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# Impact of Theory of Reasoned Action on Purchase Intention towards Organic Foods

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**ABSTRACT**

Growing public awareness of environmental and health issues has increased focus on the buying and consumption of organic food. The developing of organic food and green concept are still in the infant stage in Chennai. This is an empirical study which defines the key constructs of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The objective of this study is to determine the relationship and impact among the variables Authenticity/Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety, Attitude and Purchase Intention towards organic food products. This study employs survey data from 150 organic food product users and is analysed using weighted mean, correlation and regression. Findings revealed that Authenticity /Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience and Safety depicted a significant positive relationship with Attitude whereas Attitude have significant and positive relationship with Purchase Intention. The study also stated that Authenticity/Naturalness, Quality, Health and Safety have a considerable influence on Attitude. Additionally, Attitude has a substantial influence on purchase intention.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organic foods are maintained without preservatives and have not tampered with any other contaminants. Consumers are now aware of the dangerous chemicals added and present in food. People are willing to consume food which is not dangerous to their health and so they find organic food as an available alternative. In the 1940s, "organic food products" emerged for the first time. Organic food is defined as food that has not been genetically modified or treated with any synthetic or artificial fertilisers, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, artificial growth hormones, or regulators (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008; Sharma and Bhatia, 2021). Colours and potentially contradicting aspects

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have an impact on consumers' general food choices as well as their organic food choices. The Theory of Reasoned Action has been tentatively used to explain food choice intentions, with the addition of one key construct (consumers' attitude). As a result, an individual's attitude toward an activity is influenced by their views about the consequences of that behaviour, compounded by how the individual sees those repercussions (Davis *et al.,* 1989; Yilmaz and Ilter, 2017). Although each consumer's attitude is shaped by their own beliefs, some values are thought to be the most significant antecedents that explain why someone who maintains a given system of values has a given variety of cognitive beliefs and subsequent attitudes. Due to increased consumer awareness of the values associated with organic foods (such as being safer, healthier, and less sustainable), the organic food sector has experienced dramatic growth in emerging countries (Saba and Messina, 2003; Shahriari *et al.,* 2019).

### 1.1 Review of Literature

Shahriari *et al.,* (2019) analysed the key beliefs about organic food that influence customers' behaviour and decision-making in developed and emerging nations, starting with Iran (US). The authors analysed and contrasted the impact of subjective norms on consumers' intentions to buy organic food in various nations. Structural equation modelling was used to analyse the data after it was gathered by a questionnaire survey from samples of 217 and 210 respondents in Iran and the US, respectively. Findings showed that both Iran and the US, Price and Authenticity/naturalness were the best indicators of attitudes toward organic food. According to the findings, different societies have different relationships between subjective norms and purchasing intention.

Wang *et al.,* (2019) stated that "the study centred on comprehending how customer purchase intentions for organic food are influenced by subjective norms (SNs), individual attitudes, and perceived behaviour control (PBC). A sample of 331 responses from Tanzania and 350 responses from Kenya were used in a questionnaire survey to gather data. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model was used to analyse the data. Results revealed that SNs, personal attitude, health consciousness, and intention to buy organic food are all positively influenced by knowledge."

Yazdanpanah and Forouzania (2015) investigated the consumer behaviours and intentions of Iranian universities students with relation to the purchase of organic food. The relationship between attitude and action was investigated using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model. A cross-sectional approach was used for this investigation. A questionnaire survey was used to gather data from 389 students from two colleges who were chosen using a multistage stratified random sampling technique. The student's attitude was shown to be the most important predictor of their intention to purchase organic products, whereas perceived behavioural control and subjective norms were found to be insignificant predictors of intention.

### 1.2 Need for the Study

The idea of "organic food" is growing around the world as a result of the negative effects of chemical ingredients. The intake of food items that promote health through organic food products, which replaces artificial maturing, which harms children's and adults' immune systems in countless ways. Whether organic food production is successfully preserving both the environment and human health depends on this. In order to determine the relationship between Authenticity/Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety, Attitude and Purchase Intention with regard to the buying of organic foods, this study aims to examine these factors. The researchers may take a more comprehensive view of how consumers perceive organic foods in general.

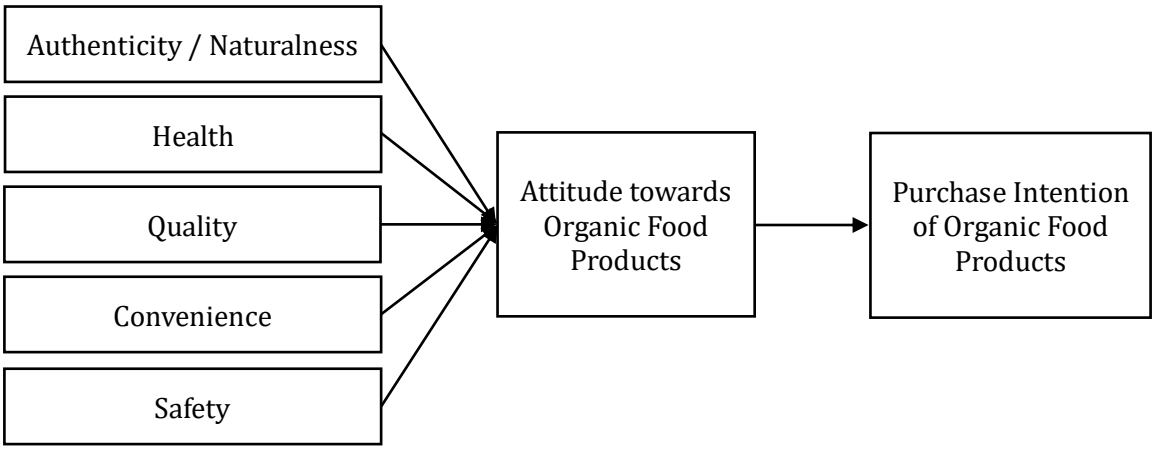
### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the various factors of organic foods, attitude & intention to purchase organic foods.
- To determine the relationship between factors of organic foods and attitude
- To determine the relationship between attitude and purchase intention
- To determine the impact of the factors of organic foods on attitude
- To determine the impact of the factors of attitude on purchase intention

### 1.4 Research Model

Figure 1

*Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)*




Source: Shahriari *et al.,* (2019)

This model Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) based on the conceptual model of Shahriari *et al.,* (2019) which considered the factors namely: Authenticity /Naturalness, Health, Quality/indulgence, Price, Convenience, Conviviality, Attitude, Subjective norms and Purchase Intention towards organic food. However, only Authenticity /Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety, Attitude and Purchase Intention towards organic food were used in the context of the present study. Hence a new model has been developed to determine the impact of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) on Purchase Intention towards organic food.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study started with the literature survey via magazines, journals that helped to comprehend the various factors of organic foods. Both analytical and empirical methods were used in the research. The questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data from a sample of 150 organic food users in Chennai using Purposive Sampling Technique. The questionnaires were administered using Google Forms. The factors of the study were measured on a Five Point Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1). Weighted Mean, Karl Pearson Correlation and Regression Analysis were used for the purpose of analysis using SPSS. The validity and reliability tests were carried out, and the findings revealed that they were good. The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire as a whole, and the results showed that it had an overall reliability of 0.953.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile being the basic attributes of the respondents are required to assess the characteristics of the respondents who are to be surveyed. In order to examine the characteristics of the study, a number of variables relevant for the study like gender, age of the respondents, educational qualifications and income have been used in this study. The classification of the respondents based on the various categories of demographic variables have been listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

*Overall Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

| Demographic Variables | Frequency (N = 150) | Percentage (100%) |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 60 | 40.00 |
| Female | 90 | 60.00 |
| Age | | |
| 17-20 years | 108 | 72.00 |
| 21-24 years | 34 | 22.60 |
| 25-28 years | 6 | 4.00 |
| 29-31 years | 2 | 1.30 |
| Educational Qualifications | | |
| Undergraduate | 119 | 79.30 |
| Postgraduate | 21 | 14.00 |
| Others | 10 | 6.60 |
| Income | | |
| Less than ₹30,000 | 111 | 74.00 |
| ₹30,000 - ₹50,000 | 18 | 12.00 |
| ₹50,000 - ₹1,00,000 | 15 | 10.00 |
| Above ₹1,00,000 | 6 | 4.00 |

*Source:* Primary Data

The data relating to the demographic profile of the respondents as depicted in Table *1* explains the following. With respect to Gender it can be inferred that, majority (60%) of the respondents are female and (40%) of the respondents are male. With respect to Age, it can be inferred that, majority (72%) of the respondents are less than 17-20 years, 22.6% of the respondents are 21-24 years and 6% of the respondents belong to age category 25-28 years and 2% of the respondents are above 29-31years. With respect to Educational Qualification, it can be inferred that, majority (79.3%) of the respondents are Under Graduates, 14% of the respondents belong to the category Postgraduates. 6.6% of the respondents belong to the category Others. With respect to respondents' monthly incomes, we may conclude that 74% earn less than ₹30,000 per month. Twelve percent of those who answered the survey earn between ₹30,000 and ₹50,000 monthly. The monthly income range for 10% of respondents is between ₹50,000 and ₹1,00,000. Four percent of those who participated in the survey had a monthly income of more than ₹1,00,000.

The next stage of the investigation involves identifying the factors that influence organic food products by using a weighted mean. The weighted mean score of which are calculated and depicted in the Table *2*.

Table 2

*Factors of organic food products, Attitude and Purchase Intention*

| Factors | Weighted Mean |
|---|---|
| Authenticity / Naturalness | 4.37 |
| Health | 4.36 |
| Quality | 4.14 |
| Convenience | 3.60 |
| Safety | 4.28 |
| Attitude | 4.19 |
| Purchase Intention | 4.08 |

*Source:* Primary Data

Table 2 shows that the weighted mean scores of the Authenticity / Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety, Attitude and Purchase Intention. It reveals the weighted mean scores for Authenticity /Naturalness, Health, Quality, safety, Attitude are above 4. This suggests that the respondents believe these variables are important in determining whether or not to buy organic food products. Weighted mean scores for Convenience are shown to be greater than 3. This suggests that these characteristics have a minor impact on respondents' propensity to buy organic products.

In the following section, we use Correlation analysis to look at the interdependencies between the various characteristics of organic products.

### 3.1 Correlation

Relationship amongst the Factors of the Study, the Hypotheses framed and tested include:

- **$H_1$:** Authenticity / Naturalness has a significant relationship with Attitude.
- **$H_2$:** Health has a significant relationship with Attitude.
- **$H_3$:** Quality has a significant relationship with Attitude.
- **$H_4$:** Convenience has a significant relationship with Attitude.
- **$H_5$:** Safety has a significant relationship with Attitude.

Table 3

*Relationship between Factors of Organic Foods and Attitude*

| Factors of organic food products | r Value |
|---|---|
| Authenticity / Naturalness | .617** |
| Health | .632** |
| Quality | .698** |
| Convenience | .434** |
| Safety | .660** |

*Source:* Primary Data

*Note:* ** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Authenticity/Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety was positively correlated with Attitude at the 1% significance level because of the $p < 0.01$ (Table *3*). As a result, we accept the hypotheses ($H_1$, $H_2$, $H_3$, $H_4$, and $H_5$). This means that, users like organic food products and believe that

was beneficial, large number of users will actively engage with the organic food products which further increases their intention to buy a particular product.

### 3.2 Relationship between Attitude with Purchase Intention

- $H_6$: Attitude has a significant relationship with Purchase Intention.

Table 4

*Relationship between Attitude and Purchase Intention*

| Factors | r Value |
|---|---|
| Independent Factors | |
| Attitude & Purchase Intention | .783** |

*Source:* Primary Data

*Note:* ** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Attitude was positively correlated with Purchase Intention at the 1% significance level because of the $p < 0.01$ (Table *4*). As a result, we accept the hypotheses ($H_6$).

This shows that consumers prefer to purchase organic food products due to their health benefits and environmental friendliness.

The next section of the investigation uses Regression analysis to examine the influence of organic food product variables on Attitude and Purchase Intention.

### 3.3 Regression

*3.3.1 Impact of Factors of Organic Food Products on Attitude*

- **$H_7$:** There is a significant impact of the factors of organic food products (Authenticity / Naturalness, Health, Quality, Convenience, Safety) on Attitude.

Table 5

*Impact of Factors of organic foods on Attitude- Regression*

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardised Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *Std. Error* | *Beta* | | |
| (Constant) | .048 | .314 | | .152 | .880 |
| NAT | .241 | .082 | .214 | 2.945 | .004** |
| HEALTH | .200 | .092 | .174 | 2.180 | .031* |
| QLTY | .278 | .100 | .277 | 2.785 | .006** |
| CON | .017 | .055 | .022 | .314 | .754 |
| SAFE | .235 | .094 | .211 | 2.502 | .013* |
| R Value | 0.764 | | | | |
| $R^2$ | 0.584 | | | | |
| F value | 40.471 | | | | |
| P value | 0.000 | | | | |

*Source:* Primary Data

*Dependant variable:* Attitude

*Note:* ** Significant at 1% level / * Significant at 5% level

Table *5* shows a significant positive relationship between the factors of organic food products and attitude, as measured by the multiple correlation coefficient (Multiple R) of 0.764. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) for organic foods is 0.584, indicating that these variables account for around 58.4% of the variation in attitude.

The Regression Equation is Y, Attitude = 0.048 + 0.241 (Authenticity / Naturalness) + 0.235 (Safety) + 0.278 (Quality) + 0.200 (Health) + 0.048 (Constant) + 0.017 (Convenience),

It is possible to draw the conclusion that Authenticity / Naturalness and Quality had a substantial positive influence on Attitude at the 1% level of significance since p-value was less than 0.01. This results in the acceptance of the hypothesis. Health and Safety was also found to have a substantial positive influence on Attitude at 5% level of significance since the p value is less than 0.05. This indicates that, since people are much engaged in buying organic food products, as it captures the attention of the organic food users and enhances their interest to know more about the products. The factor Convenience showed not significant since the respondents faced difficulty in finding the location and availability.

*3.3.2 Impact of Attitude on Purchase Intention*

- **$H_8$:** There is a significant impact of Attitude on Purchase Intention.

Table 6

*Impact of Attitude on Purchase Intention- Regression*

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardised Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *Std. Error* | *Beta* | | |
| (Constant) | 0.783 | 0.218 | | 3.593 | 0.000 |
| ATT | 0.787 | 0.051 | 0.783 | 15.333 | 0.000** |
| R Value | 0.783 | | | | |
| $R^2$ | 0.614 | | | | |
| F value | 235.093 | | | | |
| P value | 0.000 | | | | |

*Source:* Primary Data

*Dependant variable:* Purchase Intention

*Note:* ** Significant at 1% level

Table *6* shows "a significant positive relationship between the attitude and purchase intention, as measured by the multiple correlation coefficient (Multiple R) of 0.783. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) for purchase intention is 0.614, indicating that these variables account for around 61.4% of the variation in attitude."

The Regression Equation is Y, Purchase Intention = 0.783 + 0.787 (Attitude).

It is possible to draw the conclusion that Attitude had a substantial positive influence on Purchase Intention at the 1% level of significance since p-value was less than 0.01. This indicating that consumers are engaged in buying organic food products because they are more beneficial than any other products.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of the respondents are Undergraduates and fall within the income group less than ₹30000. Authenticity /Naturalness, Health, Quality,

Convenience, safety have significant and positive relationship on Attitude. Also, Attitude have significant positive relationship on Purchase Intention. The study showed that while Authenticity/Naturalness, Quality, Health, and Safety have a considerable influence on Attitude, Purchase Intention is strongly influenced by Attitude. The findings of this study will improve the knowledge about organic food purchase in emerging markets and it will assist organic food producers in fostering long-lasting relationships with organic food product users. The model Theory of Reasoned Action will improve the Purchase Intention of consumers towards organic food products.

### 4.1 Limitations and Scope for Further Study

- Only the questionnaire method was adopted to collect data from the respondents, The limitations of the questionnaire method is applicable. The research is constrained by the questionnaire's disclosed limitations.
- Further studies can be extended to other factors especially Subjective Norms, a predictor of intention.
- The factors of planned behaviour of various age groups towards the purchase of organic foods can be considered.
- Since organic foods are costly in our country the purchasing power of the people and the living standard which are the important influencing factors, can be considered for further study.

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