

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE NORMS ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF ORGANIC FOOD: A STUDY WITH CHENNAI CONSUMERS

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### ABSTRACT

The term subjective norms mean the belief of a person that his/her fellow-mate or group would approve as well as support a specific behavior. The subjective norm is determined through the social pressure as perceived by a person from the other individuals, for behaving in a specific way as well as their motivation for complying with the views of such individuals. Such subjective norms is said to affect the purchase intention of the individuals. The belief that the product purchased by an important group is worthy influences the person concerned to buy that product. In this context, the current study explores the way in which the subjective norms affect the purchase intention of the individuals regarding the organic food products. the study has been performed among the consumers in Chennai. The respondents from whom the information has to be collected for the study are selected through simple random sampling and the sample size is 10. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire and the tool used for analysis of such data is regression. The findings of the study exhibit that there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and purchase intention..

**KEYWORDS:** Subjective Norms, Purchase Intention

## INTRODUCTION

The practice of organic farming has got the tendency to reduce the emission of greenhouse gas through the improvement of carbon sequestration and decreasing the loss of nitrogen in soil by way of energy cycle, tightening the nutrient in soil, agro-forestry, crop rotation and adding organic manure for production (Kotschiand Muller-Samann 2004). The organic farming system reduces the usage of chemical fertilizers. Our nation is regarded to be the land of farmers, but most of them are still poor and small in number. In order to get a higher yield, most of the farmers depend on chemical inputs and hybrid seeds which are expensive. These factors put them in heavy debt and as such it leads to illness and death of many farmers in India each year (Prabu, 2010; Rao et al., 2005). However, the greater level usage of naturally available manure and the reduction in the usage of chemical inputs decrease the operational expenses, as far as organic farming is concerned. Hence, according to Adhavani (2009) and Kilcher (2007), the practice of organic farming turns out to be an efficient and economical alternative to the conventional practices of farming.

### Subjective Norms

The process of purchasing is considered to be a collective decision-making procedure which depends upon the beliefs and choice of individuals. The subjective norms of a person is said to have an effect over the intention and the attitude of that person which ultimately makes them different in the process of buying. According to Lea and Worsley (2005), these subjective norms are the social pressures on consumer's buying decisions. As far as subjective norms are concerned, friends and family's pressure play a significant role. Several authors had identified

that a significant referral has got the ability to make a difference in the purchase pattern of a person. Therefore, it can be rightly said that the subjective norms have got the tendency to affect the purchase intention of consumers in an optimistic way.

In the words of Ajzen (1991), subjective norms refer to the normative beliefs that are motivated not through behavior, but the pressure for accepting that behavior. As far as the organic food products are concerned, it has been noted that if a person buys the similar product as that of his/her friends or relatives, he/she gets the appreciation. Such a motivation through appreciation establishes the normative belief and also strengthens the purchase intention. Several studies had examined and concluded that the subjective norms have got the ability to build the purchase intention of the consumers (Canavari 2003). The purchase intention of the consumers can be predicted through their subjective norms since the individuals have belief on the other people's opinion regarding their purchase.

Consumption of healthy foods is regarded to be a supportive pressure from the society, which ultimately leads to a lifestyle which is healthy. It has also been identified that the individuals sometimes get the help form others in terms of time and money to get into a better health practice. In recent times, safe and good food has turned out to be a basic necessity for human life, due to the inclusion of heavy amount of chemicals in food production. If an individual is willing to spend more to get good health, then he/she can be encouraged to purchase organic products.

### **Organic Food Purchase**

In the current modern era, it has been noticed that the individuals are affected by the purchase pattern of other people. The purchase of organic food products is also not an exception

in this regard. According to Anderson and Lund (2014), the purchase decision or the purchase intention towards the organic food gets affected by the purchase of organic food products by his/her friends, relatives or neighbors. The intention of the individuals is affected by the purchase trends of other individuals. The major reason for this is the social status of the person. If an individual purchases conventional product in front of those buying organic foods, he/she feels inferior than the others. The purchase decision of a person also changes due to the publicity through word of mouth (Chen and Lobo, 2012). The words of praise and appreciation received from others makes the individual to change the purchase decision. The preference towards the organic food products changes when a person is aware of its health benefits and the standards of safety. However, the major concern for the observance of changes in the consumer's purchase behavior is health. The concept of health alters the consumer's purchase pattern. Though the organic products are priced very high, the individuals exhibit a strong level of interest towards it because of the health benefits (Klintman, 2002; Bourn and Prescott, 2002).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The organic food sector in India has been observed to experience increased level of growth. The sector is supported by the government through the initiatives for capacity building. But, the organic food industry of India is mainly focusing on the export of products than the domestic market. This explains that the purchasing of organic food products in India is limited to a small level. this can be observed by the reduced usage of organic products in India when compared with the other nations.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

The food products of organic nature are demanded by many Indian people in recent times. The review of previous studies shows that the market for organic products is in its initial stage. Only very few studies have been done to understand the behavior of consumers towards the organic products. several questions need to be answered in this regard like the dimensions of subjective norms, perception and attitude which affects the purchase intention of the consumers towards the organic food products.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose with which this study has been done is to identify the influence of the subjective norms on the purchase intention of the individuals towards the organic food purchase.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

HeppySetiawati et al., (2018) had performed a study to explore the factors which enhanced the purchase intention towards the organic food products. The authors had also explored the implication of such effect in the framing of marketing strategy for organic foods. The authors had adopted the TPB. The study made use of six variables and the variables included environmental awareness, health awareness, subjective norms, attitude for the organic products, purchase intention towards the organic foods and perceptions regarding behavioral control. The sample size of the study was 140. The analysis of the data was done with the help of structural SEM technique. The findings showed that all the independent variables of the study affected the purchase intention of the consumers towards the organic food products. Also, environmental awareness and health awareness did not significantly affect the purchase intention.

Naveed Ahmed et al., (2020) had done a research for proposing a model of TPB. The study examined the Chinese students regarding their purchase intention towards the organic food

products. the sample size of the study was 515 and the analysis was done with the help of SEM. The results showed that subjective norms, attitude and the PBC affected the purchase intention of the consumers towards the organic food products in a positive manner. Further, the attitude was explored to have an optimistic impact over the environmental concern. Also, the environmental concern also optimistically affected the purchase intention of the young Chinese people towards the organic food products.

PrayogaRizkyFadilla et al., (2018) analyzed the impact of the PBC over the purchase decision made by the consumers through the intention to purchase. The sample size of the study was 140. The analysis of the study was done through SEM-PLS. the findings showed that behavioral control, subjective norms and attitudes influenced the intention. All the independent variables mentioned here also affected the purchase decision of the consumers. Ultimately the intention of the consumers affected the purchase decision.

Nurul AqilaHasbullaha et al., (2015) had performed a study to explore the factors which affected the purchase intention of the young consumers in the context of online shopping. The study was conducted in the Malaysian Public University. The factors which were analyzed through the study were website usability, subjective norms and attitude. The current research study tried to identify whether the consumers give preference for online retailer towards subjective norms, attitude and website. The respondents were selected through simple random sampling and questionnaires were used to collect the data needed for the study. the sample size of the study was 300. The analysis of the data was done with the help of descriptive analysis, demographic profile, regression, correlation and reliability analysis. The findings showed that the young consumers were affected by the website usability, subjective norms and attitude.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study presented here aims to explore the influence of the subjective norms over the purchase intention of the consumers. The study has been done among the organic consumers in Chennai and the respondents are selected through simple random sampling. The sample size of the study is 100 and the method used for data collection is through a questionnaire. The collected data has been put into Multiple Regression for analysis.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
0.956(a)	0.915	0.911	254.486	.000(a)

a Predictors: (Constant), Social Value

	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	.271	.128		2.118	.037
The trend of buying organic food among people around me is increasing	.260	.032	.362	8.168	.000
People around me generally believe that it is better for health to use organic food	.212	.041	.204	5.160	.000
My close friends and family members would appreciate if I buy organic food	.180	.043	.181	4.155	.000
I would get all the required support (money, time, information related) from friends and family	.270	.030	.390	8.980	.000

### Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

The above table shows that positive coefficient, which means that all statements of subjective norms were influence on the purchase intention of Chennai consumers. The analysis done through regression exhibits that, all factors was highly influence over the Purchase intention. The coefficient value, R square, was found to be 0.915 through multiple regressions, which shows that 91.5% of the independent variables had an influence on the purchase intention of Chennai. The F value so got was 254.486 which means  $p < 0.000$ . The findings of the research are thus: there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and purchase intention.

### CONCLUSION

The subjective norms refer to the belief of a person that other people or his/her fellow beings will approve him/her if that person follows the purchase pattern as other do. Such individuals gets influenced by the word of mouth one by others for the purchase of organic products. The findings of the research are thus: there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and purchase intention.

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