



Exploring the Determinants of Organic Food Purchase Intention: A Review.

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ABSTRACT

Growing concerns about health, food safety, and sustainability have increased consumer interest in organic food products. However, positive perceptions do not always translate into actual purchasing, making purchase intention an important construct for understanding organic food consumption. This review examines three key determinants of organic food purchase intention: health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust. Health consciousness encourages consumers to consider the perceived health and safety benefits of organic food, while consumer knowledge improves understanding of organic production, certification, and product attributes. Consumer trust reduces uncertainty associated with organic claims and increases confidence in certification, labelling, brands, and product information. The review identifies a research gap in the integrated examination of these determinants and their role in translating purchase intention into actual organic food behaviour. Strengthening consumer awareness, knowledge, and trust may therefore contribute to stronger purchase intentions and more sustainable food consumption.....

Keywords: *Organic food, Purchase intention, Health consciousness, Consumer knowledge, Consumer trust.....*

Introduction

Organic food consumption has attracted increasing attention as consumers become more concerned about health, food safety, food quality, and environmental sustainability (Rana & Paul, 2017). Organic production is generally associated with agricultural practices that restrict or minimise the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides and emphasise ecological and environmental considerations (Sobhanifard, 2018). Growing consumer interest in organic products has created opportunities for producers, retailers, marketers, and policymakers. Nevertheless, consumer interest and positive purchase intentions do not necessarily translate into actual market adoption, reflecting the well-documented intention-behaviour gap in organic food consumption (Janssen, 2018). The literature indicates that organic food consumption is affected by several barriers, including high prices, limited availability, insufficient knowledge, lack of trust, and information asymmetry (Rana & Paul, 2017; Kushwah et al., 2019).

The purchase intention is to be especially emphasized because it is a consumer's willingness or readiness to buy a product, which is generally considered as an important antecedent of the purchasing behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). "For organic food, knowing purchase intent is important to find out whether consumers' perception and motives are strong enough to create willingness to buy organic food. Several factors have been identified from previous studies that are associated with the intention of purchasing organic food such as health concerns, environmental concerns, knowledge, trust, attitude, social influence, perceived behavioural control, price, and availability of the product (Rana & Paul, 2017; Singh & Verma, 2017). These factors are however usually studied together in general behavioural models and it would be beneficial to have more specific reviews of the determinants at consumer level.

In the present review, as such, therefore, the three important consumer-related factors that were found to determine the purchase intention of organic food are focused: health consciousness, consumer knowledge and consumer trust. Together, these three factors constitute three complementary aspects of consumer decision making: personal health motives, cognition, and trust in product claims.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

The present review has the following objectives:

To examine the existing literature on organic food purchase intention.

To identify the major consumer-related determinants influencing organic food purchase intention.

To critically examine the influence of health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust on organic food purchase intention.

To identify research gaps and emerging research directions in organic food purchase intention research.

Organic Food Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the consumer's willingness or likelihood of purchasing a particular product or service. In behavioural research, intention is considered an important proximal determinant of behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour has been widely applied to the understanding of behavioural intention. TPB states that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control lead to behavioural intentions that in turn influence behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The scope of the present review is more limited in that it narrows the focus of organic food research to three determinants that consumers face: health consciousness, knowledge, and trust; these constructs are not reviewed directly, although they are important in the study of organic food.

Consumers' evaluations of attributes that are not directly verifiable prior to purchase are key drivers of purchase intention for organic food. Organic production practices and certification limited chemical usage, environmental benefits, and product authenticity are typically credence attributes that lead the consumers to rely more on labels, certification systems and credible information (Aertsens et al., 2009; Grunert, 2005). Consumer knowledge, health consciousness and trust in this context play a crucial role in minimizing uncertainty and developing positive attitudes towards purchase (Kushwah et al., 2019). Rana and Paul (2017) also proved that purchases of organic food are determined by both motivational reasons and perceived barriers, implying that purchase intentions are not determined by one single factor but by interaction between the consumer-related factor and the contextual factor.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen provides an established theoretical foundation for understanding behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The original framework proposes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence behavioural intention, while intention contributes to behaviour.

Organic food research has frequently applied TPB to understand purchase intentions. Suciarto, S. (2020), examined attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in relation to organic food purchase intention. However, The present review uses TPB as a foundational behavioural framework while focusing on three consumer-level determinants—health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust—that can complement the core TPB constructs. This approach is theoretically useful because organic food purchase decisions involve not only general behavioural evaluations but also consumers' personal health motivations, knowledge about organic products, and confidence in organic claims. Thus, future research can use TPB as a foundational theory while incorporating these consumer-specific determinants to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of organic food purchase intention.

Health Consciousness and Organic Food Purchase Intention

Health consciousness refers to the extent to which individuals are concerned about maintaining and improving their health. In the context of organic food, health-conscious consumers may perceive organic products as healthier and safer alternatives to conventional foods, thereby strengthening their purchase intentions (Devi et al., 2023). Recent research further indicates that health consciousness can play a significant role in shaping consumers' intention to purchase organic food. Health is consistently identified as an important motivation for organic food consumption (Rana & Paul, 2017). Consumers with high levels of health consciousness are more likely to pay attention to food ingredients, production methods, safety attributes, and perceived nutritional benefits when evaluating food products. In the organic food context, such health-oriented concerns may increase consumers' preference for products perceived as healthier and safer alternatives to conventional foods (Pan & Wu, 2024)..

Basha et al. (2015) found that consumers' perceptions of organic food are associated with health and environmental considerations, while Indian research has similarly identified health consciousness as an important factor in organic food decisions.

Singh and Verma (2017) also identified health consciousness among the factors relevant to Indian consumers' organic food purchasing behaviour, together with knowledge, price, availability, and purchase intention.

However, health consciousness should not automatically be assumed to produce actual purchase behaviour. Consumers may be highly concerned about health but still face constraints such as price, availability, or insufficient trust in organic claims. This distinction makes purchase intention an important intermediate construct for understanding the relationship between health motivations and organic food adoption.

CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE AND ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE INTENTION

Consumer knowledge refers to consumers' understanding of a product's characteristics, benefits, production processes, certification, and other information relevant to purchase decisions. Knowledge is particularly important in the organic food context because the authenticity and production attributes of organic products cannot always be verified through direct observation. Consumers therefore rely on information regarding certification, production standards, ingredients, and labelling to evaluate organic products and reduce uncertainty. Recent research shows that knowledge about organic products and certification can influence consumers' perceptions, confidence, and purchase-related decisions (Garg et al., 2024; Arslan, 2025). Dholakia and Shukul (2012) examined consumer knowledge of organic food and identified knowledge and awareness as relevant considerations in consumers' decisions to buy or not buy organic products.

Singh and Verma (2017) similarly identified consumer knowledge among the factors associated with Indian consumers' organic food purchasing behaviour. Their findings suggest that consumers who understand the benefits of organic products may be more likely to develop positive perceptions and purchase intentions.

Recent evidence supports this relationship, showing that consumer knowledge positively influences attitudes towards organic food, which subsequently contributes to purchase intention (Ngo et al., 2026). Similarly, Nautiyal and Lal (2025) recent research in India identifies knowledge as an important factor in shaping consumers' evaluations and organic-food consumption behaviour. Therefore, providing clear and credible information about organic production, certification, and product benefits may help marketers and policymakers strengthen consumers' knowledge and facilitate organic food adoption.

CONSUMER TRUST AND ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE INTENTION

Consumer trust is especially significant in the organic food markets because the quality attributes of many products, such as inputs and ingredients, can't be physically checked by the consumers at the point of sale. Most of the production methods, certification, chemicals, and supply-chain practices are credence attributes that depend upon the producers, retailers, certification bodies, labels, and sources of information for the consumers. Thus, trust can diminish perceived uncertainty and boost confidence in the authenticity and credibility of the organic products, which could affect purchase intention (Murphy et al., 2022; Lodhi & Singh, 2026).

Trust and product information were cited as factors that influenced the attitudes of consumers towards organic food in India, as found by Mehra and Ratna (2014). Additionally, Kushwah et al. (2019) came up with the two points of trust and information-related problems being important factors in the consumption of organic foods. Their systematic review showed that consumers have the potential to be confused about the meaning of organic claims and to be deterred from buying based on their uncertainty.

Consumer trust can be improved if the products are certified, labelled honestly, the brand is reliable, the information is transparent and clear, and retailers can be trusted. Since organic attributes are primarily credence attributes, consumers may have less uncertainty and be more comfortable with organic claims when they have information on how these products are produced, processed, certified and handled. This has been confirmed by recent research. In northern India, perceived knowledge and revealed information were found to be significant for consumer trust, and factors related to consumer trust were found to be significant towards consumer attitude and purchase intention in the study conducted by Lodhi and Singh (2026). Likewise, Parwez et al., (2022) reported that the labelling and product availability had a significant effect on consumer trust in organic food, while trust had a significant effect on purchase intention via consumer attitude. In addition, more recent studies reveal that trust is a crucial element in the decision-making process for buying organic food, and especially when consumers are unsure about the authenticity of the food and/or claims (Riptiono et al., 2024). Therefore, consumer trust should be viewed as more than just the result of marketing communication, but also a factor influencing the intention of purchasing organic food, especially when the consumers cannot verify the product themselves.

Integrated Perspective: Health Consciousness, Knowledge and Trust

The reviewed literature suggests that health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust represent distinct yet complementary determinants of organic food purchase intention (Ngo et al., 2026; Arslan, 2025).

Health consciousness reflects consumers' concern for maintaining and improving their health and can encourage favourable evaluations of organic food because consumers associate organic products with perceived health and safety benefits (Parashar et al., 2023; Ngo et al., 2026).

Consumer knowledge represents consumers' understanding of organic products, including their attributes, production processes, and certification, and can improve their ability to evaluate organic-food claims and benefits (Garg et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2026).

Consumer trust reflects consumers' confidence in the authenticity, quality, certification, information, and claims associated with organic products and can reduce uncertainty in purchase decisions (Lodhi & Singh, 2026; Arslan, 2025).

Together, these factors represent three complementary mechanisms: health consciousness provides motivation, knowledge facilitates evaluation, and trust reduces uncertainty in organic food purchase decisions (Ngo et al., 2026; Arslan, 2025).

Health consciousness may motivate consumers to seek healthier food alternatives, while knowledge can help them assess organic attributes and trust can increase confidence in the credibility of organic products and information (Parashar et al., 2023; Lodhi & Singh, 2026). Recent empirical evidence provides further support for examining these variables together. A 2026 study of Generation Z consumers examined health consciousness, knowledge, and trust within a TPB framework and found that these factors positively influenced attitudes towards organic food, while TPB components subsequently influenced purchase intentions (Ngo et al., 2026). Similarly, recent research has shown that knowledge and trust are important in the relationship between consumers' evaluations and organic food purchase intention, although their effects may differ depending on how knowledge and trust are conceptualised (Arslan, 2025).

Therefore, an integrated focus on health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust provides a theoretically focused basis for examining organic food purchase intention without incorporating every possible determinant identified in the broader literature.

Research Gaps

Despite extensive research on organic food consumption, three important gaps remain.

11.1 Fragmented and Limited Integrated Evidence: Previous studies have examined health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust as determinants of organic food purchase intention, but these factors are often investigated separately or within broader models containing multiple variables (Rana & Paul, 2017; Kushwah et al., 2019). A focused examination of these three complementary consumer-level determinants therefore remains limited.

11.2 Intention–Behaviour Gap: Most organic food studies focus on purchase intention rather than actual purchasing behaviour. However, consumers may not translate favourable intentions into purchases because of barriers such as price, availability, convenience, and uncertainty regarding product authenticity (Kushwah et al., 2019; Singh & Verma, 2017). This highlights the need to better understand the transition from intention to actual behaviour.

11.3 Need for Contemporary Indian and Integrated Evidence: Although India has a growing organic food sector, challenges related to information, affordability, availability, and consumer trust continue to influence market adoption (APEDA, 2024; Rana & Paul, 2017). Recent studies have begun examining health consciousness, knowledge, and trust together, but contemporary evidence—particularly within the Indian context—remains limited (Garg et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2026). Further research is therefore needed to establish how these consumer-level factors jointly contribute to organic food purchase intention.

EMERGING RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future studies should examine the joint influence of health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust on organic food purchase intention across different consumer segments,

Researchers should also investigate whether knowledge strengthens the effect of health consciousness and whether trust mediates the relationship between knowledge and purchase intention,

An important direction is the intention–behaviour gap, as factors such as price, availability, convenience, and product authenticity may prevent consumers from translating intentions into actual purchases.

Finally, future research should examine cross-cultural differences and the role of digital information, certification, and transparency in developing consumer trust and purchase intention.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The review offers several implications for organic food marketers, producers, and policymakers. First, marketers should communicate health-related benefits through clear and evidence-based information without making unsupported claims. Second, consumer education should provide accessible information on organic production, certification, ingredients, and product benefits to improve knowledge and reduce uncertainty. Third, certification, transparent labelling, traceability, credible branding, and reliable retailers can strengthen consumer trust. Policymakers should therefore support effective certification and consumer-awareness mechanisms. Finally, since purchase intention may not always translate into actual purchasing, marketers should address barriers such as price and availability alongside communication and trust-building strategies.

CONCLUSION

This review examined organic food purchase intention through three complementary consumer-level determinants: health consciousness, consumer knowledge, and consumer trust. The literature suggests that health consciousness provides the motivation to seek healthier food alternatives, knowledge enables consumers to understand and evaluate organic products, and trust reduces uncertainty surrounding certification, labelling, brands, retailers, and organic claims. Together, these factors provide a focused perspective for explaining consumers' willingness to purchase organic food. However, important gaps remain concerning their integrated influence, variation across consumer groups, and the translation of purchase intention into actual behaviour. Future research should therefore develop theoretically grounded models that examine these determinants collectively and explore how purchase intention ultimately translates into actual organic food purchasing behaviour. Such research can contribute to a deeper understanding of organic food adoption and provide useful insights for researchers, marketers, and policymakers.

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