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Predicting Generation Z's Purchase Intention towards Organic Food

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Abstract

The study was conducted by collecting data through online questionnaires with the consumers who were aware of the features of organic foods. CFA, EFA and SEM were applied to analyze the data and obtain the possible result. The impact of Knowledge of organic food, the eco-labels on these foods informing the consumers that these foods are organic, the advertisements of organic foods, and the availability of organic foods through online and offline stores on consumers' purchase intention was checked through the study. Also, organic food is a health-conscious choice, and the price is one of the barriers; how it impacts consumers' purchase intention is tested through the current study. This is the first time several factors related to organic food consumption have been tested considering Indian consumers, especially in Uttar Pradesh. All these factors have impacted the purchase intention for organic foods. These results are significant in forming marketing strategies for the growth of the organic foods industry.

Keyword: Knowledge of Organic Food, Eco-Labels, Organic Foods advertisements, Price- sensitivity, Availability, Health-Consciousness, Purchase Intention towards organic foods.

1. Introduction: -

The harmful effect of pesticides, genetically modified organisms, and other non-natural substances utilized in agricultural production have gained the attention of today's consumers. This is the reason for the orientation of these consumers toward organic foods. After COVID-19, consumers have become aware of their consumption patterns and have become more health conscious. Figures show that the organic food sector has grown tremendously in many Asian countries like China, Iran, India, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, Bangladesh (IFOAM, 2019). India, the largest producer of organic foods, has also experienced a rise in demand for organic foods. According to reports of FSSAI of (2021), it has been forecasted that during 2021-2026, the organic food market in India is going to grow at a compound annual rate of 20.5% and by 2026 will reach USD 2601 million. Consumers are health-consciousness nowadays. Although Indian consumers are price-sensitive, the reports have shown that despite high-cost Indian consumers prefer organic foods (Chokhani, 2021). The availability of Organic Foods to consumers has been an issue in the past. However, online availability might have made organic foods more accessible to consumers. Because organic foods are available online, people are getting knowledge about Organic Foods through advertisements, word-of-mouth, reviews, etc. Eco-labels

present on these organic foods could prove organic foods to be less harmful to the environment, which could impact consumers' purchase intention towards organic foods. Put together; the earlier-mentioned factors seem to be important when understanding the current status of organic food purchases. Therefore, this study tries to create a comprehensive model for understanding consumers' purchase intention of organic foods. The results would help in understanding essential factors to consider while making marketing strategies for organic foods.

2. Literature Review and Model Hypotheses

2.1. Knowledge of Organic Food: -

Knowledge of organic foods refers to the perception of consumers regarding organic foods and their capacity to understand the attributes and eccentric peculiarities (Nguyen, 2019). The knowledge of consumers regarding organic foods plays a vital role when making purchase decisions (Yiridoe, 2005). Several pieces of research have identified a lack of organic food knowledge as a barrier to buying organic foods (De Magistris, 2008). The various degree of knowledge impacts the purchase intention of consumers for a product (Chiou, 1998).

2.2. Eco-Labels: -

The eco-labeling is the print related to the environment that helps consumers who make eco-friendly choices during the purchase process buy eco-friendly products conveniently (Valor, 2014). Consumers are keen to learn about quality standards, ingredients, and manufacturing processes of organic foods, and eco-labels play a vital role in this (Dangi, 2020).

2.3. Organic Foods advertisements: -

The powerful and appealing message through advertisements affects customer value and attitude. There have been several studies in the past which concluded that consumers' attitudes toward green purchases could be upgraded through green advertisements (Liao, 2020). The organic food purchase intention, which is part of green products, is also influenced by advertisements. In his study Haytko (2008) found that if the advertisements are potentially strong, then consumers are willing to pay premium prices, trust the features, have faith that green foods are less damaging, and become loyal to green food products. The current study aims to check the same belief that organic foods are also constituents of green foods.

2.4. Price-sensitivity: -

Indian consumers are price-oriented. This is the main reason that price is still a barrier when purchasing organic foods In India. Although recently, there has been a modest change observed in this pattern (MINTEL , 1999) (MINTEL , 2020) (Soil Association (SA), 2003). A few retailers have tried discounted price techniques to raise the sales of organic foods, but no empirical studies have yet been conducted to assess the impact (Padel, 2005). In the current study, we will try to understand that despite consumers being informed about the positive effect of organic foods through advertisements, price sensitivity is still a barrier to organic foods purchase intention.

2.5. Availability: -

The supermarkets and retail stores have observed the increasing demand of organic food and therefore, they have made space for these products in their stores. Availability of any product is important to boost its sales. This acceptance of organic foods by supermarkets and retail stores, along with organic foods available in its specialist outlet, have made organic foods more available to consumers (Dettmann, 2007). Therefore, it becomes evident that availability is one of the crucial aspects which affect the purchase intention among consumers of organic foods (Davies, 1995).

2.6. Health-Consciousness: -

Health consciousness can be described as consumers' willingness to act while keeping health in mind (Wang X. P., 2019). Consumers who have intention to purchase organic products considers it to be an investment in their health (Kriwy, 2012) (Guido G. , 2009) (Guido G. P.-B., 2010). Very often, organic foods are regarded as healthier than the regular foods (Lea, 2005) (Williams, 2001). Consumers who are apprehensive and conscious about their health are motivated to enhance their health and standard of life, and therefore they prefer organic foods (Schifferstein, 1998). Organic food consumers are informed about the impact of food consumption and have proper knowledge of ill-effects of pesticides (Saba, 2003). Hence, they favor organic foods, which are healthier to safeguard their durability.

2.7. Purchase Intention towards organic foods: -

It is recognized that marketers consider consumers' purchase intention when understanding the actual demand trend for organic foods in the market. Hence, it is common to replace purchase intention with actual buying behavior in academic

research (Wang J. B., 2017). The demand of health-conscious consumers for organic foods due to their health-benefits has boosted the growth of the organic food industry (Ali, 2020) (Smith, 2010). The belief of consumers that organic foods are beneficial for their well-being has positively impacted their attitude towards organic foods, resulting in increased sales of organic foods. Since health-conscious consumers consider eating organic food advantageous to their health, their positive attitudes have drastically influenced their purchase intention (Yazdanpanah, 2015) (Smith, 2010).

3. Research Gap: -

Advertisements of organic foods were significantly less seen earlier. However, after COVID-19, the acceptance of digital platforms raised, which led to more displays of advertisements for organic foods through various social media. This has made information about the availability of organic foods reach more consumers. This study will try to understand the impact of these advertisements on consumers, which is a gap in organic foods' purchase intention. Also, the impact of knowledge of organic foods raised due to advertisements and social media posts will be studied in the Indian context. Consumers have become health-consciousness after the pandemic. This study will help understand whether health-conscious consumers' purchase intention is improved for organic foods despite being highly priced. Moreover, lastly, the role of eco-labels on organic foods' purchase intention will be studied as previous studies have not focussed on Indian consumers' concerns about eco-labels.

4. Research questions: -

1. Whether knowledge of Organic Foods impacts purchase intention?
2. Whether Eco-labels on organic foods influence the organic food purchase intention?
3. Whether Advertisements of organic foods impact the purchase intention of consumers?
4. Whether Price-sensitivity is still relevant in Indian consumers' purchase intention?
5. Whether the increased availability of organic foods through online websites and offline stores improved the consumers' purchase intention towards organic foods?
6. Whether after the pandemic, health consciousness plays a vital role in consumers' purchase intention towards organic food in the Indian market?

5. Objective: -

To observe the determinants vital in impacting organic foods purchase intention among generation Z.

6. Hypotheses: -

H1: Knowledge of Organic Food impacts the Organic Food purchase intention

H2: Eco-labels on organic foods impacts consumers' organic food purchase intention.

H3: Organic Food advertisements influences the purchase intention of consumers.

H4: Price-sensitivity impacts the consumers' organic foods purchase intention.

H5: Availability impacts the organic foods purchase intention among consumers.

H6: H[illegible]he organic foods purchase intention among consumers.

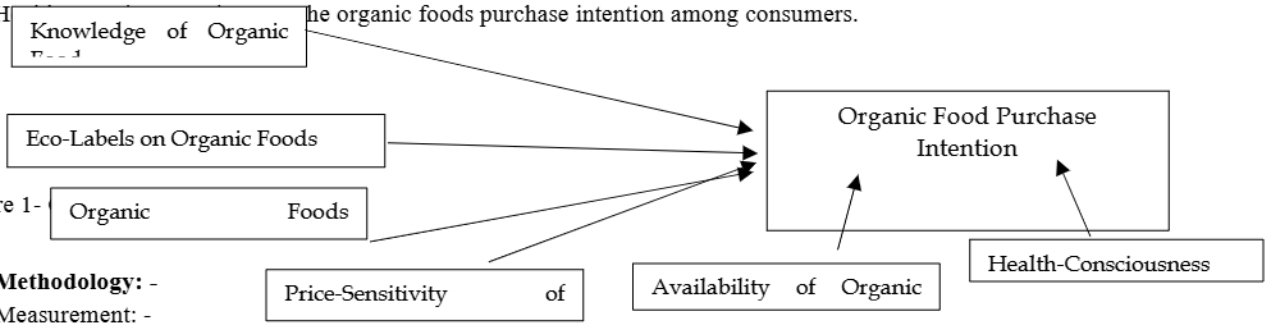

Figure 1- [illegible]

7. Methodology: -

7.1. Measurement: -

The online survey was conducted through a five-point Likert scale where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 represented "strongly agree". The items of different factors used in the questionnaire were derived from studies conducted in past and were accustomed according to Indian context. Demographic information about respondents were

also collected through questionnaire.

The knowledge of organic foods consisted of three items based on Fotopoulos & Chryssochoidis (Fotopoulos, 2001). The four items for eco-labels were based on Hasnain, Raza & Qureshi (Hasnain, 2020). The four items for advertisement of organic foods were based on Zubair M. (Zubair Tariq, 2014). The five items for measuring price-sensitivity among consumers were based on Ghali (Ghali-Zinoubi, 2021). The five items for availability were based on Song, Safari & Mansori (Song, 2016). The four items for health-consciousness were based on Ghazali, Soon, Mutum & Nguyen (Ghazali, 2017). The four items for Purchase Intention were based on Al-Swidi (Al-Swidi, 2014).

7.2. Sample: -

A convenience sampling for the purpose of data collection was used. The data was collected mainly from the students who have at least once consumed organic foods and have idea about organic foods. There were 100 valid responses collected for the study. Most of the respondents were university students. The demographic distribution is as:

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	51	51
	Female	49	49
	Prefer not to say	20	20
Age	18-30	91	91
	30-40	7	7
	ABOVE 50	2	2
Marital Status	Single (Unmarried/Divorced/widowed)	16	16
	Married	88	88
	Prefer not to say	4	4
Education	Intermediate	1	1
	Graduate	42	42
	Post-graduate	57	57
Occupation	Not working	71	71
	Employed	22	22
	Unemployed	6	6
	Business owner	1	1
Annual Income	No Income	72	72
	Upto Rs. 2.5 lakhs	6	6
	Rs. 2.50 lakhs-rs 5 lakhs	10	10
	Rs 5 lakhs to Rs. 7.50 lakhs	8	8
	Rs. 7.50 lakhs and above	4	4
	Total	100	100

Table 1- Demographic Profile

7.3. Results: -

7.3.1. Reliability Measurement

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.924	29

Table 2- Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha value is considered to be excellent when it is above 0.70. It represents the suitability of data for the research (Nunnally, 1978). The Cronbach's alpha of the current study is obtained as 0.924, which is above 0.70 and therefore the consistency is considered to be excellent and appropriate for research.

7.3.2. Factor Analysis

The factor analysis was applied to the current study in order to reduce irrelevant data for research. Principal component method was implied to examine the exploratory factor analysis. With the implication of EFA, the primary factors that describe the variables set in data could be analyzed. The data set was examined for the normality as the fundamental supposition for the parametric test (Hair J. F., 2012). When the sample size is large (>30 or 40) parametric test can be

utilized even without testing for the normality of the data (Pallant, 2020) (Elliott, 2007). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was implied for examining EFA during data analysis, and Bartlett's test of sphericity helped in administering the suitability of data and resulting in data being significant for factor analysis (Hair J. F., 2010).

Kiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square	1293.756
	df	378
	Sig.	.000

Table 3- KMO and Bartlett's Test

There exists a relationship between variables (Kaiser, 1974). The values of the test of sphericity represent whether data is suitable for factor analysis. Now, the justifiable value of KMO is 0.6. In table 3, the KMO value is 0.831. This is greater than the defensible value and hence it proves that data is sufficient for factor analysis.

The correlation matrix, along with the identity matrix, is examined using Bartlett's test of sphericity. When the significance value is less than 0.05 (p,0.5), there is a significant association between variables. In table-3, Bartlett's test of sphericity shows a significance value of 0.000, representing that factors derived from the variables are correlated.

Initial Eigenvalues			
Components	**Total**	**% Of variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	9.180	32.527	32.527
2	1.932	6.900	39.427
3	1.726	6.163	45.590
4	1.487	5.310	50.900
5	1.416	5.058	55.958
6	1.297	4.633	60.592
7	1.183	4.223	64.815

Table 4- Total Variance Explained

Seven factors that were significant for the current study were drawn in the Total Variance Explained analysis that has a value greater than one eigenvalue. These seven factors represent 64.815% of the total variance, which is more than 60% as per Hair et al. (2010) which is acceptable for the other process, as mentioned in table 4.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Eco-Label (EC1)	0.701						
Eco-Label (EC2)	0.664						
Eco-Label (EC3)	0.621						
Eco-Label (EC4)	0.568						
Price-Sensitivity (PS1)		0.627					
Price-Sensitivity (PS2)		0.624					
Price-Sensitivity (PS3)		0.619					
Organic Food Advertisement (OFA1)			0.829				
Organic Food Advertisement (OFA2)			0.741				
Organic Food Advertisement (OFA3)			0.498				
Organic Food Advertisement (OFA4)			0.439				
Knowledge of Organic Food (KOF1)				0.743			
Knowledge of Organic Food (KOF2)				0.734			

Knowledge of Organic Food (KOF3)				0.596			
Availability of Organic Food (KOF1)					0.738		
Availability of Organic Food (A2)					0.614		
Availability of Organic Food (A3)					0.59		
Availability of Organic Food (A4)					0.531		
Availability of Organic Food (A5)					0.525		
Health Consciousness (HC1)						0.798	
Health Consciousness (HC2)						0.712	
Health-Consciousness (HC3)						0.7	
Health-Consciousness (HC4)						0.648	
Purchase Intention (PI1)							0.779
Purchase Intention (PI2)							0.766
Purchase Intention (PI3)							0.728

Table 5- Rotated Component Matrix
Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Varimax method was employed by the rotated component matrix to load the factors. Table 5 represents the factor loading of all the statements. The value of factor loading for all the statements is greater than 0.7, hence satisfactory (Malhotra, 2014), resulting in factors being suitable for advancing the analysis.

7.3.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

AMOS 28 was applied for the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to validate the current study's research model. Maximum Likelihood Procedure helped perform CFA to attain value for factor loading, validity, and reliability of the scale and measurement model. Table 6 represents the model's fitness which shows the value of the threshold level of fit indices. The indication of good model fit shows that a chisq/df valueof 1.293, which is less than 3 is in the acceptable range (Hair J. F., 2010).

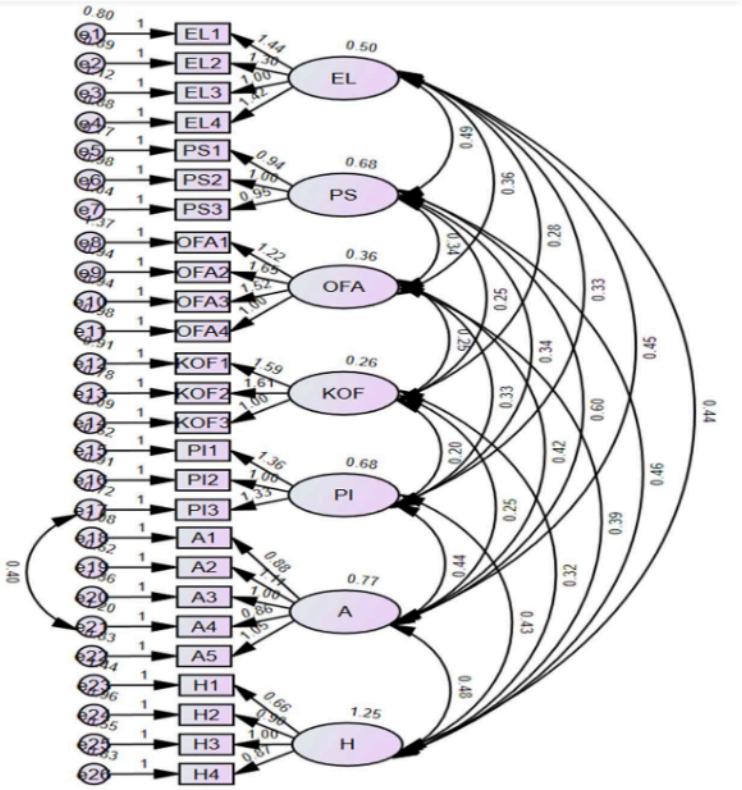

Figure 2- Measurement Model
Source: AMOS

The p-value of all the items is less than 0.001. The value shows that all items are significantly loaded on their respective construct, and all items have acceptable standardized factor loading (above 0.07), as shown in table 7 with their composite reliability and discriminant validity for testing the hypothesis using the structural model (Barclay D.W., 1995).

Fit Indices	Ideal value	Cal. values
GFI	>=0.90	.999
AGIF	>=0.80	.874
CFI	>=0.90	.912
TLI	>=0.90	.987
NFI	>=0.90	.977
RMSEA	<=0.05	.053

Table 6- Model Fit Indices

Convergent validity indicated the accepted value for all the constructs, which should be above 0.50 (Hair J. F., 2010). Discriminant validity also gave acceptable values for all constructs (above 0.70). The composite reliability of each construct is higher than 0.70, which is an acceptable value (Nunnally, 1978). Thus, the measurement model met all the criteria to test the hypothesis.

Items	Estimate	AVE	√AVE	Com. reliability
Eco-Level		0.51	0.714142843	0.734
EL1	0.701			
EL2	0.664			
EL3	0.621			
EL4	0.568			
Price Sensitivity		0.588	0.766811581	0.756
PS1	0.627			

PS2	0.624			
PS3	0.619			
organic Food Advertisement		0.519	0.720416546	0.73
OFA1	0.829			
OFA2	0.741			
OFA3	0.498			
OFA4	0.439			
KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANIC FOOD		0.582	0.762889245	0.734
KOF1	0.743			
KOF2	0.734			
KOF3	0.596			
AVALIBILITY		0.566	0.752329715	0.739
A1	0.738			
A2	0.614			
A3	0.59			
A4	0.531			
A5	0.525			
HEALTHY				
H1	0.798	0.514	0.716937933	0.808
H2	0.712			
H3	0.7			
H4	0.648			
PURCHASE INTENSION				
PI1	0.779	0.575	0.758287544	0.802
PI2	0.766			
PI3	0.728			

Table 7- Factor Loading, Validity and Reliability

7.3.4. Structural Model Equation

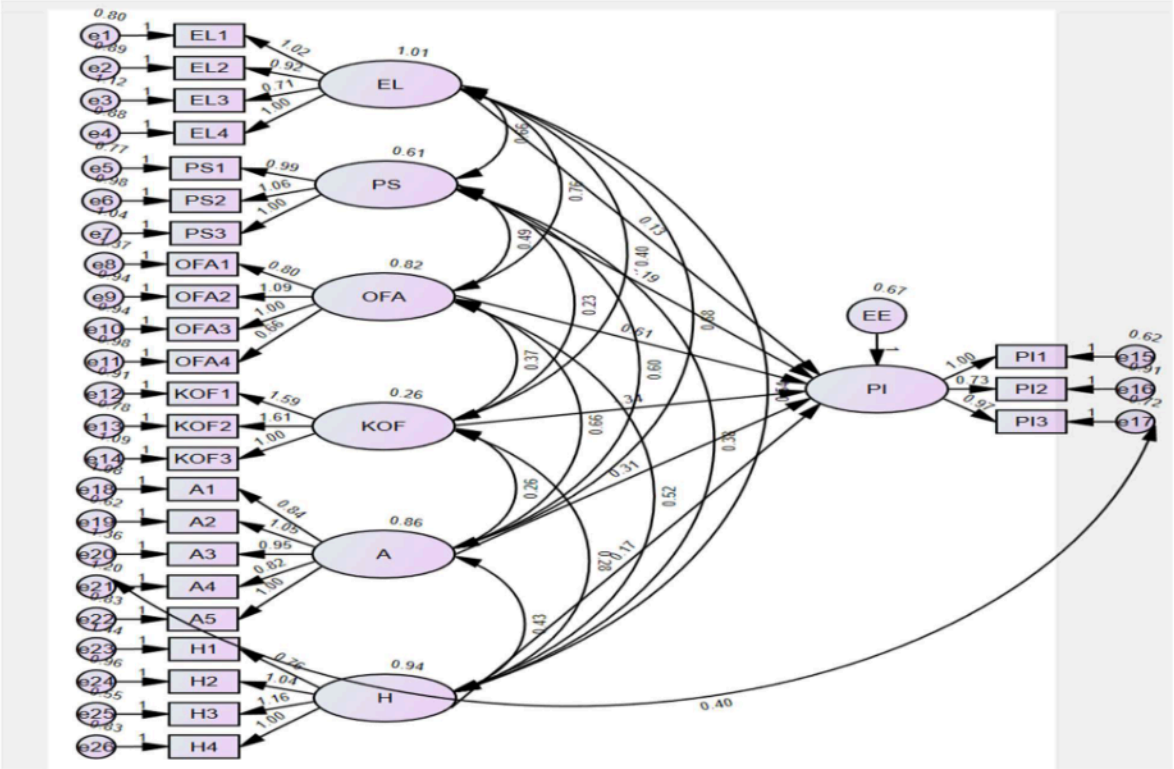

Figure 3- Structural Model-1
Source: AMOS output

Fit Indices	Ideal value	Cal. values
GFI	>=0.90	0.998
AGIF	>=0.80	0.945
CFI	>=0.90	0.912
TLI	>=0.90	0.997
NFI	>=0.90	0.987
RMSEA	<=0.05	0.028
Chisq/df	<3	1.293

Table 8- Model Fit of SME

Hence,

Path	Beta value	t-value	p-value	remark
PI←EL	.819	1.18	***	Significant
PI←PS	.653	1.98	***	Significant
PI←OFA	.559	2.13	***	Significant
PI← KOF	-.543	2.11	0.01	Significant
PI←A	.553	1.93	0.02	Significant
PI←H	.556	1.23	***	Significant

***→p< 0.001

8. Discussion

The present study tried to find the factors crucial in current times for understanding purchase intention towards organic foods.

The study combined new factors like advertisements of organic foods and eco-labels, which were also a significant research gap in organic foods studies, and a few old factors, like price-sensitivity, health consciousness, and knowledge of Organic foods. This was to develop an understanding of the current status of purchase intention for organic foods among Indian consumers. Based on the current study, it can be understood that consumers are eager to purchase organic foods as they are becoming more health-conscious, especially after the pandemic. Consumers have approached a significant change in their consumption patterns, leading toward a healthier life. The advertisements of organic foods encourage the purchase intention among consumers as they become aware of categories of products present in the market, the venue of their availability, and the discount offered on these products. Because the availability is increased on online stores of organic foods, consumers are finding it easy to purchase, leading to the growth of sales of organic foods. Increased availability of organic foods ads has led to improved knowledge of these products consumers. Increased knowledge of these foods that how these foods are healthier and are a form of investment in health has encouraged consumers to intend more purchases of these products.

Price sensitivity is still an issue when intending to purchase organic foods. This is the first factor that comes to consumers' minds when approaching organic food. Eco-labels are vital in impacting purchase intention for consumers knowing organic foods. They demand authenticity in the food that they purchase through certified labels. However, not many consumers refer to eco-labels; once they are informed that any food is organic, they purchase them. Hence, eco-labels impact the purchase intentions of consumers but not very strongly.

9. Implications: -

The results of the current study can be applied in making marketing strategies for the organic foods industry. The advertisements of organic foods can be an effective tool in appealing to consumers to purchase organic foods. Consumers are price sensitive, and through these ads, the benefit of organic food may appeal to consumers to purchase more organic foods. Industrialists could work to lower the price of organic foods through new technologies. More government allies, subsidies, and initiatives with organic food companies could make it more price effective. Direct joint ventures with farmers involved in organic production can also help cut down the costs of organic foods.

Companies should initiate more websites, brochures, pop-ups, and online communities to increase consumers' knowledge about organic foods. Through these online presences, Information about the availability of organic foods in online and offline stores could be easily made to consumers. Companies should ensure that organic foods at retail stores and malls are easily visible to customers to ensure the increased availability of organic foods to prospective consumers. Eco-labels can be a tool to increase the authenticity of organic foods. Companies should invest in labeling organic foods so that consumers who are skeptical of the authenticity of these foods can be encouraged to buy organic foods by reading these labels.

10. Limitations and Direction for future research: -

The current study has not explored the purchase intention towards different categories of organic foods. A future study could be conducted based on the preference of a specific category of organic foods. Also, the study was conducted in the Northern and central regions of Uttar Pradesh. A future study covering more geographical areas of India could clarify the purchase intention of organic foods. The government's ongoing initiatives for the promotion of organic foods can be studied as case studies which can bring ideas to industrialists for collaboration with government initiatives to increase the demand for organic foods.

Categorizing consumers based on age, gender, educational qualification, and their impact on purchase intention can also help in targeting consumers more interested in purchasing organic foods. Similarly, through social media analysis, future studies could be conducted to understand which mode of communication is more effective for the growth of the organic foods market. Industrialists could focus on that social media medium to make marketing strategies that would be more successful for the sales of organic foods.

11. Conclusion: -

The current study aimed to identify the critical factors which impact the purchase intention of organic foods in India. There is a combination of old and new factors to understand the purchase intention of organic food consumers. The study concluded that organic foods knowledge is increasing due to its availability on social media and through advertisements of organic foods. Consumers are still price-sensitive, but since now consumers are more health-conscious, they prefer

organic foods. The availability of organic foods has tremendously increased. This has improved the purchase intention among consumers. Eco-labels are a new curiosity among consumers, and companies could use them as a marketing tool for bringing authenticity to their products. Like most studies, there are certain limitations in this study, too, which have been mentioned earlier. The future direction of the study and implications have also been mentioned. The study is one of its kind as it has covered the central and northern parts of Uttar Pradesh. Factors like the impact of advertisements of organic foods and eco-labels were unexplored in these areas.

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