



Prediction of organic products purchase decision by Generation Z consumers- An Empirical Perspective

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ABSTRACT. Sustainability is an emerging concept getting eminent among Generation Z people who are growing their concern towards the environment. There are numerous reasons to adopt organic products. They can be health concerns, environmental concerns, and so on. Also purchasing organic products is seen as a status symbol, and impacts people in a positive way. Most of young consumers having little aware of organic items and want to try something new. Their source of knowledge regarding organic products mostly depends on social media. So, these are the main reasons to switch their lifestyle towards an eco-friendly manner. This study is having the main goal to predict the factors which influence organic product purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers. This paper has taken Attitude, Perceived Environmental Knowledge, and Subjective Norms as the main predictors. Results show subjective norms is the major predictor of organic product purchase decision. Apart from this, the influence of attitude and perceived environmental knowledge is also established. Gen Z consumers buying pattern relies on reference groups.

KEYWORDS: Sustainability, Health Concern, Status Symbol, Attitude, Perceived Environmental Knowledge, Generation Z consumers.

1 INTRODUCTION

The world has been dealing with numerous problems for the last few decades, including global warming, deforestation, earthquakes, and other natural catastrophes. People worry about their health as pollution and toxins in natural sources increase. People want solutions that will keep them and the world safe. So, they made the decision to live as their ancestors did. The only way to safeguard the environment and the next generation is to use traditional methods. Due to environmental concerns, the number of customers who buy green products has increased [43]. The market for

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sustainable goods has grown significantly [18]. One of the key components of environmental sustainability is green shopping (Kong et al., 2014, 2010). Consumers are increasingly choosing ecological foods in recent years [39]. Eco-awareness and environmental issues are growing quickly in our nation, and this is the new formula for global companies to get success. Studies in the Asian setting are scarce [26, 43]. The majority of developing nations are still in the early phases of studying green consumption behavior [41]. Studies and research on green marketing are limited in India [33]. Young people in India are concerned about environmental problems and take them into consideration when making purchases [42].

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Generation Z

Post-millennials, or those born after 1995, make up Generation Z. They outperform their predecessors in terms of sustainability and knowledge. People with comparable behaviors share the same birth year [38]. People born between 1996 and 2010 are considered to be members of Generation Z. According to Su et al. [38], Generation Z members are well-educated, tech-savvy, and civic-minded, and have a stronger sense of societal responsibility. These individuals have knowledge, strong brands, strong preferences, and are also conscious of social media. Parents of Generation Z customers are well-educated. They do not have the authority to make purchasing choices. Price, quality, and ease motivate them to make purchases [7]. About 27% of the population, according to a Business Insider 2020 survey, fell into the Gen Z category. These consumers are more socially and economically active in society. Compared to earlier groups and cultures, they are ethnically diverse. They are more accepting of others and more at ease using technology [43]. These individuals are frequently described as members of the "Multitasking generation," the "Versatile generation," and the "Digital Era" [16]. They took into account the health benefits connected to the foods they chose [38].

2.2 Perceived environmental knowledge

It refers to those who have opinions, viewpoints, and knowledge about air, water, and pollution. Perceived environmental knowledge has a significant impact on their choice to make environmentally friendly purchases. Greater environmental awareness and concern among consumers will result in more environmentally friendly behavior [2]. When it comes to indicating environmental education and a desire to make green purchases, economic status, and parental education stay constant. The main obstacles to buying intention are limited availability and high selling costs. The segmentation of Gen Z customers and their environmental awareness are the key areas where marketing needed to focus. Buying organic food is primarily motivated by environmental concerns.

H₁= Perceived Environmental Knowledge influences the purchase decision of Gen Z customers

2.3 Attitude

The definition of attitude is “the customer's cognitive assessment of sustainable purchase behavior, including consumer attitude towards green and fair purchasing. It is believed that attitudes have an impact on both intention and behavior” (Ajzen, 1985). The main variable in predicting human behavior is attitude. TPB is a tool that is frequently used to gauge customer behavior, especially when it comes to young people. TPB affects young consumers' behavior in part. They approach their purchase choice with optimism. Positively behaving individuals are eager to continue their natural buying habits. Irene. Most research on green buying intentions looks at the purchasing attitude [42]. Positive attitudes have an impact on young consumers' intention to buy. Additionally, it affects how young consumers feel about environmental issues. A positive mentality influences people's purchasing choice [33]. The green attitude was identified as the key and advantageous variable in earlier research [41]. The Gen Z generation views and acts favorably toward organic products. It has a major impact on the intention to consume organic foods [35].

H₂= Attitude influences the purchase decision of Gen Z customers

2.4 Subjective norms

The primary influencers of a person's purchasing choices are their family, friends, coworkers, and peer groups [[37]. In the Indian setting, subjective norms are crucial for determining attitudes and purchasing intentions [33]. Behaviors are influenced by the views of influential elements [1]. In India, customers' shopping preferences are significantly influenced by subjective norms. Adolescent purchasing behavior is significantly influenced by society [26]. Consumers take their own satisfaction into account as well as their societal standing [8]. Studies from an Asian viewpoint are still scarce [2]. Customers' purchase intentions are influenced by reference groups because they trust their views [19, 37]. Young consumers' choices to purchase organic foods are predicted by subjective norms. Social factors are more significant than other aspects like attitude and behavioral control [[30]. Generation Z's purchasing decisions are primarily influenced by subjective standards [28].

H₃= Subjective Norms influence the purchase decision of Gen Z customers

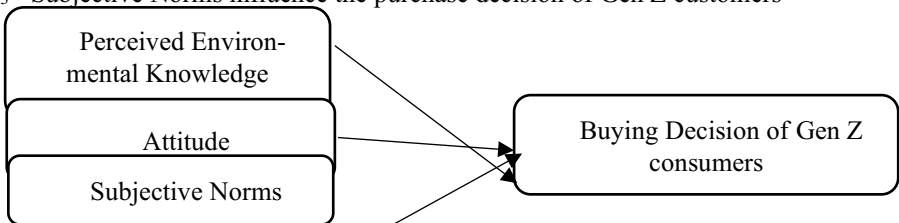


Fig 1: Theoretical framework Adopted from TPB(Ajzen,1991)

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- To identify the influencing predictors of organic products.
- To understand the impact of Gen Z customers on organic food purchase decisions.

3.2 Questionnaire

For this study structured questionnaire and the scale is adopted from previous studies. Three items of Perceived Environmental Knowledge were taken from (Thoria Omer Mahmoud (2017)). The variable Attitude has three items and it was adopted from (Valle et al, 2005) and (Anbukarasi and Dheivanai (2017); Lavuri et al., 2020). Three items for Subjective Norms from the studies (Demirtas, 2019, Lavuri & Susandy,2020). Purchase decision has three items that were adopted by various studies (Maichum, Parichatnon, et al, 2016, Lavuri et al, 2020). All the items have a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree,5=Strongly Agree).

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Convenience sampling in non-probability was used in this research. Google Forms was used to create and disseminate the survey. Answers were gathered from a variety of individuals ranging in age from 11 to 27. 95 responses were collected in total. There were more male respondents (58.9%) than female respondents. The majority of the replies (86.3%) were from people between the ages of 21 and 27. Employees (41.1%) and Dependents (Students, Homemakers, Unemployed) (36.8%) are the two most prevalent occupations. Social media is a major source of organic food knowledge for many individuals (27.4%). Only 21 percent of people earnings in between Rs.30,001 and 50,000 monthly.

4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1: Frequency Analysis

	No of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Female	39	41.1
Male	56	58.9

Age		
16-20	13	13.7
21-27	82	86.3
Household Strength		
1-3	17	17.9
3-4	50	52.6
5 and above	28	29.5
Family Income (Monthly)		
Less than 10,000	15	15.8
10,001 to 30,000	19	20.0
30,001 to 50,000	20	21.1
50,001 to 70,000	10	10.5
70,001 to 90,000	13	13.7
Above 90,000	18	18.9
Profession		
Employee	39	41.1
Professional	6	6.3
Self-Employed	3	3.2
Business	12	12.6
Dependent (Homemaker, Student, Un-employed)	35	36.8
Source of Knowledge		
Mass Media	24	25.3
The comments from friends, colleagues, neighbors	22	23.2
Usage by family members	23	24.2
Social network group	26	27.4

4.2 Structural and Measurement Model

This theoretical model was tested by using the statistical software Smart PLS 4.0. They used latent variable four with purchase decision as the outcome variable. It has twelve indicators and each of the variables has three items. Both the formative and reflective model measurements had been determined. For a reflective model of measurement, the following tests are used (Factor loadings, Internal consistency, and reliability, Convergent Validity, and discriminant validity. Discriminant validity includes the Fornell-Larcker test and HTMT test). In formative measurement model, it has Outer weight Convergent validity, and Multicollinearity. This research begins with testing of Model fit by determining SRMR, Coefficient of Determination (R^2 Value).

Structural Model

(ATT-Attitude, PEK-Perceived Environmental Knowledge, SNS-Subjective Norms, PDN-Purchase Decision)

Table 2: Path Coefficients

	Original Sample	Sample Mean(M)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T Value	P Value	Significance
ATT->PDN	0.287	0.283	0.106	2.718	0.007	Yes
PEK->PDN	0.264	0.276	0.096	2.747	0.006	Yes
SNS->PDN	0.297	0.302	0.099	3.013	0.003	Yes

To assess the path coefficients the T statistics value must be higher than 1.96. (Significance level = 5%) (Joseph F Hair, Jr et al). P value must be lesser than 0.05. All mentioned constructs have a p-value which is <0.05(Hair et al, 2010). Construct SNS has a strong influence on PDN

Table 3: Structural Model Fit Estimation

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	T Value	Result
SRMR (Estimated and Saturated Model)	0.072	0.055	----- ---	Supported
Value of R ²	0.481	0.513	5.309	Supported

SRMR is the best fit measure for the structural model. The obtained value (0.072) must be lesser than 0.08 (Dijkstra; Henseler et al., 2014). And 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are the target for latent variables that must be considered as weak, medium, and substantial. In this R2 value is 0.481 and it is significant only the values are higher than 0.20 (; Henseler et al., 2009 Hair et al., 2011) So, it has a moderate variance.

4.3 Reflective Measurement Model

Table 4: Reflective Measurement Model

Items	Outer loadings	T Value	P Value	Result
Attitude				
ATT1	0.849	26.417	0.000	Supported
ATT2	0.808	18.160	0.000	
ATT3	0.797	16.903	0.000	
Perceived Environmental Knowledge				
PEK1	0.894	32.641	0.000	Supported
PEK2	0.863	20.472	0.000	
PEK3	0.895	31.575	0.000	

Subjective Norms				
SNS1	0.904	39.400	0.000	Supported
SNS2	0.924	52.861	0.000	
SNS3	0.914	42.611	0.000	
Purchase Decision				
PDN1	0.865	29.728	0.000	Supported
PDN2	0.842	24.023	0.000	
PDN3	0.796	15.283	0.000	

Standard loadings for the constructs should be above 0. 708. Items having loadings below 0.40 can be considered as weaker and they must be removed (Philipps, 1991; Hair et al., 2011, Bagozzi, Yi). In the above model loadings, stronger loading is (SNS) 0.924,0.904,0.914

Table 5: Internal Consistency, Reliability, and Validity

Constructs and Items	Reliability	
	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability
Attitude	0.754	0.858
Perceived Environmental Knowledge	0.861	0.915
Subjective Norms	0.902	0.938
Purchase Decision	0.782	0.873

Table 5.1 Fornell-Larker criterion

	ATT	PDN	PEK	SNS
ATT	0.818			
PDN	0.553	0.835		
PEK	0.389	0.574	0.884	
SNS	0.55	0.632	0.669	0.914

Table 5.2: Hetero trait and Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	ATT	PDN	PEK	SNS
ATT				
PDN	0.714			
PEK	0.479	0.700		
SNS	0.66	0.748	0.758	

Table 5.3: AVE (Average Extracted Value)

ATT	0.669
PEK	0.782
SNS	0.836
PDN	0.697

Values of Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (Intercorrelation of observed indicators) 0.70 to 0.90 is satisfactory. SNS is having a higher internal consistency (0.902,0.938). So, table 5.2.4 have values that are greater than 0.70. This shows that indicators are highly correlated with constructs. Fornell-Larker criterion suggests that the values of each item must be higher than the square root of AVE or the values should be greater than the rest of the items in rows and columns. HTMT values should be higher than 0.85. Average Extracted Values can be above 0.65. The higher AVE value is SNS (0.836) (Henseler et al. (2015)). So, this study strongly supports reliability and validity.

4.4 Formative Measurement Model

The formative model means the Latent variables are the influencers of the outcome variable. It cannot be interchangeable and the correlation between the variables need not be higher.

Table 6: Formative Measurement Model

Items	Outer weights	T Value	Multicollinearity
Attitude			
ATT1	0.849	26.445	1.660
ATT2	0.808	18.148	1.643
ATT3	0.797	16.882	1.369
Perceived Environmental Knowledge			
PEK1	0.894	32.645	2.319
PEK2	0.863	20.492	1.995
PEK3	0.895	31.557	2.319
Subjective Norms			
SNS1	0.904	39.413	2.520
SNS2	0.924	52.844	3.061
SNS3	0.914	42.626	3.152
Purchase Decision			
PDN1	0.865	30.064	1.883
PDN2	0.842	24.357	1.746
PDN3	0.796	14.959	1.448

For the formative model, outer weights values should be no more than 0.50. It is the contribution of the latent to form the constructs. The collinearity of indicators should not have more than the threshold value of 5(Hair et al). The maximum value in the obtained result is SNS (3.152). So, this path model satisfies all the conditions of smart PLS.

5 RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypotheses for the four variables PEK, ATT, SNS, and PDN are measured using Smart PLS 4.0. Values received for SNS are highly influential. (P Value 0.003) which is significant. Hence the Hypothesis (H1) is accepted. So, the influence of Subjective Norms on the purchase decisions of Gen Z customers is high. Generation Z consumers' purchase decision strongly relies on their reference groups. Gen Z consumers are mostly dependent as they are younger. So, the opinion of friends, Family members plays a vital role in their purchasing behavior. Perceived Environmental Knowledge ((P Value-0.006) and Attitude (P Value-0.007) Hypothesis for (H2, H3) is supported). This shows attitude and PEK influences their purchase decisions. These customers want to live as an up-to-date generation. Gen Z customers are also aware of environmental issues. It clearly reveals that the involvement of reference groups (Family, Friends) strongly influences their purchase decision. Gen Z people respect their opinions.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

This study reveals the influencing factors which affect Generation Z customers' perception of organic products. Most of the respondents have a positive perception that organic products are better than conventional products because they are safer and healthier and fresh (Jianming Wang et al., 2020). But all of their intentions will not lead to a purchase. In a developing country like India, there are many factors that need to be considered. People are price sensitive. It is one of the key considerations to perform their behavior. In this study, Subjective norms act as the main driver for purchase decisions. It also has limitations too. The sample is too small and a non-probability sampling method is adopted. Future research can take a larger sample and explore the barriers that Gen Z consumers face while purchasing. They also take government contributions and company measures to promote organic products among Indian consumers. Demographic profiles (Income, Occupation, Age, Educational Qualification) can be taken as mediators and moderators and it will give huge results. In recent days social media is a strong source of promotion. So, the impact of social media and technology on buying behavior will be a better topic for researchers.

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