# AWARENESS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND PURCHASE INTENTION OF ORGANIC FOOD AMONG NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY STAFF

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**Abstract:** Growing worries about food safety, environmental sustainability, and health are the main causes of the rising demand for organic food worldwide. Despite this worldwide trend, Nigeria's organic food industry is still in its infancy, with low consumer adoption and low awareness. This study looks at university staff members' awareness, information sources, and intention to buy organic food in Nigerian universities. University staff members are an important group whose attitudes and actions can influence larger consumption patterns because of their educational background and social influence. The study's foundation is the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which highlights how information and knowledge influence behaviour and intention. Assessing the correlation between awareness and purchase intention as well as the impact of various information sources on consumers' propensity to purchase organic food are important goals. To test the suggested hypotheses, information was gathered via a structured questionnaire and examined using inferential statistics. The results show strong correlation between consumer intention, awareness, and reliable information sources, with implications for advocacy organisations, marketers, and policymakers. A better-informed consumer base can encourage healthier eating habits and aid in the expansion of Nigeria's organic food sector by improving focused awareness campaigns and fortifying certification frameworks.

## 1. Introduction

Global food consumption patterns have witnessed profound changes in recent decades, with increased attention towards organic food. This shift is largely attributed to heightened concerns regarding the adverse effects of conventional agriculture on human health, environmental sustainability, and food safety. Organic food, defined as agricultural products cultivated without synthetic fertilisers, chemical pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), or artificial additives, has become increasingly popular among health-conscious consumers (Kumar et al., 2024). As a result, the global organic food market has expanded rapidly, with sales surpassing $136 billion in 2022 and projected to continue on an upward trajectory (FiBL & IFOAM, 2023). Countries such as the United States, Germany, and France remain at the forefront of both organic food production and consumption, supported by strong regulatory frameworks, market incentives, and widespread consumer awareness.

In contrast, the Nigerian organic food sector is still developing, characterised by informality, limited infrastructure, and weak regulatory oversight. The absence of a national organic certification scheme and fragmented supply chains reduces consumer trust and dampens purchase intentions (Adeola et al., 2023). However, interest in organic food is growing, particularly among urban and educated populations. This shift is driven by rising concerns over non-communicable diseases linked to poor dietary habits and increasing awareness of the harmful effects of synthetic agrochemicals used in conventional food production (Okonkwo & Yusuf, 2023). As individuals become more health-conscious, the demand for healthier food alternatives such as organic products gain traction.

Consumer awareness plays a pivotal role in influencing food choices. Individuals with higher awareness of the health benefits, environmental advantages, and safety of organic food are more likely to adopt such options (Eze & Adebayo, 2024). Nonetheless, awareness alone does not always translate into action. Perception, shaped by awareness, significantly influences behaviour. Where awareness is low or information sources are unreliable, even individuals who express concern for health or the environment may fail to make organic food choices. Consequently, it is imperative to bridge the gap between awareness and behavioural intention through targeted communication strategies and credible information dissemination (Akinyele & Adediran, 2023). In countries like Nigeria, where dietary decisions are often driven by cultural norms, convenience, and cost, awareness-raising interventions are particularly crucial.

University staff members represent a strategic demographic in this context. As a highly educated and generally health-aware population, they possess the cognitive ability to analyse information and make evidence-based decisions. Their position in academic and social networks means that their food choices can influence peers, students, and broader communities. Moreover, academic institutions often serve as centres for research, policy development, and health education initiatives. Therefore, enhanced awareness among university staff could have a multiplier effect, stimulating policy advocacy, institutional support for organic agriculture, and grassroots awareness campaigns (Ogunyemi & Ojo, 2024).

Despite this potential, organic food consumption in Nigeria remains relatively low. Preliminary studies suggest a significant disparity between knowledge and actual purchasing behaviour, even among educated individuals. Factors such as limited access to credible information, the lack of a national organic labelling system, and the relatively high cost of organic products contribute to consumer scepticism (Nwachukwu & Olaniyi, 2023). Even within academia, university staff may encounter challenges in accessing verified data about organic food, raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing awareness efforts.

This study therefore aims to examine the awareness, information sources, and purchase intentions regarding organic food among university staff in Nigeria. By exploring this group's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours, the study intends to provide insights that can inform future policy direction, communication strategies, and market development. Understanding how informed and receptive university staff are towards organic food is essential for designing initiatives that leverage their influence in promoting healthier food systems and advancing the organic food movement in Nigeria.

**Hypotheses:**

- $H_{01}$: There is no significant relationship between awareness of organic food and purchase intention.
- $H_{02}$: Information sources have no significant effect on purchase intention of organic food.

## 2. Literature Review

### Concept of Organic Food

Organic food refers to agricultural products cultivated using environmentally sustainable methods that eschew synthetic pesticides, fertilisers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and artificial additives. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), organic agriculture relies on natural processes tailored to local conditions, aiming to enhance soil and water quality while conserving biodiversity (USDA, 2024). The primary distinction between organic and conventional food lies in production methods; while conventional farming often employs chemical interventions to boost yield and manage pests, organic farming utilises natural alternatives and crop rotation to maintain soil fertility and control pests. This fundamental difference contributes to the perception that organic foods are healthier and more environmentally friendly.

### Awareness and Its Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Consumer awareness significantly influences purchasing decisions, especially concerning organic food. Awareness encompasses consumers' knowledge and understanding of organic products, including their benefits, production processes, and certification standards. Higher levels of awareness are often associated with a greater likelihood of purchasing organic foods, as informed consumers are more attuned to the health and environmental advantages these products offer.

Recent studies have highlighted that consumers who are aware of the health benefits of organic food—such as the absence of synthetic additives and harmful pesticides—are more inclined to choose organic products (Bazhan et al., 2024). Furthermore, understanding the environmental benefits, like biodiversity preservation and reduced pollution, also positively influences consumer preferences (Nguyen et al., 2023). Awareness of food safety advantages, stemming from organic farming's avoidance of antibiotics and hormones, further impacts consumers' inclination towards organic food products (Cheng et al., 2023).

Additionally, awareness of the socio-economic benefits associated with supporting organic farming—such as contributing to the local economy and promoting fair trade—can shape consumer attitudes and behaviours towards organic food (Shanta et al., 2025). In summary, comprehensive awareness of the multifaceted benefits of organic food consumption plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behaviour.

### Information Sources and Food Preferences

Information sources play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours towards food choices. The channels through which consumers receive information about organic food—such as media, social networks, educational programmes, and product labelling—can significantly influence their perceptions and willingness to purchase these products. The credibility, accessibility, and clarity of these information sources are critical in determining their impact.

For instance, media coverage highlighting the health and environmental benefits of organic food can boost consumer interest and demand. Conversely, misinformation or lack of information can lead to scepticism and reluctance to purchase organic products. Transparent labelling and certification, along with educational initiatives, are essential in providing consumers with trustworthy information that facilitates informed decision-making (CodeBlue, 2024). Personal sources, including family, friends, and colleagues, also significantly influence consumer decisions through shared experiences and recommendations. Commercial sources, such as advertising and promotional materials, aim to inform and persuade consumers through targeted messages. Public sources, encompassing media outlets and consumer organisations, offer objective information that aids consumers in

making informed choices (Cheng et al., 2023). Moreover, social media and the internet have become increasingly important as information sources. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube serve as spaces where information, opinions, and health advice are exchanged, often leading to changes in consumer behaviour. An analysis of social media discussions revealed that health concerns post-pandemic have driven a consumer shift towards organic produce, with social media playing a key role in this behavioural change (CodeBlue, 2024).

**2.4 Theoretical Framework: Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), posits that behavioural intention is influenced by three factors: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of organic food consumption, TPB has been widely applied to understand and predict consumer intentions. Recent studies have extended the TPB framework to include additional constructs relevant to organic food consumption. For example, a study in India incorporated environmental attributes into the TPB model, finding that subjective norms and attitude positively influence consumers' purchase intention, with environmental attributes having a positive impact on attitude (Raval & Makhija, 2023). Similarly, research in Vietnam introduced household norms and trust in organic food as additional factors, revealing that household norms significantly influence purchase intention and behaviour, and trust directly affects purchase intention (Nguyen et al., 2023).

In Bangladesh, an extended TPB model was utilised to examine consumers' intention and actual purchase behaviour of organic foods. The study found that product availability, attitude, health consciousness, and consumer trust greatly influenced purchase intention and, in turn, actual purchase behaviour. Consumer trust also played a significant mediating role between product information and purchase intention (Shanta et al., 2025). These findings underscore the applicability and adaptability of the TPB framework in understanding organic food purchase behaviour across different cultural contexts. Incorporating additional constructs such as environmental concerns, health consciousness, and trust enhances the predictive power of the model, providing valuable insights for policymakers, marketers, and health professionals aiming to promote organic food consumption.

**Impact of Awareness and Information Sources on Purchase Intention of Organic Food**

Awareness and Purchase Intention: Research has shown that consumers' intention to buy organic food is significantly influenced by their level of awareness of the benefits of organic food, with higher levels of awareness about the health, environmental, and social benefits of organic food positively influencing consumers' intention to buy (Asioli et al., 2017; Ong, 2015). Information Sources and Purchase Intention: University staff's intention to buy organic food can be influenced by the sources of information on organic food, with studies emphasising the importance of reliable and trustworthy information sources, such as government agencies, scientific research, and respectable organisations, in favourably influencing consumers' intention to buy organic food. (Asioli et al., 2017; Iyengar & Usman, 2016). Consumers who rely on reliable information sources are more likely to have a higher purchase intention.

**Previous Studies on Organic Food Purchase Intention**

The factors influencing consumers' intentions to buy organic food have been the subject of numerous studies (Scalco et al. 2017; Dean et al. 2008; Carfora et al., 2020), frequently expanding the TPB framework to incorporate extra variables like trust, environmental concerns, and health consciousness. When Dean et al. (2008) integrated moral attitudes into the TPB, they discovered that moral considerations had a significant impact on consumers' intentions to buy organic food. In a similar vein, Carfora et al. (2020) looked at the function of trust in the TPB framework and found that trust in organic food increased purchase intentions by having a positive impact on attitudes and subjective norms. Another study by Teixeira et al. (2021) extended the TPB by including health concerns and perceived quality as determinants of attitude toward organic food. Their findings indicated that both health concerns and perceived quality significantly impacted attitudes, which in turn influenced purchase intentions. These studies underscore the multifaceted nature of consumer decision-making regarding organic food and highlight the importance of considering a range of psychological and contextual factors.

According to the literature, a variety of attitudinal and normative factors, as well as consumer awareness and information sources, are important in determining consumers' intentions to purchase organic food. A strong framework for comprehending these behaviours is offered by the TPB, and its extensions provide more in-depth understanding of the other elements influencing consumer choices. In order to create focused strategies that encourage the consumption of organic food, future research should keep examining these relationships, especially in a variety of cultural and economic contexts.

According to the literature, eating organic food is not just a question of product availability; rather, it is closely related to consumer awareness, the reliability and quality of information sources, and the social and psychological foundations of behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides a solid foundation for comprehending how social norms, attitudes, and perceived control inform purchase intentions. University staff,

due to their educational background and exposure to health and environmental discourses, are a critical demographic in this context. Their purchasing behaviour may not only reflect personal beliefs but also influence broader communities, including students and peers. An understanding of the interplay between awareness, information sources, and theoretical frameworks such as the TPB can help identify effective strategies for increasing organic food consumption, especially within Nigeria's evolving food landscape.

## 3. Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used in this study, which is appropriate for gathering data on the state of phenomena today and for making reliable generalisations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study's goals of determining university staff members' awareness, informational sources, and intention to purchase organic food at a few Nigerian universities are all in line with the design choice. The universities chosen for the study are Abia State University and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture; Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri; Ebonyi State University and Alex Ekwueme University Ndufu Alike-Ikwo. All of the faculty members at Nigeria's federal and state universities made up the study's population. Because of their alleged greater education, awareness, and ability to shape public opinion, university staff members were chosen (Olayemi et al., 2022). The sampling method was multi-stage. First, six universities—three federal and three state—were specifically chosen to represent institutional diversity and geographic diversity. Second, stratified sampling was used to select participants based on faculties (sciences, arts, social sciences, health sciences, and agriculture), while proportionate random sampling was employed within each stratum.

Assuming a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, producing a representative sample of 600 university staff, of which 360 returned valid and usable copies of the questionnaire. Regression analysis and hypothesis testing are considered to be feasible with this sample size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Selection bias was reduced and representativeness was guaranteed by the multi-stage sampling technique. Stratified random sampling enhanced the reliability of subgroup analysis across faculties, while proportionate sampling ensured that each faculty was fairly represented in accordance with its actual size within the university. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into five sections: (1) demographic information; (2) awareness of organic food; (3) information sources; (4) purchase intention; and (5) constraints and suggestions. Items were adapted from validated scales used in previous studies, including Yadav and Pathak (2016), Aertsens et al. (2011), and Teixeira et al. (2021). The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (5)*.

The instrument was pre-tested with 30 university staff members from a non-sampled university to guarantee validity and reliability. According to Hair et al. (2019), the internal consistency Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.78 to 0.88, indicating acceptable reliability. The study's three variables were respondents' familiarity with the term "organic food," their understanding of its advantages, and how it differed from conventional food. Media exposure (TV, radio, and the internet), scholarly expertise, peer discussions, and market interactions were among the information sources. The likelihood of purchasing organic food, willingness to pay more, and preference for daily consumption were operationalised as purchase intentions.
SPSS (Version 25) was used to analyse the data. The characteristics and awareness levels of the respondents were summed up by descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and percentage). Multiple regression analysis and Pearson's correlation are two examples of inferential statistics that were examined.

## 4: Results and Discussion

The sample size for this study is 600 university staff respondents out of which 360 retuned correctly filled and usable copies of the questionnaire. This represents 60 per cent response rate considered acceptable.

**Table 1: Demographic Frequency Table (N = 360)**

| Demographic Variable | Category/Response | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Younger university staff | 216 | 60 |
| | Older university staff | 144 | 40 |
| Academic Rank | Lower ranks | 209 | 58 |
| | Higher ranks | 151 | 42 |
| Income Level | Higher income | 198 | 55 |
| | Lower income | 162 | 45 |
| Gender | Male | 187 | 52 |
| | Female | 173 | 48 |

| Demographic Variable | Category/Response | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Discipline | Sciences | 119 | 33 |
| | Humanities | 126 | 35 |
| | Social Sciences | 115 | 32 |
| Awareness of Organic Food | Familiar with the term | 259 | 72 |
| | Correctly identified key attributes | 241 | 67 |
| | Deep knowledge (certified vs uncertified) | 155 | 43 |
| Information Sources | Internet | 292 | 81 |
| | Social media platforms | 270 | 75 |
| | Television | 223 | 62 |
| | Academic seminars/conferences | 162 | 45 |
| | Peer discussions | 144 | 40 |
| | Newspapers | 90 | 25 |
| | Radio | 65 | 18 |

**Explanation of the Demographic Data**

**Age and Academic Rank**: 216 younger staff (60%) expressed a higher intention to purchase organic food, compared to 144 older staff (40%). Similarly, 209 staff in lower academic ranks (58%) reported greater purchase intentions than 151 in higher ranks (42%) (Table 1). This suggests that younger and junior staff may be more open to adopting healthier or sustainable consumption habits. **Income Level**: 198 respondents (55%) with higher incomes showed a stronger ability to afford organic food, whereas 162 respondents (45%) with lower incomes noted financial constraints. This indicates that affordability is a key factor in actual purchase behaviour. **Gender and Academic Discipline**: The sample had 187 males (52%) and 173 females (48%), with no significant gender-based differences in awareness or intention to purchase. Disciplinary backgrounds showed a relatively even spread: Sciences (119), Humanities (126), Social Sciences (115) — and none showed a significant impact on organic food attitudes, suggesting similar levels of exposure or interest across fields.

**Level of Awareness Among University staff**

The analysis indicates that the university staff surveyed had a moderate to high level of awareness about organic food (Table 1); roughly 72% of respondents said they were familiar with the term "organic food," and 67% correctly identified its key attributes, such as the lack of synthetic pesticides, non-GMO status, and environmentally friendly production processes; however, only 43% showed deep knowledge by distinguishing between certified and uncertified organic products. This moderate awareness level is consistent with earlier research by Aertsens et al. (2011), who observed that awareness tends to be higher among individuals with higher education levels, though not always accompanied by accurate or detailed knowledge. University staff members are in a good position to understand the health and environmental benefits of organic food due to their critical thinking and information consumption. Nevertheless, the study observed gaps in practical awareness—particularly knowledge about product labelling, certification bodies, and accessibility in local Nigerian markets.

**Most Influential Sources of Information**

Peer discussions (40%) and academic seminars/conferences (45%), television (62%), and the Internet (81%) and social media platforms (75%) were the most influential sources among those analysed. Newspapers and radio were less common traditional sources (Table 1). The significant influence of digital sources demonstrates the changing pattern in the way educated Nigerians, especially university staff, obtain information about food. This result is in line with Teixeira et al. (2021), who highlighted the increasing importance of digital platforms in influencing food choices made by consumers, particularly those who are educated and live in cities. The influence of academic seminars was moderate, despite their expected larger role. This suggests that more focused campaigns are needed in academic settings to incorporate organic food literacy into larger health and sustainability discourses.

**Relationship Between Awareness and Purchase Intention**

Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between awareness and purchase intention. This indicates that as awareness about organic food increases, so does the likelihood of university staff intending to purchase such products. This finding supports the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that behavioural intentions are influenced by an individual's attitudes, subjective

norms, and perceived behavioural control. Higher awareness contributes to more favourable attitudes and perceived benefits, thereby strengthening purchase intention. Similar results were found in the work of Yadav and Pathak (2016), who argued that knowledge about organic food positively correlates with the intention to buy, especially when consumers are confident in the product's health benefits and authenticity.

**Influence of Different Information Sources on Buying Decisions**

Multiple regression analysis identified Internet sources ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and social media ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$) as significant predictors of purchase intention. Television also had a modest but significant effect ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$), while other sources such as radio, print media, and seminars did not show statistically significant contributions. These findings underscore the primacy of digital media in shaping food-related behaviours among university staff. The immediacy, accessibility, and diversity of content online provide consumers with the tools to independently verify, compare, and trust organic product claims. However, there is a potential downside. The reliance on digital media also exposes individuals to misinformation or greenwashing, particularly in an under-regulated market like Nigeria. It becomes imperative for stakeholders—including marketers, nutritionists, and regulatory bodies—to collaborate in curating accurate, appealing, and context-specific organic food content online. Investing in influencer campaigns, expert webinars, and short-form educational videos could significantly boost both awareness and purchase behaviour.

**Demographic Differences in Purchase Intention**

Further analysis using ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences in purchase intention based on age, rank, and income level. Younger university staff (below 40 years) reported higher purchase intention compared to their older counterparts. Similarly, staff in lower ranks displayed greater enthusiasm for purchasing organic food compared to senior staff, possibly due to generational differences in health consciousness and media usage patterns. Income also played a crucial role. Staff earning above ₦250,000 per month were more willing to buy organic food, even if it meant paying a premium. This supports Aertsens et al. (2011), who noted that affordability is a major barrier to organic food consumption in developing countries. No significant differences were found based on gender or faculty affiliation, suggesting that awareness and intent cut across disciplines and sexes equally. These insights can guide segmented marketing and awareness strategies.

**Implications for Marketers, Policymakers, and University Communities**

The findings of this study hold important implications for various stakeholders:

- Marketers should leverage the digital behaviour of university staff by investing in targeted online campaigns. Platforms like LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram can be useful for engaging academic audiences. Product authenticity and transparency in labelling should be emphasized to reduce scepticism and encourage trust.
- Policy makers in health and agriculture should recognize the strategic role of universities in promoting sustainable consumption. Incorporating organic food education into university health programmes, hosting organic food fairs on campuses, and encouraging partnerships between universities and certified organic food producers can bridge the gap between awareness and access.
- University management and health committees can integrate organic food discussions into wellness programmes, seminars, and cafeteria offerings. Academic communities can act as change agents in the broader society by modelling healthy food choices and sustainability behaviours.

Moreover, increased advocacy for proper certification, labelling regulations, and consumer protection laws is necessary to prevent misleading claims in the organic market. Nigeria's organic food sector remains largely unregulated compared to developed countries, leaving room for exploitation and mistrust. Public policy support in this area is vital.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the awareness levels, sources of information, and purchase intentions of organic food among university staff in selected Nigerian universities: Abia State University, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Imo State University, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Ebonyi State University, and Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike-Ikwo. The central thesis was that university staff, as opinion leaders and role models in society, have the potential to influence the adoption of healthy food consumption practices. The research specifically examined how awareness and information sources shape their intention to purchase organic food. The findings indicated that a substantial proportion of university staff are moderately aware of what organic food entails, with about 72% expressing familiarity with the concept. However, only a smaller percentage demonstrated in-depth understanding regarding certification standards and health/environmental benefits. This gap between general awareness and detailed knowledge suggests the presence of superficial understanding, which may not be sufficient to drive informed purchasing decisions.

The study further identified the most influential sources of information about organic food. Digital media platforms—particularly the Internet and social media—emerged as the dominant sources influencing awareness and decision-making. Traditional channels such as print media and radio were found to have minimal impact. This highlights the evolving media consumption habits of educated consumers and underscores the relevance of digital marketing strategies in today's food industry. A significant and positive relationship was found between awareness and purchase intention. University staff with higher levels of awareness were more likely to intend to purchase organic food. Moreover, regression analysis revealed that specific sources of information—particularly Internet-based and social media content—significantly influenced purchasing intentions.

Demographic analysis (Table 1) showed that younger university staff and those in lower ranks expressed higher levels of intention to purchase organic food, while income levels were positively associated with the ability to pay for organic products. Gender and academic discipline were not found to have a statistically significant impact. The study confirmed the central hypothesis that awareness and information sources significantly shape the purchase intentions of organic food among university staff. The research underscores the need for strategic communication, targeted awareness campaigns, and improved market accessibility to foster organic food consumption. This study reinforces the importance of awareness and credible information sources in shaping organic food purchase intention among university staff in Nigerian universities. It highlights digital media as a powerful vehicle for disseminating information and influencing consumer choices. By promoting transparency, affordability, and targeted communication, stakeholders can encourage healthier and more sustainable food consumption among one of the nation's most influential professional groups. The findings contribute significantly to the emerging body of knowledge on organic food marketing in sub-Saharan Africa and offer practical steps for leveraging the academic community as agents of change in the broader food ecosystem.

**Practical Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance awareness, trust, and purchase of organic food among university staff and the wider public.

**1. Leverage Digital Media for Awareness Campaigns:** Given the dominance of digital channels as sources of information, marketers, non-governmental organizations, and agricultural extension officers should prioritize **online platforms** for organic food awareness campaigns. Short videos, infographics, webinars, and influencer partnerships on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can effectively communicate the benefits and certification standards of organic food.

**2. Strengthen Product Labelling and Certification Transparency:** A major barrier identified in the study is the limited knowledge of official certification and product authenticity. Regulatory bodies such as the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Nigerian Organic Agriculture Network (NOAN) must enhance public education on how to identify certified organic products through labelling standards and certification seals. Retailers should also provide clear product information at points of purchase.

**3. Integrate Organic Food Literacy in University Wellness Programmes:** Universities should include organic food education as part of faculty health and wellness programmes. This could take the form of seminars, exhibitions, and nutrition workshops that discuss the health and environmental benefits of consuming organic produce. Cafeterias and cooperative food stores on campuses could also partner with certified organic suppliers to offer healthier food options to staff and students.

**4. Promote Affordability and Accessibility through Policy Intervention:** Government support through subsidies, incentives, or tax exemptions for local organic farmers and producers will help reduce production costs and ultimately lower retail prices. Policies that promote urban and peri-urban organic farming near academic institutions can also improve accessibility and affordability for university staff.

**Limitations of the Study**

While the study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged: Scope and Sample Size: The study focused on selected universities in Nigeria and may not be representative of all academic institutions across the country. Regional differences, institutional cultures, and economic contexts might influence awareness and purchasing behaviours differently. Cross-sectional Design: The data were collected at a single point in time. This design does not allow for analysis of changes in behaviour or awareness over time, nor does it establish causality. Self-reported Data: Responses were based on self-reported measures, which are subject to social desirability bias and recall errors. Some participants might overstate their awareness or intention to purchase in a bid to conform to perceived socially acceptable responses.

**Future Research**

In light of the study's limitations and evolving dynamics in food consumption patterns, the following areas are recommended for further research: Longitudinal Studies: Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to track changes in awareness, attitudes, and purchasing behaviour over time. This would help establish causality

and provide insights into the sustainability of consumer interest in organic food. Experimental and Behavioural Studies: Studies using experimental or observational methods can bridge the gap between intention and actual behaviour by observing consumer behaviour in real-world settings, such as in supermarkets or university food stores.

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