# A Study on Buyers Perception Towards Food Supplements in Sivaganga District

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**OPEN ACCESS**

Manuscript ID:
COM-2026-14039997

Volume: 14

Issue: 3

Month: July

Year: 2026

E-ISSN: 2582-6190

Received: 16.05.2026

Accepted: 18.06.2026

Published Online: 01.07.2026

Citation:
Amjath Bargana, S., et al. "A Study on Buyers Perception Towards Food Supplements in Sivaganga District." *ComFin Research*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2026, pp. 32–40.

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.34293/commerce.v14i3.9997

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**Abstract**

*Food supplements are highly helpful in meeting the daily needs of important nutrients that are not present in a regular and normal diet. They are also useful for maintaining body functions, increasing energy, and minimizing the risk of occurrence of chronic diseases. This study was conducted among food supplement buyers in the Sivaganga district. A descriptive research design was employed. The convenience sampling method was adopted to select 250 buyers of food supplements, and data were gathered from them using a questionnaire during October–December 2025. Percentages, means and standard deviations, t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analysis were used to study the objectives and test the hypotheses of the study. The findings reveal that buyers of food supplements perceive that food supplements are necessary to maintain better health, are highly safe, superior in quality, have natural ingredients, fill gaps in the daily diet, increase energy, and prevent the occurrence of infections. Significant differences were observed in buyers' perception of food supplements and their profile, namely gender, age, education, monthly income, and marital status, as t(4.134 and 4.175 for gender and marital status, respectively) and F values (5.212, 7.876, and 6.560 for age, education, and monthly income, respectively) are significant at the 1% level. Moreover, buyers' perception of food supplements has a significant, positive, and moderate relationship with their satisfaction with them, with a correlation coefficient of 0.53. Hence, food supplements should act as an alternative to medicines, must not create any side effects, and should also enhance the physical appearance of buyers. Future research may investigate the effectiveness of the dimensions of the attitude of buyers of food supplements on their buying behavior and the factors influencing the buying behavior of buyers towards food supplements in Sivaganga district and other districts in Tamil Nadu and the state as a whole.*

**Keywords**: **Buyers, Consumer Behaviour, Food Supplements, Nutritional Products, Perception, Satisfaction**

## Introduction

The demand for food materials with enhanced health benefits is continuously and swiftly increasing because of advancements in technologies and innovations, shifting economic and social conditions, and changes in lifestyle of people across all nations in the globe(Keservani et al.). The demand for food supplements and functional food is increasing rapidly among all consumer segments. In present times, foods are considered as not just fulfilling hunger but also providing necessary nutrients and giving health benefits to consumers additionally namely improving mental and physical well beings and decreasing maladies relating to nutritional deficiencies (Barauskaite et al.).

The global food supplement market is valued at approximately USD 209 billion and is anticipated to cross USD 431 billion by 2033. This rapid growth is mainly due to a shift toward personalized nutrition, preventive healthcare, and increasing health consciousness among the general public worldwide. The Indian food supplement market is booming, valued at approximately USD 4.03 billion and expected to reach USD 5.0 billion by 2033. This sector is experiencing a rapid double-digit Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.31% to 13.1%

Food supplements are intensified sources of nutrients, namely vitamins, amino acids, minerals, or fiber, and other materials deliberated to supplement normal food. They are generally available as capsules, tablets, liquids, and pills and are used for correcting deficiencies in nutrients or maintaining sufficient consumption of particular nutrients(Kowalska et al.). Food supplements contain various nutrients and other important ingredients, including extracts obtained from different herbs and plants. Food supplements are any kind of food materials for supplementing normal food tiles. They are strenuous sources of nutrients and/or other materials (Pushpangadan et al.) that have nutritional effects on consumption and are sold in different doses in the market. They are consumed in small quantities for maintaining better health of users or consumers.

Food supplements are highly helpful for meeting the daily needs of important nutrients that are not present in regular and normal diets. They are also useful for maintaining body functions, increasing energy, and minimizing the risk of occurrence of chronic diseases (Nigudkar). They also prevent vitamin or nutritional deficiencies, and some life stages require a few important nutrients to maintain and improve the health condition of consumers (Ohto-Fujita et al.). Thus, they fill the gap in the nutritional content of the diet and provide fiber and other nutrients to consumers.

Currently, food supplements are readily available in the market in different formats and products, and they are rapidly becoming popular among all consumer segments. People widely buy and consume food supplements for different reasons, including health consciousness, disease prevention, balancing diet intake, enhancing attractiveness in body structure, and increasing productivity(Colombo et al.). Perception of food supplements is highly critical as it influences consumption habits, health status, nutritional balance, and/or medication intervention. Positive or favorable perceptions generally lead to the purchase of food supplements and are also related to their delightfulness. With this background, it is imperative to study buyers' perceptions of food supplements, particularly in the Sivaganga district, since no studies of this kind have been carried out in this district.

**Review of Literature**

(Bose) studied the perception of consumers on food supplements in Siliguri, West Bengal. People had a higher degree of interest in obtaining knowledge on food supplements, and they understood the problems related to their health well. A major proportion of respondents' viewed them as medicine, while a few respondents opined that they were highly priced and had poor knowledge of them. Majority of them were satisfied with them as they had improved their health condition and they viewed that wealth people could afford and consume them regularly,

(David et al.) examined dietary supplement use, knowledge, and perceptions among student pharmacists. Among the total students, 52% and 25% of the public had consumed dietary supplements at least once. Student pharmacists had viewed dietary supplements as they were not necessary for health and information on label were not helpful and they had insufficient research, and they had restricted knowledge on them

(Lekshmi et al.) investigated the perceptions of dietary supplements among students. They concluded that 68% of paramedical and 35% of medical students had used dietary supplements without others' advice, and they viewed that they were available readily, accessible with ease, comparative at low prices, used as substitutes for nutrients, and had herbal ingredients.

(Josipa et al.) studied community pharmacists' use, perception, and knowledge of dietary supplements. Pharmacists had higher knowledge of dietary supplements and had a favorable perception of dietary supplements as expensive, maintaining

health, having no side effects, easy access, useful for body fitness, and significant differences were observed in the perception of dietary supplements among their profiles.

(Chiba and Tanemura) examined the differences in the perception of dietary supplements between dietary supplement/medicine users and non-users. Users had viewed dietary supplements as effective and safe, and they had favorable and higher degrees of perception towards them in comparison to non.-users Users had good knowledge of the different features of dietary supplements, while non-users had poor knowledge of the features of dietary supplements.

(Eyman et al.) made a study the perception and knowledge of medical college students regarding dietary supplement use for the prevention and treatment of covid-19. They revealed that two-thirds of medical students viewed dietary supplements as having increased immunity and a lower risk, and nearly half of them opined that they did not have negative effects or substitutes for food, and they had a positive perception of the use of dietary supplements.

(Susan et al.) examined the perception, knowledge, and consumption patterns of dietary supplements used during the covid-19 pandemic among black Africans. The majority of users viewed dietary supplements as medicines in combination with other medicines, accessible, nutritious, having herbal ingredients, and maintaining health. They had favorable and positive perceptions of dietary supplements, which were significantly related to their consumption patterns.

(Din et al.) assessed the association between knowledge, perception, and practice of dietary supplements among Chinese adults and found that the demand for dietary supplements had considerably increased among adults. At the same time, knowledge on dietary supplements was comparatively low and a large gaps was found among knowledge and behaviour which was affecting decision making among them and they had favourable perception on them.

(Robin et al.) explored the motivations, information behavior, perceptions, and intentions of dietary supplement users. They explicated that dietary supplements were healthy, maintained health, improved physical fitness and work productivity, and were highly priced, and users had positive and favorable perceptions of dietary supplements. A significant difference was observed between the perception of dietary supplements and the profile of users.

(Muhammad et al.) investigated the perception and knowledge of dietary supplement use among university students in Lahore, Pakistan. They stated that university students used supplements for cosmetic reasons and weight loss and viewed them as costly, having side effects on use, poor access, and risky among young university students.

(Lee and Kwak) conducted a narrative review on consumer perception influencing supplement choice, focusing on clinically studied weight-management supplements for obesity. Consumers used supplements for weight management, safety, natural ingredients, and physical appearance, and they had a positive perception of food supplements.

(Małgorzata et al.) studied dietary supplements as popular products supporting the diet. Consumers had positive perceptions of safety, quality, ingredients, and side effects, which were positively related to their satisfaction with dietary supplements.

(Prabhanjali and Mendis) made a comprehensive study on the food supplement industry and consumer perceptions in Sri Lanka. Consumers had a positive perception of food supplements with respect to their quality, nutrient content, safety, and maintenance of good health.

(Weiyi et al.) did a research on does the convenience enhance consumers' perception of the premium quality of dietary supplements. Consumers had a favorable perception of dietary supplements, and they were using premium-quality dietary supplements because they were easy to eat and carry, and their nutritional content and taste.

The above review of literature revealed that all the studies had adopted the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and not the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and were conducted in Western nations. Some studies indicated that the price of food supplements was high, had good information, had good knowledge, and maintained good health, and the findings of a few studies were in contrast to

these findings. All the earlier studies had used simple statistical techniques to analyze data collected from respondents, and no study has been conducted to find the relationship between the perception and satisfaction of users towards food supplements and to find the difference in the perception of buyers towards food supplements among their demographic profiles. To fill these research gaps, the present study was conducted.

## Objectives

1. To study buyers' perception of food supplements.
2. To examine the relationship between buyers' perception of food supplements and their satisfaction with them.

## Hypotheses

1. Perceptions of food supplements significantly differ among food supplement buyers.
2. Buyers' perception of food supplements is positively and significantly related to their satisfaction with them.

## Methodology

This study is conducted among buyers of food supplements in Sivaganga district. Descriptive research design is employed. Convenience sampling method is adopted for selecting 250 buyers of food supplements and data are gathered from them by means of questionnaire during Oct- Dec, 2025. Percentages, mean and standard deviation, t and ANOVA tests and correlation analysis are used to study objective and test hypotheses of the study. Cronbach's alpha values for buyers' perception of food supplements is 0.82 and satisfaction with food supplements were 0.78 and these values are higher than 0.70, indicating that they have an acceptable level of internal consistency. In addition, the Composite Reliability for buyers' perception of food supplements and satisfaction with food supplements were 0.81 and 0.79, respectively, which are above the cut-off value of 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for them was 0.77 and 0.74, which are higher than 0.50, and the Discriminant Validity (DV) values for them are 0.80 and 0.76. These values indicate that they exhibit good convergent validity.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Profile of Buyers of Food Supplements

Table 1 presents the profile of food supplement buyers. Of these, 137(54.80%) were men and 113(45.20%) were women. Regarding to age, 92(36.80%) of them are in age of 31 – 40 years, while, 29(11.60%) of them are in age of less than 30 years. Regarding education, 89(35.60%) were undergraduates, 31(12.40%) were higher secondary, 101(40.40%) had an income of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000, 25(10.00%) had an income of above Rs.50,000 per month, 209(83.60%) were married, and 41(16.40%) were unmarried.

**Table 1 Profile of Buyers of Food Supplements**

| Profile | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 137 | 54.80 |
| Female | 113 | 45.20 |
| **Age** | | |
| Less than 30 Years | 29 | 11.60 |
| 31 – 40 Years | 92 | 36.80 |
| 41 – 50 Years | 84 | 33.60 |
| More than 50 Years | 45 | 18.00 |
| **Education** | | |
| Higher Secondary | 31 | 12.40 |
| Diploma | 51 | 20.40 |
| Under Graduation | 89 | 35.60 |
| Post Graduation | 79 | 31.60 |
| **Monthly Income** | | |
| Below Rs.30,000 | 53 | 21.20 |
| Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000 | 101 | 40.40 |
| Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 | 71 | 28.40 |
| Above Rs.50,000 | 25 | 10.00 |
| **Marital Status** | | |
| Married | 209 | 83.60 |
| Unmarried | 41 | 16.40 |

### Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements

The buyers' perception towards food supplements is given in Table 2.

**Table 2 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements**

| Insight | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Food supplements are necessary to maintain better health | 3.94 | 0.95 |
| Food supplements are highly and safe | 3.83 | 0.76 |
| Food supplements are superior in quality | 3.87 | 0.92 |
| Food supplements are having natural ingredients | 3.80 | 0.88 |
| Food supplements are alternative to medicines | 3.28 | 0.65 |
| Food supplements are creating side effects | 3.31 | 0.84 |
| Food supplements are filling gap in daily diet | 3.76 | 0.80 |
| Food supplements are enhancing physical appearance | 3.24 | 0.59 |
| Food supplements are increasing energy | 3.73 | 0.87 |
| Food supplements are preventing occurrence of infections | 3.69 | 0.93 |

The buyers of food supplements agreed that food supplements are necessary to maintain better health, are highly safe, superior in quality, have natural ingredients, fill the gap in the daily diet, increase energy, and prevent the occurrence of infections, while they were neutral on food supplements being an alternative to medicines, creating side effects, and enhancing physical appearance.

Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and their Profile

The differences between buyers' perceptions of food supplements and their profiles are given below.

Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Gender

The differences between buyers' perceptions of food supplements and their gender are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Gender**

| Gender | N | M | SD | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 137 | 36.08 | 2.88 | | |
| Female | 113 | 38.36 | 2.27 | 4.134 | .000 |

Perception towards food supplements is better for buyers in the female category (M=38.36) than in the male category. A significant difference was found between buyers' perception of food supplements and their gender because the t-value of 4.134 is significant at the 1% level.

**Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Age**

The differences between buyers' perceptions of food supplements and their age are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Age**

| Age | N | M | SD | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 30 Years | 29 | 35.22 | 3.37 | 5.212 | .000 |
| 31 – 40 Years | 92 | 37.14 | 2.63 | | |
| 41 – 50 Years | 84 | 37.20 | 2.62 | | |
| More than 50 Years | 45 | 39.32 | 2.31 | | |

Perception of food supplements is better for buyers over 50 years of age (M=39.32) than for other ages. A significant difference existed between buyers' perception of food supplements and their age, as the F-value of 5.212 was significant at the 1% level.

**Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Education**

The difference between buyers' perception of food supplements and their education is given in Table 5.

**Table 5 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Education**

| Education | N | M | SD | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Higher Secondary | 31 | 36.29 | 2.35 | 7.876 | .000 |
| Diploma | 51 | 35.56 | 3.02 | | |
| Under Graduation | 89 | 37.78 | 2.78 | | |
| Post Graduation | 79 | 39.20 | 2.50 | | |

Buyers with a postgraduate degree (M=39.20) have a better perception of food supplements than those with other educational qualifications. A significant difference is prevalent between buyers' perception of food supplements and their education since the F-value of 7.876 is significant at the 1% level.

**Buyers' Perception of Food Supplements and Monthly Income**

The difference between buyers' perception of food supplements and their monthly income is given in Table 6.

**Table 6 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Monthly Income**

| Monthly Income | N | M | SD | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Below Rs.30,000 | 53 | 36.53 | 2.89 | 6.560 | .000 |
| Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000 | 101 | 35.80 | 2.53 | | |
| Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 | 71 | 39.08 | 2.65 | | |
| Above Rs.50,000 | 25 | 37.46 | 3.37 | | |

Perception towards food supplements is better for buyers having an income of Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 per month (M=39.08) when compared to remaining monthly incomes. A significant difference is witnessed amidst buyers' perception towards food supplements and their monthly income for the reason that the F-value of 6.560 is significant at the 1% level.

**Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Marital Status**

The difference between buyers' perceptions of food supplements and their marital status is presented in Table 7.

**Table 6 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and Marital Status**

| Marital Status | N | M | SD | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Married | 209 | 36.12 | 3.15 | 4.175 | .000 |
| Unmarried | 41 | 38.28 | 2.58 | | |

Perception of food supplements is better for unmarried buyers (M=38.28) than for married buyers. A significant difference is noticed between buyers' perception of food supplements and their marital status because the t-value of 4.175 is significant at the 1% level.

**Relation amidst Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and their Satisfaction towards them**

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between buyers' perception of food supplements and their satisfaction with them, and the results are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8 Buyers' Perception towards Food Supplements and their Satisfaction towards them**

| Particulars | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|
| Buyers' Insight towards Food Supplements and their Satisfaction towards them | 0.53** |

** Significant in 1% level

The coefficient of correlation between buyers' perception of food supplements and their satisfaction with them is 0.53, which indicates that they are positively and moderately interrelated.

**Discussion**

The findings reveal that food supplements are necessary to maintain better health and it is confirmed by studies of Bose, David et al., Josipa et al. Susan et al., Robin et al., and Prabhanjali and Mendis. The findings of Chiba and Tanemura, Lee and Kwak and Małgorzata et al. are supporting food supplements are highly safe and superior quality and the outcome of Lekshmi et al. and Lee and Kwak are supporting as they have natural ingredients. No studies have confirmed that food supplements fill the gap in the daily diet, increase energy, and prevent the occurrence of infections. The findings also elucidate that significant differences exist among buyers' perceptions of food supplements and their profiles, which is supported by the studies of Josipa et al. and Robin et al. Besides, buyers' perception of food supplements has a significant and positive

relationship with their satisfaction, as confirmed by the findings of Małgorzata et al.

## Conclusion

The analysis of this study shows that buyers of food supplements perceive that food supplements are necessary to maintain better health, are highly safe, superior in quality, have natural ingredients, fill the gap in the daily diet, increase energy, and prevent the occurrence of infections. Significant differences were observed in buyers' perception of food supplements and their profile, namely gender, age, education, monthly income, and marital status. Moreover, buyers' perception of food supplements has a significant and positive relationship with their satisfaction with them. Hence, food supplements should act as alternative to medicines and they must not create any side effects and they should also enhance physical appearance of buyers.

In addition, scientific caution is essential when considering food supplements as alternatives to medicines, as they are not subjected to the same rigorous testing for safety and efficacy as pharmaceuticals, meaning that users often act as "clinical trials." While they can complement a diet, viewing them as direct replacements for prescribed medicines poses risks, including dangerous drug interactions, toxicity, and contamination.

The FDA has found hundreds of products marketed as food supplements to be adulterated with unapproved, hidden pharmaceuticals, often at high doses, and food supplements can interfere with prescribed treatments. Food supplements do not undergo the strict pre-market approval processes required for pharmaceuticals. Manufacturers rely heavily on limited "structure/function" claimslike " claims such as supports heart health, which only require post-market substantiation and must include an FDA disclaimer. The FDA requires structure/function claims to carry disclaimers such as "This statement has not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease." Because the burden of proof varies, strong claims require a significant scientific validation. Labels typically include only structure/function claims (e.g., "supports immune health") rather than disease-treatment claims.

Health claims require Significant Scientific Agreement (SSA) among qualified experts. The relationship between a substance and a disease must be supported by the totality of publicly available, rigorous scientific evidence before the FDA or EFSA approves it. When the evidence falls short of the SSA standard, manufacturers may use qualified health claims. These claims must include clarifying language to indicate that the science is still emerging and not fully conclusive

"Natural" does not mean that it is safe. Excessive consumption of certain herbs can cause liver damage and other severe health issues. Food Supplements are legally forbidden from claiming to treat, cure, or prevent diseases. Claims on labels often lack high-quality scientific evidence. Users should consult with doctors before consuming any food supplements, and they must not replace prescribed medicines with food supplements without the knowledge of doctors.

## Practical / Managerial Implications

Buyers perceive food supplements as highly safe, and this offers direct implications for manufacturers focusing on holistic wellness, immune health, and vitality, rather than just disease treatment, as users consume them to maintain better health. They also perceive that food supplements are necessary to maintain better health; thus, marketers promote food supplements as dietary adjuncts rather than medicine among users.

Buyers also perceive that food supplements are superior in quality; hence, marketers use "structural presentation" in marketing by visually deconstructing the product in content to highlight the origins of raw ingredients, advanced scientific formulation, and clinical testing, and also invest in third-party quality certifications (e.g., USP, NSF) and prominently display them on packaging and websites.

Buyers also perceive that food supplements have natural ingredients, which makes it necessary for managers to provide clear warnings on packaging and online and implement educational content that explicitly advises consulting a physician and adopting visible, transparent packaging and using marketing that highlights the ingredients, extraction, and quality control. They also perceive that food supplements fill the gap in the daily diet; hence, marketers promote food supplements as not a meal

replacement and also to support overall wellness rather than treat deficiencies.

Buyers also perceive that food supplements increase energy, which has direct implications for marketers to refrain from presenting supplements as outright medical solutions. Instead, they should be positioned as one component of a larger, positive lifestyle shift, and marketing campaigns should be designed that focus on optimizing mental sharpness and bridging nutritional gaps caused by hectic work routines, which heavily resonate with the modern, urban health-conscious.

Buyers also perceive that food supplements prevent the occurrence of infections, which directly impacts marketers' ability to leverage health communication to align with perceived risks of the consumers. Marketers should use trustworthy, expert-backed messaging over fear tactics, prioritize endorsements from credible, relatable healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses, and scientific advisory boards), and build campaigns around recognized medical credibility to establish long-term consumer trust in the brand.

Buyers' perceptions of food supplements differ significantly among their profiles, forcing marketers to focus on novel, convenient delivery methods such as gummies, powders, and plant-based alternatives and to create marketing campaigns with an emphasis on energetic, modern lifestyles and preventive immune management, as well as clinically backed health claims, ingredient purity, and trusted brand heritage.

Meanwhile, buyers' perception of food supplements has a significant and positive relationship with their satisfaction with them; hence, marketers should focus on building credibility by collaborating with healthcare professionals for product endorsements, offering in-house expert consultations, ensuring packaging is highly scannable, clear, and convenient to use, and using the brand's digital platforms to provide comprehensive ingredient sourcing guides, satisfying the consumer's need for transparency, and utilizing Consumer Insights to design targeted campaigns catering to specific demographics.

## Delimitations

This study is confined geographically to the Sivaganga district, and a convenience sampling method was used to select food supplement buyers. The sample size was restricted to 250. The outcomes of this study may be highly appropriate and accurate if other methods are used to collect data from buyers of food supplements, and the sample size is increased for empirical generalization.

## Direction for Future Research

Future research may investigate the effectiveness of the dimensions of attitude of buyers of food supplements on their buying behavior and also factors influencing the buying behavior of buyers towards food supplements in Sivaganga district and other districts in Tamil Nadu and the state as a whole.

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