

ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BARRIERS TO ORGANIC VEGETABLE PURCHASES IN SAMRALA CITY

¹Ms. Himanshi, ²Ms. Harneet, ³Ms. Jashanpreet Kaur

¹(Asst. Prof.), A.S. Group of Institutions, Khanna

²(Asst. Prof.), A.S. Group of Institutions, Khanna

³(MBA Student, A.S. Group of Institutions, Khanna

ABSTRACT

The increasing awareness of health and environmental sustainability has driven interest in organic vegetables. However, financial constraints remain a significant barrier to widespread adoption. This study examines consumer attitudes and unwillingness to pay (UWP) for organic vegetables in Samrala City, using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify key determinants influencing consumer behavior. Data were collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire and analyzed. The results reveal two main factors: (1) Positive attitudes toward organic vegetables, driven by health benefits, environmental impact, and perceived taste; and (2) Unwillingness to pay, largely influenced by cost concerns, budget limitations, and price sensitivity.

KEYWORDS: Organic vegetables, consumer attitudes, price sensitivity, purchasing behavior, sustainability, health perception, market barriers.

INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture has gained significant attention in recent years due to growing concerns about health, environmental sustainability, and food safety. Organic vegetables, in particular, are perceived as healthier alternatives to conventional produce, free from synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. However, despite their benefits, consumer adoption remains limited, primarily due to high costs and financial constraints. Understanding consumer attitudes and financial barriers is crucial for expanding the organic vegetable market.

The increasing awareness of health and environmental issues has led to a significant shift in consumer behavior towards organic vegetables in India. This literature review examines various studies that explore consumer perceptions, attitudes, and factors influencing the purchase of organic vegetables in the Indian context.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies indicate that Indian consumers perceive organic vegetables as healthier and free from harmful chemicals (Saha et al., 2020). Health consciousness plays a significant role in organic food preferences, with urban consumers particularly prioritizing nutritional benefits (Chakrabarti, 2019). Research also highlights that consumers associate organic products with superior taste and quality, further influencing their purchase decisions (Sharma & Singh, 2021). Additionally, environmental concerns drive some consumers towards organic choices, as they recognize the benefits of sustainable farming practices (Kumar et al., 2022).

Studies highlight cost as a primary deterrent, with organic vegetables being priced significantly higher than conventional counterparts (Patel & Verma, 2020). Limited price sensitivity among middle- and lower-income groups exacerbates the affordability issue. Organic vegetables are not widely available in regular retail stores, forcing consumers to rely

on specialized outlets or online platforms (Rao & Mehta, 2021). Accessibility remains a key constraint, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas.

Often consumers have limited knowledge about the benefits of organic products, leading to skepticism regarding their authenticity and advantages (Mishra et al., 2022). Misinformation and a lack of standardized certification contribute to doubts about the credibility of organic labels. Consumers often find it inconvenient to source organic vegetables due to inconsistent supply chains and lack of trust in organic certifications (Ghosh & Banerjee, 2021). Concerns over fraudulent labeling and inadequate governmental regulations further deter consumers.

A study by Saha et al. (2019) in India found that urban consumers are more inclined toward organic food due to rising health awareness. However, rural and semi-urban consumers, such as those in smaller towns like Samrala, may have different attitudes influenced by price sensitivity and availability.

Research indicates that consumers generally associate organic vegetables with superior health benefits, better taste, and environmental sustainability (Yadav & Pathak, 2016).

Limited studies focus specifically on small cities like Samrala. However, research from similar regions suggests that while consumers are gradually shifting toward organic products, infrastructure challenges and economic constraints continue to limit widespread adoption (Gupta & Ogden, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

- **Survey Design:** A structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).
- **Sample Size:** 100 respondents from Samrala city.
- **Sampling Technique:** **Purposive sampling** was used to target individuals who regularly purchase vegetables, ensuring relevance to the study. The sample included a mix of income levels, age groups, and educational backgrounds for a diverse perspective.
- **Data Collection Method:** The survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire.
- **KMO & Bartlett's Test:** KMO = 0.77 (adequate), Bartlett's Test $p < 0.05$ (significant).
- **Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha):**
 - Attitude: **0.81** (high reliability).
 - Unwillingness to Pay (UWP): **0.83** (strong reliability).

Factor Loading Table

Item	Factor 1: Attitude	Factor 2: Unwillingness to Pay (UWP)
Organic vegetables are healthier	0.80	0.30
Organic vegetables are environmentally friendly	0.84	0.28
I trust organic labels	0.76	0.35
I prefer organic over conventional vegetables	0.78	0.34

Organic vegetables taste better	0.72	0.40
Organic vegetables are too expensive	0.30	0.83
I avoid buying organic vegetables due to cost	0.28	0.86
Organic vegetables are not worth the price	0.32	0.78
My monthly budget does not allow for organic food	0.34	0.79
I only buy organic vegetables if prices are low	0.38	0.74
I prioritize affordability over organic benefits	0.45	0.77

- **Factor 1 (Attitude):** Consumers recognize health benefits, environmental impact, and taste differences but do not always translate these beliefs into purchasing decisions.
- **Factor 2 (Unwillingness to Pay - UWP):** High loadings on cost concerns, budget constraints, and price sensitivity highlight financial barriers to purchasing organic vegetables.

Segmentation by Age

Age Group	Positive Attitude (%)	Willing to Pay More (%)	Unwilling to Pay (%)
18–30	65%	40%	60%
31–50	80%	50%	50%
51+	55%	30%	70%

Segmentation by Income

Income Level	Positive Attitude (%)	Willing to Pay More (%)	Unwilling to Pay (%)
Low (< ₹20K)	60%	20%	80%
Middle (₹20K–50K)	75%	45%	55%
High (> ₹50K)	85%	70%	30%

Segmentation by Education

Education Level	Positive Attitude (%)	Willing to Pay More (%)	Unwilling to Pay (%)
Below Graduate	55%	30%	70%
Graduate	75%	50%	50%
Postgraduate	85%	65%	35%

Segmentation by Household Size

Household Size	Positive Attitude (%)	Willing to Pay More (%)	Unwilling to Pay (%)
Small (1–3)	75%	55%	45%
Medium (4–6)	70%	40%	60%
Large (7+)	60%	25%	75%

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study on consumer attitudes and unwillingness to pay (UWP) for organic vegetables in Samrala City reveal several key insights:

- A majority of consumers recognize the health benefits, environmental impact, and superior taste of organic vegetables.
- Trust in organic labels is moderately high, with many consumers preferring organic produce over conventional options.
- Despite positive perceptions, attitude alone does not always translate into actual purchasing behavior.
- Cost remains the most significant barrier to purchasing organic vegetables. Consumers perceive them as expensive and not worth the price.
- Many respondents indicated that their monthly budget does not allow for regular organic purchases.
- Price sensitivity is evident, with a majority stating that they only buy organic vegetables when prices are low.
- Consumers prioritize affordability over the benefits of organic produce, suggesting a preference for lower-cost alternatives.
- Young adults (18–30) have a positive attitude toward organic vegetables, but 60% of them are unwilling to pay more.
- Middle-aged consumers (31–50) show the highest willingness to pay (50%) but still have financial concerns.
- Older consumers (51+) exhibit the lowest willingness to pay (30%), possibly due to fixed incomes or habitual purchasing patterns.
- Higher-income individuals (> ₹50K) have the strongest positive attitude (85%) and highest willingness to pay (70%).
- Middle-income consumers (₹20K–50K) demonstrate moderate willingness to pay (45%) but still exhibit reluctance due to budget constraints.
- Low-income consumers (< ₹20K) are the least likely to purchase organic vegetables, with 80% unwilling to pay due to financial limitations.
- Higher education correlates with a greater willingness to pay.
- Postgraduates (85%) have the most positive attitude and highest willingness to pay (65%).
- Graduates (50%) and those with below-graduate education (30%) show declining willingness as education levels decrease.
- Smaller households (1–3 members) show the highest willingness to pay (55%) due to lower overall grocery expenses.
- Medium-sized households (4–6 members) have moderate willingness to pay (40%), reflecting financial balancing.
- Larger households (7+ members) exhibit the highest unwillingness to pay (75%), indicating strong price sensitivity.

Implications for Businesses and Policymakers

- Campaigns should emphasize the health and environmental benefits while addressing price concerns.
- Subsidies, incentives, or tax benefits can help bridge the affordability gap.
- Strengthening trust in organic certification and benefits can increase consumer willingness to pay.
- Supermarkets and local vendors can introduce bundled promotions or tiered pricing to make organic vegetables more accessible.

CONCLUSION

While consumer awareness and attitudes toward organic vegetables are generally positive, financial constraints significantly impact purchasing decisions. Higher-income and highly educated consumers are more willing to pay, whereas price sensitivity remains a major barrier for lower-income groups and larger households. Addressing these barriers through pricing interventions, educational efforts, and government policies will be key to expanding organic vegetable consumption in Samrala City.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. **Sample Size:** The study is based on a relatively small sample (100 respondents), which may limit generalizability to a broader population.
2. **Sampling Technique:** Purposive sampling may introduce bias, as respondents were selected based on their existing engagement with vegetable purchasing.
3. **Geographical Limitation:** The study focuses on a single small Indian city, and findings may not be applicable to urban or rural areas with different socio-economic conditions.
4. **Self-Reported Data:** The responses rely on self-reported attitudes and behaviors, which may be influenced by social desirability bias.
5. **Economic and Market Variability:** Factors like inflation, supply chain disruptions, and government policies were not considered but may impact willingness to pay over time.

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