

## Understanding the Drivers of Consumer Buying Decisions in the Organic Food Market: A Perspective of Firms and Retailers

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**ABSTRACT:** The present study aimed to analyse the factors influencing the consumer buying decisions in organic food market in view of firms and retailers. For the study 40 organic retail stores were selected. 5-point Likert scale were used to compute the factors driving the consumer decisions. The results showed that consumers prioritize chemical-free/naturally grown products with mean Garrett's score of 46.42. From the demand factors it was indicated that there is a bright future for organic food products business with 75.00 per cent of the respondents strongly agreeing. Whereas word-of-mouth recommendation played a significant role in promotion of organic products (77.50 %). On the other hand, it was believed that consumers feel that the organic products are costly (45.00 %). 57.50 per cent of the firms strongly agreed that labelling creates a feeling of trust among consumers. Majority (82.50 %) of the firms strongly agreed health and product safety concerns are gaining importance among consumers. Majority of the firms strongly agreed that the organic food products are expensive (40.00 %) and thus is the factor responsible for not buying the organic food products. The results also revealed that majority of the firms (87.50 %) the consumption of organic food products might increase if the products are less costly. Some of the major challenges identified from the study were higher cost, shorter shelf life, limited availability, lack of awareness, lack of trust about the authenticity of organic food products. According to the study understanding the factors that influence consumer buying decisions in this market is crucial. This research, from the perspective of firms and retailers, explores the dynamics that shape these decisions. This research also unveils barriers to organic food product consumption, including cost, information gaps, and perishability perceptions. Addressing these challenges by reducing prices, providing better information, and improving storage practices can increase organic food consumption.

**Keywords:** Organic, Firms, Retailers, Consumers, Buying decisions, Perceptions.

### INTRODUCTION

Organic food products are distinct in their commitment to sustainable agriculture, environmental consciousness, and adherence to stringent quality standards. Consumers opting for organic products often do so for a multitude of reasons, including health considerations, ethical choices, and environmental concerns. These factors are central to understanding the organic food market's appeal and its growth potential.

The organic food industry presents a range of challenges and opportunities. For enterprises involved in this sector understanding the dynamics and responding to consumer preferences can be complex and diverse. Firms and retailers play a vital role, on how consumers perceive and choose products through their strategies that influences on various stages of the buying process. Consumers have become more

concerned about their food intake. They tend to prefer food that is balanced, healthy, safe and certainly friendly to the environment and animals. Thus, demand of food free from chemicals is bound to increase with the changing mindset. Organic food will be in demand across all segments of the society. India has lately picked up a healthy growth rate in the market of organic food products but it is still in its nascent stage (Richa and Deepak 2016).

Generally, Consumer buying behaviour is the process through which a consumer chooses, purchase and consume goods or services to satisfy their wants. The behaviour of consumers is influenced by several processes. Many factors, traits, and characteristics influence the individual's identity and affect consumers' decision-making processes, shopping routines, buying habits, brands they choose to purchase,

and stores they visit frequently. Every single one of these criteria influences a purchase decision. The customer looks for goods at first that he would like to consume, later he chooses just those that offer more utility. The consumer makes an estimate of the available money which he can spend, after selecting the goods. Finally, the consumer determines which goods he should purchase by examining the current prices of the goods. In the meantime, several additional factors, including social, cultural, economic, personal, and psychological influences the purchases of consumer.

Despite significant spending on foods, the food retailing in India has always been unorganized. But, in the recent years the trend has changed and the organized retail market in India is growing at a CAGR of 20-25 per cent per year. In the FY19, traditional retail, organized retail and e-commerce segments accounted for 88 per cent, nine per cent, and three per cent of the market, respectively. The unorganised retail sector in India has also created a huge untapped potential for adopting digital mode of payments as 63 per cent of the retailers are interested in using digital payments like mobile and card payments. The retail sector in India is emerging as one of the largest sectors in the economy. It contributes for about ten per cent to GDP and eight per cent to employment. Also, since the onset of COVID-19, a growing number of value-conscious online shoppers are reshaping India's e-commerce retailing and scape, and the trend is here to stay ([www.ibef.org](http://www.ibef.org)).

The organic food market in India is at a nascent stage of its development; most of the produce is exported to developed countries. The domestic market for organic products is limited to mainly in the big cities of India, and the market is anticipated to grow at a significant rate of 40-45 per cent in 2014-2017 (Oswald, 2013). India is bestowed with lot of potential to produce all varieties of organic products due to its various agro climatic conditions. In several parts of the country, the inherited tradition of organic farming is an added advantage. This holds promise for the organic producers to tap the market which is growing steadily in the domestic and export sector. Organic agriculture is often looked upon as a sustainable alternative to chemical farming. However, there is a debate between food security and environmental sustainability aspects. This paper also looks to analyse how the sustainability of small farms involved in organic agriculture (Manaloor *et al.*, 2015).

India ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of World's organic agricultural land and 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of total number of producers as per 2021 data (FIBL & IFOAM Year Book, 2023). The total volume of export during 2022-23 was 3,12,800.51 MT. The organic food export realization was around Rs. 5,525.18 Crore (708.33 million USD). Organic products are exported to USA, European Union, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, Ecuador, Korea Republic, Vietnam, Japan, etc., (APEDA, 2022).

The global organic food market has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, driven by consumers' increasing interest in healthier and more sustainable food options. In this context, understanding

the factors that influence consumer buying decisions in the organic food market is of paramount importance. This research paper examines the dynamics of consumer purchasing behaviour, with a unique focus on the perspective of firms and retailers. By exploring the strategies and practices employed by businesses, this study aims to shed light on the intricate interplay between firms, retailers, and consumers in the organic food market.

In a study conducted by Rodale Institute (2014), it was indicated that organic farming was economical for farmers to grow than conventional farming. Organic farming requires a higher labour cost that is counterbalanced by the savings of not buying fertilizer. Further, the cost parity of the two is almost twice as indicated by earlier study. Organic farming is significantly cheaper as compared to chemical farming and requires less amount of water because of specific ways of farming (Crowder and Reganold 2015). Thus, organic farming needs to be encouraged for both reasons – human health as well as to maintain the environment.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the present study, Bengaluru City of Karnataka State was purposively selected. The primary data was collected from 40 organic food products firms/retailers. The purposive and snowball sampling method was used for the selection of these 40 firms/retailers. The primary data were obtained from the sample firms/retailers through personal interview method with the help of pre-tested structured schedule. The collected data pertained to the year 2022-23.

### A. Analytical Tools Used

To achieve the objectives of the study, by the nature and extent of information, appropriate quantification techniques were used and computed with the aid of averages, frequency, and percentage to obtain meaningful results. For the comprehensive analysis of stores Likert Scale was employed.

### B. Likert Scale Analysis

A Likert scale is composed of a series of four or more Likert-type items that represent similar questions combined into a single composite score/variable. Likert scale data can be analysed as interval data, i.e., the mean is the best measure of central tendency. Likert items are used to measure respondents' attitudes to a particular question or statement. The scales used were a 5-point Likert scale to obtain the responses.

### C. Garrett's ranking technique

In this study, Garrett's ranking technique was used to rank the attributes responsible for buying of Organic Food Products a perspective of firms/retailers in the study area. The order of the merit given by the respondents was converted into a per cent position using the formula.

Per cent position =  $100 * (R_{ij} - 0.50) / N_j$

where,

$R_{ij}$  = Rank given for  $i$ th item by  $j$ <sup>th</sup> individual

$N_j$  = Number of items ranked by  $j$ <sup>th</sup> individual

The per cent position of each rank was converted to scores by referring to the table given by Garrett and Woodworth (1969). Then, for each factor, the scores of individual respondents were summed up and divided by the total number of respondents for whom scores were gathered. The mean score for all the factors/attributes were ranked, following the decision criteria that the higher the value, the more important is the order of preference by respondents. A study conducted by [Santhosha et al. \(2022\)](#) also used Garrett's Ranking technique to analyse the factors influencing the consumer preference towards different brands of milk and milk products in Shivamogga Milk Union Limited of Karnataka.

#### D. Descriptive Statistics

This technique was adopted for analysing the 5-point Likert scale which are characterized as Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. Further to obtain the meaningful results, these 5-point Likert scale statements were analysed for frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and weighted average. The weighted average was mainly used for the decision criteria i.e., whether to know that the factor is highly perceived or perceived low. If the weighted average was more than the mean value of the factor it was considered as high perception. On the other hand, if the weighted average is lower than the mean value of the factor it was considered as low perception and vice versa.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Attributes responsible for buying of Organic Food Products

The attributes responsible for buying of organic food products from the perspective of firms/retailers is presented in Table 1 and Fig 1. It revealed that, "chemical free/naturally grown" is the major factor responsible for buying of organic products with mean Garrett's score of 46.42, followed by safe (40.58), ideal for all age groups (34.08), healthy & tasty (24.75), hygiene & freshness (20.83), respectively. **The results are similar to the findings of Ali and Kapoor (2010).**

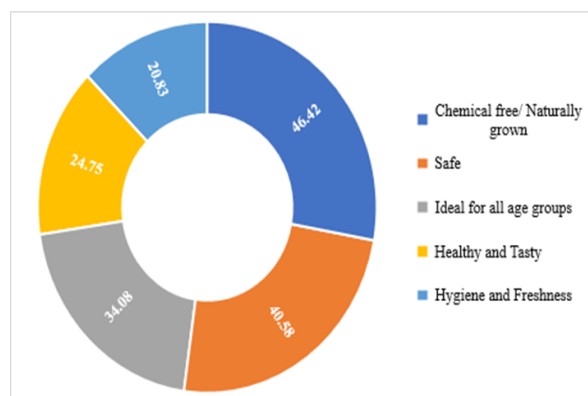
Chemical free/naturally grown and safe was the major attributes responsible for buying organic food products suggesting that consumers prioritize natural and chemical-free ingredients as well as the safety of the food they consume. It also indicates a strong preference for organic and natural food products. This aligns with the global trend of increased interest in organic and safe food products due to health and environmental concerns. Further, the attribute "Ideal for all age groups" indicates that consumers appreciate food products that cater to a broad demographic, possibly signifying the importance of versatility in food products.

### B. Firms/retailers perception towards Organic Food Products Market

The perceptions of firms/retailers towards organic food products market are categorized in five groups i.e., Demand, Awareness, Price, Trust, and Other Factors

and are revealed in Table 2. The results indicated that there is bright future for organic food products business with 75.00 per cent of the respondents strongly agreeing, followed by organic product's supply is lesser than the supply of conventional products (67.50 %), demand for organic products is growing faster than its supply (62.50 %), there is high demand for organic products in Bengaluru City, and providing door delivery facility will increase the sales / demand accounting for 55.00 per cent each respectively. And thus, perceived as high-demand factors, which align with the growing interest in organic products due to health and environmental concerns. On the other hand, growing number of high-income middle-class families will create more demand of organic products and organic products are available only in limited outlets were perceived low-demand factors with only 27.50 and 22.50 per cent of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement. The results are in line with [Baranski et al. \(2014\)](#); [Kapoor \(2017\)](#).

The perception that there is a bright future for the organic food products business reflects optimism and positive expectations for the industry. The factors like door delivery facilities indicate the importance of convenience in consumers' purchasing decisions. On the other hand, growing number of high-income middle-class families will create more demand suggest the role of income demographics in shaping demand limited outlets which indicated low perception implies the need for increasing production and distribution to meet consumer demand. The results for the awareness factors revealed that 77.50 per cent of the firms/retailers strongly agreed that the word-of-mouth recommendation play significant role in promotion of organic products and thus perceived high. The firms/retailers also believed that media should highlight research finding of organic products among consumers which accounted for 67.50 per cent, followed by consumers need to be educated about the benefits of organic products (65.00 %) and Government should arrange more exhibitions of organic products for communicating its benefits (62.50 %).



**Fig. 1.** Attributes responsible for buying organic food products a perspective of firms/retailers.

**Table 1: Attributes responsible for buying of Organic Food Products a perspective of firms/retailers (n = 40).**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Total Score	Mean Garrett's Score	Rank
1.	Chemical free/ Naturally grown	2785	46.42	I
2.	Safe	2435	40.58	II
3.	Ideal for all age groups	2045	34.08	III
4.	Healthy & Tasty	1485	24.75	IV
5.	Hygiene & Freshness	1250	20.83	V

Interestingly on the other hand even though 55.00 per cent of the firms strongly agreed that consumers are aware of the organic products and its benefits it was perceived low, followed by only 7.50 per cent of the retailers strongly agreeing for the statement that Government is actively involved in promotion of organic food products (Table 2). The results are in line with the study conducted by Manusha and Kalai (2022); Rani and Praveena (2021).

The perception that word of mouth recommendations plays a significant role in promoting organic products indicates the power of peer influence and positive experiences. The factor which says consumers need to be educated about the benefits of organic products presents an opportunity for marketing and educational initiatives to bridge the knowledge gap. On the other hand, low perceived factors such as consumers are aware of the organic products and its benefits and Government is actively involved in promotion of organic food products suggests that there is a need for awareness programmes to educate consumers about the advantages of organic products and the potential impact/involvement of government policies and initiatives.

The results from the Table 2 also revealed that price factors such as consumers feel that the organic products are costly (45.00 %), and consumers are willing to pay higher premium for organic products (37.50 %) were highly perceived. Whereas factors like consumers compare organic products with conventional products based on the price (40.00 %) and young generation consumers are spending more money on quality and healthy food (25.00 %) were perceived low. The findings of Raji and Nagadeepa (2020); Rani and Praveena (2021) are similar to the results obtained.

Consumers feel that the organic products are costly reflects a common challenge in the organic food market, thus, can be a barrier to entry for some consumers and was strongly agreed by majority of the firms/retailers, followed by consumers are willing to pay higher premium for organic products indicating a segment of consumers willing to invest in healthier and sustainable choices.

The results also revealed that 57.50 per cent of the firms believed that labelling creates a feeling of trust among consumers and thus it is highly perceived followed by the factors such as difficulty to convince the consumers if the product is not labelled (47.50 %) and consumers have trust in the certification agencies (45.00 %). The trust factors like certification plays a major role in buying decision (42.50 %), consumers buy only certified organic products (37.50 %), and consumers read the label carefully before buying the

products (20.00 %) were perceived low by the firms / retailers (Table 2).

The fact that labelling creates a feeling of trust among consumers indicates the significance of transparent labelling in consumer trust. Also, the view that it is difficult to convince consumers if the product is not labelled emphasizes the pivotal role of labelling in building consumer confidence and trust towards the brand. The results also indicate the role of these agencies in ensuring product quality. Hence it can be said that clear and trustworthy labeling creates a feeling of trust among consumers.

Among other factors in the Table 2, majority (82.50 %) of the firms strongly agreed for the statement health and product safety concerns are gaining importance among consumers, followed by there is heavy competition of organic business (70.00 %), the success of marketing of organic food products depends on efficient supply chain (45.00 %). On the other hand, environmental concern among consumers is gaining importance (35.00%), supply chain of organic food products is improving (25.00 %) and designing market strategy, and knowledge of culture and basic habits of target customer is important (15.00 %) received low perception.

Health and product safety concerns are gaining importance among consumers reflects the growing significance of health and sustainability in consumer choices. While heavy competition of organic business indicates a dynamic and competitive market. The success of marketing of organic food products depends on efficient supply chain implies that a proper supply chain management should adopted.

#### *C. Factors responsible for not buying the organic food products*

The factors responsible for not buying the organic food products according to the firms / retailers are revealed in Table 3. The results indicate that majority of the firms strongly agree that the organic food products are expensive (40.00 %), followed by lack of information (25.00 %). Whereas the firms agreed that most of the consumers 52.50 per cent believe that products are highly perishable/can't store, followed by 40.00 per cent think that they must travel more distance, 37.50 per cent don't trust the certification, 32.50 per cent of the firms agreed that customers think have less variety / choice.

The consumers perceive that organic food products are highly expensive and the same was agreed by majority of the firms and thus it might be a discouraging factor for consumers in buying decision and addressing pricing concerns should be a priority for the industry.

**Table 2: Factors related to firms/retailers' perceptions in the Organic Food Products Market (n = 40).**

Sr. No.	Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	σ	Outcome
<b>I Demand</b>									
1.	There is high demand for organic products in Bengaluru City	22 (55.00)	16 (40.00)	2 (5.00)	-	-	4.50	0.59 9	High Perception
2.	Organic products are available only in limited outlets	9 (22.50)	18 (45.00)	10 (25.00)	-	3 (7.50)	3.75	1.05 6	Low Perception
3.	Domestic consumption of organic products is increasing	24 (60.00)	15 (37.50)	1 (2.50)	-	-	4.58	0.54 9	High Perception
4.	Demand for organic products is growing faster than its supply	25 (62.50)	10 (25.00)	4 (10.00)	1 (2.50)	-	4.48	0.78 4	High Perception
5.	Organic product's supply is lesser than the supply of conventional products	27 (67.50)	3 (7.50)	10 (25.00)	-	-	4.43	0.87 4	High Perception
6.	Growing number of high-income middle-class families will create more demand of organic products	11 (27.50)	7 (17.50)	15 (37.50)	7 (17.50)	-	3.55	1.08 5	Low Perception
7.	Providing door delivery facility will increase the sales/demand	22 (55.00)	8 (20.00)	10 (25.00)	-	-	4.30	0.85 3	High Perception
8.	There is bright future for organic food products business	30 (75.00)	7 (17.50)	3 (7.50)	-	-	4.68	0.61 6	High Perception
<b>II Awareness</b>									
1.	Consumers are aware of the organic products and its benefits	22 (55.00)	5 (12.50)	10 (25.00)	3 (7.50)	-	4.15	1.05 1	Low Perception
2.	Consumers need to be educated about the benefits of organic products	26 (65.00)	12 (30.00)	2 (5.00)	-	-	4.60	0.59 1	High Perception
3.	Word of mouth recommendation play significant role in promotion of organic products	31 (77.50)	5 (12.50)	4 (10.00)	-	-	4.68	0.65 6	High Perception
4.	Government is actively involved in promotion of organic food products	3 (7.50)	11 (27.50)	19 (47.50)	-	7 (17.50)	3.08	1.14 1	Low Perception
5.	Media should highlight research finding of organic products among consumers	27 (67.50)	8 (20.00)	5 (12.50)	-	-	4.55	0.71 4	High Perception
6.	Government should arrange more exhibitions of organic products for communicating its benefits	25 (62.50)	9 (22.50)	6 (15.00)	-	-	4.47	0.75 1	High Perception
<b>III Price</b>									
1.	Consumers feel that the organic products are costly	18 (45.00)	20 (50.00)	-	-	2 (5.00)	4.30	0.91 1	High Perception
2.	Consumers compare organic products with conventional products based on the price	16 (40.00)	14 (35.00)	-	-	10 (25.00)	3.65	1.61 0	Low Perception
3.	Consumers are willing to pay higher premium for organic products	15 (37.50)	12 (30.00)	10 (25.00)	-	3 (7.50)	3.90	1.15 0	High Perception
4.	Young generation consumers are spending more money on quality and healthy food	10 (25.00)	6 (15.00)	19 (47.50)	4 (10.00)	1 (2.50)	3.50	1.06 2	Low Perception
<b>IV Trust</b>									
1.	Certification plays a major role in buying decision	17 (42.50)	15 (37.50)	-	-	8 (20.00)	3.83	1.50 0	Low Perception
2.	Consumers read the label carefully before buying the products	8 (20.00)	4 (10.00)	10 (25.00)	18 (45.00)	-	3.05	1.17 6	Low Perception
3.	Consumers have trust in the certification agencies	18 (45.00)	7 (17.50)	14 (35.00)	1 (2.50)	-	4.05	0.95 9	High Perception
4.	Labelling creates a feeling of trust among consumers	23 (57.50)	3 (7.50)	13 (32.50)	1 (2.50)	-	4.20	0.99 2	High Perception
5.	Consumers buy only certified organic products	15 (37.50)	13 (32.50)	4 (10.00)	7 (17.50)	1 (2.50)	3.85	1.18 9	Low Perception
6.	It is difficult to convince the consumers if the product is not labelled	19 (47.50)	18 (45.00)	2 (5.00)	-	1 (2.50)	4.35	0.80 2	High Perception
<b>V Other factors</b>									
1.	For designing market strategy, knowledge of culture and basic habits of target customer is	6 (15.00)	25 (62.50)	8 (20.00)	-	1 (2.50)	3.88	0.75 7	Low Perception

	important								
2.	There is heavy competition of organic business	28 (70.00)	9 (22.50)	3 (7.50)	-	-	4.63	0.62 8	High Perception
3.	The supply chain of organic food products is improving	14 (35.00)	20 (50.00)	6 (15.00)	-	-	4.20	0.68 7	Low Perception
4.	The success of marketing of organic food products depends on efficient supply chain	18 (45.00)	17 (42.50)	5 (12.50)	-	-	4.33	0.69 4	High Perception
5.	Health and product safety concerns are gaining importance among consumers	33 (82.50)	6 (15.00)	-	1 (2.50)	-	4.78	0.57 7	High Perception
6.	Environmental concern among consumers is gaining importance	10 (25.00)	20 (50.00)	10 (25.00)	-	-	4.00	0.71 6	Low Perception

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree  
Outcome Criteria = Weighted Average of Mean (4.28, 4.26, 3.84, 3.89, 4.30)

**Table 3: Factors responsible for not buying the organic food products (n = 40).**

Sr. No.	Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	$\sigma$	Decision
1.	Not available easily	-	10 (25.00)	9 (22.50)	10 (25.00)	11 (27.50)	2.45	1.154	Least Accepted
2.	Expensive	16 (40.00)	10 (25.00)	14 (35.00)	-	-	4.05	0.876	Reason Accepted
3.	Lack of information	10 (25.00)	15 (37.50)	4 (10.00)	11 (27.50)	-	3.60	1.150	Reason Accepted
4.	Lack of trust	-	5 (12.50)	13 (32.50)	15 (37.50)	7 (17.50)	2.40	0.928	Least Accepted
5.	Less variety /choice	2 (5.00)	13 (32.50)	10 (25.00)	7 (17.50)	8 (20.00)	2.85	1.231	Reason Accepted
6.	Don't believe the health benefits	1 (2.50)	5 (12.50)	22 (55.00)	-	12 (30.00)	2.58	1.130	Least Accepted
7.	Don't trust the certification	-	15 (37.50)	16 (40.00)	2 (5.00)	7 (17.50)	2.98	1.074	Reason Accepted
8.	Don't believe the information on the pack	-	-	12 (30.00)	12 (30.00)	16 (40.00)	1.90	0.841	Least Accepted
9.	Products are highly perishable/can't store	2 (5.00)	21 (52.50)	6 (15.00)	4 (10.00)	7 (17.50)	3.18	1.238	Reason Accepted
10.	Must travel more distance	-	16 (40.00)	-	8 (20.00)	16 (40.00)	2.40	1.374	Least Accepted

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree  
Outcome Criteria = Weighted Average of Mean (2.84)

**Table 4: Factors influencing the increase in consumption of Organic Food Products (n = 40).**

Sr. No.	Reasons	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	$\sigma$	Decision
1.	Less costly	35 (87.50)	5 (12.50)	-	-	-	4.88	0.335	Majority Accepted
2.	More income	15 (37.50)	24 (60.00)	1 (2.50)	-	-	4.35	0.533	Majority Accepted
3.	More accessibility in the market	15 (37.50)	22 (55.00)	3 (7.50)	-	-	4.30	0.608	Majority Accepted
4.	Better appearance & taste	13 (32.50)	20 (50.00)	7 (17.50)	-	-	4.15	0.700	Majority Accepted
5.	More recognizable labels	18 (45.00)	4 (10.00)	16 (40.00)	2 (5.00)	-	3.95	1.037	Least Accepted
6.	More product range	11 (27.50)	7 (17.50)	13 (32.50)	2 (5.00)	7 (17.50)	3.33	1.403	Least Accepted
7.	More trust on products	10 (25.00)	25 (62.50)	5 (12.50)	-	-	4.13	0.607	Majority Accepted
8.	More products from local region	15 (37.50)	5 (12.50)	16 (40.00)	-	4 (10.00)	3.68	1.269	Least Accepted
9.	Longer shelf life	8 (20.00)	-	24 (60.00)	1 (2.50)	7 (17.50)	3.03	1.250	Least Accepted
10.	More information in the media	20 (50.00)	5 (12.50)	7 (17.50)	1 (2.50)	7 (17.50)	3.75	1.532	Least Accepted
11.	Availability of online/ door delivery services	30 (75.00)	3 (7.50)	3 (7.50)	4 (10.00)	-	4.48	1.012	Majority Accepted
12.	More organic stores opened	18 (45.00)	7 (17.50)	15 (37.50)	-	-	4.08	0.917	Majority Accepted

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree  
Outcome Criteria = Weighted Average of Mean (4.01)

Majority of the firms either strongly agreed or agreed that lack of information as another reason for not buying the organic food products hence it is important to educate and communicate about the benefits of organic food products. The firms also believed that products are highly perishable/can't store hence the industry or the firms should focus on effective storage and handling practices.

#### *D. Factors influencing the increase in consumption of Organic Food Products*

The results revealed that according to majority of the firms/retailers (87.50 %) the consumption of organic food products might increase if the products are less costly followed by 60.00 per cent of firms / retailers agreed that higher income can influence the increase in consumption of organic food products. Participants perceived the more accessibility in the market positively, with 37.50 per cent strongly agreeing and 55.00 per cent agreeing. A significant proportion (50.00%) agreed that better appearance and taste influences their organic food consumption decision. Some of the other factors which were accepted by the firms/retailers are More trust on products (62.50 %), Availability of online/ door delivery services (75.00 %) and more organic stores opened (45.00 %) (Table 3).

The findings suggest enhancing the adoption of organic food products. It has been found from the above interpretation that the Organic Food Products need to be less expensive; trust and belief of the customer must be upheld for products and certification. At the same time, there should be easy access to organic stores. By rectifying these limitations, the organic food products can be marketed effectively.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

From the study it can be concluded that the organic food industry is experiencing a significant upswing, with consumer showing interest, in healthier and more sustainable food choices. In this regard, understanding the factors influencing consumer buying decisions is crucial for the success of businesses and retailers operating in the organic food market. This study has examined these factors from the unique perspective of firms and retailers.

Chemical-free and naturally grown products emerged as the most influential factors in driving consumer choices, indicating a strong preference for natural and safe food options. Consumers are increasingly prioritizing safety and health, as demonstrated by their choice for products ideal for all age groups, combining versatility with nutrition. Lack of trust and information are factors that discourage purchases, highlighting the importance of building credibility and educating consumers about organic food products. Firms and retailers perceive a promising future for organic food products, with high demand expected to continue, driven by growing health and environmental awareness. Word-of-mouth recommendations and media play essential roles in promoting these products, but awareness initiatives are needed to educate consumers and highlight research findings. Price concerns are

evident, with consumers viewing organic products as expensive. However, consumers are willing to pay a premium for these products, reflecting their commitment to quality and sustainability. Clear labelling significantly influences consumer trust, emphasizing the importance of transparent information. The study identifies various barriers to organic food product consumption, including cost, lack of information, and perceived perishability. To increase consumption, these barriers need to be addressed by reducing prices, enhancing product information, and improving storage practices.

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