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An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior in the Purchase of Food Products

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Abstract

Food purchasing behavior reflects interactions among consumer characteristics, psychological evaluations, marketing stimuli, and purchasing circumstances. This study aimed to identify, classify, and synthesize factors influencing consumer behavior in purchasing food products. A descriptive qualitative literature review was conducted using secondary data from journal articles, academic books, and previous research reports. The original review covered literature published between 1991 and 2023, with findings analyzed through thematic synthesis and comparative interpretation. Six determinant categories were identified: cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational factors. Comparative evidence revealed differences in the dominant factors across food categories and purchasing environments. Price was dominant in instant noodle purchasing, with a reported influence of 12.15%, while psychological factors were most influential in steamed layer cake purchasing. Product attributes were most decisive in a selected food outlet, whereas purchasing time was the strongest factor in a fast-food restaurant setting. These differences indicated that purchasing behavior depended on product characteristics, consumer evaluations, and transaction circumstances rather than a universally dominant determinant. The study contributes an integrated conceptual framework for interpreting heterogeneous purchasing influences and supports context-sensitive marketing strategies. Differences in research designs and measurements limit direct statistical comparisons and causal generalization.

Keywords: *Consumer behavior, Food products, Literature review, Marketing mix, Purchasing decisions.*

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INTRODUCTION

Food purchasing behavior has become increasingly complex as consumers evaluate food products through interacting economic, psychological, social, technological, and situational considerations. The expansion of convenience foods, digitally mediated purchasing channels, and products differentiated by health, safety, and sustainability attributes has diversified the criteria influencing consumer decisions beyond conventional assessments of price and product quality. Consumer preferences for convenience foods reflect interactions between marketing characteristics and purchasing intentions, indicating that product selection cannot be explained exclusively through economic considerations (Imtiyaz et al., 2022). Research on prepared foods similarly identifies consumer cognition and perceived value as relevant components of purchasing behavior, while time pressure may alter how product attributes are evaluated before purchase (Fu et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2024). Food safety consciousness, perceived purchasing risks, and concerns regarding product traceability introduce further dimensions into consumer evaluation, particularly when product characteristics cannot be assessed directly before consumption (Pan & Wu, 2024; Michałowska et al., 2024; Su et al., 2026). Purchasing channels have also become analytically relevant because digital platforms influence product accessibility, information exposure, and opportunities for repeated transactions (Cuong, 2024; Huang et al., 2025). These developments complicate the assumption that purchasing decisions are governed by a stable hierarchy of determinants applicable across food categories and consumption circumstances. For businesses operating in competitive food markets, identifying whether purchasing decisions are primarily associated with affordability, product characteristics, consumer perceptions, social influences, or situational conditions constitutes a substantive analytical problem. The scientific relevance of this issue lies in explaining how different

categories of influence operate across heterogeneous purchasing settings rather than merely establishing that numerous variables are associated with consumer behavior.

Contemporary research on food purchasing behavior can be organized into several interconnected streams concerning economic evaluation, psychological decision-making, sustainability preferences, social influences, and marketing characteristics. Studies addressing organic and environmentally responsible products emphasize the relationships among consumer attitudes, perceived benefits, behavioral intentions, and purchasing considerations, although their analytical frameworks and product categories differ considerably (Yilmaz, 2023; Bazhan et al., 2024; Sampa et al., 2024). Research using planned-behavior approaches and related conceptual integrations further positions attitudes and motivational processes as explanatory elements in food purchase intentions, while work on green food consumption examines the interaction between consumer values and behavioral dispositions (Cheng et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2024; Gan et al., 2026). A second stream examines product-specific evaluations, including willingness to pay for higher-quality vegetable oils, acceptance of cultured beef, and purchasing decisions involving ready-to-cook foods, highlighting the relevance of product characteristics and perceived utility to consumer choice (Tang et al., 2024; Roy & Khatun, 2024; Cinar & Bozkiran Yilmaz, 2025). Psychological and affective approaches extend this analysis by investigating how cognitive assessments, emotions, and attitudes enter the evaluation of green foods and organic beverages (Lian et al., 2025; Truong & Huong, 2025). These research streams collectively indicate that food purchasing behavior involves both relatively enduring consumer orientations and evaluations arising from particular product encounters. Their theoretical convergence concerns the multidimensional nature of consumer decision-making, whereas their principal differences involve the selection of explanatory variables, research populations, product characteristics, and behavioral outcomes. Consequently, the contemporary literature offers substantial evidence concerning individual determinants but requires careful synthesis before conclusions can be drawn about their relative relevance across heterogeneous food-purchasing situations.

A critical examination of the literature reveals an unresolved problem concerning the comparability and contextual interpretation of determinants identified across different food products and purchasing environments. Research on food consumption has increasingly incorporated packaging design, visual communication, brand trust, and technology-mediated information, thereby broadening the explanatory scope of conventional consumer-behavior frameworks (Sun et al., 2024; Li & Chen, 2025; Wang, L., et al., 2025). Investigations involving artificial intelligence-based food recommendations, cognitive and affective trust in AI-produced food, and social media influencers introduce additional mechanisms through which information exposure and credibility may influence purchasing intentions (Wang, W., et al., 2025; Xia et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2026). These contributions provide differentiated explanations for particular purchasing processes but do not, individually, establish whether the same mechanisms retain comparable significance across conventional food outlets, packaged food products, and digitally mediated purchasing environments. An additional conceptual limitation concerns the distinction between purchasing intentions and actual purchasing decisions, since evidence concerning intended behavior cannot automatically establish the determinants of completed transactions. The distinction is particularly relevant to research examining the relationship between previous purchasing experiences, behavioral dispositions, and subsequent intentions toward green food products (Witek & Kuźniar, 2024). Studies involving particular consumer groups or national settings also require contextual interpretation rather than direct generalization to populations with different consumption habits and economic characteristics (Mohammed, 2024; Suvittawat & Suvittawat, 2024). The research gap addressed by the present study is therefore not the absence of empirical investigations into food purchasing, but the insufficient integration of heterogeneous findings into an analytically coherent classification explaining why particular determinants become relatively prominent under different product and purchasing conditions. Addressing this gap requires a synthesis that distinguishes recurring categories of influence from context-specific findings without interpreting differences across non-equivalent studies as evidence of universal causal relationships.

Failure to distinguish general behavioral determinants from context-dependent influences has implications for both the accumulation of scientific knowledge and the interpretation of evidence used in food marketing decisions. From a theoretical standpoint, treating price, consumer attitudes, social expectations, product attributes, and purchasing circumstances as independently operating

determinants may conceal the relationships through which consumers evaluate competing alternatives. Research examining perceived determinants of sustainable food purchasing demonstrates the relevance of considering behavioral change alongside consumer evaluations, while investigations of purchasing risks show that product assessments involve considerations extending beyond immediate economic utility (Pšurný et al., 2024; Michałowska et al., 2024). Similarly, evidence concerning environmentally conscious food purchasing and the motivational foundations of green food consumption supports the need to differentiate consumer predispositions from the characteristics of individual purchasing situations (Sampa et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2024). Such distinctions have practical consequences because food businesses operate under different combinations of consumer expectations, product differentiation, accessibility constraints, and purchasing opportunities. A marketing strategy emphasizing price reductions may be insufficient when consumers prioritize taste, perceived safety, or product reliability, whereas extensive product differentiation may provide limited advantages when affordability and purchasing convenience dominate consumer considerations. Evidence from fresh-food e-commerce and prepared-food purchasing further illustrates why purchasing channels and transaction-related circumstances require consideration alongside consumer evaluations (Huang et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2024). For researchers, the methodological challenge is to synthesize results obtained from different analytical approaches without treating their reported dominant factors as directly comparable statistical estimates. For practitioners, the corresponding challenge is to identify which categories of influence warrant attention within a particular product segment rather than transferring conclusions indiscriminately from unrelated markets. A structured interpretation of the existing evidence can consequently clarify the explanatory boundaries of consumer-behavior research and support more context-sensitive marketing assessments.

The present study positions itself as a descriptive qualitative literature review that integrates the determinants of food purchasing behavior into six analytical categories: cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational influences. This position differs from studies that concentrate primarily on specific product innovations, sustainability-related purchasing intentions, or particular information technologies, because its central analytical concern is the comparative interpretation of behavioral determinants across food-product settings. Research on green food consumption and organic purchasing provides detailed accounts of attitudes, values, trust, and motivations, but these specialized perspectives do not independently explain the relative prominence of conventional marketing factors or purchasing circumstances in other food categories (Bazhan et al., 2024; Li & Chen, 2025; Lian et al., 2025). Investigations of digitally mediated food purchasing and food-related artificial intelligence similarly extend knowledge of contemporary purchasing mechanisms without necessarily integrating them into a broader classification that includes cultural, personal, and situational considerations (Cuong, 2024; Wang, W., et al., 2025; Xia et al., 2024). The analytical basis of the present review consists of previously reported findings concerning instant noodles, restaurant purchases, steamed layer cakes, and selected food outlets, which provide contrasting settings for examining the prominence of economic, psychological, product-related, and situational factors. Its proposed contribution lies in organizing these heterogeneous findings within a common conceptual structure while explicitly distinguishing the recurrence of factor categories from differences in their reported dominance. This constitutes an integrative and contextual contribution rather than a claim to establish a previously unknown behavioral theory or to identify new causal effects. The framework also provides a basis for interpreting emerging purchasing mechanisms through established behavioral categories without assuming that findings concerning specialized products can be generalized to all food consumers. Its originality is therefore located in the comparative synthesis, classification, and interpretation of existing evidence, with conclusions restricted to the characteristics and methodological limitations of the studies examined.

This study aims to identify, classify, and critically synthesize the factors influencing consumer behavior in the purchase of food products through a descriptive qualitative review of existing research. Specifically, it examines cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational influences and evaluates how these categories are represented across different food products and purchasing environments. The analysis seeks to identify recurring determinants, compare the factors reported as most influential in the reviewed studies, and explain how variations in product characteristics and purchasing circumstances may contribute to differences in their relative prominence. Through thematic synthesis, the study develops an integrated conceptual framework

connecting consumer characteristics, product-related evaluations, and situational considerations with food-purchasing decisions. Its theoretical contribution consists of consolidating otherwise dispersed findings into a structured interpretation of multidimensional consumer behavior while clarifying the limits of generalization across heterogeneous empirical settings. Its methodological contribution is the application of comparative thematic classification to findings generated through different research approaches, without equating their statistical results or attributing causal relationships that the available evidence cannot establish. The practical contribution lies in providing food businesses with an evidence-informed basis for assessing the relevance of pricing, product quality, promotion, consumer preferences, and purchasing conditions when developing marketing strategies. The study does not seek to determine a universally dominant purchasing factor, but to clarify the conditions under which different categories of influence have been reported as comparatively important. This analytical orientation supports more precise interpretation of consumer purchasing behavior and establishes a conceptual foundation for subsequent empirical research examining relationships among the identified determinants within defined food-product categories.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a literature review to identify, classify, and synthesize factors influencing consumer behavior in the purchase of food products. The research relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from published journal articles, academic books, and previous research reports addressing consumer behavior, purchasing decisions, and food-product marketing. The original literature review covered publications from 1991 to 2023, incorporating foundational consumer-behavior theories and empirical investigations conducted across different food-product categories. The core empirical sources comprised studies by Iriani (2010), Mizfar and Sinaga (2015), Timmerman et al. (2017), and Mindari (2020), together with related literature concerning consumer purchasing decisions. Additional comparative evidence was drawn from studies examining instant noodles, fast-food restaurants, steamed layer cakes, and selected food outlets, including Basith and Fadhilah (2018), Feriyadita and Tamami (2021), and Pratita (2023). Documents were considered relevant when they examined determinants of consumer behavior or purchasing decisions, addressed food products or comparable consumer-product categories, and provided identifiable publication information. The units of analysis were the behavioral factors, analytical categories, and empirical findings reported in the selected publications rather than individual consumers or purchasing transactions. Source selection was based on substantive relevance to the research objectives and the availability of identifiable findings concerning purchasing determinants. As the study was conducted through documentary analysis, it did not involve direct participant recruitment, questionnaire administration, experimental intervention, or primary field observation. The available methodological documentation did not specify bibliographic databases, standardized search strings, formal screening counts, or a quality-appraisal instrument; consequently, the research was characterized as a descriptive literature review rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative thematic synthesis involving the identification, classification, comparison, and interpretation of findings extracted from the reviewed literature. The analytical procedure began by identifying factors associated with consumer purchasing behavior in each publication, including consumer characteristics, motivations, product attributes, marketing activities, and circumstances surrounding purchasing decisions. These factors were subsequently organized into six analytical categories: cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational influences. Cultural factors encompassed socially established consumption practices and preferences, while social factors concerned reference groups, family influences, and interpersonal considerations. Personal factors included demographic and economic characteristics, whereas psychological factors addressed motivation, perception, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes. Marketing-mix factors covered product characteristics, pricing, distribution, and promotional activities, while situational factors included purchasing time, location, accessibility, and transaction-related circumstances. The findings were compared across food-product categories to identify recurring determinants, differences in reported influential factors, and the extent to which purchasing circumstances could inform the interpretation of those differences. Particular attention was given to the distinction between factors reported as statistically influential in individual studies and broader

interpretations derived from cross-study comparison. Evidence from different analytical methods was interpreted according to its original research setting rather than treated as directly equivalent or combined into pooled statistical estimates. The synthesis was organized into a comparative summary table describing research settings, analytical approaches, and principal findings, followed by a conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among the six categories of influence and food-purchasing decisions. Analytical rigor was supported by maintaining consistency between the reported findings, their original product settings, and the resulting thematic classifications, while distinguishing documented empirical results from interpretive explanations. No additional statistical estimation, formal inter-rater reliability assessment, or independent empirical validation was reported in the original research procedure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Psychological Factors and Consumer Decision-Making in Food Purchases

Psychological determinants influence food purchasing behavior through the cognitive and affective processes by which consumers interpret product information, assess alternatives, and develop purchasing preferences. The reviewed literature identifies motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes as relevant components of consumer evaluations, although their relative importance differs across product categories and purchasing situations. Research on organic food purchasing indicates that perceived benefits, attitudes, and behavioral intentions are interconnected dimensions of consumer decision-making rather than independent responses to product characteristics (Yilmaz, 2023; Bazhan et al., 2024). This relationship suggests that psychological influences should be examined as mechanisms connecting individual preferences and external marketing stimuli with purchasing decisions, while recognizing that intentions do not necessarily establish actual purchasing behavior.

Consumer motivation represents an important psychological consideration because purchasing decisions may involve several objectives that differ according to individual needs and product characteristics. Consumers selecting convenience foods may prioritize practicality and accessibility, whereas purchasers of organic or environmentally differentiated products may place greater emphasis on perceived health, safety, or sustainability attributes. Research examining the consumption of convenience foods highlights the relevance of marketing and commercial determinants, while investigations of green food purchasing emphasize motivational and attitudinal considerations (Imtiyaz et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2024). These differences indicate that motivation cannot be represented as a homogeneous behavioral determinant because its expression depends on the benefits consumers associate with particular products.

Perception shapes purchasing behavior by influencing how consumers evaluate product characteristics and interpret information that may be incomplete or difficult to verify before consumption. Food quality, safety, nutritional characteristics, and perceived risks frequently involve attributes whose actual performance cannot be established through immediate visual inspection. Research on food safety consciousness identifies its relationship with organic food purchasing intentions, while investigations of perceived risk demonstrate the relevance of uncertainty to consumer evaluations within organic food markets (Pan & Wu, 2024; Michałowska et al., 2024). These findings support the distinction between objectively identifiable product attributes and consumers' subjective interpretations, although the reviewed studies do not establish a common measurement framework for comparing their respective effects.

Attitudes constitute another analytical dimension because consumers may develop relatively favorable or unfavorable evaluations of particular food categories before encountering specific purchasing opportunities. The theory of planned behavior provides a framework for examining attitudes alongside perceived social expectations and behavioral control, but the relative contributions of these components depend on the products and populations investigated. Studies of organic food purchasing and organic beverage consumption incorporate attitudinal processes into explanations of purchase intentions, demonstrating the relevance of evaluating psychological dispositions within defined purchasing circumstances (Cheng et al., 2023; Truong & Huong, 2025). The available literature nevertheless requires a distinction between expressed evaluations and completed purchasing decisions because the former cannot independently establish whether consumers subsequently purchase the products concerned.

Differences in psychological determinants across the reviewed studies can be examined through the comparative evidence presented in Table 2. The table distinguishes the original food-outlet evidence from more recent investigations of consumer cognition, attitudes, and trust, without treating their respective analytical outcomes as statistically equivalent. The identification of psychological factors as dominant in the steamed layer cake study provides a product-specific empirical finding, while contemporary research addresses more differentiated psychological mechanisms associated with particular food categories (Feriyadita & Tamami, 2021; Fu et al., 2024; Lian et al., 2025). These findings provide a basis for assessing the scope of psychological explanations rather than inferring that the same factors dominate purchasing decisions across food markets.

Table 2. Psychological Determinants Identified in Food Purchasing Research

Study	Product or research setting	Psychological dimension examined	Analytical relevance
Feriyadita and Tamami (2021)	Steamed layer cakes, Surabaya	Psychological factors within consumer behavior	Psychological factors were reported as dominant among the four categories examined
Yilmaz (2023)	Organic foods	Consumer behavior and purchasing intentions	Theoretical explanation of determinants of organic food purchasing
Pan and Wu (2024)	Organic food	Food safety consciousness and purchasing intention	Examination of psychological mechanisms linking safety consciousness and intention
Fu et al. (2024)	Prepared dishes, China	Consumer cognition and continued purchasing intention	Analysis of cognition in relation to repeated purchasing intentions
Xia et al. (2024)	AI-produced food	Cognitive trust and affective trust	Examination of trust-related mechanisms in willingness to purchase
Lian et al. (2025)	Green food	Cognitive and affective considerations	Qualitative exploration of psychological processes underlying purchasing intentions
Truong and Huong (2025)	Organic beverages, Vietnam	Consumer attitudes	Examination of the mediating role of attitudes in purchase intentions
Wang, W., et al. (2025)	Functional foods	AI-driven recommendations and consumer decision-making	Examination of technology-mediated information in purchasing decisions

Source: Synthesized from the studies identified in the literature review.

The evidence presented in Table 2 indicates that psychological determinants encompass different explanatory levels, ranging from broad behavioral categories to specific cognitive and affective mechanisms. The steamed layer cake investigation identified psychological considerations as the most influential category within its empirical model, whereas the studies involving organic foods and prepared dishes examined more specialized constructs associated with purchasing intentions. Research on consumer cognition and cognitive–affective evaluations supports treating these processes as analytically distinct rather than interchangeable indicators of psychological influence (Fu et al., 2024; Lian et al., 2025). The methodological variation between regression-based investigations, behavioral models, and qualitative research prevents direct comparison of their effect magnitudes, making thematic interpretation more appropriate than a numerical hierarchy.

Trust-related psychological processes have become particularly relevant where consumers encounter food attributes or production methods that are unfamiliar or difficult to evaluate independently. Products associated with artificial intelligence introduce questions concerning technological reliability, perceived credibility, and confidence in the information supporting

purchasing decisions. Research on willingness to purchase AI-produced food differentiates cognitive and affective trust, while investigations of AI-driven food recommendations examine the relationship between technological information and consumer decision-making (Xia et al., 2024; Wang, W., et al., 2025). These studies extend the psychological explanation of food purchasing beyond conventional product familiarity, although their specialized technological settings limit the extent to which their findings can be generalized to traditional food products.

Learning and prior purchasing experiences provide another basis for interpreting how psychological evaluations may develop over successive consumption occasions. Previous encounters with a product can contribute to expectations concerning quality, convenience, and satisfaction, potentially influencing subsequent evaluations when consumers face similar purchasing alternatives. Research examining the relationship between past behavior and green food purchasing intentions draws attention to the distinction between established behavioral patterns and intentions concerning future transactions (Witek & Kuźniar, 2024). The original literature review, however, did not contain longitudinal purchasing records capable of determining how these psychological relationships changed over time, restricting the present interpretation to associations and mechanisms described in the reviewed research.

Psychological determinants also interact conceptually with product characteristics, perceived economic value, and information communicated through commercial channels. Consumers may evaluate a product favorably but remain unwilling to purchase it when the expected benefits do not correspond to its price, availability, or anticipated consumption experience. Research on multidimensional perceived value in prepared-food purchasing and willingness to pay for high-quality vegetable oils illustrates the relevance of examining subjective evaluations alongside product-specific purchasing considerations (Zheng et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2024). Such findings caution against interpreting motivation or favorable attitudes as sufficient explanations of purchasing decisions without considering the conditions under which consumers can translate their preferences into transactions.

The thematic synthesis positions psychological factors as intermediary explanatory considerations connecting consumer characteristics, perceived product attributes, and purchasing intentions, while recognizing that these relationships were not independently tested within the present review. Motivation, perception, attitudes, learning, and trust provide distinguishable analytical categories through which consumers evaluate food products, but their relevance depends on the product characteristics and behavioral outcomes investigated. Evidence from organic food, prepared dishes, AI-related products, and conventional food outlets demonstrates the breadth of psychological influences without establishing a universally dominant mechanism (Pan & Wu, 2024; Lian et al., 2025; Wang, W., et al., 2025). The resulting interpretation supports incorporating psychological determinants into a multidimensional conceptual framework while preserving the distinction between findings directly reported by individual studies and relationships proposed through cross-study synthesis.

Marketing-Mix and Situational Determinants of Food Purchasing Decisions

Marketing-mix and situational determinants influence food purchasing decisions through the interaction between product offerings, commercial stimuli, and the circumstances under which consumers evaluate available alternatives. Product quality, price, distribution, and promotion represent factors that businesses can manage, whereas purchasing time, accessibility, and transaction conditions introduce contextual influences that may modify consumer responses to these factors. Research on convenience foods identifies the relevance of marketing and commercial determinants to purchasing intentions, while investigations of ready-to-cook products extend this perspective to purchasing decisions involving prepared food alternatives (Imtiyaz et al., 2022; Roy & Khatun, 2024). The reviewed evidence suggests that marketing effectiveness cannot be adequately assessed through product characteristics alone because the relevance of individual marketing variables depends on consumer expectations, product categories, and the conditions surrounding purchasing activities.

Price remains a central economic consideration because consumers evaluate food products within the constraints of available purchasing resources and perceived product benefits. The original empirical evidence on instant noodle purchasing in Malang identified price as the dominant factor, with a reported influence of 12.15%, while education and income were also statistically significant

determinants of purchasing decisions (Iriani, 2010). More recent research examining consumer preferences and willingness to pay for high-quality vegetable oils provides a complementary analytical perspective by addressing the relationship between product attributes and consumers' monetary evaluations (Tang et al., 2024). These findings suggest that price sensitivity should not be interpreted exclusively as a preference for lower expenditure, since consumer evaluations may also depend on whether the expected product benefits justify the associated costs.

Product-related characteristics represent another determinant because food purchasing decisions involve assessments of taste, quality, convenience, appearance, and suitability for intended consumption. The original review identified product attributes as the most decisive factor in a selected food outlet in Malang, contrasting with the prominence of price in instant noodle purchasing and psychological considerations in steamed layer cake consumption (Pratita, 2023; Feriyadita & Tamami, 2021). Research on food packaging further demonstrates that visual presentation constitutes a relevant component of product evaluation, particularly when packaging characteristics influence expectations before direct product experience (Sun et al., 2024). These differences indicate that product characteristics may become particularly relevant when consumers evaluate differentiated food offerings, although the available findings do not establish that product quality consistently outweighs price or other purchasing determinants.

Promotional communication influences purchasing decisions by shaping product awareness, communicating expected benefits, and providing information through which consumers evaluate competing alternatives. Contemporary food marketing includes conventional promotional activities and digitally mediated communication, creating opportunities for product information to reach consumers through interactive platforms and visual narratives. Research investigating graphic storytelling in food marketing examines narrative transportation and purchasing intentions, while studies addressing virtual influencers consider consumer engagement as a mechanism associated with organic food purchase intentions (Wang, L., et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2026). These contributions suggest that promotional effectiveness may depend on the credibility, presentation, and perceived relevance of information rather than exposure to promotional messages alone.

Distribution and accessibility connect consumer preferences with the practical opportunity to purchase food products, particularly when transactions are influenced by convenience and time constraints. The empirical investigation of fast-food purchasing at McDonald's in Jatiasih identified purchasing time as the strongest factor among the dimensions extracted through factor analysis, indicating the relevance of situational conditions within that research setting (Basith & Fadhilah, 2018). Research on food delivery applications and fresh-food e-commerce similarly addresses consumer behavior within distribution environments where digital interfaces mediate access to products and purchasing opportunities (Cuong, 2024; Huang et al., 2025). The comparison presented in Table 3 organizes the marketing-mix and situational dimensions identified in the reviewed literature while distinguishing documented empirical findings from broader analytical interpretations.

Table 3. Synthesis of Marketing-Mix and Situational Determinants in Food Purchasing Research

Determinant	Study and research setting	Reported evidence or analytical focus	Relevance to purchasing decisions
Price	Iriani (2010), instant noodles, Malang	Price was identified as the dominant factor, with a reported influence of 12.15%	Economic evaluation and purchasing affordability
Product attributes	Pratita (2023), selected food outlet, Malang	Product-related factors were identified as the most decisive	Product characteristics and consumer evaluations
Product quality and willingness to pay	Tang et al. (2024), vegetable oils, China	Consumer preferences and willingness to pay for high-quality products	Perceived benefits and monetary valuation
Packaging presentation	Sun et al. (2024), pizza packaging	Visual density, sensory expectations, and	Visual information and anticipated product

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		purchasing intentions	experience
Promotional communication	Wang, L., et al. (2025), food marketing	Graphic storytelling, narrative transportation, and purchase intention	Communication characteristics and consumer engagement
Brand trust	Li and Chen (2025), green food	Corporate ESG practices, brand trust, and purchase intention	Product credibility and brand-related evaluation
Distribution channels	Huang et al. (2025), fresh-food e-commerce	Determinants of continuous purchase intention on digital platforms	Digital accessibility and continued purchasing
Purchasing time	Basith and Fadhilah (2018), fast-food restaurant, Bekasi	Purchasing time was identified as the strongest factor	Temporal characteristics of purchasing situations
Purchasing circumstances	Zheng et al. (2024), prepared dishes, China	Perceived value, behavioral attitudes, and time pressure	Context-dependent evaluation of purchasing alternatives
Product information and traceability	Su et al. (2026), agricultural products	Product traceability, consumer cognition, and purchase intention	Information availability and product confidence

Source: Synthesized from the reviewed empirical and conceptual literature.

Table 3 demonstrates that marketing-mix determinants encompass more than conventional commercial instruments because consumers also evaluate information credibility, packaging presentation, and product-related expectations. Price and product characteristics were prominent in different studies from the original review, whereas contemporary investigations examine additional purchasing dimensions associated with branding, sustainability, and digital communication. Research concerning corporate environmental, social, and governance practices addresses brand trust in relation to green food purchase intentions, while work on agricultural product traceability examines consumer cognition and product-related information (Li & Chen, 2025; Su et al., 2026). These findings support the interpretation that marketing-related factors can influence decisions through perceived product value and information-based evaluations, although their relative importance cannot be established through direct statistical comparison across the studies.

Situational determinants warrant separate analytical consideration because they refer to purchasing circumstances rather than relatively stable consumer preferences or permanent product characteristics. The prominence of purchasing time in the fast-food study indicates that the conditions surrounding a transaction may influence which purchasing considerations receive attention, but this finding cannot establish that time is equally influential in other commercial settings. Research on prepared dishes examines time pressure alongside perceived value and behavioral attitudes, providing a more differentiated basis for considering how situational constraints enter purchasing processes (Zheng et al., 2024). The available evidence consequently supports interpreting purchasing time and time pressure as related but distinct constructs, since their operational definitions and analytical roles differ across investigations.

Digital purchasing environments introduce additional complexity because distribution, promotion, product information, and transaction convenience may operate through the same commercial interface. Food delivery applications provide a setting in which consumers encounter product alternatives and transaction arrangements simultaneously, while fresh-food e-commerce platforms involve considerations relevant to continued purchasing intentions (Cuong, 2024; Huang et al., 2025). Artificial intelligence-driven recommendations represent another information-related development whose significance for functional food purchasing has been examined through consumer decision-making research (Wang, W., et al., 2025). These investigations indicate that digital channels may combine several marketing and situational influences, making it analytically inappropriate to attribute purchasing intentions exclusively to a single platform characteristic without evidence separating the mechanisms involved.

The relationship between perceived product value and marketing characteristics also raises questions concerning the conditions under which consumers accept unfamiliar or differentiated food

products. Research on willingness to pay for cultured beef examines consumer responses to an alternative food product, while studies of upcycled food purchasing integrate value-related and behavioral perspectives to investigate purchase intentions (Cinar & Bozkiran Yilmaz, 2025; Gan et al., 2026). Such investigations differ from conventional food-outlet studies because the evaluated products involve distinct attributes and consumer expectations that may influence the relevance of price, information, and perceived benefits. Their contribution to the present synthesis lies in illustrating how the conceptual categories of marketing and psychological influences can be applied to emerging food products without assuming that their empirical relationships are identical to those observed in established product markets.

The integrated evidence indicates that marketing-mix and situational determinants should be interpreted as interdependent components of food purchasing behavior rather than competing explanations with universally fixed levels of importance. Price, product characteristics, distribution, and promotion influence the alternatives available to consumers and the information through which those alternatives are evaluated, while situational conditions affect the circumstances in which purchasing decisions occur. The contrast between price-dominant instant noodle purchasing, product-oriented food-outlet decisions, and time-sensitive fast-food transactions illustrates why reported dominant factors must be interpreted in relation to their empirical settings (Iriani, 2010; Pratita, 2023; Basith & Fadhilah, 2018). The resulting conceptual framework integrates cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational determinants as six analytically distinct categories contributing to food purchasing decisions, while recognizing that the available literature does not establish a universal causal ordering or standardized effect magnitude among them.

CONCLUSION

This study identified six interrelated categories of factors influencing consumer behavior in the purchase of food products: cultural, social, personal, psychological, marketing-mix, and situational determinants. The qualitative literature synthesis indicated that these factors operate through different mechanisms and vary in their reported prominence across product categories and purchasing environments. Cultural and social influences shape consumption preferences and interpersonal expectations, while personal characteristics affect purchasing needs and economic considerations. Psychological factors, including motivation, perception, attitudes, and beliefs, influence how consumers evaluate products and develop purchasing intentions. Marketing-mix determinants concern price, product attributes, distribution, and promotion, whereas situational factors reflect purchasing time, accessibility, and transaction circumstances. The comparative findings demonstrated that price was dominant in the instant noodle study, psychological factors in steamed layer cake purchasing, product attributes in a selected food outlet, and purchasing time in the fast-food restaurant setting. These differences indicate that no single determinant can be established as universally dominant across food-product categories based on the available evidence.

The study contributes to consumer-behavior literature by integrating findings from heterogeneous food-purchasing studies into a six-category conceptual framework and distinguishing recurring behavioral determinants from their context-specific prominence. Its principal contribution is analytical rather than causal, as differences in research designs, consumer populations, product characteristics, and measurement approaches prevent direct statistical comparison of the reported effects. The findings suggest that food businesses should align pricing, product development, promotional communication, and distribution strategies with consumer characteristics and purchasing circumstances rather than rely on a uniform marketing approach. Price-sensitive product categories may require greater attention to affordability, whereas differentiated food offerings may warrant stronger emphasis on product attributes, perceived value, and consumer confidence. Purchasing convenience and transaction timing also deserve consideration when evaluating food-service and digitally mediated purchasing environments. The study remains limited by its reliance on secondary evidence, the heterogeneity of the reviewed publications, and the absence of independent empirical testing of the proposed relationships. Future research should examine the integrated framework within clearly defined food-product categories using consistent operational measures to determine the relative contributions and possible interactions of the identified determinants.

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