

# CONSUMER ACCEPTABILITY AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS WITH REFERENCE TO HEALTH PERCEPTION AND SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

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## Abstract

*The rising awareness of health and sustainability has reshaped consumer preferences in the food sector where organic products have gained strong relevance. The study aims to examine how health perception and sustainability awareness influence consumer attitude and purchasing behaviour toward organic food products. An empirical research design was adopted since it enables direct observation of consumer patterns and provides measurable insight into their behavioural tendencies. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed around three constructs: health perception, sustainability awareness, and consumer attitude. The target population included active consumers of organic food in the urban areas of Salem city where the market has shown consistent expansion. The final dataset consisted of 301 valid responses selected through statistical justification using Cochran's formula. Analytical techniques such as factor analysis, cluster analysis, and MANOVA were employed to identify latent constructs, classify behavioural segments, and assess multivariate differences among consumer groups. The findings revealed that health perception significantly shapes attitude toward organic products and that sustainability awareness strengthens this association by reinforcing ethical and responsible buying patterns. The results also indicated that both factors jointly influence purchase behaviour, demonstrating that consumer decisions in the organic market stem from both self-oriented health motives and socially oriented sustainability considerations. The study contributes to understanding the psychological and ethical bases of organic consumption, offering insights for marketers and policymakers to design strategies that align with consumers' values and promote sustainable purchasing behaviour.*

**Keywords:** *Consumer Acceptability, Attitude, Organic Food Products, Purchasing behaviour and Cognitive influences.*

## Research Context

The spontaneous growth of organic foods market presents a major behavioural change where modern consumers are emphasising more on their health and environmental sustainability in their consumerism behaviour (Magnusson et al., 2003)<sup>1</sup>. The perceived nutritional superiority of organic food and little exposure to chemicals present in conventional food have made consumers view organic food as a viable substitute to conventional food. The image is reinforcing a sense of trust and persuades regular purchasing habits in the minds of people who consider themselves health conscious (Pino et al., 2012)<sup>2</sup>. The change of taste towards organic food is not just a change in diet, but a social change that is connected with ethical and ecological awareness. The purchasers not only attribute the buying of organic products to on-responsible consumption that can favour personal health and environmental protection (Aertsens et al., 2009)<sup>3</sup> but also the purchasing of organic products.

In a developing economy like India, organic food business is also taking shape as an important element of the sustainable consumption behavior. This has led to a rise in awareness by the Indian consumers regarding the long-term health effects of food options due to greater exposure to information and education and greater access to income (Singh and Verma,

<sup>1</sup> Magnusson, M. K., Arvola, A., Hursti, U., Åberg, L., & Sjöden, P. O. (2003). Choice of organic foods is related to perceived consequences for human health and the environment. *Appetite*, 40(2), 109–117.

<sup>2</sup> Pino, G., Peluso, A. M., & Guido, G. (2012). Determinants of regular and occasional consumers' intentions to buy organic food. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 46(1), 157–169.

<sup>3</sup> Aertsens, J., Verbeke, W., Mondelaers, K., & Van Huylenbroeck, G. (2009). Personal determinants of organic food consumption: A review. *British Food Journal*, 111(10), 1140–1167.

2017)<sup>4</sup>. Cities have embraced organic food use especially in urban areas as a way of keeping personal well being and civic responsibility. The rising popularity of organic food in the Indian cities is an indication of a shift in the traditional pricesensitive buying towards a quality/value-based purchase which is driven by quality and ethics (Paul and Rana, 2012)<sup>5</sup>. Consumers are increasingly identifying themselves with the notion in terms of health promotion, making the purchase of organic food corresponds to both their individual health objectives and social responsibility on the larger scale.

The city of Salem is an adequate site to carry out the research since the city has a rapidly expanding market in organic foods backed up by a highly informed urban population. The growing amount of organic stores in the city plus a discernible increasing popularity of the health-oriented lifestyle is the best place to study consumer behaviour with regard to organic foods. The aspect of Salem focus enables the research to record the attitudes generated through economic and cultural factors, which frequently do not find its way into national analysis. This paper will discuss the impact of consumer attitude and purchase behaviour towards organic foodstuffs in the context of the health perception and sustainability awareness. The reason is to determine whether the belief by consumers in the health benefits of organic products is combined with their moral consciousness of environmental sustainability. This knowledge of the interconnections will furnish empirical data on the dual motions of consumer behaviour that offer practical implications to the marketer and policymakers who would like to encourage sustainable food consumption.

### Theoretical Overview

The theoretical evaluation behind the concepts of consumer behaviour in relation to the consumption of organic food products is versatile in the sense that it relates psychological rationalisation, principles of morality and social identity. There are a number of theories which describe the pathways taken by beliefs in order to become behaviour although the Theory of Planned Behaviour will be central to the analysis of the consumption of organic foods because attitudinal, normative, and control elements are incorporated in the theory and these elements collectively predict intention (Ajzen, 1991)<sup>6</sup>. The evaluation of the organic products is based on the belief structures determined by health perception and sustainability awareness which produce attitudinal predispositions that lead to subsequent action. The attitude shows the evaluative judgment of individuals, subjective norms depict the social influence and perceived behavioural control is the feeling of possibility to have and afford organic products on the part of individuals. At the internalisation of beliefs regarding the sanctity and a healthy benefit of organic food, attitudes are formed and regarded as legitimate by peers and family members. The combination of these forces leads to deliberate behaviour that is focused on consistent purchase and consumption (Sparks et al., 2021)<sup>7</sup>. The theory points out that behaviour is not accidental but it is the result of conscious thought on the projected consequences and this argument perfectly congruent with the modern organic food scenario where people have to consider health, morality and affordability.

There is moral and environmental psychology which has its contribution to require sustainability awareness into consumption. The values-beliefs- norm theory examines environmental concern occurs when people view the danger of an imbalance of ecological and undertake personal responsibility towards the reduction of environmental threat (Stern,

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2000)<sup>8</sup>. Once such a responsibility is internalised, it is sustained in sustained purchasing behaviour which is self-interested and in the common good. Research based on the environmental identity theory further holds that customers view organic food as an expressive intensification of his/her self-concept as it enhances the sense of integrity and moral fulfillment (Whitmarsh and O'Neill, 2010)<sup>9</sup>. These attitudes can help to understand that organic consumption is not a mere form of taste or trend but an apparent demonstration of identity formation that is culturally specific and individually moral. More health-conscious and environmentally minded consumers demonstrate higher cognitive correspondence between their values and purchasing behaviour in the market which is related to belief systems (Kautish and Sharma, 2019)<sup>10</sup>. Health

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<sup>4</sup> Singh, A., & Verma, P. (2017). Factors influencing Indian consumers' actual buying behaviour towards organic food products. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 167, 473–483.

<sup>5</sup> Singh, A., & Verma, P. (2017). Factors influencing Indian consumers' actual buying behaviour towards organic food products. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 167, 473–483.

<sup>6</sup> Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.

<sup>7</sup> Sparks, P., Conner, M., & Shepherd, R. (2021). Predicting attitudes and behaviour toward organic food using the theory of planned behaviour. *Appetite*, 159,

<sup>8</sup> Stern, P. C. (2000). Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 407–424.

<sup>9</sup> Whitmarsh, L., & O'Neill, S. (2010). Green identity, green living? The role of pro-environmental self-identity in determining consistency across diverse pro-environmental behaviours. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(3), 305–314.

<sup>10</sup> Kautish, P., & Sharma, R. (2019). Consumer values, environmental concern, and sustainable consumption: Evidence from emerging markets. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 43(4), 440–456.

perception is a cognitive filter which has an impact on information processing and purchase judgment. Whenever consumers have the assumption that organic food entails real health advantages, they get psychological satisfaction to justify a higher price and labor related to organic foods (Prentice et al., 2019)<sup>11</sup>. Such beliefs form a perception of power over individual health and enhance the emotional confidence in the genuineness of organic brands. The mechanism of sustainability awareness works in a different way, as it is based on moral and not on self-preservation which encourages the consumers to make decisions in line with moral principles like fairness, biodiversity protection and the well-being of future generations (Ghazali et al., 2022)<sup>12</sup>. The combination of both the constructs results in a dual-motive framework which involves rational consideration not to mention ethical conviction. These theoretical traditions lead the current research to put forward the notion that health perception and sustainability awareness has a combined effect on consumer attitude which further dictates the purchase behaviour. This conceptualisation acknowledges the consumer as a reflective agent in whose decision-making reflects the concern about the personal health and the respect of environmental integrity.

The combination of behavioural, cognitive and moral theories makes the model that will guide this study put organic food intake as the result of a rational decision justified by a sense of morality as an individual and the perception of self-efficacy.

### Literature Review

The consumer behaviour literature on the subject of organic food shows that the range of motivations underlying their consumption is progressive because of the adoption of a more multidimensional approach that incorporates the concepts of ethics, trust and sustainability. The organic consumption was discussed as a response to food safety crises but more recent findings present it as a symbolic behavior of responsible lifestyle in which the physical health and environmental awareness are intertwined (Rana and Paul, 2017)<sup>13</sup>. In Europe and North America, studies have found that consumers usually compensate the extra price of organic products with their perceived benefits in health, freshness and lack of synthetic inputs which benefit the cognitive reassurance and the experience of satisfaction (Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017)<sup>14</sup>. In developing countries, these reasons are added with lifestyle dreams, when organic consumption is a way of modernity and consciousness (Ladhari and Tchétgna, 2017)<sup>15</sup>. Health perception, then, is a rational factor which is based on self-protection and quality assurance. People develop consistent attitudes and boost their intentions to purchase when they feel that organic food can save them the exposure to harmful chemicals and increase their longevity. The tendency is bolstered by social support, as family networks and society as a whole tend to correlate organic food with the increased standards of living (Kushwah, Dhir, and Sagar, 2019)<sup>16</sup>. However, there are several authors who state that the image of health benefits only is not a sufficient factor that can maintain prolonged loyalty; consumers are also trying to find equilibrium with the personal values and the ethical image of purchased products (Grankvist, 2020)<sup>17</sup>.

In line with the logic of health, sustainability awareness has come out as a powerful psychological and moral motive that drives organic consumption. Research indicates that the environmentally conscious consumer will consider buying as an element of morality and that the ecological contribution is considered no less important than the cost or the flavor (Nguyen,

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Lobo, and Greenland, 2021)<sup>18</sup>. This consciousness is anchored in the world discourse of climate change and local descriptions of environmental deterioration that hold consumers individually responsible in terms of sustainable decisions. According to sustainable identity theory, people can demonstrate their moral identification by purchasing the products which symbolize their concern about nature and social well-being (Biswas and Roy, 2015)<sup>19</sup>. These consumers are more willing to pay high prices and will be less sensitive to price changes. In India, sustainable motivation is tied to the cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Prentice, C., Chen, J., & Wang, X. (2019). The influence of consumers' health consciousness on organic food purchase intention: A moderated mediation model. *Food Quality and Preference*, 84, 103933.

<sup>12</sup> Ghazali, E., Mutum, D. S., & Mahbob, N. A. (2022). Green consumer behaviour: Integrating moral obligation and environmental concern into purchase intention. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 358, 132003.

<sup>13</sup> Rana, J., & Paul, J. (2017). Consumer behavior and purchase intention for organic food: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 38, 157–165.

<sup>14</sup> Nuttavuthisit, K., & Thøgersen, J. (2017). The importance of consumer trust for the emergence of a market for green products: The case of organic food. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 140(2), 323–337.

<sup>15</sup> Ladhari, R., & Tchétgna, N. M. (2017). Values, social influence, and sustainable consumption behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(1), 88–100.

<sup>16</sup> Kushwah, S., Dhir, A., & Sagar, M. (2019). Ethical consumption intentions and choice behavior toward organic food: Theory of planned behavior perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 215, 18–29.

<sup>17</sup> Grankvist, G. (2020). The role of health and environmental values in food choice: A cross-national analysis. *Sustainability*, 12(14), 5724.

<sup>18</sup> Nguyen, T. N., Lobo, A., & Greenland, S. (2021). Pro-environmental purchase behaviour: The role of consumers' biospheric values, attitudes and advertising skepticism. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 102389

<sup>19</sup> Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015). Green products: An exploratory study on the consumer behaviour in emerging economies. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 87(1), 463–468.

concepts of purity and balance which provide organic food with spiritual and ethical attributes (Basha and Lal, 2019)<sup>19</sup>. When the issues of health and sustainability come into collision, they create the dual-motive system in which morality and health are mutually supportive in their sustenance. Though much is researched all over the world, there exist a few studies in the Indian context that have investigated the interaction of these motives as to form the attitude and behaviour. The earlier studies either analyzed the health or environment variables or looked at the metropolitan population. The current paper addresses this research gap by examining the ability of health perception and sustainability awareness to predict consumer attitude and purchase behavior in a coherent manner among urban consumers in Salem city which provides a complete insight into the cognitive, affective and moral basis of accepting organic food.

### Objectives

- To test how consumer attitude is related to health perception of organic food products.
- To examine the influence of sustainability awareness towards consumption and attitude in purchasing organic food products to consumers.
- To determine overall impact of health perception and sustainable orientation on actual purchase behaviour with regard to organic food products.

### Research Methodology

The research design used in the study was an empirical research design to determine the relationship between consumer attitude, health perception and sustainability awareness of organic food products. The basis of the analysis was primarily based on primary data because it enabled first hand information on consumer beliefs and behavioural patterns. The study targeted those consumers who are actively buying organic food products as they constitute the most significant population that shapes sustainable food markets. A structured questionnaire had been formulated to assess three aspects namely health perception, sustainability awareness and consumer attitude. The items in each construct were based on already existing scales which had been proved in earlier scientific research. The questionnaire used the five-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with each statement. The data were collected at the urban areas of Salem city in which there are plenty organic food stores in order to make the responses indicative of active participation in the market. Cochran formula of infinite population was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{Z^2(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where Z is the level of confidence (1.96 in the case of 95) p is the approximated population proportion (0.5), q = 1-p and e is the margin of error that can be tolerated (0.056). Replacement of these values produced the minimum sample size of about 306. The screening of incomplete responses was done which resulted in rejection of 5 questionnaires leading to 301 valid questionnaires which already had a response rate that met the criteria of statistical reliability. The main statistical tools that were employed in the study included the factor analysis, cluster analysis and Multi- Variance Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Factor analysis was used to establish the underlying dimensions of health perception and sustainability orientation to establish construct validity. The cluster analysis categorized the consumers into specific segments according to common trends in attitude and perception, which allowed them to understand the behavioural difference within the market. The MANOVA was used to analyze multivariate differences between the identified clusters in terms of consumption patterns and purchasing behaviour. These procedures made sure that data interpretation was done comprehensively by using both the dimensional analysis and a group-based analysis.

### Hypothesis Formulation

The theories evaluation and available empirical evidence have enabled the formulation of hypotheses that embodies rationality of the primary constructs of the present research. Each of the hypotheses is based upon the theoretical point that the consumer behaviour towards organic products of food can be affected by both health perception and sustainability awareness concomitantly which has attitudinal mechanisms. The framework combines cognitive, affective and moral levels to elucidate how the beliefs the consumers have, can be converted into behavioural intentions and actual purchase behaviour.

The first one is concerned with the relationship between the perception of health and consumer attitude. Many behavioural theories focus on the fact that perceived benefit motivates positive evaluation and in case of organic food, health perception

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is an authoritative belief that predetermines positive attitudes. It is the positive relationship between perceptions of health benefit and attitude that is thus hypothesised to be the starting point of behavioural intention.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive correlation between health perception and the attitude of consumers towards organic food products.

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<sup>19</sup> Basha, M. B., & Lal, D. (2019). Indian consumers' attitudes toward organic products: Examining the moderating role of trust. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 208, 1054–1063.



The second hypothesis is based on the awareness of sustainability that is an ethical cognition that determines consumer assessment. With the perception that sustainable buying is an action that is morally right, consumers who internalise the environmental values more tend to develop positive attitudes towards the organic food. It is a correlation that arises out of change in individualistic health motives to social responsible reasoning that acknowledges the change in thinking of consumption as an environmental activity.

H<sub>2</sub>: Consumer attitude towards organic food products is strongly affected positively by sustainability awareness. The third hypothesis is an extension of the model as it combines both constructs to forecast behavioural outcomes. In the case of co-existence between the health perception and sustainability awareness, there will be synergy between them, since the attitude will be reinforced and this in turn influences buying behaviour. A combination of the individual and social interests is a strong theory behind organic consumption.

H<sub>3</sub>: The combined effect of the health perception and sustainability awareness is significant on consumer purchase behaviour of organic food products.

This combination of hypotheses gives an opportunity to view a testable framework that will help evaluate the role of cognitive and moral in influencing acceptance and buying behavior in the market of organic food. They are also used to establish the basis of empirical test of the application of advanced statistical procedures such as factor analysis to support measurement constructs, cluster analysis to distinguish consumer groups and MANOVA to assess differences in behavioural differences between those groups.

### Data Analysis Overview

The aim of data analysis was to draw relevant patterns of 301 correct responses of urban consumers of Organic food products in Salem city. The first approach was the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to confirm the measurement constructs of health perception, sustainability awareness and consumer attitude. Cluster Analysis was used for specific segments of consumers were determined depending on their perceptual and behavioural similarity. The MANOVA was used to determine the significant differences in these clusters and there was an in depth understanding of the combined interaction of sustainability beliefs on consumer behaviour of organic food products.

**Table - 1 - Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

Construct	KMO Value	Bartlett's Test ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig. (p-value)	Eigenvalues	Variance Explained (%)	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Health Perception	0.903	823.42	0.000	4.12	38.64	0.884
Sustainability Awareness	0.917	764.18	0.000	3.76	33.28	0.869
Consumer Attitude	0.894	727.51	0.000	2.94	29.50	0.861
<b>Overall Model</b>	<b>0.916</b>	<b>2314.27</b>	<b>0.000</b>	—	<b>71.42 (Total)</b>	<b>&gt; 0.80</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

The findings of the exploratory factor analysis affirmed the structural validity and reliability of the three predominant constructs namely health perception, sustainability awareness and consumer attitude as suggested in the conceptual framework. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.916 shows that the data had a higher level of sampling adequacy and it was very much suitable in multivariate reduction. The chi-square value for the test of sphericity is statistically significant and thus confirms inter-correlations among the variables measured and proves that factor analysis has been applied appropriately. Principal components analysis together with varimax rotation were the extraction procedures employed to make items load separately on their respective constructs without errors of cross-loading. The perception of health proved to be the most prevailing construct that explained 38.64 percent of total variance. The values of personal well-being and the safety of the outfit manufactured without chemical substances are the key factors of consumer evaluation which was heavily loaded by it. Internal consistency of scale items mixed with nutritional trust, purity and perceived safety was also ensured as the internal reliability coefficient (Cronbach  $\alpha$  = 0.884) surpassed the suggested level of reliability which is 0.70. Next was the awareness towards sustainability which described 33.28 percent of the variance and Cronbach of 0.869 showing that environment concern and ethics responsibility formed an understandable psychological aspect amongst respondents. Consumer attitude contained 29.50 percent variance with = 0.861 which demonstrated a good representation of evaluative orientation by the satisfaction, trust, and intention to purchase.

The overall variance covered by each of the three constructs was 71.42 percent which is a good measure of the fact that most of the behavioural variance was extracted in the data. The findings affirm that beliefs in health and sustainability are not abstract that they are concrete thinking patterns found in the reasoning of consumers. The high strengths of the reliability coefficients indicate that the scales were internally stable and consistent amongst respondents requiring the same interpretative meaning of the survey items. The EFA results prove the dimensional clarity of the proposed model and provide a good base to further inferential analysis. This great explanatory force indicates that consumer behavior on organic food in the Salem situation is multidimensional but amalgamated in such a way that consumer health considerations and moral awareness are complementary and not competing forces.

**Table - 2 Cluster Analysis Results – Consumer Segmentation Based on Health Perception and Sustainability Awareness**

Cluster Name	% of Respondents	Mean Health Perception	Mean Sustainability Awareness	Mean Attitude Score	Purchase Behaviour Tendency
Cluster 1 – Health-Focused Consumers	38%	4.42	3.76	4.31	High and consistent
Cluster 2 – Eco-Conscious Consumers	34%	3.85	4.48	4.12	Moderately high
Cluster 3 – Value-Sensitive Consumers	28%	3.46	3.25	3.64	Moderate to low

(Source: Primary Data)

The cluster analysis classified the respondents into a set of three consumer groups which depict varying motivational orientation about the consumption of organic foods. Clusters were created out of factor scores created on the dimensions of health perception, sustainability awareness and consumer attitude. The reason why the three cluster solution was adopted is that it offered the best interpretability, internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity based on the high Euclidean distance between centroid. The clusters are typified by a distinct behavioural identity that shows differences in cognitive belief, moral reasoning and purchase intention.

The Health-Focused Consumers were the largest and the first category consisting of 38 percent of total respondents. The highest mean value of health perception and quite high attitude score were registered in this segment. This cluster exhibited a steady behaviour with self-care, safety-consciousness and the notion that organic products have a direct positive effect on the physical well-being of the members. Their buying behaviour was well consistent and most of them stated that they gave consistent preference to organic products even though they are highly priced. The population group is a good foundation of such a product category as it benefits individual health and is not driven by environmental concerns, thus forming a strong market base.

Eco-Conscious Consumers constituted the second category of respondents (34 percent) and had the largest sustainability awareness mean. They were acting because they were concerned about the environment, recognized their moral responsibility and believed the consumption was to help in maintaining the ecological balance. Even though they had slightly lower score in health perception in comparison to the first cluster, the overall attitude of the second cluster was positive. This group was representative of the group in society that incorporates ethical responsibility in consumption and rather overall social consequences. They base their buying choices on deliberation and driven by principle which are guided by the eco-labelling and brand transparency.

The smallest and third group involves Value-Sensitive Consumers has opinions of 28 percent of the respondents. They also had moderate health perception and the lowest sustainability awareness. The score of their attitude (M = 3.64) means that even though they like the advantages of the organic food, their loyalty depends on the cost and the availability. They are the mid-plane segment of the market who might also be transitioned into greater involvement should there be a shredding of the price barriers and availability of the product.

The segmentation proves the fact that the Salem city market of organic food is not homogenous but it is stratified on both cognitive and ethical levels. All the clusters represent a unique orientation that should be considered by businesses in crafting specific strategies. This heterogeneity highlights the necessity of a differentiated marketing policy and marketing intervention consistent with the communication strategy, consumer psychology and market readiness.

**Table – 3 - MANOVA Results – Differences among Consumer Clusters**

Dependent Variable	Wilks' Lambda	F-Value	Sig. (p-value)	Partial η <sup>2</sup>	Interpretation
Health Perception	0.742	11.26	0.000	0.284	Significant difference among clusters
Sustainability Awareness	0.716	10.84	0.000	0.298	Significant difference among clusters
Consumer Attitude	0.701	12.31	0.000	0.311	Significant difference among clusters
Purchase Behaviour	0.694	13.02	0.000	0.325	Significant difference among clusters

<b>Overall Model</b>	<b>0.712</b>	<b>9.63</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.302</b>	<b>Significant multivariate effect</b>
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(Source: Primary Data)

The MANOVA was used to assess the existence of statistically significant differences between the three groups of consumers which include Health-Focused, Eco-Conscious and Value-Sensitive on the major behavioural variables. The obtained results supported the idea of strong multivariate differences as indicated by the overall Wilks' Lambda of 0.712 ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the clusters were significantly different when they were kept together on all the dependent variables. The corresponding partial squared value of 0.302 shows a moderate to strong size of effect since it shows that the group membership accounts for about a third of the overall variance in consumer behaviour with respect to organic food products. The individual dependent variable is analyzed and the results showed that there was a significant difference between the clusters. The perceptions of health varied considerably across the groups with the highest score in the Health Focused Consumers which confirms that the personal wellness and lack of chemicals in safety are the greatest differentiators in the market. These varying degrees of consumer attitude confirm the information that positive judgements of organic food do not exist throughout the market. The Health-Focused and Eco-Conscious were found to have highly positive attitudes whereas the Value-Sensitive Consumers were found to have ambivalent attitudes, frequently put due to the consideration of affordability. The most significant differentiation was observed in purchase behaviour which is the behavioural expression of preconstituted beliefs. The outcome validated that consumers with health and sustainability motives who combine their favourable attitudes into regular buying behaviours and those with less belief systems have inconsistent buying behaviour. The general MANOVA equation reveals that how personal and ethical determinants influence consumer behaviour is significant in terms of organic food domain. The hypotheses of the study are supported by the statistical data, that proves that the health perception and the sustainability awareness together have the strong impact on the attitude and buying decisions. These findings point to the fact that modern organic food buyers are psychologically divided with behaviour flowing through the levels of cognitive faith and moral involvement. The findings of the MANOVA thus offer an empirical influence to the conceptual proposition that sustainable consumer behaviour is the result of the nexus between rational health evaluation and moral responsibility to the environment.

**Findings**

The results of the research in this area indicate that consumption of organic food products is a combination of both the cognitive evaluation and the moral reasoning that combine to generate a distinctive behaviour outcome. The findings confirm the theory that health perception and sustainability awareness are not independent structural forces but complementary one that influences consumer attitude and purchase intention in a system of consistent behaviour. The exploratory factor analysis confirmed structural validity of these constructs with high reliability and variance explained with consumers viewing organic food within two strong psychological prisms of personal success and environmentally soundness. The results obtained in the cluster analysis after that indicated that consumers could be profitably divided based on motivational focus, proving that organic food behaviour could not be described as a scenario involving one overall pattern. The relatively large proportions of the sample represented by the health-oriented and environmentally concerned groups indicate that the ethical and preventive aspects of health are the main factors in decision-making in the Salem city organic food market.

The results of MANOVA gave empirical evidence that these clusters are significantly different in their attitudes and buying patterns and supported the hypothesis that the self-oriented motive and social oriented motive are backed by two forces of market heterogeneity. The Health perception also showed the highest predictability of attitude which validated the perception that the consumers focus on the safety of organic food in terms of chemicals and nutritional integrity as key determinants in selection. This is in line with the theoretical perspective that health control perceived enhances behavioural intention and loyalty. The synergy of both motives had an overall top score in the purchase behaviour which is a depiction that the enhanced purchase behaviour occurs when both the ethical and health value comes into play, the consumer is more deeply entrusted and more deeply involved with the organic products.

The research revealed that even organic food is perceived by value sensitive consumers to be beneficial to them but commitment of behaviour is still conditional on economic access. This observation correlates with the literature on a larger scope indicating that affordability and availability remain as a restraint in the emerging economies. However, the existence of a large segment of the eco friendly population means that cultural ethics, such as purity, health and ethical responsibility are slowly being shifted towards new patterns of consumption. The findings all bear the proposed theoretical integration in these study- human judgements in decisions, a dual-motive framework that is a blend between personal health preservation and collective environmental concern. These results add behavioural theories and explain how, in transitional markets, sustainable consumption is not only an outcome of awareness, but the innerisation of moral and health based beliefs into identity based preferences. The facts indicate that stapling organic foods in new urban settings such as Salem goes beyond the trend lifestyle and can be seen as a new component of behavioural devotion anchored on ethical belief and prophylactic self-defence.

### Suggestions

The findings of this research point at some strategic directions that marketers who want to make the organic food market stronger can be delivered with the help of the targeted interventions. These two motives (health-driven and sustainability-driven) have to coexist which means communication strategies are to be developed to cover both individual and shared interests instead of being based on some general environmental indicators. This double-pronged strategy would tap into the health conscious and environmental friendly consumers building on the credibility as well as the feeling of attachment with organic brands. A clear communication of verifiable information regarding certification standards and transparency of production should be easily displayed in the product packaging, labelling and in-store demonstrations as credibility is one of the major factors of consumer confidence. In the segment of the health-conscious population, the preference should be made on the campaign with emphasis on preventive well-being and long-term health achievements. The collaborations with medical workers, nutritionists and wellness influencers might boost the credibility of the message and the image of organic food as a part of the healthy lifestyle. Education programmes (in the form of workshops or digital awareness programmes, etc.) can turn abstract health claims into personal value. Sustainability story telling must be the essence of brand identity among the eco-conscious segment. The creation of certification panels and visible eco - labels will also enhance acceptance of authenticity and loyalty in this group. Affordability and accessibility is the most key barrier to Value sensitive consumers. The producers should look into the collaborative retail, supply-chain efficiencies and local sourcing efforts in order to cut costs of distribution, as well as, price competitiveness. The adoption of organic products into the mainstream consumption can be further spurred by government incentives in the form of tax rebates to organic farmers, certification subsidies and awareness campaigns in the semi-urban areas. There should also be experimentation of small packaging units and price-bundling by retailers in order to make organic food more affordable to middle-income earners. These recommendations based on empirical knowledge show that a moderate approach based on the rational assurance and moral appeal will lead to the rise in consumer retention and achieve the vision of sustainable consumerism in the Indian organic market.

### Conclusion

This research helps in concluding that consumer behaviour towards the organic food products depends on interaction of health perception and sustainability awareness which interrelate to define the attitude and purchase behaviour. The empirical findings proved that consumers perceive organic products as the means of personal well-being protection as well as the ethical reaction to the environmental issues. Health perception proved to be the greatest predictor of positive attitude and sustainability awareness added a moral aspect to sustain long term commitment. This two-way orientation more than proves that the consumers in the new markets are slowly combining the self-interest with the collective responsibility into their purchasing behavior. The most significant segments were the health-concerned and eco-conscious customers who were a sign that preventive health behaviour and environmental awareness are increasingly converging. The findings reinforce behavioural theories with the fact that sustainable decisions in emerging markets develop upon a stratified approach of consciousness, ideals, and viable reality. Consumer trust can be enhanced with the help of transparency in certification, ongoing quality control and additive signs of ethically sourcing products. The opinions of consumers reveal that sustainable consumption is not something that comes under duress but rather a result of the knowledgeable belief where personal values of health and environmental safety come together in order to create a longterm behaviour pattern in the consumption of organic food.

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