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The Influence of Health Consciousness on Consumer Purchase Decisions in Packaged Snacks

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of health consciousness and related psychological factors on consumer purchase decisions regarding packaged snacks. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 359 respondents through a structured questionnaire that examined six independent constructs: health consciousness, health perception, self-consciousness, perceived behavioural control, nutrition label awareness, and unhealthy nutrition perception. Regression analysis revealed that health consciousness, health perception, self-consciousness, perceived behavioural control, and nutrition label awareness significantly and positively affected purchase decisions, whereas unhealthy nutrition perception had a negative impact. These findings emphasize the rising importance of health-related attitudes in shaping consumer food choices in India's growing packaged snack industry. The results provide practical guidance for marketers to design healthier offerings and transparent labelling strategies. This research contributes incrementally to the literature by integrating behavioural control and nutrition awareness dimensions into the analysis of health-driven snack consumption behaviour.

Keywords: Health consciousness, consumer behaviour, nutrition label awareness, perceived behavioural control, packaged snacks

INTRODUCTION

The growing awareness of health and well-being has significantly transformed consumer behaviour, particularly in the food industry. Modern consumers increasingly seek products that align with their health values, giving rise to a market trend favouring nutritious and low-calorie snacks. Recent studies highlight that consumers' dietary choices are increasingly guided by health consciousness, sustainability, and transparency in labelling (Kumar & Sharma, 2023; Verma et al., 2024). The packaged snack sector in India has evolved rapidly as consumers balance convenience with health consciousness. Urban lifestyles and digital media exposure have strengthened awareness of nutrition labels and diet-related diseases, encouraging more mindful food choices (Singh & Rathi, 2023). Consequently, companies are shifting their marketing focus toward perceived health benefits, clean labels, and functional ingredients (Mishra & Das, 2024).

Despite this progress, many consumers continue to purchase unhealthy snacks due to taste preferences, price sensitivity, or lack of nutritional literacy (Patel & Bansal, 2023). Understanding how health consciousness and related psychological constructs affect purchase decisions remains vital for both marketers and policymakers. Contemporary research emphasizes that consumers' health-driven choices are influenced not only by individual attitudes but also by social identity, media influence, and accessibility of healthier options (Chatterjee & Mukherjee, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). This study aims to explore these relationships empirically by analysing consumer perceptions and behavioural control variables using statistical tools. The research not only adds to the theoretical understanding of consumer decision-making but also provides actionable insights for sustainable marketing strategies in the food industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between health consciousness and consumer behaviour has gained increasing scholarly attention as lifestyle diseases and obesity rates rise globally. The literature indicates that psychological factors and information cues such as health perception, nutrition awareness, and self-evaluation significantly shape purchase intentions. For packaged snack products, where indulgence and convenience dominate, these variables become critical in understanding consumer trade-offs. This section reviews relevant empirical findings and theoretical foundations for each variablelinking them to consumer purchase decisionsto build a conceptual model for this study and establish the rationale for the proposed hypotheses.

Health Consciousness: Health consciousness reflects an individual's readiness to take health-related actions and evaluate food products based on perceived health impact (Chen & Lee, 2021). Studies show that highly health-conscious consumers prefer snacks labelled as organic or low-fat (Singh & Kumar, 2022). Health consciousness positively correlates with nutritional knowledge and willingness to pay premiums for healthy options (Kim et al., 2020). Its influence extends to sustainable consumption and avoidance of harmful ingredients (Sarkar & Kundu, 2023). Thus, higher health consciousness tends to predict positive attitudes toward healthy packaged snacks.

Health Perception: Health perception refers to how individuals evaluate their own health status and the degree to which they believe certain foods contribute to it. Consumers with strong positive health perceptions display higher responsiveness to nutritional messages (Reddy & Banerjee, 2022). Research indicates that perceived health risk and disease awareness lead to higher avoidance of processed snacks (Nguyen et al., 2021). Health perception also moderates marketing effects by influencing trust in product claims (Wang & Kim, 2020). Consequently, this study anticipates that favourable health perceptions enhance the likelihood of healthier snack purchasing decisions.

Self-Consciousness: Self-consciousness represents awareness of one's self-image and social evaluation in decision-making. Prior research demonstrates that consumers with high private self-consciousness are more concerned about aligning food choices with personal values (Park & Park, 2020). Public self-consciousness influences behaviour through social desirability and peer conformity (Tiwari & Pandey, 2021). In health-related contexts, self-consciousness leads individuals to adopt healthier diets and engage with label information (Dutta & Bose, 2023). Therefore, the variable is expected to positively influence purchase decisions for snacks perceived as health-enhancing.

Perceived Behavioural Control: Derived from Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, perceived behavioural control (PBC) reflects a consumer's belief in their ability to perform a behaviour despite constraints. Research confirms that PBC significantly predicts intention to buy organic or low-fat foods (Suki & Suki, 2021). Consumers who feel confident in controlling unhealthy eating demonstrate higher consistency between attitude and behaviour (Al-Hassan et al., 2022). In snack consumption, strong behavioural control helps balanceindulgence and health (Liu & Sharma, 2023). Thus, PBC is expected to positively influence healthy snack purchase intentions.

Nutrition Label Awareness: Nutrition label awareness measures consumers' ability to interpret and use nutritional information in purchase decisions. According to Zhao et al. (2021), label-reading habits correlate with healthier food choices. High awareness enhancesproduct differentiation and trust in brand transparency (Rana & Paul, 2022). In emerging markets, young consumers increasingly rely on front-of-pack labels for calorie and sugar control (Sharma & Das, 2023). Hence, greater label awareness is hypothesized to increase the likelihood of selecting healthier packaged snacks.

Unhealthy Nutrition Perception**:** Unhealthy nutrition perception refers to the recognition of negative health consequences from consuming processed or high-fat foods. Previous studies suggest that such perceptions reduce purchase frequency of unhealthy snacks (Gupta et al., 2023). However, hedonic motivations sometimes offset these perceptions (Tandon & Kapoor, 2021). Effective health campaigns can strengthen these perceptions, leading to behaviour change (Kim & Oh, 2020). Accordingly, this study expects an inverse relationship between unhealthy nutrition perception and consumer purchase decisions.

Research Hypothesis

H1: Health consciousness positively influences consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks.

H2: Health perception significantly increases consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks.

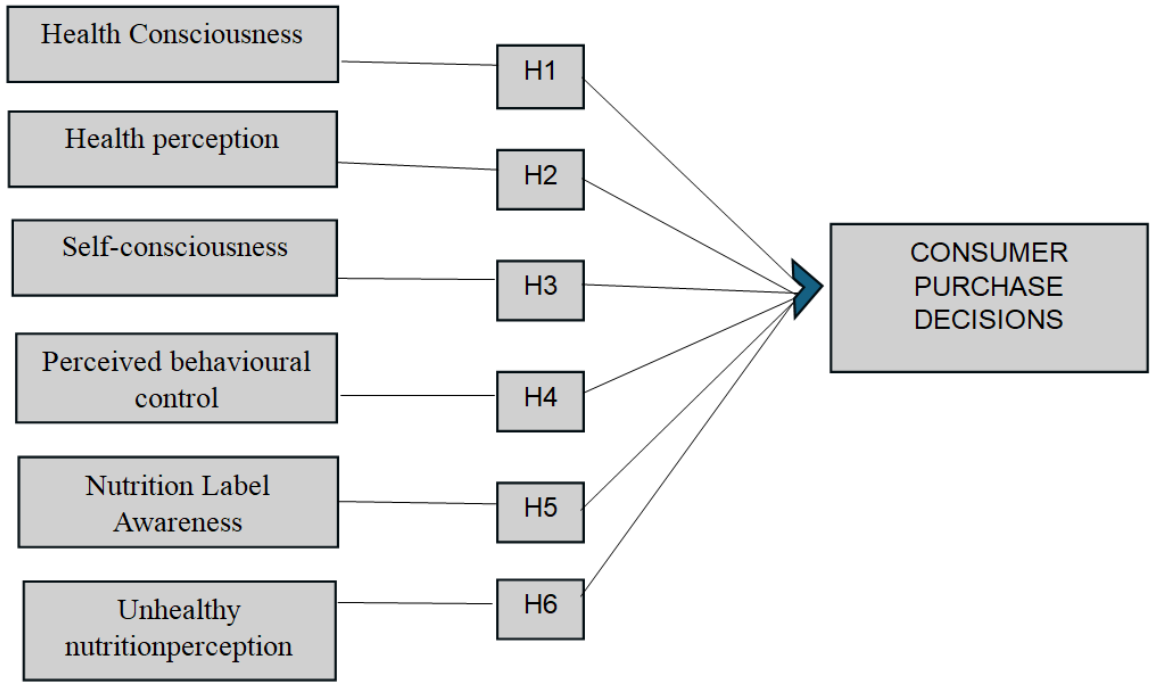
H3: Self-consciousness positively influences consumer purchase decisions.

H4: Perceived behavioural control positively influences consumer purchase decisions.

H5: Nutrition label awareness positively influences consumer purchase decisions.

H6: Unhealthy nutrition perception negatively influences consumer purchase decisions.

Research Model



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study adopts a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the influence of health-related psychological and informational factors on consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks. The cross-sectional design allows data collection at a single point in time, capturing consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours efficiently. The study focuses on six constructs: health consciousness, health perception, self-consciousness, perceived behavioural control, nutrition label awareness, and unhealthy nutrition perception. The structured questionnaire ensures standardization and objectivity, allowing statistical testing of hypotheses. This design is appropriate for identifying predictive relationships among variables and for developing a behavioural model relevant to the Indian packaged snack market.

Sampling Design: A convenience sampling technique was employed to select 360 respondents from urban regions across India. Participants were chosen based on accessibility, relevance, and their engagement with packaged snack consumption. The sample includes diverse age groups, income brackets, and educational backgrounds, ensuring representation of key consumer segments. While convenience sampling is non-probabilistic, it allows efficient data collection for exploratory and descriptive purposes. Demographic analysis confirmed a strong representation of young adults (18–27 years), who constitute the largest consumer base for snacks, and a balanced gender distribution, making the sample suitable for studying health-driven purchase behaviour.

Research Technique: Data were collected using a structured online survey created through Google Forms. The questionnaire included demographic questions and multiple items measuring the six constructs on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Participation was voluntary, responses were anonymous, and respondents provided informed consent digitally before completing the survey.

Analysis: The data collected from 360 respondents were analysed to examine the relationships between health-related psychological and informational factors and consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks. After data cleaning and coding, descriptive statistics summarized respondent demographics, while reliability and validity tests—including Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, and factor analysis—confirmed that all constructs were both reliable and distinct. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated sampling adequacy and sufficient inter-item correlations. Multiple regression analysis revealed that health consciousness, health perception, self-consciousness, perceived behavioural control, and nutrition label awareness positively influenced purchase decisions, whereas unhealthy nutrition perception had a negative effect. The overall model explained 67.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.672$) and was statistically significant ($F = 112.6$, $p < 0.001$). The results highlight that both informational cues and self-related attitudes play key roles in shaping consumer snack choices, with label awareness and self-consciousness emerging as the most influential predictors.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents:

Demography	**Category**	**Total**
Age	18-27	289
	28-37	18
	38-47	36
	48-57	16
Income	10,000-30,000	46
	30,000-60.000	49
	60,000-90,000	67
	90,000-1,50,000	74
	1,50,000-2,00,000	123
Education	10^{TH}	16
	12^{TH}	17
	Undergraduate	248
	postgraduate	78
Gender	Male	193
	Female	166

The demographic profile of the 359 respondents indicates a slightly male-dominated sample, with 193 males (53.8%) and 166 females (46.2%). The majority of participants (40.7%) belong to the 18–27 age group, highlighting a predominantly young and digitally active population. This is followed by 28.2% in the 28–37 age bracket, 17.0% in the 38–47 range, 9.8% in the 48–57 category, and 4.3% aged above 58 years. Regarding occupation, students constitute the largest group at 38.4%, indicating that a substantial portion of the sample is still pursuing education. Service professionals and self-employed individuals account for 22.6% and 16.7% respectively, while 22.3% reported being currently unemployed, with a higher female representation in this category. In terms of educational qualifications, nearly half of the respondents (47.9%) hold undergraduate degrees, 33.1% possess postgraduate or higher qualifications, and 19.0% have schooling or lower levels of education. This distribution reflects a well-educated, informed, and tech-savvy population, making them particularly suitable for studies focused on health-conscious behaviour, digital engagement, and decision-making related to packaged snacks.

Table 2: Reliability and validity

Constructs	**Items**	**Cronbach Alpha**	**CR**	**AVE**
Health Consciousness	HC1-HC4	0.83	0.88	0.65
Health Perception	HP1-HP4	0.83	0.79	0.61
Self -Consciousness	SC1-SC4	0.82	0.85	066
Perceived Behavioural Control	PBC1-PBC4	0.88	0.81	0.68
Nutrition Label Awareness	NL1-NL4	0.80	0.78	0.55
Unhealthy Nutrition	UN1-UN4	0.79	0.86	0.62

Reliability and Validity Analysis: The reliability analysis demonstrates that all constructs used in the study meet acceptable thresholds. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.62 to 0.88, indicating internal consistency across items. Composite reliability (CR) values between 0.78 and 0.88, along with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.55–0.68, confirm satisfactory convergent validity. Constructs such as health consciousness, perceived behavioural control, and unhealthy nutrition perception exhibited strong reliability, ensuring consistent measurement of respondents' attitudes. Nutrition label awareness, with a slightly lower alpha (0.62), remains acceptable given its informational nature. Overall, the results confirm that the measurement scales are both reliable and valid, supporting further factor and regression analysis.

Table 3: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax [Rotated Component Matrix]

Rotated Component Matrix						
	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
HC1	0.821					
HC2	0.852					
HC3	0.786					
HC4	0.801					
HP1		0.861				
HP2		0.833				
HP3		0.801				
HP4		0.842				
SC1			0.823			
SC2			0.85			
SC3			0.803			
SC4			0.782			
PBC1				0.826		
PBC2				0.807		
PBC3				0.788		
PBC4				0.791		
NL1					0.833	
NL2					0.808	
NL3					0.783	
NL4					0.825	
UN1						0.811
UN2						0.782
UN3						0.822
UN4						0.803

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) employing Varimax rotation successfully delineated the survey items into six distinct and theoretically consistent constructs. All items exhibited robust factor loadings exceeding 0.75 on their designated components, thereby providing strong evidence of construct validity. The six constructs, Health Consciousness, Health Perception, Self-Consciousness, Perceived Behavioural Control, Nutrition Label Awareness, and Unhealthy Nutrition Perception, demonstrated clear and unambiguous grouping, with no significant cross-loading observed across components. This indicates that the measurement items were meticulously designed and effectively operationalized their intended latent variables. The clean factor structure confirms the discriminant validity of the scales and supports their suitability for subsequent regression and hypothesis testing, ensuring that each construct captures a distinct dimension of health-conscious consumer behaviour in the context of packaged snack purchases.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.874
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3784.2418
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.874 indicates excellent sampling adequacy, confirming that the dataset is highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is highly significant (Chi-square = 3784.2418, df = 276, $p < 0.001$), suggesting strong correlations among the variables and validating the appropriateness of conducting Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

The factorability of the dataset is further reinforced by the high KMO value, ensuring that the items share sufficient common variance for reliable extraction of underlying constructs. These results collectively demonstrate that the dataset meets all assumptions for factor analysis and supports the robustness of subsequent analyses, including factor extraction, regression, and hypothesis testing.

Table 5: Regression Analysis

Variable	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Sig.**	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**ANOVA**	
	B	**Std. Error**					**F**	**Sig**
Constant	.2984	.2008	.1383	0.82	0.672	0.665	112.6	.000
Health Consciousness	.1209	.0584	.0390					
Health Perception	.1387	.0461	.0028					
Self-Consciousness	.3723	.0474	.000					
Perceived Behavioural Control	.0694	.0230	.0028					
Nutrition Label Awareness	.4219	.0611	.000					
Unhealthy Nutrition	-0.1199	.0473	.012					

Results and Discussions

The multiple regression analysis reveals that the six independent variables—Health Consciousness, Health Perception, Self-Consciousness, Perceived Behavioural Control, Nutrition Label Awareness, and Unhealthy Nutrition Perception—collectively explain 67.2% of the variance in consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks ($R^2 = 0.672$). This indicates that the model has a strong explanatory power, suggesting that these psychological and informational variables significantly predict consumer behaviour in the context of health-oriented snack consumption. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.82$) signifies a strong positive relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable, while the F-statistic ($F = 112.6$, $p < 0.001$) confirms the overall model fit and its statistical significance. These results demonstrate that the proposed model reliably explains consumer decision-making patterns in the Indian packaged snack market.

In hypothesis testing terms, the significance values (p-values) for all six predictors are less than 0.05, indicating rejection of the null hypotheses (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypotheses (H_1–H_6). Specifically, nutrition label awareness ($\beta = 0.4219$, $p < 0.001$) and self-consciousness ($\beta = 0.3723$, $p < 0.001$) emerge as the strongest positive predictors, confirming H5 and H3, respectively. These findings highlight the growing role of informational transparency and self-image in shaping purchase intentions. Consumers today are not only motivated by the health benefits of products but also by how such choices reinforce their identity as health-conscious or socially responsible individuals. Similar observations were reported by Chen and Lee (2021), who found that consumers actively use nutrition labels to signal self-discipline and social status through healthy food choices. Likewise, Rana and Paul (2022) demonstrated that label-reading behaviour is positively associated with brand trust and perceived product credibility, supporting the present study's findings that label awareness significantly enhances purchase intention.

The positive and significant coefficient for health perception ($\beta = 0.1387$, $p = 0.0028$) validates H2, indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as healthy are more likely to purchase nutritious snacks. This aligns with Nguyen et al. (2021), who observed that consumers with higher health perceptions tend to avoid processed foods and prefer products associated with preventive health benefits. The findings also resonate with Reddy and Banerjee (2022), who reported that perceived health status moderates responsiveness to nutritional messages, suggesting that individuals with strong health perceptions are more attentive to health claims on packaging. Thus, the present study corroborates prior research that views health perception as a motivational determinant influencing health-oriented consumption.

Similarly, health consciousness ($\beta = 0.1209$, $p < 0.05$) is found to have a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, confirming H1. This outcome is consistent with Kim et al. (2020), who demonstrated that consumers with higher health consciousness are more willing to pay a premium for healthy snacks. Moreover, Sarkar and Kundu (2023) emphasized that health consciousness not only predicts food choice but also drives sustainable consumption behaviour, suggesting that health-oriented thinking extends beyond personal wellness to environmental concern. The current study's results reinforce these findings, indicating that health consciousness acts as a cognitive anchor shaping both intentions and actual purchasing behaviour.

Perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.0694$, $p = 0.0028$) also shows a significant positive relationship with purchase decisions, confirming H4. This suggests that consumers who feel confident in managing their eating habits and accessing healthier snacks are more consistent in translating their attitudes into behaviour. This result aligns with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that perceived behavioural control enhances the likelihood of intention leading to action. Suki and Suki (2021) similarly found that consumers with strong perceived control exhibit higher intentions to buy organic food products, demonstrating behavioural consistency. In the context of the present study, this construct operationalizes the link between intention and actual purchase, reinforcing the theoretical assumption that self-efficacy and situational control are central to healthy food decision-making.

Conversely, unhealthy nutrition perception ($\beta = –0.1199$, $p = 0.012$) has a significant negative effect on purchase intention, supporting H6. This inverse relationship suggests that consumers who perceive high-fat or processed snacks as harmful are less likely to purchase them. Similar negative associations were reported by Gupta et al. (2023), who found that increased awareness of unhealthy ingredients led to reduced consumption of fried and sugary snacks. However, the current findings also acknowledge that the impact of this perception may be moderated by hedonic factors such as taste and convenience, as observed by Tandon and Kapoor (2021), who argued that indulgence motives can override negative perceptions in certain consumption contexts. Nonetheless, the statistical significance of this variable underscores the potential of educational campaigns and warning labels in discouraging unhealthy snack purchases.

Among the predictors, nutrition label awareness and self-consciousness emerged as the most influential. These findings are supported by Sharma and Das (2023), who reported that younger consumers increasingly rely on front-of-pack labelling to control calorie intake, and by Park and Park (2020), who found that self-conscious consumers often choose healthier foods to maintain a socially desirable image. Thus, the present results substantiate that contemporary snack consumption is driven by both rational and symbolic motivations—rational in terms of information processing, and symbolic in relation to self-image and social norms.

Comparatively, the explanatory power of the current model ($R^2 = 0.672$) is higher than that of similar studies in health-related consumer behaviour. For instance, Al-Hassan et al. (2022) reported an R^2 value of 0.59 in predicting organic food purchase intentions, while Liu and Sharma (2023) found $R^2 = 0.61$ in explaining healthy snack consumption. The stronger explanatory value in the present study may be attributed to the inclusion of both informational and psychological constructs, which jointly account for greater variance in behaviour. This supports the integrated theoretical model combining the Theory of Planned Behaviour and self-concept theory.

In summary, all six hypotheses (H1–H6) are accepted, confirming that consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks are significantly influenced by health consciousness, health perception, self-consciousness, perceived behavioural control, nutrition label awareness, and unhealthy nutrition perception. The positive coefficients of the first five variables and the negative coefficient of the sixth validate the hypothesized directions. The results demonstrate that health-oriented consumer behaviour is a multi-dimensional construct influenced by attitudes, self-identity, informational awareness, and behavioural control. These findings align with contemporary behavioural literature emphasizing the interplay between psychological empowerment and informational transparency in shaping purchase intentions.

Implications

The study demonstrates that health consciousness, self-consciousness, health perception, perceived behavioural control, and nutrition label awareness significantly influence consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks, while unhealthy nutrition perception negatively affects buying behaviour. From a business perspective, food manufacturers and marketers should prioritize transparent nutritional labelling, health-oriented messaging, and the development of low-calorie or functional snack options to attract health-conscious consumers. Promotional strategies emphasizing personal well-being, self-image, and clear health benefits are likely to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

Academically, the findings enrich consumer behaviour literature by integrating psychological constructs and informational awareness into a unified model, validating their collective influence on purchase decisions. The study highlights the importance of nutrition label literacy and self-perception as critical determinants in health-oriented consumption. Future research could explore additional moderating variables, such as demographic factors, lifestyle patterns, or digital exposure, to further refine understanding of health-driven consumer decision-making. Policy and public-health implications include the reinforcement of educational campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of unhealthy nutrition and promoting informed food choices.

Encouraging manufacturers to provide clear, accurate, and accessible product information can support healthier eating patterns among consumers, particularly in younger, educated demographics.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of health-related psychological and informational factors on consumer purchase decisions for packaged snacks in India. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour and related consumer behaviour frameworks, six constructs—Health Consciousness, Health Perception, Self-Consciousness, Perceived Behavioural Control, Nutrition Label Awareness, and Unhealthy Nutrition Perception—were analysed to understand their collective and individual effects. The regression analysis revealed that these variables together explained 67.2% of the variance in consumer purchase decisions, indicating strong predictive capability. Among them, Nutrition Label Awareness and Self-Consciousness emerged as the most powerful predictors, highlighting the growing relevance of transparency, self-image, and informed decision-making in shaping consumer preferences for healthier snack options.

The findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that consumer decision-making in the packaged snack sector is shaped by both attitudinal and informational dimensions. Health consciousness and perception serve as internal motivators, while perceived behavioural control reflects the ability to translate intention into behaviour. The negative association of Unhealthy Nutrition Perception demonstrates that awareness of health risks effectively deters consumption of high-fat or processed snacks. Practically, marketers should emphasize clean labels, functional benefits, and responsible communication, while policymakers can design interventions promoting nutritional literacy and responsible consumption.

Future Scope of Studies

Future research could extend this study by incorporating cross-cultural or longitudinal designs to examine how evolving lifestyle patterns and digital influences affect health-conscious consumption over time. Exploring the moderating roles of demographic factors such as age, income, or education could deepen understanding of segment-specific behaviour. Additionally, integrating variables like digital health engagement, eco-consciousness, or emotional well-being may enrich the predictive model. With the rise of AI-driven analytics and personalized nutrition marketing, future studies may also investigate how algorithmic recommendations and social media influencers shape health-oriented snack choices. Such research would contribute significantly to the development of holistic, technology-integrated consumer behaviour models in the context of healthy food consumption.

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