Exploring the Key Drivers of Online Purchasing Behaviour for Organic Food Products

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ABSTRACT

The growing consumption of organic food products, coupled with the rapid expansion of digital commerce, has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behaviour. The present study examines the key factors influencing consumers' online purchasing behaviour towards organic food products, based on primary data collected from 200 respondents in Hyderabad city. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire designed to assess consumer perceptions across the pre-purchase, purchase, post-purchase, and other influencing dimensions. Descriptive statistics and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were employed to analyse the data and identify the major determinants of online purchasing behaviour. The findings indicate that time efficiency in obtaining product information is the most important consideration during the pre-purchase stage, while delivery time is the leading determinant during the purchase stage. In the post-purchase phase, customer service support emerges as a crucial factor influencing consumer satisfaction and retention. The Exploratory Factor Analysis identifies five underlying dimensions: timeliness, price and certification, trustworthiness, serviceability and innovativeness. Together, these factors explain 64.04% of the total variance, highlighting their importance in shaping consumers' online purchasing decisions. The findings offer valuable insights for online retailers and organic food marketers in developing customer-oriented marketing strategies.

Keywords: Organic Food, Online Purchase, Consumer Decision-Making, E-commerce, Exploratory Factor Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital commerce, coupled with increasing consumer awareness regarding health, sustainability, and food safety, has significantly transformed the global food consumption landscape. In particular, the demand for organic food products has witnessed substantial growth over the past decade, driven by concerns over chemical residues, environmental degradation, and lifestyle-related health issues (Willer et al., 2023; FiBL & IFOAM, 2024). India, as one of the largest producers of organic commodities, has also experienced a notable shift in consumption patterns, especially in urban centers where digitally enabled purchasing platforms have become increasingly prevalent (APEDA, 2024).

The proliferation of e-commerce platforms has redefined traditional purchasing behavior by enhancing accessibility, convenience, and information availability. Online retailing of organic food products offers consumers the ability to compare prices, verify certifications, and access detailed product information, thereby reducing search costs and decision uncertainty (Kapoor et al., 2023). Furthermore, the integration of digital payment systems, logistics infrastructure, and last-mile delivery services has strengthened consumer confidence in online transactions, contributing to the growth of the online organic food market (Chavadi *et al.,* 2024).

Existing literature suggests that consumer purchase behaviour in the online organic food segment is influenced by a multidimensional set of factors encompassing product attributes, platform characteristics, and behavioural perceptions. Studies have identified key determinants such as product quality, price sensitivity, trust,

convenience, and certification authenticity as critical drivers influencing purchase decisions (Yadav & Pathak, 2016; Rana & Paul, 2020). In addition, digital-specific factors such as website usability, delivery efficiency, and customer service significantly impact post-purchase satisfaction and repeat buying behaviour (Pappas *et al*., 2017; Sharma *et al*., 2022).

Empirical evidence further highlights the importance of trust and perceived risk in shaping online consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of organic products where authenticity and certification play a vital role (Aertsens *et al.,* 2011; Singh & Verma, 2017). The presence of reliable certification labels and transparent supply chain information enhances consumer confidence and positively influences purchase intention. Similarly, promotional strategies such as discounts, user reviews, and social influence have been found to stimulate online purchases and impulse buying tendencies (Chen *et al*., 2021).

Global organic food market surpassed USD 200 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) exceeding 10 percent (Statista, 2024). In India, the organic food market is projected to reach USD 2.6 billion by 2026, supported by government initiatives such as the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and increased export promotion through APEDA (APEDA, 2024). Concurrently, India's e-commerce market is expanding rapidly, with online grocery retail emerging as one of the fastest-growing segments, driven by urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and changing consumer lifestyles (IBEF, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research, there remains a need to systematically examine the stage-wise determinants of online purchase behaviour for organic food products, particularly in the Indian context. Most studies have focused either on general online shopping behaviour or organic food consumption independently, with limited integration of both domains. In this context, the present study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the determinants influencing online purchase behaviour for organic food products using primary data collected from consumers. By integrating insights from existing literature and secondary data trends, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping consumer decisions and offers implications for marketers, policymakers, and e-commerce platforms in enhancing the effectiveness of digital organic food retailing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used for the purpose of study. Hyderabad city of Telangana state was selected for the study. A list of consumers who had previously purchased organic products was taken from a Startup engaged in retailing of organic products through an e-commerce platform and franchise stores in Hyderabad city and directly sourcing from farmers. A total of 200 consumers were selected for the present study from all five zones of Hyderabad. In each zone 4 circles were selected using randoml sampling. From each circle 10 respondents were selected using convenience sampling thus making a total sample size of 200 respondents. To determine the factors that influencing consumers to prefer online purchase of organic food products, different variables of study were measured using five point- Likert type rating scale. Factor analysis was attempted to detect the interrelationship among the factors which influence the consumers for online purchasing of organic food products and to analyse their role in profitability of an industry.

Results and Discussion:

In order to identify and understand the factors influencing consumers to prefer online purchase of organic food products, a total of 160 consumers were actually aware of online availability of organic food products. Out of them 92 consumers were found to have purchased organic products online. A total 25 variables relevant at different stages of pre purchase, on purchase, post purchase and others were measured as mentioned below.

Pre-Purchase Decisions

Table 1 Pre-Purchase Decisions

S.no.	Particulars	5	4	3	2	1	Cumulative score	Mean	Rank
1	Price of the product	31	35	17	6	3	361	3.92	VII
2	Quality of the product	29	45	13	4	1	373	4.05	VI

3	Availability of sufficient product information	29	30	18	8	7	342	3.71	X
4	Organic certification	37	42	13	0	0	392	4.15	II
5	Wide range of options	31	39	20	1	1	374	4.06	V
6	Time saving to search product information	38	42	12	0	0	394	4.28	I
7	Attractive discounts	39	31	19	1	2	380	4.13	III
8	User rating and Testimonials	28	45	19	0	0	377	4.09	IV
9	Availability of latest Items	28	32	19	8	5	346	3.76	IX
10	Authenticity of the product	31	34	18	5	4	359	3.90	VIII

The above table 1 represent the pre-purchase factors which may influence consumers towards online purchase of organic food products. It was noticed that "Time saving to search product information" with mean score of 4.28 was ranked first. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that convenience and efficiency are primary motivators in online shopping environments (Pappas *et al.,* 2017; Kapoor *et al*., 2023). The ability to quickly access product-related information reduces cognitive effort and enhances decision-making efficiency.

It was followed by "Organic certification" ranked second with a mean score of 4.15 highlighting the importance of authenticity and trust in organic food purchases. This is consistent with studies by Aertsens *et al*. (2011) and Singh and Verma (2017), which emphasize that certification labels significantly influence consumer confidence and purchase intentions in organic markets. Attractive discounts" (Mean = 4.13) and "user ratings and testimonials" (Mean = 4.09) were also key factors, reflecting the role of promotional incentives and social proof in shaping consumer behaviour (Chen *et al*., 2021). Interestingly, "availability of sufficient product information" (Mean = 3.71) was ranked lowest, suggesting that while information access is important, consumers prioritize speed and convenience over exhaustive information. This finding supports the notion that modern consumers prefer concise, easily digestible content rather than information overload (Sharma *et al*., 2022).

Table 2 On Purchase Decisions

S.no.	Factors	5	4	3	2	1	Cumulative score	Mean	Rank
1	Delivery period	33	44	15	0	0	386	4.19	**I**
2	Security of payment	27	46	12	5	1	365	3.96	IV
3	Privacy of personal information	28	52	10	2	0	382	4.15	**II**
4	Home delivery charges	36	37	14	3	2	378	4.10	III

The above table.2 represent the on-purchase decisions of consumers towards online purchase of organic food products. It was noticed that "During the purchase stage, "delivery period" (Mean = 4.19) was identified as the most critical factor. This highlights the importance of logistics efficiency and last-mile delivery in influencing purchase decisions. Similar findings have been reported in e-commerce literature, where faster delivery times significantly enhance customer satisfaction and conversion rates (Chavadi *et al.,* 2024).

"Privacy of personal information" (Mean = 4.15) and "home delivery charges" (Mean = 4.10) were also highly ranked, indicating consumer concerns regarding data security and cost sensitivity. These findings are consistent with the work of Pappas *et al.*,2017, who identified perceived risk and cost considerations as key determinants in online purchasing behaviour."Security of payment" (Mean = 3.96), although ranked lowest in this category, still scored relatively high, suggesting that while payment security is important, improvements in digital payment infrastructure have reduced consumer apprehensions in this regard (IBEF, 2024).

Table 3 Post Purchase Decisions

S.no.	Factors	5	4	3	2	1	Cumulative score	Mean	Rank
1	Customer service support	32	47	12	1	0	386	4.19	I
2	High positive vendors feedback and support	22	47	17	4	2	359	3.90	V

3	Trust of the store	26	53	11	2	0	379	4.11	II
4	Information about newer products	30	39	17	4	2	367	3.98	IV
5	Easy to return products	29	41	19	2	1	369	4.01	III

The above table 3 represent the post purchase decisions of consumers towards online purchase of organic food products. It was noticed that "customer service support" (Mean = 4.19) is the most significant factor influencing consumer satisfaction and retention. Effective after-sales service plays a crucial role in building long-term relationships and enhancing brand loyalty (Sharma *et al*., 2022).

"Trust of the store" (Mean = 4.11) ranked second, reinforcing the importance of credibility and reliability in sustaining repeat purchases. This finding aligns with prior studies emphasizing trust as a central construct in online consumer behaviour (Aertsens *et al*., 2011). "Easy return policies" (Mean = 4.01) and "information about newer products" (Mean = 3.98) further highlight the importance of flexibility and continuous engagement in post-purchase experiences. These elements contribute to perceived value and customer satisfaction, ultimately influencing repurchase intentions (Rana & Paul, 2020).

Table 4 Other factors affecting purchase of organic products

S.no.	Factors	5	4	3	2	1	Cumulative score	Mean	Rank
1	No time limitation	28	39	17	5	3	360	3.91	VI
2	Website Quality/Trust	27	49	12	3	1	374	4.06	III
3	Convenience	26	53	10	2	1	377	4.09	II
4	No crowded shopping environment	35	43	8	2	4	379	4.11	I
5	Speedy action	33	42	9	3	5	371	4.03	IV
6	Family and Friends opinions	29	41	16	6	0	369	4.01	V

The above table 4 represent the other factors of consumers towards online purchase of organic food products. It was noticed that aamong other influencing factors, "no crowded shopping environment" (Mean = 4.11) was ranked highest, indicating a strong preference for the comfort and convenience offered by online platforms. This finding is consistent with the growing shift toward digital retail, particularly in urban areas where time constraints and congestion discourage physical shopping (Kapoor *et al.,* 2023)."Convenience" (Mean = 4.09) and "website quality/trust" (Mean = 4.06) were also significant determinants, reinforcing the importance of user-friendly interfaces and platform reliability. Prior research confirms that website usability and perceived ease of use significantly influence online purchase intentions (Davis, 1989; Pappas *et al.,* 2017).

"Family and friends' opinions" (Mean = 4.01) indicate the role of social influence in shaping consumer decisions, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Meanwhile, "speedy action" and "no time limitation" reflect the increasing demand for flexibility and immediacy in online shopping environments.

Major factors which influencing consumers for online purchase of organic food products

Understanding consumer decision-making in the context of online purchasing of organic food products requires moving beyond descriptive statistics toward identifying the latent constructs that shape behaviour. In this study, factor analysis was employed to uncover the underlying dimensions influencing consumer choices, based on responses of 160 respondents who were aware about online purchase of organic food product on 25 observed variables (Table 5) measured using a five-point Likert scale. The below hypothesis was framed to test the research objective.

HC0: There are no significant factors influencing consumers for online purchase of organic food products

HC1: There are significant factors influencing consumers for online purchase of organic food products

Table 5 List of observed variables used in factor analysis

Variable	Name	Variable	Name
V1	Price of the product	V14	Home delivery charges
V2	Quality of the product	V15	Customer service support
V3	Availability of sufficient product information	V16	High positive vendors feedback and support
V4	Organic certification	V17	Trust of the store
V5	Wide range of options	V18	Information about newer products
V6	Time saving to search product information	V19	Easy to return products
V7	Attractive discounts	V20	No time limitation
V8	User rating and Testimonials	V21	Website Quality/Trust
V9	Availability of latest Items	V22	Convenience
V10	Authenticity of the product	V23	No crowded shopping environment
V11	Delivery period	V24	Speedy action
V12	Security of payment	V25	Family and Friends opinions
V13	Privacy of personal information		

Table 6 KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.730
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	986.181
	Df	136
	Sig	.000

The adequacy and reliability of the dataset were first established through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity as mentioned in Table no. 6. The KMO value of 0.730 indicates a satisfactory level of sampling adequacy, suggesting that the correlation structure among variables is sufficiently compact to yield distinct and reliable factors. Additionally, the statistically significant Bartlett's test (χ^2 = 986.181, $p < 0.001$) confirms the presence of meaningful interrelationships among the variables, thereby validating the application of factor analysis. This empirical evidence leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, affirming that consumer behaviour is influenced by multiple significant factors rather than random variation.

The results of communalities depicted in Table no.7 indicates the existence of the interrelationship among the variables of organic food products. A closer examination of communalities provides further insight into the explanatory power of individual variables within the factor model. Variables with low extraction values (below 0.50) were excluded, as they contributed minimally to explaining the shared variance. The elimination of eight such variables refined the model, resulting in a more robust and interpretable structure based on 17 variables. This step enhances the internal consistency of the analysis by retaining only those variables that meaningfully contribute to the latent constructs.

Table 7 Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extraction**
1	1.000	.610
2	1.000	.738
3	1.000	.490
4	1.000	.651
5	1.000	.449

6	1.000	.652
7	1.000	.737
8	1.000	.357
9	1.000	.709
10	1.000	.451
11	1.000	.692
12	1.000	.728
13	1.000	.755
14	1.000	.736
15	1.000	.731
16	1.000	.431
17	1.000	.699
18	1.000	.659
19	1.000	.629
20	1.000	.713
21	1.000	.767
22	1.000	.462
23	1.000	.677
24	1.000	.334
25	1.000	.430
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis		

Factor loadings of all variables in each component are given in Table 8. The application of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation revealed five distinct components with eigenvalues greater than one, collectively explaining 64.04 percent of the total variance. This level of explained variance is considered substantial in behavioural research, indicating that the extracted factors effectively capture the complexity of consumer decision-making in online organic food purchasing. The emergence of multiple factors highlights the multidimensional nature of consumer behaviour, where decisions are not driven by a single attribute but rather by an interplay of functional, psychological, and situational considerations.

Table no. 8 Factors influencing consumers for online purchase of organic food products

Component	Variables	Rotated Factor Loadings	Eigen value	% of Variation explained	Component name
1	Delivery period	0.930	4.282	20.50%	**Timeliness**
	No time limitation	0.868			
	Time saving to search product information	0.805			
2	Price of the product	0.854	3.458	16.51%	**Price and Certification**
	Organic certification	0.818			
	Attractive discounts	0.764			
	Home delivery charges	0.720			
	Trust of the store	0.604			**Trust worthiness**
	Security of payment	0.542			

3	Quality of the product	0.524	2.887	11.91%	
	Website Quality/Trust	0.514			
	Privacy of personal information	0.507			
4	Customer service support	0.780	2.128	9.52%	**Serviceability**
	Easy to return products	0.731			
5	Availability of latest Items	0.618	1.697	5.60%	**Innovativeness**
	Information about newer products	0.522			
	No crowded shopping environment	0.508			

Five major factors were extracted, explaining 64.04% of the total variance, which is considered satisfactory in behavioural and social science research, where explained variance above 60% is generally deemed acceptable for construct validity (Hair *et al*., 2019; Field, 2018). The first factor, **"Timeliness"** (20.50% variance), comprises variables such as delivery period, time-saving, and flexibility, underscoring the critical role of convenience in shaping online consumer behaviour. This finding is consistent with prior studies that identify perceived convenience and time utility as primary motivators for e-commerce adoption (Kapoor *et al*., 2023; Jiang *et al*., 2013; Verhoef *et al*., 2015; Childers *et al*., 2001; Davis, 1989).

The second factor, **"Price and Certification"** (16.51%), integrates both economic and credibility-related attributes, suggesting that consumers simultaneously evaluate affordability and product authenticity. This reflects the dual-processing nature of consumer decision-making, where rational (price sensitivity) and assurance-based (certification, labeling) considerations interact (Rana & Paul, 2020; Grunert *et al*., 2014). The importance of certification further aligns with literature emphasizing trust signals in food and health-related purchases (Aertsens *et al*., 2009). In the context of organic food, certification plays a crucial role in reducing information asymmetry and enhancing perceived authenticity, thereby strengthening purchase intention (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Singh & Verma, 2017).

The third factor, **"Trustworthiness"** (11.91%), includes elements such as security, product quality, and privacy, reinforcing the centrality of trust in online environments. Trust has consistently been identified as a decisive determinant in reducing perceived risk and enhancing purchase intention in digital platforms (Singh & Verma, 2017; Pavlou, 2003; Gefen *et al*., 2003). Kushwah *et al*., 2019 further validated this observation, highlighting that concerns over product authenticity and digital payment security remain significant barriers to online organic food adoption.

The fourth factor, **"Serviceability"** (9.52%), encompasses customer service quality and return policies, highlighting the importance of post-purchase support in influencing satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviour. Effective service recovery and responsive customer support are known to strengthen consumer loyalty and perceived value (Blut *et al*., 2015; Holloway & Beatty, 2008; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

Finally, **"Innovativeness"** (5.60%) captures consumers' inclination toward novel products and enhanced shopping experiences. This reflects the growing role of hedonic and experiential motivations in online consumption, particularly among digitally engaged consumers (Chen *et al.,* 2021; Rogers, 2003).

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that online consumer behaviour towards organic food products is multidimensional, driven by a combination of efficiency, economic value, trust, service quality, and innovation.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study offer significant implications for marketers, e-commerce platforms as well as policymakers. From a managerial perspective, the results highlight the need for online retailers to prioritize operational efficiency, particularly in terms of fast delivery and seamless user experience, as timeliness emerged as the most influential factor. Platforms must also ensure the visibility and authenticity of organic certifications

to build consumer trust and reduce perceived risk. Competitive pricing strategies combined with promotional incentives can further enhance purchase intention, especially among price-sensitive consumers. Additionally, strengthening customer service systems, including easy return policies and responsive support, is critical for improving post-purchase satisfaction and fostering long-term customer loyalty.

From a policy perspective, there is a need to standardize and regulate organic certification systems to enhance transparency and credibility in the market. Government agencies should promote awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the benefits of organic food and the significance of certification labels. Supporting digital infrastructure and logistics development can further accelerate the growth of online organic food markets.

CONCLUSION:

The study provides a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing online purchase behaviour for organic food products, offering both theoretical and practical insights relevant to the evolving digital marketplace. The findings demonstrate that consumer decision-making is a multi-stage process shaped by a combination of convenience, trust, economic considerations and service-related attributes. At the pre-purchase stage, time efficiency, availability of authentic organic certification and promotional incentives significantly influence consumer intention indicating that modern consumers prioritize both ease of access and product credibility. During the purchase stage, factors such as delivery speed, pricing and data security emerge as critical determinants, highlighting the importance of operational efficiency and risk reduction in facilitating transaction completion. In the post-purchase stage, customer service quality and trust in the platform play a vital role in shaping satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviour, emphasizing the need for sustained relationship management in online retailing. The factor analysis further strengthens these findings by identifying five key dimensions Timeliness, Price and Certification, Trustworthiness, Serviceability and Innovativeness which collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variance in consumer behaviour. Among these, timeliness and price-certification are the most influential, underscoring the central role of efficiency and perceived value in online purchasing decisions. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that e-commerce platforms should focus on improving logistics efficiency, ensuring transparent certification mechanisms, maintaining competitive pricing and delivering responsive customer support services. Overall, the study highlights that trust, convenience and authenticity are critical drivers of growth in the online organic food market.

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