

Age And Occupational Differences in Consumers' Buying Behaviour Towards Organic Farm Products: Evidence from Nagaland

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Abstract

Organic farm products are receiving greater attention from consumers due to increasing concerns regarding food quality, health and environmental sustainability. However, consumers may differ in their purchasing behaviour according to their socio-demographic characteristics. The present study examines whether consumers belonging to different age and occupational groups differ in their buying behaviour towards organic farm products in Nagaland.

The study adopts a cross section analysis, and primary data were collected through purposive sampling survey method that included 515 consumers from Kohima and Dimapur cities in Nagaland, using a structured questionnaire. A multi-item of five-point Likert scale was used to assess the buying behaviour of the consumers. Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the buying behaviour scale was assessed. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the buying behaviour scores, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine the differences across age and occupational groups.

The results indicated that the age differences were not statistically significant, $F(2, 512) = 0.851, p = .427$. Similarly, across the occupational groups the buying behaviour did not differ significantly, $F(3, 511) = 0.869, p = .457$. The study concludes that age or occupational differences have no substantial influence on the buying behaviour of organic farm product consumers in the Nagaland.

Keywords: Organic Farm Products, Buying Behaviour, Age, Occupation, Consumers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The consumption of organic food has become more popular lately as consumers' awareness level of the quality and broader implications of food they buy have been increased. Generally, organic products are perceived as relatively healthier and safer than conventional products. Moreover, its methods of production are perceived to be environmentally responsible (Wang et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2026). To purchase organic food, consumers' decisions are influenced by the information on organic products, health concerns, environmental concerns, social influences, price considerations, and its availability in the market (Kamboj, 2023; Bazhan et al., 2024). In this regard, the systematic review by Kushwah et al. (2019) provides a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing consumers' intentions and purchasing behaviour towards organic food.

Personal preferences and socio demographic characteristics significantly influence Consumers' motivation to buy organic product (Hughner et al., 2007; Tohidi et al., 2023; Yilmaz, 2023; Jakubowska et al., 2024). In general, health priorities, lifestyle, purchasing experience and exposure to information differ by age (Gundala & Singh, 2021; Lin et al., 2025). Similarly, occupation is related to differences in daily routines, purchasing patterns, income-related circumstances and access to information (Sivathanu, 2015; Pandey, 2021; Sharma et al., 2026). All these factors influence consumers' intentions and buying behaviour.

Singh and Verma (2017) reported that consumers' purchasing pattern for organic food in India differ across demographic groups, influenced by socio-demographic characteristics and behavioural factors as well. Earlier studies have primarily focused on psychological factors, such as consumers' attitudes, purchase intentions, health consciousness, and environmental concerns, while demographic variables were largely used to

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describe consumer profiles. However, recent studies have increasingly recognized the importance of demographic characteristics in explaining variations in organic food purchasing behaviour. In particular, factors such as age and employment status, along with other behavioural influences, have been found to shape consumers' organic food buying patterns (Yilmaz, 2023; Ghosh et al., 2026).

1.1. Review of Literature

Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Organic Farm Products (OFP)

Parashar et al. (2023) and Madureira et al. (2025) observed that consumer buying behaviour towards OFPs has been receiving considerable attention lately because consumers often associate organic products with health, environmental protection, food safety and quality. However, these positive perceptions do not always translate into actual purchasing (Sarumathi, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2019). Several other studies show that organic food purchasing behaviour is shaped by individual and product-related considerations such as health concerns, environmental concerns, knowledge, price, trust and product availability (Dangi et al., 2020; Kamboj, 2023; Bazhan et al., 2024).

In India, consumers' decisions to purchase organic food are shaped by a combination of psychological and socio-demographic factors (Batra, 2016; Krishnakumare & Niranjana, 2017; Kataria et al., 2019; Gupta et al., 2025). Kumar et al. (2025) and Singh and Verma (2017) found that factors such as health consciousness, knowledge, motivation, price, and availability significantly influence consumer behaviour towards organic food. Their studies also showed that socio-demographic characteristics, particularly age, education, and income, were closely related to consumers' purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that understanding consumers' buying behavior of organic food consumption requires consideration of both consumers' personal perceptions and their socio-demographic background.

Age and Organic Farm Product Buying Behaviour

The influence of age on organic food purchasing is one of the most widely debated topics in the literature. While some studies suggest a linear relationship where older consumers are more likely to buy organic, others identify non-linear patterns or insignificant correlations.

Many studies identify age as a significant factor that influence consumers' purchasing priorities, health concerns, lifestyle and exposure to information, and consequently, their buying behaviour can differ across age groups (Cranfield & Magnusson, 2003; Tsakiridou et al., 2008; Singh & Verma, 2017; Grzywińska-Rapca et al., 2025). Several studies found age to be associated with organic food purchasing (Gundala & Singh, 2021; Ural & Direk, 2024), while others suggest that the relationship may vary across consumer groups and research settings (Lockie et al., 2004; Dettmann & Dimitri, 2009; Yilmaz, 2023).

Gundala and Singh (2021) observed that consumers particularly those in the 41-50 age brackets as the most frequent purchasers of OFPs, driven by health consciousness and higher disposable income. However, other research highlights a growing affinity among younger generations who, despite higher awareness and environmental concern, may encounter financial constraints that limit actual purchase frequency (Aggarwal et al., 2019). In some contexts, age is found to have only a moderate effect on intent compared to factors like trust and price acceptance (Yin et al., 2010), while in others, the probability of purchasing rises linearly with age (Sacchi et al., 2015).

Studies from India, Misra et al. (1991) and Kaur & Rana (2022) suggest that age along with other socio-demographic factors is relevant to organic food buying behavior. Recent studies also hold that age is a relevant socio-demographic factor in understanding organic food consumption patterns (Nandita & Suprapti, 2025; Ghosh et al., 2026).

Occupation and Organic Farm Product Buying Behaviour

Occupation and employment status also play a very important role in determining organic food consumption, because it can influence consumers' income, lifestyle, access to information, and purchasing choices (Mervin and Velmurugan, 2011; Yilmaz, 2023). Similarly, Zhou and Tong, (2007) suggest that individuals in professional roles and government employees exhibit higher purchase rates. Conversely, students and non-working individuals often report lower purchase levels, primarily due to price sensitivity and limited budgets (Inan et al., 2021). Employment status has been shown to be a significant predictor of actual buying behaviour in various national contexts (Yilmaz, 2023).

Recent studies in India have suggested that occupation is an important factor in explaining organic buying behaviour (Mercygnanamani & Padhmanaban, 2025; Chandrika et al., 2025; Vasanthi & Preethi, 2026). Correspondingly, Krishnakumare & Niranjana, (2017) provide evidence that occupation is associated with consumers' attitudes and preferences towards organic food in India. Mehra and Ratna (2014) also observed differences across occupational groups in consumers' perceptions and preferences towards organic food.

Overall, the consumer buying behaviour in this sector is not uniform; it is driven by a complex interplay of psychological, situational, and demographic factors. Understanding these determinants is essential for producers, retailers, and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumption patterns. Thus, the above review underscores the necessity for multi-faceted marketing strategies that address the distinct motivations and constraints associated with different demographic segments.

Research Gap

Existing literatures provide substantial evidence on the psychological and behavioural factors of organic food consumption. Previous studies in India have examined demographic characteristics alongside broader behavioural factors, including attitude, intention and actual buying behaviour. However, it is observed that studies on age and occupational or employment specific effect on consumer buying behavior of organic products remains sparse. In particular, less attention has been given to how different demographic groups differ when making organic food purchasing decisions in Nagaland. Therefore, the present study focuses on organic farm product buying behaviour across age groups and employment status in Nagaland. Addressing this gap can provide a better understanding of consumer heterogeneity and explain why there are differences in consumers' organic food preferences and purchasing patterns across different demographic groups.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Nagaland state has a strong agricultural base, with locally produced organic farm products which contribute significantly to the local food environment. This provides a relevant setting for examining whether demographic characteristics are related to differences in consumers' buying behaviour. Comparing buying behaviour across different age and occupational groups can provide a clearer understanding on whether consumers in these groups differ in their purchasing behavior of OFPs. Based on the above discussions, the present study specifically seeks to:

- i. Examine the level of buying behaviour towards OFPs among respondents
- ii. Determine whether buying behaviour varies among different age groups and occupational categories

1.3 Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs across different age groups.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs across different occupational groups.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary information on differences in consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs across age and occupational groups. The questionnaire was developed by adapting measurement scales from earlier studies on organic food consumption and buying behaviour (Pawar, 2021). A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the responses, where 1 for "Strongly Disagree" and 5 for "Strongly Agree" (Lin et al., 2021 and Sarmiento, 2025).

2.2. Study Area

The study was carried out in Nagaland, covering selected areas of Kohima and Dimapur cities. These two cities were selected as the study areas because they represent the State's capital and the commercial hub, respectively. These important urban centers of the State provide ample access to markets where consumers purchase agricultural and farm products.

2.3. Sample Design and Data Collection

The data were collected using purposive sampling method. In the survey, 515 respondents were included, those who frequently buy and consume OFPs. The structured questionnaire was used to collect information about the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their buying behaviour towards OFPs.

2.4. Measurement of Buying Behaviour

A five-point Likert scale was used to rate the respondents' buying behaviour towards OFPs. The statements were drawn from Pawar (2021) and modified to suit the present study. The reliability and validity of the measurement scale have been established, ensuring that the items consistently and appropriately capture the intended constructs. One-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether mean buying behaviour scores differ significantly across the groups. For the present study, the data were analysed using JASP statistical software.

2.5. Variables used in the analysis

In the study, the respondents' age and occupation groups represent the demographic characteristics, with the assumption that these factors influence their buying behaviour towards OFPs.

The two dependent variables were categorized as follows:

Age was classified into three groups: 18–25 years, 26–35 years and 36 years and above.

The occupational status was categorized as Government Service, Private or Self-employed, Homemaker and Student.

III. RESULTS

3.1. Reliability and Validity of the Scale

The buying behaviour scale had undergone factor-based assessment in the study. The standardized factor loadings of the variables ranged from 0.772 to 0.807, showing satisfactory indicator reliability. The scale showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.886 and composite reliability of 0.884. The average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.608, which was above the recommended value of 0.50 and indicated satisfactory convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Discriminant validity of the measurement model was also established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as the square root of AVE for the constructs was higher than their corresponding inter-construct correlations. Thus, the measurement instrument demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity and was considered appropriate for the present analysis.

3.2. Buying Behaviour across Age and Occupational Groups

This section presents the findings on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic farm products across different age and occupational groups. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise buying behaviour scores for each group, while one-way ANOVA was used to assess whether the differences observed between the groups were statistically significant. The buying behaviour score was calculated as the mean of the items used to measure consumers' buying behaviour towards organic farm products.

Table 1: Differences in Buying Behaviour across Age and Occupational Groups

Group	Category	N	Mean	SD	F	p	ω^2
AGE	18–25	78	3.046	0.572	0.851	0.427	0.00
	26–35	201	3.068	0.534			
	36 and above	236	2.996	0.627			
OCCUPATION	Student	64	3.075	0.578	0.869	0.457	0.00
	Government service	160	3.076	0.57			
	Private/Self-employed	182	3.012	0.635			
	Homemaker	109	2.972	0.516			

Source: Own calculation based on primary data

Buying Behaviour across Age Groups

Table 1 indicates that the buying behaviour mean scores were 3.046 (SD = 0.572) for respondents aged 18–25 years, 3.068 (SD = 0.534) for those aged 26–35 years, and 2.996 (SD = 0.627) for aged 36 years and above. Although the 26–35 age groups recorded the highest mean score, the differences across the three groups were small.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to examine whether buying behaviour differ significantly across the age groups. The results indicated that the differences were not statistically significant, $F(2, 512) = 0.851$, $p = .427$, $\omega^2 = .000$, suggesting that the effect of age on buying behaviour was negligible. Levene's test was also non-significant, $F(2, 512) = 2.794$, $p = .062$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied. Thus, no statistically significant difference was observed in consumers' buying behaviour towards organic farm products among the different age groups.

Buying behaviour across Occupational Groups

Table 1 shows that government service recorded the highest mean buying behaviour score of 3.076, (SD = 0.570), closely followed by students (M = 3.075, SD = 0.578). Private/self-employed respondents recorded a mean of 3.012 (SD = 0.635), while homemakers had the lowest mean of 2.972 (SD = 0.516).

However, the one-way ANOVA results indicated that buying behaviour did not differ significantly across the occupational groups $F(3, 511) = 0.869, p = .457, \omega^2 = .000$, suggesting a negligible effect of occupation on buying behaviour. Levene's test was also non-significant, $F(3, 511) = 0.866, p = .458$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied. Thus, no statistically significant difference was found in consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs among occupational groups.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study showed no statistically significant difference in consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs across age, as well as occupational groups. Although slight variations were observed in their mean buying behaviour scores, the differences were negligible, indicating that differences in age or occupation have no substantial influence on the buying behaviour among OFP consumers in the present study.

This result is consistent with Inci et al. (2014) and Tan et al. (2022), who reported no significant difference in consumers' perceptions of organic products across age groups. Similarly, Nandita and Suprati (2025) also reported that age did not significantly moderate the relationship between health consciousness and purchase intention of organic food. These results suggest that interest in and purchasing behaviour towards organic food may extend beyond different age groups.

However, the present finding differs from several other studies that identified age as an important factor in organic food purchasing (Mervin and Velmurugan, 2011; Gundala and Singh, 2021 and Ogundijo et al., 2022). More recently, Mercynagnamani and Padhmanabhan (2025) identified age, along with education, family size and residential area, as socio-economic factors playing a more decisive role in organic food buying behaviour. These differences may be due to variations in geographical setting, sample characteristics, age categories, and the specific measures used to assess purchasing behaviour.

The lack of significant differences across age groups in the present study may indicate that consumers in Kohima and Dimapur cities in Nagaland do not differ substantially in their buying behaviour towards organic farm products based on age.

Among the occupational groups, although government-service respondents has the highest mean buying behaviour score, followed by students and private/self-employed respondents, the differences among the occupational groups were small and not statistically significant. This indicates that occupation did not substantially influence consumers' buying behaviour towards OFPs in the present study.

This finding is in line with Pearson et al. (2013), who observed differences in organic food purchase frequency across employment-status groups, with students reporting relatively higher purchase frequency; however, these differences were not statistically significant. Similarly, Celik and Gül (2023), Gupta et al. (2025), and Mercynagnamani and Padhmanabhan (2025) observed no statistically significant differences in buying behaviour across occupational groups. Overall, these findings imply that occupational characteristics may not necessarily translate into substantial differences in consumers' purchasing behaviour towards organic food.

Conversely, the present finding contradicts with Mervin and Velmurugan (2011) and Saranyaa & Sugumar (2024), who observed significant differences in organic food preferences across occupational categories. These differences may be attributable to variations in geographical context, sample characteristics, occupational classification, and the measures used to assess organic food purchasing behaviour.

In the context of Nagaland, the absence of significant differences across age groups and occupational categories may imply that organic farm products are purchased by consumers of all age and occupational backgrounds, rather than being confined to a particular group. Thus, reflects a broader acceptance of organic farm products among consumers in Kohima and Dimapur cities.

As the observed differences in mean buying behaviour across age and occupational groups were small, other factors such as psychological and behavioural factors such as health consciousness, consumer awareness, environmental concerns, personal choice, subjective norms, and attitude may offer additional insights into consumers' buying behavior towards organic farm products, beyond demographic characteristics.

While age and occupation provide useful information about consumer profiles, they may not independently distinguish consumers in terms of buying behaviour towards organic farm products in the context of Nagaland. This suggests that factors beyond basic demographic characteristics may be more relevant in understanding consumers' organic food purchasing behaviour. The findings therefore contribute to the limited empirical evidence on consumer buying behaviour towards organic farm products in the state.

V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The absence of significant differences across age groups as well as occupational status implies that (i) promotional and consumer awareness activities may not necessarily be targeted separately, rather a general approach may be suitable and (ii) greater attention may instead be given to factors such as product availability, trust, certification, price, awareness and perceived benefits while promoting organic farm products in Nagaland.

These implications have great significance for producers, retailers and policymakers involved in promoting organic farm products.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that age and occupation may not be the major factors determining consumers' buying behavior of organic products in the state. Greater attention may therefore be given to other factors that influence consumers' decisions to purchase organic farm products. This provide a basis for further research focus on other socio-economic factors and attributes of the consumers that may influence on their buying behaviour of organic food products in Nagaland. Thus, adding new insights to the existing literature on consumers' buying behaviour towards organic farm products.

VII. LIMITATIONS

The study has several limitations such as (i) the analysis is based on cross-sectional survey and therefore cannot establish the changes in causal relationships between dependent factors and buying behavior overtime. Longitudinal studies on a wider geographical area could provide additional insights on organic food buying behaviour and its changing nature over time. (ii) The study was conducted among consumers in selected locations, particularly Kohima and Dimapur cities. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to consumers in other parts of the country. (iii) Age and occupation were the only factors considered in the study. By including more factors such as consumer awareness, health consciousness, environmental concerns, price, product availability and perceived benefits will give a more comprehensive result.

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