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Consumer awareness and perceived effectiveness of marketing and promotional methods for organic products: evidence from Nashik and Kolhapur, Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Organic-product markets depend not only on consumer awareness but also on the ability of marketing and promotional communication to convert awareness into purchasing behaviour. The present study examined two focused dimensions: (i) consumer awareness and perception towards organic products and (ii) the perceived effectiveness of selected marketing and promotional methods and their relationship with purchase frequency. Primary data were collected from 120 consumers, comprising 60 respondents each from Nashik and Kolhapur districts of Maharashtra, using a structured questionnaire. Awareness and perception were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, mean scores, standard deviation, ranking, Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used for analysis. The overall awareness score was 4.25, indicating a high level of awareness, while the overall perception score was also 4.25, indicating a positive perception. Knowledge of where to verify genuine organic certification recorded the highest awareness mean (4.33), whereas the perception that organic products are environmentally friendly recorded the highest mean (4.31). All eight selected marketing and promotional methods received mean scores above 4.00. Retail-store promotions received the highest perceived-effectiveness score (4.31), followed by online shopping/e-commerce (4.28) and word-of-mouth (4.27). All eight methods showed strong positive correlations with purchase frequency; e-commerce ($r = 0.825$), influencer marketing ($r = 0.805$) and social media ($r = 0.804$) recorded the highest coefficients. The multiple regression model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.7497$, $F = 41.5554$, $p < 0.001$). Social media, e-commerce and influencer marketing showed significant positive coefficients. The findings indicate that organic-product marketing in the selected areas should combine consumer education, trustworthy information, retail visibility and integrated digital communication. The findings are based on survey associations and perceived effectiveness and therefore should not be interpreted as experimental evidence of causality.

Keywords: Organic products, Consumer awareness, Consumer perception, Promotional methods, E-commerce, Social media, Influencer marketing, Purchase frequency, Nashik, Kolhapur

1. Introduction

Organic products have attracted increasing consumer interest because of concerns related to health, food safety, product quality, environmental sustainability and responsible agricultural production. However, awareness about organic products does not necessarily translate into regular purchasing. Consumer decisions can also depend on the credibility of product information, certification, perceived benefits and the channels through which products are communicated and purchased. Earlier research has identified health, environmental concern, product knowledge, trust, social influence and perceived value as important themes in organic-food consumption (Hughner *et al.*, 2007; Aertsens *et al.*, 2009; Rana *et al.*, 2017) [2, 1, 3].

In India, certification and labelling are particularly relevant because consumers cannot directly verify many production attributes. Research has shown that consumer knowledge and understanding of labels can shape organic-product evaluation and purchase decisions (Pieniak *et al.*, 2010; Grunert *et al.*, 2014) [5, 4]. Indian studies have also highlighted the relevance of price, availability, trust, health benefits and product quality in organic-food purchasing (Singh *et al.*, 2017; Basha *et al.*, 2019) [7, 6]. More recent work has drawn attention to digital channels, online purchasing, social media and influencer communication (Wu *et al.*, 2023 [8]; Poureisa *et al.*, 2024 [9]; Khan, Firdaus and Rehman, 2025 [10]; Khan, Khan and Nazish, 2025) [11].

The present study focuses on consumers in Nashik and Kolhapur, two districts of Western Maharashtra. It examines consumer awareness and perception towards organic products and evaluates the perceived effectiveness of selected marketing and promotional methods in relation to consumers' purchase frequency.

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Regional evidence from Nashik has also indicated the importance of environmental consciousness, health benefits and product quality in consumers' attitudes towards organic products (Kulkarni *et al.*, 2021) [12].

2. Study Objectives

1. To assess consumer awareness and perception towards organic products.
2. To assess the perceived effectiveness of selected marketing and promotional methods in influencing consumers' purchase frequency of organic products.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Study area and sample

The study was conducted in Nashik and Kolhapur districts of Maharashtra. A total of 120 consumers were included, with equal allocation of 60 respondents from each district. The study was consumer-oriented and focused on awareness, perception, marketing communication and purchase frequency.

3.2 Data collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered through direct interaction and online data collection. The questionnaire included statements on consumer awareness, consumer perception, perceived effectiveness of marketing and promotional methods, and purchase frequency. A five-point Likert scale ranging

from 5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree was used for perception-based responses.

3.3 Sampling and analysis

Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used. The data were edited, coded, classified and tabulated. Frequency and percentage were used for descriptive profiling; mean, standard deviation and ranking were used for awareness, perception and promotional-method responses. Pearson correlation was used to examine the association between promotional methods and purchase frequency, while multiple regression was used to examine their combined statistical relationship. Hypothesis testing was conducted at the 5 per cent significance level.

3.4 Study variables

Awareness and perception were measured through six indicators each. The promotional component covered eight methods: retail-store promotions, online shopping/e-commerce, word-of-mouth, friends and family, influencer marketing, digital advertisements, traditional media and social media.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Consumer awareness towards organic products

Consumer awareness was measured using six statements relating to the meaning and benefits of organic products, certification, recognition and verification. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Consumer awareness towards organic products

Sr. No.	Awareness statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Awareness of the meaning of organic product	4.27	0.66	2
2	Awareness of major benefits of organic products	4.27	0.71	3
3	Awareness of organic certification/logo	4.19	0.77	6
4	Ability to recognize organic certification/logo	4.22	0.75	4
5	Knowledge of where to verify genuine organic certification	4.33	0.74	1
6	Ability to distinguish certified products from "natural" products	4.23	0.78	5
	Overall mean	4.25		

Table 1 shows that the respondents had a high level of awareness towards organic products, with an overall mean of 4.25. Knowledge of where to verify genuine organic certification recorded the highest mean score of 4.33, indicating strong awareness of the need to verify authenticity. Awareness of the meaning and major benefits of organic products each recorded a mean of 4.27. Awareness of the organic certification/logo had the lowest mean (4.19), although it remained above 4.00. The pattern is consistent with earlier evidence emphasizing

the importance of knowledge, information and certification understanding in organic-food consumption (Pieniak *et al.*, 2010; Grunert *et al.*, 2014) [5, 4].

4.2 Consumer perception towards organic products

Consumer perception was assessed through six statements covering health, environmental benefits, certification, quality and price. Higher mean scores indicate more favourable perception.

Table 2. Consumer perception towards organic products

Sr. No.	Perception statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Organic products are better for health	4.25	0.68	2
2	Organic products are environmentally friendly	4.31	0.74	1

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Sr. No.	Perception statement	Mean	SD	Rank
3	Trust in products carrying valid organic certification	4.24	0.72	4
4	Organic products provide better quality	4.22	0.84	6
5	Certification information is important when evaluating organic products	4.25	0.74	3
6	Higher price can be justified by perceived benefits	4.23	0.68	5
	Overall mean	4.25		

Table 2 indicates that respondents had a positive perception towards organic products, with an overall mean of 4.25. The highest mean score was observed for the perception that organic products are environmentally friendly (4.31), followed by better health (4.25) and the importance of certification information (4.25). Trust in valid certification also received a high mean of 4.24. The relatively lower score for better quality (4.22) does not indicate a negative perception; rather, it shows that all evaluated dimensions were viewed favourably. These

findings are broadly in line with Hughner *et al.* (2007) [2] and Basha *et al.* (2019) [6], who highlighted health, environmental and quality-related considerations in organic-food evaluation.

4.3 Perceived effectiveness of marketing and promotional methods

Eight marketing and promotional methods were evaluated using the five-point scale. Table 3 presents the mean scores, standard deviations and ranks.

Table 3. Perceived effectiveness of selected marketing and promotional methods

Sr. No.	Marketing/promotional method	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Retail-store promotions	4.31	0.67	1
2	Online shopping/e-commerce	4.28	0.76	2
3	Word-of-mouth	4.27	0.71	3
4	Friends and family	4.26	0.65	4
5	Influencer marketing	4.25	0.78	5
6	Digital advertisements	4.25	0.72	5
7	Traditional media	4.22	0.68	7
8	Social media	4.17	0.85	8

Table 3 shows that all eight marketing and promotional methods recorded mean scores above 4.00, indicating favourable perceptions of effectiveness. Retail-store promotions ranked first with a mean of 4.31, followed by online shopping/e-commerce (4.28) and word-of-mouth (4.27). Friends and family recommendations recorded 4.26, while influencer marketing and digital advertisements both recorded 4.25. Traditional media recorded 4.22 and social media 4.17. Although social media had the lowest mean among the selected methods, its score remained favourable. The results indicate that respondents value both physical point-of-purchase communication and digital/online channels.

4.4 Correlation between marketing and promotional methods and purchase frequency

Pearson correlation was used to examine the association between perceived effectiveness of the eight promotional methods and purchase frequency. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows strong positive correlations between all eight selected promotional methods and consumers' purchase frequency. Online shopping/e-commerce recorded the highest correlation ($r = 0.825$),

followed by influencer marketing ($r = 0.805$) and social media ($r = 0.804$). Traditional media, word-of-mouth, retail-store promotions, digital advertisements, and friends and family also showed strong positive associations. These results are descriptive of the surveyed consumers and indicate association rather than experimental causation. The strong digital-channel relationships are consistent with recent studies showing the growing role of social commerce, online purchasing and influencer communication in organic and sustainable-food markets (Wu *et al.*, 2023; Poureisa *et al.*, 2024; Khan *et al.*, 2025) [8, 9, 11].

4.5 Multiple regression analysis of marketing and promotional methods

Multiple regression was used to examine the combined statistical relationship between the eight selected marketing/promotional methods and purchase frequency. The model summary was Multiple $R = 0.8658$, $R^2 = 0.7497$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.7316$, $F = 41.5554$ and $p < 0.001$. Thus, the reported model explained approximately 74.97 per cent of the variation in purchase frequency within the study sample.

Table 4. Correlation between marketing and promotional methods and purchase frequency

Sr. No.	Marketing/promotional method	Pearson's r	Relationship
1	Online shopping/e-commerce	0.825	Strong positive
2	Influencer marketing	0.805	Strong positive
3	Social media	0.804	Strong positive
4	Traditional media	0.786	Strong positive
5	Word-of-mouth	0.765	Strong positive

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Sr. No.	Marketing/promotional method	Pearson's r	Relationship
6	Retail-store promotions	0.756	Strong positive
7	Digital advertisements	0.733	Strong positive
8	Friends and family	0.716	Strong positive

Table 5. Regression coefficients of selected marketing and promotional methods

Marketing/promotional method	B	p-value	Decision/interpretation
Social media	0.5395	0.0029	Significant, positive
Digital advertisements	0.3311	0.0855	Not significant
Retail-store promotions	-0.0058	0.9746	Not significant
Online shopping/e-commerce	0.4744	0.0325	Significant, positive
Word-of-mouth	-0.4202	0.0413	Significant, negative coefficient
Friends and family	-0.8764	0.0003	Significant, negative coefficient
Influencer marketing	0.5031	0.0167	Significant, positive
Traditional media	0.2544	0.1328	Not significant

Table 5 shows that social media ($B = 0.5395$, $p = 0.0029$), online shopping/e-commerce ($B = 0.4744$, $p = 0.0325$) and influencer marketing ($B = 0.5031$, $p = 0.0167$) had significant positive regression coefficients. Word-of-mouth and friends and family also had statistically significant coefficients, but the coefficients were negative after the other promotional variables were entered simultaneously. The thesis interpretation correctly notes that these negative coefficients should not be read as evidence that word-of-mouth or family recommendations reduce purchase frequency, because their bivariate correlations were positive; the regression coefficients represent their unique contribution after controlling for the other related promotional variables. Digital advertisements, retail-store promotions and traditional media were not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

The regression result strengthens the evidence that digital and online channels have an important statistical relationship with purchase frequency in the surveyed sample. At the same time, the strong positive correlations observed for retail and interpersonal channels indicate that promotional effectiveness should be interpreted across both simple associations and the combined regression model. Similar emphasis on social media, online platforms and influencer communication has been reported in recent organic-food research (Wu *et al.*, 2023; Poureisa *et al.*, 2024; Khan *et al.*, 2025; Kumar *et al.*, 2026) [8, 9, 10, 13].

4.6 Hypothesis testing

The null hypothesis for the promotional-method component stated that there is no significant relationship between selected marketing and promotional methods and consumers' purchase frequency. The overall regression model was significant ($F = 41.5554$, $p < 0.001$); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected at the 5 per cent level and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The result supports the presence of a statistically significant overall relationship between the selected promotional methods and purchase frequency in the study sample.

5. Overall Discussion

The combined findings provide a coherent picture of organic-product consumer behaviour in the selected study area. Consumers showed high awareness and favourable perceptions, particularly regarding certification verification, environmental benefits and health-related value. This indicates that the study population was not starting from a low-information position; rather, consumers already recognized important organic-product attributes. The challenge for marketing is therefore less about basic awareness alone and more about maintaining credibility, providing useful information and making the product easy to evaluate and purchase.

The promotional findings further show that respondents did not rely exclusively on one channel. Retail-store promotions were perceived as highly effective, while e-commerce, influencer marketing and so-

cial media demonstrated strong associations with purchase frequency. This combination suggests that physical visibility and digital communication can operate as complementary elements of an organic-product marketing mix. The pattern is also consistent with recent literature emphasizing social influence, online platforms and digital content as emerging mechanisms for communicating organic-product value.

The findings also reinforce the importance of interpreting perceived promotional effectiveness carefully. High mean scores indicate favourable consumer perceptions, correlation indicates statistical association, and regression coefficients indicate the unique statistical contribution of variables when considered simultaneously. These are different forms of evidence and should not be treated as interchangeable measures of causal effectiveness.

6. Practical Implications

For organic producers, retailers and marketers, the results indicate that certification information should remain clear and easy to verify, while consumer communication should connect environmental and health-related benefits with tangible product information. Retail outlets can use visible displays, demonstrations and point-of-purchase communication, while digital channels can support product discovery, reviews, storytelling and convenient online purchase. The strong association of e-commerce, social media and influencer marketing with purchase frequency also supports an integrated online-offline communication strategy rather than relying on a single promotional medium.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The study was geographically restricted to Nashik and Kolhapur and was based on 120 selected consumers using purposive and convenience sampling. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the study context and should not be generalized automatically to all consumers in Maharashtra or India. The analysis is based on self-reported perceptions and survey associations. Future research can use larger probability-based samples, compare additional Maharashtra districts, examine district-wise differences, and test promotional effectiveness through longitudinal or experimental designs.

8. Conclusion

The study found high consumer awareness and positive perception towards organic products in Nashik and Kolhapur, with overall mean scores of 4.25 for both dimensions. Certification verification recorded the highest awareness mean, while environmental friendliness recorded the highest perception mean. All eight selected marketing and promotional methods were perceived favourably, with retail-store promotions receiving the highest mean score. All eight methods showed strong positive correlations with purchase frequency, and the overall regression model was statistically significant, with $R^2 = 0.7497$. Social media, e-commerce and influencer marketing recorded significant positive regression coefficients. Overall, the findings sup-

port a marketing approach that combines trustworthy product information, strong retail visibility and integrated digital communication to engage consumers of organic products in the selected market.

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