



## The Influence of Price Perception and Consumer Attitude on Organic Food Purchase Intentions: A Study in Madurai District

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**Abstract** As health consciousness and environmental awareness rise, consumers are increasingly gravitating toward organic food options. However, in district-level markets like Madurai, price sensitivity and individual attitudes remain critical determinants of actual buying behaviour. This research investigates how price perception and consumer attitude impact the intention to purchase organic products. Using a descriptive research design, primary data was gathered from 100 respondents in Madurai District via a structured survey. The analysis employed weighted average ranking and Chi-square tests. Results suggest that while consumers hold favourable attitudes driven by health and safety benefits, high prices act as a significant barrier. The study recommends that enhancing price perception through better value communication, promotional strategies, and awareness programs can significantly boost purchase intentions.

**Keywords:** Consumer Attitude, Organic Food, Purchase Intention, Price Perception, Sustainable Consumption, Madurai District.

**1. Introduction** In recent years, the Indian market has seen a surge in demand for organic food, driven by a growing preference for products free from pesticides, artificial additives, and harmful chemicals. This shift is supported by government initiatives and the expanding retail landscape, which has improved access for urban and semi-urban populations. In Tamil Nadu, specifically within the Madurai District, the popularity of organic staples—such as grains, vegetables, and processed foods—is visibly increasing across farmers' markets and online stores. Despite this positive trend, widespread adoption is still hindered by economic factors. Price perception is a primary influence on buying intention; organic foods typically command a premium due to certification costs, lower supply, and production expenses. Consequently, consumers constantly weigh the higher cost against perceived health benefits and quality. While substantial research exists regarding metropolitan consumers, there is a lack of empirical data regarding district-level markets like Madurai. This study aims to bridge that gap by analysing how local consumers perceive pricing and how their attitudes shape their intent to buy organic products.

### 2. Literature Review

**2.1 Price Perception** Price perception is not merely about the monetary cost; it is a subjective evaluation of whether a product's price is justified by the value it delivers. Since organic foods are premium-priced, this perception is a critical driver of behaviour. Research indicates that when consumers view the price as "fair" relative to the quality, their purchase intention strengthens. Conversely, for price-sensitive demographics, a negative price perception can be a major hurdle. Previous studies in India, such as those by Paul and Rana (2012) and Kumar and Ali (2021), highlight that while awareness of organic benefits is high, price acts as a significant moderator in the purchasing decision.

**2.2 Consumer Attitude** represents a learned predisposition to react favourably or unfavourably toward a concept. In the context of organic food, these attitudes are often shaped by environmental concerns, trust in certifications, and health consciousness. A positive attitude acts as a psychological catalyst, often motivating consumers to purchase even when prices are higher. Sathyapriya et al. (2019) found that while health safety drives positive

attitudes, high costs remain a deterrent, a sentiment echoed by Singh and Verma (2017), who noted that authenticity is key to justifying price premiums.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate consumer perception regarding the pricing of organic food products.
2. To analyse the relationship between price perception, consumer attitude, and buying intention.

**4. Theoretical Framework** This research is grounded in two primary theories:

- **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB):** Proposed by Ajzen (1991), this theory suggests that intention is governed by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In this study, we focus on how a favourable or unfavourable evaluation (attitude) directly impacts the intent to buy.
- **Price Perception Theory:** This posits that a consumer's view of price fairness influences perceived value. If the price is deemed reasonable for the quality offered, it positively impacts buying decisions, which is crucial for the premium-priced organic sector.

### 5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework visually represents the relationship among variables in this study:

#### Variables:

- **Independent Variables:**

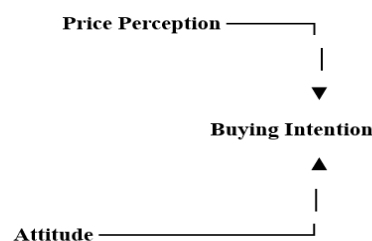
1. **Price Perception** – consumers' perception of organic food pricing (fairness, value for money, affordability)
2. **Attitude** – consumers' positive or negative evaluation of organic food (health benefits, taste, safety, and environmental impact)

- **Dependent Variable:**

- **Buying Intention** – likelihood that consumers will purchase organic food

- **Moderating/Control Variables (optional):**

- Age, income, education, health consciousness



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

#### Explanation:

- **Price perception** directly affects consumers' buying intention.
- **Attitude** mediates or strengthens the relationship between price perception and buying intention.
- Consumers with positive attitudes toward organic food and fair price perception are more likely to purchase.

**5. Research Methodology** The study utilizes a descriptive research design to systematically describe consumer perceptions and intentions. Data was collected using a non-probability convenience sampling method, selecting respondents based on accessibility. To ensure a representative mix, the 100 respondents from Madurai District included students, working professionals, and families. This sample size was deemed sufficient for descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

## 6. Data Analysis and Results

**6.1 Weighted Average Analysis** Respondents' perceptions were measured on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using the weighted average method. The data reveals specific barriers to purchase:

- **Rank 1:** "Limited availability of organic products in local markets" (Score: 385). This indicates that accessibility is the primary hurdle for consumers.
- **Rank 2:** "Difficulty identifying genuine organic products" (Score: 379). This suggests a lack of trust or clarity regarding certification.
- **Rank 3:** "Higher prices prevent frequent buying" (Score: 370). Price sensitivity is a moderate but significant concern.
- **Rank 4:** "Willingness to pay a higher price" (Score: 357). This relatively lower score implies that general acceptance of premium pricing is still developing.

Q No.	Perception Factors	Weighted Values (in Marks)					Total	Rank	%	Category
		5	4	3	2	1				
1	I am willing to pay a higher price for organic food options	125	140	60	24	8	357	4	23.94	Low
2	The higher price of organic food sometimes prevents me from buying it often.	130	160	54	20	6	370	3	24.81	Medium
3	I find it difficult to identify genuine organic food products.	140	168	48	18	5	379	2	25.41	Medium
4	Limited availability of organic products in local markets is a barrier for me.	140	180	45	16	4	385	1	25.82	High
Total							1491			
Mean							372.75			
Standard Deviation							12.1758			

## 6.2 Chi-Square Analysis

- **Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is **no significant relationship** between **price perception** and **consumers' buying intention** towards organic food products in Madurai District.



- **Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>11</sub>):** There is a **significant relationship** between **price perception** and **consumers' buying intention** towards organic food products in Madurai District.

#### 8.1 Table Chi-Square Test Results

Particulars	Values
Calculated $\chi^2$ value	29.84
Degrees of Freedom	4
Table value at 5% significance level	9.488

The calculated Chi-Square value is 29.84, which exceeds the table value of 9.488 (at 5% significance, df=4). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant relationship between price perception and buying intention.

- **Null Hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>):** There is **no significant relationship** between **consumers' attitude towards organic food products** and their **buying intention** in Madurai District.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>12</sub>):** There is a **significant relationship** between **consumers' attitude towards organic food products** and their **buying intention** in Madurai District.

#### 8.2 Table Chi-Square Test Results

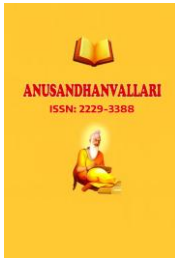
Particulars	Values
Calculated $\chi^2$ value	31.62
Degrees of Freedom	4
Table value at 5% significance level	9.488

The calculated Chi-Square value is 31.62, which exceeds the table value of 9.488 (at 5% significance, df=4). The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between consumer attitude and the intention to purchase organic food.

**7. Findings** The investigation highlights that consumers in Madurai hold a generally positive attitude toward organic food, largely fuelled by concerns for health and safety. However, the translation of this attitude into actual purchasing is hindered by three main factors: limited availability in local markets, difficulty in verifying product authenticity, and high pricing. Statistical tests confirm that both price perception and attitude are strong predictors of buying intention.

**8. Conclusion** This study concludes that in the Madurai District, consumer buying intention for organic food is significantly influenced by both price perception and attitude. While the desire for healthy, safe food drives a positive attitude, practical barriers such as high costs, scarcity, and authenticity concerns limit regular consumption. By addressing these issues through transparent pricing, improved accessibility, and effective value communication, stakeholders can successfully convert consumer interest into sustainable purchasing habits.

**9. Suggestions** To bridge the gap between intention and purchase, the following strategies are recommended: Retailers must expand distribution channels to ensure consistent availability in semi-urban areas. Implementation of clear labelling and visible certification is essential to help consumers identify genuine products. Offering smaller pack sizes, discounts, or promotional pricing can help mitigate the barrier of high costs. Continued



awareness campaigns focusing on the long-term health and environmental benefits can reinforce positive attitudes. Government subsidies for organic producers could help lower production costs, making the final price more competitive.

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