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# Understanding Consumer Behavior in the Organic Food Market: Perceptions, Preferences and Purchase Factors

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***Authors' contributions***

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

In light of the increasing consumer interest in health-conscious choices, particularly organic food products, this study aims to investigate the perceptions, preferences, and motivations that drive Indian consumers to purchase organic food items. Primary data was obtained from a sample of 120 consumers visiting organic stores for understanding the consumer perceptions, preferences and buying motives for organic food products in Bangalore city of Karnataka State. Factor analysis and cross tabulation are employed for analysing the data. The findings of the study indicated that consumers predominantly perceive organic food as healthy yet expensive. Core product factors influencing purchase of organic products include healthiness and quality, while augmentation factors include preservative-free, nutritional properties and certification. Branded organic stores are preferred place of purchase while social media and influencers are primary information sources. Purchase frequencies vary, from daily for fruits and vegetables to occasional for juices. Food safety ranks highest followed by influential and personal factors are major purchase drivers for organic

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food products. The study findings led to the development of consumer buying behaviour model for organic food products that majorly lay emphasis on personal, psychological and social factors considered during purchase of these products.

*Keywords: Organic food products; perception; preferences; product factors; purchase drivers.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over time, the excessive and indiscriminate use of inorganic compounds in pursuit of greater agricultural yields and profits has resulted in significant negative consequences for both human health and the environment. These adverse effects encompass various aspects, including soil and groundwater contamination, damage to aquatic ecosystems, depletion of soil fertility due to the loss of beneficial microorganisms, disruption of natural pest control mechanisms in plants, the release of greenhouse gases that contribute to ozone layer depletion, and increased exposure of individuals to harmful ultraviolet rays. Profound health repercussions have been observed primarily among individuals who have been consistently exposed to these chemicals without adhering to proper safety measures while applying pesticides in agricultural settings.

Many farmers are grappling with a range of health issues, including respiratory problems, eye conditions, skin ailments, and fertility issues, stemming from their regular exposure to these harmful chemicals. Furthermore, consumers who have been consuming foods containing pesticide residues over extended periods face heightened health concerns. These may manifest as an increased risk of developing various health conditions, including cancer, weakened immune systems, elevated blood pressure, hormonal imbalances, and heart disease, among others.

Growing of crops without usage of the inorganic (chemical) compounds is organic farming. Organic farming in India evolved about 4000 years ago. Food obtained from the crops grown organically are rich in antioxidant levels and micronutrients status and devoid of toxic chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides. These organically derived food maintains a healthy environment and ecological balance. Organic food products are expected to reach US$ 4602 million by 2028, up from US$ 1278 million in 2022, with a CAGR of 23.8% [1]. The market size of organic food was worth of USD 1238 million in fiscal year 2022 and is expected to grow up to USD 4082 million by 2028 [2]. India ranks first in terms of the number of producers [3] and fifth in terms of total amount of land used for organic agriculture worldwide [4]. The total area under organic certification in India as on March 31, 2023 according to the National Program for Organic Production, accounted to 10.17 million hectares and produced around 2.9 million metric tonnes of certified organic products, including all types of food products in 2022-23 [5].

The demand for organic food products and organically derived foods has been steadily on the rise. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the consumption of these organic foods and beverages. This surge can be attributed to heightened awareness among consumers, economic growth, increased purchasing power, and a growing interest in organic products. Moreover, reports indicated that consuming organic foods has positive effects on health and enhances resistance against lifestyle-related diseases when compared to conventionally grown foods.

**Problem statement:** In India, consumers are increasingly prioritizing food safety and quality. The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in shaping public perceptions of organic food, placing a strong emphasis on food safety and nutrition as essential components of a robust immune system. Consequently, the primary motivation for Indian consumers to purchase organic food products is their perception of these products as safe, healthy, and nutritious. As a result, organic foods are experiencing a surge in popularity. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to understand the consumer behaviour and preferences in the organic food market with the following objectives.

1. To analyze the consumer perception for organic food products
2. To analyze the consumer preferences for organic food products
3. To analyze the buying motives of consumers for organic food products

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Karnataka is the fourth largest producer of organic foods and ranks first among southern states in organic food production in India.

Bangalore city, a fast-flourishing metropolitan city of Karnataka State is identified for the study. The list of organic retail stores in the city was obtained and six stores were randomly **chosen. A sample size of 120 was formed by conveniently selecting 20 customers from each store they visited**. Primary information pertaining to their perception, preferences and buying motives for various organic food products were obtained. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS.13) trial version was used to analyse the data. Percentage analysis, cross tabulation and factor analysis are used to analyse the data obtained.

## 2.1 Research Instrument Development for Analysis

To assess the factors influencing buying intentions for organic food products, a research schedule with 24 statements was developed by thoroughly go through previous studies and latest reports. These statements were rated on a five-point scale with scale agreements ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. "Strongly agree" was assigned a score of 5, "agree" a score of 4, "can't say" a score of 3, "disagree" a score of 2, and "strongly disagree" a score of 1 for conducting factor analysis. The statements identified showed internal consistency and reliability with Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70

Factor analysis is a statistical tool used to describe variability among observed correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called factors. Factor analysis is a data reduction technique. Variables that have a high correlation between them and are largely independent of other subsets of variables are combined into factors. The observed variables are modelled and linear combinations of the potential factors, plus error terms. The information gained about the interdependencies between observed variables can be used later to reduce the set of variables in a data set. Thus, factor analysis was adopted to analyse factors influencing respondents' for buying organic food products. Factor loadings indicate the correlation of each variable with the underlying factor and is given as

$$X_i = \lambda_{i1}F_1 + \lambda_{i2}F_2 + \ldots + \lambda_{ip}Fp + \varepsilon i$$

Here,
$X_i$ is the observed variable, $\lambda_{ij}$ is the factor loading for variable $X_i$ on factor $F_j$, $F_j$ is the extracted factor, and $\varepsilon_i$ is the error term.

While **eigenvalues** measure the variance of in all the variables which account for that factor. While varimax rotation aims to maximize the variance of factor loadings within a factor.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Consumer Perception Towards Organic Food Products

The information pertaining to the consumer perception towards various organic food products were analysed through 12 statements on a three-point rating scale with scale agreements of agree, neutral, disagree and accordingly scores of 3,2 and 1 were assigned respectively to the scale agreements. The results are shown in Fig. 1


**Fig. 1. Consumer perception towards organic food products**

The findings presented in Fig. 1 showed that most customers view organic food products primarily as healthy [6,7,8,9,10] followed by being expensive [11]. Additionally, organic foods are perceived as superior in quality, but their availability in the market is limited [12,13], making them somewhat challenging to find everywhere. Moreover, they are recognized for their high nutritive value. On the other hand, statements regarding whether organic foods provide good value for the money spent, are preferred for their freshness, taste good, have an aesthetic appearance, and the consumer sentiment towards labels on organic foods [14] appear to be more neutral.

## 3.2 Consumer Preferences Towards Various Organic Food Products

The preference of sample respondents was analyzed by collecting the data pertaining the reasons for purchase of organic food products based on core product factors and augmentation factors, preferred sources of information, preferred place of purchase and frequency of purchase of organic food products.

The data presented in Tables 1 clearly demonstrate that consumers prioritize core product factors as health and quality, augmentation factors being preservative-free [15], possessing nutritional properties and having certification [16] when choosing organic products and align with findings of Bourn and Prescott [17].

Table 2 indicated that out of 120 sample respondents 119 choose to shop from branded organic store contributing 99 per cent, followed by online platform [18] contributing 98 per cent (114 out of 120 sample respondents) then general organic stores as they are scoring 48 per cent (58 out of 120 respondents) then comes super market scoring with 18 per cent (21 out of 120 respondents) then least preferred is local shop as it scored 5 per cent (6 out of 120 respondents).

## 3.3 Preferred Source of Information for Organic Food Products by Sample Consumers

Table 3 results indicate that social media (whatsapp, you tube, face book) followed by influencers [19,20] are the major preferred source of information regarding organic food products followed by traditional media (television, radio), mela/exhibition, print media (newspaper, magazine, journals). While, product trails, nutritionist recommendation were the low preferred sources of information regarding organic food products.

**Table 1. Preference of consumers towards organic food products based on core and augmentation product factors**

| S.No. | Core product factors | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Mean score | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Healthy | 84 | 31 | 5 | 2.66 | I |
| 2 | Quality | 66 | 45 | 7 | 2.46 | II |
| 3 | Freshness | 16 | 69 | 35 | 1.84 | III |
| 4 | Tasty | 20 | 60 | 40 | 1.83 | IV |
| 5 | Appearance | 0 | 30 | 90 | 1.25 | V |
| **S.No** | **Augmentation factors** | **Agree** | **Neutral** | **Disagree** | **Mean score** | **Rank** |
| 1 | Preservative free | 71 | 45 | 4 | 2.56 | I |
| 2 | Nutritional properties | 64 | 47 | 9 | 2.46 | II |
| 3 | Certified | 66 | 35 | 19 | 2.39 | III |
| 4 | Cruelty free | 22 | 60 | 38 | 1.87 | IV |
| 5 | Properly labelled | 0 | 51 | 69 | 1.43 | V |

**Table 2. Preferred place of purchase for organic food products by sample respondents**

| S. No. | Place | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Branded organic store | 119 | 99 | I |
| **2** | Online | 114 | 95 | II |
| **3** | General organic store | 58 | 48 | III |
| **4** | Super market | 21 | 18 | IV |
| **5** | Local shops | 6 | 5 | V |
| **6** | Any others | 5 | 4 | VI |

**Table 3. Preferred source of information of the sample respondents**

| S.No. | Source | Frequency | Per cent (%) | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Social media (WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook)** | **105** | **87.50** | **I** |
| 2 | Influencers | 102 | 85.00 | II |
| 3 | Traditional media (Television, radio) | 95 | 79.17 | III |
| 4 | Mela/ Exhibitions | 79 | 65.83 | IV |
| 5 | Print media (Newspaper, Magazines, journals) | 66 | 55.00 | V |
| 6 | Product trials | 60 | 50.00 | VI |
| 7 | Nutritionist | 10 | 8.33 | VII |

**Table 4. Frequency of purchase of organic food products by sample respondents**

| | | Frequency of purchase | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Daily | | Weekly once | | Once in fortnight | | Monthly once | | Occasionally | |
| S.No. | Particulars | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1 | Fruits and vegetables | 35 | 29. 17 | 34 | 28.33 | 29 | 24.17 | 14 | 11.67 | 8 | 6.67 |
| 2 | Egg | 19 | 15.83 | 50 | 41.67 | 48 | 40.00 | 12 | 10.00 | 10 | 8.33 |
| 3 | Heat and Eat | 21 | 17.50 | 23 | 19.17 | 54 | 45.00 | 19 | 15.83 | 3 | 2.50 |
| 4 | Staples | 0 | 0.00 | 8 | 6.67 | 30 | 25.00 | 72 | 60.00 | 10 | 8.33 |
| *5* | Milk and Dairy products | 29 | 24. 17 | 25 | 20.83 | 21 | 17.50 | 23 | 19.17 | 22 | 18.33 |
| 6 | Meat and Meat products | 1 | 0.83 | 48 | 40.00 | 21 | 17.50 | 24 | 20.00 | 26 | 21.67 |
| 7 | Tea & Beverages | *5* | 4.17 | 3 | 2.50 | 29 | 24.17 | 63 | 52.50 | 1 | 0.83 |
| 8 | Snacks | *5* | 4.17 | *5* | 4.17 | 21 | 17.50 | 56 | 46.67 | 33 | 27.50 |
| 9 | Condiments and spices | 8 | 6.67 | 9 | 7.50 | 12 | 10.00 | 48 | 40.00 | 43 | 35.83 |
| 10 | Juices | 6 | 5.00 | 8 | 6.67 | 17 | 14.17 | 28 | 23.33 | 61 | 50.83 |

**Table 5. Kaiser-meyer-olkin & bartlett's test**

| **KMO and Bartlett's Test** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | **.635** |
| Bartlett's Test, of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 972.404 |
| | DF | 276 |
| | P-value | <.0001* |

**Significant, at 1 %*

**Table 6. Principal component analysis**

| Total Variance Explained | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Component** | **Initial Eigenvalues** | | | **Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings** | | | **Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings** | | |
| | **Total** | **% of Variance** | **Cumulative %** | **Total** | **% of Variance** | **Cumulative %** | **Total** | **% of Variance** | **Cumulative %** |
| 1 | 3.881 | 16.170 | 16.170 | 3.881 | 16.170 | 16.170 | 3.195 | 13.311 | **13.311** |
| 2 | 2.598 | 10.825 | 26.995 | 2.598 | 10.825 | 26.995 | 2.156 | 8.984 | **22.295** |
| 3 | 2.329 | 9.705 | 36.700 | 2.329 | 9.705 | 36.700 | 1.998 | 8.324 | **30.620** |
| 4 | 1.974 | 8.224 | 44.924 | 1.974 | 8.224 | 44.924 | 1.982 | 8.260 | **38.879** |
| 5 | 1.626 | 6.777 | 51.701 | 1.626 | 6.777 | 51.701 | 1.973 | 8.221 | **47.100** |
| 6 | 1.469 | 6.122 | 57.824 | 1.469 | 6.122 | 57.824 | 1.912 | 7.969 | **55.069** |
| 7 | 1.248 | 5.201 | 63.024 | 1.248 | 5.201 | 63.024 | 1.909 | 7.955 | **63.024** |
| 8 | 1.118 | 4.657 | 67.681 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .988 | 4.117 | 71.798 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .882 | 3.675 | 75.473 | | | | | | |
| 11 | .779 | 3.248 | 78.721 | | | | | | |
| 12 | .669 | 2.786 | 81.507 | | | | | | |
| 13 | .641 | 2.672 | 84.179 | | | | | | |
| 14 | .572 | 2.384 | 86.563 | | | | | | |
| 15 | .535 | 2.229 | 88.792 | | | | | | |
| 16 | .457 | 1.903 | 90.695 | | | | | | |
| 17 | .429 | 1.787 | 92.482 | | | | | | |
| 18 | .363 | 1.514 | 93.996 | | | | | | |
| 19 | .342 | 1.424 | 95.420 | | | | | | |
| 20 | .305 | 1.270 | 96.690 | | | | | | |
| 21 | .264 | 1.098 | 97.788 | | | | | | |
| 22 | .198 | .825 | 98.613 | | | | | | |
| 23 | .179 | .746 | 99.359 | | | | | | |
| 24 | .154 | .641 | 100.000 | | | | | | |

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis*

**Table 7. Rotated Component Matrix**

| Particulars | Component | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Considering my age factor | 0.883 | | | | | | |
| Consuming organic food products promotes to stay healthy | 0.762 | | | | | | |
| Consuming organic food products gives me mental satisfaction | 0.649 | | | | | | |
| All of my body's nutrients are obtained from organic food. | 0.620 | | | | | | |
| Organic food products will help me to stay fit | 0.521 | | | | | | |
| Helps to reduce carbon foot print | | | | | | | |
| Growing of these foods fosters healthy ecosystem | | 0.732 | | | | | |
| Influenced by community groups | | | 0.798 | | | | |
| To support local fanners | | | | | | | 0.402 |
| Influenced by peer groups | | | 0.614 | | | | |
| Recommended in campaigns emphasizing benefits of organic foods | | | | 0.708 | | | |
| Recommended by stores personnel | | | | 0.684 | | | |
| Recommended by influencers through their feed back | | | | 0.514 | | | |
| Trust In Informative Lab eling | | | | | | | |
| Trust In certification | | | | | 0.737 | | |
| Influenced by personal experience | | | | | | | |
| Trust In Nutritional Attributes | | | | | 0.557 | | |
| I need not stress too much about what I eat | | | | | | | |
| Organic foods are safe than conventional foods | | | | | | 0.728 | |
| Organic foods are free from food additives | | | | | | 0.712 | |
| Organic foods are free from pesticide residues | | | | | | 0.567 | |
| Recommended by nutritionists/docto.IS | | | | | | | |
| Helps to improve soil health | | 0.423 | | | | | |
| To reflect my economic status | | | | | | | 0.574 |

*Extraction method: Principal component analysis. rotation me1hod: varimax with kaiser normalization*

**Table 8. Grouping of the extracted factors**

| Factor Number | Factor name | Variables under factor | Factor loadings |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Health and wellness | Consuming organic food products promotes to stay healthy | 0.883 |
| | | Organic food products will help me to stay fit | 0.762 |
| | | Consuming organic food products gives me mental satisfaction | 0.649 |
| | | All of my body's nutrients are obtained from organic food. | 0.62 |
| | | Considering my age factor | 0.521 |
| | | I need not stress too much about what I eat | 0.000 |
| 2 | Environment factor | Growing of these foods fosters healthy ecosystem | 0.732 |
| | | Helps to improve soil health | 0.000 |
| | | Helps to reduce carbon foot print | 0.000 |
| 3 | Influential factor | Influenced by community groups | 0.798 |
| | | Influenced by peer groups | 0.614 |
| | | Influenced by personal experience | 0.000 |
| 4 | Promotional factors | Recommended in campaigns emphasizing benefits of organic foods | 0.708 |
| | | Recommended by stores personnel | 0.684 |
| | | Recommended by influencers through their feed back | 0.514 |
| | | Recommended by nutritionists/doctors | 0.000 |
| 5 | Trust factors | Trust In certification | 0.737 |
| | | Trust In Nutritional Attributes | 0.557 |
| 6 | Food safety factor | Organic foods are safe than conventional foods | 0.728 |
| | | Organic foods are free from food additives | 0.712 |
| | | Organic foods are free from pesticide residues | 0.567 |
| 7 | Personal factors | To support local farmers | 0.000 |
| | | To reflect my economic status | 0.574 |

**Table 9. Factors influencing the buying behaviour of the sample respondents**

| S.No. | Factors | Mean score | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Food Safety Factor | 4.03 | I |
| 2 | Influential Factor | 3.70 | II |
| 3 | Personal Factor | 3.47 | III |
| 4 | Trust Factor | 3.43 | IV |
| 5 | Health And Wellness Factor | 3.31 | V |
| 6 | Promotional Factor | 3.06 | VI |
| 7 | Environmental Factor | 3.05 | VII |

### 3.4 Frequency of Consumption of Organic Food Products by Sample Respondents

Based on the data in Table 4, it's evident that the top three daily purchased products are fruits and vegetables (29.17%), milk and dairy products (24.17%), and heat and eat products (17.50%). For weekly purchases, the top three products are meat and meat products (40.00%), fruits and vegetables (28.33%), and milk and dairy products (20.83%). When buying once in a fortnight, consumers prefer heat and eat products (45%), eggs (40%), and staples (25%). On a monthly basis, staples (60%), tea and beverages (52.5%), and snacks (46.67%) are the top choices. For occasional purchases, the top three products are juices (50.83%), condiments and spices (35.83%), and snacks (27.50%).

### 3.5 Factors Influencing the Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Organic Food Products

**Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin & Bartlett's Test:**

According to the Table 5, the KMO value is 0.635, indicating that the sample size is adequate to proceed with factor analysis. The approximate, chi square value of 972.404 with 276 degrees, of freedom, as determined by Bartlett's test of sphericity, is significant at the 0.001 level. As a result, factor analysis is, valid.

**Principal Component, Analysis:**

By using of SPSS software, the principal component analysis is used to, extract the factors from the following 24 variables and the results are shown in the Table 6.

After applying varimax rotation, the analysis revealed seven factors with varying degrees of variance explained. Factor one accounted for 13.311% of the variance (eigenvalue: 3.811), followed by factor two at 22.295% (eigenvalue: 2.598), and factor three at 38.879% (eigenvalue: 2.329). Factor four accounted for 38.879% (eigenvalue: 1.974), factor five for 47.100% (eigenvalue: 1.626), factor six for 55.069% (eigenvalue: 1.469), and factor seven for 63.024% (eigenvalue: 1.248). These factors, post-rotation using the varimax method, collectively account for 63.024% of the total variance in the data.

**Rotated Component Matrix and Grouping of Factors:**

The rotated component matrix illustrates the factor loadings obtained for each variable and the factors that were extracted. Our criteria for grouping variables into seven factors ensured that these variables not only had the highest factor loadings within their respective rows but also exceeded the threshold of 0.500. To categorize the variables within each factor, we assigned unique names to these groups based on their factor loadings. Specifically, factor one was labelled the "Health and Wellness Factor," while factors two through seven were categorized as follows: "Environment Factor," "Influential Factor," "Promotional Factor," "Trust Factor," "Food Safety Factor," and "Personal Factor." These names were chosen based on the statements grouped under each factor. The results of this process are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

The food safety factor has the highest mean score of 4.03 followed by influential factor, personal factor, trust factor, health and wellness factor, promotional factor with mean scores 3.70, 3.47, 3.43, 3.31, 3.06 respectively. The environmental factor [21] has the lowest mean score for 3.05. Thus, the study indicates that food safety factor is very important factor influencing the buying motives of sample consumers preferring organic food products, followed by influential factors and personal factors. The findings align with studies of Rimal et al. [22], Voon et al. [23]; Basha and Ramesh [24], Basha et al. [25]; Kalaiselvi et al. [26]; Kalaivani, [8]; Michaelidou et al. [9]; Radman et al. [27]; Salleh et al. [28]; Raghavan et al. [29]; Rimal et al. [30]; Squire et al. [21]; Tsarkiridou et al. [31]; Wendy et al. [32].

## 4. CONCLUSION

Majority of consumers have a perception of organic food products as both healthy and expensive. The core product factors driving the preference for organic food products include their perceived healthiness and quality, while the augmentation factors that play a significant role are their preservative-free nature, nutritional properties and certification. When it comes to purchasing, most preferred place for purchasing organic food products include branded organic stores with local shops being the least preferred option. In terms of information sources, social media takes the top spot followed closely by

influencers, while nutritionist recommendation is the least favoured. The frequency of purchase varies, with daily purchases of fruits and vegetables, weekly purchases of meat and meat products, fortnightly purchases of heat and eat products, monthly purchases of staples, and occasional purchases of juices. Among the seven factors influencing consumers' decisions to buy organic food products, the food safety factor emerges as the most influential, followed by influential factors and personal factors. These findings shed light on the complex dynamics that drive consumer preferences and choices in the organic food market.

**Consumer Buying Behaviour Model for Organic Food Products:**

The purchase of organic foods by consumers is influenced by a wide range of factors. This study resulted in the development of a consumer buying behavior model that comprehensively examines the factors that shape consumers' decisions when buying organic food products as shown in Fig 2. This model focuses on various elements within the context of personal, psychological and social factors. Notably, it also highlights the significant marketing stimuli that impact consumer choices regarding different organic food categories, such as daily purchases of fruits and vegetables, weekly purchases of meat and meat products, fortnightly purchases of heat-and-eat products, monthly purchases of staples and occasional purchases of juices. Consumers primarily prefer to acquire organic products from both branded and general organic stores, as well as online platforms. When seeking information about organic products, consumers rely heavily on social media channels like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook, as well as influencers. Traditional media, including television and radio, also play a role in disseminating information. Psychological factors play a vital role in motivating consumers to purchase organic products. These factors encompass consumers' perceptions that organic foods are healthier, of superior quality, and consequently, more expensive. However, affordability, limited product variety and inconsistent product availability pose significant challenges to their preference for organic food products.

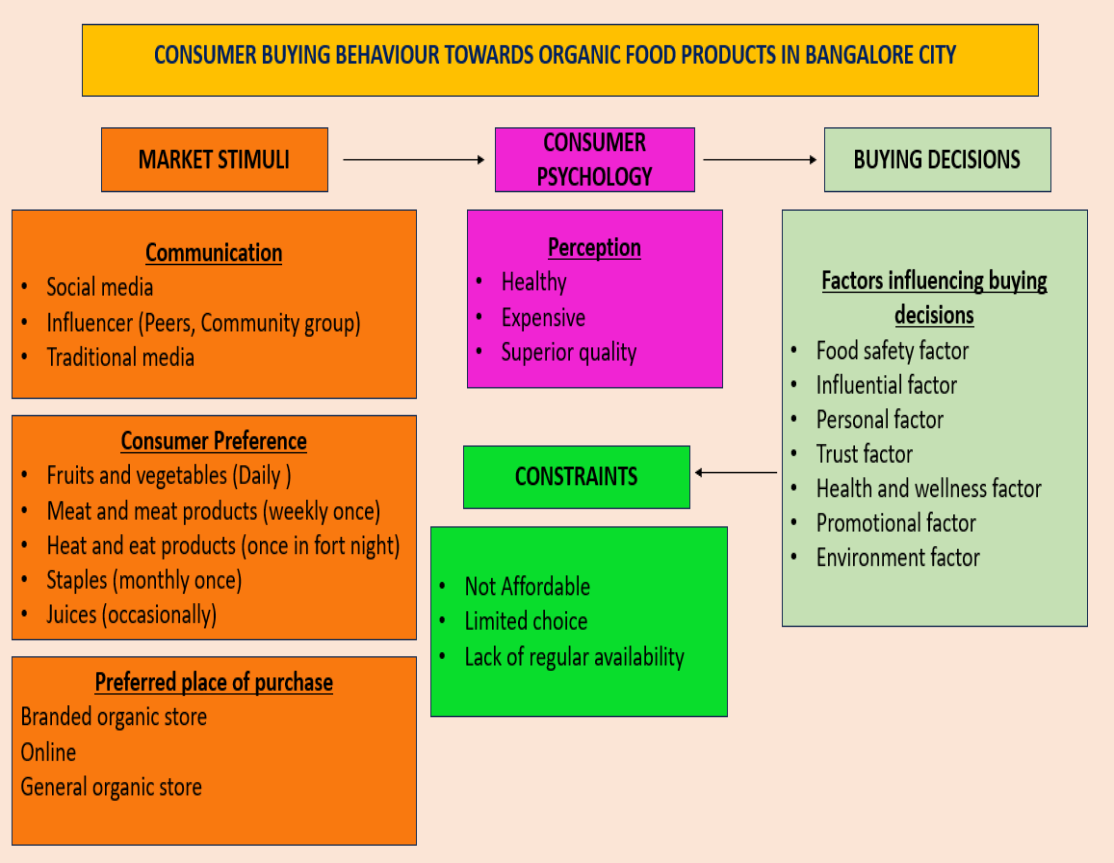


**Fig. 2. Consumer buying behaviour model for organic food products**

The motives driving consumers to buy these products can be categorized into several key factors

1. **Food Safety Factor**: Consumers perceive organic products as safer than conventional foods due to the absence of food additives and pesticide residues.
2. **Influential Factor**: Some consumers are influenced by community groups, peer groups, and personal experiences, which leads them to prefer organic food products.
3. **Personal Factor**: A portion of consumers choose organic foods to support local farmers and contribute to their economic well-being, viewing this as a personal motivation.
4. **Trust Factor**: Trust in organic certifications and nutritional attributes also influences consumers to buy organic products.
5. **Health and Wellness Factor**: Many consumers believe that the consumption of organic products helps them maintain good health, physical fitness, mental well-being
6. **Promotional Factor**: Due to recommendations given be nutritionists/doctors, stores personnel, experts in campaigns emphasizing benefits of organic foods and influencers through their feed back consumers get motivated to prefer these products.
7. **Environmental factor**: Some Consumers also view that consuming these foods have environmental benefit in terms of growing of these foods fosters healthy ecosystem, improve soil health and reduce carbon foot print

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Based on the above information the recommendations and marketing implications are suggested are given below to navigate the organic food market and build a strong presence in organic food industry.

1. **Leverage the Health Perception:** Since consumers associate organic food with healthiness, emphasize the health benefits of your organic products in your marketing campaigns. Highlight the absence of harmful additives and pesticide residues to reinforce the perception of safety.
2. **Quality Assurance:** As quality is one of the core factor driving consumer preference, factors like taste, freshness and overall product presentation to be given more importance to ensure quality
3. **Certification and Trust:** Organic certifications play a significant role in consumers' choices. Make sure to prominently display relevant certifications and communicate the trustworthiness of your brand and products.
4. **Pricing strategies:** While consumers perceive organic food as expensive, consider implementing competitive pricing strategies. Highlight the value and benefits of your products that justify the price difference.
5. **Diverse Product Range:** Address the challenge of limited product variety by offering a diverse range of organic food products. This can attract a wider consumer base with varying preferences.
6. **Online Presence:** Recognize the importance of online platforms as a preferred purchase channel. Invest in user-friendly websites and mobile apps for convenient online shopping.
7. **Social Media and Influencer Marketing:** As social media and influencers are key information sources, develop a robust social media presence. Collaborate with influencers who can promote your organic products to their followers.
8. **Traditional Media:** Do not ignore traditional media like television and radio. Use these platforms to reach a broader audience for conveying the benefits of organic products.
9. **Community Engagement:** For consumers influenced by community groups and peer experiences, consider community engagement and partnership with local organizations to build trust and brand loyalty.
10. **Environmental Sustainability:** Highlight the environmental benefits of organic farming, such as fostering a healthy ecosystem and reducing the carbon footprint. This can resonate with eco-conscious consumers.
11. **Health and Wellness Promotion:** Develop marketing campaigns that focus on the health and wellness benefits of organic products. Collaborate with nutritionists, doctors, and health experts to endorse your products.
12. **Convenience**: Recognize the varying purchase frequencies for different organic food categories. Make sure that your

products are easily accessible and available according to these preferences.

13. **Customer Education:** Educate consumers about the benefits of organic food products, addressing misconceptions and concerns related to pricing and availability.
14. **Local Support**: If applicable, promote the personal factor by supporting local farmers and communities. Highlight your contribution to the local economy.
15. **Customer Feedback and Engagement:** Listen to customer feedback and engage with your audience. Use feedback to improve your products and services and build a loyal customer base
16. **Collaboration with Other Brands:** Consider collaborating with other organic brands or local stores to create awareness and cross-promote each other's products.
17. **Sustainable Packaging:** Address environmental concerns by using sustainable and eco-friendly packaging, which aligns with the environmental factor in consumer motivations

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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