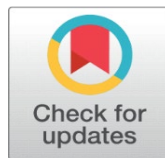
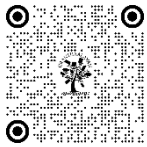


CUSTOMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The recent buzz of today's world is associated with the term "Organic". Organic products have become the most sought after due to the increase in the day to day ailments. After COVID-19, there has been a drastic change in the consumer preference towards organic products. Be it foods, beverages, milk and even textiles, the organic products sector has been growing tremendously over the past few years. Increase in the global demand, increasing customer awareness and the extensive government support to boost the sector have played a significant role in creating a strong impetus to this sector. Moreover, With varied options available, people have opted online shopping for purchasing the organic products. Online platforms offer numerous organic products, sourced from various states delivered at the doorstep, customers have started preferring online platforms over conventional method of purchasing. Online platforms also offer wide range of discounts and offers which attract the customer to purchase it online. Along with these benefits, online shopping of organic products offer innumerable advantages like convenience, price comparison, cash on delivery, etc. The respondents were contacted on the basis of purposive sampling. A sample of 640 respondents were selected from the study area. Statistical tools like simple percentage, ranking technique and weighted average score were used to analyse the collected data.

Keywords: Organic, Online Shopping, Customer Preference

1. INTRODUCTION

Organic products have become the most sought after due to the increase in the day to day ailments. After COVID-19, there has been a drastic change in the consumer preference towards organic products. Be it foods, beverages, milk and even textiles, the organic products sector has been growing tremendously over the past few years. Increase in the global demand, increasing customer awareness and the extensive government support to boost the sector have played a significant role in creating a strong impetus to this sector. Moreover, With varied options available, people have opted online shopping for purchasing the organic products. Online platforms offer numerous organic products, sourced from various states delivered at the doorstep, customers have started preferring online platforms over conventional method

of purchasing. Online platforms also offer wide range of discounts and offers which attract the customer to purchase it online. Along with these benefits, online shopping of organic products offer innumerable advantages like convenience, price comparison, cash on delivery, etc. The far southern districts of Tamil Nadu namely, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Kanyakumari and Tenkasi have seen tremendous growth over the years and the present study has purposely chosen these districts for the extend of online shopping penetration in these districts.

1.1. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To analyse the purchase intention of customers towards online shopping of organic products.
- 2) To know the level of familiarity with organic terms and identification of organic products.
- 3) To study the reasons for preferring online platforms.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The far southern districts of Tamil Nadu namely, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Kanyakumari and Tenkasi have been purposely chosen for the study. The respondents were contacted on the basis of purposive sampling. A sample of 640 respondents were selected from the study area. Statistical tools like simple percentage, ranking technique and weighted average score were used to analyse the collected data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. CONSUMER METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING ORGANIC PRODUCTS

When purchasing organic products, consumers use various cues to identify authenticity and quality. Elements such as brand name, certification, labeling, and sensory differences play a crucial role in this process. Understanding the ranking of these factors can help businesses enhance their product presentation and build consumer trust.

Table No. 1

Consumer Methods for Identifying Organic Products

S.No	Particulars	Total Weight	Rank
1	Logo	3012	IV
2	Label	3555	III
3	Brand Name	2517	VI
4	Organic certification	3784	II
5	Symbols	4339	I
6	Difference in taste/colour/size	2309	VII
7	Packaging	2812	V
8	Quality	1663	VIII

Source: Primary Data

The table presents the ranking of different methods consumers use to identify organic products while shopping online in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Symbols have the highest total weight of 4,339, placing them in the first rank, indicating that consumers frequently rely on specific organic symbols for identification. Organic certification follows in second place with a total weight of 3,784, showing that certifications play a significant role in consumer recognition of organic products. Labels are ranked third with a weight of 3,555, suggesting that product labeling is another commonly used method for identifying organic products. Logos rank fourth with a total weight of 3,012, indicating that consumers also consider official organic logos when verifying products. Packaging is placed in the fifth position with a weight of 2,812, showing that the way a product is presented influences consumer identification to some extent. Brand name, with a total weight of 2,517, is ranked sixth, showing that while branding is a factor, it is not as widely relied upon compared to other methods. Differences in taste, color, or size rank seventh with a total weight of

2,309, suggesting that sensory characteristics are used less frequently to distinguish organic products. Quality, with the lowest total weight of 1,663, ranks eighth, indicating that consumers rely less on subjective quality assessments when identifying organic products.

3.2. RECOGNITION OF ORGANIC CERTIFYING AGENCIES BY CONSUMERS

The recognition of organic certifying agencies plays a significant role in consumer trust and confidence when purchasing organic products. Understanding which certifications consumers are familiar with helps businesses and regulatory bodies ensure that certifications are visible and credible in the market.

Table No. 2
Recognition of Organic Certifying Agencies by Consumers

S. No	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1	India Organic	195	30
2	USDA Organic	220	34
3	PSG-INDIA Organic	95	15
4	Lacon Quality	130	20
Total		640	100

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that USDA Organic is the most recognized certifying agency, with 34% of consumers identifying it as familiar. India Organic follows closely, with 30% consumer recognition, indicating that it is also well-known among domestic buyers. Lacon Quality is recognized by 20% of consumers, reflecting moderate awareness, while PSG-INDIA Organic has the lowest recognition at 15%. These findings suggest that global certifications like USDA Organic have strong brand visibility, while domestic certifiers such as India Organic and regional certifiers like PSG-INDIA Organic and Lacon Quality may benefit from increased awareness campaigns to strengthen their presence in the organic market.

3.3. LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANIC-RELATED TERMS

Consumer familiarity with terms related to sustainability and organic products reflects their awareness and understanding of environmental and health-related practices. Analysing these familiarity levels helps businesses and policymakers gauge how well these concepts are understood and where more educational efforts may be needed.

Table No. 3
Level of Familiarity with Sustainability and Organic-related Terms

S. No	Statement	Weighted Average Score	Result
1	Biodegradable	2.77	Medium
2	Recyclable	4.11	High
3	Organically grown	4.76	VeryHigh
4	Sustainable produce	3.68	High
5	Eco friendly	3.81	High
6	Green Packaging	4.27	High

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that consumers have a very high level of familiarity with the term "Organically Grown" (weighted average score: 4.76), indicating that this concept is widely understood. Terms such as "Green Packaging" (4.27),

"Recyclable" (4.11), "Eco-friendly" (3.81), and "Sustainable Produce" (3.68) all have high familiarity scores, demonstrating strong awareness of sustainable practices. In contrast, the term "Biodegradable" scored 2.77, reflecting only a medium level of familiarity among consumers. This suggests that while consumers are well-acquainted with common sustainability terms, some concepts, like biodegradability, may require more education and promotion to enhance consumer understanding.

3.4. INFORMATION CHECKED BY CONSUMERS BEFORE MAKING A PURCHASE

When purchasing organic products, consumers tend to check specific product details to ensure safety, quality, and suitability for their needs. Understanding the type of information consumers prioritize helps businesses improve product transparency and labeling to meet customer expectations.

Table No. 4
Information Checked by Consumers Before Making a Purchase

S. No	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ingredient list	85	13
2	Label	125	20
3	Allergen information	100	16
4	Manufacturing/expiry dates	330	52
Total		640	100

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that manufacturing and expiry dates are the most frequently checked information, with 52% of consumers considering these details before making a purchase. This highlights the importance consumers place on product freshness and safety. Label information ranks second, with 20% of consumers prioritizing it to verify claims and product details. Allergen information is important for 16% of consumers, reflecting the growing need for transparency about potential allergens. The ingredient list is checked by 13% of consumers, indicating that a smaller but significant segment is focused on understanding product composition. These insights suggest that brands should ensure clear and accessible labeling, with key information such as expiry dates, ingredients, and allergens prominently displayed to build consumer trust.

3.5. WEBSITES FOR PURCHASING ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Consumers use various online platforms to purchase organic products, including popular e-commerce websites, grocery-specific platforms, and specialized organic stores. Understanding the preferred platforms helps businesses identify key channels for reaching their target audience and optimizing their online presence.

Table No. 5
Websites Used for Purchasing Organic Products

S.no	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	Flipkart	96	15
2	Amazon	42	7
3	Big basket	95	15
4	Orgpick	144	23
5	Nature's Basket	132	21
6	Reliance Fresh Direct	112	18
7	Specialized brand websites	19	3

Total	640	100
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Source: Primary Data

The table shows that Orgpick is the most popular platform, with 23% of consumers using it to purchase organic products, followed closely by Nature's Basket at 21% and Reliance Fresh Direct at 18%, indicating that dedicated grocery and organic-focused platforms have a strong presence. Flipkart and Big Basket both account for 15%, reflecting a balanced preference for general e-commerce and grocery-specific platforms.

Amazon accounts for 7%, suggesting that it is not as commonly used for organic purchases as for general shopping. Specialized brand websites make up only 3%, indicating that consumers prefer platforms offering a variety of options rather than single-brand stores.

3.6. REASONS FOR PREFERRING ONLINE PLATFORMS

Consumers choose online platforms for various reasons, including convenience, pricing, and product variety. Understanding these preferences helps businesses enhance their online shopping experience to meet consumer expectations and foster customer loyalty.

Table No. 6
Consumer Preferences for Online Platforms

S. No.	Statements	Weighted Average Score	Result
1.	Offers/Discounts	3.75	Agree
2.	Convenience	4.87	StronglyAgree
3.	Easy to compare products	4.72	StronglyAgree
4.	Varied options	4.69	StronglyAgree
5.	Option to control	4.23	Agree
6.	COD	3.73	Agree
7.	Easy to find products	4.63	StronglyAgree
8.	Easy to check details	4.83	StronglyAgree

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that consumers strongly agree with the convenience of online platforms (4.87), highlighting it as the most important factor driving online shopping. The ease of comparing products (4.72), varied options (4.69), easy product search (4.63), and ease of checking details (4.83) also receive high scores, reflecting consumers' preference for transparency and variety. Consumers agree that offers and discounts (3.75) and cash-on-delivery options (3.73) are important but less influential compared to convenience and product information. The "option to control" purchases, such as modifying orders or scheduling deliveries (4.23), is also seen as a beneficial feature.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study extensively analyses the customers' purchase intention towards online shopping of organic products. The study clearly shows that customers have become well aware about the organic products sector as well as the online shopping platforms. It can be concluded that by concentrating on online platforms the producers of organic products can tap the untapped potential of the existing market. Moreover, the wide reach these online platforms offer will elevate and transform the organic products sector to a new level. The policymakers can take concerted efforts towards offering subsidies to these producers to promote their products online which will create a lasting effect in the organic products sector.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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