

## **DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIC FOOD PURCHASE INTENTION IN NIGERIA: AN EXTENDED THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR APPROACH**

**Chosen Chinwe NDUKWE-TOCHI**

Department of Marketing, Abia State University, Uturu

**Chidiadi Obinna ESI-UBANI**

Department of Marketing, Abia State University, Uturu

**Obiageri L. ODUH**

Department of Mass Communication, Abia State University, Uturu

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### **Abstract**

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The growing shift toward sustainable consumption has heightened interest in organic food products, yet adoption in Nigeria remains limited despite rising health and environmental concerns. This study examines the determinants of purchase intention toward organic foods among young urban Nigerian consumers by applying an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The model incorporates traditional TPB constructs—attitude and subjective norms—together with environmental awareness and price sensitivity to capture contextual realities of the Nigerian market. A structured questionnaire was administered to 402 respondents across Lagos, Abia, and Port Harcourt, and the data were analysed using multiple regression in SPSS. Results revealed that all four predictors significantly influenced purchase intention ( $p < .001$ ), with the model explaining 64.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .643$ ). Attitude was the strongest predictor ( $\beta = .280$ ), followed by environmental concerns ( $\beta = .258$ ), social influence ( $\beta = .253$ ), and price sensitivity ( $\beta = .144$ ). The findings confirm that positive health-related attitudes and ecological values are primary drivers of organic purchase intention, while social norms play an important role in Nigeria's collectivist cultural setting. Price sensitivity, although significant, exerted a comparatively weaker influence.

**Keywords:** Organic food, purchase intention, Theory of Planned Behaviour, environmental concerns, price sensitivity, Nigeria

### **1. Introduction**

The global shift toward sustainable consumption has intensified interest in organic food products due to their perceived health, environmental, and ethical advantages (Yadav & Pathak, 2020). Organic foods are cultivated without synthetic pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), or chemical fertilisers, making them appear healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventional alternatives (Asif et al., 2021). However, in Nigeria and other developing economies, organic food adoption remains low because conventional foods are more affordable, accessible, and

culturally embedded in traditional consumption patterns (Olagunju et al., 2021; Esi-Ubani et al., 2025).

Nigeria's organic market is still emerging and lags behind Western and Asian markets (Adeola & Evans, 2022). Despite rising health awareness among urban consumers, adoption is hindered by high prices, weak certification systems, and poor distribution networks (Onyango et al., 2020). Existing studies on organic food consumption in Nigeria have largely focused on awareness levels rather than the psychological and behavioural factors influencing purchase intention (Adegbuyi et al., 2021). This study addresses this gap by examining the determinants of organic food purchase intention among young urban consumers using an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model (Ajzen, 2020).

The research focuses on commonly available organic products such as fruits, vegetables, and staple foods like rice, maize, and legumes, which are increasingly sold in supermarkets and farmers' markets in cities such as Lagos, Abia, and Port Harcourt (Adeola & Evans, 2022; Asif et al., 2021). Growing public concern about pesticide contamination, particularly in fruits and vegetables, underscores the need to explore organic alternatives (Onyango et al., 2020).

The study investigates the predictors of purchase intention: attitude, social influence, environmental awareness, and price sensitivity within the TPB framework. Consumer attitudes derive from health and ethical evaluations of organic food (Paul et al., 2020), while subjective norms reflect conformity to family and peer expectations (Yadav & Pathak, 2020). Environmental awareness involves consumers' understanding of the ecological benefits of organic farming (Olagunju et al., 2021), and price sensitivity captures the influence of cost on purchasing decisions (Adeola & Evans, 2022).

The Objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the effect of perceived health benefits on consumers' purchase intention for organic food in Nigeria.
2. To assess the influence of social factors on consumers' intention to purchase organic food in Nigeria.
3. To evaluate how environmental concerns shape consumers' purchase intention for organic food in Nigeria.
4. To determine the relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' purchase intention for organic food in Nigeria.

The research hypotheses are:

H<sub>01</sub>: Health benefits have no significant effect on purchase intention for organic food in Nigeria.

H<sub>02</sub>: Social influence has no significant effect on organic food purchase intention in Nigeria.

H<sub>03</sub>: Environmental concerns have no significant effect on the purchase intention of organic food in Nigeria.

H<sub>04</sub>: Price Sensitivity has no significant relationship with the purchase intention of organic food in Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

#### Concept of Organic Food

Organic food refers to agricultural products grown within ecological systems that avoid the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), synthetic pesticides, and chemical fertilisers. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), organic agriculture emphasises holistic production methods that enhance the health of the agro-ecosystem, relying on agronomic, biological, and mechanical approaches rather than artificial inputs. (FAO, 2023). Similarly, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) defines organic agriculture as a system that sustains the health of soil, ecosystems, and people by depending on ecological processes and locally adapted cycles instead of potentially harmful external inputs. (IFOAM, 2022).

Organic farming in Nigeria predominantly involves staple crops such as vegetables, fruits, grains, and legumes. Adeola & Evans (2023) indicate that evolving consumer health concerns and the growth of a niche organic market are driving this cultivation. Nevertheless, the organic sector in Nigeria remains underdeveloped, impeded by hurdles including burdensome certification processes, fragmented institutional governance, and poor distribution networks (Olagunju et al., 2023).

Globally, the organic food market is expanding swiftly, projected to reach USD 320 billion by 2025 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 14% (Research and Markets, 2023). In comparison, Nigeria's organic market is forecasted to grow at a slower rate (7.4% CAGR between 2023 and 2028), constrained by limited conversion of arable land (just 0.9%) and high reliance on imports (6Wresearch, 2023). Organic fruits and vegetables account for roughly 60% of domestic demand (Adegbuyi et al., 2023), which still lags substantially behind regions like Europe, where over 10% of farmland ( $\approx 10.45\%$ ) is under organic management. (IFOAM, 2022).

#### Health Benefits and Organic Food Purchase Intention

One influencing factor for consumers' purchase of organic food is the belief in its superior health benefits. Since organic farming avoids synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilisers, such products are often regarded as safer, more natural, and potentially more nutritious compared to conventionally produced alternatives (FAO, 2023). In Nigeria, where concerns about food safety and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases are increasing, consumers tend to associate organic products with a "cleaner" and healthier profile (Philip & Dipeolu, 2010). There is a positive correlation between

awareness of organic food's health benefits and the intention to purchase such products (Nnanna-Ohuonu, 2025). The perceived health value of organic food remains a central determinant of consumers' willingness to pay for these options.

### **Social Influence and Organic Food Purchase Intention**

Social influence is the impact of peers, family, community, and societal norms, plays a critical role in shaping consumers' decisions to purchase organic food. Social networks and word-of-mouth communication, both offline and through digital platforms, significantly affect perceptions regarding the health and environmental benefits of organic products (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Subjective norms, including recommendations from family members and colleagues, exert a substantial influence on individuals' intentions to buy organic food (Chauke et al., 2019). Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) via social media platforms has been found to strongly shape attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control toward organic food consumption (Oloveze et al., 2024).

### **Environmental Concerns and Organic Food Purchase Intention**

Consumers' environmental awareness is a crucial determinant of their decision to purchase organic food. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) emphasises biodiversity conservation, soil health, and ecological balance as the foundational principles of organic farming (IFOAM, 2022). Heightened public concern about environmental issues has led to increased consumer interest in products viewed as environmentally sustainable (Nath et al., 2013).

### **Price Sensitivity and Organic Food Purchase Intention**

Price sensitivity describes the extent to which consumers' purchasing behaviour responds to changes in product prices. Given that organic food production involves labour-intensive methods, rigorous certification requirements, and limited economies of scale, such products generally command a higher market price (Post & Schahczenski, 2012). Weak certification frameworks and high distribution costs further exacerbate these price disparities, creating significant barriers to widespread adoption (Garibay & Jyoti, 2003). While health and safety concerns strongly motivate organic purchases, many consumers identify the high cost of organic foods as a major deterrent. Consequently, for consumers with high price sensitivity, the premium cost of organic products may overshadow perceived health and environmental benefits, thereby reducing purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2020).

### **Empirical Review**

Empirical research on organic food consumption has evolved globally, reflecting a shift toward sustainable and health-conscious dietary behaviour. In Nigeria, this trend is driven by rising awareness of food safety, environmental degradation, and health challenges, though adoption remains limited by economic, informational, and institutional barriers. Early work by Phillip and Dipeolu (2010) revealed that over 65% of consumers in Abeokuta were willing to pay a 10–20%

premium for organic vegetables due to perceived health benefits, though mistrust in certification and low awareness constrained adoption.

Subsequent studies reaffirmed the role of information and awareness. Nnanna-Ohuonu (2025) found that access to credible information through social media and peer communication significantly enhanced purchase intention, with awareness mediating the link between attitude and behaviour. Similarly, Chatterjee, Hazra, and Banerjee (2024) demonstrated that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and influencer endorsements significantly increase perceived value and intention ( $\beta = .372$ ,  $p < .001$ ), particularly among younger, digitally active consumers.

Social and cultural influences remain strong predictors in African markets. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Chauke and Duh (2019) confirmed that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control shape purchase decisions, consistent with Oloveze et al. (2024), who found that peer and family endorsements ( $R^2 = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predict purchase intention among young Nigerians. These results reflect Nigeria's collectivist culture, where social validation through family and digital networks drives organic consumption.

Environmental awareness also plays an important role. Nath et al. (2013) reported environmental concern as the strongest predictor of green product adoption ( $\beta = .468$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while Wang, Pham, and Dang (2020) showed that environmental consciousness promotes purchase intention but is weakened by price sensitivity. Nigerian consumers increasingly link organic products to sustainability goals (NOAN, 2023), though Ogunyemi and Bello (2023) noted a 20–25% yield gap that raises food security concerns.

Economic constraints persist as key barriers. Post and Schahczenski (2012) found organic products globally priced 15–40% higher due to certification and labour costs; in Nigeria, Familusi et al. (2023) and Olagunju et al. (2023) observed a 20–30% premium and limited farmer participation ( $\approx 12\%$ ) due to high costs and weak institutional support. Garibay and Jyoti (2003) similarly identified poor distribution and certification inefficiencies in developing markets.

Akinbode et al. (2023) reported that 78% of farmers in Oyo State adopt organic methods to minimise chemical exposure, while Ogungbaro et al. (2023) found that urban consumers associate organic foods with wellbeing and health. Adegbuyi et al. (2023) also observed a growing preference for locally sourced and fair-trade products, though fraudulent labelling continues to undermine trust. Collectively, these studies affirm that health consciousness, social influence, and environmental awareness remain the dominant drivers of organic food purchase intention in Nigeria, whereas affordability and certification credibility persist as key obstacles.

### **Theoretical Review**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) remains the dominant framework in explaining organic food purchasing intentions. TPB posits that behavioural intention is shaped by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Paul et al., 2021).

Empirical applications in Nigeria reveal that attitudes toward organic foods are heavily influenced by health consciousness and perceived nutritional benefits (Ogungbaro et al., 2023). Subjective norms are stronger in collectivist cultures, making peer and family expectations significant behavioural determinants (Adegbuyi et al., 2023). Perceived behavioural control, comprising self-efficacy and resource accessibility, remains a major constraint due to price sensitivity and availability issues (Familusi et al., 2023).

Recent studies extend TPB to include environmental awareness and price sensitivity as independent constructs. Environmental awareness enhances the model's predictive power by up to 22%, reflecting consumers' sustainability motivations (Yadav & Pathak, 2023). Conversely, price sensitivity explains economic constraints in developing countries, where organic foods are typically 20–30% more expensive (Olagunju et al., 2023). Together, these extensions resolve earlier limitations of TPB by integrating ecological consciousness and economic realism (Adeola & Evans, 2023).

The Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour (MGB) (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001) incorporates emotions and desires preceding behavioural intentions, making it more dynamic for understanding organic consumption motives. Nigerian consumers often link organic purchase intentions to health maintenance and environmental stewardship, aligning with emotional desire frameworks (Asif et al., 2023).

Similarly, the Value–Attitude–Behaviour (VAB) model (Homer & Kahle, 1988) suggests that values such as health and environmentalism shape attitudes, which then influence behavioural choices. The value–behaviour gap remains a critical issue in Nigeria due to trust deficits and price barriers (Paul et al., 2021).

### **3. Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative research design using a survey approach to collect data from young urban consumers in Nigeria. The design is appropriate given the study's goal to examine the causal relationships between psychological, environmental, and economic factors and consumers' purchase intention toward organic food products. The quantitative approach facilitated statistical generalisation and hypothesis testing using measurable variables derived from the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

The population includes urban consumers residing in Lagos, Abia, and Port Harcourt, representing Nigeria's cities with organic food availability and health awareness levels. The target demographic is young adults aged 18–40 years, as this group demonstrates higher health consciousness, digital access to organic product markets, and purchasing power.

The study utilised a stratified random sampling technique, ensuring demographic representation based on age, income level, and education. A minimum sample size of 385 respondents is determined using Cochran's formula for populations larger than 10,000 at a 95% confidence level and 5%

margin of error. Stratification ensured that all three urban centres and age-income segments are fairly represented.

A structured self-administered questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool. The instrument was divided into five sections. All items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. Items are adapted from validated scales in related studies (Ajzen, 1991; Paul et al., 2021; Yadav & Pathak, 2023).

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in consumer behaviour and environmental economics. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from Abia to check clarity and reliability. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test internal consistency, with a threshold value of 0.7 considered acceptable for each construct. Data was analysed using SPSS for Multiple regression Analysis.

The study was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), explaining purchase intention as a function of Attitude toward behaviour (health and ethical evaluations), and Subjective norms (influence from peers and family) (Esi-Ubani et al., 2026). The TPB was extended to include Environmental awareness – consumer concern for sustainability, and Price sensitivity – perceived affordability of organic food. This theoretical expansion is essential for contextualising the Nigerian organic food market, where structural barriers and environmental motivations are critical.

**4. Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Coefficients Table**

Predictor	B (Unstandardized)	Beta (Standardised)	T	Sig. (p)	VIF
Constant	0.291	–	2.274	.024	–
Attitude (ATT mean)	0.257	.280	5.596	.000	2.780
Social Influence (SN mean)	0.274	.253	5.568	.000	2.299
Environmental Concerns (ENV mean)	0.259	.258	5.477	.000	2.459
Price Sensitivity (PRICE mean)	0.158	.144	3.897	.000	1.513

Source: SPSS V.23 Output

**Data Analysis Summary**

The statistical results identify the key factors influencing consumers’ purchase intention toward organic food. Reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha confirmed strong internal consistency across all constructs—Attitude/Health Benefits ( $\alpha = .913$ ), Social Influence ( $\alpha = .813$ ),

Environmental Concerns ( $\alpha = .857$ ), Price Sensitivity ( $\alpha = .769$ ), and Purchase Intention ( $\alpha = .886$ )—all exceeding the acceptable 0.70 threshold.

Regression analysis revealed a strong relationship between the predictors and purchase intention ( $R = .802$ ), with the model explaining 64.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .643$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .639$ ). The Durbin–Watson statistic (2.033) confirmed independence of residuals, while ANOVA results ( $F(4, 397) = 178.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ) established the overall model significance.

Among predictors, Attitude was the strongest influence ( $\beta = .280$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that positive evaluations of organic products—particularly health benefits—drive purchase intention. Environmental Concerns ( $\beta = .258$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Social Influence ( $\beta = .253$ ,  $p < .001$ ) also had significant effects, highlighting the role of ecological awareness and social norms in shaping behaviour. Price Sensitivity ( $\beta = .144$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed a weaker yet significant effect, suggesting cost remains a constraint but not a dominant factor. Diagnostic tests confirmed model robustness, with all VIF values below 3 and assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity satisfactorily met.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The finding that attitude is the most influential predictor of organic food purchase intention aligns strongly with previous empirical evidence. Yadav and Pathak (2023) emphasised that attitudes formed from positive evaluations of organic products are the most direct determinant of purchase intention. Similarly, Nigerian studies such as Ogunbaro et al. (2023) and Akinbode et al. (2023) confirmed that health consciousness and perceived nutritional benefits remain the key motivations for organic food adoption. The current results reinforce these observations, demonstrating that consumers with favourable perceptions of health and safety are significantly more likely to express purchase intention. This suggests that policies and marketing strategies should prioritise awareness campaigns that highlight the health and well-being advantages of organic products.

Social influence also emerged as a significant determinant, supporting the argument of Adegbuyi et al. (2023) that peer and family expectations strongly shape consumption behaviour in Nigeria's collectivist culture. While Asif et al. (2023) reported only moderate social effects in Western contexts, Nigerian consumers appear far more responsive to social cues, reflecting the cultural emphasis on communal norms. This is consistent with Oloveze et al. (2024), who found that social endorsements and e-WOM through digital platforms substantially influence purchase intentions among young consumers. Hence, marketing efforts leveraging community leaders, family endorsements, and digital influencers may be particularly effective in promoting organic food adoption.

The study also found that environmental concerns significantly influence purchase intention, corroborating Yadav and Pathak's (2023) assertion that environmental awareness enhances the predictive power of the TPB model. Local evidence from NOAN (2023) reinforces this relationship, linking agroecological practices to increased consumer trust and sustainability awareness. The

findings are also supported by Nath et al. (2013) and Wang, Pham, and Dang (2020), who established that environmental concern positively affects purchase intention across developing markets. Although Nigeria's organic farming coverage remains low compared to Europe (Eurostat, 2023), rising eco-consciousness among urban consumers indicates a convergence with global sustainability trends. Nonetheless, as Ogunyemi and Bello (2023) warn, productivity gaps and high costs may challenge large-scale adoption.

Price sensitivity, while significant, exerted the weakest effect, aligning with Olagunju et al. (2023) and Familusi et al. (2023), who noted that organic foods in Nigeria carry a 20–30% price premium that discourages low-income consumers. However, unlike findings in other developing markets, the present results suggest that Nigerians may still prioritise health and environmental values over affordability, indicating a gradual shift toward value-based consumption rather than purely cost-based decisions.

From a theoretical perspective, this results validate the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) by integrating environmental and economic dimensions, consistent with Adeola and Evans (2023). The findings also support the Value–Attitude–Behaviour model (Homer & Kahle, 1988) and the Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001), demonstrating that values related to health, environment, and social belonging translate into behavioural intentions. In contrast to Paul et al. (2021), who identified a “value–behaviour gap,” all predictors in this study were significant, suggesting stronger alignment between stated attitudes and behavioural intentions among Nigerian consumers.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study corroborates and extends prior empirical works by confirming that attitudes, social influence, environmental concerns, and price sensitivity all significantly predict organic food purchase intention in Nigeria. Health-oriented attitudes and environmental values emerged as the strongest drivers, while social norms reflected Nigeria's collectivist orientation. Price, though a constraint, was less influential than anticipated. The findings highlight the potential for Nigeria's organic food market to grow if strategies emphasise health and ecological benefits while leveraging social influence and addressing price and certification barriers. 0

## 7. Recommendations

These recommendations are intended for policymakers, marketers, organic producers, and stakeholders seeking to promote organic food adoption and consumption in Nigeria:

- i. Promote the nutritional and safety advantages of organic foods through targeted campaigns, expert testimonials, and programs aimed at families, the elderly, and health-conscious youth.
- ii. Encourage adoption through endorsements by family, friends, community leaders, and social media influencers to amplify trust and acceptance.

- iii. Communicate the ecological benefits of organic farming, such as soil preservation and reduced chemical use, and align messaging with national climate adaptation goals to appeal to eco-conscious consumers.
- iv. Reduce cost barriers for low- and middle-income consumers via subsidies, value bundles, and strengthened local supply chains to make organic products more accessible.

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