

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IT PROFESSIONALS (WITH REFERENCE TO IT PROFESSIONALS IN HYDERABAD CITY)

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ABSTRACT:

The major goal of this research paper is to look at the factors that influence IT Professionals customers' buying decisions when it comes to organic foods.

Design/methodology/approach: *To achieve the study's goal, the Henry Garrett raking method and multiple linear regression are used. The Garrett approach is used to determine consumer buying behavior for organic food products, and regression is used to determine the impact of independent variables, such as influencing factors, and dependent variables, such as customer buying behaviour.*

Findings – *The outcome of the study showing that the factors like Health Consciousness, Environmental concern, Perceived price and Food Safety Local Origin are significantly influencing customer buying behaviour. Further, it is also witnessed from the study that the factors are correlated to each other. The current research was judged to be empirically sound.*

Research limitations – *The sample for the study was collected from Hyderabad and the findings encompassed a wide range of crucial touch points in order to provide comprehensive coverage of the factors impacting organic food product purchasing behaviour.*

Practical implications – *The current study's findings provide the organic agricultural business with more helpful and effective inputs. Manufacturers can create better tactics to achieve competitive advantage based on the trend in the results.*

Keywords: *organic, buying behaviour, health consciousness, food safety*

1. Introduction

Organic food consumption is becoming increasingly popular in modern culture as people seek a healthier lifestyle. The word 'organic' in food refers to a product that has been produced according to organic standards and has been recognized by a reputable certification agency or organization (IFST, 2018, 07). Organic foods are natural, free of impurities, and do not pose an additional risk of food poisoning. They may also contain more nutrients than conventional meals (Chen, 2007; Heaton, 2001). Concerns about pesticide risks began in 1962, when many incidences of poisoning in the workplace occurred during the process of mixing pesticides.

In India, the organic food business has just recently begun to take baby steps toward what appears to be a bright future for an industry that has received a significant increase since the

pandemic. According to the FiBL (The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) and IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements), India ranks first in Asia (fifth in the world) with 23 lakh hectares of organic farming land. (Prathik Desai, DHNS, 2021, 10).

People's interest in eating organic food is growing as they become more aware of the concerns. Organic foods, according to health-conscious individuals, can improve subjective health (Apaolaza, et al., 2018). Natural foods Individual and social values are thought to be accomplished by eating organic food, according to consumers. Environmental and animal welfare concerns have also become major motivators. Although there is a growing awareness of health in the community, the majority of people are still unfamiliar with organic products. Consumer awareness and willingness to live a healthy lifestyle while also protecting the environment is increasing. Consumer interest in health and the environment should be measured by marketers as a marketing opportunity to reach out to concerned customers with organically grown items (Bharathi et al., 2014) Purchasing organic food entails a number of considerations.

The emergence of awareness of these risks makes people's interest in consuming organic food now increasing. People who care about health believe that eating organic foods can improve subjective health. Organic food consumers assume that by consuming organic food, individual values and their social values can be achieved. Environmental and animal welfare factors are also become the most significant motives. Although health awareness is slowly increasing in the community, the majority of them still feel alien to organic products. Consumers' knowledge and willingness to lead a healthier lifestyle and maintain the fragile environment is rising. Marketers should measure consumer interest in health and the environment as a marketing opportunity to reach concerned customers with organically grown goods. (Bharathi et al., 2014). Purchasing organic food implies that it is beneficial to one's health, environmentally friendly, recyclable, and attentive to environmental issues (Mostafa, 2007).

2. Review of literature

Organic foods, as per Allen and Albala are grown without the use of current artificial ingredients such as pesticides and fertilisers, do not contain genetically modified organisms, and are not processed with radiation, chemical preservatives, or chemical food additives(Bharathi et al., 2014). Many factors have been found to factors that account toward organic food and its consumption, including health consciousness. (Magnusson et al., 2001), concern for nutrition. (Padel and Foster, 2005) healthy lifestyle. (Squires et al., 2001), environmental concern, food safety and ethical concerns, (Chen, 2009) and food safety and ethical (Schifferstein and Ophuis, 1998). Advertisements are thought to have a greater impact on youth than on other age groups. The characteristics that influence customer perceptions of organic food items were found by Shafie and Rennie (Williams and Hammitt, 2001). Organic products were highlighted for their taste, nutrition, freshness, and appearance, but higher prices were the only cause for lower demand. It is discovered that the cost of organic food was a major factor in the city of Mysore's low demand. It is also discovered that organic products were unavailable, causing a buyer of organic products to purchase non-organic products. There were just a few organic product stores in the city, and they offered little to no variety. Because of a

lack of understanding about organic products, the ratio of non-organic purchasers was disproportionately greater (Chandrashekar, 2014).

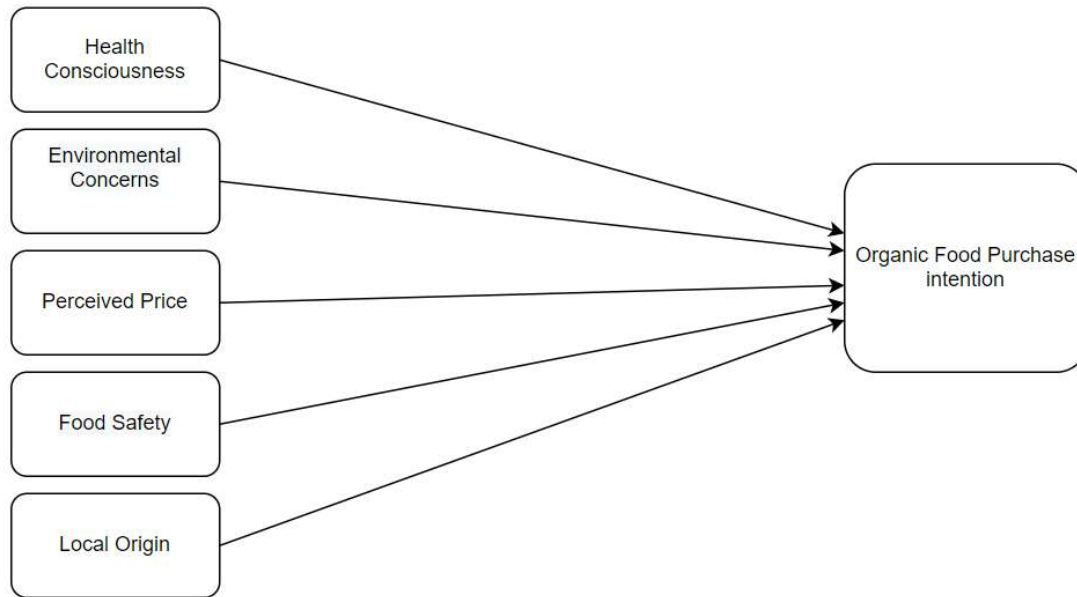
A person's predisposition to focus on their health is known as health awareness. Previous study has found that even this variable has a significant impact on attitudes about organic food and purchasing intentions (Chinnici et al., 2002; Baker et al., 2004; Hughner et al., 2007; Chen, 2009). Individual health awareness will favourably influence attitudes and intentions to consume organic food (Michaelidou and Hassan, 2008). Organic food is thought to be more ecologically friendly (Irianto, 2015) and less risky and useful to the environment (Cabuk et al., 2014), which has been regarded as one of the elements that drive customers to choose organic food. Organic foods are often recommended since they are environmentally friendly and sustainable (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). This demonstrates that environmental issues impact consumer attitudes toward organic food; customers who are more knowledgeable about environmental issues are more inclined to eat organic food.

Consumers are eager to spend more money on green items since the concept of green consumerism has been generally acknowledged. Consumers in the United States were ready to spend 4.4–18.7% more for ecologically friendly certified wooden items, according to Ozanne and Vlosky (Gronhoj and Olande, 2007). Furthermore, US tourists are ready to spend 8.5 percent more for green hotels, according to Rushmore (Ozanne and Vlosky, 1997). According to (Hansla et al., 2008), customers are prepared to pay extra for green power supplied from renewable sources. As a result, customers' willingness to pay is highly connected to their intents to purchase ecologically friendly items. The full range of available normative ideas about hope of the relevant referents for the individual in question determines the subjective norm (Ajzen, 1993). Subjective norm has also been found to be a key predictor of social input on the performance of certain behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Individual accountability has risen as social attitudes have shifted toward healthy food intake. These shifts have a significant impact on customer decisions to buy organic food (Hill and Lynchehaun, 2002). Finally, a consumer's decision to buy organic food is influenced by the attitudes and views of individuals who are important to them. As a result, customers identify local origin, environmental concerns, food safety concerns, and animal welfare concerns when it comes to organic goods (Ueasangkomsate and Santiteerakul, 2016). Consumer trust is favourably impacted by both functional and emotional values, and solely emotional value drives purchase intention. The perception of value has a significant role in predicting consumer trust and purchase intent Brazilian consumers (De et al., 2020). A thorough study model describes variables such consumer health consciousness, food safety concerns, consumer engagement, and ecological motivations to explore their connections with consumer intentions toward purchasing healthy and organic food (Iqbal et al., 2021). It has been demonstrated that purchasing intentions for organic food are positively influenced by the perceived value of traceability information; perceived uncertainty partially mediates the main effect; and, finally, the significance of product information favourably modifies the association between perceived uncertainty and purchasing intentions (Wu et al., 2021).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know the demographic profile of the consumers of organic food in Hyderabad
2. To study the relationship between the factors influencing the consumer purchase intention towards organic food
3. To evaluate the relationship between the influencing factors of organic food and purchase intentions of IT professionals in Hyderabad city, Telangana.

Proposed Conceptual model and research hypotheses



Fig(1):Conceptual Model

H₁: Health consciousness significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food.

H₂: Environmental concerns significantly influence purchase intentions for organic foods.

H₃: Perceived price significantly influence purchase intentions for organic foods.

H₄: Food safety significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food

H₅: Local origin significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food

3. Research methodology

The primary data for the study was acquired by questionnaire from the population of IT professionals in the Hyderabad region. The questionnaire was well-designed and well evaluated before being used. Secondary data was gathered from books, periodicals, yearly reports, newspapers, and websites, among other sources.

Sample Size

The population for the present study is the consumers of organic food in Hyderabad city. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to draw required sample from the population.

Based on the Cochran's sample formula, the sample size for the present study is fixed as 182. As a part of data collection, the structured questionnaires were spread to 250 respondents throughout study area. Out of which, the researcher identified that only 240 responses are completely filled. Hence, the researcher considered 181 as a sample size.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The present study adopted a statistical package for social science (SPSS) to analyze the data.

Table:1 Correlations among independent variables						
		Health_cons sciousness	Environmen tal_concern	Perceived _Price	Food_s afety	Local_Origin
Health_consci ousness	Pearson Correlation	1	.637**	.376**	.403**	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	182	182	182	182	182
Environmental _concern	Pearson Correlation	.637**	1	.383**	.480**	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	182	182	182	182	182
Perceived_Pri ce	Pearson Correlation	.376**	.383**	1	.443**	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	182	182	182	182	182
Food_safety	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.480**	.443**	1	.665**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	182	182	182	182	182
Local_Origin	Pearson Correlation	.529**	.509**	.593**	.665**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	182	182	182	182	182
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

From the table, the coefficient correlation value of Health consciousness and environmental concern(0.767), Health consciousness and Perceived price (.376), Health consciousness and Food safety (.403), Health consciousness and Local origin (.529), environmental concern and Perceived price (.383), environmental concern and Food safety (.480), environmental concern and Local origin (.509), Perceived price and Food safety (.443), Perceived price and Local origin (.593), Food safety and Local origin (.665) are positive values which indicates the positive relationship among the variables. The significant value is less than 0.01 and it is proving that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant at 1% level of confidence.

H₁: Health consciousness significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food.

Table: 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.563 ^a	.317	.309	1.69062

a. Predictors: (Constant), Health Consciousness (I believe that organic food is good for my health than conventional food), Health Consciousness (I believe that organic food contains more natural ingredients than conventional food)

Table: 3 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	237.439	2	118.720	41.537	.000 ^b
	Residual	511.615	179	2.858		
	Total	749.055	181			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Health Consciousness (I believe that organic food is good for my health than conventional food), Health Consciousness (I believe that organic food contains more natural ingredients than conventional food)

Table: 4 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.923	.790		6.228	.000
	Health Consciousness I (I believe that organic food contains more natural ingredients than conventional food)	.024	.270	.008	.090	.929
	Health Consciousness II (I believe that organic food is good for my health than conventional food)	1.679	.285	.557	5.898	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

From the coefficient table, it is observed the independent variables Health Consciousness I has significant effect on dependent variable i.e., purchase intention. The remaining independent item was insignificant in the model. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₂: Environmental concerns significantly influence purchase intentions for organic foods.

Table: 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.645 ^a	.416	.406	1.56826

a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental concern (I believe that organic food is more environmental friendly), Environmental concern (I pay a lot of intention to the environment), Environmental concern (The environmental aspect is very important)

Table: 6 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	311.272	3	103.757	42.187	.000 ^b
	Residual	437.783	178	2.459		
	Total	749.055	181			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental concern (I believe that organic food is more environmental friendly), Environmental concern (I pay a lot of intention to the environment), Environmental concern (The environmental aspect is very important)

Table: 7 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.617	.743		4.866	.000
	Environmental concern I (I pay a lot of intention to the environment)	.585	.265	.198	2.205	.029
	Environmental concern II (The environmental aspect is very important)	.731	.289	.246	2.530	.012

Environmental concern III (I believe that organic food is more environmental friendly)	.757	.241	.272	3.141	.002
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a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

From the coefficient table, it is observed that three independent variables viz, Environmental concern I, Environmental concern II, Environmental concern III, have significant effect on dependent variable i.e., Purchase intention. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H3: Perceived price significantly influence purchase intentions for organic foods.

Table: 8 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.560 ^a	.313	.298	1.70468

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived price (Organic food is cheap compared to other product), Perceived price (Organic food has a reasonable price), Perceived price (Organic food is a good product regarding its price), Perceived price (Organic food offers benefit for the money spent)

Table: 9 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	234.706	4	58.676	20.192	.000 ^b
	Residual	514.349	177	2.906		
	Total	749.055	181			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived price (Organic food is cheap compared to other product), Perceived price (Organic food has a reasonable price), Perceived price (Organic food is a good product regarding its price), Perceived price (Organic food offers benefit for the money spent)

Table: 10 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.349	.759		7.048	.000

Perceived price (Organic food has a reasonable price)	.038	.179	.018	.211	.833
Perceived price (Organic food offers benefit for the money spent)	.613	.313	.210	1.959	.052
Perceived price (Organic food is a good product regarding its price)	1.211	.275	.449	4.405	.000
Perceived price (Organic food is cheap compared to other product)	-.244	.203	-.110	-1.202	.231

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

From the coefficient table, it is observed that independent variables viz, Perceived price 2 and perceived price 3 have significant effect on dependent variable i.e., Purchase intention. The remaining independent items are insignificant in the model Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H4: Food safety significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food

Table: 11 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.566 ^a	.321	.305	1.69540

a. Predictors: (Constant), Food Safety (Organic food is chemical free), Food Safety (Organic food is safer to eat), Food Safety (Organic food does not contain genetically modified), Food Safety (Organic food can reduce the food poisoning risk)

Table: 12 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	240.289	4	60.072	20.899	.000 ^b
	Residual	508.766	177	2.874		
	Total	749.055	181			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Food Safety (Organic food is chemical free), Food Safety (Organic food is safer to eat), Food Safety (Organic food does not contain genetically modified) , Food Safety (Organic food can reduce the food poisoning risk)

Table: 13 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.237	.866		4.895	.000
	Food Safety (Organic food is safer to eat)	.956	.407	.324	2.346	.020
	Food Safety (Organic food does not contain genetically modified)	-.872	.493	-.291	-1.768	.079
	Food Safety (Organic food can reduce the food poisoning risk)	.699	.541	.221	1.291	.198
	Food Safety (Organic food is chemical free)	1.042	.491	.319	2.121	.035

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

From the coefficient table, it is observed that three independent variables viz, Food safety I and food safety II and food safety II have significant effect on dependent variable i.e., Purchase intention. The remaining independent item is insignificant in the model hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₅: Local origin significantly associated with the purchase intentions for organic food

Table: 14 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.491 ^a	.241	.224	1.79210

a. Predictors: (Constant), Local Origin (Production and processing of organic food is strictly local) , Local Origin (Organic foods are fresh), Local Origin (Organic foods help support local farmers), Local Origin (Organic foods are certified by related institution)

Table: 15 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	180.595	4	45.149	14.058	.000 ^b
	Residual	568.460	177	3.212		

Total	749.055	181			
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a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Local Origin (Production and processing of organic food is strictly local), Local Origin (Organic foods are fresh), Local Origin (Organic foods help support local farmers), Local Origin (Organic foods are certified by related institution)

Table: 16 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.983	.928		5.371	.000
	Local Origin (Organic foods help support local farmers)	.213	.289	.080	.739	.461
	Local Origin (Organic foods are fresh)	.912	.401	.272	2.274	.024
	Local Origin (Organic foods are certified by related institution)	.439	.454	.135	.967	.335
	Local Origin (Production and processing of organic food is strictly local)	.145	.458	.048	.316	.753

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

From the coefficient table, it is observed that independent variables Local origin has significant effect on dependent variable i.e., Purchase intention. The remaining independent items are insignificant in the model hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. Findings:

- The independent constructs considered for the study were proved low correlation among each other which indicates the erogeneity of each in the model.
- The respondents of the study are having good awareness towards health consciousness, environmental concern and food safety. These concerns proved to have positive significant impact on customer purchase intensions.
- Customer health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived price, food safety and local origin shows a positive impact on the purchase intentions towards organic food.
- It is also found from the study that the independent variable viz. health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived price, food safety and local origin are positively correlated.

6. Conclusion:

The present study covered health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived price, food safety and local origin impact on the purchase intentions of customers towards organic food. The researcher has taken the support of literature to construct a model in the present study. The statistical result shows that the increase of awareness towards health consciousness among customers led to purchase organic food. It is proved from the research that the independent variables like environmental concerns, perceived price, food safety and local origin plays a vital role in deciding the purchase intentions of customers. The research could also help the producers of organic food in promoting and offering organic food to the customers.

7. Limitations of the study

In spite of the effort made by the current study, some boundaries are worth seeing for future research. First, since the research data were collected in Hyderabad, future studies should be conducted around more cities within or outside country. Future scholars should also empirically study the role of cultural aspects of organic food purchases.

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