Original Article
ISSN (Online): 2582-7472

ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts
January -June 2024 5(1), 218–224

EXAMINING GEN Z CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD IN COIMBATORE CITY

Kavipriya R[1] ✉, Kumarasamy T[2], T. S. Sreenidhi[3]

[1]Research Scholar/Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce B.Com IT and E-Com, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, India
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce B.Com AF/M.Com IB, Name of Institution, City, Country
[3]Research Scholar/Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce B.Com PA and CS, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, India

ABSTRACT

Changing consumer attitudes and a growing awareness of health and environmental concerns are driving significant growth in the organic food industry in India. This change is especially evident among Generation Z, who are becoming more conscious of how their consumption affects the planet. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this movement, leading consumers to adopt healthier and more sustainable eating practices. In Coimbatore City, the popularity of organic food is increasing, this study investigates the factors that shape Gen Z consumers' intentions to buy organic products. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 219 Gen Z participants, focusing on aspects such as health awareness, environmental concerns, product quality, price sensitivity, and social influences. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data, Factor Analysis, and One-Way ANOVA. The results indicate that regular buyers of organic food demonstrate stronger intentions to purchase, with health benefits, environmental sustainability, and perceived product quality being significant motivators. While organic products are well-known, the decisions to purchase are greatly impacted by the prices and social influences despite the awareness. The analysis also reveals no significant links between demographic factors like age, education, and income, and purchase intentions, suggesting that Gen Z consumers from various backgrounds have similar reasons for opting for organic food. These results highlight the increasing popularity of conscious consumption among Gen Z and provide important insights for stakeholders looking to engage with the expanding organic food industry in Coimbatore.

Keywords: Environment, Gen Z, Wellness, Sustainability, Intent

Corresponding Author

Kavipriya R,
kavipriyar61297@gmail.com

DOI
10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.3400

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

1. INTRODUCTION

The organic food industry has seen remarkable growth globally, primarily fueled by an increased consumer awareness of health, environmental sustainability, and ethical issues (Shafie & Rennie, 2012). This expansion is largely driven by younger generations, particularly millennials and Gen Z, who emphasize the importance of sustainable and ethically sourced food (Rana & Paul, 2017). In line with this trend, Coimbatore, a city in Tamil Nadu, India, has witnessed a significant rise in organic food consumption as young consumers adopt conscious consumerism, prioritizing health and environmental factors over convenience and cost (Kumar & Ali, 2011).

The growing interest in organic products in Coimbatore reflects a wider movement towards mindful consumption, which focuses on supporting products that align with personal values and environmental respect (Loureiro et al., 2001). This change in consumer behavior signifies a shift in societal attitudes, favoring long-term sustainability over short-term satisfaction (Wier & Calverley, 2002). Studies indicate that younger individuals are increasingly inclined to choose organic food due to perceived health benefits, environmental concerns, and social responsibility. In Coimbatore, several factors contribute to the rising demand for organic products, including increased awareness of the dangers posed by pesticides and chemical fertilizers, global influences, and a heightened focus on wellness (Sharma et al., 2016;). This growth is further supported by the greater availability of organic products in local markets, the rise of organic food startups, and government initiatives that promote organic farming (Aertsens et al., 2009).

In India, the organic food market is rapidly expanding due to heightened consumer awareness regarding the health benefits of organic products, concerns about chemical pesticide usage, and growing corporate interest in organic agriculture. In 2023, the market was valued at USD 1.7 billion, with forecasts predicting growth to USD 10.329 billion by 2032, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.20% from 2024 to 2032. Government initiatives like the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and the Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCDNER) provide financial support and infrastructure, further propelling the industry's growth (Market Research Future 2024). Consumer preferences have shifted significantly towards healthier and more environmentally friendly food choices. The adverse health effects associated with conventional farming practices that utilize synthetic chemicals have made organic fruits and vegetables more appealing to consumers who prioritize quality and nutrition. Additionally, the rise of online shopping platforms such as Amazon, BigBasket, and JioMart has improved access to organic products in both urban and rural areas, catering to the demand for convenience and variety. International brands like Nestlé have also entered the Indian market with organic products tailored to local preferences, highlighting the promising future of organic food in India. Key players in India's organic food sector include Suminter India Organics, Organic India, Sresta Natural Bioproducts, and Nourish Organics Foods. These companies are dedicated to investing in research and development, expanding their product offerings, and forming strategic partnerships to strengthen their market presence. With increasing consumer interest and robust government support, the Indian organic food sector is set for sustained growth over the next decade. This research aims to investigate the factors that influence organic food consumption among the youth in Coimbatore and how their choices contribute to the growth of the organic food sector. Gaining insights into these factors will assist stakeholders in developing strategies to meet the needs of this expanding market and promote sustainable consumption practices (Aschemann-Witzel & Niebuhr Aagaard, 2014).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, consumers have become increasingly aware that their purchasing decisions directly impact the environment (Laroche et al., 2001). This heightened awareness has prompted many to adopt eco-friendly habits, such as selecting organic foods, to support environmental sustainability (Chen & Peng, 2012). Organic products, recognized for their use of locally sourced ingredients, avoidance of synthetic additives, and promotion of ecological balance and human health, are becoming more popular among shoppers. The growing interest in organic food is primarily driven by concerns about food quality and safety. Many consumers believe that organic food is free from pesticides and chemical residues (Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002). Organic food production avoids synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and biotechnology, and does not involve irradiation, industrial solvents, or chemical stabilizers (USDA, 2024). This natural, chemical-free production method appeals to health-conscious consumers who often prefer organic options over conventional ones and there is also a noticeable difference in consumer preferences for various types of organic products. (Aertsens et al., 2009) notes that shoppers are more likely to purchase organic fruits and vegetables than organic meat. For non-vegetarian items like organic chicken, eggs, meat, and dairy, these products are valued for being produced without antibiotics or growth hormones, which enhances their appeal to health-focused consumers emphasize that modern consumers prioritize product quality over price (USDA, 2024). Key factors influencing the purchase of organic foods include product quality, social norms, and considerations related to health, the environment, and lifestyle. Recent concerns about food safety and environmental issues have heightened consumers' awareness of the importance of eco-friendly food production (Rana & Paul, 2017). This awareness has led to a greater understanding of the negative effects of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and unsafe preservatives in food production Loureiro et al., (2001. As a result, sustainability has become a vital aspect of both food production and consumption. Sustainable food systems are essential for maintaining ecological balance and meeting consumer demand for healthier, environmentally friendly options in the recent studies indicate that consumers are gradually becoming more health-conscious, increasingly favoring natural and

healthy food products, such as organic foods, which are perceived as safer and healthier than conventional alternatives (Hasselbeach & Roosen, 2015)

3. OBJECTIVES

To analyze the key factors that influence Gen Z consumers' intentions to purchase organic food in Coimbatore City and evaluate how these factors contribute to raising environmental awareness.

4. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate Gen Z consumers' purchase intentions regarding organic food in Coimbatore City. A total of 250 participants were approached, and after follow-up, 219 completed questionnaires were collected. The sample of 219 respondents, representing the target population of Gen Z consumers, was selected using a structured questionnaire to gather data on the factors influencing their organic food purchasing behavior. Various statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized to evaluate the factors affecting satisfaction with organic food products, while Factor Analysis was employed to identify the underlying dimensions influencing purchase intentions. Additionally, Percentage Analysis provided descriptive insights into the demographic and behavioral characteristics of the respondents. One-way ANOVA was conducted to identify significant differences in purchase intentions across demographic variables such as age, income, and education level, offering a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving organic food consumption among Gen Z in Coimbatore City.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic analysis of the 219 respondents reveals a fairly balanced gender distribution, with 53.9% female and 46.1% male. The majority of respondents (76.7%) are in the age group of 15-25 years, indicating a younger demographic. Regarding educational qualifications, most respondents have completed undergraduate studies (73.5%), followed by professionals (12.8%) and postgraduates (11.9%). In terms of occupation, 69.9% are employed in private or government jobs, while 16.4% are professionals. A significant portion (66.2%) of the respondents is married. Concerning family income, nearly half (48.9%) earn less than ₹15,000 per month, while 26% have a monthly income of ₹45,001 and above. Awareness of organic food products is high, with 96.3% of respondents indicating they are knowledgeable about them. In terms of purchasing behavior, 93.2% of respondents buy organic food often or frequently. Lastly, 80.4% believe that organic food contributes to a healthier lifestyle. This data highlights a young, educated, and health-conscious population with significant awareness and positive perceptions of organic food products.

H_0: There is no relationship between Age and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food in Coimbatore City

Table No 1: Age and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food

Age Categories	Mean	SD	F Value	P Value
15-25	138.00	23.43164	1.949	0.164
25-35	132.82	22.36847		

Note: *significance @ 5% level.

Table 1 displays the findings of a one-way ANOVA that examines the connection between age and overall intentions to purchase organic food in Coimbatore City. The F value of 1.949, along with a p-value of 0.164, suggests that there is no statistically significant correlation between the different age groups and their purchase intentions at the 5% significance level. The similar average scores for the age groups 15-25 and 25-35 indicate that both demographics show alike levels of awareness and interest in organic food products in Coimbatore City.

H_0: There is no relationship between Educational Qualification and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food in Coimbatore City

Table No 2: Educational Qualification and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food

Educational Qualification	Mean	SD	F Value	P Value
School Education	147.00	16.79	1.411	0.240
UG	134.98	24.22		
PG	139.65	22.34		
Professional	143.10	17.51		

Note: *significance @ 5% level.

Table 2 illustrates the outcomes of a one-way ANOVA, which investigates the relationship between educational qualifications and overall intentions to buy organic food in Coimbatore City. The F value of 1.411 and the corresponding p-value of 0.240 reveal that there is no statistically significant link between educational qualifications and purchase intentions at the 5% significance level. The comparable mean scores across all educational categories imply that individuals from various educational backgrounds demonstrate similar levels of awareness and interest in organic food products in Coimbatore City.

H_0: There is no relationship between Monthly Income and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food in Coimbatore City

Table No 3: Educational Qualification and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food

Monthly Income	Mean	SD	F Value	P Value
Less than 15000	134.14	24.72	0.915	0.435
15001 - 30000	140.03	21.57		
30001 - 45000	138.85	23.72		
45001 and above	139.21	20.78		

Note: *significance @ 5% level.

This table 3 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA that assesses the relationship between monthly income and overall intentions to purchase organic food in Coimbatore City. With an F value of 0.915 and a p-value of 0.435, the analysis indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between monthly income and purchase intentions at the 5% significance level. The mean scores across income brackets, ranging from 134.15 to 140.04, suggest that people with different income levels exhibit similar intentions to purchase organic food. This implies that income may not be a significant factor influencing the decision to buy organic products in Coimbatore City.

H_0: There is no relationship between Purchase Frequency and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food in Coimbatore City

Table No 4: Purchase Frequency and Overall Purchase Intentions of Organic Food

Purchase Frequency	Mean	SD	F Value	P Value
Very Often	142.3500	19.60127	8.298	.000
Frequently	133.9423	23.39024		
Sometimes	119.5333	32.69527		

Note: *significance @ 5% level.

The table 4 presents the findings of a one-way ANOVA that evaluates the relationship between the frequency of purchasing organic food and overall purchase intentions in Coimbatore City. The analysis reveals an F value of 8.298 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between purchase frequency and purchase intentions at the 5% significance level. The mean scores indicate that individuals who buy organic food "Very Often" (Mean = 142.35) show significantly higher purchase intentions compared to those who purchase "Frequently" (Mean = 133.94) or "Sometimes" (Mean = 119.53). This suggests that consumers who buy organic food more regularly tend to have stronger purchase intentions, reflecting a greater commitment and interest in organic products.

Table No 5: Purchase Intention of Organic Food Products, KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.847
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7591.821
	df	703
	Sig.	.000

Table No 6: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.310	32.395	32.395	12.310	32.395	32.395	5.727	15.071	15.071
2	4.909	12.918	45.313	4.909	12.918	45.313	5.422	14.269	29.340
3	3.277	8.624	53.937	3.277	8.624	53.937	4.724	12.432	41.772
4	2.607	6.861	60.798	2.607	6.861	60.798	3.508	9.232	51.004
5	1.855	4.882	65.680	1.855	4.882	65.680	3.471	9.134	60.138
6	1.452	3.821	69.501	1.452	3.821	69.501	2.271	5.975	66.114

7	1.402	3.691	73.191	1.402	3.691	73.191	1.947	5.125	71.238
8	1.093	2.876	76.068	1.093	2.876	76.068	1.835	4.830	76.068
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

The table 5 & 6 indicate that KMO value is 0.847, which is considered "meritorious" (values above 0.8 are ideal). This indicates that the sample size is adequate for conducting factor analysis, and the variables are suitable for structure detection. The chi-square value of 7591.821, with 703 degrees of freedom (df), and a significance level of 0.000, shows that there are significant correlations among the variables, validating the appropriateness of factor analysis. Initially, eight components were extracted, with the first few explaining a significant proportion of variance. The first component explains 32.395% of the variance. The second component adds another 12.918%, bringing the cumulative explained variance to 45.313%. All eight components together account for 76.068% of the total variance, indicating that these components adequately represent the underlying structure in the data. The Rotated Component Matrix reveals that these factors represent distinct dimensions. The first factor labeled “Health Consciousness” includes 7 variables: Perception of health benefits (0.831), Awareness of food-related diseases (0.829), Belief in organic food’s nutritional value (0.812), Concern for pesticide-free products (0.800), Interest in consuming less processed food (0.789), Personal health priorities (0.786), and Influence of fitness trends (0.735). Respondents who scored highly on this factor are likely more concerned about the health benefits of organic food, preferring less processed, pesticide-free products. The second factor labeled “Environmental Concern” includes 6 variables: Belief in environmental sustainability (0.846), Support for eco-friendly farming practices (0.822), Awareness of organic food’s impact on biodiversity (0.814), Concern for soil and water conservation (0.800), Willingness to reduce carbon footprint (0.796), and Perception of organic food’s role in pollution reduction (0.743). High scores suggest that consumers consider organic food better for the environment. The Third factor labeled “Quality Perception” includes 8 variables: Perceived freshness of organic food (0.854), Taste preference (0.784), Perceived higher safety standards (0.766), Belief in superior food quality (0.743), Certification of organic products (0.733), Trust in organic labelling (0.686) Preference for locally sourced organic food (0.668), and Experience with organic product quality (0.567). Consumers scoring high here associate organic food with superior quality and freshness. The fourth factor labeled “Purchase Intention” includes 4 variables: I am willing to buy organic food when I shop (0.895), I will try to buy organic food soon (0.875), I plan to buy organic products because they are better for the environment (0.870), and I will keep purchasing organic foods (0.866).High scores indicate a strong intention to buy organic products regularly. The fifth factor labeled “Price Sensitivity” includes 5 variables: Willingness to pay premium prices (0.774), Perceived affordability of organic food (0.765), Comparison with conventional food prices (0.761), Impact of discounts and promotions (0.718), and Influence of household income (0.702). High scores suggest consumers are more sensitive to price when deciding on organic food purchases. The sixth factor labeled “Social Influence” includes 3 variables: Influence of family preferences (0.882), Peer recommendations (0.811), and Societal trends towards organic consumption (0.731).High scorers are likely influenced by external social factors when deciding to buy organic food. The seventh factor labeled “Availability” includes 3 variables: Accessibility of organic food in local markets (0.703), Availability in supermarkets or online platforms (0.667), and Convenience of purchasing organic products (0.731).High scores suggest consumers find organic food easy to access either in markets or online. The eight factors labeled “Ethical Concern” includes 2 variables: Support for fair-trade and ethical farming (0.820), and Concern for animal welfare in organic farming (0.812).Consumers who score high here value the ethical aspects of organic food production. The factor analysis extracted eight key dimensions that influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards organic food in Coimbatore City. These factors include health consciousness, environmental concerns, quality perception, purchase intention, price sensitivity, social influence, availability, and ethical concerns. Together, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the drivers behind organic food consumption among this demographic.

Table No 7: Goodness of Fit test for CFA

Name of category	Name of index	Threshold	Index Value
Absolute Fit measure	CMIN/Df	Between 1 and 3	1.342
	GFI	> 0.90	.945
	AGFI	> 0.90	.916
	RMSEA	< 0.10	.040
	PClose	> 0.50	.791
Incremental fit measure	NFI	> 0.90	.957
	CFI	> 0.90	.988
	TLI	> 0.90	.985
	IFI	> 0.90	.989
Parsimonious fit measure	PGFI	> 0.50	.621

	PCFI	> 0.50	.750
	PNFI	> 0.50	.725

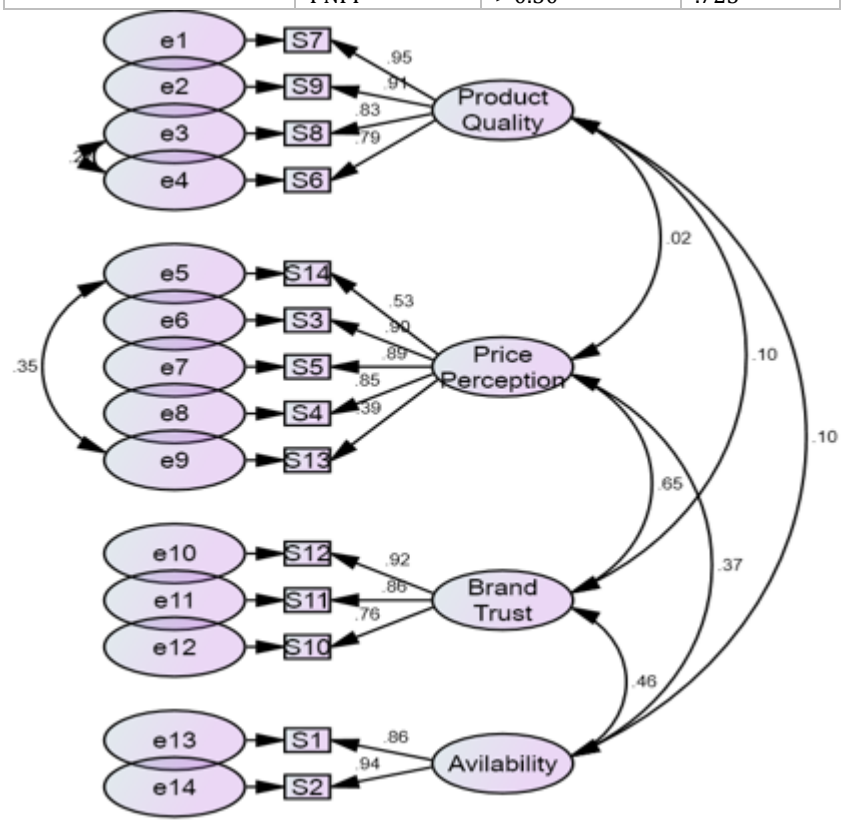

Figure 1: CFA model with standardized factor loading

The table 7 and figure 1 indicate model fit indices presented indicate an excellent overall fit of the data to the hypothesized SEM model. The CMIN/Df ratio of 1.342 falls within the acceptable range of 1 to 3, showing a good model fit. Additionally, the absolute fit measures, including GFI (.945) and AGFI (.916), both exceed the threshold of 0.90, while the RMSEA (.040) is below the required 0.10, with a PClose value of .791, indicating no significant lack of fit. The incremental fit measures such as NFI (.957), CFI (.988), TLI (.985), and IFI (.989) are all above 0.90, reinforcing the strong model fit. Moreover, the parsimonious fit indices PGFI (.621), PCFI (.750), and PNFI (.725) surpass the 0.50 threshold, supporting the model's efficiency in balancing goodness of fit and simplicity. Factor loading results demonstrate that consumer satisfaction with organic food products is driven by four main factors: Product Quality, which includes attributes like taste, freshness, appearance, and nutritional value; Price Perception, covering affordability, value for money, and willingness to pay; Brand Trust, based on brand reputation, certification, and transparency; and Availability, including accessibility and variety. These factors collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer satisfaction with organic food products.

6. CONCLUSION

This research effectively identified and examined the main factors influencing Gen Z consumers' intentions to buy organic food in Coimbatore. Utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Factor Analysis, and One-Way ANOVA, the study highlighted eight significant dimensions that affect these purchasing intentions: health awareness, environmental concerns, quality perception, purchase intention, price sensitivity, social influence, availability, and ethical considerations. Health awareness and environmental concerns emerged as the primary drivers, reflecting Gen Z's strong understanding of the health benefits and ecological impacts of their food choices. Quality perception, which includes aspects like taste, freshness, and safety, also significantly influenced their buying decisions. While price sensitivity was a factor, it did not act as a major barrier, indicating a willingness to pay for high-quality organic products. Social influences, such as advice from family and friends, along with product accessibility, contributed to their purchasing behavior. Furthermore, ethical considerations related to fair trade and animal welfare enhanced their preference for organic options. The analysis indicated no significant differences in purchase intentions based on age, education, or income, suggesting that organic food appeals broadly across various demographic groups within Gen Z. However, the

frequency of purchases was important, with more frequent buyers showing stronger purchase intentions. In conclusion, Gen Z consumers in Coimbatore are informed, health-oriented, and environmentally aware, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuing their organic food purchases. This provides valuable insights for businesses and policymakers looking to promote sustainable and healthy consumption practices while supporting the growth of the organic food market in Coimbatore.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

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. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070700910992961

Aschemann-Witzel, J., & Niebuhr Aagaard, E. M. (2014). Elaborating on the attitude–behaviour gap regarding organic products: Young Danish consumers and in-store food choice. **International Journal of Consumer Studies**, 38(5), 550–558. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12115

Chen, A. H., & Peng, N. (2012). Green hotel knowledge and tourists' staying behavior. **Annals of Tourism Research,** 39(4), 2211–2216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.07.00

Shafie, F. A., & Rennie, D. (2012). Consumer perceptions towards organic food. **Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,** 49, 360–367. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.07.034

Fotopoulos, C., & Krystallis, A. (2002). Purchasing motives and profile of the Greek organic consumer: A countrywide survey. **British Food Journal,** 104(9), 730–765. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070700210442421

Hasselbach, J., & Roosen, J. (2015). Consumer heterogeneity in the willingness to pay for local and organic food. **Journal of Food Products Marketing,** 21(6), 608–625. https://doi.org/10.1080/10454446.2014.885866

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. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.06.004

Kumar, S., & Ali, J. (2011). Analyzing the factors affecting consumer awareness on organic foods in India. In **21st Annual IFAMA World Forum and Symposium on the Road to 2050: Sustainability as a Business Opportunity** (pp. 1–12). Frankfurt, Germany: IFAMA.

Karst, T. (2024, January 19). USDA report examines organic. **The Packer**.

Loureiro, M. L., McCluskey, J. J., & Mittelhammer, R. C. (2001). Assessing consumer preferences for organic, eco-labeled, and regular apples. **Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics,** 26(2), 404–416. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40987117

Laroche, M., Bergeron, J., & Barbaro-Forleo, G. (2001). Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. **Journal of Consumer Marketing**, 18(6), 503–520. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000006155

Market Research Future (2024).

Sharma, A., Berndt, N., Grieder, T., & Winklhofer, C. (2016). Contributions of the prion protein sequence, strain, and environment to the species barrier. **Journal of Biological Chemistry**, 291(3), 1277–1288. https://doi.org/10.1074/jbc.M115.686411

Wier, M., & Calverley, C. (2002). Market potential for organic foods in Europe. **British Food Journal,** 104(1), 45–62. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070700210418749