

Prioritising the factors affecting organic food consumption in India: An AHP approach

¹Shrish Singh (0000-0002-3845-3844), ^{2*}Arnab Chakraborty (0000-0001-5246-506X), ³Deepti Dabas Hazarika (0000-0001-5594-9350)

^{1,2,3}School of Leadership and Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (MRIIRS), Faridabad, India

Keywords	Abstract
Organic Food; Food Neophobia; Food Neophilia; AHP; Health Consciousness; Environmental Concern	An in-depth knowledge of the factors affecting consumer buying behaviour is required to meet the growing demand for organic food in India. In this paper, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is used to prioritise these factors, therefore offering a systematic framework for decision-making within the organic food industry. A survey was undertaken with a sample size of 11 experts. 12 primary factors influencing organic food consumption were found, encompassing health awareness, environmental considerations, labelling and certifications, and price competitiveness. The AHP technique enabled the rating of these factors according to the experts' opinions and perceptions. The results show that health consciousness and environmental concern were identified as the most influential factors, whereas lifestyle was ranked as the least influential element. In addition, the results emphasise the significance of pricing strategies in improving market accessibility. This study enhances the current body of knowledge by giving valuable understanding of consumer decision-making and presenting practical suggestions for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote the expansion of the organic food industry in India. In order to be appropriate for an academic audience, this summary provides a concise overview of the research's objective, methodology, main findings, and implications.

*Corresponding Author: discovrearnab1@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

The Advantages of organic food are now more popular, which increase its demand worldwide (Sultan et al., 2020). People are pursuing a healthy life, so they just paid more attention to organically farming food than the typical meals (Güney and Sangün, 2021). The trend for organic food began to

build up during the late 19th century yet in the last two decades, it skyrocketed across of all regions around world with global sales nearly USD90 billion (Sultan et al., 2020). This is odd in a way, so long back India stopped promoting its organic food products that are even well recognized at the international

level but on this local demand dimension it has only just restarted (Prakash et al., 2018; Yadav and Pathak, 2016). Research indicates that health consciousness, environmental concern, culture, ethical commitment, food safety, labelling and certification are among the factors influencing purchase intention towards organic food (Banovic et al., 2019; Bojnec et al., 2019; Janssen, 2018; Singh and Verma, 2017; Uyttendaele et al., 2016; Xie et al., 2015). In addition, several researchers have examined the impact of regional factors on consumers' choices to buy organic foods, separate from individual characteristics (Szolnoki and Hauck, 2020). From the above analysis, it is evident that there are several significant elements that contribute to the consumption of organic food. Therefore, it is imperative to identify and assess these factors in relation to organic food consumption in India, considering the fast-expanding market for organic food products. This study aims to narrow the existing gap by evaluating the selected criteria that are pertinent to the consumption of organic food in India. The objective of the present study project is to comprehend and assess the elements that influence the consumption of organic food in the Indian setting. Although India is the biggest producer, the continental European countries have the highest per capita consumption of organic food, followed by the United States and Canada (Teixeira et al., 2021). The persistently low and slow growth rate of organic food consumption in India serves as the basis for the stated objective. In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, this study raises the following two questions:

- Which factors should be considered for the consumption of organic food?
- How may these factors be given priority and ranked?

To achieve the stated goals and address the specific research issues, this study is carried out in two phases. The first phase of the study was to identify the key factors influencing organic food consumption among Indian consumers by conducting a literature analysis and gathering perspectives from experts. The second stage involves evaluating these factors using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). This tool not

only helps to define the significance of all the identified factors but also helps to provide them ranks on the basis of their relative importance (Chang and Chen, 2011).

2. Literature Review

The belief of consumers in the superiority of organic foods over conventional ones motivates them to purchase those (Fotopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2001). The rapid growth in the consumption of organic food can be attributed to the growing awareness of health and social responsibility among individuals (Rana and Paul, 2017). This has led to a shift in consumer preferences from conventional to organic dietary options. Nevertheless, to successfully increase consumer demand for organic foods, it is necessary to first understand the cognitive processes that impact consumers' consumption habits. Hence, this issue remains incompletely resolved. The present study has found a total of 12 prevalent factors associated with the organic food consumption behaviour of consumers. These factors were determined through an extensive literature analysis of prior studies published in reputable publications. A further investigation of these aspects was conducted using AHP. The eleven factors are:

2.1 Environmental Factor (F1)

Environmental engagement refers to the level of emotional involvement in environmental issues, which measures individuals' successful response to environmental protection, as defined by Lee (2008) (Lee, 2008). Over time, consumer perspectives have evolved due to ethical considerations regarding the environment (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002). Furthermore, environmental concern is a significant factor that motivates and contributes to the development of a positive consumer attitude towards organic food (Paladino and Smith, 2009). Within many cultural contexts, concern for the environment appears to be a primary driving force for pro-environmental actions (Bohlen et al., 1993; Milfont et al., 2006; Rhead et al., 2015). Research conducted by Huang et al. (2014) has shown that environmentally conscious consumers often link their purchases with adverse environmental impacts

(Huang et al., 2014). The food preferences of consumers are increasingly being shaped by environmental considerations, leading to changes in production and supply and demonstrating how individual customers may contribute to environmental well-being (Petrescu et al., 2020). The past research suggests that consumers are more inclined to buy organic food if they perceive it to have positive environmental impact (Tandon et al., 2020b). So, based on the studies reviewed above, environmental concern emerges as the most desirable aspect to be taken into account.

2.2 Certification and Labelling (F2)

The inclusion of nutritional information and health claims on packaged food labels has a substantial influence on consumer attitudes and purchasing motivations (Kozup et al., 2003). In order to establish credibility with consumers, producers must authenticate and validate their products by means of government certification (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The purchase of organic products is less probable among individuals who lack knowledge about the concept of organic or are uninformed about organic certification or labelling (Deliana, 2012; Xie et al., 2015). Policymakers and marketers employ food certification, which is a constituent of food labelling, to enhance consumers' confidence in food. Conroy and Lang (2021) argue that food certifications are the primary determinant for the consumption of organic food (Conroy and Lang, 2021). Recent studies indicate that labelling and certification have a beneficial impact on psychological and behavioural aspects related to the consumption of organic food. Food quality certificates have been extensively promoted to meet sustainable goals and address the increasing concerns of consumers about food safety (Lang and Conroy, 2022; Majer et al., 2022).

2.3 Price (F3)

Pricing is a highly contentious matter when purchasing organic food (Rödiger and Hamm, 2015). Previous research indicates that the primary obstacle in purchasing organic food is its expensive cost (Marian et al., 2014), but other studies suggest that

decreased costs of organic food do not always result in increased sales (Bunte et al., 2010). Different groups of consumers exhibit significant variations in the price elasticity of demand for organic food (Green et al., 2013). Increased price sensitivity significantly alters the attitude-behavior link in a detrimental manner (Ghali-Zinoubi, 2021). Based on the findings of Rodríguez-Bermúdez et al., the expense associated with organic food remains a significant obstacle to its consumption. Most participants indicated that they would increase their consumption of organic food if it were priced at a mere 10% to 30% higher than conventionally manufactured food (Rodríguez-Bermúdez et al., 2020). The results of a recent study indicate that price adversely affects purchase intentions by reducing perceived behavioural control (Bósquez et al., 2022). Therefore, the price of organic food can be regarded as one of the most pivotal determinants of its consumption.

2.4 Health Consciousness (F4)

Health consciousness is a mental status of an individual which shows the degree of involvement of that individual in daily healthy routine and activities (Jayanti and Burns, 1998). Health consciousness is defined as the extent to which an individual's daily actions take their health into consideration (Wang et al., 2019; Yadav and Pathak, 2016). Health-consciousness of people has been regarded as the finest predictor of consumers' attitude and behaviour toward organic food because it significantly encourages consumers to buy it (Paul and Rana, 2012). Organic foods are often thought to be healthier for consumers since they include more nourishment and less insecticides and toxins (Kriwy and Mecking, 2012; Wier et al., 2008). Consumers' level of health consciousness is the first factor significantly impacting the purchase intention for organic food (Nagaraj, 2021). Research shows that COVID-19 pandemic has positively influenced health consciousness of consumers and organic food buying has increased due to this (Sohn et al., 2022). Thus, health consciousness also changes the buying intention of consumers for organic food and becomes most prominent factor affecting organic food consumption (Su et al., 2022).

2.5 Promotion (F5)

Promotion of organic food surpasses the adverse consequences of high pricing, making it a crucial subject that researchers must tackle (Rong-Da Liang et al., 2017). Consistent promotion of organic food through various media outlets enhances the inclination to consume more nourishing and healthful food products (First and Brozina, 2008; Xu and Wu, 2010). Effective advertising can enhance the probability of consumers buying organic products (Septianto et al., 2019). Sales promotion and advertising have the potential to influence customers' purchasing intention towards organic products (M. Li and Cui, 2021). Both promotional and advertising elements have the potential to impact an individual's inherent inclination to purchase organic food (Zheng et al., 2022). The phenomenon of influencer marketing is experiencing significant growth in the contemporary technology age. The promotional and advertising activities conducted by these influencers are also exerting an impact on consumer preference for organic food consumption (Chetioui et al., 2022). Hence, advertising and promotion emerge as significant determinants influencing the adoption of organic food.

2.6 Quality and Taste (F6)

Consumers have traditionally placed paramount importance on natural flavour, freshness, and nourishing sustenance (Hemmerling et al., 2016). The primary determinants of consumer decision-making in purchasing organic food are taste and flavour (Castellini et al., 2008; Cerjak et al., 2010). Generally, organic food is perceived as being more costly due to its superior quality and enhanced flavours (Hill and Lynchehaun, 2002; Hughner et al., 2007). The genuineness of organic products is determined by their quality and natural taste, which in turn motivate individuals to purchase organic items (Fleşeriu et al., 2020). Purchasing decisions are influenced by two key attributes of organic food: superior quality and enhanced taste, for which consumers are willing to pay a premium (Ali, 2021). The purchase behaviour of customers for organic food is positively influenced by the traits of quality

and flavour (Danner et al., 2022), making it a relevant aspect to investigate.

2.7 Availability and Accessibility (F7)

The expert also suggested that consumer demand for locally produced goods is really significant (Bryła, 2016). Prior studies demonstrate that organic foods are not readily accessible, while their availability is crucial for consumers to become used to them. The availability of organic products led to a rise in the consumption of organic foods (Tran and Nguyen, 2021). A notable positive correlation exists between Availability and Purchase Intention (Roseira et al., 2022). One of the most significant obstacles is the limited accessibility of organic products (Kim and Chung, 2011; Mirakzadeh et al., 2012).

2.8 Knowledge and Awareness (F8)

Research indicates that customer perceptions and attitudes towards organic foods are shaped by their level of knowledge regarding organic foods. Increased consumer education is necessary to boost the demand for organic food (De Magistris and Gracia, 2008). Enhanced awareness and understanding of organic food positively influence individuals' attitudes towards organic food (Le-Anh and Nguyen-To, 2020). Consumer knowledge and information are the primary determinant in the domain of organic food consumption. This suggests that progressive consumers strongly depend on cognitive processes to make decisions about the acceptance of organic foods (L. Li et al., 2021). Evidence indicates that the level of product knowledge has an impact on the inclination to purchase organic food (Eberle et al., 2022). Conversely, if consumers have insufficient knowledge and information regarding organic foods, it will manifest in their perplexed and inaccurate reactions and behaviours when it comes to buying organic food (Dinçer et al., 2022). Therefore, the likelihood of buying organic products increases with higher levels of awareness (Radman, 2005). Therefore, knowledge and information might also represent a significant determinant for the consumption of organic food.

2.9 Food Safety (F9)

Consumers express concerns about food safety, specifically about the quality of processed foods, food additives, and pesticide residues that could potentially pose a risk to their physical well-being (Hsu et al., 2016). In the context of national food supply networks, food safety pertains to the prevention of detrimental microbiological and chemical agents (Uyttendaele et al., 2016). Consumer purchasing intention of organic food is significantly influenced by food safety (Misra and Singh, 2016). Organic food products are often regarded as entirely safe for use and consumption (Lesch et al., 2006). The prevailing belief among consumers is that organic foods are associated with greater safety and health benefits (Truong et al., 2012). Concerns about food safety result in a positive outlook towards purchasing organic food (Çabuk et al., 2014). The consumption of pesticide and chemical-free foods is advantageous for human health and promotes the adoption of organic food (Khan et al., 2022). Research by Shahabi Ahangarkolaee and Gorton (2021) suggests that consumer willingness to pay for organic food is influenced by their perceived concerns about food safety (Shahabi Ahangarkolaee and Gorton, 2021).

2.10 Food Neophobia (F10)

Customers' aversion to experimenting with new foods is referred to as food neophobia, and customers' enthusiasm for sampling new foods is termed food neophilia (Okumus et al., 2021). Food neophobia refers to the extent to which consumers exhibit reluctance in experimenting with novel food items, cuisine, and meals. Limited study has revealed that individuals with food phobia exhibit a preference for avoiding the consumption of novel or organic foods, therefore significantly influencing their eating attitudes. Food neophobia is a metric used to assess the objective of food festivals. Organisations specialising in the sale of Organic Food should highlight the significant impact of consumer neophobia on their purchasing decisions for organic products. Nevertheless, the assessment of satisfaction is not often given sufficient attention (Umair Kashif et al., 2023; Rehman et al., 2023).

2.11 Food Neophilia (F11)

Food neophilia is a personality predisposition marked by a willingness to experiment with novel and unfamiliar culinary experiences. Individuals with a high level of food neophilia display a broad range of food preferences and gain enjoyment from exploring new culinary experiences. Food Neophilia could be the primary reason for organic food intake (Tarinc et al., 2023). Food neophilia is a mentality marked by a fascination with novel cuisines and a strong desire to sample both familiar and foreign foods (Rehman et al., 2023). Food neophilia refers to a customer's willingness to try organic food.

2.12 Lifestyle (F12)

In order to comprehend the consumer lifestyle and its influence on the consumption of organic food, extensive research has been conducted (Sriwaranun et al., 2015). Lifestyle is a driving force for customers to purchase organic food (Nie and Zepeda, 2011). The food-related lifestyle (FRL) model is frequently employed to examine the consumption of organic and locally produced food. It effectively elucidates the paramount importance of lifestyle in the context of organic food consumption (Brunsø et al., 2004; Grunert and Juhl, 1995). Numerous lifestyle and demographic variables complicate the correlation between adopting an organic diet and the health benefits (Mesnage et al., 2020). While lifestyle does influence consumer behaviour, the specific lifestyle of an individual plays a more crucial role in determining actual buying behaviour among organic food consumers (Han and Lee, 2022). Investigation of the relationship between a social lifestyle and purchase intention for organic food is a significant area of research (Jeyakumar Nathan et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

The present work's technique is compartmented into four clearly defined phases (Figure 1), which will be further explained below:

3.1 Phase I: Literature Review and Experts' Opinion

During the initial stage, an extensive literature review

was carried out in collaboration with group discussions including industry professionals and academic personnel. The discussions played a crucial role in creating a thorough questionnaire that was later used to gather answers from the expert group. The identification of these factors is advantageous in comprehending consumer decision-making regarding organic food consumption. An analysis was conducted on 39 publications pertaining to the consumption and purchasing behaviour of organic food. Various keyword combinations, including chemical free foods, green food products,

sustainable eating, ecological food items, naturally grown food, Food Preferences, Food Neophilia, and Food Neophobia, were employed. Among the 39 articles, eight were excluded because they did not pertain to organic foods, while the remaining three were rejected because of their unrelated content. After careful consideration, a total of 28 papers from prestigious journals were included. A total of eleven experts participated in the study by helping to identify variables and offering their responses for data gathering.

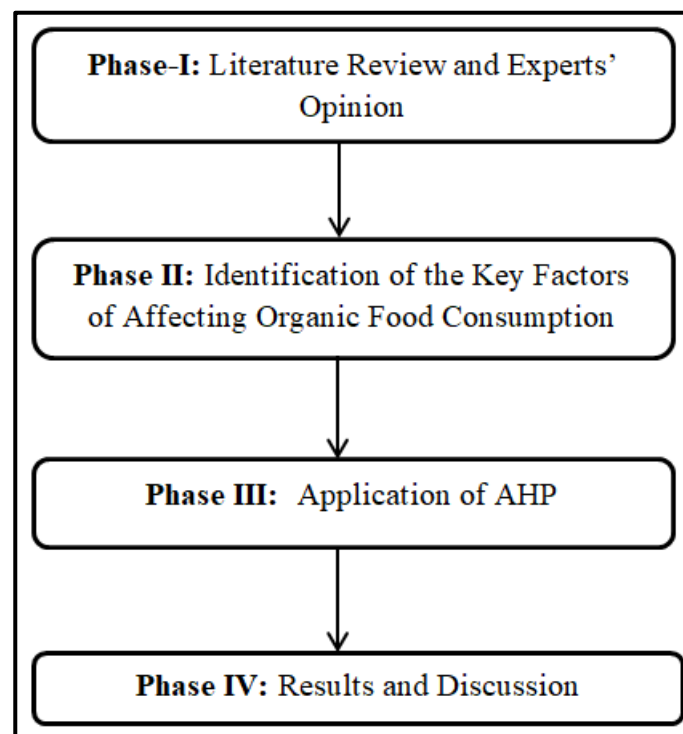


Figure 1: Methodology Framework

3.2 Phase II: Identification of the Key Factors

The analysis commenced with a comprehensive examination of the existing literature and databases to ascertain the key determinants influencing the consumption of organic food. The analysis of 28 papers from respected publications revealed the presence of 19 factors. Ultimately, a total of 12 factors were chosen with the guidance of experts, following the removal of 7 identical factors with different names. A total of 15 experts were contacted for this study; nonetheless, only 11 experts provided responses and participated in the research. The involvement of five or more experts is essential for effective decision-making, as supported by previous

studies (Aghasafari et al., 2020; Jena and Dwivedi, 2021; P.-H. Nguyen, 2022). Thus, the findings of this study can be reasonably regarded as reliable when a sample size of 11 experts is employed.

3.3: Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Method

Thomas Saaty is attributed with the development of the renowned Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), which decomposes complex decision-making situations into distinct smaller structures. Furthermore, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) enables decision makers to ascertain the relative importance of criteria and sub-criteria by employing pairwise comparisons (Chang and Chen, 2011).

Presented below are the sequential stages in AHP:

Step 1: This stage involves compiling a comprehensive inventory of the overarching objective, the criteria, and the several alternatives for making a decision.

Procedure 2: Generate a Pairwise Comparison Matrix: Employ the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

nine-point scale (Table 1) to assess the comparative importance of each pair of decision options. The matrix presents quantitative ratings that evaluate and contrast the horizontal (first) and vertical (second) options. The possibilities are shown in both horizontal and vertical orientations.

Table 1: AHP - Importance Scale

For any pair of factors 'i' & 'j'	
Score	Relative importance
1	Factors 'i' and 'j' have equal importance
3	Factor 'i' is weakly more important than 'j'
5	Factor 'i' is strongly more important than 'j'
7	Factor 'i' is very strongly more important than 'j'
9	Factor 'i' is absolutely more important than 'j'
Note: 2, 4, 6, 8 are intermediate values	

Step 3: Generate a Normalised Matrix by dividing each whole number in a column of the pair-wise comparison matrix by the sum of the adjacent columns.

Step 4: Proceed to construct the Priority Vector Average by computing the average of each cell within the normalised matrix. These row averages constitute the priority vector of alternative preferences in relation to the particular criterion. The cumulative sum of the values in this vector is 1.

Step 5: Calculate the Consistency Ratio [CR] using the following formulae-

$$CR = \left[\frac{CI}{RI} \right]$$

Here,

The Consistency Index (CI) is defined as the ratio of

$$\left[\frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1} \right]$$

Random Inconsistency (RI) is a statistical measure that may be computed as $RI = \left[\frac{1.987 (n-2)}{n} \right]$

The allowable coefficient of determination (CR) range depends on the dimension of the matrix. It is equal to 0.05 for a matrix of dimensions 3 by 3, 0.08 for a matrix of dimensions 4 by 4, and 0.1 for any larger matrices with n equal to or greater than 5.

Step 6: Generate an exhaustive priority matrix of alternatives by compiling decisions from multiple tiers of the hierarchy.

Therefore, we examined the Decision Matrix (Table 2), Factor Weight Matrix (Table 3), and Result Metrics Matrix (Table 4) by implementing the aforementioned methodology.

Table 2: Decision Matrix

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12
F1	1.0	9.0	5.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
F2	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.1	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.3
F3	0.2	4.0	1.0	0.2	1.0	4.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.3
F4	1.0	8.0	5.0	1.0	4.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	4.0	4.0
F5	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.3	4.0	1.0

F6	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.2	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.5
F7	1.0	9.0	7.0	1.0	6.0	7.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	7.0	4.0
F8	1.0	8.0	4.0	1.0	5.0	5.0	0.3	1.0	3.0	4.0	6.0	7.0
F9	0.3	5.0	5.0	0.5	1.0	3.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
F10	0.3	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	0.5	0.3	1.0	1.0	4.0	1.0
F11	0.2	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.3
F12	0.2	3.0	4.0	0.3	1.0	2.0	0.3	0.1	0.3	1.0	4.0	1.0

Table 3: Drivers and Weights Matrix

S. No	Factors	Weights	Priority (in %)	Ranks
1	Environmental Factor (F1)	0.14	14.20	2
2	Certification and Labelling (F2)	0.12	11.90	4
3	Price (F3)	0.10	9.90	5
4	Health Consciousness (F4)	0.18	17.60	1
5	Promotion (F5)	0.04	3.91	9
6	Quality and Taste (F6)	0.10	9.50	6
7	Availability and Accessibility (F7)	0.06	5.90	8
8	Knowledge and Awareness (F8)	0.06	6.20	7
9	Food Safety (F9)	0.12	12.00	3
10	Food Neophobia (F10)	0.03	2.90	11
11	Food Neophilia (F11)	0.03	3.20	10
12	Lifestyle (F12)	0.03	2.70	12

Table 4: Result Metric Matrix

Number of comparisons	102
Consistency Ratio CR	6.4%
Principal Eigen value	13.42
Eigenvector solution: 6 iterations, delta	4.2E-7

3.4 Phase IV: Results and Discussion

From the results it is clear that Health Consciousness (F4) factor is on the top with 1st rank followed by Environmental Factor (F1), Food Safety (F9), Certification and Labelling (F2), Price (F3), Quality and Taste (F6), Knowledge and Awareness (F8), Availability and Accessibility (F7), Promotion (F5), Food Neophilia (F11), Food Neophobia (F10) and Lifestyle (F12) respectively. This shows that the main driving force behind Indian consumers' procurement of organic foods is their health consciousness. A significant number of consumers regard organic products as being healthier, devoid of dangerous pesticides, and more nutritionally rich in comparison to conventional meals. Past researches also support this finding (Eves et al., 2004; Putri et al., 2021; Rana

and Paul, 2017). Environmental concern is also highly significant factor for organic food consumption. Other researches also claim that the rising interest in organic foods can be attributed, in part, to the increasing awareness of environmental concerns and the adoption of sustainable farming operations (H. V Nguyen et al., 2021; Prakash et al., 2023; Yi, 2009). Food safety is directly related to the health of the consumers and becomes one of the most important factors. The implementation of robust food safety protocols safeguards customers and guarantees the complete realisation of the advantages of organic food while maintaining health standards (Tandon et al., 2020a).

The significance of certification and labelling in organic food consumption lies in its ability to provide guarantee of genuineness, establish customer

confidence, promote transparency, distinguish products in the market, assure adherence to regulations, and endorse sustainable agricultural methods. Collectively, these elements bolster customer confidence and stimulate the expansion of the organic food industry (Aitken et al., 2020; Ezhilvani and Jayakumar, 2020). Price is considered as a negative factor for the organic food consumption because the high price of organic foods poses a substantial obstacle to their consumption (Bernab   et al., 2023). Prices of organic products are generally more than those of conventional alternatives, which may discourage consumers who are sensitive to prices. Although certain consumers are ready to pay the higher rates for the supposed health advantages, a significant number still consider the cost to be excessive but the effect of price on organic food consumption can't be ignored (MS, 2021). The notion of superior taste and quality continues to be a major impetus for the use of organic food. The attractiveness of organic products for health-conscious consumers is enhanced by their sensory attributes, as well as their authenticity and purity (Hemmerling et al., 2016).

The level of consumers' understanding regarding organic goods, encompassing its advantages and distinctions from conventional meals, significantly influences their buying choices. Insufficient knowledge might result in doubt over the quality and perceived worth of organic products, so affecting the general rates of consumption (Demirtas, 2018). Insufficient availability of organic foods in some areas can impede consumer access. Notwithstanding the motivation of customers to buy organic items, they may encounter challenges in finding them in nearby marketplaces or stores, therefore impeding their consumption patterns (Vo and Laukkanen, 2021; Zakowska-Biemans, 2007). Promotion plays a crucial role in increasing customer awareness, effectively conveying the advantages, distinguishing organic products, encouraging trial and repeat purchases, and influencing retail stocking choices. Effective promotion of organic brands enhances their prospects of success in the very competitive food industry (Rong-Da Liang et al., 2017; Suki et al., 2021). Both food neophilia and food neophobia play critical roles in shaping consumer attitudes toward organic food. While neophilic consumers are likely to

embrace and promote organic options, neophobic individuals may resist trying these products. Understanding these dynamics can help marketers and producers develop strategies to increase organic food consumption by addressing the concerns of neophobic consumers and appealing to the adventurous nature of neophilic consumers (U Kashif et al., 2021; Ranga et al., 2024; Tarinc et al., 2023). Lifestyle aspects exert a substantial impact on the consumption of organic food, therefore shaping consumer behaviour and preferences in the most diverse manners (Han and Lee, 2022; Mahmud and Abdul-Talib, 2022) but in this research lifestyle is at the bottom on the basis of its rank. It does not mean that is not important, it refers that other factors are more important than this.

4. Implications

The study finds and ranks health consciousness, environmental concern, food safety, certification and labelling, and pricing as the five most significant criteria influencing organic food purchasing decisions. These priorities enable marketers and producers to concentrate their efforts on the most influential areas, therefore assuring efficient allocation of resources to improve customer engagement and sales. The significant role of price in purchasing decisions indicates that pricing strategies must be carefully considered. Organic food products often come at a premium, so understanding consumer perceptions of value is vital. Strategies such as promotional discounts, loyalty programs, or bundling organic products with conventional ones could help mitigate price sensitivity among consumers. Certification and labelling lead to trust, so, we can conclude that trust is identified as a critical element in the consumption of organic food. This discovery implies that it is crucial to establish and sustain consumer confidence by implementing transparent procedures, including quality assurance, and keeping consistent communication through proper labelling and organic certification. The establishment of credibility and trustworthiness in branding and messaging should be a top priority for marketers in order to cultivate enduring relationships with consumers. An analysis of the prioritised elements and their impact on buying behaviour can

assist marketers in formulating focused strategies. By placing emphasis on the health advantages in marketing efforts, offering clear and open information regarding sourcing and production methods, and resolving any concerns about pricing, it is possible to amplify consumer interest and stimulate sales.

5. Limitations and future scope

Given that the study is entirely dependent on expert judgements, it is possible that these opinions may be influenced by prejudice. Furthermore, the study consists of only 11 experts, which excludes the possibility of generalising the results. Given that just 12 factors have been investigated, another constraint could be the choice of factors, as there may exist

several more significant factors that influence organic food intake but have not been identified and classified. Furthermore, the present study failed to consider the impact of ambiguity and human bias on the assessment of the variables. While the current study was conducted in the Indian setting, it would be beneficial to expand the study to other countries in order to obtain more generalised findings. Additionally, it may be feasible to compare developed and developing markets as well. By employing Multi-Criteria-Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques such as Fuzzy DEMATEL, ISM, VIKOR, ANP, and TOPSIS, further research can be conducted to gain a more thorough and efficient understanding of the hierarchically interconnected interactions among components.

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