

Factors Influencing Consumers' Buying Behaviour of Organic Food in Sri Lanka: A Case of Consumers in Kegalle Divisional Secretariat Division

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is a country rich in natural resources and traditional values and eco-friendly agricultural practices. Therefore, people, especially in the past moved to things that were of quality and nutritious for their lives. However, when focusing on Sri Lankan food and beverages market at the present, still organic food has a narrow market in which the level of consumption is very low. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors influencing consumers' organic food buying behaviour in Sri Lanka. Data were collected from 200 consumers who purchase organic foods in the Kegalle divisional secretariate division through a survey conducted using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficients, analysis of variance, and multiple regression techniques from Minitab-17 statistical software. The results revealed that cultural, personal, social, economic, and psychological factors that have a clear positive relationship with the consumers' organic food buying behaviour while both psychological and personal factors have a powerful significant impact on organic food buying behaviour.

Keywords: *Buying behaviour, Cultural factor, Organic food, Personal factors, Psychological factors, Social factors*

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Introduction

As human beings have to fulfill some basic needs to lead to a better life. Food is one of them. This food consumption will take a different face from person to person as well as from country to country (Apaolaza, 2018). However, it is well-known fact that the food we eat should be good for our bodies. But, in the recent past, food consumption patterns have rapidly changed and there has been a trend toward processed and artificial diets instead of buying and consuming healthy foods due to intense busyness and competition. Therefore, there had been an increase in the production of food products using chemicals, especially chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and preservatives (Jose, Kuriakose, and Koshy, 2020). As a result of these, conventional food practices, the adverse effects on the environment during the production from manufacture were further exacerbated and due to consumption various adverse diseases, including non-communicable diseases began to spread rapidly among humans (Doan, 2021).

Thus, at present, due to the adverse effects on the environment as well as human lives, people are lining up globally eager to buy quality food for their lives which consist of both food safety and sustainability (Chu, 2018). Therefore, the global organic food market is expanding rapidly, and organic food have become more popular across the world (Chowdhury, *et al.*, 2021). Organic food is food that is made using healthy production methods, without any use of chemicals (Doan, 2021; Shafie and Rennie, 2012). *“Organic food is the food grown without any chemical fertilizer, pesticides, preservatives, and synthetic food enhancers”* (Kapuge, 2016: 304). Due to its quality and nutritional value, the global demand for organic food is steadily increasing. Not for show, but today people are moving to organic food to reduce the purchase of chemical residuals and consume nutritious food to maintain a high level of human health (Prada, Garrido, and Rodrigues, 2017). This rapid growth is occurring due to increased consumer confidence in organic foods as well as concern about possible health risks and environmental impacts of conventional food production methods (Arora, *et al.*, 2022; Winter and Davis, 2006). The proportion of buying organic food has increased day by day and it is gratifying that, not only developed but also developing countries are turning to organic food consumption (Doan, 2021).

As Winter and Davis (2006) explained, the organic food industry in the United States has grown rapidly over the past two decades. Further, they highlighted that the small-scale organic food production center has grown into a large-scale organic food producer and further he pointed out that the main reason for this is that consumers are more inclined to purchase organic food due to its nutritional value. Today’s modern consumers are highly concerned about their health and trying to maintain a high living standard by eating healthy in their busy lifestyles and they are gradually moving away from existing conventional

food to organic food (Rana and Paul, 2017). Besides, people are turning to organic food practices not only because of its health benefits, but also their affection for animals and the environment (Chowdhury, *et al.*, 2021) as well as economic growth and development (Seyfang, 2008). According to Jayman and Gunethilaka (2018), all countries are now moving toward organic foods.

Considering the Sri Lankan context, Sri Lanka was a country that produced food using traditional and eco-friendly agricultural practices which were quality and nutritious for the lives of the people in ancient times. However, with changing circumstances, there had been drastic changes in the way Sri Lankans produce and buy food in the recent past. As of today, with the increased level of environmental pollution and social issues, both consumers and producers are again concerned about the natural environment in Sri Lanka. As a result of that, Sri Lanka as a developing country also recognizes the importance and value of buying and consuming organic food, which is also considered a sound and sustainable solution to Sri Lanka's environmental and health problems. Therefore, the concept of organic food has created a social discourse. However, the organic food industry in Sri Lanka is considered to be a niche market and the level of consumption is still very low although it is growing rapidly (Bandara, 2019) and very few people have turned to purchase organic food. In this circumstance, the attempt is very much important to understand the purchasing behaviour of the consumers and it is more appropriate to focus on what are the factors influencing it.

Previous studies conducted in foreign countries are available, but only a few works of literature is available in the Sri Lanka context. Existing literature in Sri Lanka was on consumer intention and purchase behaviour factors (Bandara, 2019; Jayman and Gunethileka, 2018; Kapuge, 2016; Weerasiri, and Maldeniya, 2016) and no one study the factors such as cultural and psychological together. Therefore, the knowledge gap; regarding the identification of factors that influence consumers' organic food buying Behaviour still exists in Sri Lanka. Hence, the main objective of this study is mainly to identify significant factors that may influence on buying behaviour of consumers for organic food in Sri Lanka, and especially this study seeks to find how each variable affects the buying behaviour of consumers for organic food in Sri Lanka. The findings of the study would be practically relevant to the responsible parties in the future, including food production companies, policymakers, and the government who are manipulating the rules and regulations in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

The study of how consumer spends their money to purchase a particular good or service can simply say to consumer behaviour. This is typically studied by economists to better understand how personal taste and income affect buying behaviour. To understand consumer behaviour, the Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB) is most often used as a theoretical base. In this theory, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) propose that individuals control their socially relevant behaviours, and one driver of this behaviour is their intention to engage in it.

The TPB states that people's behaviour is determined by their intention to perform a given behaviour. According to the TPB, it states that people's behaviour is influenced by their intentions (Casper, 2007). Intentions are the most immediate antecedents to behaviour and represent the convergence of the cognitive, motivational, and affective internal processes associated with a given behaviour (Donahue, 2022). The theory postulates that intentions are a function of three factors: attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived control over the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB could serve as a comprehensive model for understanding change in both physical and psychosocial consumption behaviours (Donahue, 2022). And also, attitudes, norms and perceived behaviour all control all characteristics of human consumer behaviour that are modifiable. Specifically, some studies reveal that the TPB would suggest interventions to enhance positive psychosocial behaviours be targeted toward the identification of attitudes and perceptions of norms and perceived behavioural control relevant to these psychosocial behaviours, followed by efforts to modify these cognitions, as necessary (McEachan, *et al.*, 2011).

The consumers' buying behaviour is influenced by all three aspects of selection, purchase, and consumption of goods and services where if the consumer first finds the details about the particular product and then is satisfied with it, the person will focus on that purchase and consume (Rani, 2014; Ramya and Ali. 2016; Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016). Various scholars have pointed out that a lot of factors influence the buying behaviour of consumers and some factors including demographic, cultural, personal, social, economic, and economic factors influence it (Bandara, 2019; Likoudis, Sdrali, Costarelli, and Apostolopoulos, 2016; Rani, 2014; Ramya and Ali. 2016; Tsakiridou, *et al.*, 2008; Ueasangkomsate and Santiteerakul, 2016). The Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB) is one of the most appropriate and highly used theories available to discuss consumer predictions and behavioural attitudes regarding buying behaviour (Zoellner, *et al.*, 2012) and Ajzen (1991) further discussed how motivation and psychological impact on it. In addition to applying the original variables of the TPB as essential theoretical support in the study of

consumer buying intent and purchasing decision, other scholars have introduced new factors based on the TPB theoretical framework. Anisha and Kalaivani (2016) has been used Impulse Buying Theory, which was introduced by Hawkins Stern; to discuss how consumers make purchasing decisions and how best to predictable behaviours.

Cultural factors and buying behaviour

Culture is a way of dealing with the world by defining it in detail which makes people understand each other better. It includes race, religion, traditions, and caste, and also consists of the sub-culture and social class. This has been demonstrated by a limited group of researchers when considering how cultural factors affect consumers' buying behaviour. Religions, ethnicities, traditions, geographical regions, and even wealth also have a tremendous effect on buying behaviour of consumers (Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016; Gajjar, 2013; Overby, Woodruff, and Gardial, 2005). Generally, behaviour patterns, knowledge, and perceptions of society vary from family to family and society to society. Therefore, Rani (2014) says that culture is a part of our society, and it influences the buying behaviour of consumers from country to country in different ways. There, she further states the bandwagon effect which implies that the opinions and suggestions of family, friends, and living community also influence the buying behaviour of consumers.

Many studies have investigated factors like perceived beliefs and attitudes also influencing the buying behaviour of organic food (Dean, Raats, and Shepherd, 2008; Weerasiri and Maldeniya, 2016). As same, cultural activities have a positive effect on the tendency to buy organic products, to the extent that they depend on the social orientation of each cultural activity (Agovino, *et al.*, 2017). Hansen, Sorenses, and Eriksen (2018) have said adding the opposite opinion to it, the organic food buying behaviour is even positively correlated with health consciousness, it is negatively correlated with social consciousness.

Some researchers have identified that cultural factors are extremely important and need to be examined to understand consumers' buying behaviour. Yakup, Mucahit, and Reyhan (2011) emphasize that culture, beliefs, and traditions play an important role in food buying behaviour. Jeong and Lee (2021) explained that culture is a key factor in consumers' choice of food products. As same, cultural activities have a positive effect on the buy organic products, to the extent that they depend on the social orientation of each cultural activity (Agovino *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the study assumes that cultural factors have an influence on the consumers' purchasing behaviour for organic food. Therefore, the study predicts that,

H₁: There is a relationship between cultural factors and consumers' buying behaviour toward organic food.

Personal factors and buying behaviour

When focusing on the buying behaviour of the consumer, several facts can be discussed under personal factors. Many researchers say that consumers' buying behaviour is strongly influenced by age and gender. The main reason for this is that, as a person age, their ideas and rational abilities change, and the existing tastes and knowledge about the products they are eager to buy in their youth, change as they matured and the same way the desires, attitudes, understanding, and interests in buying products will vary according to their gender (Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016; Dittmar, 2005; Gajjar, 2013; Katrodia, Naude, and Soni, 2018; Rani, 2014; Vilcekova and Sabo, 2013). Besides, Wandel and Bugge (1997) used three types of foods to investigate consumer assessment of food quality: vegetables, meats, and potatoes. He says a large number of consumers prioritize the freshness, taste, and quality of food. He discovered that organic food attitudes are mainly influenced by demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and level of education. Furthermore, he noted that the age of the consumer affects buying behaviour and that more and more young people are focusing on eco-friendly food. He added that more young people than adults are turning to organic food because of the high concern about their health. Further, women seem to be more interested in organic food than men, and overall, more positive attitudes towards organic food have been revealed among women as opposed to men (Lea and Worsley, 2005).

Same, education also has a significant impact on consumer buying behaviour (Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016; Rani, 2014), especially on organic food purchasing (Hill and Lynchehaun, 2002; Tsakiridou, *et al.*, 2008). The reason for this is that, as the level of education increases, the way people see, think and perceive things through new information exploration changes drastically, and it has a profound effect on consumer purchases. This means, that people with higher education highly demonstrate positive attitudes toward organic food (Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016; Hunger *et.al.*, 2007; Wijesinghe and Aththanayaka, 2021). Roddy, Cowan, and Hutchinson (1996) stated that previous experiences in organic food have a positive impact on consumer buying practices on organic food and there is a positive correlation between the consumers' buying behaviour of organic food and their income (Alvensleben, 1998; Ueasangkomsate and Santitrrakul, 2016; Wijesinghe and Aththanayaka, 2021). Both international and national researchers have discussed these sub-factors under demographic factors, but very few researchers have discussed them under personal factors. Also, in analyzing the factors influencing the organic food buying behaviour of Sri Lankan consumers, it is important to pay

attention to personal factors, because still there is a greater focus on market factors than personal factors.

Scholars have highlighted that the influence of personal factors on a consumer's buying behaviour for organic food is determined by the impact of sub-characteristics of personal factors. According to Vilčková and Sabo (2013), personal factors influence consumers' attitudes, and their buying behaviour varies according to their age, gender, or level of education. Further, more positive attitudes towards organic food have been revealed among women as opposed to men (Lea and Worsley, 2005) and people with higher education highly demonstrate positive attitudes toward organic food (Hunger *et.al.*, 2007). All subdivisions under the personal factors have a positive impact on the consumers' organic food buying behaviour and overall, personal factors seem to have a positive influence on the consumers' organic food buying behaviour:

H₂: There is a relationship between personal factors and consumers' buying behaviour toward organic food.

Psychological factors and buying behaviour

A person's buying behaviour is influenced by psychological factors such as learning, motives, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Psychological tendency regarding consumer buying behaviour is expressed by evaluating a degree of favor or disfavor and favorable or unfavorable feelings (McGuire, 1976; Zielinska, 2006). Due to the significant impacts, on individuals, the market also tends to give attention to the psychological factors which influence consumers buying behaviour. This is because even if the consumer has the opportunity, knowledge, and money to do so if the consumer is not in a good mood to buy a certain product at that time, there will be no purchase. Rani (2014) uses Maslow's Hierarchy of needs to discuss psychological factors of consumer buying behaviour and she states that the person's psychological capacity and background influence on willingness to learn about the product and the motivations and perceptions to buy it. This is because many factors affect a person's psychological level, including their opinions, trust, and confidence. But in addition, considering psychological factors of consumers' organic food buying behaviour, in addition to the main facts, their age, gender, level of education, social status, price of food, quality, nutritious, environmental friendliness, and awareness of information will be taken into consideration (Anisimova, 2016; Chan and Lau, 2002). Also, Wandel and Bugge (1997) identified that consumers are turning to organic food because of its health benefits and despite the high price, the consumer is drawn to organic food because of his intellectual and rational ability and other psychological factors.

Many studies have found that the link between psychological attitudes towards organic food and the idea of buying behaviour is strong. Wandel and Bugge (1997) have said that consumer turns to organic food because of their intellectual ability which gains from inclination, learning, motivation, and perception. As same, Klockner (2012) and Nguyen and Truong (2021) say, psychological factors positively impact the buying behaviour of organic food. Thus, it is hypothesized that psychological factors would positively influence consumers' purchasing behaviour for organic food:

H₄: There is a relationship between psychological factors and consumers' buying behaviour toward organic food.

Social factors and buying behaviour

Man is a social being and hence our behaviour patterns are highly influenced by the people around us. Here, the opinions, attitudes, and behavioural patterns of people, including family, friends, workplace people, and acquaintances in the community have a significant impact on consumers' buying Behaviour. According to Rani (2014), being a family member strongly influence buying behaviour. This is because of the personality development, knowledge, ideas, and attitudes that take place within the family, all of which affect the consumers' buying behaviour. Same, the social status; the position of an individual within his family, friends, and working place also influences this (Ju and Ahn, 2016). In addition, the behavioural patterns of associates also impact on buying Behaviour of consumers (Anisha and Kalaivani, 2016; Ju and Ahn, 2016; Karoui and Khemakhem, 2019; Rehman, Ashfaq, Rehman, and Ansari, 2011; Rani, 2014). That, the comments made by the community on the selections and purchases, when compared with others, when appreciating and criticizing their buying behaviour, as well as imparting new knowledge regarding buying patterns, is likely to take the consumer's buying behaviour to another dimension.

The above theoretical literature review assists the researcher to identify that this topic in question is considered on a significant level internationally, it is rarely researched in the Sri Lankan context and there was very few research have conducted in Sri Lanka. Organic food consumption is considered a turning point in the agricultural sector and whole-food production sector. Although there have been studies based on demographic, trade, marketing, and pre-purchasing factors it is hard to find research based on cultural, personal, psychological, and social factors which influence the consumers' buying behaviour for organic food which means existing literature in Sri Lanka, there are almost no observations that have been studied including the above factors for consumers. In the previously studied scholars have not examined factors like cultural and psychological and they highly highlighted economic factors.

Personal factors were also considered under the demographic factors and socio-economic factors were discussed. Therefore, this gap in knowledge needs to be filled and the present study aimed at filling the existing literature gap by appraising the factors influencing the consumers' buying behaviour for organic food in Sri Lanka.

The literature shows that social factors; family, friends, and community have always been important to consumers' organic food buying behaviour. This explains the external influence of others either directly or indirectly, on consumer buying behaviour. The families' consumers living with young children have a positive influence on buying organic food (Hunger *et.al.*, 2007). As same, Wandel and Bugge (1997) have examined that; social factors, as well as social influence, will positively affect the consumers' buying behaviour. Thus,

H₄: There is a relationship between social factors and consumers' buying behaviour toward organic food.

Methodology

The present study concentrated on observing the significant factors that influence consumers, buying behaviour toward organic foods in Sri Lanka. This research can predict exact relationships, which means the researcher can develop a directional form of hypotheses regarding research. Based on the nature of the objective, the research philosophy adopted belongs to the philosophy of positivism. The researcher has applied quantitative techniques to measure reality through valid tools adopted by previous scholars.

The study has a big challenge to select a sample to represent the whole consumers who purchase organic foods in Sri Lanka. There is no official data source that contains consumers who purchase organic foods. Therefore, the study used a purposive sampling technique to select the sample and employed a multistage sampling technique to select the purposive sample. First, one district (Kegall district) out of 25 districts was selected using a simple random sampling technique since organic food consumers may be available in every part of the country. Second, out of 11 Divisional Secretariat Divisions (DSD) in Kegalle district, again one DSD (Kegall DSD) has been selected using a simple random sampling technique. Third, the appropriate sample size is decided based on the analyzing purpose. Stevens (1996) explained that a rigorous statistical analysis data sample should be at least 200 respondents. Loehlin (1992) suggested that at least 200 observations would be better for the statistical analysis. Therefore, the study decided to select 200 sample to collect data from consumers who purchase organic foods. Data were gathered during the period between January and February 2022 in Kegalle city area.

Enumerators visited different market faces in Kegalle city, observed the customers who purchased organic foods and contacted them at the marketplace. Then, collect data for a self-administration structural questionnaire having a face-to-face interview with the consent of respondents after confirming that they are settled in Kegalle DSD.

This study mainly focuses on the collection of primary data gathered from consumers through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by referring to items used by previous scholars to measure variables. The study measured factors influencing consumers' organic food buying behaviour using four factors; cultural, personal, social, and psychological factors adopted by Ramya and Ali (2016) and the purchasing behaviour was assessed using three items; attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived control over the behaviour adopted by Donahue (2022); Nakalinda (2018); Tsakiridou *et.al.*, (2008). The cultural factors were measured by employing two items; cultural preferences, and subcultures (religion, ethnicity, and demographic factors) adopted by Agovino, *et al.*, (2017). Four items; education, income, ability to choose, and self-motivation were used to measure personal factors (adopted by Hughner *et.al.*, 2007; Jayman and Gunethileka, 2018; Wandel and Bugge, 1997). Social factors were measured with the support of mainly three items; consultation and reference of social network (family members, friends, supportive, etc), social status and information flow adopted by Nakalinda (2018); Tsakiridou *et.al.*, (2008). Psychological factors are measured using six items; perception, motivation, happiness, enjoyment, and attitude adopted by Arora, Rani, Devi, and Gupta, (2022); Nakalinda (2018); Tsakiridou *et.al.*, (2008). Each item was measured at an ordinal level with 7-point Likert scales such as 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3- somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree 5- somewhat agree, 6 – Agree, and 7 – Strongly agree.

The researcher used factor analysis to develop each variable by combining the relevant items. The researcher has used reliability and validity tests to evaluate the consistency and accuracy of measures respectively. The study used the correlation coefficient to calculate the strength and statistical relationship between the two variables. Further, the study has used multiple linear regression to identify the cause-effect relationship between the dependent and independent variables which predict the values of the dependent variable based on the independent variables. The data were analyzed using the Minitab 17 Statistical Software.

Results and Discussion

Results

The study has focused on identifying the significant factors that influence consumers' buying behaviour for organic food in Sri Lanka. The purpose of the study will achieve by constructing a multiple linear regression model for the collected data. The dependent variable of this study is consumer buying behaviour and the independent variables are cultural, personal, social, and psychological. The study has used two step procedure to analyze data. First, the study did the factor analysis to develop composite variables after checking the suitability of data using KMO test the validity of data and then reliability of composite variables were tested. Reliability ensures the dependability, consistency, and accuracy of a measure. To examine the reliability of this study, Cronbach's Alpha value had used. Accordingly, from the reliability analysis, all the factors including dependent and independent variables were found to be of good reliability with all the Cronbach's alpha results and as same overall, the Cronbach's alpha result is also above 0.70 as mentioned in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha value
Overall	0.8967
Purchasing behaviour	0.8373
Cultural	0.8997
Personal	0.8597
Social	0.9169
Psychological	0.8464

Source: Survey data, 2022

The above overall Cronbach's alpha value illustrates that the model for this study is fit to be conducted. Pearson's correlation analysis expresses both the magnitude and direction of the relationship. The relationship was tested by taking into account the hypotheses developed under the conceptual framework and hypotheses development section and the results obtained are shown in Table 2.

P-values of all variables in the study are less than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 ; the null hypotheses are rejected while emphasizing that, there is a relationship between consumers' buying behaviour of organic food with each independent variable. The table 3 shows the R-square and adjusted R- square of the regression

analysis. Since, R-square shows that selected independent variables in the model explain 87.87% of the variation in the dependent variable; consumer buying behaviour in this study.

Table 2. Results of Pearson's Correlation

No.	Hypotheses	Pearson's Correlation	P-value	Decision
H ₁	There is a relationship between consumers' buying behaviour of organic food and cultural factors.	0.650	0.000	H ₀ Rejected
H ₂	There is a relationship between consumers' buying behaviour of organic food and personal factors.	0.864	0.000	H ₀ Rejected
H ₃	There is a relationship between consumers' buying behaviour of organic food and social factors.	0.552	0.000	H ₀ Rejected
H ₄	There is a relationship between consumers' buying behaviour of organic food and psychological factors.	0.903	0.000	H ₀ Rejected

Source: Survey data, 2022

Table 3. Model summary

	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)	S
1	87.87%	87.62%	84.66%	0.351831

Source: Survey data, 2022

The F-value obtains from ANOVA, was used to determine whether the test is statistically significant. Based on the results of table 4, it was observed that the overall regression model was significant under the 95% confidence level rejecting null-hypothesis, where $F=353.15$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.

Table 4. ANOVA table

Source	Adj SS	DF	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Regression	174.862	4	43.7155	353.16	0.000
Residuals	24.138	195	0.1238		
Total	199.000	199			

Source: Survey data, 2022

The coefficient estimation provides the necessary information to predict consumer buying behaviour and the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ of the variables concludes

that coefficients are statistically significant (see table 5). Hence, cultural, personal, social, and psychological factors contributed statistically significant to the model in this study.

Considering the significant value of individual parameters, the final regression analysis can be interpreted by using all the variables which are influencing consumers' organic food buying behaviour in Sri Lanka. The results obtain from table 5; can be summarized as a regression equation as follows.

$$\text{Buying behaviour} = -0.0000 + 0.1077 \text{ Cultural} + 0.3622 \text{ Personal} + 0.0598 + 0.5124 \text{ Psychological}$$

Table 5. Coefficients of predicted model

Variable	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value
Constant	-0.0000	0.0249	-0.00	1.000
Cultural	0.1077	0.0320	3.36	0.001
Personal	0.3622	0.0427	8.49	0.000
Social	0.0598	0.0299	2.00	0.047
Psychological	0.5124	0.0464	11.05	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2022

Discussion

As shown in Table 5, consumers buying behaviour is highly influenced by the psychological factor, which achieves the strongest association with consumers' buying behaviour towards organic food (0.5124). It is similar to the idea of Wandel and Bugge (1997), the link between psychological factors and buying behaviour for organic food is strong. Klockner (2012) said that psychological factors positively impact the buying behaviour of organic food. Besides, Roddy, Cowan and Hutchinson (1996) stated that previous experiences in organic food have a positive impact on consumer buying practices on organic food and it will impact the rational ability of the consumer. Najib, *et al.*, (2022) explained that psychological factor has a strong positive impact on the organic food buying behaviour of customers. Similar results were found in this study reflecting that most Sri Lankans are now much interested in organic food, due to its nutrition, quality, and eco-friendliness and psychological factor strongly impact positively the organic food buying behaviour of customers.

In addition to that, the personal factor also shows beta values of 0.3622, which has the next highest significant value. The study refers to both educational and income levels making a significant impact on consumers' buying behaviour. This result is parallel to the findings of Hunger *et.al.*, (2007) and Najib, *et al.*, (2022) that people with higher education highly demonstrate a positive impact on buying organic food. Further, Tsakiridou *et al.*, (2008) highlighted that both higher education and income levels express positive attitudes toward organic food buying behaviour. Also, there is more positive attitudes toward organic food have been revealed among women as opposed to men (Lea and Worsley, 2005). The finding of the study also confirms that the education and income level of consumers has a positive influence on organic food buying Behaviour in the Sri Lankan context as well.

Results in Table 5 further show that cultural factor has a positive significant effect on consumers' buying behaviour (Coefficient value is 0.1077 and p-value is 0.001). Agovino *et.al.*, (2017) and Najib, *et al.*, (2022) also illustrated that cultural activity and bigleaf have a positive effect on buying organic food. Basha and Lal (2019) emphasized that culture has a significant powerful effect on organic food buying behaviour in India. Empirical evidence of this study gives similar results showing that cultural factor has a positive impact on consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods in Sri Lanka. Results in table 5 show that social factors have the lowest impact on consumers' buying behaviour showing that 0.0598 coefficient. Wandel and Bugge (1997) have examined those social factors, as well as social influence on consumers' buying behaviour, and found that social factors have positively affected the consumers' buying behaviour. The study shows similar results.

Conclusions

At present, Sri Lankans are lining up eager to buy organic food for their lives which consists of both food safety and sustainability. They are still recognizing the value of buying and consuming organic food, which is the sustainable solution to Sri Lanka's environmental and health problems. Hence, the researcher conducts this study to identify the factors influencing consumers' organic food buying behaviour in Sri Lanka with special reference to consumers in the Kegalle DSD. Through this study, a comprehensive investigation of the factors influencing consumers' organic food buying behaviour is addressed. The researcher has mainly focused on and identified how cultural, personal, social, and psychological factors influence it. Findings obtained from the data analysis reflect that each factor positively influences consumers' organic food buying behaviour. Further, psychological factor was highlighted while making a higher influence on consumers' buying behaviour for organic food. Thereafter, personal, cultural, and social factors influence the

consumers' buying behaviour respectively. Thus, the study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence in the Sri Lankan context which can provide valuable information and suggestions for Sri Lankan organic food producers to expand their market.

The findings contribute to consumer behaviour knowledge which helps to understand the most important factors that positively affect organic food purchases. Although the existing literature provides various key factors, the present study comes up with a ranking of the factors according to their priority in purchase decisions. This will definitely help producers, sellers and academicians about the key factors which affect purchase behaviour, and it will surely add incredible empirical knowledge to the existing literature. The findings of this paper will help producers and sellers to understand the consumer buying behavioural of organic food products. Accordingly, they can decide on strategies to increase the organic food market. The study found that psychological factors and personal factors highly influence consumer intention to purchase of organic foods. It gives important insight into the trends of consumer buying behaviour of organic foods in Sri Lanka. If adequate marketing strategies and effective promotional campaigns that articulate the value of organic foods will help to expand the market for organic food products.

Further, the research may improve government policy by providing a better analysis of patterns of consumer buying behaviour and may need to be adopted to support producers to increase organic food production and the government can introduce some concessionaries (tax reliefs and other subsidies) to the organic food manufacturing produces.

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