

## **A Study on the Effect of Demographic Factors on Consumer Buying Decision of Organic Food Products in Bangalore City**

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### **Abstract:**

The organic food market all over the world has grown considerably over the past decade. Simultaneously, organic food industry in India got bigger, even though the local markets are still small. The aim of this paper is to study the demographic factors effecting buying behavior of customers of organic food products. A total of 50 questionnaires was taken into consideration with proper responses filled in via convenience sampling from consumers across organic and regular retail stores in Bangalore city. Eight demographic variables were studied which are gender, age, income, education, marital status, locality, family type, and occupation. The data was analyzed using the SPSS tool. The findings will help organic sellers interested in increasing their consumer base by giving useful insights on the buying behavior and consumption patterns of the consumers of organic foods specifically in metros like Bangalore.

**Key words:** organic products, organic food products, consumer buying behavior, demographic factors.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

**Organic farming has been practiced in India since a long time.**

Food scarcity in India post-independence has forced the then government to look for alternative options to address the issue. Investing on chemical fertilizers was the only way to increase the agricultural productivity. Consumers' awareness on the effects of chemicals and pesticides on one's health as well as on the environment has given momentum to organic production. Ideally we can define organic food as food cultivated without the use of pesticides, preservatives or chemicals. With consuming of organic food gaining prominence among consumers, advocating health and preserving environment, studying and finding the factors affecting consumers' buying behavior towards organic foods would suggest viable measures for companies marketing these

products. Especially with the metropolitan consumers showing greater interest in buying and consuming organic food products. Recent articles by researchers suggested that 62% of metropolitan consumers purchased organic food. It was found that Mumbai held the top position having highest monthly expenditure on organic products followed by Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai. Retailers had mentioned that health and concern for the environment were the most important reasons for consumers to purchase organic food products. Hence, it becomes imperative to study the reasons that influenced this changing behavior of consumers towards organic food products. Undeniably, significant differences were found in socio-demographics between developed countries and others, with respect to inclusion of organic food to their daily consumption. Even though organic foods benefitted health and environment, consumers favoring non-organic foods has only been increasing in comparison to the organic foods. Studies by researchers [12], [30], [46], [51], [53], found organic food buying behavior influenced by gender, age, income, education etc. As per the research studies of [49], women and young consumers had favorable outlook towards organic products and included them in their purchases. Assuming organic products as expensive, the consumers preferring organic products were considered wealthy as per the findings in their studies by [30], maintained high lifestyle and were highly educated by [44], [53]. In a study by [59] it was found that different age and income groups had favorable relation with consumer's organic purchase behavior but education was found not related. However, the previous studies were contradicted by some researchers [15], and their findings showed that differences in income was not related to the buying decision.

#### **Need for the study:**

Many researchers studied the variations in the buying behavior displayed by consumers belonging to a demographic variable category in a given study area across the world and each study showed conflicting findings regarding the likelihood of buying organic products. Against these variations in behavior, the following questions are imperative: Do the consumers belonging to the demographic variables (gender, age, income, education, occupation, marital status, location, family type) in Bangalore display similar behavior pattern as rest of the world metropolitan cities while purchasing organic products? Does the level of consumption of Bangalore match the consumption of the world metropolitan cities? The results of this study will contribute to the literature by assessing how demographic characteristics influence organic purchase behavior, specifically among consumers in Bangalore.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Definitions:**

#### **Organic:**

Each country has its own standards for certifying products as “organic”. In other words, organic products are produced with minimal or zero artificial ingredients, preservatives or chemicals for being certified as 100% organic. The cultivation process and techniques used must be eco-friendly. USDA defines “Organic”, as “an ecological management production system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity” based on the minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance “ecological harmony”. To improve the environment and public health, food quality and reduce cost of agriculture, going organic is the only way forward.

#### **Shift from Non Organic to Organic products:**

In accordance with the BCG report in 2009, around fifty percent of consumers choose not to buy environmental friendly products for reasons such as lack of awareness (34%), only few options (16%), and that it is too expensive (11%). Few (2%) felt the quality of the products are poor comparing with the conventionally produced and some of them don't trust (4%) the label information and the certification. In a study by a researcher [27], it was observed that green products are costlier than the conventional products because higher cost is acquired by the process, material and to obtain certified eco labels. Hence, the important considerations among the consumers when they buy organic food were found to be taste, health and environmental benefits, whereas the price and availability of such products were the major obstacles according a study [28], [31]. Yet in another study [26] it was found that customers bought organic products for their concern for environment, health benefits and also showcasing their lifestyle. Some of the customers prefer to buy directly from local producers or from specialty stores due to lack of trust on manufacturing companies for non-organic products even if they can be differentiated with the help of label information and certifications. On the other hand, in a study [5], [20] it was observed that consumers favored organic products as it was perceived that products grown organically were healthy and safe for consumption than the regular products. Also other by products like fruits and herbs for beverages, cosmetics, vegetables for dyes etc are catching the

market and need to be advocated through extensive awareness drives, promotions etc to reach the consumer in a larger way.

### **1. Organic Products Classification:**

Among the types of organic food category, the most sought after are organic grocery, organic vegetables, certified organic food items etc. These products must comply with the given guidelines, certified and only then marketed as "organic".

### **Organic Food Products:**

The Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs states that:

‘Organic food is the product of a farming system which does not use fertilizers, pesticides; growth regulators or livestock feed additives.’ They also endorsed the numerous benefits of organic food consumption. As per a report published in the article ‘Organic and Biodynamic farming’ by ORG- MARG in 2012, India produces the following organic products:

- Vegetables: Okras, brinjals, garlic, onions, tomatoes, potatoes etc.
- Fruits: Mangoes, bananas, pineapples, passion fruits, sugarcane, oranges, cashew nuts, walnuts etc.
- Spices: Cardamom, black pepper, white pepper, ginger, turmeric, vanilla, mustard, tamarind, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, chili etc.
- Pulses: Red gram dal, black gram dal etc.
- Commodity: Tea, coffee, rice, wheat etc.
- Oil seeds: Sesame seeds, castor seeds, sunflower seeds etc.
- Others: Cotton, herbal extracts from flowers, leaves, roots etc.

### **2. Consumer buying behavior:**

Changing consumer demographics has made consumer behavior as one of the most sought after topics for study by marketers and researchers even after all these years.

As per studies [23], understanding consumer behavior greatly contributes to the business growth. Also suggested by a researcher [58] in his study is that, owing to the extreme competitions in the retail industries across the world, understanding consumer behavior has become much more important. In another study, the researcher [1] analyzed the effect of previous experience of a consumer on his current buying intention. SEM was used to study this relationship between buying habits and previous experience of consumers. Findings showed that both the factors directly influenced the consumers’ purchase decision. Researchers [25] also conducted studies on

the five stages of consumer decision making process. The focus was on the factors that affected the most in the consumer decision making process, particularly the demographic factors. A five stage model for consumer decision making was proposed by researchers [6] as problem/need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision made and post-purchase evaluation along with other competing models proposed by various researchers [3], [36].

### 3. Demographic factors

Prominent researchers [10] in their studies, identified the demographic variables for consumers and their purchase pattern of organic products. Their findings indicated that the demand for organic products was relative to age, gender, education and income. As per the studies from [25], [49], younger members and women contributed more to the purchase of organic products. Similar studies in [12] and [51] found women more into organic purchases than men again supported by the studies in [22], which noted that women favored organic product consumption. Similar studies [20] observed that organic buyers were mostly younger than non-buyers. Also researchers, [46] and [15] suggested in their research that environmental consciousness was more in youngsters but with less purchasing power, were unable to pay more, where the elderly people payed more for organic products, as they were more health conscious. Income was another factor found to be important in influencing purchase decision of organic products. A study [2] in its findings pointed income as a positive influence on consumer buying behavior owing to the fact that they have higher prices where consumers co-related quality to higher price. Level of education was also an influencing factor affecting consumers' attitudes towards organic products. Organic consumers were found to be highly educated than non-organic consumers in a study [44]. As per studies [53], highly educated people required more convincing on the authenticity of organic products after which, were ready to pay a premium price for organic products. Due to these contradictory results, it was essential to examine the influences of demographic factors on the buying behaviour of consumers.

#### Hypothesis:

To address this problem, the following main hypothesis was adopted:

#### **Demographic factors do not influence consumers' purchase/buying decision.**

A detailed and specific sub-hypotheses are derived from it:

- i) Gender has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho1
- ii) Age has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho2
- iii) Education has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho3

- iv) Occupation has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho4
- v) Income has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho5
- vi) Marital status has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho6
- vii) Family type has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho7
- viii) Location has no influence on the decision to buy. Ho8

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. Statement of problem**

Organic food products have a major contribution to the country's economy and also to the livelihood of many natural food growers. It has created employment for many intermediaries and also found its place in the production of many products in the markets. However the pertinent question is do all of us know the source of the products? Are we ready to use the products as it is procured from the sources? If yes why and if not why? Why are these products not as popular as the so many other regular products available in the market? Is visibility the reason? Or the lack of convenience in acquiring the product is the reason for their alternating choice. However owing to the changing trends in the market and rising health issues from lifestyle patterns of consumers, demand for natural products is on the upswing. However lack of information regarding these products, places of availability and other related factors is hindering the consumer from preferring these products. There is a lot of scope for improvement with respect to the product, prices, promotion and making the organic products available to the customers. This study has been taken up to understand who the actual consumers are and their purchase behavior towards specifically the organic food products sold through various retails formats in Bangalore city, as there are many studies conducted by researchers throughout the world for regular branded products.

#### **2. Objectives:**

This study has following objectives:

- To identify the demographic variables of respondents of organic food purchase.
- To study the influence of these variables on the consumers' buying decision

#### **3. Scope:**

This study is mainly on demographic factors influencing purchase decision of consumers towards organic foods. It may help sellers identify actual consumers of organic food products

and improve the overall marketing strategies of companies selling organic food products. The target population considered for this study are consumers of organic food products only.

#### **4. Limitations:**

- No definite profile of organic food consumers is available for Bangalore as it is a cosmopolitan city with people from various backgrounds and worldwide living here.
- Scattered location of stores selling organic food products making collection of data difficult

#### **5. Research Design:**

An effective research design helps the researcher in collecting data efficiently and analyze it. The findings obtained will validate the research problem, which is to study the demographic factors influencing consumer buying behavior towards Organic food products. In this study, descriptive method was adopted.

#### **6. Sampling Techniques**

Non Probability sampling technique was adopted for this study. Stratified sampling method was used since the samples are exclusively for organic food consumers. Then Convenience sampling was used where subjects are selected from the available consumers. Accordingly a Sample Size of 50 was considered for a pilot study.

#### **7. Research Variables**

##### **Independent variables:**

Demographic Factors: Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Income, Marital status, Family type, Location,

##### **Dependent Variables:**

In this research, the dependent variable is consumer decision making, represented by –

##### **Consumer Buying decision**

#### **8. Data Collection**

**Primary data:** Obtaining accurate data is the key for exact study results. The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers who were there in the stores to buy organic products only. Most of

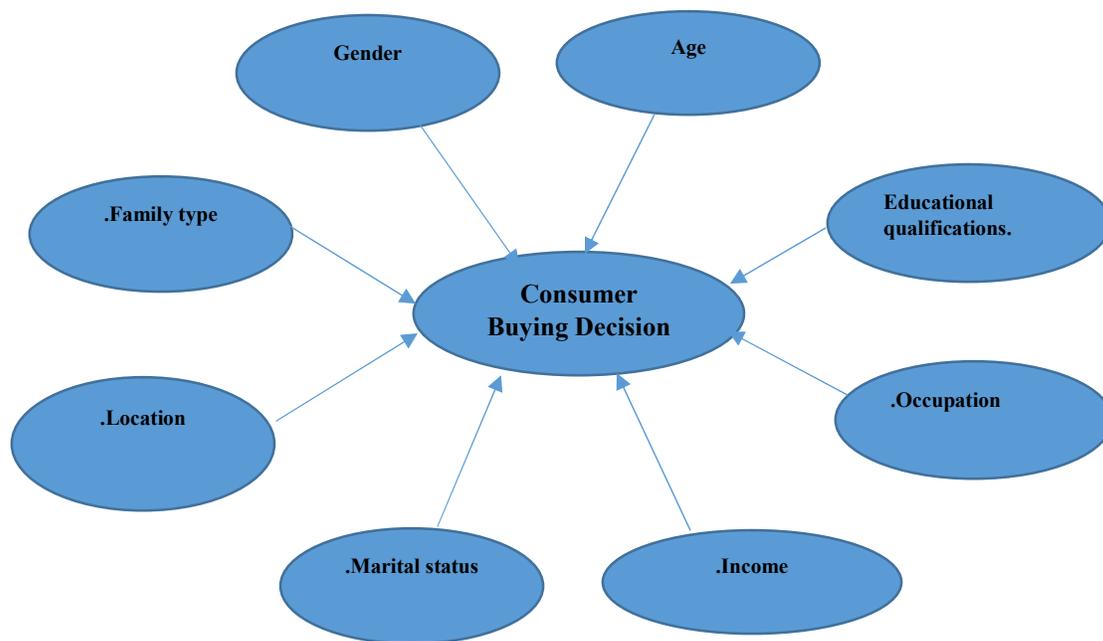
the consumers were willing to fill in the questionnaire by themselves. However, for others, the researcher personally filled in for them.

**Secondary data:** Similar studies from journals, published reports, documents, information brochures and research studies helped as a reference for this study.

### 9. Questionnaire Design:

The questionnaire was based on the consumer's demographic variables under consideration along with the sub categories.

### 10. Conceptual Model:



### 11. Study Area

Organic food products have been attractive for those who are both health and environment conscious. Hence, Bangalore with its diverse population from not only across the country but also from across the world, has been chosen as an ideal location for the study.

#### Organic shops in Bangalore:

There are more than 2000 supermarkets and departmental stores and 700 plus specialty organic stores in Bangalore. They sell locally produced organic products and also those procured from other states within India and other countries. Hence regular retail stores and mostly specialty organic stores were considered for the study. Some areas in Bangalore have as many as 10

organic stores in its location within a radius of 5 kms whereas other areas have 2 to 3. So stores were chosen so that these was a balanced representation along with regular retail stores.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### The influence of gender on buying decision

**Table.1: Group Statistics**

buying decision of organic food	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	male	21	1.10	.436	.095
	female	29	1.00	.000	.000

To compare the buying decision of organic food for male and female, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. A significant difference in scores for male ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ) and female ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) was observed.

**Table.2: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
buying decision of organic food		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	6.170	.017	1.180	48	.244	.095	.081	-.067	.258
	Equal variances not assumed			1.000	20.000	.329	.095	.095	-.103	.294

As per the result above, the significant value in independent samples test is .09 which is more than .05. Hence, gender does not influence buying decision of organic food. Therefore, hypothesis  $H_01$  was supported.

##### The influence of Marital status on buying decision

**Table: 3: Group Statistics**

buying decision of	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	married	37	1.05	.329	.054

organic food	unmarried	13	1.00	.000	.000
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To compare the buying decision of organic food for married and unmarried, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. a significant difference in scores for married ( $M = 1.05$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) and unmarried ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) was observed.

**Table. 4: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
buying decision of organic food	Equal variances assumed	1.467	.232	.589	48	.559	.054	.092	-.131	.239
	Equal variances not assumed			1.000	36.000	.324	.054	.054	-.056	.164

As per the result above, the significant value in independent samples test is .05 which is less than or equal than .05. Hence, Marital status has some influence on buying decision of organic food. Therefore, hypothesis Ha6 was supported.

### **The influence of Family type on buying decision**

**Table: 5: Group Statistics**

buying decision of organic food	Family type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	nuclear	37	1.05	.329	.054
	joint	13	1.00	.000	.000

To compare the buying decision of organic food and family type, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. A significant difference in scores for Nuclear family ( $M = 1.05$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ) and Joint family ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) was observed.

**Table.6: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
buying decision of organic food	Equal variances assumed									
	Equal variances not assumed									

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
buying decision of organic food	Equal variances assumed	1.467	.232	.589	48	.559	.054	.092	-.131	.239
	Equal variances not assumed			1.000	36.000	.324	.054	.054	-.056	.164

As per the result above, we can notice that significant value in independent samples test is .05 which is less than or equal than .05. Hence, Family type has some influence on buying decision of organic food. Therefore, hypothesis Ha7 was supported.

**The influence of Location on buying decision**

**Table. 7: Group Statistics**

buying decision of organic food	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	urban	35	1.00	.000	.000
	semi urban	15	1.13	.516	.133

To compare the buying decision of organic food and Location, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. A significant difference in scores for Urban (M = 1.00, SD = 0.00) and Semi Urban (M = 1.13, SD = 0.52) was observed.

**Table.8: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
buying decision of organic food	Equal variances assumed	11.134	.002	-1.549	48	.128	-.133	.086	-.306	.040
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.000	14.000	.334	-.133	.133	-.419	.153

As per the result above, we can notice that significant value in independent samples test is .13 which is more than .05. Hence, Location did not influence buying decision of organic food. Therefore, hypothesis Ho8 was supported.

### The influence of age on buying decision

**Table.9: Descriptives: Age**

buying decision of organic food								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					less than 20 years	3		
21-30 years	10	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
31-40 years	21	1.10	.436	.095	.90	1.29	1	3
41-50 years	13	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
51 and above years	3	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
Total	50	1.04	.283	.040	.96	1.12	1	3

To explore the influence of age on purchase intention towards organic food, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted. A statistical difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores for the five age groups:  $F(4, 45) = .33$ ,  $p = 0.86$  was observed.

**Table.10: ANOVA: Age**

buying decision of organic food					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.110	4	.028	.326	.859
Within Groups	3.810	45	.085		
Total	3.920	49			

The mean score as indicated through Post- hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for Group less than 20 years ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = .00$ ) was different from Group 31 to 40 years ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = .43$ ). Group 21 to 30 years, 41 to 50 years, 51 and above did not differ significantly from each other. The finding showed that age did not influence buying decision of organic food ( $p = .86$ ). Hence,  $H_0$  was supported

### The influence of Education on buying decision

**Table: 11: Descriptive: Education**

buying decision of organic food								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					10th	2		
12th	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
undergraduate	21	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
PG/ Professional	25	1.08	.400	.080	.91	1.25	1	3

Total	50	1.04	.283	.040	.96	1.12	1	3
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To explore the influence of education on buying decision of organic food, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted. A statistical difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores for the four education groups:  $F(3, 46) = .32$ ,  $p = 0.81$  was observed.

**Table: 12: ANOVA: Education**

buying decision of organic food					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.080	3	.027	.319	.811
Within Groups	3.840	46	.083		
Total	3.920	49			

The mean score as indicated through Post- hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for Group 10<sup>th</sup> class ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = .00$ ) was different from Group PG/Professional ( $M = 1.08$ ,  $SD = .40$ ). Group 12<sup>th</sup> and Undergraduate did not differ significantly from each other. The finding showed that education did not influence buying decision of organic food ( $p = .81$ ). Hence,  $H_03$  was supported.

### **The relationship between Occupation and buying decision**

**Descriptive: Occupation: Table.13**

buying decision of organic food								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
self employed	15	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
job in private sector	21	1.10	.436	.095	.90	1.29	1	3
job in public sector	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
retired	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
housewife	5	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
student	5	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
Total	50	1.04	.283	.040	.96	1.12	1	3

To explore the influence of Occupation on buying decision of organic food, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted. A statistical difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores for the six occupation groups:  $F(5, 44) = .26$ ,  $p = 0.94$  was observed.

**Table.14: ANOVA: Occupation**

buying decision of organic food					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.110	5	.022	.255	.935
Within Groups	3.810	44	.087		
Total	3.920	49			

The mean score as indicated through Post- hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for Group Self-employed (M = 1.00, SD = .00) was different from Group Job in private sector (M = 1.10, SD = 0.44). Group Job in public sector, Retired, Housewife and Student did not differ significantly from each other. The findings showed that Occupation did not influence buying decision of organic food ( $p = .94$ ). Thus,  $H_04$  was supported.

### **The influence of Income on buying decision of organic food**

**Table.15: Descriptive: Income**

buying decision of organic food								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
less than 10000	4	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
10000-20000	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
20000-30000	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
40000-50000	16	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00	1	1
50000 and above	26	1.08	.392	.077	.92	1.24	1	3
Total	50	1.04	.283	.040	.96	1.12	1	3

To explore the influence of Income on buying decision of organic food, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted. A statistical difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores for the five Income groups:  $F(4, 45) = .22$ ,  $p = 0.93$  was observed.

**Table.16: ANOVA: Income**

buying decision of organic food					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.074	4	.018	.216	.928
Within Groups	3.846	45	.085		
Total	3.920	49			

The mean score as indicated through Post- hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for Group Less than 10000 (M = 1.00, SD = .00) was different from Group 50000 and above (M = 1.08, SD = 0.39). Group 10k-20k, 20k-30k, and 40k-50k did not differ significantly from each other. The

findings showed that Income did not influence buying decision of organic food ( $p = .93$ ). Thus, Ho6 was supported.

## V. FINDINGS

- Buying decision of organic food was not influenced by Age, Gender, Income, Occupation, Education, and Location
- However, buying decision of organic food was somewhat influenced by Marital status and Family type

## CONCLUSION

From the above findings, it can be concluded that whichever age and gender, the consumer was, and whatever were his qualifications, personal health, better taste and quality products without pesticides were the top priority while purchasing the products. However, contrary to the findings, income did have some influence on the purchase decision as organic food products were little on the higher side of the prices than regular food products

Where married people were found to be influenced by their spouses for the choice, unmarried people were not weighed by the cost of the products or any other factors for deciding on their purchases. At the same time, most nuclear families could afford the costs of the organic products, only some joint families went for organic food products.

Bangalore being a metro, location had no influence on the purchase decision as all the customers felt there is no such differentiation now.

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