

Review Article

A study of Consumer Behavior towards Organic Food Products in Hyderabad, With Special Emphasis on Ethical Consumerism and Sustainability

Archana. A. Ramesh¹, Shruti Kayal², Rashmi Dhodapkar³, P. Durga Rani⁴ and Megha Chandarana⁵

¹Assistant Professor of Commerce Badruka College of Commerce and Arts

²Assistant Professor of Commerce, Badruka College of Commerce and Arts

³Assistant Professor of Commerce, Badruka College of Commerce and Arts

⁴Assistant Professor of Commerce, Badruka College of Commerce and Arts

⁵Assistant Professor of Computer, Jagruthi Degree & PG College

Received: 12/04/2025;

Revision: 16/05/2025;

Accepted: 03/06/2025;

Published: 22/06/2025

*Corresponding author: Archana. A. Ramesh (Archana.vvps@gmail.com)

Abstract: A study of Consumer Behaviour towards Organic Food Products in Hyderabad (With Special Emphasis on Ethical Consumerism and Sustainability) The study aims to add to the contribution to academic research in ethical practices and sustainability specifically on consumer behaviour turned to organic consumption adding to it the ethical and sustainable factor. The study's objective is to project the consumer behaviour towards organic food products and the impact of demographic factors on their decision making towards organic food products. The data is collected from 120 respondents. The respondents in the study show a bent towards preference in organic food consumption keeping in mind the ethical and sustainable factor. The study considers key influencing factors, factors influencing and consumption pattern. The study will leave a scope for future researcher to dwell into more in-depth cross culture impacts on consumer behaviour towards organic food consumption. In furtherance, comparison of the consumer behaviour from town and behaviour of an urban city consumer can be taken for study. Study can also deepen to analyse consumer behaviour towards vegan and keto products and market which is a further step in support of sustainability.

Keywords: Consumer, Organic, Behaviour, Food, Products, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Ethical consumerism and sustainability are very much related. Ethical consumerism is adoption of practices that are based on ethics which are converted into application of being conscious of the decisions made as consumers. When the business creates a product, which has ethical element to it, and when the consumer decides to purchase based on the ethical element, he engages in ethical consumerism. The rise and growth of ethical consumerism has seen a noticeable mobility in the dynamics of commerce as the companies or industry at large are reevaluating their methods and adopting sustainable practices to address to the needs of an ethical consumer. The rise of ethical consumer begins at the stage where a consumer realises that the goods or services offered by the market have moral and ethical shortcomings. As this becomes an underlying and unaddressed issue, a remarkable transformation is seen in the choices made by the consumers to shift to more sustainable options offered by the markets and decisions to buy products and services that are produced and made under ethical conditions by business who abide by being socially and ethically responsible and working towards sustainable practices. The (UN, 1987) defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Thus we find all of these influencing the consumer behaviour and his purchase decisions. The study

further links the depths of ethical consumerism and its influence on consumer behaviour towards making sustainable choices. The study would try to connect the dots by taking the aspect of consumer behaviour towards organic product consumption. An ethical consumer works towards making sustainable choices contemplating on the outcomes of such decisions which brings about sustainability in long run. The UNSDG-17 states: sustainability can be attained when consumer becomes thoughtful about what they buy and chose as a sustainable option whenever possible. This study explores the attributes that contribute to such shift taking into consideration various factors that influence the consumer behaviour and decisions during the purchase and consumption.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. (Smirti Kutaula) 2024 in the journal - "Ethical Consumerism in Emerging Markets: Opportunities and Challenge" state that even though the factors of environmental, economic and social issues are given importance of is given in emerging countries, most of the research around ethical consumerism is done in developed countries. To show this gap they have focused on emerging markets through three broad aspects. Through a systematic theoretical review, they

have studied how the ethical consumerism works in emerging markets, and how or not the emerging markets are drivers for ethical consumerism. The study leaves a scope for future researcher to study on the intersection of the concepts of green consumption, political consumption, globalisation and ethical consumerism and reshoring.

2. (Raksha Shenoy) 2024 in the study “Conceptualizing organic food consumption: a consumer motive perspective” research discuss how rising public awareness of sustainability, environment and human health has led to the surge in the organic food consumption. Such practices, are believed to be more sustainable and kinder to environment. They have identified different motivators that influence the consumer behaviour towards organic food items. The research scope for future researchers is left to explore the efficiency of various marketing strategies, also leaving scope to study how technology impacts the marketing of organic food. The conclusion shows increased consumer worries about their health, food safety have led to increase in popularity of organic food items in recent years.
3. (O'Neill, 2023), in the study of “Food interests, preferences and behaviours: a profile of the sustainable food consumer” aimed to study the consumer segments based on food consumption practices and to identify the quality attributes that influence the food consumption practices of the consumers. Each of the indicators were taken to measure the key influencers. It also aimed to provide a holistic view on the range of sustainable behaviours practiced by consumers. The quality attributes were attached to the behaviour and practices of the consumers of four segments. It was concluded that the sustainable behaviour related to food consumption has had seen a willingness to engage in sustainable consumption practices. The gap identified in this study was that less attention is paid to sustainable behaviour at various stages in food consumption process as it focuses on habitual and routine behaviour.
4. (Nikita Khandelwal)2022, In the paper “Consumer Perception and Preference towards Sustainable Food in India states that consumers have shifted away from conventional and wasteful practices and are moving towards sustainable consumption. The main aim of the study was to identify the how consumer preference towards the sustainable consumption is evolving and the various variables that are preventing or boosting it. The study concludes that when it came to the idea of saving the environment by maintaining a proper level of food consumption, consumer expressed a strong desire to protect the environment and were judged to be responsible citizens, but the same did not hold true in practice. The healthful features of organic food have been the primary driving force behind such consumption.
5. (Toms, Romont, & Scridon, 2021) in “Is

Sustainable Consumption Translated into Ethical Consumer Behavior?”, has taken three dimensions for studying the ethical behaviour and sustainability in ethical decision making. The three dimensions- environmental, social and economic have shown a positive influence in the ethical decision-making process. It was concluded that such consumers are hold lot of potential from company’s perspective. It was also concluded that when a consumer thinks ethical they become sensitive to issues related to recycling, eco-packaging, eco- friendly disposable products and restrict their consumption to only what is needed. One of the findings also show that economic utility is a prime consideration for such ethical behaviour. Significance of the Study:

Due to the growing health hazards, growing global concerns and the unethical practices by big giants, ethical consumerism and sustainability has become an extremely prominent topic. The UN has set up goals for sustainability and India, over the recent past has turned its focus towards the promotion of sustainable practices. Ethical consumerism and sustainability are closely related as the former supports the latter. The outcome of such goals by are large are seen as consumers have begun preferring organic products which indicates a paradigm shift from normal pattern of consumption to ethical and sustainable pattern of consumption. As we see an accelerating growth in the community of these consumers it is necessary to give them more insight into the subject matter as beneficiaries of this research.

Research Gap and Need of the Study

Many research scholars have done studies into various aspects and dimensions of ethical consumerism and sustainability. However, the previous research work focused on cross culture aspects of ethical consumerism and did not focus on significant options available for ethical consumerism as organic consumption. As the major contributing factor is how the business establishments who have imbibed ethical practices, included in their production and supply are able to meet the needs of ethical consumers. Therefore, this study focuses on this underlying concept. The gap is also identified to study the practical challenges an ethical consumer faces to lives by the standard of ethical consumption of organic food taking into consideration various variables like place of purchase, frequency of supply, serious practitioners’ intentions, which can be analysed to study the impact.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study about consumer behaviour towards organic food products as sustainable practices.
2. To study the impact of demographic and psychographic factors on consumer decision-making towards organic food products.
3. To examine the factors influencing the consumer preferences for organic food products.
4. To assess the consumers perception and attitude towards organic food products in select stores of Hyderabad.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research shall use descriptive type of research study. This research will use both Primary and secondary data. In the secondary data collection, the research shall be done to review and study the existing literature which provides a detailed analysis of the qualitative data and structure the quantitative data. The secondary study considers the aspect of consumer's perception and preference towards organic products.

Sample Size:

Population: Data will be collected from the population of Hyderabad.

Sample unit: The sample unit would represent the entire population through 120 respondents. This sample size will be taken with reference to the past researcher's sample from

the population to determine the sample size.

Scope of the study:

The study is confined to study only the organic food product consumption of consumers in the city of Hyderabad. The study considers only those establishments who exclusively provide organic products and not a mix of organic and non-organic products.

Limitations of the study

The study is limited to consumers of organic food products only. This study is limited to the city of Hyderabad and takes into consideration the respondents from Hyderabad city only. The study is also limited to few select organic stores of Hyderabad. The data collected through questionnaire is as per the responses given by the respondents and thus could be biased.

Data analysis and interpretation

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant relationship between age and the dependent variable ($\beta = 0$).

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant relationship between age and the dependent variable ($\beta \neq 0$).

Multi- Regression Analysis

Multi- Regression Analysis								
SUMMARY OUTPUT								
Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.0215							
R Square	35393							
Adjusted R Square	0.0004							
Standard Error	63773							
Observations	-							
ANOVA	0.0080							
	06873							
	1.0700							
	22889							
	120							
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	0.062686671	0.06268667	0.0547506	0.81539938			
Residual	118	135.10398	1.14494898					
Total	119	135.1666667						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	4.356949364	0.273268682	15.9438299	3.24E-31	3.81580298	4.8981	3.815803	4.898096
AGE	0.019795791	0.08460155	0.23398851	0.8153994	-0.1477383	0.18733	-0.147738	0.18733

Table 1

Interpretation: Based on the data presented in table 1, the regression analysis found no significant relationship between age and the dependent variable. With an R^2 value of 0.0005 and a non-significant age coefficient ($p = 0.8154$), the results indicate that age does not explain variability in the dependent variable. Only the intercept was significant, but its practical interpretation is

limited. Overall, age is not a meaningful predictor in this model.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H0)

There is no statistically significant relationship between education level and considering government certification (e.g., PSG-India Organic, PSG-India Green) when purchasing organic food.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1)

There is a statistically significant relationship between education level and considering government certification when purchasing organic food.

Co-Relation		
	EDUCATION	YOU CONSIDER CERTIFICATION FROM DO GOVERNMENT (PSG-INDIA ORGANIC, PSG-INDIA GREEN) WHILE PURCHASING ORGANIC FOOD?
EDUCATION	1	
DO YOU CONSIDER CERTIFICATION FROM GOVERNMENT (PSG-INDIA ORGANIC, PSG-INDIA GREEN) WHILE PURCHASING ORGANIC FOOD?	0.099136984	1

Table 2

Interpretation: The study finds a weak positive correlation (0.099136984) between education level and consideration of government certifications when buying organic food, indicating minimal influence of education on certification consideration.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H0)

There is no significant association between gender and preference to consumer food consumption pattern.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1)

There is a significant association between gender and preference to consumer food consumption pattern.

Results						
	ALWAYS prefer to consume	OFTEN prefer to consume	RARELY prefer to consume	SOMETIMES prefer to consume	never prefer to consume	Row Totals
male	30 (38.40) [1.13]	18 (16.90) [0.07]	8 (6.50) [0.35]	16 (11.70) [1.58]	6 (6.50) [0.04]	78
female	26 (19.60) [2.09]	8 (9.10) [0.13]	2 (3.50) [0.64]	2 (6.30) [2.93]	4 (3.50) [0.07]	42
Column Totals	56	26	10	18	10	120 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistics is 9.0338. The p-value is 0.06026. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3

Interpretation: Table 3 reveals that the Chi-square test analysis yielded no statistically significant difference (p-value: 0.06026) in consumption preferences between males and females. While some categories exhibit deviations from expected counts, these differences are insufficient to indicate a substantial difference in preference by gender which reflects that observed differences may be attributed to chance rather than genuine gender-based preferences.

CONCLUSION:

This study was an attempt to understand and analyse the consumer behaviour towards organic food products taking into consideration the key factors of ethical consumerism and sustainability. It is seen from the study that sustainability factor is a driver for consumer food consumption and the ethical element also plays an important role in consumer's purchase decision. Though the consumers prefer consumption of organic food products price plays a major influential reason for their decision making. Health is another contributing factor for consumer's preference for organic food products. The study majorly reflects the consumers who prefer consuming organic food products fruits are most preferred. It is also seen that mostly the consumer trusts the organic food products based on the certification issued by the

competent authorities.

Future Scope:

The study has further scope to dwell on comparison of the consumer behaviour from town and behaviour of an urban city consumer. Study can also deepen to analyse consumer behaviour towards vegan and keto products and market which is a further step in support of sustainability.

REFERENCES:

1. Ethical consumption intentions and choice behaviour towards organic food. Moderation role of buying and environmental concerns- Sikhakushwa
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959652619323273?via%3Dihub>

2. China. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 1165(1), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2007.08.015>
3. Čolović, M., & Mitić, V. (2021). Determinant factors influencing organic foods purchase. *Acta Agriculturae Serbica*, 26(51), 89–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2017.08.006>
4. Aktas, E., Sahin, H., Topaloglu, Z., Oledinma, A., Huda, A. K., Irani, Z., . . . Kamrava, M. (2018). A consumer behavioural approach to food waste. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326815247_A_consumer_behavioural_approach_to_food_waste
5. Factors Affecting Consumers to Buy Organic Food Products in Hyderabad and Secbad International Journal of Business and Management Invention
6. Dr .H.M. Chandrashekar. (2014). Consumers Perception towards Organic Products - A Study in Mysore City. *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management*.1 (1), 52-57. <https://www.ijrbmsm.org/pdf/v1-i1/7.pdf>
7. K. Raksha Shenoy, V. K. Ranjith, Smitha Nayak & C. Anirvinna (2024) Conceptualizing organic food consumption: a consumer motive perspective, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10:1, 2338864, DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2024.2338864