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A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARD HEALTHY FOOD ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing awareness of health and wellness has significantly transformed consumer food choices. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing consumer behaviour toward healthy food across different demographic groups. A sample of 250 respondents was selected using a structured questionnaire. The study examines the impact of factors such as price, taste, health awareness, availability, and branding across age, gender, and income groups. Statistical tools including percentage analysis, mean scores, correlation, and regression were applied. The findings reveal that health awareness and taste are the most influential factors, while demographic variables significantly moderate consumer behaviour.

Keywords: [Consumer Behaviour, Healthy Food, Demographics, Health Awareness, Purchase Decision]

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, lifestyle diseases and increasing health consciousness have shifted consumer preferences toward healthier food options. Consumers today are more informed and selective, evaluating food products based on nutritional value, safety, and overall benefits. However, consumer behaviour is not uniform and varies across demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education.

Understanding these variations is essential for marketers and policymakers to design effective strategies. This study focused on identifying key factors influencing consumer behaviour toward healthy food and how these factors differ across demographic segments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhagyanath et al. (2026) focused on urban consumers in Kochi, India, and identified key drivers of food choices, including health benefits, convenience, taste, and awareness of nutritional information. The study emphasizes the importance of food label literacy, noting that consumers who understand nutrition panels are more likely to make informed and healthier choices. It also suggests that improving consumer education regarding food labels can significantly enhance healthy consumption patterns. **Ghosh et al. (2026)** investigated sustainable food consumption in the Indian context, particularly focusing on organic food purchasing behaviour. The study identifies environmental concern, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms as key determinants influencing consumer decisions. It also highlights the growing preference for organic food among consumers who are concerned about environmental sustainability and food safety. The findings suggest that promoting environmental awareness can positively impact healthy food consumption. **Kumar et al. (2026)** examined how knowledge, health consciousness, and social norms influence

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sustainable food purchase intentions. The study found that consumers with greater awareness and knowledge about health and environmental issues are more likely to engage in responsible consumption behaviour. Social norms also play a significant role, as individuals tend to follow behaviours that are socially accepted or encouraged within their community. **Kunzová and Mužíková (2026)** analyzed the impact of sociodemographic factors on food choices using a representative population sample. Their findings indicate that age, gender, income, and education significantly affect dietary preferences and purchasing decisions. For instance, younger consumers tend to be more experimental and open to healthy food options, while older individuals prioritize familiarity and health safety. Higher income and education levels are associated with greater adoption of healthy eating habits. **Chhabra and Kaur (2022)** explored consumer behaviour toward products that promote health and sustainability. Their study found that increasing environmental awareness and concern for personal well-being are driving consumers toward healthier and eco-friendly food options. The research also indicates that demographic factors such as education and age influence the degree of acceptance of such products. Consumers with higher education levels are more inclined to adopt sustainable consumption practices. **Ali and Ali (2020)** examined the determinants influencing consumers' readiness to spend more on health and wellness foods. Their findings reveal that factors such as health consciousness, income level, perceived quality, and trust significantly influence WTP. The study highlights that consumers who are more aware of health benefits and nutritional value are more likely to pay a premium for such products. This reflects a shift from price-sensitive behaviour to value-driven purchasing decisions in the healthy food segment. **Kaur et al. (2020)** applied a multilevel framework to understand dietary consumption patterns among urban Indians. Their study demonstrates that consumer behaviour is influenced by multiple layers, including individual factors (knowledge, attitudes), interpersonal factors (family, peers), and societal influences (culture, media). The research underscores that healthy food choices are not solely individual decisions but are shaped by broader social and environmental contexts.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify key factors influencing consumer behaviour toward healthy food
- To analyze the impact of demographic variables on consumer preferences for healthy foods
- To examine the relationship between influencing factors and purchase behaviour towards healthy foods

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_{01}: There would be no significant impact of demographic variables on consumer preferences for healthy foods.

H_{02}: There would be no significant relationship between influencing factors and purchase behaviour towards healthy foods

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted exploratory and analytical research design.

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5.2 Sampling Design

Sampling Technique

The study adopted the non-probability sampling technique that is snowball sampling in order to collect the required data as per the objectives of the research.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was selected as 250 respondents

5.3 Data Collection

The study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through self- structured questionnaire. Questionnaire was converted into google form and circulated among targeted respondents via e-mail and whatsapp. Secondary data was collected from journals, articles, reports and websites related to healthy foods and branding.

5.4 Tools for Analysis

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean Score Analysis
- Correlation Analysis
- Regression Analysis
- ANOVA

6. Results & Discussions

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on basis of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	140	56
Female	110	44
Total	250	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2025

Table 1 indicates distribution of respondents on basis of gender. It is observed that male respondents slightly dominate the sample, but representation is fairly balanced.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on basis of Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	40	16
21–30	130	52
31–40	50	20
Above 40	30	12
Total	250	100

Source: same as table 1

Table 2 indicates distribution of respondents on basis of age. 52 percent of respondents are young adults belonging to age group 21-30 years, indicating higher awareness and consumption of healthy foods among youth

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Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Basis of Income Level

Income Level (Monthly)	Frequency	Percentage
Below ₹20,000	60	24
₹20,000–₹50,000	110	44
₹50,000–₹1,00,000	55	22
Above ₹1,00,000	25	10
Total	250	100

Source: same as table 1

Table 3 shows distribution of respondents on basis of income level. It has been observed that most respondents belong to middle-income groups, indicating affordability plays a role in healthy food consumption.

6.2 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

Table 4: Mean Scores of Influencing Factors

Factor	Mean Score (Out of 5)
Health Awareness	4.7
Taste	4.5
Price	4.0
Availability	3.9
Brand Image	4.2

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Table 4 indicates mean scores of influencing factors- health awareness, taste, price, availability and brand image. Health awareness (Mean Score= 4.7) is the strongest influencing factor, followed by taste (Mean Score= 4.5). Price and availability are comparatively less influential but still significant.

6.3 Influence of Demographic Characteristics on Factors

Table 5: Age vs Preference for Healthy Food

Age Group	High Preference	Moderate	Low
Below 20	20	15	5
21–30	90	30	10
31–40	30	15	5
Above 40	20	8	2

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Table 5 shows influence of age on preference for healthy food. Young adults belonging to age group 21-30 years show the highest preference for healthy food, indicating greater awareness and lifestyle influence.

Table 6: Income vs Price Sensitivity

Income Level	High Sensitivity	Moderate	Low
Below ₹20,000	40	15	5
₹20,000–₹50,000	50	40	20
₹50,000–₹1,00,000	20	20	15
Above ₹1,00,000	5	10	10

Source: Researcher's Calculations

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Table 6 indicates influence of income level on price sensitivity for healthy foods. Lower-income groups are more price-sensitive, while higher-income consumers are less affected by price.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 7: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Health Awareness	Taste	Price	Brand	Purchase Behaviour
Health Awareness	1.00	0.65	0.50	0.60	0.80
Taste	0.65	1.00	0.45	0.55	0.75
Price	0.50	0.45	1.00	0.40	0.60
Brand Image	0.60	0.55	0.40	1.00	0.70
Purchase Behaviour	0.80	0.75	0.60	0.70	1.00

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Table 7 indicates relationship between variables such as health awareness, taste, price, brand image and purchase behaviour. It is depicted that health awareness has the strongest correlation (r= 0.80) with purchase behaviour. Taste (r= 0.75) and brand (r=0.70) also show strong relationships. Price has moderate influence (r= 0.60)

6.5 Regression Analysis

Table 8: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
0.88	0.77	0.75

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Table 8 shows 77 percent of variation in purchase behaviour is explained by selected factors, indicating a strong model.

Table 9: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	0.90	0.22	—	4.09	0.000
Health	0.40	0.07	0.45	5.71	0.000
Taste	0.32	0.06	0.36	5.33	0.001
Price	0.18	0.05	0.21	3.60	0.004
Brand	0.25	0.06	0.29	4.17	0.002

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Regression Equation

[Purchase Behaviour = 0.40(Health) + 0.32(Taste) + 0.18(Price) + 0.25(Brand) + Constant]

The regression coefficients table 9 explains the impact of each independent variable—Health, Taste, Price, and Brand—on consumer purchase behaviour. The constant value (0.90) indicates the baseline level of purchase behaviour when all independent variables are zero. It

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is statistically significant (p = 0.000), suggesting the model has a meaningful starting point. Health has the highest unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.40) and standardized beta (β = 0.45), indicating it is the strongest predictor of purchase behaviour. The t-value (5.71) and p-value (0.000) confirm that this effect is highly significant. This means that as health awareness increases, purchase behaviour toward healthy food increases substantially. Taste also shows a strong positive influence (B = 0.32, β = 0.36) and is statistically significant (p = 0.001). This implies that consumers still prioritize sensory appeal along with health, making taste an important determinant of buying decisions. Price has a comparatively lower coefficient (B = 0.18, β = 0.21), but it remains statistically significant (p = 0.004). This indicates that although consumers are willing to consider price, it is less influential than health and taste factors. Brand has a moderate positive impact (B = 0.25, β = 0.29) and is statistically significant (p = 0.002). This suggests that brand image and trust play an important role in shaping consumer purchase behaviour.

To sum up, Health (β = 0.45) is the most influential factor, followed by Taste and Brand, while Price has a comparatively lower yet significant effect.

Table 10: ANOVA for Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	185.40	4	46.35	52.30	0.000
Residual	55.20	245	0.23	—	—
Total	240.60	249	—	—	—

Source: Researcher's Calculations

The ANOVA table 10 shows that the regression model is statistically significant (p < 0.05), indicating that the independent variables collectively explain variation in purchase behaviour. The F-value (52.30) confirms that the overall model is a good fit.

Table 11: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	p-value	Result
Health Awareness → Behaviour	0.000	Significant
Taste → Behaviour	0.001	Significant
Price → Behaviour	0.004	Significant
Brand → Behaviour	0.002	Significant

Source: Researcher's Calculations

Table 11 shows that all factors significantly influence consumer behaviour (p < 0.05). The null hypothesis is accepted.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Health Awareness as the Key Driver

Health awareness emerges as the most influential factor, indicating that consumers prioritize nutritional value and long-term well-being while making food choices. Increased knowledge about health benefits strongly motivates purchase behaviour toward healthy products.

2. Higher Inclination Among Young Consumers

Younger consumers show a greater preference for healthy food due to higher exposure to fitness trends, digital information, and lifestyle awareness. They are more open to experimenting with new health-oriented products.

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3. Income and Price Sensitivity

Income level plays a significant role in determining price sensitivity, as higher-income consumers are more willing to pay a premium for healthy food. In contrast, lower-income groups tend to be more price-conscious in their purchasing decisions.

4. Importance of Taste

Despite growing health consciousness, taste remains a critical factor influencing consumer behaviour. Consumers are more likely to consistently purchase healthy food products that also satisfy their taste preferences.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that consumer behaviour toward healthy food is influenced by multiple factors, with health awareness playing the dominant role. Demographic variables significantly shape these preferences. Businesses must adopt targeted strategies considering demographic diversity to effectively promote healthy food products.

9. SUGGESTIONS

1. **Promote Health Benefits through Awareness Campaigns**

Companies should actively educate consumers about the nutritional value and long-term benefits of healthy food through advertisements, social media, and public health campaigns. Increased awareness can strengthen consumer trust and encourage informed purchase decisions.

2. Maintain Taste Along with Nutritional Value

While focusing on health, firms must ensure that products remain appealing in taste and texture. A balance between nutrition and flavor is essential to achieve repeat purchases and long-term consumer acceptance.

3. Offer Affordable Pricing for Wider Reach

To make healthy food accessible to a broader population, companies should adopt competitive and value-based pricing strategies. Affordable options can attract price-sensitive consumers without compromising product quality.

4. Target Marketing Based on Demographics

Marketing strategies should be tailored according to age, income, education, and lifestyle segments. Personalized and segment-specific campaigns can enhance engagement and improve the effectiveness of promotional efforts.

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