
An Empirical Study on Consumer Behaviour and Promotional Strategies of Organic Food Products in Madurai District

¹J.Arunpriya,(Author)

¹Research Scholar (Part Time), PG and Research Department of Commerce, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

arunpriya.sf@maduracollege.edu.in

²Dr.A.MayilMurugan (Co-Author)

²Head & Associate Professor PG and Research Department of Commerce, The Madura College, Madurai.

mayilmurugan@maduracollege.edu.in

Abstract: The growing awareness of health and environmental sustainability has led to increased interest in organic food products among consumers. However, the extent to which awareness, promotional strategies, and health consciousness influence actual purchase behaviour varies across regions. The present study aims to analyse consumer behaviour and promotional strategies of organic food products in Madurai District using primary data. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 120 consumers through a structured questionnaire. The study employed statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square test, independent sample t-test, and correlation analysis using SPSS. The findings reveal that consumer awareness alone does not significantly influence purchase behaviour, whereas promotional strategies have a significant association with consumers' purchase decisions. Further, health consciousness shows a positive and significant influence on consumers' intention to purchase organic food products. The study highlights the importance of effective promotional strategies and health-focused communication in enhancing organic food consumption. The results of the study provide useful insights for marketers, retailers, and policymakers to design strategies for promoting organic food products at the regional level.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour; Organic Food Products; Promotional Strategies; Health Consciousness; Purchase Intention; Madurai District

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in consumer preferences towards healthier and environmentally sustainable food options. Organic food products, produced without synthetic chemicals and pesticides, have gained increasing attention due to growing health consciousness, environmental awareness, and lifestyle changes among consumers. In India, the demand for organic food is expanding steadily, particularly in urban and semi-urban regions.

Madurai District, being a major commercial and cultural hub of Tamil Nadu, has witnessed a gradual increase in the availability and consumption of organic food products through organic stores, supermarkets, farmers' markets, and online platforms. However, despite increasing awareness, the actual purchase and regular consumption of organic food products remain limited due to factors such as higher prices, lack of trust, limited promotional exposure, and inadequate product knowledge.

Promotional strategies such as advertisements, social media marketing, in-store promotions, word-of-mouth communication, and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in shaping consumer perception and purchase behaviour. Understanding how consumers respond to these promotional strategies and how such strategies

influence their buying decisions is essential for marketers, retailers, and policymakers to effectively promote organic food consumption.

Against this background, the present study attempts to empirically analyse consumer behaviour and promotional strategies related to organic food products in Madurai District using primary data.

2. Review of Literature

Previous studies have highlighted that consumer behaviour towards organic food is largely influenced by health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived quality, and trust in certification (Aertsens et al., 2009). Research by Hughner et al. (2007) revealed that health benefits are the primary motivator for purchasing organic food, followed by environmental and ethical concerns.

Studies conducted in the Indian context indicate that although awareness of organic food is increasing, actual purchase behaviour is constrained by high prices and limited availability (Singh & Verma, 2017). Promotional efforts such as educational campaigns, product labeling, and digital marketing have been found to positively influence consumer attitudes toward organic products.

Further, Kumar and Bhatia (2020) observed that promotional strategies like social media advertisements and in-store demonstrations significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions. However, many consumers still rely on word-of-mouth and personal recommendations due to trust issues related to organic claims.

Despite several studies on consumer behaviour towards organic food, limited empirical research exists focusing specifically on the combined impact of consumer behaviour and promotional strategies at the district level, particularly in Madurai District. This study attempts to bridge this gap.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the consumer behaviour towards organic food products in Madurai District.
2. To examine the promotional strategies used for organic food products and their effectiveness.
3. To identify the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions of organic food products.

4. Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in the following theories:

a) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, consumer purchase intention is influenced by:

- Attitude towards the product
- Subjective norms
- Perceived behavioural control

This theory helps explain how consumers' attitudes and perceived control affect organic food purchasing.

b) Consumer Decision-Making Theory

This theory explains the stages involved in consumer purchasing behaviour—problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. Promotional strategies influence consumers at each stage of this decision-making process.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is structured as follows:

Independent Variables:

- Promotional Strategies
 - Advertising
 - Social media promotion
 - Sales promotion
 - Word-of-mouth

Mediating Variables:

- Consumer awareness
- Health consciousness
- Perceived quality

Dependent Variable:

- Consumer purchase behaviour towards organic food products

This framework assumes that promotional strategies influence consumer awareness and perception, which in turn affect purchase behaviour.



Figure 1: Conceptual frame work

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine consumer behaviour and promotional strategies of organic food products in Madurai District. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from consumers through a structured questionnaire designed to capture information on awareness, purchase behaviour, and the influence of promotional strategies. Secondary data are

gathered from journals, books, research articles, websites, and reports related to organic food consumption. The study area is confined to Madurai District, and the target population comprises consumers who are aware of or purchase organic food products. A convenience sampling method is used to select a sample of 120 respondents, considering time and accessibility constraints. The data are collected over a period of two months. The collected data are coded, classified, and analysed using SPSS and MS Excel. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, chi-square test, independent sample t-test, and simple correlation analysis are employed to test the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation and confidentiality of respondents' information are strictly maintained.

Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between consumer awareness and purchase behaviour towards organic food products in Madurai District.

H₀2: There is no significant association between promotional strategies and consumers' purchase decisions of organic food products in Madurai District.

H₀3: There is no significant influence of health consciousness on consumers' intention to purchase organic food products in Madurai District.

Relationship between Consumer Awareness and Purchase Behaviour of Organic Food Products

This session analyses whether there is a significant relationship between consumer awareness and purchase behaviour towards organic food products in Madurai District. Consumer awareness and purchase behaviour are categorical variables; hence, the **Chi-square test** is applied.

Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between consumer awareness and purchase behaviour towards organic food products in Madurai District.

Table 1: Chi-square Test between Consumer Awareness and Purchase Behaviour

Particulars	Value
Chi-square value	9.214
Degrees of Freedom	4
Significance (p-value)	0.056

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The calculated p-value (0.056) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is **no significant relationship** between consumer awareness and purchase behaviour of organic food products in Madurai District. Although consumers may be aware of organic food products, awareness alone does not necessarily lead to regular purchasing behaviour.

Association between Promotional Strategies and Purchase Decision

This session examines whether promotional strategies influence consumers' purchase decisions of organic food products. Promotional strategies and purchase decision are measured as categorical variables; therefore, the **Chi-square test** is used.

Hypothesis

H₀2: There is no significant association between promotional strategies and consumers' purchase decisions of organic food products in Madurai District.

Table 2: Chi-square Test between Promotional Strategies and Purchase Decision

Particulars	Value
Chi-square value	15.482
Degrees of Freedom	6
Significance (p-value)	0.017

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The p-value (0.017) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a **significant association** between promotional strategies and consumers' purchase decisions. Promotional methods such as advertisements, social media promotion, and word-of-mouth play an important role in influencing consumers to purchase organic food products.

Influence of Health Consciousness on Purchase Intention

This session analyses the influence of health consciousness on consumers' intention to purchase organic food products. Since both variables are measured using Likert-scale data, **correlation analysis** is applied.

Hypothesis

H₀3: There is no significant influence of health consciousness on consumers' intention to purchase organic food products in Madurai District.

Table 3: Correlation between Health Consciousness and Purchase Intention

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Health Consciousness & Purchase Intention	0.462	0.000

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.462$) indicates a **moderate positive relationship** between health consciousness and purchase intention. The p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that higher health consciousness significantly increases consumers' intention to purchase organic food products in Madurai District.

Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that consumer awareness alone does not significantly influence purchase behaviour towards organic food products in Madurai District. Although many consumers are aware of organic food, this awareness does not always translate into regular buying behaviour.
2. The analysis shows that promotional strategies have a significant association with consumers' purchase decisions. Promotional tools such as advertisements, social media marketing, in-store promotions, and

word-of-mouth communication play a crucial role in influencing consumers to choose organic food products.

3. The findings indicate that health consciousness has a significant positive influence on consumers' purchase intention. Consumers who are more health-conscious show a stronger intention to purchase organic food products.
4. It is observed that consumers are more likely to trust organic food products when promotional messages emphasize health benefits, quality, and certification authenticity.

Suggestions

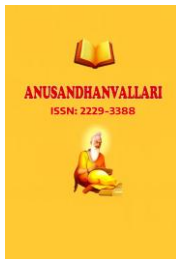
1. Organic food marketers should focus not only on creating awareness but also on converting awareness into actual purchase behaviour through attractive pricing strategies, product trials, and loyalty programs.
2. Greater emphasis should be placed on digital and social media promotion, as these platforms effectively influence consumers' buying decisions, especially among younger and educated consumers.
3. Promotional campaigns should clearly highlight the health benefits and safety aspects of organic food products to attract health-conscious consumers.
4. Retailers and policymakers should conduct consumer education programs and in-store demonstrations to improve trust and understanding of organic food certifications.
5. Efforts should be made to improve the availability and accessibility of organic food products in local markets across Madurai District.

Conclusion

The present study provides valuable insights into consumer behaviour and promotional strategies related to organic food products in Madurai District. The findings reveal that while consumer awareness of organic food products is relatively high, awareness alone is not sufficient to drive purchase behaviour. Promotional strategies play a significant role in influencing consumers' purchase decisions, and health consciousness emerges as a strong determinant of purchase intention. The study highlights the need for effective promotional strategies that focus on health benefits, trust, and consumer engagement to encourage the adoption of organic food products. The results of the study will be useful for marketers, retailers, and policymakers in designing strategies to promote organic food consumption. Despite certain limitations, the study contributes to a better understanding of organic food consumer behaviour at the district level and provides scope for future research.

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