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CURRENT STATE OF GEORGIAN ORGANIC PRODUCTS MARKET AND PROSPECTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Abstract:

The objective of the paper is to study theoretical and practical aspects of modern trends in the organic products market in Georgia and determining the prospects of its further development, develop recommendations that will support further of it development.

The paper examines the organic products market, its growth trends, and the role of organic agribusiness in driving economic growth and social stability in Georgia. It highlights that the expansion of organic farming is influenced not only by global market challenges but also by the increasing interest of Georgian consumers in organic products. This growing demand is evidenced by recent market trends and the results of a consumer survey conducted by the authors.

The study presents findings on Georgian consumers' attitudes toward organic products. Based on the research, the authors analyze key factors shaping the future growth of the organic market in Georgia. These include the main drivers of interest in organic food, reasons for purchasing organic products, and barriers to buying them. Additionally, the paper explores how consumers obtain information about organic products, their views on organic food consumption, their attitudes toward genetically modified foods, and their preferences between local and imported organic products. It also identifies factors that could enhance interest in purchasing domestically produced organic goods.

In conclusion, the authors provide a series of scientific, practical, and organizational recommendations to promote both the production and consumption of organic products in Georgia. These recommendations aim to increase consumer adoption of organic foods, thereby fostering the sustainable development of the country’s organic farming sector, strengthening Georgian agriculture, and improving national food security—an urgent and critical issue for the country.

Keywords:

Organic products market, Consumer attitudes toward organic products, Organic farming policy, Sustainable agricultural development, Food security

JEL Classification: Q13, O13, Q01

Introduction

The organic production model is becoming popular worldwide (Oliveira, De Faria & De São José, 2024). Today, there is a worldwide trend of organic farming and, accordingly, growth in the organic food market. The global organic market is growing steadily. Global organic agriculture demonstrated resilience amidst economic and geopolitical uncertainties, with total farmland expanding by 2.5 million hectares in 2023.The latest statistics about organic farming are featured in the 26th edition of the yearbook The World of Organic Agriculture, published in 2025. It states that the global organic farming area expanded by 2.6 percent in 2023, bringing the total to 98.9 million hectares, managed by 4.3 million organic producers in almost 190 countries. Retail sales of organic food also increased, exceeding 136 billion euros (Willer, Trávníček & Bernhard, 2025). According to some forecasts, the organic food market is expected to reach $324.1 billion by 2032, at a CAGR of 10.1% from 2025 to 2032 (https://www.meticulousresearch.com/product/organic-food-market-5122)

The growing trend towards organic food consumption , driven by health, environmental, and other concerns, necessitates systematic research in this area (Pant et al., 2024). In order to serve consumers' actual needs and wants regarding organic products, those involved in the market need to be informed about consumers' perceptions of organic products (Schleenbecker & Hamm, 2013). Organic agriculture is essential for the sustainable development of the agricultural sphere of Georgia. Experts consider that, due to the mountainous landscape of the country and land fragmentation, the production of high-quality bio-products is an area that could make Georgian products competitive on the world market. However, effective mechanisms for developing organic farming have not yet been introduced in the country (Okruashvili, Paresashvili & Damenia).

The global trend of leading a healthy lifestyle has spread widely in Georgia as well. This very positive trend is discussed in the works of prominent Georgian scientists, Professor N. Todua and Professor Ch. Jashi (Todua, 2017); (Jashi & Todua, 2013); (Jashi, 2017). The trend of leading a healthy lifestyle has created a growing interest in organic agricultural goods both around the world and in Georgia. This is reflected in the population's increasing interest in purchasing environmentally friendly organic products. The current study presents the state of development of the organic products market in Georgia. It includes the results of a consumer survey, based on which the peculiarities of Georgian consumer behavior are analyzed. Additionally, specific factors affecting the formation of the local organic products market are identified. The paper highlights important aspects for the successful functioning of the organic products market, such as the frequency of purchasing organic products, dependence on price and non-price determinants, and the level of consumer knowledge and awareness about organic products. Finally, the paper outlines specific measures that will ensure the sustainable development of the organic products market and, thus, contribute to achieving the crucial goal of providing better food security for the population of the country.

Body of the article

he benefits of organic food are discussed in the article by A.A. Yaseen and S.A. Mama, where the authors argue that organically grown products have a lower risk of causing chronic illnesses and help preserve an ideal state of health. This is because organic foods derived from plants tend to

have a higher concentration of bioactive components and a lower or nonexistent concentration of harmful elements such as nitrates, heavy metals, synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides (Yaseen & Mama, 2024).

Organic farming encompasses the ideals of conserving biodiversity, maintaining ecological balance, and protecting agricultural resources during crop production operations. Due to growing societal concerns about food safety, animal welfare, and environmental issues, consumer demand for organic food products is rapidly increasing (Peng, 2018).Consumer interest in organic food has surged globally, driven by health, sustainability, and ethical considerations (Madureira et al., 2024)

Organic farming is understood as an approach that avoids the use of synthetic chemicals, hormones, antibiotic agents, genetic engineering, and irradiation in both plant and animal husbandry (Baydas, Yalman & Bayat, 2021).

The growing organic produce market worldwide shows that contemporary consumers are becoming more aware of environmental problems, and their solutions are taking shape through environmental protection and sustainable consumption practices (Pilelienė & Tamulienė, 2021). Consumers are increasingly concerned about their health and make food choices accordingly. Health consciousness strongly influences consumer attitudes toward organic food (Baydas, Yalman & Bayat, 2021).

The development of organic farming and the organic products market in Georgia is discussed in the works of Georgian scientists, among which the scientific articles by E. Kharaishvili, T. Lazariashvili, I. Natsvlishvili, and M. Natsvaladze are noteworthy (Kharaishvili, Lazariashvili & Natsvlishvili, 2019); (Kharaishvili, Lazariashvili & Natsvlishvili, 2020); (Natsvaladze, 2015). These works provide an analysis of the field of organic production, as well as valuable recommendations for stimulating the further development of the organic products market. Organic farming as a sustainable development path for the agricultural sector of Georgia is studied in the scientific paper “Production of Organic Products – Important Condition of Growth of Georgia's Export Potential”, where it is mentioned that organic farming harmoniously combines and develops the ecological, economic, and social spheres. It is justified that organic farming is the practical implementation of the principles of sustainable development in the agricultural sector, which will help establish Georgia on the international market as an organic producer and increase its export potential (Okruashvili & Paresashvili, 2018).

Organic food and beverages have gained significant traction not only in the global marketplace but also in Georgia, driven by consumer preferences for healthier, more sustainable food alternatives.This market segment is characterized by a focus on non-GMO products and the avoidance of synthetic ingredients, pesticides, and antibiotics. Health benefits are a primary consideration, as organic produce is believed to be more nutritious and free from harmful chemicals. Accessibility is another key factor, with organic food becoming increasingly available at supermarkets and hypermarkets, as well as through online retailers and subscription packages.

Moreover, sustainable practices and environmental impact are also important considerations for consumers. Organic farming employs methods that promote soil health and biodiversity, making it an ecologically friendly alternative to conventional agriculture. The organic certification process

ensures that these practices are adhered to, providing customer confidence. The organic beverages sector is a growing segment within the market.

Georgia's organic land use is one of the world's lowest. According to IFOAM, in 2021, the number of organic lands in Georgia constituted 4,278 hectares, and its share in the total number of agricultural lands was 0.1% (Willer, Trávníček, and Bernhard, 2023). In 2022, it had 5,303 hectares (Willer, Trávníček, and Bernhard, 2024). In 2023, it had 5,871 hectares, with a share in the total number of agricultural lands of 0.2%. With this indicator, Georgia's organic farming lags behind the worldwide average, where the share of total agricultural land is 2.1%, not to mention a number of European countries. For example, the organic share in Sweden is 18.3%, Switzerland – 18.2%, the Czech Republic – 16.9%, and Slovakia – 13.7% (Willer, Trávníček, and Bernhard, 2025).

The situation in the country is very unfavorable in terms of the tendency for the growth of organic agricultural lands. It is worth noting that the list of Caucascert (an organization that certifies organic farmers in Georgia) entrepreneurs, as of March 27, 2025, includes only 139 certified organic entrepreneurs. The same official website states that 6 entrepreneurs had their certificates revoked, and 129 farmers had their contracts revoked. By 2021, the number of certified organic farmers had reached 131; thus, over the past 4 years, the number of certified organic farmers has increased by only 10. (http://caucascert.ge/files/Operators270525GEO.pdf) Thus, the slight increase in the number of organic lands and the number of organic farmers indicates that contemporary challenges have little effect on organic farming, and the amount of organic agricultural products being produced remains low. This indicates the fact that the agricultural sector of Georgia cannot respond to the global challenges and demands in the agricultural field, which have been expressed worldwide.

Research Methodology: Research on the problem of consumers' attitudes towards organic food and consumers' intention to buy organic foods, their priorities, and benefits has been conducted in two stages, based on qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the first stage, a qualitative study was conducted that included focus groups. Participants in the qualitative research were selected from consumers of organic food. The analysis of secondary information and the focus groups conducted allowed us to formulate hypotheses and set priorities for further research. In the second stage, we conducted research using the survey method. The research tool was a questionnaire consisting of pre-compiled and tested structured questions. The survey was conducted electronically. The sample was formed based on the probabilistic method. The research area included the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, and the regions. According to official statistics for 2024, the number of adult population living in Georgia was 2.973 million. The sample size was calculated using the Raosoft sample size calculator, and the minimum number of respondents to be interviewed was 385. Given the 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, it was necessary to survey 385 respondents(http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html). However, we surveyed 537 respondents, which made the survey results more relevant.

In order to gauge and investigate Georgian consumers' perceptions and purchasing attitudes toward organic food products, a database derived from questionnaire responses provided by 537 participants was utilized and analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS. For data analysis purposes, frequency distributions, summary descriptive statistics, contingency and crosstabulation tables, dispersion analysis, and graphical analysis were employed. Various statistical procedures, graphical analysis, and data management tools were used to substantiate

the hypotheses. Frequency distribution, crosstabulation, and custom tables were used with qualitative variables. To assess the influence of several categorical variables on one variable, a two-factor analysis of variance of the general linear model was used. To determine the presence of a statistical relationship between qualitative variables, crosstabulation and custom tables were employed. To determine the presence of a statistical relationship between categorical variables with more than two groups, we used the Kruskal-Wallis Test (Table 12). To determine the relationship between qualitative variables and quantitative variables for any two groups, a T-test was used. We also used data management tools for filtering and processing multiple-choice questions. This article comprehensively discusses consumers' awareness of organic products and their benefits, as well as attitudes toward organic products in consumer groups with t different genders, ages, and incomes. For this purpose, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

Hypothesis 1: - The main reason for consuming organic food is to take care of the health of oneself and family members.

Hypothesis 2:- Different age groups differ in the intensity of purchasing organic products.

Hypothesis 3: - The intensity of purchasing organic products depends largely on monthly income.

Hypothesis 4: - Between local and foreign organic products, the Georgian consumer gives preference to local products, which is an important stimulus for the further development of local Georgian organic farming.

Hypothesis 5:- Consumers who regularly (daily) purchase organic products are more likely to trust certification labels.

Hypothesis 6: - Price determinants are a significant factor influencing the purchase of organic products, and high prices are a major barrier to the widespread consumption of organic products.

Hypothesis 7: - The main means of obtaining information about organic food products have a significant impact on its consumption and intensity.

Hypothesis 8: - Regular consumers of organic food products lead a healthy lifestyle.

As mentioned, 537 respondents participated in the study. As the study showed, 85% of respondents are consumers of organic products, 15% - not (Table 1).

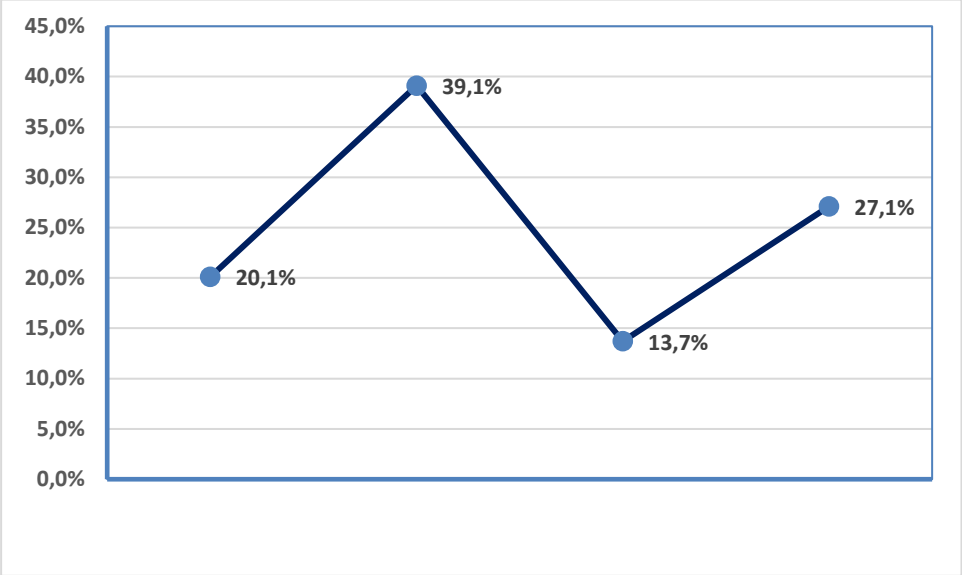
Table 1. Frequency distribution of variable A1

A1 Are you a consumer of organic products?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Yes	456	84.9%	84.9%	84.9%
	2 No	81	15.1%	15.1%	100.0%
	Total	537	100.0%	100.0%	

The intensity of organic product purchase is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The intensity of organic product purchase



As can be seen from Figure 1, the majority of respondents (39%) purchase organic products only once a week, a large percentage (27%) rarely purchase organic products, 20% of consumers purchase such products daily, and 14% do so once a month.

What reasons and factors influence the purchase of organic products are revealed when examining the hypotheses below.

To investigate the problem mentioned in Hypothesis 1, we used the T test for several independent samples (Independent Sample T test), through which we established the existence of a statistical relationship between the reasons for consuming organic food and the consumption or non-consumption of the product. As can be seen from Table 2, a significant difference between the consumption and non-consumption of organic products is noted primarily with the following statements:

- Buying organic food shows that I care about my health and the health of my family members - (P=0.01, t=2.584)

- I will buy organic products, even if they cost a little more than conventional ones (P<0.001, t=3.691)

- Healthy food is directly related to our physical and mental health - (P<0.001, t=3.389)

- When we buy organic products, our health is much better (P<0.001, t=3.723)

These provisions confirm the fact that consumers are willing to buy a quality product at a high price and in smaller quantities rather than a cheaper one and in large amounts, in order to protect not only their personal physical and mental health, but also as the health of their family members.

Table 2. t-test results

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 organic products shows that I care about my health and the health of my family members.	Equal variances assumed	3.416	.065	2.584	535	.010	.250	.097	.060	.440
	Equal variances not assumed			2.119	96.632	.037	.250	.118	.016	.485
Buying organic products shows that I care about the environment.	Equal variances assumed	.342	.559	.485	535	.628	.060	.123	-.182	.302
	Equal variances not assumed			.475	108.483	.636	.060	.126	-.190	.309
Buying organic products means that I am more interested in the usefulness of the product than the price.	Equal variances assumed	.040	.842	1.629	535	.104	.198	.122	-.041	.437
	Equal variances not assumed			1.483	102.850	.141	.198	.134	-.067	.463
The difference between organic and non-organic food is very small, so I don't see the need to pay more for organic food..	Equal variances assumed	1.968	.161	-.717	535	.474	-.124	.173	-.463	.215
	Equal variances not assumed			-.747	114.325	.457	-.124	.166	-.452	.205
It is better to buy less healthy and high-quality products, rich in vitamins and minerals, than to buy a lot of poor-quality products	Equal variances assumed	1.541	.215	1.138	535	.255	.173	.152	-.125	.470
	Equal variances not assumed			1.074	105.473	.285	.173	.161	-.146	.491
I will buy organic products, even if they cost a little more than conventional ones	Equal variances assumed	11.839	.001	3.691	535	.000	.483	.131	.226	.740
	Equal variances not assumed			3.154	98.872	.002	.483	.153	.179	.787
Healthy food is directly related to our physical and mental health	Equal variances assumed	12.330	.000	4.389	534	.000	.529	.120	.292	.765
	Equal variances not assumed			3.508	93.357	.001	.529	.151	.229	.828
When we buy organic products, that is, those that contain only beneficial antioxidants, our health is much better protected	Equal variances assumed	6.680	.010	3.723	534	.000	.468	.126	.221	.715
	Equal variances not assumed			3.137	98.119	.002	.468	.149	.172	.764

If we filter to select only those respondents who consume organic food products, the above statements, rated on a 5-point scale (1- I completely disagree, ... 5- I completely agree), are presented in the following way according to the average of the ratings (Figure 2):

Figure 2: Representation of provisions with evaluation averages

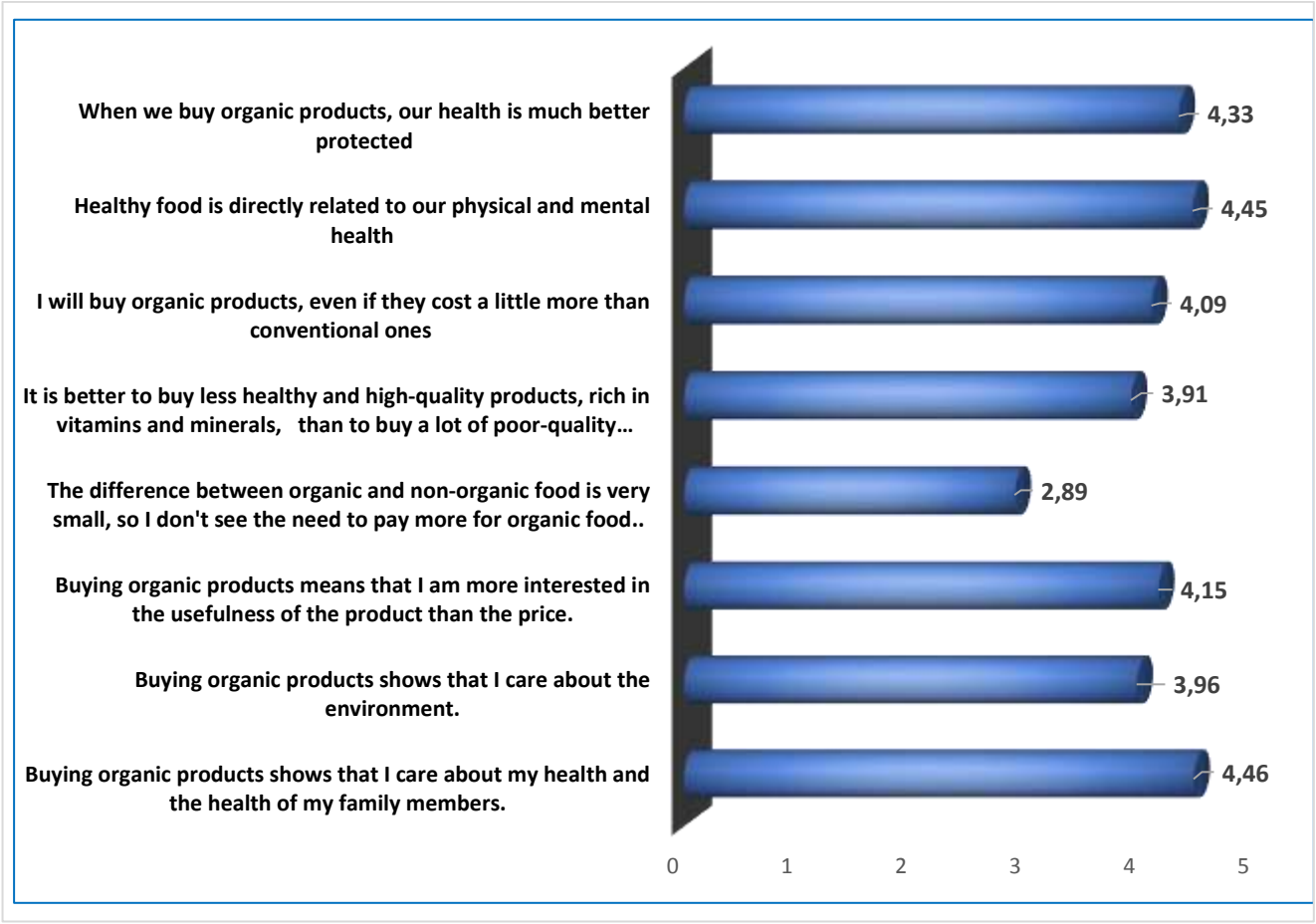


Figure 2 also shows that those who consume organic food products give the highest scores to the statements and believe that:

1. By purchasing organic food, they care about their own well-being and that of their family members (mean=4.46).
2. Healthy food is directly related to their physical and mental health (mean=4.45)
3. By purchasing organic products, their health is much better protected (mean=4.33).
4. When purchasing organic products, they are more interested in their benefits than their price (mean=4.15).

The statement with the lowest score is “The difference between organic and non-organic food is very small,so there is no need to pay more for organic products.”

Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3: “Different age groups differ in the intensity of purchasing organic products”, and “The intensity of purchasing organic products depends largely on monthly income” were substantiated by means of two-factor analysis (Univariate), which allows for the assessment of the influence of several independent variables on one dependent variable.

The table of between-group effects test obtained by the univariate procedure (Table 2) shows that both variables: age (variable - A24) and income (variable A27) - cannot simultaneously affect the intensity of purchasing organic products (P = 0.144, which is greater than 0.05). However, their individual effects are statistically significant at the 0.05 level (P = 0.023, F = 2.845 for the age variable, P = 0.033, F = 2.636 for the income variable). The effect size of the influence for both of them is small, Eta = 0.15 and 0.16.

Table 3. Results of Between-Subjects Influence effects test

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: A4 How often do you buy organic products?

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	44.330[a]	20	2.217	1.902	.010	.052
Intercept	624.788	1	624.788	535.998	.000	.437
A24	13.264	4	3.316	2.845	.023	.016
A27	12.292	4	3.073	2.636	.033	.015
A24 * A27	20.097	12	1.675	1.437	.144	.024
Error	805.467	691	1.166			
Total	5240.000	712				
Corrected Total	849.798	711				

a. R Squared = .052 (Adjusted R Squared = .025)

The impact of individual factors based on forecast averages is reflected in Tables 3 and Tables 4.

Table 4: The impact of age as a separate factor on the intensity of purchasing organic products

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: A4 How often do you buy organic products?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared
Age	11.699	4	2.925	2.509	.041	.014
Error	805.467	691	1.166			

The F tests the effect of age. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

The influence of age will be assessed at the 0.05 level of statistical significance (P=0.041), with a small effect size of influence, Eta=0.014.

Table 5: The impact of monthly income as a separate factor on the intensity of purchasing organic products

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: A4 How often do you buy organic products?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Monthly income	**12.597**	**4**	**3.149**	**2.702**	**.030**	**.015**
Error	**805.467**	**691**	**1.166**			

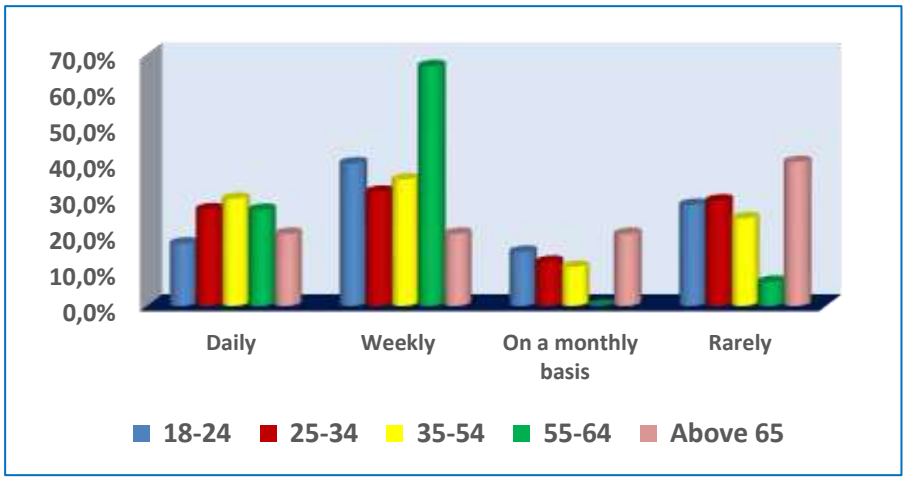
The F tests the effect of Monthly Income (Gel). This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

The monthly effect is estimated at the 0.05 level of statistical significance (P=0.030), as well as the small effect size of the effect, Eta=0.015.

Thus, through two-factor analysis of variance, it was determined that Different age groups differ in the intensity of purchasing organic products, and the intensity of purchasing organic products is highly dependent on monthly income, which confirms the second and third hypotheses.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 below illustrate the relationship of the factor of age with the variable of purchasing organic products intensity.

Figure 3. Relationship of age with the intensity of purchasing organic products.

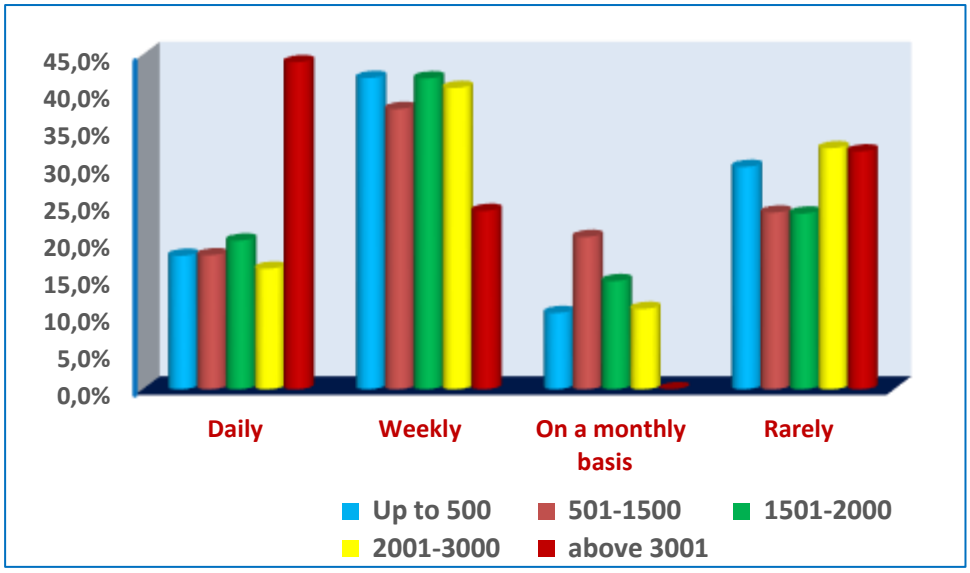


As shown in Figure 3, daily organic products are mostly purchased by consumers aged 35-54, followed by consumers aged 25-34 and 55-64.

66.7% of weekly organic products are purchased by consumers aged 55-64, followed by consumers aged 18-24.

Organic products are mostly purchased monthly by those aged 65 and over, and those who rarely purchase such products are also mostly older than 65.

Figure 4. Dependence of monthly income on the intensity of purchasing organic products



As can be seen from Figure 4, organic products are mostly purchased daily by those with a salary of above 3001, followed by those with a salary of 1501-2000 GEL, with the lowest percentage of daily organic product purchases by respondents with the lowest salary.
The lowest percentage of weekly purchases are made by those with a salary of above 3001 GEL,
The lowest percentage of monthly purchases are made by those with a salary of above 3001 GEL.
The highest percentage of monthly purchases are made by those with a salary of 501-1500 followed by those with the salary of 1501-2000 GEL.

The fourth hypothesis — between local and foreign organic products, the Georgian consumer prefers local products, which is an important stimulus for the further development of local Georgian organic farming — was tested alongside the assumption that gender and social status have a significant impact on the selection of local or foreign organic products. To test this, we used filtering and custom tables alongside the chi-square test, as we are dealing with the determination of statistical relationships between qualitative variables.

A survey conducted among consumers purchasing organic products selected through filtering, asking whether they preferred local or foreign products when purchasing the product, showed that 80% of organic product buyers prefer local products, while 20% prefer foreign products.

Table 6. Frequency distribution of Respondents' preference between local and foreign organic product

A20 Which do you prefer between local and foreign organic products?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Local product	365	79.9	79.9	79.9
	2 Foreign product	92	20.1	20.1	100.0
	Total	456	100.0	100.0	

To study the influence of gender and social status on the choice of organic products, we used a consumer table obtained using the chi-square test. Table 7 presents the frequency distribution of the variable A20 Which organic product do you prefer, local or foreign? with respect to gender and social status, and Table 8 presents the results of the chi-square test.

T**able** 7. **The influence of respondents' age and social status on their preference for local organic products**

		A20 Which organic product do you prefer, local or foreign? (Row N %)	
		Local product	Foreign product
A23 Gender	Male	85.1%	14.9%
	Female	77.5%	22.5%
A26 Social status	Employed	85.6%	14.4%
	Unemployed	100.0%	0.0%
	Student	76.5%	23.5%
	Housewife	66.7%	33.3%
	Retired	75.0%	25.0%
	Businessman	60.0%	40.0%

Table 7 shows that when purchasing organic products, the majority of both men and women — with men slightly more inclined — prefer local products. According to social status, the majority in all categories also choose local products by a significant margin: 100% of unemployed respondents, 86% of employed people, 77% of students, and 75% of pensioners opt for local products. Businesspeople purchase foreign products at the highest rate among all groups, although even 60% of them still prefer local products.

The results of the chi-square test in Table 8 show that the gender and social status variables — specifically, variable A20: Which organic product do you prefer, local or foreign? — have a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level, which confirms Hypothesis 4. The difference in product preference is more pronounced among social status groups than between male and female groups. For social status, the statistical significance is P = 0.027, with a chi-square coefficient of 12.630; for gender, P = 0.034, with a chi-square coefficient of 4.471.

Table 8. Results of Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		A20 Which organic product do you prefer, local or foreign?
A23 Gender	Chi-square	4.471
	df	1
	Sig.	.034
A26 Social status	Chi-square	12.630
	df	5
	Sig.	.027

Hypothesis 5 was tested by crosstabulation and the inclusion of a chi-square test. The table obtained as a result of crosstabulation (Table 9) displays the frequency distribution of the variable A21 What determines your choice between a local and a foreign organic product? in relation to the intensity of purchasing organic products, while Table 10 presents the results of the chi-square test.

Table 9. Crosstabulation of variables: "A21 What determines your choice between a local and a foreign organic product?" and "A4 How often do you buy organic products?"

		A4 How often do you buy organic products?				
		Daily	Weekly	On a monthly basis	Rarely	Total
A21 What determines your choice between a local and a foreign organic product?	Acceptable prices	15.8%	42.5%	13.7%	28.1%	100.0%
	A wide range of products presented	14.5%	46.1%	23.7%	15.8%	100.0%
	A higher degree of confidence in product certification	**23.6%**	35.8%	11.3%	29.2%	100.0%
Total		20.2%	39.1%	13.7%	27.0%	100.0%

As can be seen from Table 8, when purchasing organic products regularly, the choice of product is largely determined by certification labels. Based on the chi-square test data (Table 10), we conclude that the conditions for choosing local and foreign products do indeed affect the intensity of product purchase. A statistically significant relationship is observed at the 0.01 level (P = 0.007), with a chi-square coefficient of 17.724.
Thus, Hypothesis 5 is also confirmed.

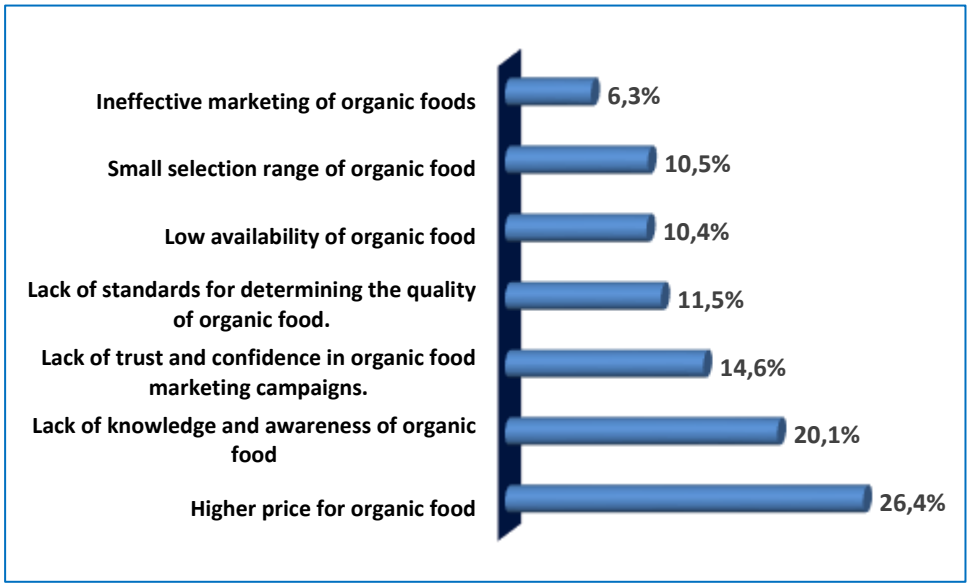
Table 10. Results of Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.724[a]	6	.007
Likelihood Ratio	17.545	6	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	.392	1	.531
N of Valid Cases	540		

To test Hypothesis 6 – „The main barrier to widespread consumption of organic products is their high prices“, we used the frequency distribution table of the multiple-choice question “A18 What are the main barriers that exist in purchasing organic food products” (Table 11).

Figure 5. Frequency distribution Figure of the variable "A18 What are the main barriers to buying organic food" in percentages



As we can see from Figure 5, the biggest barrier to purchasing organic products is the high price of organic food.

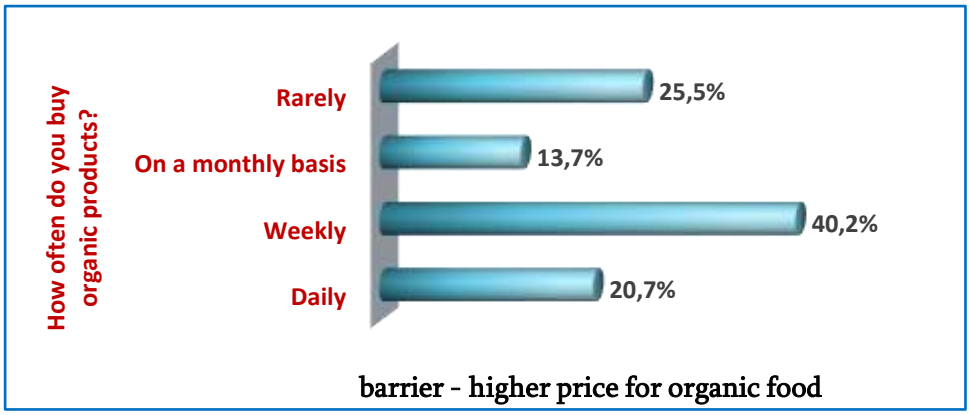
If we look at the intensity of purchasing organic products, we see that in each category of this variable, the highest percentage share among the main barrier groups is occupied by the higher price of organic food products (column %).

Table 11. Frequency distribution of the main barriers to the intensity of purchasing organic products

A_18 Main barriers to buying organic products	A4 How often do you buy organic products? (Column Responses %)			
	Daily	Weekly	On a monthly basis	Rarely
A18_1 Higher price for organic food products	**26.7%**	**26.3%**	**26.8%**	**26.2%**
A18_2 Lack of knowledge and awareness about organic food products	20.0%	19.3%	21.0%	20.9%
A18_3 Lack of trust and confidence in organic food marketing campaigns	16.2%	15.0%	18.8%	10.6%
A18_4 Lack of standards for determining the quality of organic food products	10.5%	12.8%	8.7%	11.8%
A18_5 Low availability of organic food products	8.6%	10.6%	9.4%	12.2%
A18_6 Small selection of organic food products	11.4%	9.9%	8.7%	11.8%
A18_7 Ineffective marketing of organic food products	6.7%	6.0%	6.5%	6.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

If we consider the main barrier - "A18_1 Higher price of organic food" - as a linear percentage of the intensity of organic product purchase, we observe that the high price barrier is recorded with the highest percentage share (40.2%) among those who purchase organic products weekly. Additionally, infrequent purchases of organic products are also largely attributed to their high cost (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Frequency distribution of high price, as a purchasing barrier by product purchase intensity

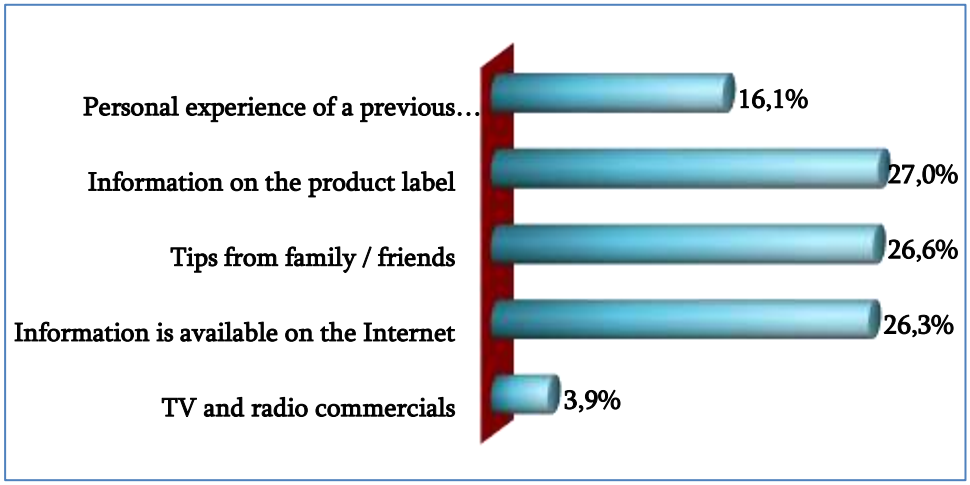


To test Hypothesis 7 - The main means of obtaining information about organic food products have a significant impact on its consumption and intensity - we discussed the impact of different means of obtaining information on the purchase of organic products

In general, the frequency distribution of the main means of obtaining information about organic food products is presented in percentages in the following Figure (Figure 7).

Among consumers of organic products — who, as shown in Table 1, make up 85% of respondents (456 respondents) — the sources of information about organic food are distributed as follows (see Figure 7):

Figure 7. Indication the main means of obtaining information about organic food products for organic products consumers



As Figure 7 shows, the main source of information about organic products is information on product labels (27%), followed by advice from family/friends (26.6%), and then information on the Internet (26.3%).

The fact that sources of information influence the intensity of organic product purchases is confirmed by the Kruskal-Wallis Test (Table 12), which was used to identify statistical relationships between categorical variables with more than two groups.

Table 12 Kruskal-Wallis test results

Test Statistics

	A4 How often do you buy organic products??
Chi-Square	23.597
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Table 12 shows that there is a maximum statistical relationship between the intensity of purchasing organic products and the sources of information about organic products at the 0.01 level (P<0.001). The chi-square coefficient is equal to 23.597.

Thus, Hypothesis 7 was also confirmed.

To confirm Hypothesis 8 - Regular consumers of organic food products follow a healthy lifestyle - we used cross-tabulation analysis. From the obtained tables, Table 13 shows the frequency distribution of the variable A8 Do you follow a healthy lifestyle? in relation to the intensity of organic product consumption, while Table 14 shows the results of the chi-square test.

Table 13. Frequency distribution of the variable "A8 Do you follow a healthy lifestyle?" in relation to the intensity of organic product consumption

		A8 Do you follow a healthy lifestyle?		
		Yes	No	Partially
A4 How often do you buy organic products?	Daily	12.5%	5.6%	81.9%
	Weekly	14.3%	7.1%	78.6%
	On a monthly basis	8.2%	8.2%	83.7%
	Rarely	5.2%	30.9%	63.9%

Table 13 clearly illustrates that among those who consume organic food products on a daily basis, 12.5% explicitly state that they clearly follow a healthy lifestyle, while Only 5.6% of daily consumers clearly indicate that they do not follow a healthy lifestyle. 81.9% report partially following a healthy lifestyle. In the case of weekly consumption, 14.3% also clearly state that they follow a healthy lifestyle, whereas 7.1% disagree.

The results of the chi-square test (Table 14) show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the given variables at the 0.01 level ($P<0.001$), and the chi-square coefficient is equal to 38.342.

Table 14. Chi-Square Tests results.

Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		A4 How often do you buy organic products?
A8 Do you follow a healthy lifestyle?	Chi-square	38.342
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Thus, Hypothesis 8 is confirmed. Regular consumers of organic products lead a healthy lifestyle. Consuming organic products has a significant impact on their lifestyle.

Conclusions

- The state of organic agribusiness in Georgia does not align with the trends and challenges of the modern world; The land area of organic farming in Georgia is still highly limited compared with EU countries as well the neighboring countries. In addition, its growth rate is not sufficient to ensure sustainable and irreversible growth of the country's agrarian sector in the long run, on the one hand, and sustainable food security of the country's population on the other hand. The development of organic farming should be unequivocally seen not only as an opportunity to maintain a healthy environment for the future generations of Georgia and protect its natural resources, but also as a means to improve the population's health. That's why it can be concluded that it is necessary to transform the country's agricultural sector into a predominantly organic agro-product sector and implement a state policy to ensure it, as a key factor for sustainable and irreversible agricultural growth.
- The study showed that the driving motives for the consumption of organic food by Georgian consumers are personal and family health concerns - specifically, food safety and security, its naturalness, and high nutritional value. A positioning marketing strategy developed by organic food companies based on these factors will significantly increase the marketing effectiveness of organic food products and, therefore, the capacity of the country's organic products market.
- The current study shows that Georgian consumers perceive the health benefits associated with organic foods. They value its food safety aspects and the environmental benefits. Therefore, the local market will benefit from governmental programs stimulating the farmers' awareness through informational campaigns. Such campaigns would not only increase the farming of organic produce but also strengthen consumer trust.
- The survey presented a positive picture for local organic food companies. Georgian consumers value the local origin of organic food. Namely, they show a preference for local produce over foreign organic products. Such consumer preference can become the main stimulating factor for the development of organic food products in Georgia, increasing the volume, diversity, and availability of organically grown local products.
- The study revealed that the intensity of purchasing organic products largely depends on monthly income. This finding allows us to conclude that, once the issue of low income in the country is addressed, the volume of the organic products market will increase significantly.
- The study showed a high level of consumer sensitivity to price. The study also showed that the main deterrent and barrier to purchasing organic products is the high cost. The fact that in Georgia the price of organic produce is even higher than in the developed countries of the EU further discourages consumption. State programs offering financial assistance and subsidies to farmers will help to further expand the Georgian organic market. In turn, it will present a possibility to local bio-entrepreneurs to reduce prices and increase their sales. Therefore, support from the Georgian government for organic farming is crucial for promoting the production of organic produce and expanding the local market.
- The survey revealed a strong correlation between a healthy lifestyle and the consumption of organic products. That is why we believe that the popularization of a healthy lifestyle in the country will significantly increase the level of consumption of organic products.
- Organic Consumer Surveys have shown the community's lack of knowledge about the merits and benefits of organic products. That is why we consider it necessary to unite and intensify the

efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the Ministry of Consumer Rights and Environmental Organizations in order to increase the level of knowledge and awareness about organic products in the country. We believe that targeted activities and campaigns in this direction will have a strong impact on the positive attitude and perception toward organic food products in the country. We believe the Georgian government ought to take on the realization of this task, as its primary function is to take care of the population's health, food security, and sustainable development of the environment. All of this is directly related to the prospects of transitioning the country's agricultural sector to predominantly organic production.

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