

Consumer Perception Towards Organic Food Products

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Abstract

Consumer preferences for organic food are influenced by sensory factors such nutritional content, flavour, freshness, and appearance as well as food safety, human health, and environmental concerns. Organic customers may be defined by demographic factors, although there is little association between them. Additionally, consumers link organic food to natural processes, environmental and animal welfare concerns, and the avoidance of fertilisers and pesticides. Organic food consumption is still suppressed by premium prices. In order to comprehend the potential for organic food to become a truly mainstream industry, it is essential to comprehend the factors that contribute to the rising level of organic food consumption, such as motivation.

Keywords: Consumer preferences, human health, food safety, organic food, consumption

Introduction

Produce and processed foods from farms that adhere to strict regulations, avoiding synthetic pesticides and fertilisers and avoiding genetically modified organisms (GMOs), are referred to as organic food. These foods are produced utilising methods that focus on natural processes, such as crop rotation, compost, and biological pest control. A food product is considered "organic food" if it is (1) produced without the use of pesticides or grown on land that has used DDT and other banned pesticides in the last 51 years, (2) not processed (that is, handled, sorted, mixed, or packaged) in a way that could contaminate it with known toxic industrial chemicals, and (3) an animal product that has been proven to be free of synthetic chemicals that are known to accumulate in its edible parts (e.g., by chemical analysis or is the offspring of an animal already tested as being free of synthetic chemicals and is fed only "organic" feed). Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are absent from organic food, which is produced without the use of artificial chemicals like fertilisers and pesticides. In addition to processed foods like crackers, beverages, and frozen meals, organic foods also include fresh fruit, meats, and dairy products.

Organic food products

Towards the close of the 20th century, governments and economists began to embrace the phrase "organic" as a way of producing food, matching consumer action, awareness, and preference. Researchers in the food business have finally begun to recognise it to a significant degree (Rana and Paul, 2020). Natural items made using the accepted practices of organic farming are known as organic foods. It entails growing food crops without the use of chemical fertilisers or artificial insecticides. Because they contain less

harmful metals and pollutants than other foods, these meals are both healthful and environmentally beneficial. Organic oil, milk, chicken, dairies, tomatoes, spinach, snacks, and apples are some examples of these organic product. Because organic foods are thought to provide health benefits, be free of pesticides, and have better nutrition, people generally believe that they are healthier than regular or conventional meals. In the eyes of the public, organic foods are frequently seen as healthier than conventional or typical foods. An apple is used as an example to demonstrate this idea in Fig. 2. Additionally, when choosing food, some customers take into account "private good" qualities like freshness, flavour, and quality in addition to health, ethical, and political factors including animal welfare and environmentalism (Sadiku, 2020).



Quality of organic food

Generally speaking, organic food is of greater quality than food that is cultivated conventionally, especially when it comes to the lower pesticide residue and maybe higher vitamin content. Some research suggests that organic foods may have higher quantities of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, while other studies find no discernible difference in total nutrient levels. Animal welfare and environmental sustainability are also given top priority in organic production practices, which raises the standard of the finished product overall.

Benefits of organic food

Organic farming's sustainability is well acknowledged, but there is ongoing discussion about its potential health and nutritional advantages. Much attention is also paid to the use of (organic) pesticides and the

potential for residues to be found in crops cultivated organically. One challenge arises from the fact that at least three distinct factors are addressed concurrently while evaluating the findings of previous studies:

- The variations in nutritional components;
- The advantages for human well-being;
- The environmental impact.

There isn't much of a nutritional benefit to eating organic food, according to studies. A comprehensive analysis of 240 studies conducted in 2012 concluded that there was no discernible difference in the nutritional value of organic and conventionally cultivated foods. Experts in nutrition believe that the never-ending discussion about the advantages of organic produce is merely a diversion from the more urgent problem, which is that most Europeans do not consume the recommended 400 g of fruits and vegetables per day, as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Organic produce has been proven to have lower levels of pesticide residues from a health standpoint. A more recent study from 2014 reported that organic crops have 20% to 40% higher levels of antioxidants and fewer pesticide residues. However, the exact function of antioxidants is still up for debate, and it is unclear if they can enhance human health.

Specialists claim that any nutritional advantage should only be viewed as a "bonus" and that the primary justification for purchasing organic food is its lower impact and sustainable production standards.

The dirty dozen and clean 15.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases two lists each year that helps to decide which produce is best to buy organic: **the dirty dozen and clean 15.**

There is currently no list of the 2025 Dirty Dozen, which names the fruits and vegetables with the greatest concentrations of pesticide residues. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) does, however, publish this list every spring, and the 2024 list can serve as a benchmark for 2025. Strawberries, spinach, kale, collard and mustard greens, peaches, pears, nectarines, apples, bell and jalapeño peppers, cherries, blueberries, and green beans are all on the 2024 Dirty Dozen list.

The 2024 Dirty Dozen list, which is probably going to resemble the 2025 list, is examined in more depth below:

Strawberries: Frequently tested for high concentrations of several pesticides.

Spinach: Even after washing, this vegetable still has a lot of pesticide residue.

Kale, Collard, and Mustard Greens: Pesticide contamination is also common in these leafy greens.

Grapes: Even after washing, grapes are a major source of pesticide exposure.

Peaches: The EWG found that 59 pesticide residues were identified in almost all conventional peaches.

Pears: The EWG found that more than 90% of pear samples contained at least one chemical.

Nectarines: The EWG reports that a sizable portion of nectarines have many pesticide residues.

Apples: The EWG found that two or more pesticides were present in over 90% of standard apple samples.

bell and hot peppers : One significant source of pesticide exposure is bell and hot peppers.

Cherries: Oftentimes, they contain several pesticides.

Blueberries: Another food item with a high pesticide residual content.

Green beans: They may also have high levels of pesticide residue.

Clean Fifteen for 2025

The fruits and vegetables with the lowest levels of pesticide residues, known as the "Clean Fifteen" for 2025, often include avocados, sweet corn, pineapples, onions, papayas, sweet peas, asparagus and honeydew melon. The list may also include watermelons, sweet potatoes, mangoes, cantaloupes, kiwis, cabbage, and mushrooms.

A more thorough analysis of the 2025 "Clean Fifteen" can be found here:

- **Avocados:** Avocados are a common option and are said to have minimal pesticide residue.
- **Sweet Corn:** On the "Clean Fifteen" list, sweet corn is always ranked highly. **Pineapples:** Pesticide residue is often low in pineapples.
- **Onions:** The "Clean Fifteen" includes sweet onions.
- **Papayas:** Another fruit that usually exhibits minimal pesticide residue is papayas. **Sweet Peas (Frozen):** In terms of pesticides, frozen sweet peas are likewise regarded as harmless.
- **Asparagus:** One vegetable that is frequently on the list is asparagus. **Honeydew Melon:** In general, honeydew melons contain few pesticides. **Other Items:** The "Clean Fifteen" may also contain watermelons, sweet potatoes, kiwis, cabbage, mushrooms, cantaloupes, and mangoes.

It's crucial to remember that the "Clean Fifteen" is a guide that helps people decide whether to purchase conventional or organic fruit. The "Clean Fifteen" offers a method to prioritise organic products while still including a range of fruits and vegetables in one's diet, even though organic produce is always preferred from a health and environmental perspective.

Review on Consumer perception towards organic food

It is said that only the middle classes can afford to be ecologically conscious. Instead of selecting sustainable and non-sustainable products, consumers would prefer to have an option among sustainable products. In order to assess a product and make decisions, consumers integrate data regarding its features and implications. Their experience influences their felt involvement, which is what they rely on. The preferences and values of the customers determine how much weight is given to each parameter. Experience fosters individual significance, relevance, and interest, all of which contribute to the motivational state (Shroeder, 2013). The organic consumer profile is defined by lifestyle, environmental beliefs, and demographic factors. Frequent organic food buyers are typically well-educated, well-off, and from upper socioeconomic classes (Padel and Foster, 2015; Stobelaar et al, 2016).

Regarding how frequently they consume organic food, there are three categories of consumers: regular, infrequent, and non-consumers. Consumers who make purchases at least twice a week were classified as regular consumers (12%), followed by occasional consumers (42%), and non-consumers (46%). Twenty-five percent of the non-consumers were prospective buyers who planned to purchase organic food in the future.

Organic food consumption is more likely to be higher among consumers who are concerned about natural foods, the sensory and emotional appeal of food, and are more inclined to practise green eating (Lockie et al, 2014). Additionally, they are increasingly concerned about the effects of preservatives and chemical residues on their health (Yiridoe et al, 2005). Natural foods, environmental ideals, and the equity of paying more for environmental goods are more important to women.

According to consumers, there was no discernible difference between organic and conventional milk, while organic orange juice tasted better than conventional orange juice (Fillion and Arazi, 2002). Consumer demand for organic food has been rising in recent years. This market trend for organic food has

been fuelled by several factors. Organic food was seen by British customers as a way to help them and their family achieve social and personal values. Health is the primary reason for purchasing organic food, with environmental and animal welfare considerations coming in second and third. Because they believe the quality of organic food is higher, some people purchase it.

Reviews have consistently found that consumers who purchase organic produce are skewed in certain demographics, with age (usually older but mixed findings), sex (female), income (higher), education (higher education) and marital status (married) more likely to purchase organic food (Gumber & Rana, 2019; Rana & Paul, 2017). Similarly, consumer's regional and national identities have been shown to affect consumer's beliefs for purchasing organic produce (Rana & Paul, 2017).

More over 50.9 million hectares, including areas in conversion, were grown organically in 179 countries worldwide in 2015. Due to the development of legally enforceable criteria for organic production, the area under organic management (both fully converted and in-conversion) has grown during the past few decades.

Methodology

It is an analysis of journal articles that were published between 2015 and 2025 about consumers of organic food and sustainable agriculture. This study explores after Covid-19 consumer concerns regarding food safety by examining health risks, agricultural practices, and environmental changes related to contemporary food production, such as genetic modification and inappropriate pesticide use. The varied consumer attitudes regarding organic food are also included in this review, especially the willingness to pay for organic food, its quality, and how it reduces the risk to the environment and human health through recommendations.

Conclusion

Organic customers may be defined by demographic factors like age, income, and education, however there is little association between them. Organic food consumption is still hindered by its high cost. Because the claimed health benefits of organic food are frequently hard to measure, it is challenging to defend the premium. Therefore, society may benefit from more openness in the production of organic food and the farm-gate pricing. The solution to closing the price difference might lie in securing the domestic supply of organic food. To understand the potential of the organic market to maintain its growing growth and truly become a mainstream market, it is crucial to understand the factors that contribute to rising levels of organic food consumption, such as motivation, behaviour, beliefs, and demographics. Because of concerns about human health, food safety, and the environment, as well as other sensory qualities like nutritional value, taste, freshness, and appearance, there are a lot of research comparing organic and conventional food due to the growing interest in organic. The opinions of consumers regarding organic food are very individualised. It's also important to keep in mind that these opinions might or might not match their actual purchase activity. Furthermore, since there is less use of pesticides, high-quality organic food at a fair price may not only draw in more potential customers but also benefit the environment. It also available in International E-Markets. Therefore, marketing the benefits of eating organic food through a coordinated effort by all stakeholders, particularly the government, may help change consumer behaviour. Future research should thus adopt a consumer-based approach, which is crucial for both consumers and how they react to shifts in market dynamics.

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