

Consumer Perception and Adoption of Green Products in the Processed Food Sector of Haryana

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Abstract

Consumer demand for green and organic food products has been increased by rising consumer awareness and concern about issues such as health, food safety, protection of the environment, and ethical aspects, but demand for green processed food has not developed uniformly due to high cost, limited availability, confusion regarding the labelling of green food products, and doubts regarding the authenticity of such products. This study examined the effect of various consumer characteristics on green processed food products' cognition and consumption behaviour in Haryana, involving 300 consumer respondents with respect to awareness, health concern, environmental concern, certification trust, price sensitivity, and purchasing intention. Descriptive

statistics, rank, correlation and regression analysis, and t-test and ANOVA were used. Health concern, environmental concern, awareness of green labels and trust in certification positively affect purchase intention and adoption. However, price sensitivity is a negative aspect for low-income and occasional buyers. The study concludes that consumers in Haryana are positive about purchasing green processed food products. However price, trustful certification, availability and proper usage information determine their actual purchases. The study provides the food processors, retailers, marketers and policymakers with inputs to move forward with the aspects of green processed food in India.

Keywords: Green products, processed food, organic food, consumer perception,

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

Haryana, purchase intention, certification trust, price sensitivity.

1. Introduction

Green food products are food products which are produced, processed, packaged and marketed with reduced impact on health and the environment. Examples of green food products include organic products, millet products, packaging- and preservative-free foods, chemical-free flour, organic pulses, natural juices, eco-labelling dairy products and less-processed food products. Examples of processed green food products include organic snacks. In India, organic foods are defined as food products that are produced by processes based on biodiversity, health of the soil, chemical free inputs and environmentally sustainable techniques (FSSAI, 2020). FSSAI also recognises the use of the "Jaivik Bharat" logo as a differentiator for organic foods over non-organic foods (FSSAI, 2020).

The processed food industry is meaningful since modern consumers are increasingly choosing packaged and pre-prepared food products. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has regularly published the annual

report on the processed food sector's growth and development, indicating the policy importance of this sector in India (Ministry of Food Processing Industries, 2025). APEDA states India has enormous potential for certified organic products and an abundance of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, spices, fruits, vegetables, tea, coffee, and processed food that can be produced as organic products (APEDA, 2024).

The proximity of Haryana to Delhi-NCR, and a rise in urbanisation, urban purchasing power, and supermarket, e-commerce and branded food outlet penetration results in Haryana being an agricultural and consumption market in its own right. However, consumer adoption of green processed foods is not automatic. However, other factors may play a role in the organic food attitude-behaviour gap, even for individuals with a positive attitude toward green/organic products: price, trust, availability, taste and labelling (Sultan et al., 2020; Tandon et al., 2020a).

Prior studies have identified several factors behind consumers' intention to purchase organic and green food, such as health consciousness, safety, environmental

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

concern, quality, normativeness, convenience, and trust (Kamboj et al., 2023; Kaur & Kaur, 2023; Matharu et al., 2022). High price, lack of trust, weak product knowledge, and unwillingness to try new products are also reputedly barriers preventing consumers from adopting organic products (Kushwah et al., 2019a; Kushwah et al., 2019b). Several other Indian studies find that trust, perceived price, fear of conventional food, organic knowledge, and health consciousness also influence organic purchase intention (Basha & Lal, 2019; Jose et al., 2020; Pahari et al., 2023).

Thus, this research will evaluate the perception and behaviour of the consumers in the case of the green processed food products in Haryana with a sample size of 300 respondents. The research will be analytical and based on a survey.

Research Objectives

1. To study the demographic profile of the consumers who purchase or intend to purchase green processed food products in Haryana.

2. To investigate consumer awareness and perceptions towards green processed food products.

3. To examine the effect of health concern, environmental concern, certification trust and price sensitivity on purchase intention.

4. To test the relationship between consumer perception and adoption of green processed food products.

5. Provide practical recommendations for marketers and policymakers.

2. Literature Review

In the past several years, green and organic consumption has been studied extensively. The literature suggests that consumer behaviour in this area is informed by positive motives and practical barriers. Health concern also acts as one of the strongest motives. Organic and green foods are believed to be more natural, safer, and healthier than the food obtained through conventional manufacturing practices (Basha & Lal, 2019; Kamboj et al., 2023). Basha and Lal (2019) found that health, environmental concern, product information, and perceived quality are the most important

**International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies
(IJMIS)**

factors that influence Indian consumers' attitude towards organically produced foods.

Environmental concern is another factor that drives green consumption. Those who are aware of pollution, climate change, chemical use, and waste are more likely to buy green products. Tandon et al. (2020a) identified an important connection between environmental concern and trust with organic food purchasing behaviour. Ahmed et al. (2021), on the other hand, reported a positive correlation between environmental awareness and environmental concern and young consumers' intention to consume organic food.

Trust features especially in green processed food, as consumers are not able to verify that the packaged food is organic, chemical-free, and environmentally friendly. Certification, labelling and brand trust can be seen as signals of trust. According to Aitken et al. (2020), labelling positively influenced perceived behavioural control and intention for organic food purchasing. The Indian government agency APEDA's National Programme for Organic Production claims that organic certification assures consumers that products have been grown using no

chemical fertilisers or pesticides (APEDA, 2024).

More recently, Kamboj et al (2023) also showed the influence of knowledge. They found that knowledge about organic food had the greatest effect on purchase intention in India compared to other variables. The authors also identified health benefits, availability, convenience, green trust, functional value, and social norms as important predictors of purchase intention.

However, positive attitudes do not always translate to actual purchase. Sultan et al. (2020) discussed the intention-behaviour gap in organic food and showed that perceived communication, satisfaction and trust can reduce this gap. This is especially true in Haryana where consumer interest in green products is high, but purchases are infrequent due to pricing and availability concerns.

Price influences consumer purchases; consumers may resist organic and green processed foods because such foods are often more expensive. Jose et al. (2020) concluded that perceived price and trust act as moderators between consumer fear of customary food and the intention to buy organic food in India. According to Kushwah

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

et al. (2019a), consumer resistance to organic food constrains consumer intention, and obstacles (price, habit, risk perception, and lack of value clarity) negatively influence consumer intention.

With increased online and retail availability in India, Pahari et al. (2023) investigated online purchasing behaviour of organic food products and found that digital and behavioural factors influence consumer behaviour towards organic food purchase. Similarly, Matharu et al. (2022) have identified personal values, health motives, environmental concern, and perceived benefits as important underlying factors affecting organic food purchase among young Indian consumers.

Kaur and Kaur (2023) applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour to Indian organic food consumers and found that attitude towards organic food, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control positively influence purchase intention. This study is relevant as it indicates that consumer adoption is not only individual but also social and situational.

Further application of SEM and neural networks by Uikey et al. (2024) establishes

factors such as awareness of need, personal norms, environmental concern and health consciousness to have an important impact on the purchase intention of organic food products, with the highest predictive power attributed to health consciousness and health awareness.

Overall, awareness, health concern, environmental concern, trust, affordability, perceived quality, and perceived availability have been concluded to be the most important factors influencing the adoption of green processed food. Hence, three hypotheses are proposed.

Hypotheses

H1: Consumer awareness and understanding of green labels is positively related to adoption of green processed food products.

H2: Health concern and environmental concern positively affect the purchase intention toward green processed food products.

H3: Certification trust and price sensitivity have a positive and negative effect, respectively, on the willingness to pay green processed food products.

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

3. Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive cross sectional survey research design. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire filled by the authors from a sample of 300 respondents to investigate consumer's perception, purchase intention and adoption behaviour of green processed food products in Haryana.

Sample Size

The sample size was 300 participants.

Study Area

Urban, semi-urban and rural consumers from the 11 districts Gurugram, Faridabad, Hisar, Panipat, Karnal, Rohtak, Ambala, Sonipat and rural areas of these cities in the state of Haryana were included in the study.

Sampling Method

Sampling involved a non-probability convenience sample of retail consumers who were currently purchasing or were aware of the following categories of packaged food items: organic cereals, millet-based snacks, preservative-free juices, and eco-labelled

(i.e., environmentally friendly products) dairy foods.

Data Collection Tool

Data collection was done using a structured close-ended questionnaire. Questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of questions about the demographics of respondents, while the second section consisted of psychometrically-worded statements measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Variables Used

The main variables are:

- Consumer awareness
- Green label understanding
- Health concern
- Environmental concern
- Certification trust
- Price sensitivity
- Purchase intention
- Actual adoption

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

- Willingness to pay premium

Statistical Tools

The data were analysed using percentage analysis, mean score analysis, standard deviation, ranking, correlation, regression, t-test, and ANOVA statistical methods. These

statistical techniques are commonly used in research on consumer behaviour as they provide an explanation for both descriptive statistics as well as the relationships between different variables (Kamboj et al., 2023; Kaur & Kaur, 2023; Uikey et al., 2024).

4. Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154	51.3%
	Female	146	48.7%
Age	18–25 years	62	20.7%
	26–35 years	98	32.7%
	36–45 years	71	23.7%
	46–55 years	43	14.3%
	Above 55 years	26	8.6%
Education	Up to Senior Secondary	48	16.0%
	Graduate	126	42.0%
	Postgraduate	91	30.3%

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

	Professional/Other	35	11.7%
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	54	18.0%

	₹25,001–₹50,000	92	30.7%
	₹50,001–₹1,00,000	103	34.3%
	Above ₹1,00,000	51	17.0%
Residence	Urban	166	55.3%
	Semi-urban	82	27.3%
	Rural	52	17.4%
Family Type	Nuclear	198	66.0%
	Joint	102	34.0%

The gender of the sample population was almost equally represented. Also, the majority of respondents were between age 26 and 45 and hence the sample had people who were an active part of household decisions. The sample had a skewed population towards more educated people as most respondents were graduates and postgraduates. Given that more than half of the respondents are urban

based, this is helpful as green processed foods are predominantly available through supermarkets, organised retail stores, and e-grocery. This supports earlier findings that educational level, urban experiences, and product availability are factors in organic and green food purchases (Basha & Lal, 2019; Pahari et al., 2023).

Table 2: Awareness of Green Processed Food Products

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I have heard about green/organic processed food products.	4.12	0.81	High awareness
I understand the meaning of organic or chemical-free food labels.	3.76	0.89	Moderate to high
I can identify green food products in retail stores.	3.58	0.94	Moderate
I know that certification marks help verify green food claims.	3.69	0.91	Moderate to high
I actively search for information before buying green food products.	3.31	1.02	Moderate

Despite knowing about green food products, consumers often do not actively search for the information regarding their certification, and do not check the labels of the products.

This is consistent with Aitken et al. (2020), who indicated that labelling increases confidence and purchasing intentions amongst consumers.

Table 3: Health and Food Safety Perception

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Green processed foods are healthier than ordinary processed foods.	4.08	0.78	High agreement
I prefer food products with fewer preservatives.	4.25	0.73	Very high agreement
I believe chemical-free ingredients are better for longterm health.	4.18	0.76	High agreement
I worry about artificial colours and additives in packaged foods.	4.02	0.86	High agreement
Health benefits influence my decision to buy green foods.	4.15	0.79	High agreement

Health is one of the most important decision criteria. Consumers are very sensitive to preservatives, additives and chemical ingredients. This reinforces the findings of recent studies that health advantages and

food safety considerations are key motivators for the intention to purchase organic food (Kamboj et al., 2023; Uikey et al., 2024).

Table 4: Environmental Concern and Sustainable Consumption

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I prefer products that are less harmful to the environment.	3.94	0.84	High agreement
I am concerned about plastic packaging in processed foods.	3.87	0.91	High agreement
I believe green products support sustainable farming.	3.81	0.88	High agreement
I feel responsible for making environmentally friendly purchases.	3.72	0.93	Moderate to high
Environmental claims influence my food purchase decision.	3.49	1.01	Moderate

Consumers carry environmental concern, but it is not as strong as health concern. There are consumer values for the environment, but they do not always influence purchase

decisions. This is in agreement with Tandon et al. (2020a) who found that trust and motivation matter but also depend on environmental concern.

Table 5: Trust, Certification, and Label Perception

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I trust products with recognized organic certification.	3.98	0.82	High trust
I check labels before buying green processed foods.	3.52	0.98	Moderate
I trust well-known brands more than unknown green brands.	4.06	0.80	High agreement
I doubt some companies' green claims.	3.88	0.95	High doubt
Certification increases my willingness to pay more.	3.67	0.91	Moderate to high

The table also indicates that certifications and company reputation help build trust, yet skepticism about green marketing suggests the risk of greenwashing perception. This risk could be attenuated through domestic

certification systems like NPOP and use of logos that assure consumers that the product adhered to organic farming standards (APEDA, 2024).

Table 6: Decision Factors Affecting Purchase of Green Processed Foods

Decision Factor	Mean Score	Rank
Health benefits	4.21	1
Product safety	4.13	2
Certification/label trust	3.96	3
Taste and quality	3.89	4
Availability in nearby stores	3.74	5
Environmental benefit	3.68	6
Brand reputation	3.61	7
Price affordability	3.44	8
Attractive packaging	3.09	9
Social media influence	2.91	10

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

Health benefits and product safety were the most important factors in purchase decisions, followed by certification. This indicates that customers expect credible evidence before they are willing to pay a premium. The lower importance of environmental benefits indicates that green processed food marketers in Haryana cannot base their marketing strategies just on environmental benefits.

Furthermore, they should also be concerned about health, safety, certification, and quality according to the findings of Kamboj et al. (2023), Matharu et al. (2022), and Jose et al. (2020).

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Consumer Awareness and Label Understanding Positively Influence Adoption

Table 7: Correlation Between Awareness, Label Understanding, and Adoption

Variables	Awareness	Label Understanding	Adoption
Awareness	1.000	0.512**	0.486**
Label Understanding	0.512**	1.000	0.533**
Adoption	0.486**	0.533**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

In consumer behaviour, awareness and understanding of green labels positively correlate with green processed food adoption. Higher the understanding of green label, higher the green processed food

adoption among consumers is expected. This finding reinforces existing studies such as those by Aitken et al. (2020) that labelling improves consumer control and intention on organic food consumption, and Kamboj et al.

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

(2023) that knowledge positively influences the organic food purchase intention.

Table 8: Regression Analysis for H1

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
Constant	1.214	5.61	0.000	Significant
Awareness	0.318	6.24	0.000	Significant
Label Understanding	0.407	7.18	0.000	Significant
R ²	0.412			
Adjusted R ²	0.408			
F-value	104.21		0.000	Model significant

The regression model explains 41.2% of the variation in adoption. Both awareness and understanding of the label are meaningful predictors, therefore H1 is supported. This indicates that an increase in awareness and clearer labelling can lead to an increase in the purchase of green processed food products in Haryana.

H2: Health Concern and Environmental Concern Positively Influence Purchase Intention

Table 9: Correlation Between Health Concern, Environmental Concern, and Purchase Intention

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

Variables	Health Concern	Environmental Concern	Purchase Intention
Health Concern	1.000	0.446**	0.591**
Environmental Concern	0.446**	1.000	0.472**
Purchase Intention	0.591**	0.472**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

Health concern and environmental concern both have a positive relationship with purchase intention. Health concern has a higher correlation with purchase intention than environmental concern. This reveals that Haryana consumers consider personal and family health to be more important than

a green environment when making green processed food purchases. These findings confirm the study of Uikey et al. (2024), which found that health consciousness was one of the most important factors influencing organic food purchase intention.

Table 10: Multiple Regression for H2

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
Constant	0.982	4.72	0.000	Significant

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

Health Concern	0.496	9.43	0.000	Significant
Environmental Concern	0.281	5.84	0.000	Significant
R ²	0.463			
Adjusted R ²	0.459			
F-value	128.01		0.000	Model significant

The model explains 46.3% of the variance in consumer purchase intention. The effect of health concern is stronger than the other dimensions. H2 is therefore accepted. Green processed food marketers should stress health and safety benefits while establishing a link between health and safety and environmental sustainability.

H3: Certification Trust and Price Sensitivity Influence Willingness to Pay

Table 11: Independent Sample t-Test: Willingness to Pay by Certification Trust

Group	N	Mean WTP Score	SD	t-value	p-value
Low Certification Trust	128	3.02	0.86	8.77	0.000
High Certification Trust	172	3.91	0.78		

Consumers having higher levels of certification trust exhibit considerably higher WTP, this indicates that certification helps reduce buying risk perception and hence

increases WTP. Our results confirm studies by Canova et al. (2020) that certification trust is an important factor affecting organic product buying behaviour and APEDA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

(2024) that certification is an assurance mechanism.

Table 12: Regression Analysis for H3

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
Constant	2.106	8.32	0.000	Significant
Certification Trust	0.452	8.96	0.000	Significant positive effect
Price Sensitivity	-0.337	-6.41	0.000	Significant negative effect
R ²	0.389			
Adjusted R ²	0.385			
F-value	94.28		0.000	Model significant

Certification trust positively impacts willingness to pay while price sensitivity negatively impacts willingness to pay. Thus, H3 is accepted. Our results suggest that consumers will be willing to pay a premium if consumers believe that the green certification is strong and not if it is weak. This is consistent with the findings of Jose et al. (2020), Prakash et al. (2023), and Sultan et al. (2020).

Discussion

The results also indicate that the consumers of Haryana have positive attitudes towards green processed foods and associate green foods with health, food safety, less chemicals and better quality, but not all consumers have adopted green processed foods. Health benefits, product safety, and trust and awareness of certification systems are the strongest drivers of organic adoption.

**International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies
(IJMIS)**

Environmental concern is also important but ranked lower.

These findings are important because many green marketing campaigns rely on green-related information being made salient. In Haryana, the study suggests consumers will be more influenced by health and family safety messages. Environmental claims play a role, but high concern about environmental issues only occurs in the conjunction with personal benefits such as safety, nutrition, purity, and trustworthy certification systems. Previous studies of Indian organic food consumption also found health, quality, knowledge and trust to be prominent influences on organic food purchase intention (Basha & Lal, 2019; Kamboj et al., 2023; Matharu et al., 2022). The results of this study confirm that awareness is not sufficient. A high level of knowledge of the food labels and certification can further augment GPF products if consumers know the meaning of the labels organic, natural, chemical-free, preservative-free, and eco-friendly. According to Aitken et al. (2020), labelling food products could increase food consumer trust and purchase intention,

provided the labels are clear, salient and verifiable.

Trust is another important factor. The descriptive results show that consumers trust labels on known certified brands more than unknown green brands. Many consumers are also skeptical of exaggerated corporate claims, indicating that greenwashing remains a serious problem. The certification process by FSSAI, and that of APEDA could also reduce the doubts about the certification, and the certification marks should be marketed better to common consumers (FSSAI, 2020; APEDA, 2024). Price sensitivity was also a major impediment to purchase. However, the regression analysis also showed a negative relationship between price sensitivity and willingness to pay. This is quite normal, as green processed foods are more expensive than non-green processed foods, and consumers may not be willing to pay a much higher price for a product unless it is safe, healthy, and certified. Jose et al. (2020) found similar findings that perceived price and trust to be determinants of organic food purchase intention in India.

The study is an example of the wider intention-behaviour gap: for example,

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

consumers may say they would prefer green processed foods, but will purchase based on price, availability and trust. To achieve this, Sultan et al. (2020) argue that trust, satisfaction and communication can close the divide. In the specific case of Haryana, this means that retailers and food processors need to ensure that green products are available, in preferred pack sizes, credibly labelled, and above all, ensure repeated positive product experiences.

6. Conclusion

A study employed a sample of 300 respondents to understand consumer acceptance and adoption of green processed food products in Haryana. The results show a positive perception of green processed food, especially in terms of health, safety, and chemical use. Health concern was found to be the most meaningful factor influencing purchase intention. Environmental concern and trust are the second most important drivers. Price sensitivity decreases the willingness to pay. The study concludes that green processed food adoption in Haryana can increase if businesses and policymakers focus on increasing awareness, affordability,

certification, and availability. Green processed food brands should promote their health and safety benefits, use trusted certification marks, disclose ingredients, and offer affordable pack sizes. Retailers should increase shelf visibility and consumer awareness. Policymakers should promote Jaivik Bharat and India Organic certifications. This study found that factors influencing the adoption of green processed food products among consumers in Haryana were their trust in the product, perceived price, label readability and availability.

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International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

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International Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations & Studies (IJMIS)

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