

In 1980, Ajzen proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which is used to explain and predict behaviour based on attitudes, norms, and intentions. However, numerous scholars have improved TRA and added other external affecting elements (Belk, 1975; Stern et al., 1995; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). They stated that behaviour is the function of both internal and external factors and a positive attitude does not always lead to positive buying intention. Ajzen (1991) proposed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as an extension to TRA by incorporating the influence of external factors. He added the perceived behavioural control (PBC) to incorporate the external factors which are not in control of individuals while performing the behaviour. The TPB is one of the most influential and widely accepted behavioural theories.

In 1977, Schwartz proposed Norm Activation Model (NAM) focussing on the personal norm, i.e. the moral obligation that an individual feels can motivate to act in a certain way (Schwartz, 1977). The personal norms are triggered in a situation through predictors such as perception of ecological problem and awareness of consequence. The NAM has been widely used to predict people's altruistic and pro-social behavior (De Groot and Steg, 2009). Further, an extension to NAM which concentrated more on individual's altruistic value proposed a Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) model by broadening the NAM by adding concepts such as egoistic and biospheric values (Stern and Dietz, 1999).

Even though there is a link between various motivational and situational factors in influencing the purchase intention of organic food products, constructs such as fear and trust are not given much emphasis, though some studies have been done, mostly in western countries. Understanding the influence of cultural factors in the Indian context also will serve well for this study and enrich the literature of this field. The moderating role of social pressure, health consciousness, environmental concerns, quality and price and effort emphasized in various studies are incorporated into a holistic model including all the constructs mentioned which are not studied previously, will provide a deeper understanding of purchase intention of organic food in India. To form a conceptual framework, the major constructs that were considered important for this study, including health consciousness, environmental

concern, fear, trust, quality, price, and social pressure to put forth effort in procurement, as well as consumers' attitudes toward organic food and their purchase intentions, were thoroughly reviewed.

## 2.1. Health consciousness

Health consciousness can be defined as “an individual’s readiness to undertake healthy actions” (Ophuis, 1989). Individuals who are health-conscious are aware of the wellness of their health and they are continuously motivated to improve their health status, conscious about their behaviour to evade any ill health consequences (Titterington and Cochrane, 2018). Previous study has revealed that an individual's responsiveness and effort to seek health information is connected to their level of health consciousness ((Sirieix, et al., 2011; Leyva-Hernández et al., 2021).

Kim and Chung (2011) reported health consciousness as the most essential factor in influencing consumers' actual behaviour and they also tested the weak relationship between consumers' intention and health consciousness based on a low level of awareness. The study in Mexico pointed out that consumers put their health at top priority before propelling to a final purchasing intention (Leyva-Hernández et al., 2021). A study conducted in Delhi, in India also, health consciousness is an important factor for buying organic fruit and vegetable (Paul & Rana, 2012). Based on this assumption, following hypotheses were proposed with regard to health consciousness and purchase intention of organic food.

**Hypothesis 1:** Health consciousness has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of the consumers toward organic food products.

## 2.2. Environmental concern

Environmental concern defined as "the degree to which people are aware of problems regarding the environment and support efforts to solve them and or indicate the willingness to contribute personally to their solution" (Dunlap and Jones, 2002). Understanding environmental concerns begins with examining their perspectives on environmental issues. Consumers' environmental concerns may have important ramifications in the consumer behaviour literature. Consumers are becoming more concerned about the environment and many are willing to contribute to environmental causes in any possible way. As organic food products are considered environmentally friendly, buying these products were generally related to the reduction of the environmental issues.

The study (Nguyen et al., 2021), in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), found that environmental concern is an important factor to explain the purchasing behaviour of a consumer. The study in countries like Taiwan, South Korea, Brazil, and the USA has produced empirical evidence that environmental concern positively influences the consumers’ purchasing behaviour (Liang 2016; Suh et al., 2015; Lee and Yun, 2015). According to a research study in China, people used organic food items mostly owing to individualistic concerns such as care for one's own health and also concern for the health of one's family, rather than concern for the environment (Sirieix, et al., 2011). To check its validity in India, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** Environmental concern influence the purchasing intention of a consumer towards organic food products.

### 3. Fear

Fear is defined as “an emotional response to a threat that expresses, or at least implies, some sort of danger” (Tanner et al., 1991). Therefore, fear is an emotion that encourages people to avoid or escape unpredictable and unknown situations (Tandon et al., 2020). Despite the fact that humans are logical, emotions play a large role in their judgments. This study learned the significance of fear in consumer behavioural intentions, since their fear is increased by many unpleasant messages they experience on a daily basis (Tandon et al., 2020). According to a research done by Brewer and Prestat (2002), 40% of respondents were more concerned about pesticide residue in their food than disease caused by microbial origin. Furthermore, Verhoef (2005) used Richins' scale to evaluate anxiety and found that fear about the safety and quality of organic meat was an essential factor in choosing organic meat. Thus from the previous literature, it is found that fear plays a vital role in buying organic food. Based on this assumption, we postulated the hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 3:** Fear factor has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of a consumer towards organic food products.

### 4. Trust

Trust is described as a belief, feeling, or expectation regarding the loyalty of a trade partner that stems from intention, integrity (Gorton, et al., 2021). When we apply this principle to the organic food, it increases trust in products and certification. It is hard to assess trust in organic food. This is due to the lack of apparent product features at the moment of purchase, therefore the buyer must depend only on the seals and certificates that are branded on the items. Purchase intention is influenced by seals and certification systems (Liang, 2016). In terms of the impact of customer trust on purchase intention, Naspati and Bodini (2008) study found that the higher level of trust in food products is reciprocated with a higher level of purchasing intention of the consumers. The study is further supplemented by Drexler et al., (2018) where the consumers' trust is based on the identification of product brands, symbols, composition and expiry date affecting the purchasing intention. Trust is one indispensable element in organic food markets.

Individuals found it difficult to select food products that they considered safe for consumption due to the rising variety of food items available on the market. Most consumers especially in dominant markets in Europe, consumers usually prefer the food products to be labeled non-GMO along with branded marks to consider a trustworthy product. The study in Brazil revealed trust as an essential factor that affects consumers' choice for purchasing organic food products (Curvelo et al., 2019). The study in China and Taiwan produced the same result that consumers believed trust is associated with certification where products are stored in the markets for purchasing (Teng and Wang. 2015; Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017). To verify the work of literature, we have derived the research hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 4:** Trust in organic food products have a positive influence on the purchasing intention of a consumer.

## 4. Product characteristics

### 4.1. Quality

The International Organization of Standardization (ISO) defined quality as “the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs”. Various studies have identified quality dimensions specific to particular products as the concept of varied attributes exist for various products. Therefore, this study try to understand the perspective of quality from the consumer point of view, focusing on organic food products. Based on the food product, the quality dimension perceived by the consumers vary.

Consumers' preferred attributes for buying apples were studied using degree of blemish on the apple, size, flavour, texture, price, origin, and production process, and they found that degree of blemish on the apple, texture, and price are the most important factors for consumers to buy apples, while the place of origin and production process (organic/conventional) were insignificant (Wirth, et al., 2011). Another study of Kevany Kathleen (2018) promulgated the quality of a food product as a major factor for sustainable sales and consumption of the consumers and producers. They pointed out that the quality of a product is directly affected by brand authenticity, safety, functionality, stability and services along with nutritional value, production process and level of connection between producers and consumers. If a consumer seems to be content about the quality of the company products, then it is likely that the customer would purchase again and recommend other potential consumers to purchase the product. Therefore, a research hypothesis was drawn from this assumption.

**Hypothesis 5:** Quality influences the purchase intention of a consumer towards organic food products.

### 4.2. Price

Price is defined as “the amount of money charged for a product or service or the sum of values consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service”. (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996). Price has been treated as an indicator of quality by many consumers. According to Dholakia (2018), respondents usually evaluate the price tag when deciding whether or not to buy organic food. He also added that the behaviour of some sections of consumers was difficult to measure because of the limited knowledge on benefits gained from organic food consumption. A study conducted in USA among the young adolescents, raising the price of fast food and lowering the price of low fat food in the school cafeteria helped to reduce fast food consumption, demonstrating that a higher price produces a higher cost for consumers (Khan et al., 2012).

The study in Brazil also revealed price as an important factor that influences the consumer purchase intention of organic food products (Curvelo et al., 2019). As for the cheaper price of the products, consumers tend to choose products that are certified and boost their trust (Liang, 2016). Here, we can

derive that price and trust are related that are motivated by the manufacturers or company's certification. However, for some potent consumers', price is not a barrier in purchasing organic food products, on the other hand, they are willing to pay more if they realize the various benefits of organic nutrition, safety, taste and so on as in South Korea and the USA (Suh et al., 2015; Lee and Yun, 2015). Gleim and Lawson (2014) have noticed that price is no longer an impediment for Americans, who are becoming more aware of the environmental benefits of green products. To clarify this context, we have derived the research hypothesis. Does price as a factor influence consumer attitudes toward purchasing organic products?

**Hypothesis 6:** Price factor has a positive influence on consumers' attitudes towards purchasing organic food products.

## 5. Social pressure

Social pressure is defined as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Azjen et al., 1991). Social pressure played a significant role in influencing the behaviour of a potential consumer in many countries (Li and Jaharuddin, 2020). A study conducted by Ruiz de Maya et al. (2011) in various European countries including Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, respondents depend on social pressure rather than their own judgement when purchasing organic food products. In Denmark and Sweden, social pressure has a strong impact, but in Spain, an individual's independent judgement is preferred when purchasing organic food. Wana, Shen, and Choi (2018) found that in Hong Kong, persons with a greater level of significant social pressure' influence are more likely to use urban green space such as public parks, playgrounds, and gardens more effectively than those with a lower level of influence.

Many studies have found a significant effect of social pressure on buying organic food products (Ruiz de Maya et al. 2011; Wong and Teoh, 2015; Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen 2017; Wana, et al., 2018; Varah et al., 2021), while there are others who found it insignificant (Ruiz de Maya et al. 2011; Varah et al., 2021). Concerning the Indian context, the effects of social pressure on consumers are vaguely studied or remain unknown. Thus, it can be assumed that social pressure can influence individuals to buy organic food, which is stated as a hypothesis below:

**Hypothesis 7:** Social pressure influences the purchasing intention toward organic food products.

## 6. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is based on a study between consumer behavior and intentions, which makes this construct very important for consumer research. Intention is a relevant dimension in marketing literature to shows the consumer trend to buy goods or services in the same store, and share experience with friends and family. With regard to organic food, purchase intention can be affected by several elements environmental concern, health consciousness, and social pressure (Nguyen et al., 2021). Rana and Paul (2012) pointed out that not only the health factor affects the purchase intention, but also the availability and quality of these products. Liang (2016) investigation on organic food marketing observed factors such as certification, nutritional value, retailing value and environmental protection have a positive

influence on consumers' intention while purchasing organic food products. Therefore, it is important to understand the purchase intention of organic food. In this study, we also have used the intention variable as a mediator between various factors and actual behavior as presented in Fig. 1. From the light of the above discussion, we have converged into the following theoretical framework for this study.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Sample and Procedures**

The study deploys descriptive and explanatory methods, it describes and depicts the relationships between the key variables or constructs. The study deploys a descriptive method, attempting to investigate and explain variables such as attitudes, product characteristics, fear, trust, social pressure, and consumer purchase intention. The research is also explanatory, attempting to explain both the direct and indirect effects of independent and mediating variables on consumers' purchase intentions. Data was gathered through an online survey of young Indian consumers aged 18 to 30, who were studying at the time in Indian universities, colleges, and institutions, primarily in New Delhi, India. Data was collected between September and December, 2020. Young consumers were targeted as they are our future custodians and are likely to be more aware of organic food, more concerned about their health and the environment (Varah et al., 2020). The survey questionnaire was written in English because English is the medium of instruction for higher education in Indian universities, colleges, and institutions, and students are fluent in English. The survey has two parts. The first part dealt with the demographic information of the respondents like age, gender, educational qualification and annual income. The second part of the survey was used to collect the individual's level of agreeableness towards the questionnaire items. The questionnaire was first piloted with 20 questionnaires to check any discrepancy in the questions and responses. Minor changes were made based on the feedback received from the respondents.

### **3.2. Measurement Instruments**

The variables' measures were operationalized using previously validated and new measures, with item wording modified for the Indian context. All items (28) were scored on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being "Strongly disagree" and 5 being "Strongly agree." Appendix 1 summarizes the items used for each of the variables and presents the mean values and standard deviations. The collected data was placed and coded in an excel sheet after thorough screening and corrections. The data was then transferred to SPSS software for statistical analysis. To check the reliability and validity of data, Cronbach's Alpha and KMO and Bartlett's Test values were computed. Linear regression analysis was run to test the study's established hypotheses.

## **4. Results And Analysis**

Data were collected from 289 respondents. The respondents' profiles in terms of sex, education and age are presented in Table 1. The result indicates that 64.7% of the respondents are females and 35.3% males. Our study objective targets are primarily young consumers of Delhi and thus, the majority of the

respondents (50.9%) are undergraduate followed by above post-graduate (30.4%) and below secondary school (18.7%). The majority of the respondents (41.2%) are the age 21–25, 36% of respondents below 20 years, and 22.8% of respondents above the age of 26 years.

**Table 1:** Respondents profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	187	64.7
Female	102	35.3
<b>Education</b>		
Below secondary school	54	18.7
Undergraduate	147	50.9
Above post-graduate	88	30.4
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	104	36.0
21-25	119	41.2
Above 26	66	22.8

## 4.1 Reliability and validity assessment

The reliability and validity of the measurement items were evaluated based on factor loadings, KMO-MSA test, Cronbach’s Alpha and total variance explained. Before factor analysis, the KMO-MSA test was carried out to check the reliability of the data. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity ( $\chi^2 = 3821$ ,  $df = 378$ ,  $p = .000$ ) with varimax rotation technique explained 51.85% of the total variance showing that the items collected meet the threshold value of sample adequacy with a MSA value of 0.5 (Table 2). The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  value ranged from 0.625 to 0.914, all above the threshold value except for the “price” factor, the reliability coefficients indicate 0.836 for health consciousness, fear (0.703), environmental concern (0.625), trust (0.732), quality (0.914), social pressure (0.660), and purchase intention (0.906) (table ). The overall Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was .916 indicating that the measurement items are reliable, consistent and valid to conduct factor analysis and other statistical analysis. The result confirmed that the data collected is classified as either very good or excellent (Comrey and Lee, 1992).

Table 2  
KMO and Bartlett's Test.

<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b>	<b>.906</b>
Approx. Chi-Square	3821.397
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, df	378
Sig.	.000

For factor analysis, except for the items FE1, "I fear that conventional food products available in the market contain pesticide residue", and SP3, "Shopkeepers' suggestion is taken into consideration when I purchase organic food", were above the threshold value of 0.55. The items below 0.55 were eliminated in further analysis. The Eigen value > 1 was selected as the minimum requirement for analysis as per Kaisers criterion (Lee and Hooley, 2005).

Table 3  
Constructs, items and factor loadings

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Measurement Items</b>	<b>Standardized Factor Loading</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Total Variance (%) Explained</b>
Health Consciousness (HC)	HC1	.697	0.836	51.853
	HC2	.736		
	HC3	.739		
	HC4	.646		
Fear (FE)	FE1	.498	0.703	10.613
	FE2	.717		
	FE3	.694		
	FE4	.666		
Environmental Concern (EC)	EC1	.655	0.625	9.022
	EC2	.729		
	EC3	.623		
	EC4	.596		
Trust (TR)	TR1	.624	0.732	7.094
	TR2	.782		
	TR3	.739		
	TR4	.568		
Quality (QU)	QU1	.783	0.914	6.869
	QU2	.839		
	QU3	.794		
Price (PR)	PR1	.628	0.432	6.376
	PR2	.594		
	PR3	.639		
Social Pressure (SP)	SP1	.640	0.660	4.753
	SP2	.615		
	SP3	.403		
Intention (IN)	IN1	.776	0.906	3.420

Constructs	Measurement Items	Standardized Factor Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Total Variance (%) Explained
	IN2	.769		
	IN3	.733		

## 4.2 Testing Hypothesis

One of the main objectives of our study is to examine the factors why young consumers in Delhi purchase or reject organic food products. To test the hypotheses, linear regression analysis was computed for all the factors. From the results, it can be construed that consumers have a desire for organic food consumption and some of the established relationships between factors and purchase intention has proven to be significant as discussed below.

Health consciousness is the first element of organic food products in this research. As presented in Table 4, our findings revealed that health consciousness hypothesis ( $\beta = .094$ ,  $t = 1.949$ ,  $p > 0.052$ ) does not influence purchasing organic food products among young India consumers. The result stands against the study of Paul and Rana, (2012), Wang et al., (2019), Leyva-Hernández et al., (2021) that health consciousness is an essential factor for determining the purchase intention of organic food consumers. Many researches have revealed that young consumers have less understanding about organic food products (Green and Knechtges, 2015), and that elderly individuals are more health-conscious than younger people (Green and Knechtges, 2015; Kuhn et al. 2007).

Concerning the fear factor, the result ( $\beta = .094$ ,  $t = -.303$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) does not support the hypothesis, implying that fear plays no influence in a young Indian consumer's decision to purchase organic food goods. The result stands against the study of Brewer and Prestat (2002), and Verhoef (2005) that fear influenced the decision-making of a consumer before the final purchase of organic food products. Though they are aware of the harmful effects of the consumption of conventional food, most young Indian have become routine to consume the food available in the market and experience no fear in buying it.

This study's third hypothesis is an environmental concern. According to our findings, environmental concern ( $\beta = -.015$ ,  $t = 3.501$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) is most likely to influence a consumer's real behaviour. The result supports the studies of Lee and Yun (2015), Liang (2016), and Nguyen (2016) that environmental concern is an important determinant for consumers' purchasing behaviour towards organic food products. Such affirmative results could be attributed to the knowledge gained from the educational background of the young Indian.

**Table 4:** Linear regression analysis predicting consumers' purchase intention

Hypotheses	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig	Results
	B	Std Error	Beta			
H1: HC → IN	.079	.040	.094	1.949	.052	Not Supported
H2: FE → IN	-.012	.036	-.015	-.343	.732	Not Supported
H3: EC → IN	.159	.045	.177	3.501	.001	Supported
H4: TR → IN	.009	.048	.010	.190	.850	Not Supported
H5: QU → IN	.341	.050	.337	6.768	.000	Supported
H6: PR → IN	.102	.055	.080	1.833	.068	Not Supported
H7: SP → IN	.357	.058	.311	6.139	.000	Supported

The fourth relevant factor regarding purchase intention was the trust. Concerning the trust factor, the result ( $\beta = .177$ ,  $t = .190$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) does not support the hypothesis. The result stands against the studies of Naspati and Bodini (2008); Drexler et al., (2018); Curvelo et al., (2019); and Krishna and Balasubranian (2021), that trust influenced the decision-making of a consumer before the final purchase of organic food products. The result is most likely to hold true because in India the commodification of organic food in markets is still at a nascent stage and the available food in vendors and markets is still dominated by raw or unprocessed forms. Hence, the trust factor on an organic food is relatively low and does not influence much on the purchasing intention of a young consumer in Delhi.

Quality of product is another important element of organic food products in this research. Our findings show that the quality of a product ( $\beta = .337$ ,  $t = 6.768$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) is the most potent factor influencing the purchase intention of a young consumer in Delhi. This finding is in conjunction with Wirth, et al., (2011), Wong and Teoh, (2015) and Mehra and Ratna (2014) whereby young consumers are keen on product information and labels while selecting organic food. Label and certification of an organic food product are associated with its quality and as such influence the purchase intention of potential consumers.

Further, our findings show that price (H6  $\beta = .080$ ,  $t = 1.833$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) does not significantly influence purchasing organic food products. The result indicates that young Indian students do not perceive the high price as a barrier to purchasing organic food products. The finding contradicts Liang(2016), Dholakia's (2018), Curvelo et al., (2019) finding that price is the most significant barrier to organic food consumption. The absence of considerable worry among young Indians over high organic food prices in this survey is consistent with D'Souza et al., (2007). Gleim and Lawson (2014) have noticed that price is

no longer an impediment for Americans, who are becoming more aware of the environmental benefits of green products.

Finally, one of the organic food product's elements in this study is social pressure. In our study, social pressure ( $\beta = .311$ ,  $t = 6.139$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) turned out to be the second most potential factor that influences the purchase intention while purchasing organic food. The result supports the works of Ruiz de Maya et al. (2011), Wong and Teoh (2015), Wana, Shen, and Choi (2018), and Varah et al., (2021), that consumers' attitude tends to be influenced by family, relatives, friends and other important people in their contacts.

## **Research Implications**

This study tries to identify the factors which motivate or prevent consumers for the purchase of organic food products. The effect of trust, social pressure, environmental concern found to be very significant in the study may be stressed upon for the promotion of organic food products. The current study is able to fill the gap which exists in organic consumer study in India. As there exists a huge potential for organic products to grow in the domestic market, understanding the factors which motivate the consumers' intention to purchase organic products is a key factor. The contribution of this study can be divided into three parts.

- First, this study is original and unique of its kind and had produced results that are relevant to the culture and environment of Delhi and India in general.
- Second, the result has proven that health consciousness, fear, trust and price on organic products have no role in the consumers' purchase of organic food products in Delhi. Therefore, producers, retailers, government and other stakeholders are implied to focus on this factor and take promotional measures to convert the potential buyers to regular buyers.
- Third, environmental concern, quality and social pressure are most likely to influence the consumers' behaviour towards purchasing organic food products. Our findings showed that friends, relatives and families have a resounding influence on the purchase intention of potential consumers, and such a result is greatly relevant to a culture-valued society like India.

The research provides practical insights for organic food producers, marketers and policymakers in India's developing economy. To improve consumers' attitudes, marketers and producers need to deliver clear messages to consumers that organic food is more beneficial to health and the environment as compared to conventional ones. Such measures would help in shaping the constructive perception of a consumer and help promote a sustainable attitude towards the environment in foreseeable future. It also opined to emphasize the quality of a product to ensure the cumulative consumption of organic food. It would be noteworthy to develop policy measures that promote the consumption of organic food products with an incentive or subsidiary for registered consumers, their friends, relatives and families.

## **5. Conclusion And Recommendations**

The explicitness of the use of pesticides and insecticides in food has aggrandised dramatically as a result of man's desire to make a quick profit. While herbicides and insecticides have boosted the productivity and shelf life of food goods, they have also contributed to an increase in the incidence of lifestyle diseases. As an alternative solution to this issue, a few producers have started organic farming though, but in most countries, there are not many takers for it. The study has identified environmental concern towards conventional food products as the most important factor for shifting consumers' food habits from conventional food items which are not in conformity with the basic standards of organic production to organic food products in Delhi. Other elements, like quality and social pressures, might also influence a consumer's intention before the final purchase of organic food. According to the study, situational elements such as health consciousness, fear, price, and trust were also identified as being important in exerting an influence on the direct relationships between attitude and intention. However, it would be premature to draw a generalisation for Delhi as the study sample is less and based on virtual psychological feedbacks. However, it could have some practical implications in the context of Delhi or India.

Thus, the practical implications of the study are that the marketers of organic food products should take into consideration some factors while promoting its products, especially the environmental concerns, its quality and social pressures that are akin to organic business. The availability and accessibility of organic food products, as well as the extension of certification, labels, and logos to organic food products, will enhance awareness of organic food products, resulting in increased consumption for the benefit of society. Accordingly, marketers and producers are imperative to develop planning or strategies and persuade potential consumers about the organic food content benefits, environmental benefits, pesticide-free and dissemination of knowledge among friends, families and others.

## Declarations

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**Declaration of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethics approval and consent to participate:** The study was approved by the institutional ethics committee of University of Delhi. Informed consent was obtained from the individuals prior to inclusion in the study.

**Author's Contribution:** The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: FV; data collection: MM; analysis and interpretation of results: MM; draft manuscript preparation: SKV. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

**Availability of Data and Materials:** The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, (FV), upon reasonable request.

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## Figures

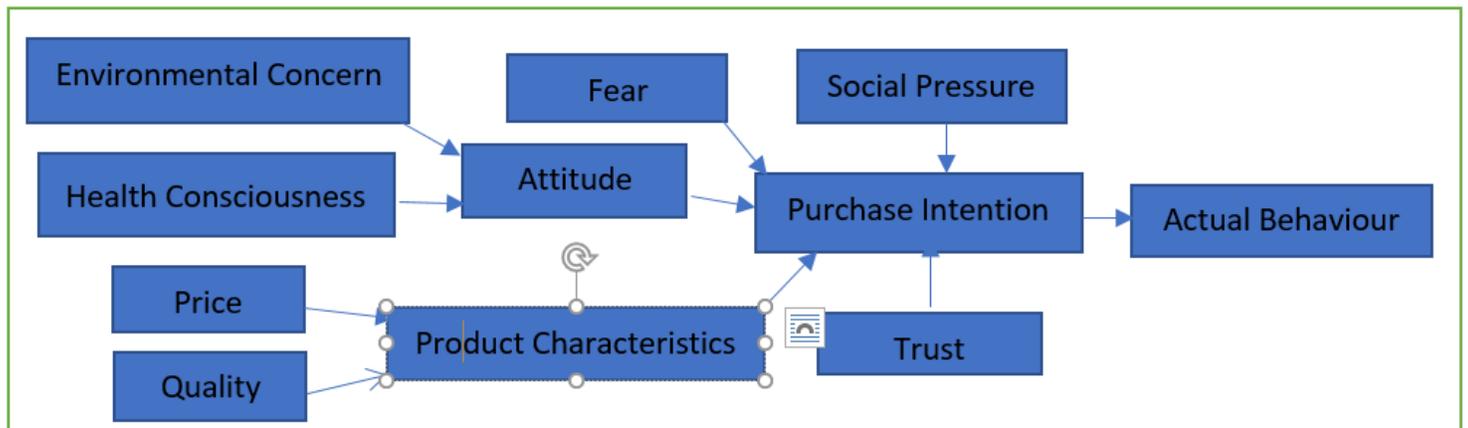


Figure 1

Proposed theoretical framework for the study

## Supplementary Files

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