



A General Assessment of the Retail Price Premiums of Organic Food Products in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

Organic agricultural production has emerged as an alternative to conventional production and aims to promote a sustainable production approach based on the health of soil, the protection of nature and human well-being factors with an environmentally friendly production method. Organic production combines traditional knowledge with scientific innovation to benefit the natural environment and promote a higher quality of life for all. Organic agricultural products, which have gained significant market share globally and expanded into various markets, are mainly produced for export in Türkiye. The growth of the organic market depends on the balance between supply and demand. In this respect, the aim of this study is to examine the product market prices, which is a key factor affecting the purchasing behaviour of consumers in order to grow the organic market and reach the desired level. Price premiums were examined for the following food groups: cereals/legumes, fruit, vegetables, milk, dairy products and eggs, dried fruit and nuts. This study relies on secondary data and retail prices were collected through online websites. According to the results, the price premium, which was calculated by comparing the prices of organic and conventional versions of selected food products, was found to be in favour of organic products. This price premium was found to be particularly high for noodles, dry beans, buckwheat and rice from the cereals/legumes group; grapefruit, apple and pear from the fruit group and yellow chickpeas, pumpkin seeds from the nuts group. These results provide useful insights for food producers, marketers and policy makers when making decisions about organic food.

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Introduction

In recent years, the negative environmental and public health impacts of climate change, soil and water pollution, biodiversity loss and increased greenhouse gas emissions have attracted the attention of scientists, producers and consumers (Bazhan et al., 2024). One of the reasons for these, which cause severe damage in ecosystem, is agricultural production (Michalke et al., 2023). This is why the concept of sustainable agricultural production has emerged. It aims to eliminate or reduce the harmful impact of agricultural production on the environment and all living things. At this point, innovations in production methods and shifts in consumption patterns have become increasingly necessary (Bosquez et al., 2023). Protecting what is owned for the long term is the essence of sustainability. Similarly, the long-term protection of the ecological environment is part of sustainable development, which is a process that aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Gür and Erdem, 2023). As part of sustainable development, sustainable agriculture has arisen

to improve current production and ensure that future production is carried out in a healthy manner. It also addresses global issues such as hunger, malnutrition, food security and rural development.

In the context of sustainable development, organic production can be used as an alternative production method in rural development, with its characteristics compared to non-organic agriculture (Bernabeu et al., 2023). The practices that distinguish organic farming from conventional farming are the prohibition of the use of chemical inputs and the increased quality and health of products by implementing the entire process from production to consumption in a controlled manner to support the sustainability of agriculture (Göktaş and Önal, 2024). Conventional production methods that are not sustainable are shown to be the main cause of biodiversity loss and global warming. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) reports that agricultural production is directly responsible for a significant proportion of the negative effects experienced

globally. In countries where the industry is not very developed, organic farming practices are feasible and have some advantages. It is beneficial to use organic farming as an alternative agricultural model to non-organic agricultural production, especially in developing countries such as Türkiye. Organic farming is considered a transition path towards solutions for protecting natural resources and achieving sustainable agriculture. Given that it is based on the use of local biodiversity and resources, organic agriculture appears to be an accessible and affordable system that empowers most small-scale farmers. It has its own crop and breeding system and requires very little external input (Bernabeu et al., 2023). New researches and the need for change in agricultural production have created the need for countries to gather organic agriculture practices under one roof (Kılıç and Turhan, 2022). These organisations provide information on the status of the organic agriculture sector, its development plans and the policies that can be implemented. Organizations such as the Institute of Organic Agriculture Research (FIBL) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) and the European Union (EU) Commission carry out tasks such as preparing policies and reports on practices such as organic agriculture within the scope of sustainable agriculture (Örs, 2019).

In recent years, the negative impacts of conventional agriculture have created a potential demand for sustainably produced food (Li and Kallas, 2021). Supply and demand are key to the recovery of the organic market. The development of action plans for producers and consumers will therefore be of paramount importance. The countries with the largest organic farming areas in the world are Australia (35.7 million hectares), Argentina (4.1 million hectares) and France (2.8 million hectares), respectively, while the countries with the largest organic farmers are India (1.5 million), Uganda (404 thousand) and Ethiopia (218 thousand). Looking at the organic market in the world, the United States leads with €48.6 billion, followed by Germany with €15.9 billion and France with €12.7 billion. Switzerland (€425), Denmark (€384) and Luxembourg (€313) have the highest per capita consumption of organic products (IFOAM, 2023). In order to meet the growing demand, the number of organic products in developing countries such as Türkiye increased from 150 in 2002 to 268 in 2022. The number of farmers increased from 12,428 to 44,927, and the total production area increased from 89,827 to 310,584 hectares. The production amount also increased from 310,125 to 1,600,858 tons (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). According to 2022 data, the area where organic farming is carried out within the total agricultural area in Türkiye has a share of 1.5%. In 2022, a total of 101 organic farmers carried out organic breeding with 7,220 cattle, 5,330 sheep and goats, and 684,408 poultry. In addition, 591 beekeepers actualize organic beekeeping with 95,733 hives (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2023). In response to these developments unfortunately the domestic market has not developed sufficiently. Türkiye has begun to enter the organic farming sector in the 1980's (Yücel et al., 2023; Taçyıldız and Son, 2023) with dried grapes and figs for export (Çelik, 2013; Kılıç et al., 2014; Yücel et al., 2023) and is still mainly for export (Ağızan and Bayramoğlu, 2023). However, the number of farmers, the production

area and the production volume has increased over the years (Ağızan and Bayramoğlu, 2023).

Consumer preferences, attitudes and behaviours, socio-demographic characteristics, health concerns, product price, product quality and accessibility are important variables in organic market development (Baş et al., 2024; Gür and Erdem, 2023). In this case, market research helps identify consumer expectations, informing more effective marketing strategies. Marketing strategies can then be developed in line with these considerations. Consumer demand is one of the most effective factors in the growth of the organic products market (Kılıç et al., 2014), and it needs to be encouraged. The market for organic products has been assessed by looking at the price premium of organic food products sold on the domestic market in Türkiye as compared to non-organic products. The factors affecting consumer demand include the price premium, which encourages and facilitates the transition of conventional farms to organic farms. In order to identify organic food retail sales from the consumer side, it is essential to take into account health, quality, taste and eco-friendly production, as well as affordability (Ankamah-Yeboah et al., 2016). Another factor that influences consumers' purchasing behaviour is their hedonistic attitude towards shopping, which urges and facilitates purchases. However, utility attitudes towards organic food consumption are also a factor. Certified organic foods can also be seen as a sign that leads both utility and hedonic purchasing behaviours (Yemez and Akca, 2024).

This paper discusses the price differences between organic and non-organic food retail prices in Türkiye. It is well known that the retail prices of organic food products are higher than those of conventional products. The main research question in this article is to determine the relative extent to which the retail prices of organic products exceed those of their conventional counterparts. Analysis of household spending patterns in Türkiye shows that vegetables and fruit consistently receive the highest proportion of total food expenditure over 25% with 'Bread and Other Cereal Products' frequently accounting for around 18% of food expenditure, while 'Milk, Cheese, and Eggs' represent approximately 14%, emphasizing the dominant consumption of these groups (Yıldırım and Çobanoğlu, 2022). Although consumers have different preferences regarding organically and non-organically produced food, this study focuses on the price premiums of the most commonly consumed food products in Türkiye.

Materials and Methods

The findings presented in this study were based on secondary data. The data for this study were collected during April and May 2025. In this study, cereals and legumes, fruits, vegetables, milk, dairy products and eggs, as well as dried fruits and nuts were selected as they represent key components of a balanced diet and most consumed food products in Türkiye. According to BİSAM's August 2025 cost of living analysis, fruit and vegetables account for the largest share 32.45% of daily food-group expenditure per person in Türkiye, closely followed by meat, eggs, and pulses (24.83%) and milk and dairy products (24.62%); cereals (bread and grains) account for 10.93%.

An internet search was carried out on the relevant websites to find out the relative prices of organic food. Online shopping sites were visited to obtain comparable prices for the most commonly consumed foods. It should be noted that the prices of both organic and conventional food products are the average prices found in various online supermarket chains. A price premium, also known as a relative price, is the percentage by which the selling price of an organic product exceeds that of a non-organic product (Farris et al., 2010).

It can be calculated as follows Formula (1):

$$\text{Price premium (\%)} = \frac{\text{Price}_{\text{OR}} - \text{Price}_{\text{CON}}}{\text{Price}_{\text{CON}}} \times 100(1)$$

where Price_{OR} is the price of the identified organic food related product and $\text{Price}_{\text{CON}}$ is the price of the identified conventional food product, both determined as per kilogram or in case of liquid products per litre.

Results and Discussion

Global Overview of Organic Farming and Markets in The World and in Türkiye

Organic farming is an integrated production system that protects the soil, the ecosystem and natural resources, providing sustainable farming and community wealth (Smoluk-Sikorska et al., 2023). It also preserves ecological system, using practices that care about biodiversity, nutrient-rich soil and impact of social, economic and the environmental aspect of the agricultural production (Bernabeu et al., 2023). Recently, organic agricultural production has been evaluated more cost-efficient strategy especially against biodiversity loss (Akter et al., 2023). It is clear that the intensive use of resources in agricultural production, such as the overuse of natural resources, pesticides, antibiotics and fertilisers, always damages the ecosystem. Scholars, experts and agricultural extensions pay attention to these chemicals because they cause 60% of soil pollution (Hu et al., 2024). Therefore, increasing the organic land has become more significant in this respect, and it is an important part of sustainable agricultural production, particularly in rural areas (Smoluk-Sikorska et al., 2024). The global organic farming sector has experienced significant expansion, with an increasing number of countries adopting organic cultivation practices and a rising number of organic farmers worldwide. According to the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FIBL, the area of land under organic agricultural management, including fully converted and converted areas, has increased steadily to nearly 99 million hectares in 190 countries. In 2023, nearly 4.3 million farmers worldwide were engaged in organic farming. While China (319 000 ha), France (228 000 ha) and Spain (198 000 ha) are the countries where the organic farmland increase steadily, the highest number of the organic farmers are in India, Uganda and Ethiopia (1 590 000, 404 246 and 218 175 respectively).

In recent years, the consumption of organic food products has increased due to concerns about health, environment, animal welfare and protecting ecosystems. There are many studies that concern insights of the consumers on organic consumption versus conventional.

When the European and the world organic retail sales compare, it is obvious that the Europe holds a significant share in this market with the 54 702 billion euros in 81 728 billion euros global retail sales in 2023. In light of this data, it is unsurprising that the market for organic food products has grown continuously. As Badruddoza et al. (2020) stated in their study that organic foods sector is the most growing sector. Behind this sectorial growth, there are certain factors that affect directly this growth. Consumers' demand is the main factor and in recent years it has been noticeably growing (Hu et al., 2024; Pawlewicz, 2020; Jafari, 2025; Watanabe et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2024). In the Western world, people are becoming more informed about the food they eat, especially in developed countries (Akter et al., 2023). In response to the effects of conventional food production on sustainable production, some consumers prefer eco-friendly food products. Price is the main factor driving demand for organic products, especially when it comes to the environmental, health and quality attributes. Consequently, a number of studies have examined consumers' willingness to pay in order to determine the price premium that will have the most significant impact. The studies align with existing literature on positive willingness to pay (Loke et al., 2015). Although price premiums may play a vital role in the overall expansion of the organic food sector, other key factors such as accessibility, availability, sensory requirements, traceability, and label perception can also be primary buying criteria.

Although Türkiye has many advantages for organic farming, the production of organic products initially depends on foreign demand. Despite its development, sufficient progress has not yet been made in the domestic market (Göktaş and Önal, 2024). Therefore, the growth of the domestic organic market has been hindered by a lack of understanding of consumers' behaviour and attitudes. As technology becomes more widely used, consumers can easily access information about the products they use, which increases their awareness of them (Yemez and Akca, 2024) so it can be said that consumer demands are very effective in the growth of the organic product market. In this context, studies analysing the factors that play a role in consumers' purchasing of organic products are increasing. Türkiye ranks 25th in Europe for organic product retail sales with 46 million euros (FIBL, 2023). In Türkiye, 80% of products in the organic food market are exported, with only a small proportion consumed domestically. This can be due to a lack of information and awareness, high sales prices, and marketing problems. As stated in the study conducted by Göktaş and Önal (2024), consumer awareness for the growth of the organic retail market should be created through mass media. In this context, the level of awareness should be increased by including all market stakeholders. Encouraging new consumers through word-of-mouth communication from consumers who regularly purchase organic food and trust the product will be effective in the growth of this market. Despite consumers demand these types of food products, they also want to satisfy their social needs, so the feedback of individuals with a certain social status will influence their decision to purchase organic food (Yemez and Akca, 2024). Considering the sales prices, which play an important role in purchase decisions for organic products, will provide some insight into the organic product market in Türkiye.

Price Premium on Selected Organic Food Products in Türkiye

The production processes for the organic products are more costly due to expensive inputs, intensive labour, costly certification processes and packaging compared to non-organic production. Additionally, higher organic food prices are also affected by the government regulations. In some organic food markets, such as in Türkiye, these products are still perceived as niche products. One attribute of niche products is a price premium, and producers can exploit this in a competitive market. In theory, a price premium is defined as a high price that generates higher-than-average profits, so this above-average profit must be regarded as the amount more than a reasonable price (Zhang and Kim, 2013). Whereas, on the one hand, some studies show that there is a negative price premium for this value-added food products (Wei et al., 2025). The price premiums are valuable to obtain the data for organic agricultural production bodies that arrange the relating laws and policies, as well as food enterprises, extensions, farmers and scholars (Pawlewicz, 2020). From the perspective of consumers, price premiums make it certain how much they are willing to pay for these products. As it is stated in the study of Jafari (2025), consumers are ready to pay about 5% price premium for the organic labels. Further research by Ankamah-Yeboah et al. (2016) found that Danish consumers were willing to pay a 20% premium for organic salmon. In some cases, the price of organic products may not be higher than that of non-organic products because the production costs of organic products are low (Wang et al., 2017).

In this paper, we handle the common situations where organic products are at a premium. The price premiums of the selected organic food products in Türkiye have been analysed based on a set of data for organic and non-organic retail food prices. To obtain data on actual market prices, we looked at the different websites of national retail chains that operate in the country. The most consumed organic food products were chosen from the groups of cereals/legumes, fruit, vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and milk/dairy products/egg (Table 1).

The market prices of organic and conventional products were obtained from the relevant websites in order to calculate the price premium of the selected foods (Table 2). Average prices were used when considering the different prices found on various websites. Online retail platforms in Türkiye were used for our research. The main reason for this is that these sites have expanded tremendously in

recent years, both in Türkiye and around the world. This has made them accessible to the average shopper almost everywhere. Another important change has been the impressive range of labelled, certified and local food available from e-shopping. There is an imposing difference in the price premium for organic food as shown in Table 2.

As it is seen in Table 2, price premiums for organic food products in the grain and legume group range from 41% to 500% and noodles had the highest price difference at 500%, while oatmeal had the lowest. In the fruit group, price premiums vary between 87.5% and 300% although the price premium for organic banana is lower than for other fruits, it is higher for grapefruit and apples. The price premium difference between organic dried fruits and non-organic ones generally varies between 63% and 138%. While this difference is lower in dried figs, it is higher in dried plums and the price premiums for organic food products vary between 70% and 300% in the vegetable group. While cappa pepper is the product with the lowest price difference (70%) in the vegetable group, organic cucumber is determined to be the product with the highest difference. Research has shown that price premium for the organic vegetable group over non-organic ones is very high. For example, Watanabe et al. (2023) proposed that the average difference in the prices of some vegetable and fruit such as carrot, tomato, orange, papaya and apple is generally higher.

In the milk and dairy products group, packaged yoghurt (150%) and feta cheese (161%) are the two products with the highest price difference among these products. Packaged milk (71%) and butter (77%) have been found to be the products with the lowest price differences in this group. Whereas Loke et al. (2015) found that the organic milk price difference is only 24.6% higher in the US market. The price premium per 10 eggs was found 122% and similar result was found in the study of Pawlewicz. The average price premium for organic eggs was 121%. As it is seen in the nuts category, the products with the highest price differences are yellow chickpeas (400%) and pumpkin seeds (226%). Shelled almonds (88%) and walnuts (92%) have more reasonable price differences compared to other nut products. As mentioned in the Jafari's research (2025), there is generally positive average price difference for organic products. In the meantime, Badruddoza et al. (2020) found that the premiums for organic milk, yogurt and eggs were 56%, 27% and 38%, respectively in the US market.

Table 1. Selected food products in the study.

Cereals / Legumes Group	Fruit	Vegetable	Dried Fruit	Milk / Dairy Products/Egg	Nuts
Rice	Avocado	Potatoes	Dried apricots	Packaged Milk	Walnut
Dry Beans	Orange	Cucumber	Dried figs	Packaged Yogurt	Raw almonds
Buckwheat	Banana	Eggplant	Sultana raisin	Egg	Hazelnut
Noodle	Lemon	Cappa pepper	Dried plum	Feta	Pumpkin seeds
Oatmeal	Grapefruit	Onion	Dried Mulberry	Cheddar cheese	Yellow chickpeas
Bulgur wheat	Apple	Green bean		Butter	Pistachio
Red lentils	Pear	Tomatoes			Chestnut
Chickpeas	Mandarin				Shelled almonds
					Shelled walnut

Tablo 2. Price premiums of the food products included in the research.

Cereals / Legumes Group (kg)	Price of organic	Price of non-organic	Price premium (%)
Rice	280 (\$7,36)	90 (\$2,36)	211
Dry Beans	320 (\$8,41)	98 (\$2,57)	226
Buckwheat	280 (\$7,36)	89 (\$2,34)	214
Noodle	180 (\$4,73)	30 (\$0,78)	500
Oatmeal	120 (\$3,15)	85 (\$2,23)	41
Bulgur wheat	170 (\$4,47)	60 (\$1,57)	183
Red lentils	150 (\$3,94)	50 (\$1,31)	200
Chickpeas	230 (\$6,05)	80 (\$2,10)	187
Fresh Fruits			
Avocado (piece)	84 (\$2,20)	40 (\$1,05)	110
Orange (kg)	100 (\$2,63)	45 (\$1,18)	122
Banana (kg)	150 (3,94)	80 (\$2,10)	87,5
Lemon (kg)	100 (\$2,63)	45 (\$1,18)	122
Grapefruit (kg)	180 (\$4,73)	45 (\$1,18)	300
Apple (kg)	160 (\$4,20)	40 (\$1,05)	300
Pear (kg)	190 (\$4,99)	60 (\$1,57)	216
Mandarin (kg)	94 (\$2,47)	35 (\$0,92)	168
Dried Fruit			
Dried apricots	650 (\$17,10)	380 (\$9,99)	71
Dried figs	750 (\$19,73)	460 (\$12,10)	63
Sultana raisin	690 (\$18,15)	390 (\$10,26)	77
Dried plum	950 (\$24,99)	400 (\$10,52)	138
Dried Mulberry	770 (\$20,25)	450 (\$11,83)	71
Vegetables			
Potatoes	100 (\$2,63)	35 (\$0,92)	185
Cucumber	200 (\$5,26)	50 (\$1,31)	300
Eggplant	190 (\$4,99)	95 (\$2,49)	100
Capia pepper	170 (\$4,47)	100 (\$2,63)	70
Onion	50 (\$1,31)	25 (\$0,65)	100
Green bean	200 (\$5,26)	65 (\$1,71)	207
Tomatoes	120 (\$3,15)	55 (\$1,44)	118
Milk/Dairy Products/Egg			
Packaged Milk (lt)	60 (\$1,57)	35 (\$0,92)	71
Packaged Yogurt (kg)	100 (\$2,63)	40 (\$1,05)	150
Egg (10 pieces)	200 (\$5,26)	90 (\$2,36)	122
Feta (kg)	600 (\$15,78)	230 (\$6,05)	161
Cheddar cheese (kg)	700 (\$18,41)	380 (\$9,99)	84
Butter (kg)	800 (\$21,04)	450 (\$11,83)	77
Nuts (kg)			
Walnut	1250 (\$32,88)	650 (\$17,10)	92
Raw almonds	1230 (\$32,35)	600 (\$15,78)	105
Hazelnut	1125 (\$29,59)	500 (\$13,15)	125
Pumpkin seeds	970 (\$25,51)	297 (\$7,81)	226
Yellow chickpeas	750 (\$19,73)	150 (\$3,94)	400
Pistachio	2000 (\$52,61)	900 (\$23,67)	122
Chestnut	200 (\$5,26)	100 (\$2,63)	100
Shelled almonds	500 (\$13,15)	265 (\$6,97)	88
Shelled walnut	600 (\$15,78)	230 (\$6,05)	160

Conclusion

The findings in this study reveal that the price premium differences between organic and conventional food products in different food product categories are in favour of organic products. It is observed that the price premium is higher for some organic products. There are many factors, from production processes to consumer demand that can explain the price premium difference between organic and conventional food products in favour of organic products. However, the point here is that organic products should be more accessible to consumers.

Some fundamental steps need to be taken by producers, marketers, and government policies to ensure consumers' easy access to organic products. High production costs at the producer level contribute significantly to the increasing price premium differences between organic and conventional food products. The main reasons for this include yield losses, high certification costs, intensive labour usage, and the high prices of organic inputs. In this context, it is important for organic producers to manage their production and marketing processes collectively as a

group rather than individually. By doing so, organic producers can gain significant advantages in terms of input procurement, product marketing, certification costs, and technical support. Due to the price premium difference favoring organic products over conventional ones, consumers are often unable to purchase organic products regularly, which hinders market growth. Besides the price premium, underdeveloped distribution channels and insufficient consumer awareness regarding organic products also restrict consumers' access to these products. Accordingly, marketing stakeholders involved in the distribution of organic products should implement promotional strategies that emphasize the benefits and quality assurance of organic products. They should offer products at different price segments to facilitate access for low-income groups, provide packaging options suitable for consumers' budgets, and implement loyalty programs and discounts. From the perspective of government policies, several measures are necessary to improve consumers' easy access to organic products. These include providing support to producers to promote organic farming and reduce costs, increasing the number of sales points for organic products to facilitate consumer access, conducting educational and informational activities regarding the health and environmental benefits of organic products, and offering direct financial incentives to consumers to boost the demand for organic products.

Given the limitations of the present study, notably the inability to assess the influence of socio-demographic variables and the reliance on secondary data, it is imperative that future research endeavours adopt a multidimensional approach. Such studies should comprehensively investigate health concerns, quality perceptions, socio-demographic factors, and environmental impacts associated with organic product consumption through rigorous and methodologically robust analyses.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

N.D.: Data collection, investigation, and writing the original draft

H.A.: Conceptualization, methodology, review and editing

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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