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Understanding What Influences Gen Z Consumers to Purchase Organic Food: Evidence from Bangladesh Using the Theory of Consumption Values

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Abstract - **This study aims to extend the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV) to identify key factors shaping Generation Z's willingness to purchase intentions of organic food, adding two additional constructs: health concerns and environmental value. This pilot study also identifies the main barrier to purchasing organic food in the Bangladesh market. A quantitative approach was used, and 102 respondents were collected from Gen Z consumers in Bangladesh. This data was analyzed with SPSS and included the use of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression models to test six hypotheses. Findings reveal that social values (WOM) and emotional value are the strongest predictors, whereas price sensitivity is the main barrier to purchase intention of organic food. Findings also show that environmental concern and health consciousness had weaker direct effects. As the first TCV-based study on Bangladeshi Gen Z, it offers theoretical and practical marketing insights for effective communication and pricing, supporting healthier lifestyles and sustainable consumption aligned with SDGs 3 and 12.**

Keywords: **environmental marketing; organic products; organic food consumption; theory of consumption value; Bangladesh.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Concerns about health and sustainability at the global level are impacting consumers' preferences, leading to an increase in demand for organic, sugar-free, and health-related foods [1]. Consumers value organic food for their health and environmental benefits and, in general, are willing to pay a premium price [2]. In Bangladesh, the awareness of organic food products is gradually increasing, aligning with the global trend but also reflecting food safety concerns and wellness locally [3]. Generation Z, which consists of people born roughly between 1995/1996 and 2010/2012, is the first generation to be truly digital natives. Their consumption choices are deeply influenced by social media, their peer networks, and global culture [4]. While the level of fast-food consumption of Bangladeshi Generation Z is very high, for instance 63–68% of the Bangladeshi Generation Z in Dhaka and Chittagong reported eating it often due to convenience and taste [5], rising health issues like obesity and chronic diseases are fueling interest in healthy options like organic food [6]. However, the motivations and barriers for Bangladeshi Generation Z for their purchases of organic food are not well understood.

Previous studies have examined consumer behavior towards organic food from different perspectives, such as culture, lifestyle, and personal values. However, there are very few studies using the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV) to analyze the young consumers' decision-making process with organic food in Bangladesh. Gen Z is an important group to study because they are future consumers, more open to new ideas, and often care about social influence and sustainability. To address the above research gaps, the main objectives of the study are: *RO1: to identify which factors influence Gen Z consumers' intention to buy organic food in Bangladesh. RO2: to extend the Theory of Consumption Values to explore six factors: functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value, health consciousness, and environmental value.*

Based on this, the pilot study addresses the following research question: *RQ1: What determines Generation Z consumers' organic food purchase intentions in Bangladesh, and how do their health, social, and environmental values affect these intentions?*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Background: Theory of Consumption Value

Theory of Consumption Value (TCV) examines why consumers choose certain products over others, focusing on their decision-making drivers [7]. It has been widely applied in marketing and consumer behavior research. Researchers in previous studies used TCV to describe a wide range of products or services such as food, clothes, education, tourism, etc. [8,9]. By leveraging TCV, researchers can explore not only purchase decisions but also willingness to buy, uncovering how different consumption values shape consumer preferences for organic products [10]. Indeed, TCV provides a multidimensional framework well-suited for analyzing organic food purchasing behavior [7]. However, its application to Gen Z consumers in Bangladesh remains unexplored. This study therefore investigates how functional, social, environmental, and personal values, along with health consciousness and price sensitivity, shape Gen Z's purchase intentions toward organic food [11]. Research indicates that environmental value strongly influences young, educated consumers' green purchasing decisions in Bangladesh [12],

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while a consumer's health consciousness also encourages a positive attitude toward buying organic food [13].

In the current study, we anticipated that our integrated proposed framework would provide comprehensive and complementary insights into Gen Z consumers' sustainable consumption values and organic food purchase decisions in Bangladesh.

a. Hypothesis Development

2.2.1. Functional Value (Perceived Quality)

Functional value (FV) refers to a product's usefulness based on its practical, utilitarian, or physical performance, as perceived by the consumer [7]. FV is a key determinant in whether consumers choose green products and services [14]. The findings on consumers' willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products are varied. Despite this, several studies demonstrate that individuals often have favorable views of these products and are somewhat prepared to pay more to safeguard both individual and collective well-being [15,16]. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (H1): Functional values (Perceived quality) are more positive influences that consumers are willing to pay more.

2.2.2. Conditional Value (Price Sensitivity)

Conditional value (CV) refers to how a particular circumstance or context can change the value of a choice [7]. Organic items are typically of a higher price, but consumers find the price justifiable due to the perception of quality [17]. Previous studies indicate that highly price-sensitive consumers are less likely to translate their environmental awareness into green purchasing behavior [18]. Therefore, this study proposes the following.

Hypothesis (H2): Conditional value has a significant impact on willingness to purchase organic food.

i. Social Value

Social value (SV) refers to the perceived utility a consumer derives from a product based on its association with positively or negatively stereotyped social groups [7]. Previous studies have found that a consumer's choice to purchase sustainable goods is heavily influenced by their social environment, peer pressure, and the desire for social approval [19]. Moreover, consumers are more likely to act or think alike to a reference group sometimes regardless of their personal beliefs [15]. This suggests that the purchase intention to buy products such as organic foods may increase in consumers of Bangladesh, if they are endorsed by public figures, like celebrities, social media influencers or even professionals. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (H3): Social value is positively associated with customers' purchase intention towards organic foods.

2.2.4. Emotional Value (Personal Value)

Emotional value (EV) refers to the benefit we get from how a product or experience makes us feel, such as excited, secure, or comfortable [7]. Consumers' strong emotional values, moral actions, and affectionate behaviors may significantly impact decision-making to buy green or organic products [19]. For example, in the US, coffee shops' use of green practices significantly influenced how attached their customers became [20]. Ultimately, when consumers form a strong emotional bond with eco-friendly goods, it often drives them to purchase more and adopt an identity as a protector of the environment [21]. Therefore, this study proposes the following.

Hypothesis (H4): Emotional value has a significant impact on willingness to purchase organic food.

2.2.5. Health Consciousness

Health consciousness (HC) is described as how much people think about their health and how their lifestyle choices, like diet, affect it [22]. As people grow more health-conscious, they often look for healthier food options and nutrition information [23]. Previous research has identified many factors influencing organic food purchases, but health concerns remain the most common reason consumers choose it [24]. Research strongly supports the positive link between health consciousness, attitude, and organic food buying intentions. As consumers grow more health-conscious, they increasingly prefer organic and healthy food options [23]. This, we propose:

Hypothesis (H5): Consumers who have Health Consciousness prefer a significant impact on willingness to purchase organic food.

2.2.6. Environmental Value

Environmental value (EVa) refers to an individual's conviction and perception regarding the importance of protecting the environment and minimizing ecological harm [25]. Individuals prioritizing EVa tend to exhibit eco-friendlier purchasing behavior, such as purchasing organic food [12, 26]. Empirical findings from previous studies have confirmed that a favorable environmental attitude significantly affects the purchase of green products, which leads to sustainable consumption behavior [27]. In light of the above discussion, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis (H6): Environmental value (Eva) has a significant impact on willingness to purchase organic food.

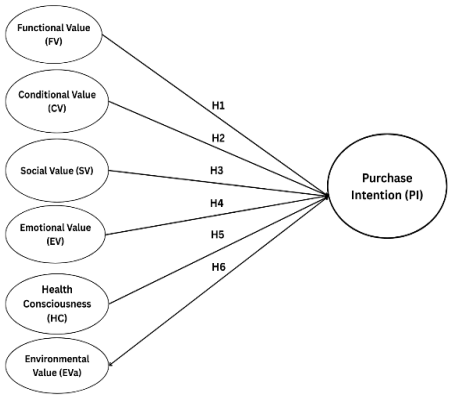
The model of dependent variables with independent variables, along with the hypothesis, is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual model of Purchase Intention

III.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection and Measures

In this study, we used a quantitative research design to



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investigate Gen Z's consumption behavior for organic food in Bangladesh. A structured self-administered questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed via social media and email to target university students, who represent the Gen Z population. Online surveys are considered effective for reaching young, tech-savvy groups [28]. Convenience sampling was applied due to its accessibility and time efficiency [29].

The questionnaire included four demographic questions pertaining to respondents' age, education level, monthly income, and occupation. Respondents' age and education were assessed using close-ended questions with appropriate options to ensure accuracy in their answers. Nevertheless, 28 items of 7 variables are adopted from well-established literature. For example, five items of functional, epistemic, and personal value are adopted from previous literature 30,31]. Four items of purchase intention; conditional value are taken from [32]. Lastly, three variables from environmental and social values were taken [33]. The participants responded to the questionnaire based on the Likert scale (1 - Strongly Disagree, 5 - Strongly Agree).

1. Statistics Technique

We obtained 102 valid responses from students aged 18 to 29 years, from both private and public universities in Bangladesh. All responses were obtained fully anonymously, protecting the participants' anonymity and encouraging truthfulness in their responses. The responses were then coded and analyzed using SPSS version 26 to ensure that the information gathered would be accurately interpreted and reliable, thus findings were respectful of their integrity.

IV FINDINGS

4.1 The socio-demographic profile

Table 1 shows that most respondents are male (53.9%), aged mainly between 22–25 years (65.7%), and the majority are undergraduates (74.5%), reflecting a young, mostly student-based population.

Table 1: The socio-demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	46	53.9
Female	55	45.1
Prefer not to say	1	1.0
Age		
18–21 years	13	12.7
22–25 years	67	65.7
26–29 years	16	15.7
30–40 years	6	5.9
Level of Education		
Undergraduate	76	74.5
Postgradute	17	16.7
Master	7	6.9
Average Monthly Income		
None	24	23.5
5,000-10,000 BDT	200	33.3
11,000-20,000 BDT	98	17.6
20,000-30,000 BDT	116	9.8
More than 30,000 BDT	224	15.7
Total (Respondents)	**102**	**100.0**

4.2. Reliability and Descriptive Analysis

In this study, the reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using SPSS 26. The results showed that all constructs had Cronbach's Alpha value above the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.759 to 0.909. This indicates that the items used for each construct were internally consistent and measured the intended concepts reliably.

Specifically, Social Value showed acceptable reliability (α = 0.759), while Conditional Value (α = 0.835), Functional Value (α = 0.842), and Purchase Intention (α = 0.897) demonstrated strong reliability. Emotional Value (α = 0.909), Health Consciousness (α = 0.904), and Environmental Value (α = 0.899) showed very strong reliability. Overall, these results confirm that the measurement scales used in this study were reliable and suitable for analyzing consumer behavior toward organic food products.

The mean values of table 2 presents that Functional Value has a mean of 3.694 indicating that respondents consider quality, safety, and packaging for organic foods. Conditional Value has a mean of 3.54 showing that respondents are price sensitive and consider price while purchasing organic foods. The social value with a mean of 3.38 indicates moderate social influence by family, friends, and social media on organic foods consumption value. Emotional Value has a mean of 3.54 indicating respondents being favorable to personal responsibility and consumption of green products. Health Consciousness has a mean of 3.714 indicating health benefits strongly impact consumption value. Environmental Value has a mean of 3.47, indicating a neutral to slightly positive attitude towards environmental issues when making purchasing decisions. Finally, Purchase Intention has a mean score of 3.65 verified by the means of respondents stated Gen Z's are more inclined to purchase organic foods in the future.

Variable Name & Item	Cronbach Alpha Value	Overall Mean	Overall mean
Functional Value	.842	3.695	3.569
Conditional Value	.835	3.539	
Social Value	.759	3.382	
Emotional Value	.909	3.537	
Health Conciousness	.904	3.714	
Environmental value	.899	3.471	
Purchase Intention	.897	3.647	

Table 2: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha Values)

4.3 Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Table 3 presents the correlation between each value with Purchase Intention (PI). The Environmental Value (EVa) had the highest correlation to PI (0.726). This implies that individuals who care about the environment are more likely to have the intent to purchase. Emotional Value (EV) demonstrated a strong correlation (0.723), demonstrating that feelings and emotional attachment are significant drivers of purchase intention. Health Consciousness (0.701) and Conditional Value (0.692) had the next highest correlation, which implies that health awareness, as

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well as situational benefits, such as convenience and situation, significantly contribute to purchase intention. While Functional Value (0.685) has a moderate effect, it is significant, demonstrating that practicality is important as well. Social Value (SV) (0.672) demonstrated the weakest relationship with purchase intention, which implies that social approval/ image has the least influence on values on purchase intention. Overall, this illustrates that environmental concerns and therefore emotions are the most significant contributors to purchase intention while social influence is of relative less extent**.**

Table 3: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

4.4 Test of Hypothesis and Interpretation

From Table 4, we see that the F-value is 40.180 (p = 0.000), which is less than 0.05. This implies that we reject the null hypothesis, and we accept the alternative hypothesis at the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the proposed predictors statistically significantly explain the variation in Purchase Intention among consumers.

Table 4: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

The regression model (Table 5) shows a strong link (R = 0.847) between the six values and Purchase Intention (PI). About 71.7% of the change in PI is explained by the model (R^2 = 0.717), and the adjusted value (0.699) confirms it is a good fit. The low error (0.48458) and significant F-test (p < 0.05) means the model is reliable.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Chan
1	.847[a]	.717	.699	.48458	.717	40.180	6	95	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Functional Value, Price Sensitivity, Social Influence, Personal Value, Hea Consciousness, Environmental Value

Table 5: Regression Model Summary

The results of the hypothesis (Table 6) show that Social Value (β = 0.226; p = 0.004), Conditional Value (β = 0.168; p = 0.043), and Emotional Value (β = 0.225; p = 0.025) have a significant positive effect on PI. Therefore, H2, H3, and H4 are accepted, confirming that social influence, conditional benefits, and emotional value strongly increase purchase intention. On the other hand, Functional Value (β = 0.139; p = 0.112), Health Consciousness (β = 0.166; p = 0.058), and Environmental Value (β = 0.104; p = 0.323) were not significant. Hence, H1, H5, and H6 are rejected, showing that functionality, health concerns, and environmental value do not significantly predict PI

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	PI	SV	CV	EV	HC	EVa	FV
PI	1.000	.672	.692	.723	.701	.726	.685
SV	.672	1.000	.628	.499	.563	.556	.554
CV	.692	.628	1.000	.653	.568	.627	.542
EV	.723	.499	.653	1.000	.634	.806	.623
HC	.701	.563	.568	.634	1.000	.684	.713
EVa	.726	.556	.627	.806	.684	1.000	.693
FV	.685	.554	.542	.623	.713	.693	1.000

Table 6: Regression Coefficient

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Results
		B	Std. Error	Betxa			
1	**(Constant)**	.008	.248		.034	**.973**	
	FV	.144	.090	.139	1.604	**.112**	Rejected
	CV	.169	.082	.168	2.053	**.043**	Accepted
	SV	.237	.080	.226	2.985	**.004**	Accepted
	EV	.214	.094	.225	2.285	**.025**	Accepted
	HC	.167	.087	.166	1.917	**.058**	Rejected
	EVa	.094	.095	.104	.993	**.323**	Rejected

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.611	6	9.435	40.180	.000[b]
	Residual	22.308	95	.235		
	Total	78.919	101			

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

b. Predictors: (Constant), FunctionalValue, PriceSensitivity, SocialInfluence, PersonalValue, HealthConsciousness, EnvironmentalValue

V.DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This study examined the purchase intentions of Generation Z towards organic food in Bangladesh using the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV). The results revealed that social value, conditional value, and emotional value had a significant and positive effect on purchase intentions, while functional value, health consciousness and environmental value were not significant.

The strong effect of social value indicates that Gen Z are not only very influenced by peer groups and social media endorsements, but also by word-of-mouth recommendations from others. This is consistent with previous research which has suggested that young consumers often seek social approval through their purchases. However, this differs with previously held views about environmental or health values as leading motivations for sustainable food purchasing. This provides an indication that a marketing strategy could effectively target influencers, community endorsements and online spaces to enhance social acceptance of organic food products. Campaigns that promote organic food products through relatable role models may enhance the perceived social benefits associated with their consumption.

The significance of conditional value shows that price sensitivity

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and situational benefits (discounts promotions, subsides etc.) are still significant aspects for Gen Z when buying organic food in Bangladesh. Whilst some of the respondents said they would pay more but affordability still plays a key deciding role, consistent with literature on emerging market consumers. Thus, marketers and policy makers should think of ways to include student discounts, limited time promotional offers, and bundling product purchases to try to offset cost. Furthermore, finding incentives or subsidies for organic products that support the younger, price sensitive consumers could increase adoption levels.

Similarly, emotional value positively impacted purchase intentions, suggesting that Gen Z develops attachments and positive feelings toward sustainable consumption. This demonstrates that organic food marketing is effective when it appeals to emotions such as pride, responsibility, and identity, echoing past findings in green consumer research. Companies should focus on emotional narratives in advertisements and initiatives that convey the feelings about personal well-being, sustainability, and how it benefits the community. Strategies that can meld the emotions created between consumers and eco-friendly lifestyles are likely to be efficacious.

Unexpectedly, the functional value construct did not significantly affect purchase intentions. This may mean that Gen Z consumers assume all organic food meets a minimum level of quality which is unimportant, and do not prioritize functional attributes as differentiators. Similarly, health consciousness and environmental value did not have a significant impact. This also was surprising given the current global focus on health and environmental issues. Therefore, one explanation of this study could be that only spreading awareness does not automatically convert into purchase decisions unless it is supported by social influence, emotional appeal, and affordability.

Overall, these findings suggest that marketers should adopt socially engaging, emotionally appealing, and economically accessible strategies to promote organic food. Policy interventions may focus on subsidies, awareness programs, and collaborations with educational institutions to make organic food more appealing and attainable for young consumers.

V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

(1) The pilot survey was conducted on Gen Z university students in Bangladesh, resulting in limitations to the broader population. Future research can add in generational cohorts or include working professionals to compare differences in organic food purchase intentions with large sample size.

(2) Data collection was predominately from urban centers, thus does not provide the perspective of rural consumers where awareness and access vary considerably. The future could include both urban and rural samples to gain wider perspective.

(3) While this study examined six values under TCV, other personal factors such as attitudes, lifestyle, and cultural influence may also play important roles in shaping purchase behavior. Future research should integrate these variables to extend the explanatory power of the mode

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