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A Study Towards Understanding The Consumer Psychology And Credence In Organic Food In Post-Pandemic India

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the link between price and customer trust. The study is an attempt to understand how consumer trust influences the relationship between purchase intents, health and safety concerns, and how availability influences this relationship. This survey aimed at various Indian demographic groups to gather data. According to the research, although greater costs might raise people's opinions of quality, they can also breed doubt if they're seen & perceived to be overpriced excessively. Concerns about health and safety are a major draw for consumers shopping for organic food, but their buying intentions are heavily influenced by how much they believe in the advantages and authenticity of the product. Furthermore, the price-trust link is moderated by the availability of organic food, with greater availability lessening the detrimental impact of high costs on trust. Through smart pricing, better availability, and clear communication of the health and safety advantages, organic food industry stakeholders may increase customer trust and their buying intentions. These findings provide insightful counsel in this regard.

Keywords: Organic Food, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intentions, Price Perception, Health and Safety Concerns, Customer Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about health and safety are a major draw for consumers shopping for organic food, with a greater emphasis now being placed on safety, health, and general well-being. Organic food has garnered significant attention in this context because of its alleged health advantages and safer cultivating methods. The increasing attention and consumer confidence in organic food continues to be a crucial element that may greatly impact buying preferences. There are several reasons to trust organic food, including beliefs of safety, authenticity, and quality. The purpose of this study is to investigate, in the aftermath of the epidemic, what variables influence the faith that Indian consumers have in organic food.

The study specifically looks at three main areas: how price affects customer trust; how consumer trust mediates the link between purchase intentions, health and safety concerns; and how availability modifies the relationship between price and trust. Price is a key factor in determining trust as customers tend to associate greater costs with higher quality, but they can also be viewed as unreasonable, which breeds mistrust. Consumers are increasingly gravitating toward organic products due to health and safety concerns, but trust is the primary mediator between these concerns and real buying intentions. Furthermore, the detrimental impact of skimming prices on trust may be lessened or increased depending on the availability of organic food.

The 2019 coronavirus illness, or COVID-19, caused havoc in people's routines and lives. The most recent figures for infections and fatalities worldwide are startling. The epidemic has claimed more lives than 6.8 million and caused more than 750 million illnesses so far. COVID-19 laws were recently relaxed by the Chinese government on January 8, 2023, marking a substantial shift in policy three years after the implementation of the rather strict "dynamic clearing" epidemic prevention plan. But the incidence of COVID-19 infection has been rising lately, therefore the pandemic has been labeled as long-term and there is no end date yet. Changes in diet and exercise habits for billions of people throughout the globe have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the outbreak, consumers are more worried about food safety and quality, and the global food supply chain needs to rethink its strategies to satisfy current expectations. Because of the inherent health, safety, and environmental benefits of organic food, consumers have been more cognizant of these factors since the beginning of the pandemic and have been more inclined to buy it. Sales of organic foodstuffs skyrocketed in retail stores during the epidemic, increasing by 18.3 percent in just two years. Consequently, in the post-pandemic age, there will be huge growth, and businesses in the organic food market will need to adjust their plans and objectives to accommodate it. (Qi et al., 2023)

when India's population was smaller, farmers practiced agriculture in a nearly organic and natural manner. The needs of the rapidly expanding population could not be met by this type of farming when it was passed down from a single generation of farmers to the next (Abdelgawwad & Mohamed, 2013). During the Green Revolution, farmers extensively embraced scientific agricultural treatments to meet the country's expanding food demand brought on by India's growing population (Dholakia & Shukul, 2012). Unfortunately, although this revolution did improve grain output, it also increased the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, which were bad for the environment and people's health. Now that consumers are more informed about the distinctions between inorganic as well as products, they are making more deliberate decisions to buy organic things. The reason being: that while the COVID-19 epidemic was in full swing, conditions were more dangerous for people's health and wellbeing, which is why consumers today are more likely to choose organic goods. (Salunkhe, 2023)

Indian customers have been favoring organic food items more and more recently. Since the pandemic began, they have grown increasingly aware of their health. Additionally, they have been growing aware of the damage that chemical-laden farming methods have caused to the environment. Organic food sales in India hit 1,278 million USD in 2022. Forecasts indicate that the market will increase from 2023 to 2028 at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 23.8%, reaching a value of about \$4,602 million. This is an excellent forecast. This bodes well for the organic food business in India, which has limitless potential and a bright future. On the surface, it seems counterintuitive that 30% of the world's organic producers are based in India, given that the nation accounts for only 1/3 of the organic agriculture worldwide. The national organic food

business has not expanded at the same rate, therefore the investigator set out to find out why. (Srinath et al., 2024)

The thinking of consumers will not constantly go in the same way. At the same rate as "environmental changes," perception is always shifting. Throughout the COVID-19 epidemic, researchers recorded the views of housewives on organic food items in this study. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, people started to see organic food differently. There is widespread concern about "how nutritious and nourishing our intakes are" in the wake of the epidemic. In terms of the food intake of family members, particularly their children, housewives are the more responsible members of the family in these uncertain times (Chakrabarti Somnath, 2010). It is essential information for all marketers to comprehend how homemakers view organic food products. Every person's perception is different and changes in response to their own internal and external stimuli; in this context, expectations for the product also play a significant influence (Campus et al., 2022) (Agyekum, Crentsil, 2015).

Organic food items are in high demand due to the rising public consciousness about the need to take responsibility for the environment, the natural world, and human health (Photcharoen et al., 2020). It is thought that organic farming methods are more environmentally friendly and sustainable than conventional farming methods (Aulakh et al., 2022). Customers are prepared to spend more on organic food supplies as they grow more health-conscious. Osaili and colleagues (2023). Searching for and assessing the information on the factors that influence people's decisions to consume organic goods is the aim of this broad literature study. According to iMARc group, a global market research and consulting business, the market is projected to expand at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 23.8% from 2023 to 2028. By 2028, the market is projected to reach \$4,602 million. According to the Sanrachna Foundation State Organics Report, the program's stated goal is the creation of long-term, environmentally friendly organic farming methods that make use of both conventional and cutting-edge agricultural technologies. We deliberately picked a narrow range of keywords to focus on a relatively small sample of the literature since our major purpose was to determine whether market variables impact consumer preferences for organic food. (Shenoy et al., 2024)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Price of organic food

(Kadam, 2022) A straightforward definition of the price would be a price that validates and supports the cost of production. Consistently offering eco-friendly consumer products has been one of the most effective strategies for promoting organic products, kadam asserts that price and cost reductions are directly related to various buying procedures. Even clients who care about the environment have complained about the absurd costs of sustainable items in 84 cases. Overpriced components have been noted as key challenges in implementation regions where environmental concerns are developing. Pricing is a crucial component in enticing customers to make purchases as it affects how they see prices and values and influences their choices. In a similar vein, discovered that pricing may have an impact on customers' selections of brands, products, and stores. Price is a major factor in consumers' preferences to buy, and fresh produce goods that are labeled as organic tend to cost more.

(Kaiser et al., 2021) Devastating and complicated ways, the ongoing worldwide COVID-19 epidemic has impacted every corner of society. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rethink the value goals and deliberative frameworks inside our food systems as nations assess their mobility and the limits of social-distancing tactics. On a global, national, regional, and even local scale, it was

already essential to revamp alimentary systems before the pandemic to establish a shared objective of ethical and environmentally friendly food supply chains. The relevant scientific communities also need a shift in focus since they have long operated in isolation from one another and have failed to adequately account for the many ways in which various interest groups have interpreted the food system problem in light of their ideological assumptions. We argue that the standards and reorientation needed for a more sustainable and ethical food future might be found in a post-pandemic strategy that is bottom-up, regional, cross-sectoral, and nonpartisan. As seen through the lens of food ethics, which cuts across disciplines.

Health and safety

(Thakur & Nahar, 2022) Consumers who are concerned about their health may find it easier to distinguish between conventional and organic items on the market. "Readiness to undertake health actions" is the definition of health awareness. People who are health conscious are driven to engage in healthy activities, be self-aware of their health, and improve or preserve their health as well as to be aware of and worried about their wellbeing. Because of this, people are increasingly investing in their health by buying organic foods. According to certain research Nahar, buying organic food is primarily motivated by health concerns. Indeed, as consumers begin to doubt the quality of traditional foods, they will become interested in food-related health concerns. Additionally, while purchasing organic foods, the majority of customers will be worried about maintaining or improving their health. According to the study, health awareness is a broader concept that reflects a person's readiness to take action for their health. It may be measured as a level of readiness to do healthy acts.

(Vijayan & Ong, 2021) identified four different consumer categories. Each of them has a distinct pattern in the consumption of organic crops. The primary driving force behind the "pioneer" group's limited utilization of organic products is curiosity. Effective marketing strategies might encourage this group of consumers to eat more organic vegetables. The "pragmatist" group is more preoccupied with price, to the extent that it causes them significant difficulties when making judgments about what to buy. It is evident that the third, categorized as "health-conscious," is the most well-established. Customers in this group choose fresh vegetables over conventional items because they think they are healthier, and they have been buying organic food from specialized sales outlets for at least two years. Furthermore, the greater average family income of this group explains why these clients are ready to spend an additional 20–30% on organic produce. The last group is the "nostalgic" group, which is made up only of elderly individuals who associate eating organic vegetables with the genuineness and Flavours of the past.

Availability of organic food

(Kedah et al., 2016) The rising demand for organic products has led traditional supermarkets to increase their organic food selection to better meet customer needs. Instead of being limited to buying organic food from organic businesses, consumers may now purchase organic food at regular supermarkets. the research of Dettmann & Dimitri (2007), customers may now purchase organic foods more easily since conventional supermarkets and major retail establishments use more marketing methods to promote organic goods. Nevertheless, further study indicates that it is not always simple to locate organic food. Given that availability influences consumers' intentions to buy organic food, they are inclined to conduct a thorough investigation. Research demonstrates that customers' inability to choose environmentally friendly items is caused by a lack of knowledge (Brown, 2003). According to earlier research, one of the things that prevents customers from

buying organic goods is the absence of organic food in the shop. "Market mavens may be defined as people who have knowledge about many different product types, places to shop, and other aspects of the market and establish a discussion with customers and respond to consumers about market information," As a result, interactions with customers who possess both a high level of market expertise and product availability may influence their purchasing behavior in a way that they find more favorable.

(Saxena et al., 2021) For a better grasp of how Italians' eating habits and general lifestyle evolved during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Laura Di Renzo et al. titled their study "Eating habits and lifestyle changes during COVID-19 lockdown: an Italian survey" in June of that year. The data was analyzed using the following tests: Kruskal-Wallis, Shapiro-Wilk, Chi-square, and Mann-Whitney U. Three percent fewer individuals smoked and fifteen percent more people began consuming more organic produce, as seen in the results. "Impacts on dietary habits and well-being of Indian population during COVID-19 lockdown," a study conducted by Rajesh Kumar R. et al. in November 2020, set out to assess how the lockdown impacted regular activities, such as eating. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which revealed a significant change in eating habits and a reduction in both mental and physical states. Finding the amount of research gaps has been made easier thanks to the literature review. There is currently literature on foods that boost immunity. Research has mostly focused on substitutes for pharmaceutical immune enhancers. The emphasis has been on different geographic regions where food consumption, cultural factors, and the prevalence of coronavirus infection have brought this to light, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The pandemic's shift in eating patterns will make people's perceptions of nutrition and the role that food plays in sustainable living amid emergencies more transparent.

Consumer trust

(Shukla & Pandey, 2023) Research has shown that a person's intended use of a technology directly precedes their actual use behavior (UB). The BI shows when a person should be anticipated to exhibit a certain behavior. But this connection can only exist if the person has the autonomy to choose what they want to do. According to the TAM model, a user's actual user behavior (UB) is determined by their belief in the technology, or their BI. Much prior research demonstrates the direct relationship between behavior intention and UB.

(Roy, 2014) found that there is a significant relationship between mutual trust & service quality of the banks providing their services. This may remain valid in the case of organic food manufacturers.

(Natarajan & GR, 2022) There has been a lot of focus on the complicated issue of consumer trust in organic food in both academic and commercial studies, particularly in the post-pandemic era. Consumers' faith in organic food is influenced by several factors, including claims about its quality and safety, authenticity, and the credibility of certifications and labels. Research shows that consumers have a stronger faith in organic foods because they assume they are healthier and contain less harmful chemicals. (Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Still, cost is a crucial consideration; whereas premium pricing may indicate quality, it may also breed suspicion if it is seen to be excessive. Since the pandemic, people's concerns about health and safety have increased, pushing them toward organic products. However, these worries only influence purchases when they are balanced by faith in the reliability and advantages of the product (Gould et al., 2021). Furthermore, there is a moderating effect of the availability of naturally grown food; more availability may normalize higher costs and maintain trust, whereas less availability might heighten scepticism about authenticity and value (Hemmerling et al., 2015). This corpus of research emphasizes how

crucial it is to strategically price, communicate, and make organic food widely accessible to build consumer confidence.

Purchase intentions

(Chandra Panetal., 2024) According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, a person's purchasing intention is their propensity or inclination to acquire a given product or service at a later time (Meet et al., 2024). Simply said, intentions show the degree to which an individual is committed to making an effort to achieve a goal. Various theoretical frameworks for primary impulse (PI) analysis have been described in the literature throughout the years. These models include the well-known theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour put out by Ajzen. The PI Planned Behaviour (PB) research paradigm is theoretically grounded on this study's use of the concept of planned behaviour. Both theoretical and empirical studies found that attitude (AT) significantly affected the propensity to purchase organic foods (Rana and Paul, 2017). Additionally, Perceived Price (PP) and Perceived Value (PV) may be able to forecast primary impulse PI, according to the study.

(Stoica, 2021) A specificity to act with confidence is called intention. Moreover, the idea of intention first surfaced in psychology and relates to an individual's subjective perception of carrying out a certain behaviour. Marketing researchers took into account purchase intention based on its associations with consumer purchasing behaviour and attitude. Cong and Zheng (2017) claim that consumer purchase intention includes the choices and willingness of the customer to make purchases. Furthermore, purchase intention measures the likelihood that customers will make a certain purchase (goods or services). Accordingly, the core components of purchase behavioural intention include customers' propensity to shop, their attempts to make purchases, their future purchase plans, and the measurement of their likelihood of making a purchase

Behavioural intention, defined as the act of engaging in a behaviour, is comprised of three sub-dimensions: intention to use, intention to spread word of mouth, and desire to pay more. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown to be an exceptional problem that still affects individuals all over the globe. Naturally, several infectious illnesses have spread over the globe in various locations.

Hypothesis Development

H1: Organic food costing more has a major effect on how consumers perceive organic food.

(Xing et al., 2022) The food industry has far-reaching effects on the world's economies, ecosystems, and people's well-being. The food business must immediately implement reforms to improve sustainability. Produced in a way that is considerate of biodiversity, the environment, and the well-being of animals, foods that have received the organic label from both the European Union and individual member states are considered to be organic. A growing body of research shows that organic farming significantly cuts down on emissions of greenhouse gases and the amount of carbon left behind. Other studies have shown that people are less likely to get cancer and have lower pesticide levels when they consume organic food. Organic food consumption in France rose by almost 13.5 percent from 2018 to 2019. The French Organization for the Development and Promotion of Organic Agriculture had revenue of roughly 12 billion euros in 2018, as anticipated by various authors, and it has been progressively increasing for several years. This is somewhat similar to what happens in several of the European Union member states. This amazing development indicates that 90% of French people have consumed some organic food in the last month, according to the same source. Academics are flocking to research organic food because, well, it's fashionable. A recent demonstration highlighted the significance of the monetary stakes. Therefore, marketing and consumer behavior are very consequential. When it comes to organic

food labels, for example, credibility is a big issue (Janssen and Hamm, 2012). While issues with mental representation are more common, they may also arise with how people perceive organic food products.

H2: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between health and safety concerns and purchase intentions.

According to Salunkhe, health awareness refers to how much a person incorporates health-related topics into their everyday life. Because they think organic food items are healthier & contain less pesticides, many consumers choose to buy them. Synthetic chemicals and residues compared to traditional products (Salunkhe, 2023). Several studies have shown strong evidence that consumers' inclinations to buy organic food are significantly influenced by health awareness. For instance, the research by Parashar. It showed that the most important factor in determining Indian consumers' purchasing intentions and actions was health awareness.

The relationship between street food and behavioral intentions (BI). According to Suhartanto, food quality and service quality (e-SQ) have a big impact on customer loyalty decisions to use organic delivery services for food. (Teangsompong et al., 2024) This implies that when patrons believe the service and food to be of a high caliber, they have a better chance of having positive behavioral intentions (BI), like repeat intentions (RI). Customers put a premium on the safety and quality of street food, according to a scoping assessment of research conducted worldwide by Teangsompong. This shows that customers' views on the healthfulness and safety of street food might affect their behavioral intentions (BI), which include their loyalty and Repeat Intentions (RI). The aforementioned study indicates that customers' evaluations of street food sellers are influenced by how they feel about the value, quality, and service of the meal. These preferences are shown by the traits that this research looked at. The Service Quality intentions of consumers.

H3: The price-trust link between organic food and its availability is moderated by the price-availability relationship.

(Tandon et al., 2020) According to a review of the research, eating organic food is indicative of one's private issues, such as moral standards, and is important to one's worldview environmental effect, morally motivated consumption, and health awareness (Birch et al., 2018). Accordingly, consumer concerns have a major impact on consumers' decision-making or reasoning processes, serving as regulators as they pursue an objective. Additionally, they may affect a person's motivation and feelings. According to recent research, understanding consumer motivations, preferences, and perceptions of risk is crucial for creating sustainable patterns of organic food consumption. These findings imply that motivations, attitudes, and purchasing behavior may be strongly influenced by a consumer's self-identity, including its intrinsic and extrinsic components. The study model postulates that trust (T) and environmental concerns (EC) moderate the relationships between various motives, attitudes, and purchasing behaviors.

(Zhang et al., 2016) This study aims to fill a gap in our understanding of what motivates people in poor countries to purchase organic food. It provides important insights for policymakers, researchers, and those working in the organic food distribution sector. The present study strand will provide a practical benefit by providing knowledge of the aspects that customers consider when buying organic food, as well as a theoretical contribution by providing significant insights into the behavior of Pakistani consumers toward organic food. Consequently, there are two goals for the present investigation. People eat food without having all the facts about its safety,

sustainability, and quality, thus confidence in food is crucial. "Food bridges the gap between the body's "inside" and "outside" environments."

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

Finding out what factors impact Indian consumers' belief in organic food after the outbreak and how that trust affects their purchasing intentions is the main goal of this study. The research primarily looks at how availability, pricing, and health and safety issues affect customer trust and purchase behavior.

Objectives

- To examine how the cost of organic food affects customer trust.
- To investigate how customer trust influences the link between purchase intentions and health and safety concerns.
- To assess how the presence of organic food influences the link between price and customer trust, moderating it.
- To provide strategic advice to those involved in the organic food sector

Hypothesis

Ha1: The price of organic food Significantly impacts consumer trust in organic food.

Ha2: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between health and safety concerns and purchase intentions.

Ha3: The availability of organic food moderates the relationship between the price of organic food and consumer trust.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a quantitative methodology to investigate customer confidence in organic food. Data from individuals with varying demographic backgrounds were gathered at a particular moment in time using a cross-sectional approach.

Sampling

Customers were chosen for the research using a convenience sample approach. The sample size of 350 responders was selected based on consumers of organic foods and viability.

Random Sampling

Every potential participant has an equal chance of being chosen by random sampling, which is a method for selecting samples from a group of people. Taking a random selection from a larger pool of people may often provide more accurate results than looking at the population as a whole. To get data from a large population, random sampling is one of the simplest approaches.

Here is the formula for a single-sample random selection of a population:

$$P = 1 - \left(\frac{N-1}{N} \right) \left(\frac{N-2}{N} \right) \dots \left(\frac{N-n}{N-(n-1)} \right)$$

Data Collection

Gathering relevant information is a crucial aspect of every study. Two of the most often used techniques for obtaining information are primary and secondary data collecting. The primary

information will be gathered via a questionnaire. Secondary data may also be found in books, papers, essays, annual reports, magazines, and journals in addition to these locations.

Tools for Data collection

Surveys/questionnaires: Structured inquiries are used in questionnaires, which are data collection methods, to elicit information from respondents. Their employment in research is frequent, as they give important views on views, opinions, and experiences. Surveys are a flexible tool that researchers may use to quantify data, identify patterns, and comprehend the many customer opinions on a certain subject.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- **Inclusion Criteria:** consumers who are open to buying organic food.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Participants who declined to participate or were under the age of 18 when data was collected were not included.

Tools and Techniques of this Study

Tools

For this study, the researchers rely on the statistical package known as SPSS.

Result and Discussion

Reliability Test

For 50 samples, the validity and reliability are assessed. The extent that to which the study's constructs agree with one another is known as their dependability. A structure or variable may be regarded as reliable if its Alpha value is greater than 0.70. Construct dependability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Cronbach's alpha:

The Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the internal dependability, or the degree to which a set of items is interdependent. It is considered a measure of scale reliability. Just because the alpha value is "high" doesn't mean the measurement is one-dimensional. To check for dimensionality, one can examine exploratory factors. The following is the standardised Cronbach's alpha formula, provided for conceptual reasons:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

The average inter-item covariance among the items is denoted by the c-bar, while the average variance is represented by the v-bar. Here, N = number of items. To ensure the data is internally consistent before the inquiry begins, the Cronbach's alpha () value is used. The Cronbach's alpha value is one of the measures used in dependability analysis. A link exists between correlation and Cronbach's alpha. As item correlation increases, Cronbach's alpha generally rises as well.

By analyzing the Cronbach's alpha value, we were able to extract the following data points:

If $\alpha \geq 0.9$ - Excellent

• If $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ - Good

• If $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ - Acceptable

• If $0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$ -Poor

- If $\alpha < 0.5$ – Unacceptable

Cronbach's alpha value—the degree to which item data are internally consistent.

For objects that seemed to have poor consistency among other items, Cronbach's alpha provides information about which ones.

Table 1 Reliability test

Construct	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Price of organic food	05	.854
Health and safety	05	.854
Availability of organic food	05	.845
Consumer trust	05	.853
Purchase intentions	05	.851

Price of organic food

The reliability of the rural job opportunity was shown by Cronbach's Alpha value ($\alpha = 0.854$) of the Price of Organic Food Scale with Five Items. The preceding table displays the dependable outcome of the organic food price.

Health and Safety

The Price of Organic Food Scale with Five Items demonstrated dependability in rural employment opportunities with a Cronbach's Alpha score of $\alpha = 0.854$. An accurate breakdown of the cost of organic foods is shown in the table above.

Availability of organic food

The reliability of the health and safety measures was shown by the Cronbach's Alpha value ($\alpha = 0.845$) of the five-item availability of organic food scale. The accompanying table shows the reliability outcome of organic food availability.

Consumer trust

The reliability of the health and safety measures was shown by the Cronbach's Alpha value ($\alpha = 0.853$) of the five-item consumer trust on the organic food scale. The following table displays the reliable outcome of consumers' faith in organic food.

Purchase intentions

The health and safety are dependable, as shown by the Cronbach's Alpha score ($\alpha = 0.851$) that the five-item purchase intentions scale achieved. The following table displays the outcomes of the reliability analysis of the purchase intentions.

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is used to isolate the components from the independent variables. This study is often used to generate questions. Picture this: the data contains a plethora of variables. If that's the case, we may use this method to get the variables out of the data. The variables in this research

are categorized according to their shared characteristics. The reduced components may be used for further investigation.

Values are extracted from this test and their usage

- You need a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure higher than 0.5.
- A p-value of less than 0.05 is required for Bartlett's test of sphericity.

According to the total variation explained table, we may determine what proportion of variance is accounted for by each component.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.923
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4718.44
	df	300
	Sig.	.000

To evaluate the appropriateness of factor analysis, use the KMO and Bartlett's tests. The factor analysis was supported by Bartlett's test, which was extremely significant ($P = 0.00$) and yielded a KMO score of 0.923, suggesting great sampling adequacy.

Table 3 Post CFA factor loadings

	Post CFA factor loadings	AVE	CR
Price of organic food		0.7942	0.50608785
Do customers think the cost of organic food is more than it was before the pandemic?	.777		
How much do you think greater costs for organic food translate into higher standards of quality and safety?	.792		
Do customers think that the cost of organic food fairly represents the high requirements of quality and safety?	.802		
Has the price of organic food products changed since the epidemic started, in the eyes of consumers?	.813		
To what extent do you think that the costs of organic food are fair given their health benefits?	.787		
Health and safety		0.795	0.50659116
I think that organic food is safety than conventional food?	.779		
I think that organic food contains the least amount of chemicals?	.791		
I choose food carefully to ensure good health?	.804		
I think of myself as a health-conscious consumer	.815		
I often think about health issues?	.786		

Availability of organic food		0.785	0.50026235
How frequently do you try to buy organic food products and find that they are out of stock?	.884		
How easily available do you think organic food goods are in general grocery shops and supermarkets?	.691		
To what extent do you find the range of organic food alternatives in the market satisfactory?	.834		
As needed, I can easily find and buy organic food goods?	.768		
To what extent do you find the availability of organic food items in your community satisfactory?	.748		
Consumer trust		0.794	0.50596194
In my opinion, food items that are organic are of a greater quality than those that are conventional?	.824		
I really believe that eating organic food is beneficial to my health?	.797		
I am confident in India's organic food product certification and labelling?	.801		
I have no doubt that organic food items are devoid of dangerous chemicals and pesticides?	.764		
I believe the details offered regarding the history and cultivation practices of organic food.	.784		
Purchase intentions		0.7922	0.50482728
I have been purchasing organic food on average every week?	.817		
I think that the purchase of organic food is better than conventional food for the environment?	.797		
I think that I can contribute to environmental protection by buying and eating organic food?	.798		
I plan to regularly purchase organic food items in the future?	.764		
Even though organic food costs more than non-organic food, I still choose to buy it?	.785		

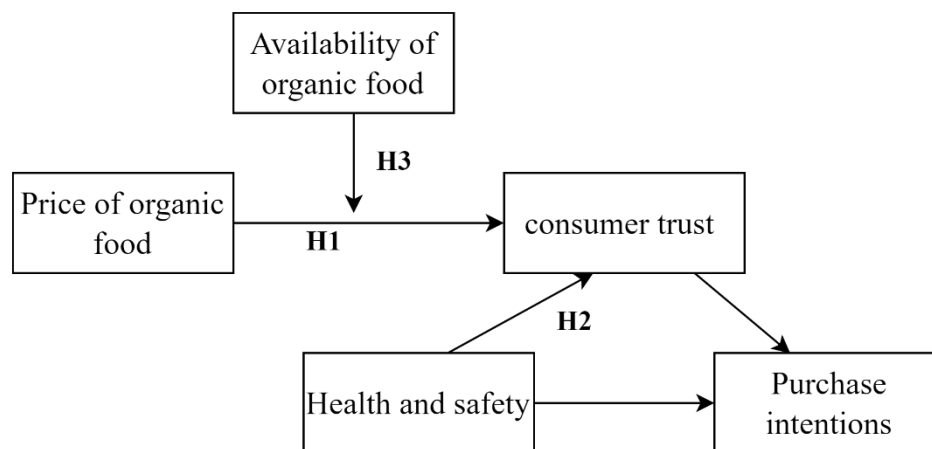
Discriminant validity:

Discriminant validity is a notion used in the context of validating measuring tools and evaluating the relationships between variables, rather than a specific test run in SPSS or any other statistical program. To make sure that various conceptions or variables in a study are actually separate and aren't evaluating the same underlying concept, discriminant validity is essential. Scholars employ

diverse methodologies, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) or correlational analysis, to substantiate the distinct nature of the measurements meant to evaluate distinct conceptions and refute the notion of strong connection. By minimizing construct overlapping or redundancy and ensuring that the measurement tools effectively capture the distinct concepts they are intended to measure, discriminant validity contributes to more reliable and accurate data processing and interpretation.

Correlations					
	Price of organic food	Health and safety	Availability of organic food	consumer trust	Purchase intentions
Price of organic food	0.89117				
Health and safety	.163**	0.89162			
Availability of organic food	.163**	1.000**	0.88600		
Consumer trust	.673**	0.081	0.081	0.89106	
Purchase intentions	.118*	.672**	.672**	0.086	0.89005

Conceptual Framework



H1: The price of organic food Significantly impacts consumer trust in organic food.

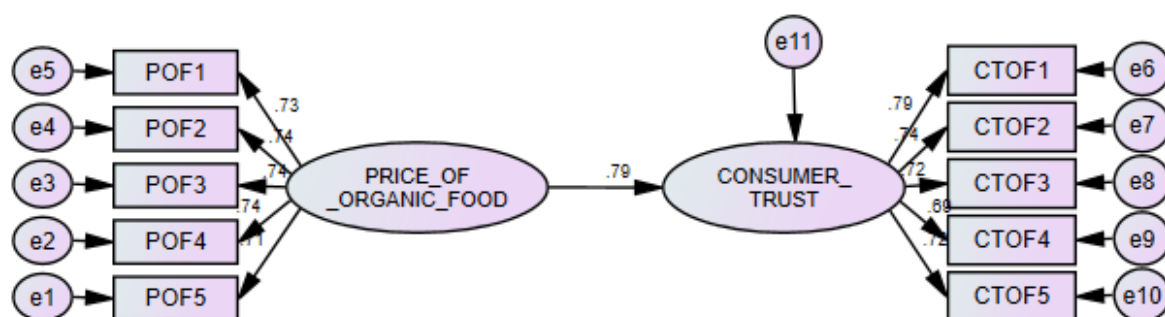


Table 4 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 – Default model)

PATH			Un Standardized Estimate	S.E.	Standardized Estimate	C.R.	P
Consumer Trust	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.015	.090	.788	11.239	***
POF5	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.000		.713		
POF4	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.073	.084	.745	12.757	***
POF3	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.105	.087	.743	12.734	***
POF2	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.095	.086	.739	12.668	***
POF1	<---	Price Of Organic Food	1.044	.083	.730	12.526	***
CT1	<---	Consumer Trust	1.000		.792		
CT1	<---	Consumer Trust	.817	.058	.744	14.197	***
CT1	<---	Consumer Trust	.825	.060	.720	13.671	***
CT1	<---	Consumer Trust	.754	.058	.693	13.085	***
CT1	<---	Consumer Trust	.800	.059	.717	13.611	***

In this hypothetical structural equation model, the table shows how two variables—the price of organic food and consumer trust—are dependent on each other. Here, customer trust is the dependent variable and organic food price is the independent variable. The investigation's results show that there is a noteworthy and favorable correlation between the price of organic food and consumer trust in this kind of food ($\beta=.788$, $P<.05$).

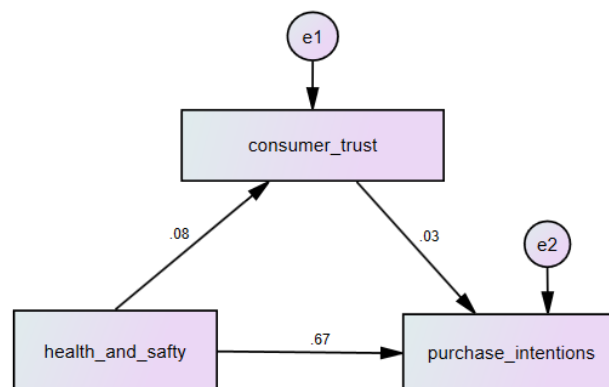
A positive link between the price of organic food and consumer trust is shown by the standardized coefficient of 0.162, as indicated in the route connecting these two variables. It seems that the observed connections are statistically significant since the correlation coefficient values (C.R. values) display big magnitudes. Due to the components' statistical significance (p -values > 0.05), the fit indices show that the model is well-fitting. There was a positive and statistically significant correlation between the price of organic food and consumer trust when seven separate fit indices were used to assess the overall model fit.

Table 5 model fit

Variable	Value
Chi-square value(χ^2)	99.98
Degrees of freedom (df)	34
CMIN/DF	2.941
P value	0.000
GFI	.946
RFI	0.921
NFI	0.940
IFI	0.960
CFI	0.959
RMR	0.037
RMSEA	0.075

All of the quality metrics, including $\chi^2 = 132.997$, NFI = 0.940, IFI = 0.960, GFI = 0.946, RFI = 0.921, and CFI = 0.959, were significantly higher than the threshold of 0.90, indicating an adequate representation of the sample data. Similarly, the critical value is 0.080, while the values of RMR (Root Mean Square Residuals) = 0.037 and RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) = 0.075 are not very high. A number of metrics, such as RMSEA (0.075), RMR (0.037), GFI(0.946), and CFI (0.959), pointed to a solid match with the offered model.

H2: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between health and safety concerns and purchase intentions.

**Table 6 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 – Default model)**

PATH	Un Standardized Estimate	S.E.	Standardized Estimate	C.R.	P
Consumer Trust <--- Health and safety	.083	.054	.081	1.526	***
purchase intentions <--- Health and safety	.677	.040	.669	16.827	***
purchase intentions <--- Consumer Trust	.031	.040	.031	.784	***

Table 3 displays the results of a regression study that looks at the relationship between health and safety, consumer trust, and intent to buy, with a focus on how consumer trust acts as a mediator. The results show that health and safety information used and consumers' trust in organic food are major factors in determining whether or not to buy. With a critical ratio (C.R.) of 1.526 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.83 for the route from health and safety to consumer trust, a substantial positive connection is suggested. A large unstandardized estimate of 0.677 and a C.R. of 16.827 both lend credence to the idea that health and safety considerations influence consumers' willingness to buy. Furthermore, when analysing the route from Consumer Trust to purchase intentions, there is an impressive C.R. of 0.784 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.31.

H3: The availability of organic food moderates the relationship between the price of organic food and consumer trust, such that the negative impact of price on trust is weaker when availability is high.

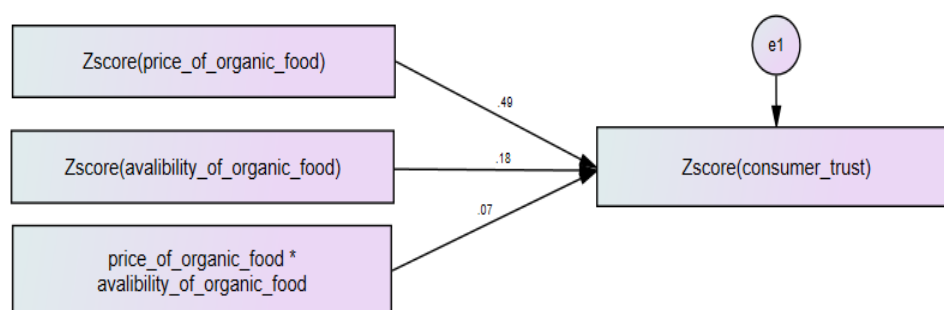


Table 7 Regression Weights: (Group number 1 – Default model)

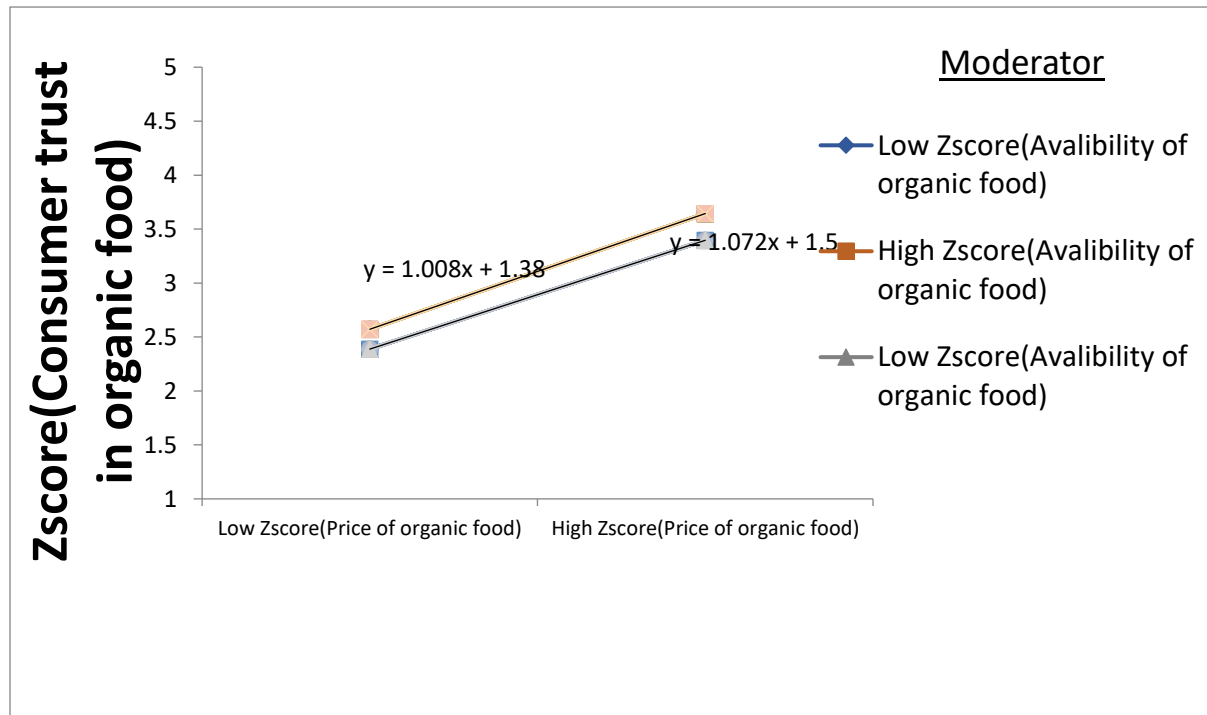
PATH	Un Standardize d Estimate	S.E.	Standardi zed Estimate	C.R.	P
Zconsumer trust <- Zprice of organic food	.520	.048	.493	10.858	***
Zconsumer trust <- ZAvailability of organic food	.108	.027	.184	4.058	***
Zconsumer trust <- interaction	.016	.010	.073	1.606	***

Table 6 displays the results of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) that moderates the relationship between Zscore (availability of organic food) and Zscore (price of organic food) and Zscore (customer trust). Taking measurement errors and in-model feedback into account, this thorough analysis enables testing of all relevant routes. The path analysis-based hypothesis states that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the Zscore (price of organic food) and the Zscore (price of organic food) ($\beta=0.493$, $P<0.05$). There is a positive and significant relationship between the Zscore (availability of organic food) and the Zscore (customer trust) ($\beta=.073$, $P<0.05$).

Moderation testing:

Zscore (customer trust), Zscore (availability of organic food), and Zscore (price of organic food) are treated as independent variables in the moderation analysis. Using SPSS, we create interaction terms from the standardised scores of the variables, and then we compute the results.

PATH			Un Standardize d Estimate	S.E.	Standardi zed Estimate	C.R.	P
Zconsumer trust	<-	interaction	.016	.010	.073	1.606	***



We examined the Zscore, which stands for "access to organic food," as a potential moderator. A positive and substantial impact on the Zscore (customer trust) ($\beta = 0.073$, $P < .05$) is exerted by the interaction term of the Zscore (availability of organic food) and (price of organic food). Our data provides statistical evidence that Zscore (availability to organic food) acts as a moderator.

Discussion

The price of organic food significantly impacts consumer trust, as consumers often associate higher prices with better quality and authenticity, though excessively high prices without clear justification can lead to scepticism and reduced trust. Health and safety concerns are paramount for consumers, especially post-pandemic, driving them towards organic food; however, these concerns translate into purchase intentions primarily through the mediation of consumer trust, as trust validates the health and safety claims associated with organic products. Furthermore, the accessibility of organic food has a moderating role in the price-trust connection; high accessibility may normalise higher costs and keep consumers' faith, while low accessibility can make high prices seem suspicious, leading to a decrease in trust. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for stakeholders to develop effective pricing, distribution, and communication strategies in the organic food market.

Conclusion

This research highlights the intricate relationships that exist in post-pandemic India between pricing, customer trust, health and safety concerns, purchasing intentions, and the availability of organic food. It shows that although more expensive products might raise people's opinions about their quality, if they are seen to be exorbitant, they can also breed suspicion. In order to drive

sales, consumer trust is essential since it acts as a mediator between health and safety concerns and buy intents. It also emphasizes how important it is for consumers to believe that organic food is real and beneficial. Moreover, the price–trust link is moderated by the availability of organic food, where a greater availability lessens the detrimental effect of high costs on trust. Organic food sector players should prioritise strategic pricing, increasing accessibility, and effectively communicating the health and safety benefits of organic food in light of these results.

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