

Decoding Organic Product Acceptance among Overweight Generation Z Consumers: The Role of Health Consciousness, Social Media Exposure, and Product Certification in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

Jidnya Patil¹, Dr. Evelina Brajesh Sahay²

^{1,2} Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth Pune, (Deemed to be University) Department of Management Studies (Off campus) Navi Mumbai.

HOW TO CITE:

Jidnya Patil, Evelina Brajesh Sahay (2026). Decoding Organic Product Acceptance among Overweight Generation Z Consumers: The Role of Health Consciousness, Social Media Exposure, and Product Certification in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. International Journal of Special Education, 41(8s), 571-582

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ABSTRACT:

The increasing prevalence of overweight and weight related issues among Generation Z has become a growing public health concern in India. This study examines the factors influencing organic product acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region from a health behaviour perspective. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the study investigates the influence of health consciousness, product certification, product labelling, and social media exposure on organic product acceptance. A quantitative research design was adopted using survey data collected from 210 overweight Gen Z respondents. Regression analysis revealed that health consciousness, product certification, product labelling, and social media exposure significantly and positively influence organic product acceptance. The findings suggest that organic food consumption is increasingly perceived as a preventive health and wellness-oriented behaviour among young consumers. The study contributes to the understanding of healthy consumption behaviour and offers implications for public health communication, health promotion strategies, and sustainable food practices in India.

Keywords: Generation Z, Organic product, Health Consciousness, Product certification, labelling.

Introduction :

The organic food market is the leading sector in the global green market. Indian Council for research on International Economic relations(ICRIER) (2022) The Union Budget for FY 2022-23 outlined a vision for sustainable growth leading up to India@100, known as "Amrit Kaal." It focuses on fostering inclusive welfare and technology-driven agricultural

development, while promoting chemical-free farming . Practice of organic farming is key to protect environment and ensuring long-term sustainability. As per Krishi Jagran feb (2025) The government is strengthening India's organic market by allocating Rs 1,150.09 to support 379 local farmers , organic practices and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs). As per imarcgroup report , The Indian organic food market, valued at USD 1,917.4 million in 2024, is projected to

reach USD 10,807.9 million by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 20.13%. Over the past ten years, the demand for organic products has grown significantly. This growth is driven by rising awareness of the health benefits of organic food, health consciousness, concerns over chemical pesticides. These factors are fuelling the organic market expansion in India. India is prospecting in organic market. As per Kowalska, A., Ratajczyk, (2021) Younger generations, who will shape the future, are often viewed as more eco-conscious than older groups. Young consumers Generation Z (born in 1997 to 2012) are a key focus for researchers, policymakers, and educators on sustainable consumption, due to their growing spending habit. It's an opportunity to promote the organic product and their health benefit at larger scale. As per Pione, A., & Shenai, G. (2024) The McKinsey report highlights that 82% of U.S. consumers, 73% of UK consumers, and 87% of Chinese consumers prioritize wellness. Millennials and Gen Z are particularly focused on health trends like longevity, weight management, gut health, and sleep. 60% of consumers are interested in longevity products, and another 60% seek weight management solutions. Companies are advised to adapt to these evolving consumer preferences. As per healthcare curated Jan. (2024) issue Gen Zs are facing the overweight problem despite being health conscious. India Today (2022) As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), the worldwide prevalence of obesity nearly tripled between 1975 and 2016. Obesity is calculated on the basis of a Body Mass Index (BMI). Anyone with a BMI of more than 30 is considered obese; a person with a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is deemed overweight. As per Anwar, W., Ranjan, P. (2024) the increasing rates of obesity among young adults (18–30 years) have become a major public health issue due to the potential long-term health risks associated with it. Shrivastava, R. (2024) has found that the global obesity rate among children and adolescents (ages 5–19) increased fourfold, while adult obesity rates more than doubled between 1990 and 2022.

As per Kesse-Guyot, (2017) Organic food is free from chemicals, pesticide GMO etc, provides

health benefit after consumption. Eating organic foods could play a role in managing weight gain and reducing the risk of obesity. Study has shown a lower BMI after regular organic foods consumption. As per Bhagavathula, A. S., Vidyasagar (2022) meta-analysis findings indicated that consuming organic foods is linked to a reduced likelihood of obesity. These studies highlight the need for more thorough evaluation and better synthesis of evidence regarding the benefits of organic product for Generation Z.

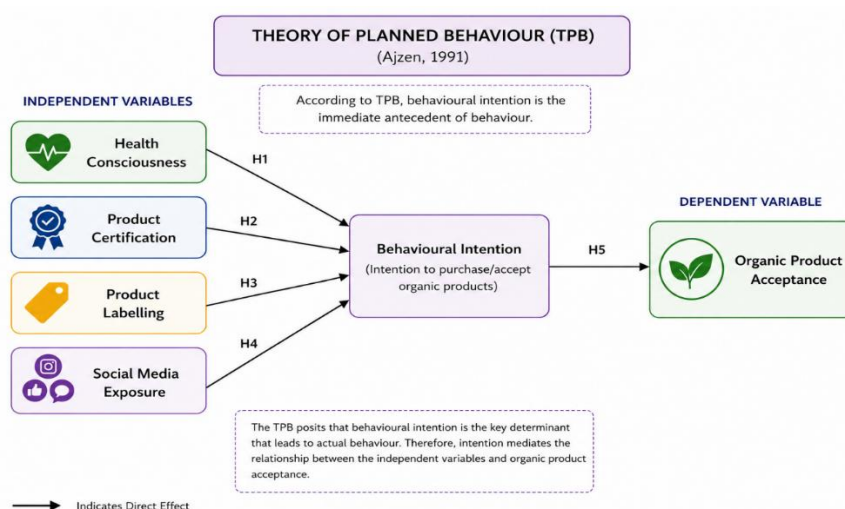
The present study examines the factors influencing organic product acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region from a preventive health behaviour perspective. Data were collected from 210 Gen Z respondents, and Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated using self-reported height and weight measurements to identify overweight participants. The study specifically focuses on understanding how health consciousness, product certification, product labelling, and social media exposure shape healthier food choices among young adults. As overweight and obesity-related concerns continue to rise among Generation Z, understanding their acceptance of organic products becomes important in promoting healthier dietary practices and wellness-oriented lifestyles. The findings are expected to provide useful implications for public health communication, nutritional awareness initiatives, and strategies aimed at encouraging informed and health-conscious food consumption among urban youth.

Theoretical Underpinning: This study is grounded in Ajzen's 1991 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which is widely recognised as one of the most effective frameworks for understanding consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions toward healthy and sustainable food choices. TPB suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control significantly influence behavioural intention and actual behaviour. McDermott et al 2015 observed that these TPB constructs strongly predict healthy dietary intentions and preventive health behaviours

among adolescents and adults. Furthermore, studies by Li et al 2019 , Hohmann et al 2022 highlighted that TPB-based interventions are effective in encouraging healthier eating practices and long-term dietary behaviour change.

Several researchers have extended the TPB framework by incorporating additional variables such as health consciousness Teng et al 2015 , environmental concern Tandon et al 2020, and motivation-related factors to better explain preventive health and food consumption behaviour. X., Lee, et al 2025 further identified motivation as an important predictor in

maintaining long-term healthy behaviours. However, prior studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding overweight consumers' attitudes toward organic food products. Moreover, most existing studies have primarily focused on Western populations, with limited research conducted in Asian contexts such as Vietnam Nguyen et al 2023 and India. This study applies the TPB framework to examine how health consciousness, social media exposure, product labelling, and product certification influence organic product acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers.



Problem Statement: Despite the growing demand for organic food, the factors influencing organic product acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers remain underexplored. Limited research has examined how health consciousness, certification, labelling, and social media shape their choices, especially within the Indian context.

Research Gap :

This study addresses several important research gaps. Firstly, there has been a limited focus on overweight Generation Z consumers, as previous research on organic food consumption has primarily examined general consumer behavior, overlooking the unique motivations, health concerns, and lifestyle challenges of this group. Secondly, there is a lack of integration between health consciousness and marketing factors, with few studies combining health-related aspects

such as BMI and health awareness with marketing elements like product certification, labelling, and social media influence to explain organic product acceptance. Lastly, there is a scarcity of research within the Indian context, as most existing studies have been conducted in Western or developed markets. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how young Indian consumers, especially those dealing with weight issues, perceive and accept organic food products.

Social Relevance :

This study holds significant public health relevance as it highlights the rising health concerns among overweight Generation Z consumers in Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The variables under study examine their impact on healthier and organic food choices, thereby supporting preventive health initiatives,

nutritional awareness, and sustainable dietary practices among young adults. The findings may also help policymakers and public health communicators promote healthier eating behaviour and long-term wellness among Generation Z consumers.

Research Objectives

- To analyze the influence of Health Consciousness on the acceptance of organic products among overweight Generation Z consumers in the Mumbai metropolitan region.
- To examine the role of social media exposure in shaping the acceptance of organic products among overweight Generation Z consumers.
- To evaluate the impact of product labeling attributes (e.g., "organic," "non-GMO," "sustainable") on the preferences of overweight Generation Z consumers for organic products.
- To investigate the effect of product certification on the acceptance of organic products among overweight Generation Z consumers.

Literature Review:

Health consciousness:

According to the research Ucl. (2022) teens born between 2000 and 2002 often referred to as "Gen Z" are more concerned with their weight and weight reduction than previous generations. The study tries to explore the product acceptance of organic product amongst overweight Generation z. Gen Z are health conscious and they prefer to organic product as Li, X., Zhao, A., & Cai, L. (2023) Bhagavathula, A. S. (2022) conventionally grown foods tend to have higher levels of pesticide residues, nitrates, heavy metals, hormones, antibiotic residues, and GMOs, which could potentially harm health. Overweight people are more conscious when they are selecting product for them selves. As per Suryatapa Das (2020) eating organic foods can reduce exposure to pesticides and may also help improve health outcomes. Specifically, it appears to support better weight management, including a decrease in body mass index and related weight

issues, along with a lower risk of certain health problems. Furthermore study by Herberg, S., & Lairon, D. (2017) mentions that higher is the intake of organic food lower is the BMI, this has been observed in cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys. Robinson, S., & Leifert, C. (2019) has also come across in his longitudinal study eating organic food helps the people manage their weight and keep their BMI stable.

H1: Health consciousness positively influence the organic product acceptance.

Product certification :

As observed by Wu, S., & Jang, J. (2013) ISO certification has a positive influence on consumer preference and product acceptability. Tian, X., & Wang, Y. (2024) found that certification has the positive impact on consumer engagement. The customer who care about their health choose organic product. Bottonaki, A., Polymeros (2006) Certified organic product influence the health conscious consumer decision making. Wang, J., Tao, J., & Chu, M. (2019) research highlights that trust of customers towards food certification. Their purchase intention is positively influence by level of certification and its authenticity. Liu, M. (2021) as per study consumer intention for organic product is positively influence by certification.

H2: Product certification positively influences the organic product acceptance

Product labelling :

Product label packaging can act as a tool for communication. Cowburn, G., & Stockley, L. (2005) It has been observed that consumer prefer simple clear and easy to understand information on product label. Mittone, L., & Savadori, L. (2024b) labels can boost the product's appeal and attractiveness while simplifying the decision-making process for consumers. Ahmad, S. (2022) research results also confirmed the positive relationship between decision making, nutrition knowledge and food label usage. The consumption of healthy product is now a necessity due to proportionality growing numbers of overweight individuals. The World Health Organization has identified nutritional

labelling as an essential part of its global strategy on diet and health as mention by Fenko, A. (2018). Hasni, M. J. S., Mittone, L., & Savadori, L. (2024) as per this experimental study its been observed that presence of health star rating labelling gives competitive advantage. This will not only will encourage consumer for healthy selection but also consumer engagement can be achieved.

H3 : There is a positive relationship between the product labelling and organic product acceptance amongst overweight Generation Z's.

Social Media :

In the 21st century its been difficult to imagine life without social media platform. As per Alfred, J. J. R., & Wong, S. P. (2022) Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook has been used for taking reviews, feed back . Marketers are using these platform to grab the attention and convert the want into demand. Alfred, J. J. R., & Wong, S. P. (2022b). Wong Siew Ping (2022) found that social media is having credibility amongst Gen Z and its shows the impact on their perception as well. As per Asri, M. A. S., Sualman, I., & Centre for Media and Information Warfare Studies. (2019) Its been found that face book is the most prevailing social media for interaction and

Data Analysis:

information gathering amongst Generation Z. Sustainable , eco friendly purchase decisions are influenced by social media. As per Suryaputra, R., Daryanti, S. (2024) Gen Z are considering the views and recommendation of social media before buying the product.

H4 :Social media leads to increased organic product acceptance.

Research Methodology :

This study followed a quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire survey among overweight Generation Z consumers in the Mumbai metropolitan region. Participants' weight status was determined through calculated BMI values based on self-reported height and weight, ensuring accurate classification. The questionnaire measured variables such as health consciousness, product certification, product labelling, social media exposure, and organic product acceptance using a Likert scale. Collected data were analyzed using reliability analysis, correlation, and multiple regression to evaluate the strength and significance of relationships between the variables and to test the proposed hypotheses.

Demographics:

Statistics	Gender	Height(m)	weight(kg)	BMI
N	210	210	210	210
Mean	1.55	1.62	69.14	26.24
Std Dev	0.5	0.13	9.78	2.68
Minimum	Male	1.2	38	17.9
Maximum	Female	2.1	120	45.14

A total of 210 respondents participated in the study, with complete data available for all variables. The participants exhibited an average body mass index (BMI) of 26.24, classifying them as overweight. The mean height and weight were 1.62 meters and 69.14 kilograms, respectively, indicating relatively homogeneous physical characteristics within the sample.

The research specifically targeted overweight Generation Z participants , aiming to explore the factors influencing their intention to purchase organic products. Core constructs health consciousness, social media influence, product labeling, and product certification were measured using a five-point Likert scale to capture the

strength of participants' attitudes and perceptions.

Descriptive Statistics

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.700 ^a	.480	.480	.28000

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Health Consciousness	210	4.29	0.47	2.8	5
Product Certification	210	4.09	0.54	2.3	5
Product Labelling	210	4.19	0.57	2.5	5
Social Media	210	3.95	0.54	2	5
product Acceptance	210	4.11	0.38	3	5

Interpretation: The mean scores of the variables indicate that respondents generally hold positive perceptions toward the factors influencing product acceptance. Health Consciousness has the highest mean value (4.29), suggesting that consumers place strong importance on maintaining health while choosing products. Product Labelling (4.19) and Product Certification (4.09) also show high average responses, indicating that clear labeling and trusted certifications significantly shape purchasing decisions. Product Acceptance itself has a mean of 4.11, implying that overall acceptance of the product is favorable among respondents. Social Media has the lowest mean score (3.95) compared to other factors, though still above average, meaning that while social platforms play a role in influencing choices, they are slightly less impactful than health-related and quality-assurance cues. Overall, the scores reflect strong agreement among respondents toward the importance of these factors in their buying behavior.

Regression Analysis (for Testing Hypotheses)

To test the predictive power of the independent variable(s) on the dependent variable(s),

performed regression analysis for each hypothesis.

H1: Health consciousness → Product Acceptance

^a. Predictors: (Constant), Health Consciousness

Interpretation: Health Consciousness alone (Model 1) explains 48% of the variance in the dependent variable, Product Acceptance, indicating a strong positive relationship ($R = 0.700$) between the two variables. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.28000) indicates a low level of prediction error, suggesting that the model provides a reliable estimate. This finding highlights that overweight Generation Z consumers who are more health-conscious tend to show higher acceptance of organic food products. The substantial explanatory power of the model demonstrates that Health Consciousness plays a key role in shaping Product Acceptance among this demographic, emphasizing that awareness and concern for personal health significantly influence their preference toward healthier, organic alternatives.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.700	.170	–	9.780	.000
Health Consciousness	.560	.040	.700	13.960	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Product Acceptance

Interpretation: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.56$, $t = 13.96$, $p < .001$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in Health Consciousness, the Product Acceptance score increases by 0.56 units. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.70$) confirms a strong positive influence of Health Consciousness on Product Acceptance.

H2: Product Certification → Product Acceptance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
2	.780 ^a	.600	.600	.24000

^a. Predictors: (Constant), Product Certification

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
2 (Constant)	1.870	.130	–	14.670	.000
Product Certification	.550	.030	.780	17.730	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Product Acceptance

Interpretation: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.55$, $t = 17.73$, $p < .001$) shows that for every one-unit increase in Product Certification, Product Acceptance increases by 0.55 units. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.78$) further

Interpretation: Product Certification alone (Model 2) explains 60% of the variance in the dependent variable, Product Acceptance, indicating a strong positive relationship ($R = 0.780$) between the two variables. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.24000) suggests a low level of error in predicting product acceptance based on product certification. This result shows that when overweight Generation Z consumers perceive organic products as well-certified and trustworthy, their acceptance of such products significantly increases. It highlights that Product Certification plays a crucial role in influencing Product Acceptance among overweight Gen Z consumers, emphasizing that assurance of authenticity, safety, and quality strongly drives their willingness to choose organic options.

confirms a strong positive influence of Product Certification on Product Acceptance.

Overall, these results highlight that Product Certification plays a vital role in shaping Product Acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers. When consumers perceive organic

products as officially certified and reliable, their trust and acceptance levels rise significantly, showing that certification acts as a powerful driver in promoting organic food consumption.

H3: Product Labelling → Product Acceptance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
3	.750 ^a	.560	.550	.26000

^a. Predictors: (Constant), Product Labelling

Interpretation: Product Labelling alone (Model 3) explains 56% of the variance in the dependent

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
3 (Constant)	2.020	.130	—	15.340	.000
Product Labelling	.500	.030	.750	16.120	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Product Acceptance

Interpretation: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.50$, $t = 16.12$, $p < .001$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in the quality or clarity of Product Labelling, the Product Acceptance score increases by 0.50 units. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.75$) further confirms a strong positive effect of labelling on acceptance.

H4: Social Media → Product Acceptance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.680 ^a	.460	.460	.28000

^a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media

Interpretation: The model summary shows that Social Media explains 46% of the variance in the

variable, Product Acceptance, indicating a strong positive relationship ($R = 0.750$) between the two variables. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.26000) reflects a relatively low margin of error, suggesting that the model provides reliable predictions of product acceptance based on labelling factors.

This finding implies that clear, informative, and transparent product labels positively influence how overweight Generation Z consumers perceive and accept organic food products. The strong explanatory power of the model highlights that Product Labelling plays a significant role in shaping Product Acceptance, emphasizing that accurate nutritional information and well-presented product details strengthen consumers' trust and willingness to choose organic options.

dependent variable, Product Acceptance, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables ($R = 0.680$). The R Square value (0.460) suggests that nearly half of the variation in product acceptance can be attributed to the influence of social media. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.28000) is relatively low, implying that the model's predictions are consistent and reliable.

This finding highlights that social media significantly influences product acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers, who are highly active on digital platforms. Engaging content, influencer endorsements, and peer reviews enhance their trust, awareness, and perceived value of organic food products, ultimately shaping positive purchase acceptance towards healthier alternatives.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
4 (Constant)	2.210	.140	–	15.480	.000
Social Media	.480	.040	.680	13.430	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Product Acceptance

Interpretation: The coefficients table reveals that Social Media has a significant positive effect on Product Acceptance ($\beta = 0.680$, $t = 13.430$, $p < 0.001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.480$) indicates that for every one-unit increase

in social media influence, the level of product acceptance increases by 0.48 units. The high t -value and low significance level confirm that this relationship is statistically meaningful.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sig.
H1: Positive influence of health consciousness on the organic product acceptance.	Health consciousness	Product Acceptance	.000
H2: positive relationship between Product certification and organic product acceptance.	Product certification		.000
H3: There is a positive relationship between the Product labelling and organic product acceptance amongst overweight Generation Z's.	Product labelling		.000
H4: Social media exposure leads to increased organic product acceptance.	Social media		.000

Interpretation: All four hypotheses were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating strong positive relationships between each independent variable and Product Acceptance among overweight Generation Z consumers.

Specifically, health consciousness significantly enhances acceptance of organic products, showing that individuals who are more aware of health benefits are more inclined to choose organic options. Product certification also plays a crucial role, as verified labels and official endorsements build trust and confidence in product quality. Similarly, product labelling has a strong positive influence, with clear and transparent information helping consumers make

informed and health-driven choices. Lastly, social media exposure significantly increases product acceptance, emphasizing the impact of digital engagement, influencer content, and peer recommendations on Gen Z's perception of organic products.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has some limitations. The data were collected through a self-reported questionnaire at one point in time, which may cause common method bias and limit causal interpretation. The focus on Indian overweight Gen Z consumers, identified through self-reported BMI, may also affect accuracy. Future studies should use objective BMI measures and longitudinal data to track behavioral changes over time. Expanding

samples across different countries and including mediating or moderating variables such as attitude, green pricing, and demographics could offer a deeper understanding of organic food purchase behavior in this segment.

Conclusions:

The findings clearly demonstrate that health consciousness, product certification, product labelling, and social media collectively have a significant impact on the acceptance of organic food products among overweight Generation Z consumers. This group, being more aware of health risks and body image concerns, tends to seek healthier and more authentic food options that align with their wellness goals. Their purchase behavior is not only guided by nutritional awareness but also by the credibility and transparency conveyed through product certifications and clear labelling.

Moreover, social media emerges as a powerful platform shaping their perceptions and decisions. Overweight Gen Z consumers frequently engage with health influencers, diet trends, and organic food promotions online, which enhances their trust and motivation to make better dietary choices. This makes digital engagement an essential tool for influencing their attitudes and purchase intentions.

For marketers, these insights are crucial. By focusing on clear labelling, credible certifications, and authentic health-oriented messaging on social media, brands can effectively connect with this health-conscious segment. Tailored marketing strategies that emphasize well-being, transparency, and community-driven trust can not only strengthen brand loyalty but also position organic products as the preferred choice among overweight Gen Z consumers striving for a healthier lifestyle.

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