

**CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO
BUY ORGANIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN
VENKALACHEDDIKULAM DS DIVISION, VAVUNIYA
DISTRICT**



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ABSTRACT

The growing demand for organic fruits and vegetables has been driven by increasing consumer awareness of health benefits, environmental sustainability, and food safety. This study investigates consumer preferences and willingness to purchase organic produce in Venkalcheddikulam DS Division, Vavuniya District. A structured pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data from 150 respondents, and statistical analyses, including multiple linear regression, were conducted to determine the relationships between independent variables like socio demographic factors, marketing factors, non-marketing factors and consumer willingness to buy organic produce. The findings indicate that health benefits are the primary motivation for buying organic products, while high prices and limited availability are significant barriers. Consumer awareness levels indicate that 43.3% have little awareness of organic produce, while only 20% have high awareness. Health benefits (67.3%) are the main reason for purchasing organic products, and the purchase frequency is predominantly rare (38%). The most preferred quality product attributes is overall appearance (65.3%). The main barrier for purchasing organic products is high prices (57.3%), followed by irregular supply (20%). Consumer preference for organic produce stands at 59%, while 21% having no preference to organic produce and 20% opting for non-organic products. The multiple regression model explains 19.1% of the variance in consumer preference and willingness to buy organic fruits and vegetables, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.146, indicating a good fit. ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant model ($p = 0.000$). Among the independent variables, awareness ($p = 0.003$), quality ($p = 0.042$), and place ($p = 0.002$) significantly influence willingness to buy, while availability, product, promotion, price, and gender show no significant impact. Hypothesis testing confirms significant positive relationships between awareness, quality, and place with willingness to buy, while availability, product, promotion, price, and gender are not significantly related. The findings suggest businesses to focus on increasing awareness, improving quality, and enhancing distribution strategies in order to promote organic fruit and vegetable consumption.

Keywords: consumer awareness, food safety, marketing, organic food, regression analysis

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