



Organic Food and Customers' Perception: A Qualitative Study

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Health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social influence are the five main variables that this research intends to examine in order to understand consumer behaviour towards organic food in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A qualitative methodology was used in the study, which involved eleven semi-structured interviews with a varied set of Saudi Arabian individuals. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, which consists of three steps: initial coding, topic creation, and theme finalisation. Organic food customers value the absence of synthetic chemicals and disease prevention, according to the paper findings. Organic food's better taste, freshness, and nutritional content boost their attractiveness. However, high price sensitivity prevents wider adoption. Social influences including peer recommendations, digital endorsements, and family traditions can shape consumer behaviour. This study illuminates Saudi Arabian consumers' complex organic food preferences, which has ramifications for marketers, regulators, and public health advocates. By addressing affordability issues and using social media, stakeholders may encourage organic food consumption and a healthier, more sustainable Saudi food culture. The research also advances consumer psychology, environmental sociology, and marketing theories.

1. Introduction

Due to growing consumer awareness of health, environmental sustainability, and ethical consumption, academic and commercial interest in organic food consumer behaviour has grown in recent decades. Organic food, farmed without synthetic pesticides, fertilisers, GMOs, or ionising radiation, is considered healthier and more environmentally friendly (Sun et al., 2024). Organic food markets globally are rising due to worries about chemical residues in food and the environmental impact of conventional agriculture practises (Durmaz & Akdoğan, 2024). Research shows that people buy organic food for health, environmental, quality, and ethical reasons (Liu & Madni, 2024). Consumer impression of organic food as healthier and safer is a major factor (Simiyu & Kariuki, 2024). Organic farming practices are valued by customers

for their environmental benefits, including lowering pollution, conserving water, and improving soil fertility (Pant et al., 2024); furthermore, taste, freshness, and safety boost organic product attractiveness. Due to greater agricultural and certification costs, organic food is priced higher, which hinders its wider acceptance (Arcese et al., 2024). Though many consumers are price conscious and evaluate organic food's value against their budget, it offers various advantages (García-Salirrosas et al., 2024). Organic food consumer attitudes and behaviours are also influenced by peer recommendations, internet endorsements, and family customs, therefore highlighting the importance of social networks in knowledge sharing and choice validation (Hasan et al., 2024).

Studies on consumers of organic food have repeatedly revealed that the primary factor is health perception

(Shamsi & Abad, 2024). Cao & Zhang (2024) claims that consumers of organic food are ready to pay more since they think it is better for their health. Organic food reportedly provides more nutrients and fewer pesticide residue than conventional food (Cela et al., 2024). Malhotra & Srivastava (2024) observed that consumers of organic food seek it because they link it with a reduced risk of health issues, thereby reflecting health consciousness. Environmental issue is another main factor influencing demand for organic food. Studies show that consumers who are ecologically aware of the harmful effects of conventional farming choose organic food (Srivastava & Gupta, 2023). Since consumers of organic farming see them as more sustainable and environmentally friendly, Sheikh et al. (2023) found that environmental awareness greatly predicts the intention to buy organic food. Rai et al. (2023b) contend that consumer preferences for organic products are influenced by environmental ideals and health issues. Organic food use also depends on taste, freshness, and nutritional value. Consumers believe organic food is better, so Suhail (2023) found they are ready to pay extra for it. Jirapattanakul (2023) also found that taste and appearance influence consumer choices. Organic certification labels, which guarantee organic products' authenticity and quality, promote consumers' idea of superior quality (Ecevit, 2023). Price sensitivity still prevents organic food consumption. Many consumers avoid organic products due to their greater price, despite their perceived health and quality benefits (Ecevit, 2023). Khare (2023) discovered that while customers prefer organic food, price limits their purchase frequency. The higher production and certification costs of organic farming contribute to price sensitivity (Azlie et al., 2023). Social impact is vital to organic food consumer attitudes. Gelaidan et al. (2023) underlined how highly consumer purchases are influenced by social conventions and peer recommendations. Promoting organic food depends critically on social media and digital influencers since reliable endorsements boost consumer confidence and desire to try organic products (Ma et al., 2023). This social component highlights group and cultural influences on consumption of organic food.

Although much has been researched on many facets of organic food consumer behaviour, significant gaps still exist (Onozaka et al., 2023). It is little known how cultural surrounds affect consumer intentions and barriers. Less studies have looked at consumer behaviour in non-Western countries where dietary practices and cultural values could vary (Marwat, 2023). Investigating

these mechanisms in many civilizations can assist to clarify world consumption of organic food. Furthermore, unclear is how digital technology and online platforms affect consumers of organic food (Audi & Ali, 2023). As social media and e-commerce expand, it becomes imperative to know how digital involvement influences consumer opinions and purchases. According to Ghaffar et al. (2023), consumer awareness and opinions of organic products are much influenced by internet information sources. More recent research is required, nevertheless, to assess how organic food consumption is being changed by digital marketing (Sarangi et al., 2023). Further research is warranted on the link between price sensitivity and other motivational factors including environmental issues and health (Rai & Bhattarai, 2023a). Although price is a barrier, effective pricing policies can be developed by studying how consumers balance cost with expected benefits. According to Hisam et al. (2022), studies can investigate if customers are willing to pay a premium for organic food due to its positive effects on health and the environment.

This study is grounded in many concepts of consumer behaviour and sustainability. The Health Belief Model (HBM) elucidates the relationship between health perceptions and the consumption of organic food. As per the Health Belief Model (HBM), individuals are motivated to engage in health-related activities based on their perception of the importance of health issues, the perceived advantages of preventive actions, and the barriers they face in taking action (Lavuri, 2022). This model elucidates why individuals may opt for organic food over price, given the perceived health benefits. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) elucidates the influence of perceived behavioural control and social influence on the consumption of organic food. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that an individual's inclination to participate in an activity is shaped by their attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control, as stated by Walia & Kumar (2022). Social norms such as digital endorsements and peer recommendations have the potential to influence consumers of organic food. Perceived behavioural control, including factors like accessibility and pricing, might also impact the decision to purchase organic food. The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) hypothesis, a concept in environmental psychology, provides insights into consumer behaviour regarding environmental concern. The VBN hypothesis posits that individuals' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability are influenced by their environmental

values and beliefs (Marwat, 2023). This concept elucidates why individuals who prioritise environmental concerns are more inclined to buy organic food due to their perception of its ecological benefits. This study examines the relationship between individuals' impression of their health, their concern for the environment, their perception of the quality of organic food, their sensitivity to price, and the influence of social factors on their use of organic food.

2. Literature Review

Organic food demand has spurred more research on consumer attitudes and motivations, and their popularity stems from organic foods' reputation as safer and better choices (Walia et al., 2022). Consumers of organic food see it as free from synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms which they connect with causing health issues (Singh & Alok, 2022). Marketing strategies and media coverage highlight natural and healthy qualities of organic products. More consumers are selecting organic food to promote sustainable farming as environmental awareness rises (Marwat et al., 2022). They contend that organic farming improves biodiversity, soil quality, and pollution control. The ethical and environmental benefits of eating organic food have become significant draws for customers who are concerned about the environment and their health (Bhutto et al., 2022). The apparent taste and quality of organic food are also influenced by consumer preferences. This viewpoint is typically influenced by the notion that food produced by organic farming is superior and tastes better (Lin et al., 2022). More and more organic foods are being sold as gourmet or upmarket. This premium positioning can raise the perceived value and appeal of organic food, which in turn can raise consumers' willingness to pay for it (Onozaka et al., 2023). Impressions of organic food are further enhanced by social effects, such as referrals from friends and family. Growing numbers of people adopting organic diets have increased consumer trust due to its popularity and trendiness (Rai et al., 2023a). Organic food appeals to consumers due in part to its perceived quality, social aspects, environmental consciousness, and health benefits.

2.1 Health Perception

Health attitudes strongly impact organic food purchases and consumption, according to consumer behaviour research (Sun et al., 2024). People believe organic food

is better than regular food, according to multiple research. Some believe organic food has fewer harmful ingredients including industrial pesticides, chemical fertilisers, genetically modified organisms, and other substances (Liu et al., 2024). Avoiding these drugs can minimise the risk of allergic reactions, hormone changes, and chronic diseases like cancer. Higher vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant concentrations in organic food are thought to improve health (Pant et al., 2024). To promote this health idea, organic product marketing and labels should emphasise their natural and chemical-free qualities. Health-conscious clientele are likely to change their diets and long-term medical plans to benefit from organic food (García-Salirrosas et al., 2024). The lack of toxic chemicals and the benefits of organic farming methods make organic food healthy. Organic farming emphasises soil health, crop rotation, and organic fertilisers to produce more nutritious food (Shamsi et al., 2024). Multiple studies have revealed that organic foods may offer more nutrients than conventionally farmed food (Cela et al., 2024). Organic food is healthier due to ethical aspects including environmentally sustainable food production and animal welfare. Consumers may link ethical farming to better, more compassionate, and healthier food production (Srivastava et al., 2023). Organic food is becoming more popular due to its holistic approach to health, which encompasses personal and ethical concerns. Health perception includes several aspects that affect customer preferences and drive product demand (Rai et al., 2023b).

2.2 Environmental Concern

The increased awareness and sensitivity to environmental issues that influence purchasing decisions explains organic food customers' behaviour (Jirapattanakul, 2023). Because organic food is considered environmentally friendly, consumers pick it. Organic farming emphasises crop rotation, composting, and not using synthetic pesticides and fertilisers (Ecevit, 2023; Jirapattanakul, 2023). These measures improve soil, biodiversity, and water quality. Research shows that ecologically concerned consumers pick organic food to save natural resources and reduce their environmental impact (Azlie et al., 2023). Eco-labels and certifications help to establish this relationship between organic food and environmental sustainability by verifying ecologically beneficial actions and influencing customer choices (Ma et al., 2023). Apart from the advantages for the surroundings, the ethical and social effects of organic

farming shape consumer opinions and practices. Those concerned about animal welfare and climate change value organic farming's better animal treatment, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and less pollution (Marwat, 2023). Studies reveal that environmental concern covers food system sustainability as well as benefits for ecosystems. ecologically aware consumers could view their purchases as a component of a greater endeavour to support ecologically benign and climate-resilient agriculture (Ghaffar et al., 2023). Organic items cost more because buyers feel responsible and ethically duty-bound to help the environment (Rai et al., 2023a). Thus, environmental concern drives organic food demand, indicating a greater commitment to ecological stewardship and sustainability in consumer behaviour.

2.3 Perceived Quality

Organic food consumers' willingness to buy and eat depends on perceived quality. Due to inherent and external causes, consumers generally view organic food as better than conventionally produced food (Lavuri, 2022). Organic food purportedly tastes fresher, tastier, and healthier, improving the eating experience. Scientific evidence suggests that organic produce may have more nutrients and antioxidants (Singh et al., 2022). Organic food's taste, texture, and aroma appeal consumers greatly. Premium packaging, brand familiarity, and organic certification labels suggest more manufacturing and better product quality, thereby improving quality impression (Bhutto et al., 2022). Therefore, the supposed quality of organic food draws those who respect taste and health. Usually, organic food quality is related with integrity, openness, and authenticity. Considered as less industrialised and more transparent than conventional farming is organic farming (Durmaz et al., 2024). Customers of organic products believe they are created with more care, hence this association develops authenticity and confidence (Arcese et al., 2024; Simiyu et al., 2024). Organic labeling's rigorous standards and certification procedures help to support this point of view by giving consumers confidence in product quality and provenance. The ethical and environmental values of organic farming match consumer attitudes and way of life, therefore enhancing perceived quality (Arcese et al., 2024). Organic food is popular for its taste, nutrients, and support of a sustainable food system. Organic food quality including sensory qualities, nutritional value, ethical issues, and production methods influences customer behaviour (Hasan et

al., 2024). Understanding organic food consumer behaviour depends on environmental awareness and sensitivity, which influences purchase decisions. Due of their environmental friendliness, consumers choose organic foods.

2.4 Price Sensitivity

Price sensitivity influences consumer behaviour towards organic food, thereby impeding its overall acceptance (Cao et al., 2024). Because organic food is produced labor-intensively, yields are lower, and organic certification costs are more than for conventional food (Malhotra et al., 2024). Consumers' willingness to pay extra for environmental and health benefits, income, and perceived value of organic products define their price sensitivity (Sheikh et al., 2023). Studies reveal that although some consumers are ready to pay more for organic food because of its stated health benefits and environmental sustainability, a larger portion of the market is price-sensitive and may be turned off by the higher prices (Suhail, 2023). Because of their price sensitivity, lower-income consumers could favour affordability above natural product benefits. Pricing so still affects consumers' decisions for either conventional or organic food (Suhail, 2023). Consumer education, awareness-raising, and marketing help to lower price sensitivity. Well informed organic food consumers are less price-sensitive because of their better ethical, environmental, and health values. By showing organic food as a reasonable investment, market strategies stressing long-term health benefits and disease preventive cost reductions may reduce price sensitivity (Khare, 2023). Now available in private-label brands and budget stores, organic food is more affordable and accessible, therefore addressing price sensitivity (Gelaidan et al., 2023). Promotions, discounts, and loyalty schemes financially encourage natural decisions, hence lowering price sensitivity. Price sensitivity is therefore a big problem, but clever policies to support organic food and increase its availability can help to solve it (Onozaka et al., 2023).

2.5 Social Influence

Organic food consumer behaviour is mostly influenced by social context since people search for advice and validation among peers (Audi et al., 2023). Studies reveal that a person's natural food tastes can be very influenced by family, friends, and social networks (Sarangi et al., 2023). Peer acceptability may increase

when reliable sources advocate natural products for ethical, environmental, or health reasons. Social standards also count; when more members of a community or social group eat organic food, others can follow suit to fit group standards (Hisam et al., 2022). Organic eating is socially acceptable in cultures that value health or the environment. Apart from personal contacts, social media and digital groups are fast influencing natural food values and practices. People can post their natural product experiences, opinions, and knowledge on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Walia et al., 2022). Influencers and celebrities who support organic lifestyles can reach enormous audiences and set trends. Reviews and testimonials boost social influence by providing relatable and authentic insights about organic food's benefits and appeal (Marwat et al., 2022). Online connections between organic food aficionados foster a feeling of community and shared ideals, boosting positive attitudes and encouraging more people

to try organic (Lin et al., 2022). Social influence, whether through direct human encounters or internet involvement, drives organic food demand, making it a key aspect in consumer decision-making.

3. Methodology

This qualitative research comprises of 11 semi-structured interviews with a broad Saudi Arabian sample. This strategy was used to acquire extensive, thorough data on consumers' organic food perceptions through in-depth talks. To fully understand how age, gender, income, and education affect organic food preferences, participants were selected from a wide range of demographics. The semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to explore specific themes and allowed participants to share their thoughts and experiences in their own terms. Each 60-minute interview was held in a comfortable location to ensure participants' comfort and candour.

Table 1: Semi-structured Interview Guideline.

Variable	Interview Questions
Health Perception	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How important is health to you when choosing food products? 2. Do you believe organic food is healthier than conventional food? Why or why not? 3. Can you describe any specific health benefits you associate with organic food?
Environmental Concern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How concerned are you about the environmental impact of food production? 2. Do you think organic farming is better for the environment? Why? 3. How does environmental sustainability influence your food choices?
Perceived Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe the quality of organic food compared to conventional food? 2. What specific qualities do you look for in organic food? 3. Can you share any experiences where the quality of organic food influenced your purchase decision?
Price Sensitivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you feel about the price of organic food? 2. Are you willing to pay more for organic food? Why or why not? 3. How does the price of organic food affect your purchasing decisions?
Social Influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do recommendations from friends or family influence your food choices? 2. Have you ever been influenced by social media or online reviews when buying organic food? 3. Can you share an instance where social influence impacted your decision to buy organic food?

3.1 Thematic Analysis

A three-step thematic analysis was used to find and understand patterns in interview data.

Step 1: Initial Coding: First, the interviews were verbatim transcribed and read several times. This step developed first codes to capture key data points. As the researcher learned more about the data, codes were modified and altered (Zaman et al., 2021). Descriptive codes were used to identify major themes and reoccurring subjects highlighted by participants.

Step 2: Theme Development: The initial codes were examined and categorised into themes in the second step. This involves evaluating code linkages and how they could be combined to produce themes that summarise the data's primary ideas. Theme revisions done iteratively guaranteed they reflected data patterns and stories. This level also made every theme unique and pertinent and avoided redundant coding.

Step 3: Finalization: The subjects were defined and named to finish the narrative about the perceptions of organic food on consumers. Names were selected to succinctly describe each topic, which was constructed

to reflect the core of the data it stood for. Organised into a logical framework, the themes highlighted the significant results of the research and exposed the factors influencing Saudi Arabian consumers’

opinions on organic food. By means of a methodical and thorough assessment of interview data made possible by theme analysis, the study subject became deeply understood.

Table 2: Respondents of the Study.

Respondent ID	Gender	Age	Income Level (Monthly)	Education Level	Occupation	Number of Years Purchasing Organic Food
R1	Male	30	\$3,000 - \$4,000	Bachelor’s Degree	IT Professional	2
R2	Female	28	\$2,000 - \$3,000	Master’s Degree	Teacher	3
R3	Male	35	\$4,000 - \$5,000	Bachelor’s Degree	Engineer	5
R4	Male	42	\$5,000 - \$6,000	High School Diploma	Small Business Owner	7
R5	Female	25	\$2,500 - \$3,500	Bachelor’s Degree	Marketing Specialist	1
R6	Male	33	\$3,500 - \$4,500	PhD	University Professor	4
R7	Male	27	\$1,500 - \$2,500	Associate Degree	Sales Representative	2
R8	Male	40	\$4,500 - \$5,500	Bachelor’s Degree	Banker	6
R9	Male	29	\$2,000 - \$3,000	High School Diploma	Technician	3
R10	Male	38	\$6,000 - \$7,000	Master’s Degree	Senior Manager	8
R11	Male	31	\$3,000 - \$4,000	Bachelor’s Degree	Government Employee	5

4. Results

The findings of the research are presented below in the form of sections:

4.1 Health Perception

According to the survey, Saudi consumers believe organic food to be better than conventional one. This point of view results from the belief that organic food devoid of connected to health problems harmful chemicals, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms. Participants said organic food offers more vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which improves health. Health benefits were a major factor in choosing organic products, especially for health-conscious or dietary-conscious consumers. Some participants also related organic food to chronic illness prevention and long-term well-being. This suggests a high preference for organic food as a preventative health intervention.

R1 said, “Organic food is healthier because it lacks pesticides and chemicals. I eat it more safely and for nutrition.” Participants agreed that organic food is safer and healthier since it lacks dangerous chemicals. Safe and nutrient-rich organic food is valued for its health benefits. R3 said, “Eating organic has improved my health. I think the cuisine is better and worry less about its long-term repercussions.” Participants said organic food improves their health and comfort of mind. It suggests that customers evaluate both short-term and long-term health benefits when choosing

food. Interviewee R6 said, “I eat organic for health. Get additional antioxidants and vitamins as well as avoid negative items.” This comprehensive approach of health emphasises organic food’s benefits, such as greater vitamin levels.

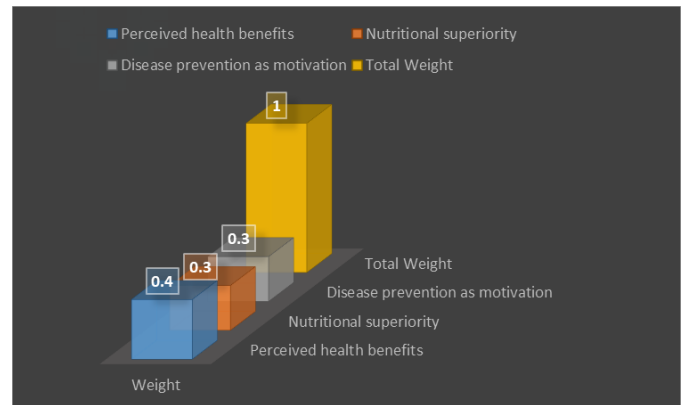


Figure 1: Weightage analysis of Health Perception.

These findings support prior evidence suggesting health concerns drive organic food purchase. According to Sun et al. (2024), customers choose organic food due to its perceived health benefits, such as pesticide-free and increased nutritional value. Simiyu et al. (2024) found that health benefits, such as the idea that organic food is safer and healthier, motivate consumers. Past studies support the current findings that health perception is a key determinant in organic food purchases. These results demonstrate a widespread and ongoing confidence in organic food’s health benefits, emphasising its importance in consumer behaviour and marketing efforts.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Health Perception.

Step	Description
Step 1: Initial Coding	Initial codes identified from interviews: Health benefits Nutritional value Disease prevention
Step 2: Theme Development	Themes developed: Perceived health benefits Nutritional superiority Disease prevention as motivation
Step 3: Finalization	Final themes defined and named: Health benefits as motivator Nutritional superiority Long-term health considerations

4.2 Environmental Concern

The research shows that environmental concern influences Saudi Arabian consumers’ organic food purchases. Conventional farming practices’ environmental consequences were regularly raised by participants. Organic farming reduces soil deterioration, water pollution, and biodiversity loss, they said. Many participants believe that organic food promotes ecological balance and environmental sustainability. Environmental consciousness is often linked to ethics, since customers feel obligated to

support agricultural techniques that conserve the world for future generations. The survey also indicated that environmentally conscious customers are more ready to accept higher organic food prices as an investment in environmental health.

R2 said, “I eat organic because I worry about the environment. I know organic farming improves soil and minimises pollution.” This comment emphasises the link between environmental concern and organic product choice, noting the anticipated benefits of organic farming on soil and pollutants. Interviewee R5 said, “Buying organic helps me support sustainable methods. I want my meals to reflect my environmental principles.” The participant’s food selections reflect their environmental ideals, emphasising the role of human responsibility in achieving sustainability through consumer behaviour. Interviewee R9 said, “Organic food is more expensive, but it protects the environment. I consider it a future investment.” The participant justified the increased cost of organic food due to its environmental benefits, showing how environmental concern can trump price sensitivity.

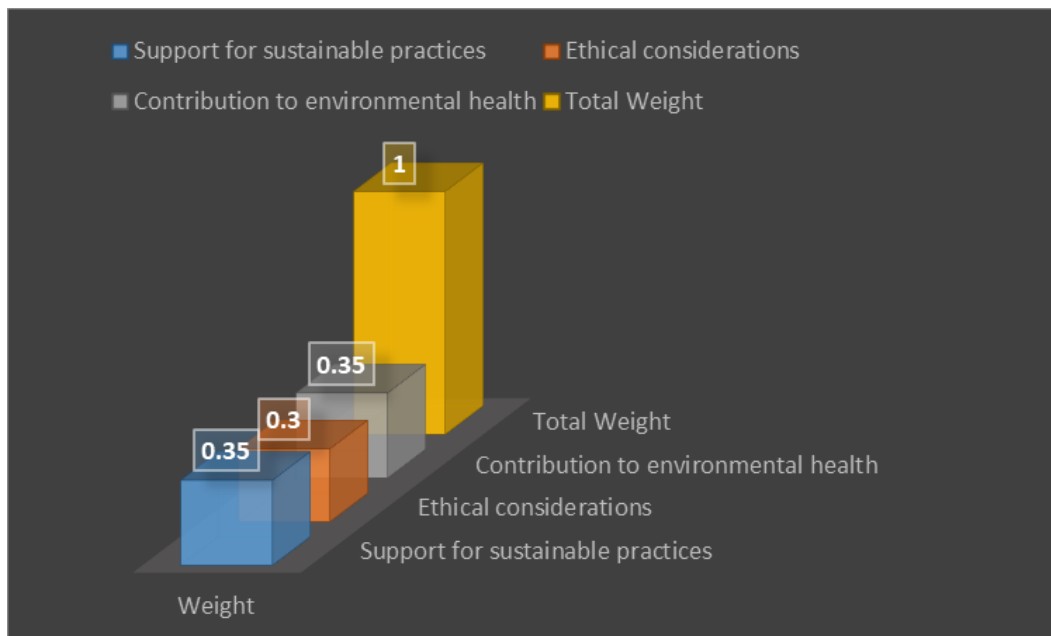


Figure 2: Weightage Analysis of Environmental Concern.

The findings support prior research indicating environmental concern drives organic food purchase. García-Salirrosas et al. (2024) discovered that customers chose organic food because they believe it is more environmentally friendly than conventional farming. Cao et al. (2024) found that customers want to lower their

ecological footprint and support ecologically friendly farming techniques. These studies support the current evidence showing environmental concern is a major factor in organic food purchases. These studies demonstrate that environmental values influence consumer behaviour towards organic products across situations.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis of Environmental Concern.

Step	Description
Step 1: Initial Coding	Initial codes identified from interviews: Pollution reduction Soil health Biodiversity preservation
Step 2: Theme Development	Themes developed: Support for sustainable practices Ethical considerations Contribution to environmental health
Step 3: Finalization	Final themes defined and named: Environmental stewardship Ethical consumerism Investment in future sustainability

4.3 Perceived Quality

The research shows that perceived quality influences Saudi Arabian consumers’ organic food purchases. Participants consistently thought organic food was better than conventional food. The absence of synthetic additives, superior taste, and more nutritional content contribute to this feeling of higher quality. Organic cuisine was typically regarded as fresher, tastier, and more authentic. Organic food is also seen as superior

quality due to its natural and ethical cultivation. Organic certification badges reassure consumers of quality and authenticity. Organic food quality influences consumer preferences and purchases.

Interviewee R3 said, “Organic produce tastes better and lasts longer. The quality is better than usual produce.” Taste and freshness of organic food provide it a higher quality perception. The focus on sensory experience shows that consumers respect organic food’s daily advantages. Interviewee R8 said, “Organic products feel more authentic. The organic labels are trustworthy, and the quality seems higher.” This quote emphasises trust and honesty in quality perception. Certification marks comfort consumers about product quality and organic standards, strengthening their choice for organic food. R6 said, “Organic food is healthier and has more nutrients. Quality food is important to me.” This emphasises organic food’s nutritional value as a quality factor. Organic food is more appealing to health-conscious consumers due to its better nutritional content.

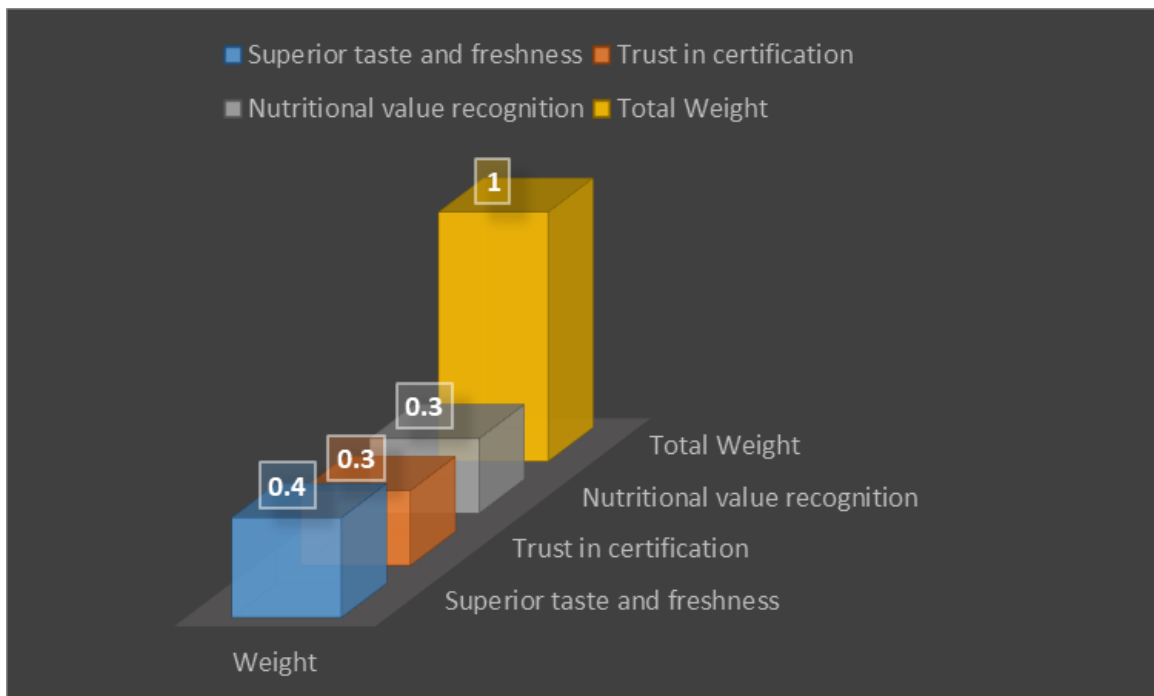


Figure 3: Weightage Analysis of Perceived Quality.

The findings support prior study showing perceived quality motivates organic food consumption. Due to its taste, freshness, and nutritional content, Srivastava et al. (2023) discovered that consumers view organic food as higher quality. Organic food is perceived as higher-quality due to the lack of synthetic chemicals

and natural farming processes. Suhail (2023) organic labels boost consumer trust in organic product quality. Past research support the current findings that perceived quality is a key factor in consumer decision-making and a major driver of organic food demand.

Table 5: Thematic Analysis of Perceived Quality.

Step	Description
Step 1: Initial Coding	Initial codes identified from interviews: Taste and freshness Certification trustworthiness Nutritional content
Step 2: Theme Development	Themes developed: Superior taste and freshness Trust in certification Nutritional value recognition
Step 3: Finalization	Final themes defined and named: Taste and sensory experience Certification assurance Nutritional integrity

participants valued health and sustainability and were willing to spend more for organic food as an investment in their health and the environment. Price sensitivity hindered Saudi consumers’ acceptance of organic food, affecting their purchase and consumption habits.

R7 said, “Organic food is preferable, but I can’t always afford it. Food choices depend on my budget because the price difference is large.” These words illustrate the financial difficulties some organic food purchasers confront. Price sensitivity affects purchase decisions, as the participant’s decision-making is driven by cost notwithstanding the benefits. R10 said, “I’ll pay more for organic food because it’s healthier and better for the environment. I accept the trade-off for long-term rewards.” The participant values health and the environment over pricing in this comment. Organic food purchases show a higher commitment to health and sustainability. Respondent R4 said, “I buy organic food on certain occasions or when I locate offers. I rarely buy it due to price.” This implies choosing organic food based on price and value. Participants’ intermittent consumption reflects the balance between organic product desire and budget constraints.

4.4 Price Sensitivity

The research shows that price sensitivity strongly influences Saudi consumers’ organic food purchases. Organic items cost more than conventional ones, although participants’ sensitivity varied. Many participants said organic food’s higher prices dissuade them from buying it regularly. Low-income individuals prioritised cost-effectiveness in meal choices, demonstrating price sensitivity. These individuals were unwilling to pay more for organic food despite its perceived health and environmental benefits. Some

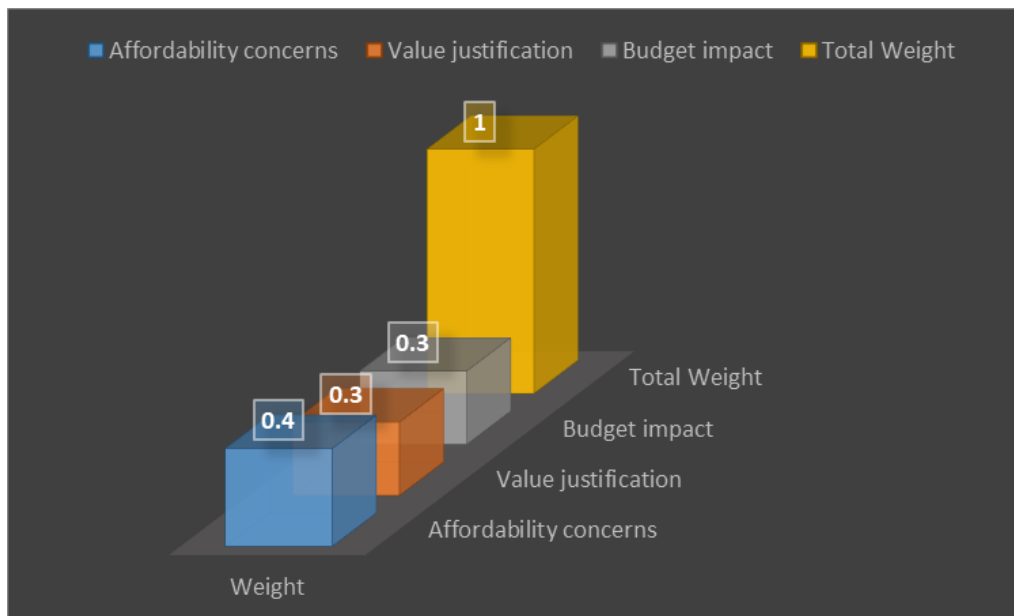


Figure 4: Weightage Analysis of Price Sensitivity.

Prior study has demonstrated that price sensitivity strongly influences organic food purchases. Affordability issues, according to Gelaidan et al. (2023), affect consumers’ propensity to purchase organic goods particularly low-income consumers. Although customers value organic food, Marwat (2023) discovered that price

still affects their purchases. These studies highlight the need of affordability in market penetration and consumer acceptance since they reveal that price sensitivity is universal and a barrier to consumption of organic food.

Table 6: Thematic Analysis of Price Sensitivity.

Step	Description
Step 1: Initial Coding	Initial codes identified from interviews: Affordability concerns Value perception Budget constraints
Step 2: Theme Development	Themes developed: Affordability as barrier Value justification Budget impact
Step 3: Finalization	Final themes defined and named: Cost considerations Value assessment Economic impact

4.5 Social Influence

Studies in Saudi Arabia indicate that consumers’ opinions and actions on organic food are shaped by society. Participants reported suggestions, recommendations, and social conventions impacting their natural dietary choices. For information and validation, many participants turned to personal recommendations from friends, relatives, and colleagues. Organic food usually gained more appeal with social affirmations of it. Participants say social media influencers and online organisations promote natural living and distribute natural product knowledge. Such material’s visibility and accessibility affect consumer preferences and impressions, therefore influencing

organic food selections. Organic food awareness, acceptance, and uptake in Saudi Arabia were much influenced by societal context.

Interviewee R1: “When my friends started shopping for organic food, I became intrigued. I experimented since they said it’s better for the environment and healthier.” This quotation illustrates how peer recommendations could inspire consumption of natural foods. Organic food choices are accepted by friends’ social standards, which drives more consumption for environmental and health concerns. Interviewee R5 remarked, “I follow Instagram health influencers that support organic foods. Their posts on natural food and advantages have revolutionised my supermarket shopping. This comment shows how consumer behaviour is influenced by social media celebrities. Participants’ involvement with online materials demonstrates how credible sources, by disseminating knowledge and supporting natural products, influence consumer opinions and decisions. “My parents prefer organic food since it’s safer and healthier,” respondent R9 remarked. I look about eating differently because of them.” Family attitudes and beliefs about organic food are passed down. The participant’s background and family influence shape their choice for organic products, demonstrating the long-term impact of social influence on consumer behaviour.

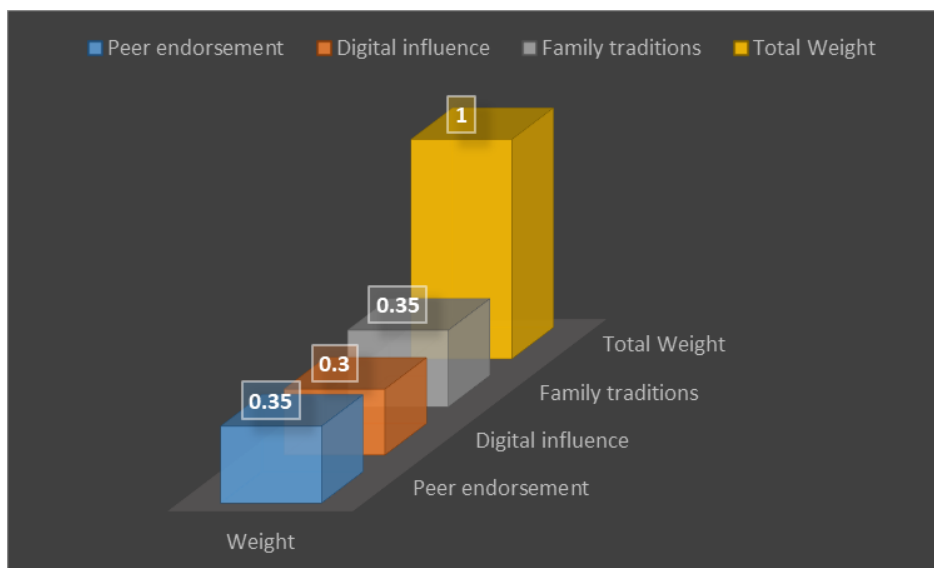


Figure 5: Weightage Analysis of Social Influence.

The findings support prior study on social influence on organic food consumption. Sarangi et al. (2023) found that interpersonal communication and social networks strongly influence food choices, especially organic product preferences. Research by Lavuri

(2022) highlights the impact of social norms and peer recommendations on consumer perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable food choices. These research confirm the current results that social influence, both through human contacts and digital platforms,

promotes organic food uptake. Pervasive social influence is important in organic product marketing tactics to increase consumer acceptability and demand.

5. Discussion

Different ideas, values, and outside influences affect Saudi Arabia consumers' attitude to organic food. Stakeholders advocating sustainable agriculture and local healthy meals depend on an awareness of these mechanisms. This chapter presents the whole results of thorough thematic analyses of semi-structured interviews with a large number of participants on health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social influence. This discussion investigates these features in order to grasp consumer tastes for organic food and provide suggestions for advancing Saudi Arabia's food culture in general sustainability.

Table 7: Thematic Analysis of Social Influence.

Step	Description
Step 1: Initial Coding	Initial codes identified from interviews: Peer recommendations Social media influence Family influence
Step 2: Theme Development	Themes developed: Peer endorsement Digital influence Family traditions
Step 3: Finalization	Final themes defined and named: Peer validation Online influence Family influence

Table 8: Findings Flow and Proposition Development Table.

Theme	Key Findings	Proposition Development
Health Perception	Consumers perceive organic food as healthier due to absence of chemicals, higher nutritional value, and disease prevention benefits.	Emphasize health benefits through targeted marketing. Educate consumers on specific nutritional advantages and disease prevention aspects.
Environmental Concern	Consumers prioritize organic food for its perceived environmental benefits, including pollution reduction and soil health improvement.	Highlight environmental sustainability in product labeling and advertising. Support organic farming practices through consumer education.
Perceived Quality	Organic food is perceived as superior in taste, freshness, and nutritional content, bolstered by trust in certification standards.	Strengthen certification processes and communicate quality assurances effectively. Enhance sensory appeal and nutritional messaging in marketing.
Price Sensitivity	Price remains a significant barrier despite perceived benefits; affordability concerns influence purchase decisions.	Introduce pricing strategies such as promotions or bundle deals to mitigate cost barriers. Communicate value proposition effectively.
Social Influence	Peer recommendations, digital influencers, and family traditions play crucial roles in shaping organic food adoption.	Engage with influencers and leverage social media platforms to amplify positive endorsements. Foster community engagement around organic lifestyles.

This study reveals that consumption of organic food in Saudi Arabia is motivated by health perception. Organic food is, participants firmly felt, better than conventional food. Thematic study turned up several reasons, including the absence of synthetic chemicals like pesticides and fertilisers, higher nutritional value, and the belief that organic food stops illness. These results confirm other studies revealing the influence of health considerations on natural product purchasing (Padel & Foster, 2005; Hughner et al., 2007). The focus on health benefits suggests that consumers see organic food as a proactive health tool. This is in line with general trends whereby people choose products with better nutritional value and safety and give health-conscious diets first priority. The studies also reveal diverse ways in which individuals view the health advantages of organic food. Participants pick organic foods since they think they reduce chemical intake. This backs with studies demonstrating consumers' view

of health benefits including social and environmental ramifications (Yiridoe et al., 2005). Suggesting a comprehensive approach to diet-based health care, the topic analysis also revealed that participants clearly associate organic food intake to prevention of chronic diseases. Therefore, even while health perception is a well-known factor promoting organic food adoption globally, its Saudi Arabian forms and consequences draw attention to cultural and environmental aspects impacting consumer behaviour.

Environmental concern was another main determinant of Saudi consumer attitude towards organic food. Participants were quite conscious of the environmental effects of conventional farming including loss of biodiversity, water pollution, and soil degradation. According to the topic research, consumers consider organic farming to be a green, sustainable alternative. This backs up research stressing environmental

sustainability as a major influence on consumption of organic food (Magnusson et al., 2003; Lockie, 2002). Organic food is recommended for ethical eating, environmental preservation, and health. The study also indicates that consumers' environmental sentiments regarding organic food are influenced by social standards and ethics. Participants claimed they routinely purchase goods supporting environmentally friendly, sustainable agriculture. Surveys find that consumers see organic farming as more ecologically friendly and consistent with their ideas of conservation and responsible consumption (Aertsens et al., 2009; Lockie, 2002). The thematic study reveals the links between the individual actions and environmental awareness of Saudi Arabian culture, therefore confirming the theory that eating organic food is a part of a cultural transformation towards sustainability.

Saudi Arabian organic food tastes were much influenced by quality. In taste, freshness, and nutrition, organic products exceeded conventionally grown ones. Participants recognised organic certification labels for authenticity and quality, so supporting this quality evaluation. These results complement earlier research showing how consumer opinions of organic food quality are influenced by sensory characteristics and certification trustworthiness (Krystallis & Chrysosoidis, 2005; HUGHNER et al., 2007). People choose organic food for its health advantages, sensory experiences, and superior quality, according to the topic study. According to the study, consumers are growingly desiring organic labels and transparent, open messages. Participants underlined the need of evident nutritional advantages and the need of production techniques' communication as well as the need of strong marketing tactics building customer confidence. Studies reveal that consumer quality perception incorporates value and authenticity as well as product attributes (Janssen & Hamm, 2012). Thus, even if natural food consumption is driven by perceived quality, its effective marketing requires a balance between sensory appeal and factual transparency.

Price sensitivity studies show Saudi consumers' varied perceptions and behaviour around organic food. Although organic food provides environmental and health benefits, participants commonly cited cost as a barrier to frequent usage. This supports global studies showing that price sensitivity drives organic food consumption (Honkanen et al., 2006; Aertsens, 2009). The thematic analysis found that low-income

clients avoided organic products. Consumer demand for sustainable and healthy solutions is difficult to meet due to cost constraints. The poll found that participants disagreed regarding organic food's value versus its higher cost. Some consumers were apprehensive owing to budgetary constraints, but others believed organic food was a good investment in health and sustainability. Consumers' willingness to pay more for organic products depends on their perceived personal benefits and financial capabilities (Grunert & Juhl, 1995). The hypothesis that economic factors and product value affect price sensitivity emphasises the need for targeted initiatives to alleviate consumer issues and improve affordability in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi consumer opinions and actions towards organic food were influenced by society. Participants choose organic food depending on family customs, internet influencers, and peer recommendations. This study emphasises the need of social networks in influencing consumer perceptions and information distribution, therefore complementing research on the impact of social norms and interpersonal communication on food choices (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Brunsø et al., 2004). Based on the topic study, people choose organic food partly due to peer and reputable social media endorsements. The study also demonstrated the influence of family customs and values on the desire for organic food. The correlation between social impact and cultural norms elucidates how individual choices and societal factors shape dietary practices. The endorsement of organic food adoption through social influence can have an impact on marketing and communication methods. Stakeholders can promote a conducive environment for sustainable food practices and organic food consumption through the utilisation of influential social networks and active community engagement.

The organic food landscape of Saudi Arabia is characterised by factors such as health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social impact. Various factors, including health advantages, ecological sustainability, cost, and social media, influence customers' choices. The findings emphasise the necessity of specific measures to enhance consumer perceptions, affordability, and societal influence in order to promote the adoption of organic food. By strategically aligning consumer values and preferences with market objectives, stakeholders may actively promote the advancement of sustainable food practices, leading to a more promising future for

Saudi Arabian consumers and their environment. This discourse facilitates well-informed decision-making and strategic measures to enhance the consumption of organic food in Saudi Arabia.

6. Conclusion

Finally, this paper investigates the several factors affecting the organic food consumption of Saudi Arabian consumers. By means of in-depth theme analysis of semi-structured interviews, the paper investigates health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social influence. Health benefits and environmental sustainability inspire consumers of organic food; they value the lack of synthetic chemicals and illness avoidance. Improved organic product appeal results from the impression of improved taste, freshness, and nutritious value. Price sensitivity still inhibits general acceptance even with these positive impressions. Consumer behaviour can be changed by family customs, internet endorsements, and peer recommendations. These results show the difficulty of consumer decision-making and the need of several organic food promotion strategies. Major ramifications for public health advocates, legislators, and marketers follow from these results. Understanding customer behaviour can help marketers promote organic food's health and environmental benefits, solve affordability concerns, and use social media to engage consumers. Policymakers may encourage organic farming and educate consumers about its benefits via supportive policies and incentives. Public health programmes can use these data to promote healthier diets and minimise diet-related diseases. By revealing the relationship between health consciousness, environmental values, quality perceptions, economic factors, and social influences, the research advances consumer psychology, environmental sociology, and marketing theories. These findings should inform longitudinal and comparative studies, cultural effects, and the role of digital technology in organic food consumer behaviour. By addressing these channels, scholars and practitioners may develop knowledge and foster sustainable food systems that meet consumer demands and tastes, creating a healthier and more sustainable future for Saudi Arabia and beyond.

Implications of the Study

This research sheds light on sustainable consumption and market acceptance beyond Saudi Arabian consumer

behaviour towards organic food. This study contributes to consumer psychology, environmental sociology, and marketing theories by examining health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social influence. The findings show that health consciousness drives organic food uptake, reflecting a global trend towards diet-based well-being. The focus on environmental sustainability shows customers' growing awareness of environmental issues and preference for sustainable products. These findings can help consumer decision-making models stress sustainable consumption's complex cognitive, affective, and social interactions. The study of price sensitivity and social impact illuminates economic and interpersonal dynamics that affect consumer decisions, giving theoretical underpinnings for understanding how external influences and economic restrictions affect human values and preferences. This research illuminates the complex reasons and challenges that drive organic food consumption, advancing theoretical understanding and informing future research and strategic initiatives to promote sustainable consumption worldwide.

This research affects food industry, public health, and environmental campaigners. Saudi organic food marketers and producers can boost market penetration and customer adoption by understanding consumer behaviour drivers such health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social impact. methods include honest communication of health benefits and environmental sustainability, pricing and advertising to address affordability difficulties, and social media influencers to enhance positive endorsements. Organic farming and consumer education can benefit policymakers. Health perception data can help Saudi public health programmes promote healthier diets and reduce chronic illness from conventional diets. Environmental advocacy groups can also use consumer environmental concerns to promote sustainable agriculture and ecological integrity. This research can help Saudi Arabia and abroad develop a more sustainable and health-conscious food culture by using theoretical concepts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the fact that it offers many advantages, this research has certain limitations. First, the study's 11 semi-structured interviews may limit its relevance to Saudi Arabians. Despite diversity initiatives, future research should have larger sample sizes and



demographic representation to capture different perspectives and experiences. Qualitative research offers deep insights but may hinder quantitative analysis and statistical generalisations. Surveys and experiments can verify and illuminate trend statistical significance. Cultural and environmental differences in Saudi Arabian market findings are another limitation. Socioeconomic conditions and market dynamics may affect consumer behaviour and opinions of organic food across the kingdom. Future research may be longitudinal to track these changes and determine consumer preference sustainability. The study focused on health perception, environmental concern, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and social influence, although convenience, taste preferences, and availability may also influence customer decisions and worth further study.

Based on the findings, future research could explore innovative approaches to develop this discipline. First, longitudinal study might examine how market dynamics, consumer education, and legislation affect Saudi Arabian organic food preferences. Comparative demographic and geographic studies in Saudi Arabia could help adapt marketing and regulatory strategies by exposing consumer attitudes and behaviours towards organic food. Cultural values and organic food consumer behaviour need more research. In culturally diverse societies like Saudi Arabia, understanding how cultural norms and traditions affect dietary choices, notably organic versus conventional food preferences, might promote sustainable consumption. Experimental designs and quantitative methodologies can show causal links and forecast organic food consumer behaviour while supplementing qualitative findings. Finally, future research may evaluate how digital technology and e-commerce platforms effect organic food client purchases. Digital consumer behaviour and participation can inform new organic food consumption and sustainability strategies as online platforms and social media influencers expand. By exploring these research pathways, scholars and practitioners can enhance knowledge and develop sustainable food systems that meet Saudi and worldwide consumer needs.

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