

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Consumer Buying Behavior of Organic Products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal

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Received on : 10th July, 2024
1st Revised : 20th August, 2024
2nd Revised : 10th October, 2024
Accepted on: 10th November, 2024
Published on : 18th December, 2024

Cite this paper

Rokaya, A., & Pandey, A. (2024). Examining the Role of Financial Awareness, Attitude, and Knowledge in Personal Financial Planning: A Study in the Kathmandu Valley. *The International Research Management Science*, Vol. 9 (1), 103-118.

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<https://doi.org/10.3126/irjms.v9i1.72718>

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal. It explores how various factors, including the pandemic phase, perceived health risk, income loss, governmental regulations, and media influence, have shaped purchasing patterns during the pandemic.

Methodology: A survey was conducted among 400 organic product consumers from Surkhet Valley, using a convenience sampling technique. Data collection took place between June and July 2024 and analysis was performed using Smart PLS software to test relationships and hypotheses. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess validity and reliability.

Findings: Results show that pandemic phases, perceived health risks, and media influence significantly affected consumer behavior. Economic hardship and government regulations also played roles in limiting access to organic products. Consumers perceived organic products as safer during early pandemic phases but reverted to previous buying habits over time.

Limitations/ Implications: The study is limited to Surkhet Valley and convenience sampling, which may limit generalizability. Nevertheless, these insights are valuable for businesses and policymakers seeking to adapt strategies for the organic product market in post-pandemic settings, promoting resilience and sustainability.

Keywords: : consumer buying behavior, organic products, COVID-19 pandemic, media influence, economic challenges

Introduction

Early in 2020, COVID-19 was deemed a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Talwar et al., 2021). Governments implemented lockdowns in an effort to contain the virus after this news, which caused panic buying globally (Bennett et al., 2021). To fill up on necessities, people flocked to supermarkets. Fearing shortages, people were stockpiling food, medicine, and sanitary goods, according to reports from scholarly research, social media, and mainstream media (Norberg and Rucker, 2020). Supermarket shelves were often empty, which was similar to what was usually observed during cold weather or natural disasters like cyclones (Robinson et. al., 2016). Similar to this, medical supplies and rice vinegar were hoarded in China following the 2003 SARS outbreak. During other public calamities, such as the H1N1 virus in China, Hurricane Sandy in the United States, the nuclear accident in Japan, and the earthquake in Haiti, similar cases of bulk purchase took place (Huang et al., 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak was unquestionably a unique time that had an impact on people's daily lives all around the world. Global food security, quality of life, public health, and economic and financial stability are all thought to have been seriously impacted by the pandemic. The global health crisis has particularly affected eating patterns and led to lifestyle changes for a significant number of people. According to WHO (2021), concerns about sustainability and health were sparked by COVID-19. In this sense, the consumption of organic food and products has expanded (Cramarenco et.al., 2023). Eco-friendly products composed of natural resources are called organic products, and they are implied to be free of chemicals, preservatives, and synthetic ingredients. Since consumer decisions about the environment have an impact on the standard of living for both present and future generations, environmental concerns provide a major challenge to the development of healthy communities.

Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and economic halts were among the restrictive measures that were implemented globally in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020. As a result, companies shut down, jobs were lost, and economies shrank. Businesses face difficulties because of changes in customer behavior even with limitations being softened. During the pandemic, there were notable shifts in consumer behavior characterized by the purchasing attitudes of both individuals and organizations. Panic buying and stock shortages resulted from the crisis's induction of sensitivity to variables like price and quality, especially for non-essential commodities. As long as COVID-19 is there, there will likely be a persistent shift in consumer behavior that will have an effect on economic growth and consumption trends. Studies show that customers have modified their priorities, which impact judgments about what to buy and have led to a long-lasting shift in consumer behavior.

Currently, there is a push to educate people to make wise decisions when choosing organic products due to the desire to build both a sustainable and healthy environment. The last ten years have seen a significant rise in the demand for organic products, nevertheless. The low cost of organic food was identified as a primary factor contributing to the low demand in the city of Mysore in a study conducted by Chandrashekar (2014) on Consumers' Perception towards Organic Products in Mysore. The study found that because consumers were less knowledgeable about organic produce, the proportion of non-organic purchases was significantly higher.

In the context of Nepal, Vaidya (2019) concluded that the competition has been growing quickly every day as a result of Nepal's growing number of online retailers, which will eventually be advantageous for the country's e-commerce industry. Similarly, Parajuli et al. (2022) found that consumers prefer online shopping over coming to a physical store in person. According to the survey, consumers were aware of the pandemic's alleged health hazards. Malla (2018) also discovered that Kathmandu's present online consumers are cost-conscious and want accurate product portrayal on the website along with effective customer and after-purchase assistance. Similarly, Koirala et al. (2021) discovered that a number of issues and difficulties persist when it comes to internet purchasing in Nepal, including questions about the validity of the products, quality assurance, brand configuration, etc. Furthermore, Subedi and Tamang (2023) found an increase in the use of digital payments due to a number of reasons, including COVID-19 risk, perceived benefit, and simplicity of use.

In addition to being a public health catastrophe with potentially fatal health repercussions, the pandemic had crippling long-term implications on the economy. The International Monetary Fund predicted that the onset of a pandemic will cause global economic growth to stagnate in 2020 at 3.00 percent. Furthermore, as the Bureau of Central Statistics had forecast, Nepal's economic development was expected to continue at a rate of 2.70 percent. Furthermore, studies found that small and medium-sized businesses are the main victims of the COVID-19 pandemic because they typically lack the managerial and financial resources necessary to handle such financial problems, which are likely to last longer (Silwal, 2023). The aim of this study is to explore various factors influencing consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how the pandemic phase, perceived health risks, income loss, government regulations, and media influence collectively shape consumer decisions regarding organic products in this region. By examining these dimensions, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key drivers and barriers that affect consumer preferences for organic products in the context of Surkhet Valley.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between pandemic phase and consumer buying behavior of organic products.

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived health risks and consumer buying behavior of organic products.

H3: There is a significant relationship between income losses and consumer buying behavior of organic products.

H4: There is a significant relationship between governmental regulations and consumer buying behavior of organic products.

H5: There is a significant relationship between media influence and consumer buying behavior of organic products.

Review of Literature

Parajuli (2024) has studied the global pandemic and consumer behavior in online grocery shopping (OGS) in Nepal, with an emphasis on customer satisfaction and decision-making as the dependent variable. Perceived ease of use, service quality, security, online payment process, interest, trust, and customer purchasing behavior are examples of independent variables. The results show that customer satisfaction and decision-making are positively influenced by perceived ease of use, service quality, security, and the online payment process. Furthermore, a noteworthy beneficial influence was observed in the areas of trust, interest, and customer buying behavior. According to these findings, the main factors influencing customer satisfaction with online grocery shopping in Nepal after the epidemic are usability, customer trust, secure transactions, and effective payment procedures.

Silwal (2023) examined the COVID-19 outbreak scenario in Nepali businesses and made policy recommendations for the survival and expansion of small and medium-sized businesses in Nepal. Analyzing responses using a descriptive research methodology reveals that the majority of small and medium-sized businesses are severely impacted by the pandemic and they have encountered a number of challenges, including a decline in demand, loss of profit, and liquidity issue. Additionally, the data demonstrates that there have been few commercial operations and that small and medium-sized enterprises are especially vulnerable. The report states that the government declares a unique strategy for companies so they can weather the pandemic and gradually revert to normalcy. The data indicate that a company's internal earnings may be poor and bankers may be unwilling to lend money in this challenging scenario. The businesses should, therefore, seriously explore utilizing funds from current investors.

Singh et al. (2023) have studied the variables that affect consumers' panic purchase behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been discovered that elements like attitude, subjective norms, scarcity, time constraints, and perceived competition positively affect consumers' propensity to make a panic purchase. Additionally, it was found that perceived competitiveness is positively influenced by scarcity and time constraints, whereas customers' panic buying intentions are negatively influenced by perceived social detection risk. In order to reduce panic buying during the pandemic, store managers and legislators will benefit from these findings as they implement improved management practices, social policies, and resource utilization strategies.

Sapna (2023) has examined whether consumers worry about their health and immunity, and their preferences have continued to shift from commercial to organic products. This trend has accelerated after COVID-19. The goal of this study was to examine customers' purchasing patterns for organic products. The findings indicated that 92.00 percent of participants had a favorable opinion of organic products, mostly as a result of their concern for their health. High prices, a restricted selection of products, and inconsistent availability were among the difficulties mentioned.

Faiz et al. (2023) have investigated how, during the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic dynamics shifted dramatically, causing fluctuations in product demand and pricing. Results showed altered consumer behavior during the months of March to June 2020 due to job losses, reduced wages, and promotions. Product prices were linked to COVID-19-related factors and government restrictions. However, sales patterns differed during the pandemic and pre-pandemic periods.

Mbongwe and Qutieshat (2023) have studied the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions to the retail sector and customer behavior. These obstacles include higher demand, broken supply chains, and food stockpiling as a result of pandemic-related anxieties. The purpose of this research is to further our understanding of how COVID-19 affects customer purchasing decisions by concentrating on brand preference. The study evaluates whether the pandemic has changed consumer purchasing patterns with regard to particular brand categories and looks into possible changes in the brands that consumers select. The goal is to compile evidence from publications published between 2020 and 2022. "Consumer buying behavior," "impact of COVID-19 and private label" are some of the important search terms. The analysis shows that a number of variables, such as psychological, cultural, and personal elements, have affected consumer behavior during the epidemic. To fully understand the changing complexity of consumer demand, researchers and marketers must take into account these contextual and influencing elements, which include psychological, sociological, and economic aspects.

Parumasur et al. (2023) have explored how the businesses and their supply systems were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which swiftly turned into a global calamity. There were shortages of inventory, especially for the products like masks, hand sanitizers, and toilet paper, as a result of panic shopping, which, in turn, raised demand. Supply networks were thrown off balance, which presented difficulties for manufacturers, distributors, and suppliers. The bullwhip effect caused unpredictable swings in demand, which had an immediate and long-term effect on enterprises. The purpose of this study is to investigate how COVID-19 has affected panic buying and the triple bottom line, with an emphasis on how consumer behavior affects individuals, healthcare systems, and corporations.

Das et al. (2022) investigated the socioeconomic backgrounds of the participants examining how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their lifestyles and spending habits. The findings indicated that the pandemic had a major effect on consumers in the unorganized sector, which raised demand for reasonably priced daily essentials. Demand for wellness and entertainment products was mediated by changes in lifestyle and affordability, with family income and occupation having an impact. Family income and work status influenced the demand for hygiene and health products, with affordability and awareness acting as a mediating factor. In order to target particular customer categories and modify product offerings during a pandemic, decision-makers can benefit greatly from the data this model offers.

Hu et al. (2022) explored consumer behavioral intentions to buy green products in relation to fear of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings showed that health worries, social media knowledge, intolerance for uncertainty, and personal relevance are all significantly impacted by fear of the pandemic. These factors then influence customers' behavioral intention to buy green products. The results showed that behavioral intention to buy the green product is correlated with fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a serial mediating impact.

Purwasono (2022) has examined how consumer assessments are impacted by attitudes towards sustainable consumption and knowledge anxiety, which in turn affects how much organic product consumers in Surabaya choose to buy. The variables include information anxiety and attitudes towards sustainable consumption, consumer judgments function as a mediating variable, and purchase behavior for organic products serves as the dependent variable. The results show that information anxiety strongly

affects consumer judgments, sustainable consumption attitudes greatly affect consumer evaluations, and consumer judgments significantly influence purchasing behavior. It's interesting to note that, although information anxiety does not directly influence purchasing behavior, it does so through mediating effects on consumer assessments. Furthermore, through the medium of consumer opinions, sustainable consumption attitudes have a direct impact on purchasing behavior.

Buraczyńska et al. (2022) have investigated how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected consumer behavior, with a particular emphasis on the Polish market. The results show that the pandemic had a significant impact on several behaviors, such as paying closer attention to prices, shopping online more frequently, and making larger purchases. A number of pivotal changes were noted in the preferences for purchasing Polish and organic goods. Subgroup analysis showed that the most notable behavioral changes were observed among women, those under 35, highly educated people, and people with higher family incomes. These findings, which emphasize the importance of Internet sales channels and draw attention to the Polish and ecological roots of items, provide useful information for commercial organizations to develop effective sales strategies. This study adds to our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected consumer behavior in the Polish organic market by pointing out particular consumer groups that are experiencing behavioral shifts and offering company owners strategic options.

Jain (2021) studied how COVID-19 epidemic, which started in Wuhan, China, became a major worldwide human catastrophe affecting millions of people and drastically changing many elements of everyday life. Notable changes in e-commerce preferences have resulted from this extraordinary circumstance, especially impacting customer behavior in India. Online shopping has become a popular option as people deal with time limits and increased stress. Online shoppers use it to compare features, costs, and post-purchase services in addition to making purchases. In light of this, a cross-sectional study that looks at the well-established factors influencing online purchasing behavior of residents of Rajasthan, India, has become more significant during the epidemic. E-commerce companies that want to be competitive in the market need to be proactive in understanding and meeting changing consumer needs.

Koirala et al. (2021) have studied how COVID-19 is, in some way, changing how consumers make purchases. According to the study, respondents have a mediocre opinion of Internet shopping. Customers believe that there are still a lot of concerns and challenges with online shopping in Nepal, such as brand configuration, quality assurance, and product credibility. Even though they prefer to purchase online, they are dissatisfied with the system due to issues, like slow service and missed deadlines. Policies, laws, and other best practices ought to be introduced and put into effect because the Internet trading industry is a rapidly growing one. The e-commerce industry won't undergo any significant changes if concerns and challenges relating to online purchases are not resolved right away. People will resume visiting showrooms after the virus subsides and things return to normal. Promoting online buying and selling with quality control and consumer protection would be preferable.

Butu et al. (2020) focused on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on customers' purchasing decisions for fresh vegetables from regional farmers, especially in the quarantined territory of Suceava, Romania. Subsequently, the study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on customers' purchasing intentions, both during and post pandemic. This study's primary objective is to comprehend how these

behavioral shifts may affect how digital technology is used in short food supply chains. Similarly, Koirala et al. (2020) carried out a survey in Kathmandu to investigate and comprehend the general situation management based on the experiences of South Korea, the United States, China, and Italy following the COVID-19 outbreak. The study's primary goal is to use clinical expertise and field experience to pinpoint gaps and needs and offer recommendations for efficient reaction and preparation. The outcome demonstrates that the government built Corona hospitals in the nation's capital and other important provinces, which aided in checking viral effect on time. According to the study, as the economic activities dwindled, the infrastructure and aid packages are required to assist every industry area in order to restore commercial operations.

Conceptual Framework

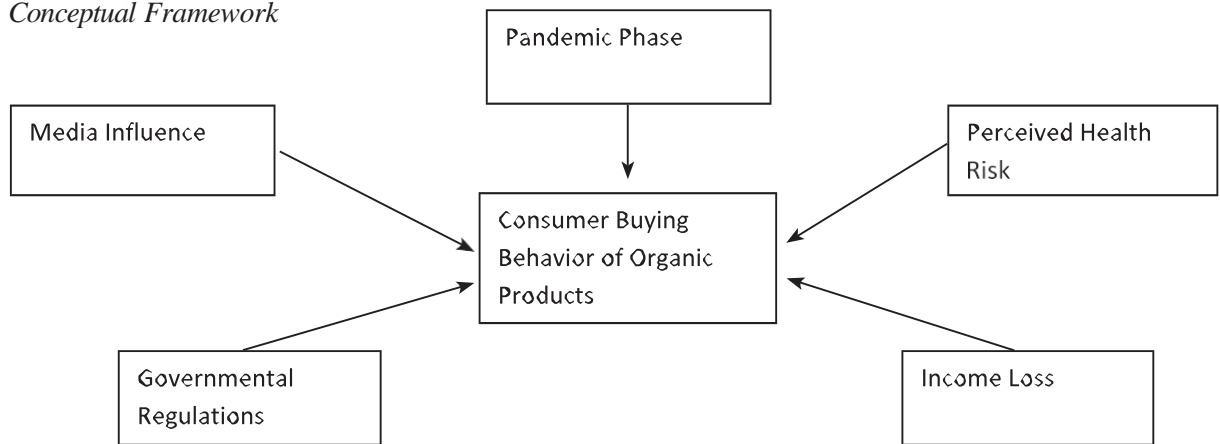
1. **Pandemic Phase:** The pandemic brought on by the outbreak of COVID-19 has had a profound impact on consumer buying behavior in Surkhet Valley, Nepal, particularly in the realm of organic products. With heightened health concerns, consumers have displayed a growing preference for organic items perceived as healthier and safer. This shift is driven by an increased awareness of personal health and well-being, as well as a desire to support local and sustainable agriculture. Moreover, as economic uncertainties linger, many consumers are also becoming more conscious of their spending habits, leading to a focus on essential and environmentally friendly choices. The COVID-19 pandemic has thus accelerated the adoption of organic products in Surkhet Valley, reflecting a broader global trend in consumer behavior (Kelly, 2011).
2. **Perceived Health Risk:** In Surkhet Valley, Nepal, perceived health risk pertains to the way in which consumers evaluate the possible health risks connected to their purchases in relation to the influence of COVID-19. Customers now view organic products as safer and healthier options because they think they are less likely to be contaminated due to the pandemic's increased concerns about safety. As people try to lower their exposure to health dangers during these difficult times, there has been a discernible increase in demand for organic items as a result of this impression (Commodari & La Rosa, 2020).
3. **Income Loss:** Many customers have to prioritise necessities over organic products due to income loss brought on by lockdowns and economic uncertainties. This change in consumer behavior affected the market for organic products by highlighting the significance of affordability and basic needs. Due to the pandemic's economic effects on consumer choices in the area, people became less inclined to priorities organic options and more price-sensitive as they adapted to new financial limitations (Gama et al., 2021).
4. **Governmental Regulations:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, government rules in Nepal's Surkhet Valley have significantly influenced customer purchasing behaviour for organic products. Lockdowns and other social distancing tactics have made people prioritise sustainability and health. The use of organic products has increased as a result of government programs to support organic farming and control costs. Furthermore, consumers now have more faith in organic products due to safety rules and cleanliness standards, which reflects a substantial movement in consumer preferences towards healthier and ecologically friendly solutions (Bentkowska, 2021).

5. **Media Influence:** The media has played a significant role in shaping the consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through news reports, social media, and online content, consumers have been exposed to information about the virus's health implications and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. This heightened awareness has led to an increased interest in organic products, perceived as healthier and safer options. The media's role in disseminating information and promoting health-conscious choices has contributed to a notable shift in consumer preferences and purchasing habits within the region (Tsoy et al., 2021).

6. **Consumer Buying Behavior of Organic Products:** The COVID-19 epidemic has had a major impact on the consumers' purchasing decisions in Surkhet Valley, Nepal, especially when it comes to organic items. Customers in this area started to pay greater attention to what they were eating as worries about health and safety increased throughout the pandemic. Because they believed organic products to be safer and healthier, they became more and more in favor of them. Organic products became increasingly popular as people became aware of their ability to increase immunity and developed a demand for fresh produce that was produced locally. Customers who valued convenience and contactless shopping also turned to e-commerce and online platforms in order to obtain these things. This change demonstrates how drastically the pandemic affected the Surkhet Valley market for organic products (Chaturvedi, Rashid Chand & Rahman, 2021).

Figure 2.1:

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

The study used a quantitative research methodology to identify the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal. Using convenience sampling methods, 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 450 responses were received. 50 of these responses were found to be incomplete and incoherent. Thus, we were left with 400 usable responses for the final analysis. The sample consisted of regular consumers of organic products and data were collected during June and July 2024 in Surkhet Valley, Nepal. Likert scale questionnaires were created with structure in

order to gather quantitative data. To summarize the demographic features of the participants, descriptive statistical analysis was carried out, and statistical software (e.g., SPSS, Excel, and Smart PLS-4) was used to execute the data analysis.

Result and Discussions

Table 1

Demographic Profiles

		No.of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25	80	20.00
	26-35	120	30.00
	36-45	160	40.00
	Above 45	40	10.00
Marital Status	Married	240	60.00
	Single	160	40.00
Gender	Male	250	62.50
	Female	150	37.50
Qualification	Primary or below	40	10.00
	Secondary	160	40.00
	Graduation	120	30.00
	Post Graduation	60	15.00
	Above	20	5.00
Occupation	Government service holder	160	40.00
	Private service holder	200	50.00
	Unemployed	40	10.00
Income level	Less than 10,000	40	10.00
	10,000-20,000	100	25.00
	20,001-40,000	200	50.00
	Above 40,000	60	15.00

Source: Field Survey 2023

The demographic profile of the surveyed population is shown in Table 1 and offers insights into its characteristics. The age, gender, marital status, qualification, occupation, and income level of the data are the categories used to group it. The table shows the distribution of respondents in terms of their age which has been categorized into four groups. The majority 40.00 percent fall under the age group of 36-45 which accounts for 160 respondents out of 400. In terms of respondents' marital status, out of 400 samples, 240 are married while 160 are unmarried. It is observed that 62.50 percent were males and the rest 37.50 percent were females. The level of qualification of majority 40.00 percent which accounts for 160 respondents was secondary level. Similarly, in case of occupation majority, 50.00 percent respondents, are private service holders. The study has been conducted on respondents with different income levels, with majority, 200 respondents, falling within the range of 20,001- 40,000.

Reliability Test

The Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient was used to evaluate the research instrument's dependability. A reliable co-efficient of 0.6 and above are acceptable and high while a reliable coefficient of below 0.6 shows questionable and poor reliability (Dikko, 2016).

Table 2

Reliability Test

Code	N	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
PP	7	0.712	Good
PH	7	0.659	Acceptable
IL	7	0.774	Good
GR	7	0.826	Excellent
MI	7	0.799	Good
CB	7	0.634	Acceptable

As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha of the variables is higher than 0.6; thus, we can say that there is high level of internal consistency among the variables.

Rotated Component Matrix

The matrix reveals the factor loadings of all constructs obtained to be higher than 0.5. It has met the criteria of research. Besides, the communality values of each item have also been recorded to be higher than 0.5, which is highly reliable. Additionally, the values of each construct are higher than 0.7, which is highly valuable (Hair et al., 2013). Similarly, according to Table 3, 31 items among 42 items meet the criteria because the factor loading is more than 0.5. Other remaining 11 components are not taken into account for this study because factor loading is less than 0.5.

Table 3*Rotated Component Matrix*

Items	Factor loadings					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PP1	0.567					
PP3	0.730					
PP4	0.907					
PP6	0.776					
PP7	0.898					
PH2		0.686				
PH3		0.762				
PH6		0.756				
PH7		0.759				
IL1			0.652			
IL3			0.708			
IL4			0.801			
IL5			0.863			
IL6			0.785			
IL7			0.634			
GR2			0.733			
GR4				0.656		
GR5				0.768		
GR6				0.834		
GR7				0.606		
MI1				0.781		
MI2					0.547	
MI3					0.731	
MI4					0.801	
MI5					0.698	
MI7					0.566	
CB1						0.813
CB2						0.771
CB4						0.879
CB5						0.599
CB6						0.625

Smart PLS-4

Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares) is a software package commonly used for structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Hypothesis testing is a fundamental aspect of SEM, and Smart PLS provides capabilities to test hypotheses using the partial least squares algorithm (Wang et al., 2023). In Smart PLS, hypothesis testing typically involves assessing the significance of path coefficients, which represent the relationships between variables in the model. Here, the study is conducted on the role of social media in promoting organic products. For this purpose, Smart PLS-4 is used, which is mentioned below.

Table 4

Path analysis

Path	P value
PP -> CB	*** (0.000)
PH -> CB	***
IL -> CB	***
GR -> CB	***
MI -> CB	0.10

Source: *Smart PLS-4*

Note: (***) denotes P-value significant at 0.01 level of significance, (PP= Pandemic phase, PH= Perceived health risk, IL= Income loss, GR= Governmental regulations, MI= Media influence and CB= Consumer buying behavior of organic products).

According to Table 4, P-value of Pandemic phase, Perceived health risk, Income loss and Governmental regulations are less than 0.01, which indicates that there is significant impact of these variables on consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal, at 1.00 percent level of significance. But, the P-value of media influence is 0.10, which is more than 0.01; therefore, this result shows that there is no significant impact of media influence on consumer buying behavior of organic products in Surkhet Valley, Nepal.

Discussions

The research indicates that the pandemic phase had a noteworthy influence on the purchasing habits of organic product consumers in Surkhet Valley. Early in the pandemic, the need for better substitutes to strengthen immune systems caused a spike in demand for organic products. As the pandemic continued, some customers did, however, return to their previous purchasing patterns. This demonstrates how changing consumer behavior was at different points throughout the pandemic.

Consumer behavior has been found to be significantly influenced by perceived health risks. Consumers bought more of organic items because they felt that they were safer, more hygienic and less likely to be polluted. This emphasizes how crucial safety perceptions are in determining consumer preferences, particularly during periods of increased health anxiety.

The pandemic's financial consequences, including lost jobs and income cutbacks, clearly affected consumer behavior. Some customers chose less expensive options because organic items are typically more expensive. This highlights how economic factors can still have an impact on consumer choices, even in marketplaces where organic and ecological products are the main focus.

Lockdown procedures and governmental laws had a big impact on how people behaved. Consumer preferences were influenced by the limited availability and accessibility of organic products due to restrictions on mobility and business activity. Government initiatives to promote organic farming and manage expenses also played a role in the rise in consumer desire and trust for organic goods.

Although media had a considerable impact on consumer behavior, the study's P-value indicates that media influence was not statistically significant. This could suggest that the media was involved, but that the influence was subtler or more varied for different customers. More research into particular media outlets and how they affect consumers' perceptions may yield a more thorough knowledge.

Conclusions

The Surkhet Valley study emphasizes how the pandemic caused changes in consumer behavior and how health concerns affected the use of organic products. Choices were impacted by economic issues, such as job losses, highlighting the continued importance of economics in organic markets. Both media and government laws had subtle effects, but businesses should strive for flexibility, clever pricing, and teamwork. In light of the ongoing pandemic problems, the study emphasizes the necessity of continual monitoring and research to support resilient and sustainable decision-making.

Implications and Recommendations

Throughout the various stages of a pandemic, businesses need to be ready to adjust to the changing needs of their customers. It is crucial to have viable methods that can adapt to shifting consumer demands.

Businesses should investigate price techniques to increase accessibility to organic products by acknowledging the influence of economic obstacles on consumer preferences. This could entail taking into account various price points or promos.

A favorable environment can be created through cooperation between the government and the organic goods business. Customers and businesses can gain from programs that support organic farming, guarantee product availability, and deal with financial difficulties.

Businesses should communicate responsibly and informatively through a variety of media outlets, even though the power of the media is considerable. It is possible to positively impact consumer attitudes by accurately providing facts regarding the safety and health benefits of organic products.

Numerous factors impact consumer behavior; hence, it's important to keep an eye on it and do ongoing research to stay informed. To make wise judgments, businesses and regulators need keep up with shifting trends and preferences.

This research adds to the growing body of knowledge about consumer behavior and how outside influences affect market dynamics. In order to promote resilient economies and sustainable consumption habits, it will be crucial to comprehend and address consumer behavior as the world struggles to deal with the pandemic's effects.

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