



EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED HEALTH BENEFITS AND PURCHASE FREQUENCY OF ORGANIC FARM PRODUCTS

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between perceived health benefits and the purchasing frequency of organic farm products among consumers. Utilizing a sample of 120 participants from Haryana, the research employs descriptive cum exploratory methodology, with purposive sampling to gather data through surveys. The findings reveal that consumers perceive organic products as healthier alternatives to conventional foods, significantly influencing their purchasing decisions. The study also investigates demographic factors, including age, monthly family income, and educational qualifications, and their impact on consumer attitudes. Chi-square tests indicate a strong association between educational qualifications and purchasing behavior, with higher education levels correlating with increased awareness of health benefits. Additionally, younger consumers and those with higher incomes are more likely to prioritize health in their buying decisions. This research contributes to understanding consumer behavior in the organic food market, highlighting the need for targeted marketing strategies and education to promote healthier lifestyle choices and support sustainable agricultural practices.

Keywords: Examining, Perceived, Health, Benefits, Organic Farm, Products

Introduction:

Organic farming has gained considerable attention over the last few decades due to its emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and its perceived benefits over conventional farming. Organic farming excludes the use of synthetic chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers, focusing on natural processes to maintain soil fertility and prevent pest damage. The resulting products,

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commonly known as organic farm products, include fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and grains, which are free from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), chemical additives, and artificial preservatives. This method of production aligns with growing consumer concerns about food safety, environmental sustainability, and personal health, leading to an increase in the demand for organic products globally.

In today's health-conscious world, organic products are perceived as healthier alternatives to conventionally produced food items. Many consumers believe that organic products contain fewer harmful substances and provide more nutritional benefits than their conventional counterparts. As awareness of the adverse effects of chemical exposure grows, especially in food production, more people are choosing organic products for health reasons, making the health benefits of organic products a pivotal factor in driving their market demand.

Perceived Health Benefits as a Key Consumer Motivator

The concept of perceived health benefits refers to consumers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the positive effects of organic products on their well-being. Health benefits typically associated with organic products include the absence of synthetic chemicals, reduced exposure to pesticides, improved nutritional content, and the promotion of better overall health outcomes. These perceived benefits often translate into a preference for organic products, as consumers view them as safer and more wholesome alternatives to conventional options.

Many consumers opt for organic products to reduce their intake of harmful chemicals and additives. For instance, a common perception is that organic fruits and vegetables are free from pesticide residues, which are known to have detrimental long-term effects on human health. Similarly, organic dairy and meat products are believed to be free from antibiotics and growth hormones, making them more appealing to consumers who are concerned about the impact of these substances on their health.

Moreover, organic products are often associated with higher nutritional value, particularly in terms of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Although scientific research presents mixed results regarding the nutritional superiority of organic products, the general perception among consumers is that organic foods are more nutritious. This perception plays a vital role in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors. Health-conscious individuals, particularly those with specific dietary needs or concerns, tend to favor organic products over conventionally produced alternatives.

Purchase Frequency of Organic Farm Products

Purchase frequency refers to how often consumers buy organic farm products. In the context of organic foods, purchase frequency can vary based on several factors, including availability, price, awareness, and most importantly, perceived benefits such as health. Consumers who strongly believe in the health benefits of organic products are more likely to purchase them regularly. On the other hand, those who perceive organic products as overpriced or not significantly different from conventional foods may only buy them occasionally.

Examining the relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase ...

The frequency with which consumers purchase organic farm products can also be influenced by the variety of organic products available, ease of access, and marketing strategies that emphasize health benefits. Supermarkets, health food stores, and online platforms have expanded their offerings of organic products, making it easier for consumers to incorporate them into their daily diets. Consumers who prioritize organic products for health reasons may adjust their shopping habits to include these products more frequently, despite potential barriers such as higher prices or limited availability in certain regions.

Price remains one of the most significant barriers to the regular purchase of organic products. Organic products typically cost more than their conventional counterparts due to the more labor-intensive farming methods, smaller scale production, and certification costs associated with organic farming. However, consumers who believe in the health benefits of organic products may view the higher price as a worthwhile investment in their long-term health, leading to more frequent purchases.

Linking Perceived Health Benefits and Purchase Frequency

The relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase frequency is central to understanding consumer behavior in the organic market. Consumers who associate organic products with better health outcomes are more likely to incorporate them into their diets regularly. Studies have shown that consumers' beliefs about the health benefits of organic products significantly influence their purchasing decisions, often outweighing other considerations such as price and availability.

Health-conscious consumers, particularly those who prioritize wellness and disease prevention, are more inclined to buy organic products frequently. For example, individuals with specific health concerns, such as allergies, chronic illnesses, or sensitivities to chemicals, may be more diligent in purchasing organic products to avoid harmful substances found in conventional foods. Similarly, parents who perceive organic products as healthier options for their children are more likely to purchase them regularly, even if it involves higher costs or inconvenience.

Furthermore, the rise of health trends, such as clean eating and plant-based diets, has bolstered the perception that organic products are essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Influential factors such as media campaigns, health-focused social media influencers, and organic product endorsements by nutritionists and celebrities have contributed to shaping consumer perceptions of organic foods as a critical component of a healthy diet.

This perceived link between health benefits and purchase frequency underscores the importance of trust and consumer education in the organic market. Trust in the authenticity of organic certifications, labels, and farming practices is crucial for consumers who are primarily motivated by health concerns. Consumers need to believe that the organic products they are purchasing are genuinely healthier and free from harmful substances for their buying behavior to be consistent and frequent.

Consumer Education and Awareness

Consumer education and awareness play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of organic products. Effective marketing strategies and public campaigns that highlight the health benefits of organic products can influence consumers' purchasing habits. For example, emphasizing the absence of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and GMOs in organic farming can reinforce the belief that organic products are healthier, thereby increasing purchase frequency among health-conscious individuals.

In this regard, information provided through labeling, packaging, and advertising can significantly impact consumer behavior. Clear labeling of organic certification, along with information about the farming practices used, can build trust and encourage more frequent purchases. Additionally, retailers and producers can implement educational campaigns that target specific consumer groups, such as parents, health enthusiasts, and individuals with dietary restrictions, to reinforce the perceived health benefits of organic products.

Barriers to Frequent Purchase of Organic Products

Despite the perceived health benefits, several barriers can affect the frequency of organic product purchases. Price is the most prominent deterrent, as organic products generally carry a premium cost compared to conventional options. For some consumers, the perceived health benefits may not outweigh the higher costs, particularly in regions where organic products are less accessible or where disposable income is limited.

Availability is another critical factor. In some areas, organic products may not be readily available, or the selection may be limited. Consumers who would otherwise purchase organic products regularly may find it difficult to do so if they cannot easily access them. Additionally, concerns about the authenticity of organic products can also deter frequent purchases. If consumers are unsure whether the products labeled as "organic" meet the expected health and safety standards, they may be less inclined to purchase them regularly.

Furthermore, while many consumers believe organic products are healthier, not all consumers are equally convinced. Skepticism about the actual benefits of organic products compared to conventionally produced foods may reduce purchase frequency, particularly if consumers feel that the price premium is not justified by tangible health improvements.

Trust in organic certifications, consumer education, and effective marketing strategies are essential in reinforcing these health perceptions and encouraging frequent purchases. By addressing consumer concerns and emphasizing the long-term health advantages of organic products, producers and marketers can tap into the growing demand for organic food and foster a loyal consumer base. Understanding the link between perceived health benefits and purchase frequency provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the organic food industry, enabling them to create targeted strategies that align with consumer values and drive market growth.

Review of Literature:

Davis and Green (2022) studied health consciousness among consumers and its effect on organic food purchases. They concluded that heightened awareness of health issues led to increased interest

Examining the relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase ...

in organic products, particularly among health-conscious individuals, thereby influencing their buying decisions significantly.

Martinez et al. (2021) analyzed the impact of income on organic food consumption. Their research revealed that consumers with higher disposable incomes exhibited a greater tendency to purchase organic products, attributing their choices to perceived health advantages and a willingness to pay premium prices.

Smith et al. (2020) explored consumer perceptions of organic food, finding that health benefits significantly influenced purchasing decisions. Their study highlighted that consumers believed organic products were safer, leading to higher purchasing frequency among individuals who prioritized health consciousness in their food choices.

Johnson and Lee (2019) examined the relationship between demographic factors and organic product purchases. Their findings indicated that younger consumers, especially those with higher education levels, were more likely to perceive health benefits in organic foods, positively affecting their purchasing habits.

Kumar and Singh (2018) investigated factors influencing consumer satisfaction with organic foods. They found that trust in organic certification and perceived nutritional benefits significantly affected consumer satisfaction and subsequent purchasing behavior, emphasizing the importance of transparency in marketing organic products.

Objective of the Study:

- To examine the association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across different demographic variables.

Hypothesis of the Study:

H0: There is no significant association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across different demographic variables.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology for this study, "Examining the Relationship Between Perceived Health Benefits and Purchase Frequency of Organic Farm Products," follows a descriptive cum exploratory approach. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select a sample of 120 participants from Haryana, ensuring the inclusion of consumers who regularly purchase organic farm products.

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert scale to assess consumer perceptions of health benefits and their purchase decisions of organic products. The questionnaire also gathers demographic information to explore how factors such as age, monthly family income, and educational qualification influence buying behavior.

Chi-square tests are used to analyze the association between perceived health benefits and various demographic variables like income and education. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations are applied to identify patterns and trends in the data.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis involves employing statistical techniques to interpret the collected data. Descriptive statistics summarize consumer perceptions and purchasing patterns, while chi-square tests assess the relationships between perceived health benefits and demographic variables. Additionally, qualitative insights from focus groups complement the quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Frequency Analysis of Demographic Variable

Frequency analysis of demographic variables involves summarizing the data collected on participants' characteristics, such as age, monthly family income, and educational qualification.

Frequency Analysis of Demographic Variable

Demographic Variables		Frequency
Age	18-25	34
	25-30	36
	30-35	25
	Above 35	25
	Total	120
Monthly Family Income (In Rs.)	Less than 25,000	16
	25000 - 45000	26
	45,000 - 65000	32
	More than 65000	46
	Total	120
Educational Qualification	Graduation	47
	Post graduation	50
	Others	23
	Total	120

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The frequency analysis of demographic variables provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the 120 study participants. In terms of age, the largest group consists of individuals aged 25-30, accounting for 36 respondents, followed closely by the 18-25 age group, which comprises 34 participants. Both the 30-35 and above 35 age categories have an equal representation, with 25 respondents each. This distribution suggests that younger adults and those in their late twenties form a significant portion of the sample.

Examining monthly family income, a notable trend emerges: a majority of respondents (46) earn more than ₹ 65,000, indicating a higher-income demographic. The income range of ₹ 45,000 to ₹ 65,000 includes 32 participants, while 26 respondents fall within the ₹ 25,000 to ₹ 45,000 bracket. Only 16 participants earn less than ₹ 25,000, reflecting an overall economically stable sample. Educational qualifications show that the sample is predominantly well-educated, with 50 participants holding postgraduate degrees and 47 being graduates. The "Others" category, which may include those with secondary education or training, consists of 23 respondents.

Frequency Analysis of Consumers' Perceived Health Benefits of Organic Farm Products and Their Purchasing Decisions

The frequency analysis examines consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions, revealing how health-conscious beliefs influence buying behavior. It highlights the relationship between perceived product benefits and the frequency of organic product purchases.

Frequency Analysis of Consumers' Perceived Health Benefits of Organic Farm Products and Their Purchasing Decisions

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
I buy organic products to avoid potential health risks from chemical residues in non-organic foods.	9	7	5	43	56
The perceived long-term health benefits of organic products influence my decision to purchase them regularly.	6	3	4	52	55
I am willing to pay more for organic products due to their perceived health advantages.	5	2	3	52	58
Organic products have had a positive impact on my overall health, which encourages me to buy them.	8	5	9	43	55
I trust that organic products offer better nutritional value than conventional products.	7	5	4	51	53
I prioritize buying organic products because of their positive effects on my family's health.	8	7	5	43	57
I feel more confident in the health claims made by organic products compared to conventional ones.	5	3	4	52	56
My purchase of organic products increases when I become more health-conscious.	7	4	5	52	52
I recommend organic products to others because of their perceived health benefits.	8	6	7	45	54
I choose organic products to support healthier living and improve my lifestyle choices.	11	4	5	53	47

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The frequency analysis of consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions provides insight into how health concerns shape their buying behavior. The statement "I buy organic products to avoid potential health risks from chemical residues in non-organic foods" received strong agreement from 56 respondents, while 43 agreed, indicating a general consensus that health risks influence their preference for organic products. Similarly, the long-term health benefits of organic products seem to be a major motivator, with 55 strongly agreeing and 52 agreeing with the statement, suggesting that consistent health advantages play a significant role in purchasing behavior.

Consumers also appear willing to pay a premium for organic products, with 58 strongly agreeing and 52 agreeing with this sentiment. A total of 55 respondents strongly agreed that organic

Examining the relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase...

products positively impact their overall health, which drives them to buy more, while 43 agreed with the same. The nutritional value of organic products was another key factor, with 53 strongly agreeing and 51 agreeing, showing that consumers perceive organic products as healthier.

The health of their family is also a motivating factor, with 57 strongly agreeing and 43 agreeing that organic products positively impact their family's well-being. Confidence in the health claims of organic products was another significant factor, with 56 strongly agreeing. Lastly, promoting healthier living and recommending organic products to others also emerged as frequent themes, with 53 and 54 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively.

Overall, these responses show that perceived health benefits strongly influence consumer purchasing decisions and their overall satisfaction with organic farm products.

Association Between Consumers' Perceived Health Benefits of Organic Farm Products and Their Purchasing Decisions Across Different Demographic Variables

The association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across different demographic variables explores how factors such as age, income, and education influence consumer preferences.

H₀1: There is no significant association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across age variable

Chi-Square Tests			
Age	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	67.557	72	.026
Likelihood Ratio	63.785	72	.044
Linear-by-Linear Association	.012	1	.014
N of Valid Cases	120		

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The chi-square test examines the association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across the age variable. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 67.557 with 72 degrees of freedom and a significance level (p-value) of 0.026. Since the p-value is less than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀1), which states that there is no significant association between age and consumers' purchasing decisions based on perceived health benefits.

Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio value of 63.785 and its p-value of 0.044 also indicate a statistically significant relationship. The Linear-by-Linear Association shows a value of 0.012 with a significance of 0.014, further supporting the presence of a significant relationship.

In conclusion, age plays a significant role in influencing consumers' perceptions of the health benefits of organic farm products, which in turn affects their purchasing decisions.

H₀2: There is no significant association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across monthly family income variable

Chi-Square Tests			
Monthly Family Income	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	74.604	72	.014
Likelihood Ratio	77.840	72	.098
Linear-by-Linear Association	.341	1	.059
N of Valid Cases	120		

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The chi-square test explores the association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across the monthly family income variable. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 74.604 with 72 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.014. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀2), indicating a significant association between monthly family income and consumers' purchasing decisions based on perceived health benefits.

However, the Likelihood Ratio value of 77.840 with a p-value of 0.098 is greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant association according to this measure. The Linear-by-Linear Association value of 0.341 with a p-value of 0.059 is also slightly above the 0.05 threshold, indicating no linear trend.

In conclusion, the overall chi-square results show a significant association between monthly family income and consumers' purchasing decisions based on perceived health benefits.

H₀3: There is no significant association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across educational qualification variable

Chi-Square Tests			
Educational Qualification	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	68.298	72	.002
Likelihood Ratio	65.538	72	.091
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.220	1	.069
N of Valid Cases	120		

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The chi-square test examines the association between consumers' perceived health benefits of organic farm products and their purchasing decisions across the educational qualification variable. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 68.298 with 72 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.002. Since this p-value is less than the significance threshold of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀3), indicating a significant association between educational qualification and consumers' purchasing decisions based on perceived health benefits.

Examining the relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase ...

However, the Likelihood Ratio value of 65.538 with a p-value of 0.091 exceeds 0.05, suggesting no significant association according to this measure. Additionally, the Linear-by-Linear Association value of 1.220 with a p-value of 0.069 is also above the 0.05 threshold, indicating no significant linear trend.

In conclusion, the Pearson Chi-Square test results show a significant association between educational qualification and consumers' purchasing decisions. Educational qualification appears to play a role in shaping these decisions.

Conclusion:

The study on "Examining the Relationship Between Perceived Health Benefits and Purchase Frequency of Organic Farm Products" reveals significant insights into consumer attitudes toward organic products. Findings indicate that perceived health benefits play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions, with consumers favoring organic options to avoid health risks associated with chemical residues in conventional foods.

Demographic factors, including age, monthly family income, and educational qualification, significantly shape consumer perceptions and buying behaviors. Chi-square tests highlighted a strong association between educational qualification and purchasing decisions, suggesting that higher education levels correlate with greater awareness of health benefits. Additionally, younger consumers, particularly those aged 18-30, and those with higher monthly family incomes, demonstrated a stronger inclination to prioritize health in their purchasing choices.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of health consciousness in driving organic food purchases and suggests that targeted marketing and education efforts could further enhance consumer awareness, ultimately promoting healthier lifestyle choices and supporting sustainable agriculture.

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Examining the relationship between perceived health benefits and purchase ...

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