

A Study of Key Factors Driving Consumers' Intention to Purchase Organic Food Products: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

The domestic as well as global organic food market is experiencing a massive growth in recent years because of its multiple health benefits. Several studies focused on consumer perceptions towards organic food products in different contexts. However, in spite of the emergence of studies on this topic, the information about the key factors driving consumer intention to purchase, as well as their actual purchase behaviour, is still scarce. The aim of this research is to explore the key drivers of purchase intentions of organic food products, and develop a conceptual framework based on personal characteristics, motives, perceptions, subjective knowledge, reference groups, attitudes, perceived behavioural control, purchase intention, and actual buying behaviour. This extensive literature review has analysed the top-quality pool of papers published in the past two decades. As a result, it contributes to a better understanding of this focal phenomenon by identifying the key drivers of consumers' intention to purchase organic food products. Furthermore, future research directions are provided, in order to extend the existing knowledge of consumer behaviour towards organic food products.

Keywords: Organic Food, Personal Characteristics, Perception, Motives, Subjective Knowledge, Reference Group, Attitude, Perceived Behavioural Control, Buying Intention, India

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, there has been an increased demand for organic food, which is perceived to be healthier and more environmental friendly than conventionally grown foods (e.g., Kapoor & Garyali, 2012; Mie et al., 2017; Barański et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019; Eynade et al., 2021). Consequently, consumer preferences have shifted from conventionally grown foods to organically produced foods (Ali et al., 2015; Du et al., 2017). The Indian market for organic products has shown impressive growth, accounting for USD849.5 million in 2020. The market is further expected to grow at a CAGR of about 20.5% in the forecast period 2021-2026, to reach a value of about USD2,601 million by 2026, due to its advanced demographic dividend, improved purchasing power, and increased interest for the perceived health and wellness benefits of certain organic products (USDA Report, 2020; Tandon et al., 2020). In addition to the growing domestic market, India is the second largest exporter of organic

products in Asia, after China (ASSOCHAM-EY Report, 2018). Nevertheless, organic products in India represent far less than 1.0% of global value demand, with a per capita expenditure of USD0.06 in 2019 (Global Organic Trade Guide, 2019). Previous research mentioned that quality, safety, and the health-enhancing properties of organic food attract consumer interest and affect buying behaviour (Hansen, 2005; Jones et al., 2006; Basha & Ramesh, 2014). Moreover, increased consumers' interest in organic food has been attributed, among other factors, to the developing demand for food products free from chemical residues and pesticides (Baltas, 2001; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002).

In order to serve consumers' actual needs and wants regarding organic products, those involved in the market need to be informed about consumers' perception of organic products (Schleenbecker & Hamm, 2013). In response to consumers' concerns about food safety, human health, and the environment, the interest of

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consumers and public institutions in organically produced foods has increased in developed countries (Gracia & Magistris, 2007) and developing countries (Umali-Deininger & Sur, 2007). Although the concept of organic food seems to be well known to many consumers, the proportion of consumers who purchase organic foods on a regular basis is low (NCAER, 2014). Despite retailers' desire and increasing offerings of organic food products, there have been several obstacles to consumers' organic product purchase. The most common barriers are premium price, limited availability, and consumers' scepticism with regard to organic products being of higher quality (Paul & Rana, 2012; Rana & Paul, 2017; Lea & Worsley, 2005). These obstacles are considered to be the reasons for the attitude-behaviour gap concerning organic products buying behaviour. Previous studies on the attitude and intention model in organic food consumption have not shown consistent results (Chen, 2009; Krishnakumara & Niranjana, 2017). The organic food product price variable negatively affects the consumers' attitude towards organic food (Magnusson et al., 2001; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002). In contrast, some studies have shown that consumers are tolerant of the premium price of organic food (Davis et al., 1995).

In fact, many pertinent studies, which have focused on either exploratory understandings of consumer decision-making processes (Essoussi & Zahaf, 2008; Lea & Worsley, 2005) or describing the nature of organic food and analysing demographic variables (Dimitri & Oberholtzer, 2009), have been unable to keep pace with developments in practice. In the Indian context, despite the progressive development of the organic food sector, little is known about how consumers' awareness level, perception, attitudes, beliefs, and buying behaviours influence organic food purchase decisions (Sakthiraman & Venkatram, 2012; Chandrasekhar, 2014). Previous studies focused on organic food consumption included recognising key motivations behind their buying, to know the 'whys' of consumers' choices. A comprehensive overview of consumers' perception of organic food products characteristics does not exist to date. It is imperative to marketers to gather the present state of knowledge on the subject of consumers' perception of organic food product characteristics. Most of the research on consumer attitudes and behaviours regarding purchase and consumption of organic food products are from the

perspective of developed countries. Research into the Indian consumer's behaviour towards organic food is still at a relatively early stage, and few studies focused on comprehensive understanding of the determinant attributes of consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food products. Research related to consumer preferences and demand for organic foods in the Indian context is few (Pandiya & Nayankumar, 2012; Sivathanu, 2015). Moreover, the changing trends in the socio-demographic profile seem to affect the consumer attitudes and buying behaviour towards organic food products (Ali & Moorthy, 2010; Bharathi et al., 2014; Natarajan, 2015). Few studies have attempted to address the consumers' subjective knowledge of the organic food, health consciousness, and food safety concern, which impact organic food buying behaviour (Basha et al., 2015; Saloni Mehra & Ratna, 2014; Shashikiran & Madhavaiah, 2014). While there is relatively high awareness of organic food in developed countries, Indian consumers' awareness as well as consumption of organic food in India's domestic market is relatively low and primarily relegated to metropolitan cities (Prakash, Singh & Yadav, 2018). Therefore, consumers' knowledge about organic food is an important factor that positively influences consumers' buying behaviour (Bhama & Balaji, 2012; Osswald & Menon, 2013; Suganya & Aravinth, 2014). Moreover, Indian consumers have inconsistent interpretations about what organic food is (Tandon et al., 2020). Recent research shows a general distrust or suspicious attitude among Indian consumers about the quality of organic food and the certification labels (Tandon et al., 2020a). Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on consumer behaviour towards organic food products in the Indian context: (1) by identifying key factors that influence consumers' intention to purchase organic food products, and (2) by developing a conceptual framework of consumers' purchase intentions and buying behaviour towards organic food products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, interest in organic food has grown remarkably as consumers and marketers respond to popular media about health and environmental effects of pesticides, genetically-modified organisms, and food safety. Thus, consumer behaviour towards organic food products has been of interest to researchers for many

years from a wide array of perspectives. A comprehensive literature review was carried out to establish a theoretical framework for consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products, by identifying previous studies and models supporting the current research; and also identifying research gaps that the present research intends to fill. The literature clearly indicates that the word 'organic' has several meanings. Considerable confusion surrounding the term 'organic' still exists (Chryssochoidis, 2000). Organic food is food produced by methods that comply with the standards of organic farming (Hughner et al., 2007). While many consumers have believed that of the term and are aware of its central characteristics – such as, that it is chemical-free – most are unfamiliar with organic farming standards and practices (Harper & Makatouni, 2002; Hill & Lynchehaun, 2002).

There have been several studies of what influences consumers in their decision to purchase or consume organic foods, specifically concerned with fresh organic food products. Previous studies show a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, with consumers being positive about organic foods but often not purchasing them. This difference appears to be explained by the known fact that consumers do not consider "organically produced" to be an important purchase criterion, that organic foods are not perceived to exceed conventional food products with respect to taste and shelf life (two qualities rated to be of great importance), and because of the perceived premium prices of organic foods (Magnusson et al., 2001). Many people believe that organic food is only a "concept" popular in the developed countries. They consider that when it comes to organic food products, India alone exports organic food and very little is consumed. However, this is not true. Though 50% of the Indian organic food production is focused towards exports, there are several who look towards organic food for domestic consumption. The most important reason for buying organic food is the concern for the health of the children, with over 66% parents choosing organic food to non-organic food. Though organic food is priced over 25% more than conventional food in India, many parents are willing to spend this higher premium price due to the perceived health benefits of organic food (Tregear, Dent & McGregor, 1994).

The increase in organic food consumption in India is evident from the increasing number of organic food stores

in the country. Today, every supermarket has an organic food store and every large city in India has numerous organic food stores and restaurants. The pattern of organic diet consumption in India is far different from that in the developed countries (Ramesh, Singh & Rao, 2005). In India, customers prefer organic marmalade, organic strawberry, organic tea, organic honey, organic cashew butter, and various organic flours. With the awakening of the Indian consumers to healthy eating, a few restaurant owners have started serving organic food, to survive in the market (Mishra & Kaushik, 2007). People prefer organic food for various reasons, as they are healthier and free of pesticides or fungicides. In addition, these organic products are grown on land where there are no traces of chemicals; organic animals are not treated with antibiotics and hormones (Forman & Silverstein, 2012). Consumers generally make their choices considering the product information, product attributes, and evaluating the consequences of consuming the product (Cunningham, 2002).

There are many reasons that consumers favour organic food. The consumers prefer organic food because of their demographic characteristics. Previous studies have explored the favourable influence of personal factors such as socio-demographics (Singh & Verma, 2017). Despite the fact that findings across research studies using demographic profiling are sometimes contradictory, there have been some consistent results that have emerged across studies. In general, consumers of organic food are female (Food Marketing Institute, 2001), have children living in the household (Thompson & Kidwell, 1998), and are older (Cicia et al., 2002). Surprisingly, younger consumers have been found to hold more a positive attitude towards organically grown food (Magnusson et al., 2001), and yet, older consumers are more likely to be the purchaser as price premiums on organic food may be more affordable by them. Some researchers' attempts to categorise organic food purchasers by income and education have been mixed. Studies have found both negative and positive relationships between these demographic variables and organic food preference (Wilkins & Hillers, 1994; Chinnici et al., 2002; O'Donovan & McCarthy, 2002). In other research, results have been inconclusive (Jolly, 1991).

In addition, there are various factors that impact the consumers' choice to buy organic food products.

Consumers generally have a positive attitude regarding organic food products (Marian et al., 2013). Consumers usually associate food utilities such as taste, health, nutritional value and environmental concerns for comparison between organic food products and conventionally produced food (Hughner et al., 2007). Moreover, there are factors like concerns about the use of chemicals and insecticides in conventional farming, the erosion of land, and concern for animal welfare (Muller, 2009). Environmentalism, alternate medicine, and vegetarianism are various means of alternative lifestyles, and organic consumption is related to it. Consumers are ready to pay more for organic food products, which are environmental friendly, and this is because of the consumer's ecological friendly behaviour (Batte, Hooker, Haab & Beaverson, 2007). Organic food consumers give less importance to price compared to the consumers who have never purchased organic food before. The premium prices for organic food are justified by the food safety, taste, and nature conservation. A few of the consumers feel that they have to pay a higher price for healthy food, and some customers assume that organic food is expensive (Van Loo et al., 2010). The main constraint to the purchase of organic food is the high premium prices (Padel & Foster, 2005), lack of information, and absence of trust in organic certification quality and schemes. However, a high price can be perceived favourably when consumers believe that the price of the product is positively related to its quality (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Many studies attempt to assess consumers' willingness to pay a price premium for organic products, based on self-reported intention or behaviour data from surveys or choice experiments (Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005; Van Loo et al., 2011). Therefore, it is quite interesting to investigate how consumers respond to high prices, and whether a high price is essentially a drawback for the marketing of organic food products. Non-availability of organic food products in the store is one of the most significant barriers for consumers' buying. The consumer attitude is highly unfavourable towards organic food due to availability and price. There are key reasons like high price, satisfaction with conventional food, partial choice and availability, lack of perceived value, and lack of trust, which prevent consumers from buying organic food (Shepherd, Magnusson & Sjöden, 2005).

METHOD

To address the objectives, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to understand the primary factors behind the shift in the consumer behaviour towards organic food. For selecting the relevant literature on organic food products for this review, the standard methods adopted in prior review articles (Canabal & White, 2008; Terjesen et al., 2016) were used, and a broad search for organic food and interdisciplinary literature published in the last 20 years (i.e., 2000-2020) was carried out, which included online databases as well as reference lists of the articles. Keywords such as organic food, consumers' attitude towards organic food, subjective knowledge, influence of reference groups, purchase intention for organic food, actual purchase for organic food, and so on, were searched in Google Scholar, EBSCO, and Science Direct. After careful consideration and selection, we shortlisted core articles to be included in this review based on the criteria used in prior reviews. The final sample consists of 95 research articles, which identify organic food consumers and their attitudes, beliefs, purchase intention, and behaviour as published in journals, which are either listed in the Social Science Citation Index, or in SCOPUS. The reason for considering the last 20 years as the time for the review, is to encompass all the important factors and variables that influence consumer behaviour and purchase intention for organic food in the context of emerging and developed economies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Organic food research to date lacks strong theoretical foundations. There are many exploratory studies than theoretical on organic food, attempting to explain the consumer decision-making process (e.g., Essoussi & Zahaf, 2008; Tsakiridou et al., 2008). Although very few theoretical models have been developed in organic food studies, theories that researchers have used to study organic food consumption are attitude-behaviour models, such as the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (e.g., Chen, 2007; Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; Zagata, 2012). Both the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned

behaviour stated that a person's behaviour (i.e., purchase) is determined by their intention to perform this behaviour. For these two models, the best predictor of behaviour is intention. Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour. Although TRA and TPB have been widely utilised in many consumer studies, a very recent study by Lee and Yun (2015) used a modified Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to empirically examine both cognitive and affective influences on behaviour to provide theoretical support for organic food research.

However, a majority of the studies found a weak relationship between the expressed positive attitude of consumers towards purchase intentions of organic food products and their actual purchase behaviour, generally referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap (Tanner & Wofing Kast, 2003; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008; Wheale & Hinton, 2007). TPB and TRA approaches thus fail to explain consumer decision-making during purchase of the organic food products, and whether they would purchase it in future (post-purchase behaviour), although it examines the antecedents of consumer intentions in pre-consumption situations. The attitude-intention-behaviour models also ignore external effects of the environmental and situational factors on consumer purchase behaviour (Carrington et al., 2010). Various studies have proposed some modifications to TPB in order to overcome its limitations. In the present study, the purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour are determined by seven factors: i) personal characteristics, ii) perception, iii) attitude, iv) consumption motives, v) subjective knowledge, vi) reference groups, and vii) perceived behavioural control. However, the significance of exploring and examining consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food products in India is spurred by the increased popularity and use of organic food products. In this study, researchers attempted exclusively to identify and examine the determinant attributes of consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products. Consumer behaviour towards purchase of organic foods can be seen as a motivation and dedication towards health and better taste (Shafie & Rennie, 2012). Consumer food choice motives such as mood, convenience, natural content, animal welfare, environmental protection, political values, and religion positively affect people's

attitudes about organic food; in turn, this affects their purchase intentions (Chen, 2007). Some studies mention that consumers perceive that conventional foods sold on the market may contain chemical substances, and one reason for purchasing organic foods is to avoid the chemical substances or pesticide residues that conventional foods might have (Tsakiridou et al., 2008). People believe that organic products do not have pesticide residue, do not contain common food additives, or were excessively processed; having a more positive view of organic than traditional food will increase their purchase intentions (Yee et al., 2005).

A majority of studies find 'health' to be the primary reason consumers buy organic foods (Chinnici et al., 2002; Zanolli & Naspetti, 2002). Consumers buy organic food because of their desire to avoid the chemicals used in conventional food production. Since organic farming emphasises sustainability, being free from chemicals, ecological balance, and natural methods (Taiwan Organic Information Portal, 2013), buying organic foods is the only way to avoid the majority of residual chemical substances on foods (Velimirov & Lindenthal, 2012). Thus, perceived healthiness of organic food is a factor of quality for many consumers (Magnusson et al., 2001). Organic foods with their specific health benefits could offer a new way of thinking about the relationships between food, health, and nature in everyday life. Some studies have found that consumers believe organic food to be more nutritious (Hill & Lynchehaun, 2002). Thus, marketing strategies are determined by consumer beliefs, attitudes, and responses to organically grown products, as well as by their willingness to pay a premium price (Gil et al., 2000; Aryal et al., 2009). Contrary to that, the high price of organic food has been found to be the main obstacle in its purchase (Magnusson et al., 2001; Zanolli & Naspetti, 2002). Previous studies have also found environmental concerns to be a factor in consumers' attitudes towards organic foods (Soler et al., 2002), as they perceive organic foods are environmentally friendly (Wilkins & Hillers, 1994). Various environmental issues have increased worldwide consumers' concern about the quality, safety, and environmental-friendliness of foods (Liu, Pieniak & Verbeke, 2013).

In recent years, food safety is receiving more and more attention in developing countries; consumers' awareness of food safety information and the analysis of food

demand are closely related (Obayelu et al., 2014). Food safety concern is referred to as the consumers' concern for pesticide residues, fertilisers, artificial additives, and preservatives in foods, as well as food production methods and agricultural practices (Yee et al., 2005). Frequent food safety incidents make consumers worried about food safety related issues (Hsu & Chen, 2014). Thus, consumers are paying more attention to health, quality, and the ingredients of what they ingest (Suh et al., 2012). A very recent study by Shu-Yen Hsu et al. (2016) revealed that food safety concern and subjective knowledge have a significantly positive impact on attitudes towards organic food and purchase intentions, and natural content has a significantly positive effect on attitudes towards organic food. Moreover, it also shows that health consciousness and attitudes towards organic food have a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions. Past research has pointed out that individuals' high involvement with a product would enhance their willingness to purchase the product (e.g., Kim, Kim & Park, 2010). Specifically, consumers tend to have a higher level of involvement with purchasing organic products than conventional products due to credence attributes of the former (Barrena & Sanchez, 2010; Thogersen, Jorgensen & Sandager, 2012). Some researchers (e.g., Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006) found that consumers who are more involved with organic foods also have a more positive attitude and a stronger intention towards buying organic food products.

However, a few studies mention that consumers' lack of organic food knowledge, the dearth of organic food promotion, and ineffective retailing strategies (merchandising and displays) have negatively influenced consumers' buying behaviour (Chryssochoidis, 2000). Moreover, the level of consumer scepticism surrounding organic food labels is another setback in the purchase of organic food (Aarset et al., 2004; Hughner et al., 2007). Thus, if a consumer possesses a negative attitude towards organic food, they will not tend to purchase such food. Some studies mention that when a consumer is implementing a certain behaviour, an important reference

group will influence their behaviour. Other studies confirmed that consumer recognition of organic food was highly subjective. Among the studies on organic food, the application of the theory of perceived behaviour can efficiently predict the behavioural intention of consumers (Kim et al., 2013).

In this study, perceived behavioural control is referred to as an individual's perceived ease or difficulty in performing a particular behaviour. A given behaviour possibly occurs when an individual has both the ability and motivation to perform that behaviour, rather than when the individual has only one or neither factors (Zhou et al., 2013). Therefore, developing perceived behavioural control prior to generating intention is essential. Many researchers have concluded that confidence in the ability of the individual to control their behaviour showed a positive relationship with purchase intention. The aforesaid literature on factors affecting consumer buying behaviour regarding organic food products illustrates inconsistent empirical findings and conceptual incongruence in different contexts of organic food retailing. Few empirical studies have been conducted in the Indian context to explore and examine determinant attributes of consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products. Literature on the diverse findings in the consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products has not provided compelling justification based on any theoretical basis. Having considered the existing literature, this study has proposed a conceptual framework, shown in Fig. 1, for consumer buying behaviour towards organic food products. The conceptual model has been developed from the perspective of consumer demographic characteristics, perception, attitude, motives, reference groups, subjective knowledge, and perceived behavioural control. It is theorised that the discussed determinant attributes affect the consumer's buying behaviour towards only the organic food product category. The following section reviews the literature on proposed relationships among constructs and proposes a series of hypotheses.

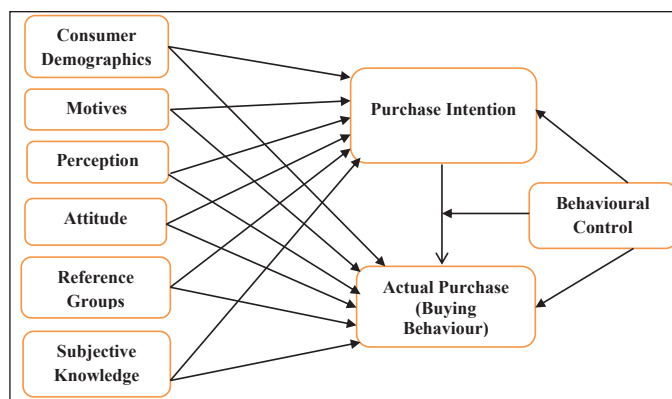


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of Key Factors Driving Indian Consumers' Intention to Purchase Organic Food Products

Consumers' Personal Characteristics

Many marketing researchers have agreed on the significance of personal characteristics in understanding the consumers' buying and consumption of organic food products (Ahmad, 2010). Previous research has empirically proved that demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly household income, religion, family size, and type of family have a significant influence on consumer attitudes and buying behaviour towards organic food products (Magnusson et al., 2001). Previous studies also mention that demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education and marital status have been widely investigated and are reported to have a profound impact on Chinese consumers' behaviour towards safe food (Zeng et al., 2007). Women consumers appear to be keen on purchasing organic food products than men, and they are more repeated buyers than men (Wandel & Bugge, 1997). Some researchers (e.g., Dai et al., 2006) found that women were prepared to pay a higher price for organic vegetables than men. Lea and Worsley (2005) detected that women have more a positive attitude towards organic food products than men.

Some studies (e.g., Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002) mention that consumers' age appears to affect attitude towards organic food products. Further, young consumers are more environmentally aware, but less willing to pay more, due to their lower purchasing power and disposable

income, whereas older people are more health conscious and more willing to pay a premium price for organic food products. Previous research conducted in China (e.g., Zhang & Han, 2009) has documented that women or married consumers were more aware about safe food, and men or elderly consumers had stronger intentions to buy safe food. Previous research supports the view that consumers' education has been a significant factor affecting consumer attitude towards organic food products. Consumers with higher education are more likely to express a positive attitude towards organic products (Govindasamy et al., 2001; Magnusson et al., 2001; Hill & Lyncheaum, 2002). Some studies have also confirmed that demand for organic food appears to have a positive correlation to income (von Alvensleben, 1998). It is reported in previous research (e.g., Grunert & Kristensen, 1991) that higher income households were more likely to form a positive attitude and to purchase more organic food. Fotopoulos and Krystallis (2002) found that higher income households did not necessarily show higher likelihood of organic purchases, while income has not been statistically significant in determining organic food purchases, according to studies carried out for the USA consumers (Loureiro et al., 2001; Durham & Andrade, 2005; Onyango et al., 2006; Zepeda & Lin, 2007). On the other hand, results from the European studies show that income positively influences organic food purchases, implying that consumers with higher income are more likely to buy organic food products (Millock et al., 2003; LockieWier et al., 2004; and Tsakiridou et al., 2006). Family size and composition are important socio-cultural factors influencing consumer behaviour. Large families hold less knowledge than small families about safe food, and are less likely to buy it (Li, 2007a). Families with infants, children, or elders in the household is also a significant factor, which positively influences consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food products (Ma & Qin, 2009; Zhang & Wu, 2010). The very recent study of Omar et al. (2016) revealed that gender, age, and education levels did have a major impact on the customer intention to purchase organic food in the Malaysian context. Hence, it is necessary to examine the influence of consumer's demographic characteristic on purchase intention, since there might be discernible demographic differences in organic food acceptance and consumption behaviour. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H1a-H1g: There are mean differences in consumers' purchase intention towards organic food products with respect to consumers' demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly household income, and family size).

H2a-H2g: There are mean differences in consumers' actual purchase behaviour towards organic food products with respect to consumers' demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly household income, and family size).

Organic Food Consumption Motives

Motivation is the driving force or arousal formed by a state of tension, which exists as the result of an unfulfilled need(s), such as physiological need(s) (food, water, air). Literature has revealed different consumer motives to buy organic food, such as taste, nutritional value, health, environment, and even animal welfare (Michaelidou & Hasan, 2010; Hemmerling et al., 2015; Bryła, 2016; Massey, O'Cass & Otaha, 2018; Rana & Paul, 2017; Prentice et al., 2019). Similarly, some researchers have emphasised the critical role of consumer barriers that can significantly avert the purchase related decision-making process (Kushwah, Dhir, & Sagar, 2019a). Thus, motives would act as drivers as well as barriers in this context (Van Doorn & Verhoef, 2015). However, a large number of studies demonstrated that organic consumption motives have a positive impact on purchase intention and consumer decision (Honkanen, Verplanken & Olsen, 2006). The review summary identified that health, including food safety, sensory characteristics (i.e. taste and freshness), and ethical properties, such as environmental protection and animal welfare, are considered to be the most important organic consumption motives (Ayub et al., 2018). Some studies mention that regular consumers are mostly motivated by ethical reasons, whereas for occasional buyers health considerations remain the main driving factors (Pino et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2008).

Another study (e.g., Pearson et al., 2013) revealed that regular and occasional consumers had both high concerns for environment. Here, environmental concern is related to environmental damage prevention and its impact

on life in the community (Lee, 2008). It is known that environmental concern is often an important predictor of consumer attitude towards organic foods (Magnusson et al., 2003; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Several studies in different contexts (Europe, Australia, Asia, and America) specified that health consciousness is the major motive for organic food consumption. Health consciousness is referred to as consumers' readiness to identify with and to undertake health actions (Hansen et al., 2018). Several studies have reported that the concern for personal and family health positively influences attitude towards organic products and the purchasing of organic food (Hansen et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2016; Kriwy & Mecking, 2012; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). A few studies mentioned that the natural content of organic foods has a positive effect on the attitude of the healthier consumer towards these products (Chen, 2007; Hsu et al., 2016). The knowledge that the product is made with natural ingredients positively influences the health-conscious consumer (Laroche et al., 2001). Further, the appearance of organic food products influences their perceived quality and consumer satisfaction (Espejel et al., 2007). Here, sensorial appeal is one of the most important factors that influence the purchase of organic foods (Massey et al., 2018). The sensorial attributes of organic foods, such as taste, smell, and texture, influence consumer attitude towards organic foods (Chen, 2007; Lee & Yun, 2015).

In addition, literature review reported that consumers are highly concerned about food safety in relation to the presence of additives, chemical products, and preservatives in foods (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). Previous studies in different contexts (e.g., Sirieix, Kledal & Sulitang 2011 in China; Sakiridou et al., 2008 in Thailand) identified the significance of food safety and environmental protection to be the main organic motives related to organic consumption and buying organic food. Cass (2001) mentioned that individuals' motives related to health benefits of organic food consumption would elicit their involvement with organic purchase decision, as the health image of organic foods is closely associated with their strong health awareness. Therefore, several studies have consistently provided evidence that consumers hold multi-faceted motives in purchasing organic food, including health concerns, environmental concerns, food safety, sensory variables, ethical concerns, or value structure (Baker et al., 2004; Lockie et al., 2004). By and large, health concern is often found to be the

most important factor motivating organic food purchase (Chinnici et al., 2002; Magnusson et al., 2003). In light of this, this study formulated the following hypotheses:

H3: Organic food consumption motives positively influence the consumers' intention to purchase organic food products, in relation to:

H3a: Health consciousness motives; H3b: Environmental motives; and H3c: Animal welfare concerns.

H4: Organic food consumption motives positively influence the consumers' actual purchase behaviour towards organic food products, in relation to:

H4a: Health consciousness motives; H4b: Environmental motives; and H4c: Animal welfare concerns.

Consumers' Perception of Organic Food Products

Perception is “the process by which people select, organise, and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world”. “Thereby whenever a consumer buys a product it depends on the perception they have on that particular product.” There is a substantial amount of literature on consumers and organic food products. Previous research (e.g., Lee & Yun, 2015) has identified an abundant range of organic product attributes associated with health, environmental protection, and animal welfare that are used to judge organic food consumption and intentions to purchase organic food. Torjusen, Lieblein, Wandel and Francis (2001) found two types of organic food quality attributes: observation (e.g., appearance and freshness) and reflection traits (food quality attributes related to health, nutrition quality, environmentally friendly production, animal welfare, sensory appeal such as taste, appearance, texture, and odour, and price attributes). Previous research documented that organic food product attributes such as quality (Smith & Paladino, 2010; Hamzaoui-Essoussi & Zahaf, 2012; Ergin & Ozsacmaci, 2011), better taste (Lockie et al., 2002; Hughner et al., 2007; Stolz et al., 2010), nutrition value, and freshness (Fotopoulos & Chryssochoidis, 2000) have found to be influential in organic food consumption. The choice of organic versus inorganic food is significantly influenced by the perception of the health effect of organic foods. “Households, who perceive organic foods as healthier, are more likely to purchase organic food,

and they have a higher willingness to pay than other households. Organic food is perceived as healthier and safer and organic practices are perceived to be more environmentally sound” (Andersen, 2007).

Consumers perceive that conventional foods sold on the market may contain chemical substances, and one reason for purchasing organic foods is to avoid the chemical substances or pesticide residues that conventional foods might have (Velimirov & Lindenthal, 2012). Davies et al. (1995) revealed that organic food was perceived as food without ‘chemicals’ and ‘hormones’. Consumers purchased organic food as they perceived it to contain lower pesticide and fertiliser residues. People believe that organic products do not have pesticide residue, do not contain common food additives, or were excessively processed; having a more positive view of organic than traditional food will increase their purchase intentions (Yee et al., 2005). According to a survey in the UK market by Hill and Lonchhaum (2002), people perceive organic food products to be less contaminated and more nutritious compared to conventional ones, and therefore healthier and safer, in terms of product quality. Rongduo Liu et al. (2013) mention that frequent food safety incidents have increased consumers’ concern about food quality and safety.

Similarly, Ragavan and Mageh (2013) found that product safety concerns, environment friendliness, and availability of product information were the major factors for purchase intention towards organic products. “Food safety concern refers to the degree of consumers’ anxiety regarding the quality of processed foods, food additives, and pesticide residues that could jeopardise their physical health.” Thus, food safety is receiving more and more attention in developing countries; consumers’ awareness of food safety information and the analysis of food demand are closely related (Obayelu et al., 2014). Hence, consumers are paying a lot of attention to health, quality, and the ingredients of what they consume (Suh et al., 2012). Product attributes associated with ecological welfare (i.e., environmental protection and animal welfare) also influence consumers’ perceptions of organic food (Padel & Foster, 2005). Lea and Worsley (2005) found that organic food is viewed as being more environmentally friendly than conventional food. Makatouni (2002) mentioned that organic food is perceived to be good for

animals because hormones, antibiotics, and pesticides are not given to them. In addition, organic food consumption has been perceived as a healthier eating habit by organic consumers, but so far there has not been a clear scientific confirmation (Seal & Brandt, 2007). Ali et al. (2010) identified that consumers considered health to be a more important factor over concern for environment in their purchase decisions. Their study depicted that perception towards organic food products and beliefs that such products were environmentally friendly did not have a strong correlation.

The consumers' perceived value of organic food is important, as previous studies showed a positive perception towards organic food products (Ahmad, 2010). Consumers are willing to pay more for organic food, as they believe it is healthier, safer, and environment friendly. However, the organic foods were perceived to be more expensive and healthier than conventionally produced alternatives. In other words, if consumers do not have a good perception of organic food, they are less favourable towards purchasing organic food. A major obstacle to the purchase of organic foods was reported to be the premium prices (Magnusson et al., 2001). Price continues to be cited as the main reason for not buying organic food, despite a slight shift in this trend recently. According to traditional economic theory, price is understood as a monetary sacrifice needed to make a purchase. The role of price as a measure of sacrifice appears to be a widespread view in purchasing organic food, perhaps due to the belief that organic food is expensive (Padel & Foster, 2005). As a result, a high price is a major hindrance to purchasing organic food (Magnusson et al., 2001). Therefore, it is likely that the higher the consumers perceive the cost of organic food to be, the less positive their attitude towards the purchase of organic food. Moreover, Brunso and Scholderer (2001) revealed that the importance of health in food choice is declining. Factors perceived to limit organic food choice are high price, limited availability, satisfaction with conventional food, lack of trust, and lack of perceived value (Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002). Against this background, the following hypotheses are posited:

H5: Consumers' perception of organic food products has a positive influence on purchase intention, in relation to:

H5a: Food safety; H5b: Value attributes; H5c: Nutrition attributes; H5d: Package attributes

H6: Consumers' perception of organic food products has a positive influence on actual purchase behaviour towards organic food products, in relation to:

H6a: Food safety; H6b: Value attributes; H6c: Nutrition attributes; H6d: Package attributes

Consumers' Attitude towards Organic Food Products

Attitudes are "mental positions" or "emotional feelings", favourable or unfavourable evaluations, and action tendencies people have about products, services, companies, ideas, issues, or institutions. Attitudes serve many important functions for humans, in that they guide human thoughts (cognitive), impact human feelings (affective function), and affect human behaviour (conative function) (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2001). The attitude depends on expectations of and beliefs in the personal impacts on the outcomes resulting from that behaviour (Chen, 2007). Attitudes cause people to behave in a consistent way and are difficult to change once they are settled into a consistent pattern. Several marketing scholars have underscored the importance of consumer attitude, since consumer attitude is an important knowledge for successful marketing operations (Solomon et al., 2010). Attitude is referred to as a psychological path of evaluating a specific object with favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007). Attitudes hold five distinct features: a) favourability – to what extent something is liked or disliked, b) attitude accessibility – the attitude is easily restored from memory, c) attitude confidence – the degree to what strength an attitude is held, d) persistence – the variation in endurance an attitude can survive for, and e) resistance – their likeliness to change (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2001).

Many studies have found a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intention and/or purchase behaviour. It is argued that consumer preference for a particular product is based on attitude towards available alternatives. In the Indian context, several studies (e.g., Gupta, 2009; Chakrabarti, 2010; Raghavan & Mageh, 2013) underscored that consumers' attitude is one of the important factors that influenced the purchase

process of organic food consumers. Consumers' attitude could also be influenced by the information or knowledge they have, such as consumers' previous experiences (Yin et al., 2010). Previous studies mention that consumers who have a favourable attitude towards purchasing organic food will more likely demonstrate behavioural purchase intentions (Ajzen, 2002). Consumers' health attitudes have been found to be a significant predictor in explaining consumers' intention to buy organic products (Chryssohoidis & Krystallis, 2005; Durham & Andrade, 2005). Moreover, consumers' environmental attitudes significantly affect consumers' intention to purchase organic food products (Loureiro et al., 2001; Torjusen et al., 2001; Millock et al., 2004; Kuhar & Juvancic, 2005).

However, some studies revealed that there is inconsistency between attitudes and behaviours in regard to sustainable consumption (Moraes, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2012). In other words, consumers' positive attitudes towards organic food are not necessarily linked to their food purchase behaviour. This inconsistency is referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000). Thus, in this study, attitudes towards purchasing organic food are regarded as being more valid for predicting behavioural intentions, than attitudes towards organic food itself. This conceptualisation is also consistent with the construct of attitudes towards behaviour in the TRA and TPB models (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Some scholars (e.g., Laroche et al., 2001; Squires et al., 2001) found that consumer attitude towards the environment was the most important predictor of their purchase intent towards organic food.

The results indicated that the influence of customer value regarding organic food products had an important impact on the consumer loyalty for the organic food products. Dumea and Cuza (2012) reported that a majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards organic food. People who had a greater concern for health and environment, and people who had a higher level of knowledge about organic food, had a higher purchase frequency. The attitude, concern for health, environmental concern, and knowledge about organic foods had a positive relationship with purchase frequency. These variables were good predictors for the purchase frequency of organic food. Recent study by Marian et al. (2014), ascertained from several studies, that the attitude of consumers towards organic food is generally positive, with typically associated benefits being superior taste,

more environmental friendliness, improved health, safer food, and increased animal welfare. Zeinabseyedsaleki et al. (2012) also found that consumers' buying behaviour was influenced by organic food knowledge, quality, price consciousness, subjective norms, and familiarity with attitude. Some studies have revealed a significant difference between consumers' opinions on organic food and their real purchase behaviour (Hughner et al., 2007; Magnusson et al., 2001; Yip & Janssen, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H7: Consumers' positive attitude towards organic food products has a positive influence on intention to purchase organic food products.

H8: Consumers' positive attitude towards organic food products has a positive influence on actual purchase behaviour towards organic food products.

Consumers' Subjective Knowledge

Knowledge appears to be a vital factor in the effective marketing of organic foods (Hill & Lynchehaun, 2002), since it represents the only instrument that consumers have to differentiate the attributes of organic products from those of conventional ones, and to form positive attitudes and quality perceptions towards these products. Several studies (e.g., Gracia & Magistris, 2007; Saleki, Seyedsaleki & Rahimi, 2012) mentioned that knowledge plays an important role in forming consumer's perception and attitude towards organic food. It is also believed that consumers who possess substantial knowledge of organic food are more likely to choose organically produced food, and lack of knowledge and information about organic production method is a barrier to organic purchase, especially in developing countries (Yin et al., 2010). Moreover, knowledge of the organic food or food production methods/processes may result in the formation of positive consumer attitudes and increase the likelihood of consumers buying these foods (McEachern & Willock, 2004; Siegrist et al., 2008). Knowledge pertaining to organic food, such as ingredients and nutritional value, is the only means for consumers to distinguish organic food from non-organic food.

Yiridoe et al. (2005) revealed two reasons of knowledge influencing the buying intention of the customers. First, inadequacy of knowledge is the prime reason that elucidates why consumers do not want to buy or choose

organic food; second is the consumers' perception of the lack of information provided about the organic products. Organic food knowledge is determined by socio-demographic variables, such as education level and income, and psychographic variables (values and lifestyles). In addition, organic knowledge is affected by information provided by the public administration, mass media, ecological associations, and shopping sites. Anand and Palaniammal (2016) found that most of the consumers were buying the products based on the advertisements. Thus, the level of organic product knowledge will depend on information on organic products available in the market. Gracia and De Magistris (2007) argue that this is the case because knowledge is the only instrument that consumers have to differentiate the attributes of organic from conventional products, and to form positive attitudes towards these products. Consumers who have an insufficient knowledge of organic food and those who do not buy it, will not, unless they are educated about its real benefits (Del & Foster, 2005).

In addition, consumers' past experience with organic products may have an effect on their subsequent purchase (Hughner et al., 2007; Zanolli & Naspetti, 2002). Previous research (e.g., Saleki et al., 2012; Voona et al., 2011; Thøgersen, 2009; Dean et al., 2008; Chen, 2007) confirms the importance of subject norm to the consumer's intention of buying organic food products. Some researchers (e.g., Briz & Ward, 2009) found that "more information about the organic food market, which increased consumers' organic food knowledge, was important because it positively influenced consumers' attitudes towards organic food products". When the consumers have more knowledge about organic foods, this will have a positive impact on their perspectives of it and the frequency with which they consume it (Aertsens et al., 2011). Thus, this study expects that the greater the consumers' subjective knowledge of organic food, the better their attitude towards it and the higher their purchase intentions. Contrary to previous research findings, Gotschi et al. (2010) highlighted that knowledge about organic food products did not necessarily lead to positive attitudes or higher levels of self-reported purchase behaviour. Increased consumer knowledge of organic labelling and their faith in organic labels, as well as increasing the availability and variety of organic food products, might be the most effective way of increasing their market share. Contradicting the

above, Chrysoschoidis (2000) argues that weak perceived self-competence is likely to keep consumers away from organic food, since they will feel incapable of making a good choice. This is confirmed by Thøgersen (2007), who found that uncertainty has a direct negative influence on the intention to buy organic food and on the translation from intention to the actual purchase of organic food. In light of the above discussions, it is posited that:

H9: The more positive the consumers' subjective knowledge regarding organic food products, the higher the purchase intention.

H10: The more positive the consumers' subjective knowledge regarding organic food products, the higher the actual purchase behaviour.

Reference Groups

A large body of research has focused on one-on-one and/or many-to-one interactions, wherein a single individual influences another individual (e.g., a salesperson, a fellow consumer, colleague, neighbour, and spouse). Reference group influence has been conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct. A reference group is a group whose perspective an individual takes on in forming values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and overt behaviours. One considers this group as a point of reference when evaluating how they view their own existence in the world. Reference groups are referred to as social groups that are important to a consumer, and against which he or she compares himself or herself (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). From a consumer behaviour perspective, a reference group is a person or a group of persons who significantly influence an individual's behaviour (Schiffman, 2008). In other words, it is a group whose accepted viewpoints or values are being used by an individual as the basis of their behaviour (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2013). Indeed, the opinions of family and friends are reported to influence an individual's attitude, intentions, and behaviour. Some researchers (e.g., Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015) focused on the scope of reference groups and stated that an individual may use a reference group to assess his own attitude and behaviour. Individuals can form either general or specific values and attitudes, or a specific guide for behaviour, by being influenced from a reference group. Reference groups are generally conformed by the social network of an individual: family members, friends,

peers and colleagues, and inspirational figures (Kapuge, 2016).

Reference groups expose the person to new behaviours and lifestyles (Welsch & Kuhling, 2009). Indeed, consumers often are influenced by members of their own group (Whittler & Spira, 2002). Some scholars reported that an individual's purchase of products and brands are affected by the reference groups (Vermeir, 2012). It is also found that a countable number of people were changing to organic foods by learning about it through their friends (Anand & Palaniammal, 2016). Previous studies examined and found the significant influence of reference groups on purchase intention and buying behaviour of consumers (Eze et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2012). Moreover, some studies (e.g., Lee, 2010; Salazar et al., 2013; Tsarenko et al., 2013) reveal that reference groups, especially peers and other individuals with close proximity to consumers, have a stronger influence on consumers' purchase decision-making process. The findings from the contexts of different countries reveal the mixed results about purchase intentions of organic food. In the Korean context, it is found that expert opinions and suggestions from friends have a significant effect on decision to purchase organic food (Suh et al., 2012), whereas in the Czech context, expectation from family is the main social norm that affects a consumer's purchasing behaviour (Zagata, 2012). Further, Zagata (2012) mentioned that when consumers' knowledge of organic food is low, their purchase decision making has to rely on other people's evaluation and experience. However, findings from Thogersen and Zhou's (2012) study reveals that reference groups have an insignificant impact on individual's purchasing decision in the context of China. Reference groups represented in this study were primary groups that are characterised by face-to-face association and a high degree of cooperation among members, such as family members, peers, neighbours, close friends, and co-workers. Against this background, it is posited that:

H11: There is a positive influence of reference groups on consumers' intention to purchase organic food products, in relation to:

H11a: Family members; H11b: Close friends; H11c: Colleagues at work place; and H11d: Neighbours

H12: There is a positive influence of reference groups on consumers' actual purchase behaviour towards organic food products, in relation to:

H12a: Family members; H12b: Close friends; H12c: Colleagues at work place; and H12d: Neighbours

Purchase Intention, Actual Purchase, and Perceived Behavioural Control

Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour; it is one of the best predictors of actual buying behaviour. Intention is also regarded as the motivation necessary to engage in a particular behaviour: the stronger the intention to engage in behaviour, the more likely its performance. According to Ajzen (2005), the intention to perform a specific behaviour accounts for 19% to 82% of the variance in measures of that behaviour (Ajzen, 2005). When behavioural intentions are appropriately measured, they account for a significant proportion of variance in actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2005). Past research indicates that the strong intention of a person leads to a high likelihood of realising the intention (Chen et al., 2012; Qing et al., 2012). Although clear intention plays a critical role in consumers' purchase decisions, some studies have revealed that there are difficulties in translating intentions and actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2001), as actual purchase is complex and varies by segment (Chiang et al., 2010). Thus, the knowledge on actual purchase enables the researchers in understanding customers' needs/wants and explores the marketing strategy, to ensure the sustainability of the business (Paul & Rana, 2012). Consumers' stated purchase intentions are used as major inputs that marketing managers use to predict future sales and to find out how the actions they take will influence consumers' purchasing behaviour. As a result, previous studies operationalised and measured purchase intention, and not the actual purchase, to predict buying behaviour. Purchase intention is defined as planned behaviour that a consumer is willing to buy a certain product. Fundamentally, purchase intention represents what consumers think they will buy (Blackwell et al., 2001).

The consumer's intention of purchasing organic foods is the primary action in creating demand for organic food products. According to Spears and Singh (2004), purchase intention towards organic food products is an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase organic food products, while actual purchase is the customer's keenness to purchase products or services. Other studies related

to actual purchase behaviour have used predictors such as intention (Al-Ekam, 2013) and perceived behavioural control (the degree to which behaviour is perceived to be under the control of the individual) (Zia-ur-Rehman & Dost, 2013). Consumers with intentions to buy a certain product will exhibit higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying (Brown, 2003). Consumers strongly believe that the consumption of organic food is beneficial, and this positive attitude has significantly influenced the purchase intention of organic food (Suprpto & Wijaya, 2012). Previous studies (e.g., Aertsens et al., 2012; Baker et al., 2004; Worsley, 2005; Paul & Rana, 2005; Shepherd et al., 2005) documented evidence that health consciousness impacted the purchase intention of organic food, and it is found to be a strong influential factor compared to environmental motives (Spears & Singh, 2004; Magnusson et al., 2001). Contrary to the above discussions, Michaelidou and Hassan (2008) found that health consciousness and food safety concerns had no significant effect on purchase intentions towards organic food products.

According to the study of Honkanen, Verplanken and Olsen (2006), environmental motives have a strong influence on attitude, which will lead to the purchase intention of organic food. All the factors were positive and significant, except the subjective norms influence, on organic buying behaviour. Chrysochoidis (2000) and Gracia and De Magistris (2007) observed that the intention to purchase organic food is positively influenced by a higher level of subjective knowledge. Consumer's actual buying behaviour is the direct result of strong intention to purchase and attitudinal values towards the benefits of the organic food products (Priya & Parameswari, 2016). The empirical findings from previous research has supported that the path from intention of buying organic food to the actual buying behaviour is positive and significant (e.g., Saba & Messina, 2003; Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; Thøgersen, 2007).

However, some studies (e.g., Niessen & Hamm, 2008) found that there was a big gap between stated and actual buying behaviour in the case of organic food. The results in their study showed that 50% of consumers say they buy organic products; however, in reality only 15% buy what they say. Research has been criticised for a gap between behavioural intention and actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2005;

Shaw et al., 2007; Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010). Often, people do not behave as they intended to. This behavioural inconsistency is frequently observed (Ajzen, 2005; Sniehotta et al., 2005a; Schwarzer, 2008). Possible reasons leading to behavioural inconsistency between intentions and behaviour could be unforeseen barriers, unstable intentions, perceived behavioural control, or people giving in to temptations. In this context, it is the perceived behavioural control that is concerned with individuals' own judgment about their capabilities to engage in a particular behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour also proposes that perceived behavioural control of the focal person in a decision-making situation may affect their behavioural intentions. The theory suggests that behaviour is a function of salient beliefs, relevant to the behaviour. These salient beliefs are considered to be the prevailing determinants of a person's intentions and actions. The beliefs include access to resources and opportunities needed to perform the behaviour. It may encompass two components. The first component reflects the availability of resources needed to engage in the behaviour. This may include access to money, time, and other resources. The second component reflects the focal person's self-confidence in the ability to conduct the behaviour. For example, if a person has a strong subjective product knowledge, they will have higher confidence in their ability to carry on the consumption behaviour. Their attitude towards the act already shows this confidence. The attitude towards the behaviour can overshadow the effect of perceived behavioural control. Therefore, the effect of perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention will be weaker when consumers have high subjective product knowledge. Therefore, an individual's belief will influence the individual's behavioural intention and stimulate them to perform the target behaviour. Conversely, if a person has lower subjective product knowledge, they will have less confidence in their ability to carry out the consumption behaviour. When forming behavioural intention, attitude towards the act will not be the dominating antecedent. Perceived behavioural control, on the other hand, will become an important factor of consideration.

Some researchers (e.g., Thøgersen, 2009a) opined that perceived behavioural control formed by perceived barriers and perceived ability influences organic food buying behaviour. Perceived barriers, such as price and

availability, are significant obstacles that hinder organic food consumption (Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005; Hughner et al., 2007). In the case of perceived abilities, a majority of the previous research has attributed income or financial resources as essential determinants of willingness to purchase organic food. Prior studies have supported the notion that perceived behavioural control is a significant predictor of behavioural intention. Given that there is a gap between intention and behavioural performance that remains to be explained, it is to examine whether perceived behavioural control moderates the relationship between intention to purchase and the actual purchase of organic food products. In scientific literature, perceived behavioural control has received mixed evidence for its moderating effect on the intention-behaviour relationship. Since there are few researchers investigating the actual purchase behaviour in the context of organic food products, it is significant to explore the consumer's actual purchasing behaviour in this research in the Indian context. Based on this conceptual and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H13: The stronger the consumers' perceived behavioural control regarding organic food products, the higher the purchase intention.

H14: The stronger the consumers' perceived behavioural control regarding organic food products, the higher the actual purchase behaviour.

H15: The consumers' intention to purchase organic food products will have a positive effect on actual purchase behaviour.

H16: The consumers' perceived behavioural control moderates the effect of purchase intention towards organic food products on actual purchase behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Based on an extensive review of literature from the last two decades, this study has enhanced the understanding of key drivers of consumer behaviour towards organic food products in a developing country like India. It is among the first studies proposing a conceptual model to understand how personal characteristics, motives, consumer perception, product attributes, attitudes, subjective norms, reference groups, and perceived behavioural control influence the purchase intentions and

actual purchase behaviour of organic food products. The exploratory study indicates many areas like distribution, marketing communications, labelling and certification issues, ethical consumerism, and so on for future research that may be directly or indirectly helpful in developing the organic food market in India. This exploratory research underlines the pressing need for increased education on the importance of organic food and its influence on human health, especially among the Indian consumers. They should explore the identified factors in attracting consumers who do not buy organic food. Organic food marketers may develop effective marketing strategies to attract and retain their loyal consumers. Similarly, policy makers, professionals from the food industry, and retailers could use the identified key factors for a better understanding of the Indian consumers' behaviour towards organic food products. Although the conceptual model exemplifies key factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions of organic food products, some limiting aspects point to various possibilities for further elaboration on the conceptual model, to improve it. Firstly, socio-cultural factors may possess considerable predictive power and could be included to enhance the conceptual model. Secondly, various further justifications for buying organic food products could exist, and their inclusion in the model could eventually improve it. In-depth interviews or focus group discussions could be used in future studies to identify such justifications. Furthermore, it would be important to test the conceptual model in a future study to predict objectively observed purchase intentions of organic food products, rather than resorting to self-reported behaviour.

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