

https://dspace.org/

Marketing and Motivational factors that influence attitude towards consumption of vegan food products among young consumers

Rachel Raff; Neo Ligaraba; Norman Chiliya

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/41608
DOAJ

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

:: IJEBD ::
(International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Development)
Volume 07 Number 03 May 2024
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

Marketing and Motivational Factors that Influence Attitude Towards Consumption of Vegan Food Products Among Young Consumers

Rachel Raff[1], *Neo Ligaraba[1], Norman Chiliya[2]
Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa1
Business Management at University of Venda, Limpopo, South Africa2
Corresponding Author*: rachelraff95@gmail.com, neo.ligaraba@wits.ac.za, norman.Chiliya@univen.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The influence of veganism in the food market is growing. This study aims to investigate the impact of marketing (perceived value and product attributes) and motivational (subjective norms and health consciousness) factors in driving consumers vegan food purchase intention in a market that has an increasing demand of vegan food – South Africa.

Design/methodology/approach: Structural equation modelling was used to test the five hypotheses based on the validated survey data gathered from 283 young consumers in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Findings: The results suggested that subjective norms, health consciousness, perceived value, product attributes and attitude have positive effects on young consumer's vegan products consumption behaviour.

Research limitations/implications: This study provided an understanding of consumer's perspective regarding their purchase intention of vegan food products, which will help marketers, researchers, and food producers to achieve marketing strategies for the development of these products.

Practical implications: This study contributes to the literature of and practice of vegan food products consumption by identifying the various marketing and motivational factors that can influence vegan food products purchase intention. It provides marketers insights into important factors to focus on while developing marketing strategies for vegan consumers.

Paper type: Literature review

Keyword: *South Africa, Youth, Vegan products, Attitude, Health consciousness*
Received : January 4th
Revised : April 18th
Published : May 31th

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers are increasingly shifting their food habits and lifestyles towards vegan food (Martinelli and De Canio, 2021). Healthier lifestyles have become a current social trend with significant influence on marketing across the world (Martinelli & De Canio, 2021). Several authorities have found that the rising number of individuals who take interest in their well-being, strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle, by using products that ameliorate their overall health (Cooper, Dedehayir, Riverola, Harrington & Alpert, 2022). With society producing an influx of information surrounding contradictory healthy lifestyle options, most individuals are not scientifically equipped to evaluate these options, and thus can be socialised into adopting different eating habits (Kiely, 2021; Arroyo, Liñan & Martínez, 2020; Su, Khaskheli, Raza & Yousufi, 2022). Examples of common alternative healthy eating options are functional foods, where the healthfulness of a food product is enhanced by adding or removing certain ingredients (Voedingscentrum, 2016) and organic foods, which are foods free from food additives, chemical fertilizers, antibiotics, artificial pesticides and genetic modification (Song, Safari & Mansori,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

2016). Amongst these alternatives, one such diet gaining prominence is a plant-based diet, most known as veganism. As a recent trend, veganism has been increasing in popularity around the world (Park & Kim, 2022).

Vegan is defined as the exclusion of items that exploit animal or animal by-products in the manufacturing process or something that is naturally plant-based (The Vegan Society, 2019). The term vegan is therefore not only confined to that of edible and functional products but can also be defined as a person who does not consume animal products, including meat, fish, seafood, eggs and dairy. In this study vegan foods denote foods that substitute animal products with plant-based alternatives.

The Food Revolution Network (2018) claims that the global shift towards plant-based foods and away from animal products is being driven by millennials. Thus, the current study will assess young consumers in South Africa, to gauge the attitudes towards consumption of vegan foods by this important segment.

A. Problem Statement

The worldwide vegan food market grew from $14.44 billion in 2020 to $15.77 billion in 2021 and is predicted to continue growing for the next several years (Hemi, 2022). This has been largely driven by the increasing preference of healthier food. Young consumers are more than ever, demanding alternative healthier eating practices than previous generations (Maarsman 2016) with veganism at the forefront of this healthy eating demand (Food Revolution Network, 2018). While the number of individuals adopting veganism internationally continues to rise (Food Revolution Network, 2018).

There have been numerous studies conducted on consumer's attitude towards purchase intention of non-conventional products (Maarsman, 2016; Teng & Wang 2015; Mhlophe, 2016) to ameliorate overall health both in South Africa and abroad. Majority of studies found has been concentrated on the consumption of organic products as studies of veganism, specifically in a South African context are thin on the ground. Teng & Wang (2015) conducted a study on decisional factors driving organic food consumption to understand the generation of consumer purchase intention in South Africa. Where Mhlophe (2016) investigated the insights into consumer purchase intentions towards organic food in South Africa and Song, Safari & Mansori (2016) researched the effects of marketing stimuli factors on consumer's perceived value and purchase intention of organic food in Malaysia. These studies were aimed at assessing the purchase behaviour of consumers as well as the factors influencing the consumer's attitude towards purchase intention or consumption of organic foods. More recent studies have been done in Holland (Maarsman, 2016) on the underlying motives for food choices and how these motives contribute to healthy food choices. Despite healthy eating being on the rise, there is a paucity of research regarding the purchasing behaviour, attitudes and values of these individuals, particularly amongst young consumers, in an emerging economy like South Africa towards the adoption of veganism. The objective of this study is to assess the marketing and motivational factors that lead to purchase intention of vegan foods. In particular young consumers who internationally are demanding vegan lifestyles.

B. Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the main theoretical concepts underlying the present study.

1. Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory (S-O-R)

The Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory (S-O-R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) explains the development and subsequent changes of individual's needs and thus, the resulting purchase decisions. The three elements contained within the basic S-O-R model; stimuli, organism and response. Stimuli are generally regarded as external to the individual, while the internal states which arise from the environmental stimuli are referred to as the organism.

2. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) postulates that three predictor variables significantly determine behavioural intention. These variables are attitude towards behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Where consumer purchase intention is concerned, this model has proven reliable (Holst & Iversen, 2011).

C. Literature Review

1. Subjective Norms

Ajzen (1985) defines subjective norms as the promulgated social influence of an individual's significant others, on the individual's perception regarding a behaviour. It is because of this social influence which, in turn, causes an individual to engage or avoid specific behaviours, which led to subjective norms gaining recognition as an integral factor when determining the power of social influence on behavioural intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).The notion of subjective norms, translated to a food selection process, will expect an individual to select

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

food influenced by the behaviours of others. This is because food is generally consumed in social situations, the surrounding social cues and opinions may influence the item of food selected (Maarsman, 2016).

When researching the relationship of subjective norms and attitudes in the context of alternative healthy eating options, a significantly positive relationship was identified between the subjective norms of a consumer and their subsequent purchase intention of organic foods (Teng & Wang, 2015). Meaning, that if it is believed by consumers, that positive attitudes towards organic foods are held by those significant to them, there is a stronger likelihood of the consumer displaying positive intentions to purchase organic foods (Teng & Wang, 2015).

2. Health Consciousness

A key indicator in the purchase intentions of consumers for non-conventional products are health related issues (Mhlophe, 2016). Currently consumers are more sensitive regarding the state of their health, their nutritional intake and the value of the food they consume. Health consciousness is a measure of a consumer's willingness to undertake actions constructive to their health (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). While most research points to the role between health consciousness and consumer purchase intention, there is evidence given that these health motivations indirectly influence the purchase intention of consumers (Mhlophe, 2016). This could be because of the diffusion of literature on what constitutes a healthy diet (Maarsman, 2016). In a book published by Amato and Partridge (1998), it is found that practitioners of plant-based diets live longer and contract fewer health problems than meat-eaters (Maarsman, 2016). On the contrary, Elmadfa and Meyer (2017), state that because of the amino acid pattern and easy digestibility of animal-based protein, this protein source is of a higher quality for humans.

Although the motivation to purchase healthier food items is consistently displayed among consumers that are health conscious (Mhlophe, 2016), this likelihood of consumers purchasing vegan foods due to the contradictory literature from other researchers or medical doctors is questionable.

3. Perceived Value

The consumers evaluated differences of the benefits in relation to the costs of an available offering against the perceived alternatives of another offering is what is known as perceived value (Kotler and Keller, 2011). Prior research postulates that consumers engage in healthy food choices because of their concern for their appearance (Maarsman, 2016). Foods that are beneficial for one's physical appearance such as body, skin, nails, teeth and hair which increase perceived physical health and one's attractiveness may appeal more to consumers than alternative foods. This is indicative of the fact that consumers are value maximisers and will act on the offer they assume delivers them maximum benefits (Kotler and Keller, 2011) which can be deduced, based on research previously mentioned, that consumers will value products that they believe enhance their physical and physiological beauty over alternative options (Maarsman, 2016).

There are various perceived values associated with adopting a vegan lifestyle. The implication of eating a vegan diet is that the variety of plant foods consumed is much wider than the diet of omnivores, which is expected to have clear health benefits in the aspects mentioned above (Cole, 2008). The Physicians Committee (2018) states that veganism aids in weight loss and increased metabolic functions. In their book, Nelson and Nelson (2018) go into detail on how a plant-based vegan diet clears skin problems and restores one with a glowing complexion.

4. Product Attributes

Product attributes - the additional tangible and intangible attributes of a product - are standard factors in persuading a consumer to purchase a specific product (Song et al., 2016). It was found that consumers will consider the nutritional and weight benefits of a product in relation to the degree they live a healthy lifestyle (Maarsman, 2016) and opt for the healthier version. Product attributes play a considerable part in a consumer's ultimate purchase decision of a product (Maarsman, 2016) and understanding what product attributes consumers look for when exploring food options will give valuable insight into their subsequent product purchase. Song, Safari and Mansori (2016) confirmed that perceived benefits of a product were positively influenced by product attributes. Consumers considered organic produce to be more enjoyable and taste better while also being safer than conventional products and are more enjoyable and taste better than the available conventional products (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). It was also found that certification and labelling (Ponsanam, Napompech & Suwanmaneepong, 2014) of organic food increased the perceived benefits associated by consumers with organic foods.

5. Attitude

Generally understood as a predisposition to react in a consistent manner to a stimulus, favourably or unfavourably, attitudes are learned or acquired rather than an innate quality (Hughes, 1971). From the knowledge and reasoning of communicated experience by others or an individual's personal experience, an individual's attitude is formed (Fishbein, 1975). An individual's value system also contributes to the formation of an individual's attitude (Lamb et al, 2015). A consumer's attitude is a key determinant of the consumers behavioural

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

intention; the more favourable the behavioural attitude, the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour (Teng & Wang, 2015). With regards to TRA, the consumers' attitude will result in a specific behavioural intention which in turn will affect the purchase intention of the product. For the purpose of this study, attitude towards behaviour will be evaluated.

In a study by Ares & Gámbaro (2007) on the perceived value and willingness to sample functional food, it was found that a positive attitude was held by younger people towards functional foods (Maarsman, 2016). Functional foods are food with added or removed ingredients to increase the nutritional benefit of the product (Voedingscentrum, 2016; Maarsman; 2016). Teng and Wang (2015) found that if a consumer's significant others held a positive attitude towards organic foods, there was a stronger likelihood of the consumer displaying positive intention to purchase organic food. Meaning, the subjective norms of a consumer's significant others significantly affect a consumer's attitude towards a product and subsequent purchase intention.

6. Purchase Intention

The notion that purchase intention of a specific product is commonly related to behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of consumer is outlined in the Theory of Reasoned Action, which states that an individual's attitude leads to behavioural intention which leads to actual behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In a similar manner, the above components including a factor of perceived behavioural control are incorporated in the TPB, in an attempt to explain the combined effect on the behavioural intention of an individual (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A fundamental antecedent of actual behaviour by the individual is behavioural intention and is identified in both the TRA and the TPB. There is an assumption that based on the information available to an individual will aid in their rational decision making. This assumption is the basis for the relationship between behavioural intentions and actual behaviour. Therefore, an individual's behavioural intention towards the performance or lack of performance of a behaviour signals an immediate determinant of an individual's actual behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

In this study, behavioural intention is the consumer's intention to purchase vegan foods or rather purchase intention of vegan foods. Research on alternative health practices found that organic food consumption confirmed a significant positive relationship between the attitudes of an individual and their subsequent purchase intention (Teng & Wang, 2015).

Additionally, an individual's purchase intention is hindered by the intensity of another person's subjective norm and how strong the individual's motivation to comply with the subjective norm is (Teng & Wang, 2015). However, investigating consumers purchase intention of vegan foods may not translate to actual purchase of vegan foods by the consumer.

D.Hypotheses development

1. Subjective Norms and Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods

A study by Al-Swidi et al., (2014) examined the role of subjective norms in the theory of planned behaviour within the context of organic food consumption. The study found that subjective norms significantly influence attitude toward buying intention. In many previous studies we again find a strong causal link between subjective norms and attitude formation (Al-Swidi, Huque, Hafeez, Shariff, 2014; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005). As explained by Ajzen (1985), an individual's attitude about a particular behaviour is significantly influenced by the attitudes of their significant others. This could affect the performance or avoidance of a particular behaviour by an individual because of the socialised attitude they have formed towards the behaviour (Maarsman, 2016).

The most important finding of Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) research on subjective norms, attitudes and intentions of Finnish consumers in buying organic food, the subjective norms through attitude, affected purchase intention of organic food. With the findings presented, it is predicted that if the subjective norms, of those significant to the consumer, are positive towards vegan foods, the consumer will have a positive attitude towards consumption of vegan foods and thus subsequent purchase intention vegan foods Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between subjective norms and attitude towards consumption of vegan foods.

2. Health Consciousness and Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods

Researcher Nagaraj (2021) investigated the direct and indirect impact of health consciousness on attitude towards organic food products in India and found that health consciousness has direct and significant impact on attitude. In a study by Schifferstein & Oude Ophuis (1998), to improve health, organic food consumers were willing to switch to purchasing organic foods since they were aware of the fact that their health is affected by their food intake (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). Researchers Magnusson et al., (2001) showed that health consciousness predicted attitudes, intention and purchase intention of organic foods. In other research by Paul & Rana (2010), consumers who displayed a higher concern towards health-related issues were found to hold favourable attitude towards purchasing organic foods. We therefore hypothesize that:

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

H2: There is a positive relationship between health consciousness and attitude towards consumption of vegan foods.

3. Perceived Value and Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods

Prior research postulates that consumers engage in healthy food choices because of their concern for their appearance (Maarsman, 2016). Foods that are beneficial for one's physical appearance and which increase perceived physical health and one's attractiveness may appeal more to consumers than alternative foods. This is indicative of the fact that consumers are value maximisers and will act on the offer they assume delivers them maximum benefits (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

Consumer's attitude towards a certain product is improved depending on the favourability with which they perceive the value of the product, so if consumers perceived values are positive, this will lead to a positive effect on attitude (Wu & Chang, 2016). A study by Shaharudin, Pani, Mansor, Elias (2010) found that perceived value had a noteworthy effect on a customer's willingness to purchase organic foods while Song, Safari and Mansori (2016) found where strong positive relationship between consumers perceived value had actual purchase of organic foods. Although there is scarce literature on perceived value of vegan foods, this construct nevertheless remains an important construct to the study, and thus we hypothesize that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived value and attitude towards consumption of vegan foods.

4. Product Attributes and Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods

Product attributes play a considerable part in a consumer's ultimate purchase decision of a product (Maarsman, 2016) and understanding what product attributes consumers look for when exploring food options will give valuable insight into their subsequent product purchase. It was found that consumers will consider the nutritional and weight benefits of a product in relation to the degree they live a healthy lifestyle (Maarsman, 2016) and opt for the healthier version.

Studies indicate that the attribute of taste of organic produce, was considered by a consumer's, to be more enjoyable and taste better (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008) while Padel and Foster (2005) found the safety attribute of organic food to be perceived by consumers to be safer than conventional products. Although previous research on how product attributes influence the attitude towards consumption of vegan foods or even organic foods, we none the less hypothesize that:

H4: There is a positive relationship between product attributes and attitude towards consumption of vegan foods.

5. Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods and Purchase Intention of Vegan Foods

The relationship between attitude towards consumption and purchase intention has been extensively researched in literature in multiple contexts (Martinelli & and De Canio, 2021; Mhlophe, 2016; Teng & Wang, 2015). This relationship is founded from the conventional wisdom of Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), where the duo researched that the attitude centered around a particular behaviour, has a causal link in the intention to perform that behaviour. According to Ajzen (1991), the more favourable attitude displayed by the individual in regard to the behaviour, so the individual's behavioural intention strengthens.

Several authorities have found that within the context of organic food purchases, attitudes explained purchase intention (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005; Magnusson et al, 2001). Similarly, upon reviewing related literature in relation to the purchase intention of organic food, attitudes regarding organic food attributes are identified as crucial antecedents influencing consumer decision making (Teng and Wang, 2015).

Since attitude is about the personal belief that a certain action by an individual will lead to a desired outcome it can be said that an individual's attitude towards purchasing vegan food in order to ameliorate health has a significant effect on the purchase intention of individuals who engage in purchasing healthy food items. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between attitude towards consumption of vegan foods and purchase intention of vegan foods.

II. METHODS

In this Methodology section, the research design, sampling technique, data collection and data analysis are presented.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

A. Research design

The current study utilised a quantitative approach. The aim of quantitative research is to establish a relationship between existing variables within the population/representative sample by way of statistical techniques to propose a concluding course of action that can applied to other populations.

B. Sampling

Convenience sampling technique was used. The survey was distributed to 300 participants and only 283 were fully completed.

C. Data collection

Empirical data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A included demographic questions and Section B included the constructs of the study.

D. Analysis of data

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the respondent demographic information using SPSS version 25. For Inferential statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equality Modelling using AMOS 25 were employed in data analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

This section provides an overview of the respondent profile, the scale accuracy analysis, the model fit and hypotheses results.

1. Respondents profile

The demographics of the study shows that females constituted most young people sampled (59.0%). Young people between the ages of 18 to 22 constituted the majority of age segments sampled (80.9%), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Variables	*Descriptions*	*(%)*
Gender	*Male*	*38.5*
	Female	*59.0*
	Prefer not to say	*0.7*
Age	*18–22*	*80.9*
	23–25	*13.8*

2. Scale accuracy analysis

The scale accuracy analysis is presented in Table 2 and followed by a discussion of the measurement scale reliability and validity.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

Table 2. Accuracy analysis scale

Research Construct		Descriptive Statistics				Cronbach's Test		CR Value	AVE Value	HSV Value	Factor Loading
		Mean Value		Standard Deviation		Item-total	∝ Value				
SN	SN1	2.11	2.25	1.046	1.08	0.472	0.694	0.69	0.38	0.254	0.760
	SN2	2.22		1.045		0.546					0.756
	SN5	2.46		1.133		0.456					0.480
	SN6	2.20		1.105		0.441					0.368
HC	HC3	2.96	3.02	1.151	1.14	0.807	0.893	0.89	0.80	0.516	0.888
	HC4	3.07		1.137		0.807					0.901
PV	PV1	3.05	3.33	1.085	1.09	0.684	0.802	0.82	0.62	0.563	0.848
	PV2	3.16		1.109		0.771					0.898
	PV4	3.77		1.065		0.507					0.571
PA	PA1	2.30	3.16	1.064	0.96	0.403	0.756	0.61	0.29	0.432	0.556
	PA2	3.05		1.023		0.568					0.745
	PA3	3.35		0.871		0.612					0.439
	PA4	3.45		0.859		0.500					0.301
	PA5	3.43		0.925		0.418					0.312
	PA6	3.38		1.005		0.507					0.685
ATT	ATT1	3.03	2.77	1.107	1.11	0.700	0.829	0.82	0.54	0.230	0.850
	ATT2	3.09		1.142		0.652					0.856
	ATT3	2.35		1.053		0.654					0.598
	F5	2.59		1.118		0.621					0.599
PI	PI1	3.23	3.17	1.079	1.10	0.448	0.742	0.73	0.36	0.254	0.551
	PI2	3.13		1.095		0.495					0.761

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

PI3	*3.02*	*1.080*	*0.533*		*0.461*
PI4	*2.78*	*1.144*	*0.513*		*0.416*
PI5	*3.67*	*1.101*	*0.537*		*0.725*

SN – Subjective Norms, HC – Health Consciousness, PV – Perceived Value, PA – Product Attributes, ATT – Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods, PI – Purchase Intention of Vegan Foods.
NB: CR = Composite Reliability and AVE = Average Variance Extracted.
Source: Field data (2019)

3. Reliability and validity assessment

The Cronbach's alpha test (α) alpha test reached the required reliability threshold of 0.6 as recommended by (Hair *et al.*, 2017). All the study measures had factor loadings and composite reliability values above the recommended threshold values of 0.50 and 0.70, respectively (Nunnally, 1967). Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) of different study constructs was also higher than 0.50 as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). (Table 2). SEM returned good model fit (X^2/df = 2.547, *CFI* = 0.905, *NFI*= 0.856, *TLI* = 0.871, *GFI*= 0.879, *RMSEA* = 0.074).

4. Correlations between constructs

Table 3 the correlations among constructs of the study.

Table 3. Inter construct correlation matrix

	SN	*HC*	*PV*	*PA*	*ATT*	*PI*
SN	*1*					
HC	*0.407*	*1*				
PV	*0.444*	*0.718*	*1*			
PA	*0.472*	*0.477*	*0.558*	*1*		
ATT	*0.499*	*0.677*	*0.750*	*0.657*	*1*	
PI	*0.504*	*0.327*	*0.470*	*0.436*	*0.480*	*1*

Source: Field data (2019)
Note: SN – Subjective Norms, HC – Health Consciousness, PV – Perceived Value, PA – Product Attributes, ATT – Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods, PI – Purchase Intention of Vegan Foods.

5. Hypotheses testing and path coefficients.

Table 4 below presents the results of the hypotheses and path coefficients followed by a discussion thereof.

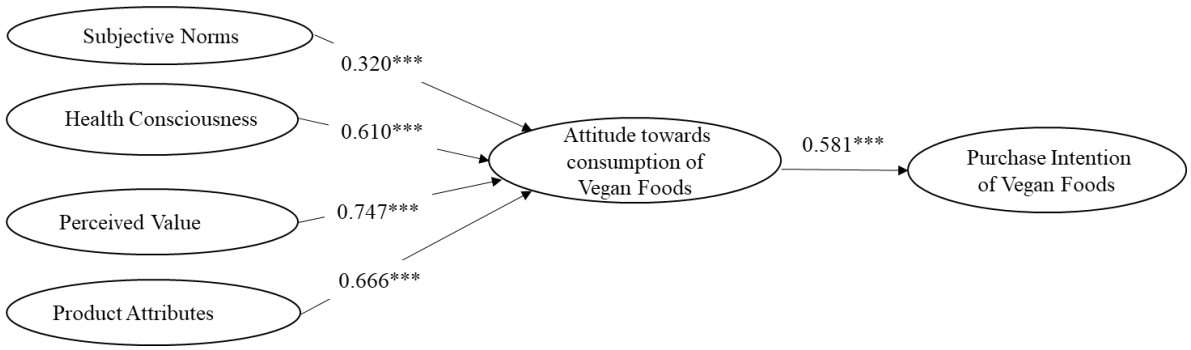
Table 4. Structural model results

Proposed hypothesis relationship	*Hypothesis*	*Path Coefficient*	*P Value*	*Outcome*
SN → ATT	*H1*	*0.320*	***	*Supported and Significant*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

HC → ATT	*H2*	*0.610*	***	*Supported and Significant*
PV → ATT	*H3*	*0.747*	***	*Supported and Significant*
PA → ATT	*H4*	*0.666*	***	*Supported and Significant*
ATT → PI	*H5*	*0.581*	***	*Supported and Significant*

Note: *** = p<0.01
SN – Subjective Norms, HC – Health Consciousness, PV – Perceived Value, PA – Product Attributes, ATT – Attitude towards Consumption of Vegan Foods, PI – Purchase Intention of Vegan Foods.



*Note: Effect size significant at ** * = p<0.01*

Figure 1: Tested Conceptual model for the study

In Figure 1, the coefficient of H1 Subjective norms → Attitude towards consumption of vegan foods was 0.32, and this suggests a significant positive relationship. This reinforces the influence of social norms and supporting the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Thus, the results for H1 are similar to that of prior research analysing consumer behaviour towards plant-based meat and dairy alternatives market in Sweden (Mousel & Tang, 2016) where subjective norms were found to influence people's opinions of plant-based companies as consumers of these products are influenced by the positive feedbacks from their significant others. The current study's findings add vegan foods to the list of attitudes towards consumption of alternate healthy eating products which are influenced by subjective norms (Teng & Wang, 2015; Mhlophe, 2016).

The coefficient of H2 Health consciousness → attitude towards consumption of vegan foods. The coefficient of H2 was 0.61, and this suggests a significant positive relationship. Thus, the findings of the current study build on the majority of past studies, in which it was found that health consciousness was an important motive for clarifying attitudes towards organic foods (Padel & Foster, 2005. The results also went against a study conducted by Michaelidou & Hassan (2008) that claimed there was a weak relationship between health consciousness and attitudes. These findings suggest that young consumers are conscious about their health and keep abreast of changes responsible for the state of their health and thus associate more health benefits with vegan foods with likely attitude to consume such products.

The coefficient of H3 (Perceived value → attitude towards consumption of vegan foods) was 0.747 demonstrating a positive robust relationship. Prior literature with regards to the relationship between perceived value and attitude has revealed that consumer's attitude towards a certain product is improved depending on the favourability with which they perceive the value of the product, so if consumers perceived values are positive, this will lead to a positive effect on attitude (Wu & Chang, 2016). The results of the current study are in line with those conducted by Wu & Chang (2016) by building on evidence that the more favourable perceived value students have of vegan foods, the more positive their relationship attitudes towards consuming vegan foods and thus marketing the benefits consumers perceive is vital in ensuring subsequent purchase intention.

The coefficient of H4 (Product attributes → attitude towards consumption of vegan foods) was 0.666, and this suggests a strong relationship. Finally, the coefficient of H5 (Attitude towards consumption of vegan foods

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

→ purchase intention of vegan foods) was 0.581, and this suggests a strong relationship. This is in line with the findings from research studies conducted by Teng and Wang (2015), whereby it was found that consumers attitude towards consumption had a positive effect on consumers purchase intention of organic foods. As well as a study conducted by Mousel and Tang (2016) who found that attitude towards purchasing plant-based meat and dairy alternatives, positively affected their purchase intention of such alternatives.

B. Discussion

The study hypothesised that subjective norms, health consciousness, perceived value and product attributes influence attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of vegan foods amongst youth in South Africa. All five hypotheses (H1-H5) were supported, therefore indicating that subjective norms, health consciousness, perceived value and product attributes have an important effect on attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of vegan foods amongst youth in South Africa.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study proved that there is a positive relationship between subjective norms, health consciousness, perceived value, product attributes, attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of vegan foods amongst youth in South Africa. The outcome of the study is in line with the hypotheses put forward. The empirical results from the study supported all research hypotheses in a significant way. All five hypotheses are supported, with results indicating a positive relationship between subjective norms 0.320, health consciousness 0.610, perceived value 0.747, product attributes, 0.666 and, attitude towards consumption. The relationship between attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of vegan foods amongst youth in South Africa also indicated positive relationship of 0.581. The study provided evidence to validate the applicability of the Stimulus- Organism-Response theory (S-O-R) and the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB), which form the theoretical framework of this study.

1. Implications of the study

There are several management implications that follow from this study. The marketing contribution aims of this study were in order for producers, retailers and marketers of vegan foods to aid in the planning, formulation and implementation of marketing strategies. This study helped in identifying young consumers as customers with favourable attitudes and purchase intention of vegan foods. Thus, vegan food companies and marketers know who to better target their products towards. As there is a general feeling that non-conventional foods/ vegan foods/foods deemed to be healthier contain a price premium, driving the price up and the demand down, policy makers can assist in advising policy makers to impose subsidy programmes or new policies in order to enhance the growth of the vegan food market in South Africa.

Furthermore, companies could contemplate connecting themselves in order to have a stronger influence on grocery stores to stock vegan foods because currently the plant-based alternatives are only stocked in selected stores and cover a small portion within that store.

2. Limitations and areas of future research

This study has certain shortcomings. First, only university students were respondents to the survey. The fact that some students were not aware of veganism or vegan foods, or not be responsible for household food purchases may have affected the response provided by participants in this study. Second, the current study utilized survey items that were extracted from previous research which examines functional or organic foods and modified in order to address vegan foods as a means of ameliorating overall health. Third, the current study is limited to measuring the attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of vegan foods in order to improve health; there is no measurement of actual buying or consuming behaviour. Therefore, the study does not gain insight as to whether these respondents attitude lead to actual purchase of vegan foods to improve their overall health. Lastly, this study was limited to purchase intention of vegan foods for health benefits, where moral, ethical and environmental concerns can also cause an individual to purchase vegan foods.

Upcoming research could examine each variable in depth as well as other factors which would influence consumer's attitudes to consumption of vegan foods. An interesting area for future research would be to examine, the ethical and environmental motivations for purchasing vegan foods, how the media positions plant-based foods and the subsequent influence it causes, lastly, research on the prejudices towards vegans and plant-based foods could be done.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M., (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour.* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behaviour, Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 50(2): 179-211

Al-Swidi, A., Huque, M. R., Hafeez, M. H., & Shariff, M. N. M. (2014). "The role of subjective norms in theory of planned behavior in the context of organic food consumption", *British Food Journal*, [Online] 116(10), 1561-1580. Accessed from: https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-05-2013-0105_[3 October 2021]

Arroyo, P. E., Liñan, J., & Vera Martínez, J. (2020). Who really values healthy food? *British Food Journal*, *123*(2), 720-738.

Cole, M. (2008). Asceticism and hedonism in research discourses of veganism. *British Food Journal.* 110(7), 706-716.

Cooper, K., Dedehayir, O., Riverola, C., Harrington, S., & Alpert, E. (2022). Exploring consumer perceptions of the value proposition embedded in vegan food products using text analytics. *Sustainability*, *14*(4), 2075.

Elmadfa, I & Meyer, A. L. (2017). Animal Proteins as Important Contributors to a Healthy Human *Diet*. *Annual Review of Animal Biosciences.* [Online]. 5, 111-131. [Internet: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-animal-022516-022943; downloaded on 27 September 2021].

Food Revolution Network (2018). *Why the Global Rise in Vegan and Plant-Based Eating Isn't A Fad (600% Increase in U.S. Vegans + Other Astounding Stats.* [Internet: https://foodrevolution.org/blog/vegan-statistics-global/; downloaded on 6 October 2021]

Hair, J., Hollingsworth, C. L., Randolph, A. B., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2017). An updated and expanded assessment of PLS-SEM in information systems research. *Industrial management & data systems*, 117 (2017), pp. 442-458.

Hemi, K. (May 13, 2022). Is Veganism Becoming More Popular? Using Data to Track the Growing Trend. [Internet: https://sentientmedia.org/increase-in-veganism/; downloaded on 6 June 2022].

Kiely, M. E. (2021). Risks and benefits of vegan and vegetarian diets in children. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, *80*(2), 159-164.

Lamb, C. W. Jr., Hair, J. F. Jr., McDaniel, C., Boshoff, C., Terblanche, N., Elliott, R. & Klopper, H. (2015) *Marketing.* 4th Edition. South Africa, Oxford University Press.

Maarsman, P. (2016). *A Quantitative Study to the Underlying Motives for Food Choices: And How Do These Motives Contribute to Healthy Food Choices Among Dutch Young Adults?* Communication Studies (MSc). University of Twente. [Online]. [Internet: https://essay.utwente.nl/71051/1/Maarsman_MA_Faculty%20of%20Behavioural,%20Management%20and%20Social%20Sciences.pdf; downloaded on 23 August 2021].

Magnusson, M. K., Avrola, A., Hursti Koivisto U. K., Aberg, L, & Sjoden, P. O. (2001). Attitudes towards organic foods among Swedish consumers. *British Food Journal*, 103(3), 209-226.

Martinelli, E., & De Canio, F. (2021). Non-vegan consumers buying vegan food: the moderating role of conformity. *British Food Journal*, 124(1), pp.14-30.

Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mhlophe, B. (2016). Consumer Purchase Intentions Towards Organic Food: Insights from South Africa. *Business & Social Sciences Journal*, 1(1), 1-32.

Michaelidou, N. and Hassan, L.M., (2008). The Role of Health Consciousness, Food Safety Concern and Ethical Identity on Attitudes and Intentions towards Organic Food. *International Journal of Consumer Studies.* [Online] 32(2), pp.163-170. [Internet: https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/828/1/IJCS_Michaelidou%20%20Hassan%20Role%20of%20health%20consc.pdf; downloaded on 16 May 2021].

Mousel, T. & Tang, X. (2016). *Analysis of Consumer Behavior Towards Plant-Based Meat and Dairy Alternatives Market in Sweden.* Masters Thesis. Uppsala University.

Padel, S. & Foster, C. (2005). Exploring the gap between attitudes and behaviour: understanding why consumers buy or do not buy organic food. *British Food Journal*, 107 (8), pp606-626

Park, E., & Kim, S. B. (2022). Veganism during the COVID-19 pandemic: Vegans' and nonvegans' perspectives. *Appetite*, *175*, 106082-106082.

Paul, J., & Rana, J. (2012). Consumer behavior and purchase intention for organic food. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *29*(6), 412-422.

Physicians Committee (2018). *The Health Benefits of Going Vegan with Dr. Neal Barnard.* [Online]. [Internet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLasU_5RmRA; downloaded on 27 September 2021].

Song, B. L., Safari, M., Mansori, S. (2016). The Effects of Marketing Stimuli Factors on Consumers' Perceived Value and Purchase of Organic Food in Malaysia. *Journal Pengurusan*, 47(10), pp119 -130.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
ISSN : 2597-4785 (ONLINE)
ISSN : 2597-4750 (PRINTED)

Su, Y., Khaskheli, A., Raza, S. A., & Yousufi, S. Q. (2022). How health consciousness and social consciousness affect young consumers purchase intention towards organic foods. *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*, (ahead-of-print).

Suhr, D. (2006). The Basics of Structural Equation Modelling. [Online]. [Internet: https://www.lexjansen.com/wuss/2006/tutorials/TUT-Suhr.pdf; downloaded on 21 August 2021].

Tarkiainen, A., & Sundqvist, S. (2005). Subjective norms, attitudes and intentions of Finnish consumers in buying organic food. *British Food Journal*, 107 (11), 808-822.

Teng, C.C. & Wang, Y.M. (2015). Decisional factors driving organic food consumption: Generation of consumer purchase intentions, *British Food Journal*, [Online], 117(3), 1066-1081. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-12-2013-0361; downloaded on 10 April 2021].

The Vegan Society. (2019). [Internet: https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/definition; downloaded on 25 May 2019].

Wu, S. H. Chang, H. L. (2016). The Model of Relationship between the Perceived Values and the Purchase Behaviors toward Innovative Products. *Journal of Management and Strategy.* [Online]. *7*(2). [https://doi.org/10.1108/07363761211259223].