

Investigating the Cause–Effect Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intentions for Healthy Food Products

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
N/A	The rapid expansion of the healthy food sector reflects developing health awareness and changing consumers' lifestyle. This study performs a comprehensive quantitative analysis that examines causation between marketing strategies and purchase intentions among consumers in the India National Capital Region (NCR). A structured survey was administered to 70 respondents and investigated the influence of labeling, packaging, prices, distribution and promotional activities on purchase intentions. The analysis used descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression modeling. The results show that labeling and digital campaigns significantly affect purchasing intention, while pricing shows mixed effects. Packaging and distribution contribute positively, but moderate to consumers. These findings illuminate the significant effect of marketing strategies on consumer behavior and provide action -rich insights for marketers and decision makers who want to promote healthy food consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

The marketing of healthy food products has emerged as a global phenomenon, driven by consumers' increasing emphasis on well-being and nutrition in the diet's preferences (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Increasing awareness of lifestyle-related health conditions, including obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, have accelerated the demand for food products that were perceived as healthy, natural and functional (Chen, 2011). While consumers' interest in healthy food continues to increase, actual purchase intention is affected not only by the inherent health benefits of products, but also by sophisticated market communication, packaging design and promotional strategies. Marketing strategies act as critical intermediaries between producers and consumers, forming value -level, build trust and driving behavior (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Globally, companies use different strategies - including product labeling, packaging design, distribution channels, price mechanisms and campaign campaigns - to influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Keller, 2003; Kotler et al., 2019). Labeling provides, for example, important product information and nutritional transparency, which directly affect consumers' confidence and trust (Grunert & Wills, 2007). Packaging affects product appeal and differentiation, and acts as a "quiet seller" that communicates brand values and quality signals (Underwood & Klein, 2002). Similar forms promotional tools such as advertising and health claims perceived product value and consumer attitudes (Dean et al., 2012). Distribution channels determine product accessibility and convenience, while pricing affects reasonably and perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988).

However, the relative influence of these factors on consumer decisions often varies between regions and socio -economic groups. In the context of India's NCR, rapid urbanization, increasing disposable income and increasing awareness of lifestyle-related health problems expanded the market significantly for healthy food products (KPMG, 2020). Recent reports indicate that Indian consumers, especially urban millions, have increasingly gravitated against organic, fortified foods and low calorie content due to increased health awareness (Euromonitor International, 2021). Nevertheless, in fact, buying behavior remains inconsistent. While some consumers show a willingness to pay premium prices for healthy options, others are still price sensitive or skeptical of the authenticity of health claims (Suresh & Biswas, 2019). This deviation emphasizes the need for empirical examination of how marketing strategies affect purchase intention in the NCR context. The present study deals



with this research gap by examining causation between important marketing strategies (labeling, packaging, prices, distribution and promotion) and consumer purchase intentions. By using a structured study of 70 respondents and using statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, this study identifies the most important predictors of purchase intentions in the Healthy Food category. By doing this, it contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in consumer behavior and marketing strategy formulation.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the effects of various marketing strategies (labeling, packaging, pricing, distribution, and promotion) on consumer purchase intentions.
2. To investigate the causal relationships between marketing strategies and purchase intentions.
3. To determine which marketing strategies exert the strongest influence among NCR consumers.
4. To provide managerial insights for effective marketing of healthy food products.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Marketing Strategies and Consumer Decision-Making

Market strategies play key roles in the design of both rational and emotional dimensions of consumer behavior. Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that consumers not only respond to the product tool, but also to symbolic and emotional signals built in market communication. Marketing and health -related claims are particularly influential, as they improve perceived credibility and reliability of food products. Magnusson et al. (2003) found that clear nutrition labeling improves consumers' confidence and directly contributes to healthy purchase decisions. Grunred (2010) further argues that packaging design acts as an external signal that affects consumers' expectations and values judgments before product consumption. Underwood and Klein (2002) note that attractive and informative packaging contributes to brand differentiation, while Wansink (2004) emphasizes that packaging information regarding colors, shapes and serving sizes can affect consumer volumes. Within the Indian context, Suresh and Biswas (2019) observed that middle -class consumers show greater response to health -focused marketing messages, indicating that effective labeling and packaging are crucial in culturally diverse markets.

3.2 Pricing and Value Perception

Pricing acts as a double -edged factor in healthy food markets: It signals quality while potentially deteriorating price -sensitive consumers. Zeitaml (1988) stated that consumers often use price as a surrogate indicator on quality. Michaelidou and Hassan (2008) found that health -conscious consumers are generally willing to pay premiums for functional or organic food when perceiving significant health benefits. In emerging markets such as India, a reasonable price plays a more crucial role. Gupta and Singh (2016) stated that even though wealthy consumers accept premium prices for organic and fortified foods, middle income groups remain hesitant unless the value proposals are clearly communicated. Similarly, Dean et al. (2012) argued that the balance between price and health claims determines whether healthy food is perceived as available or elitist.

3.3 Promotional Strategies

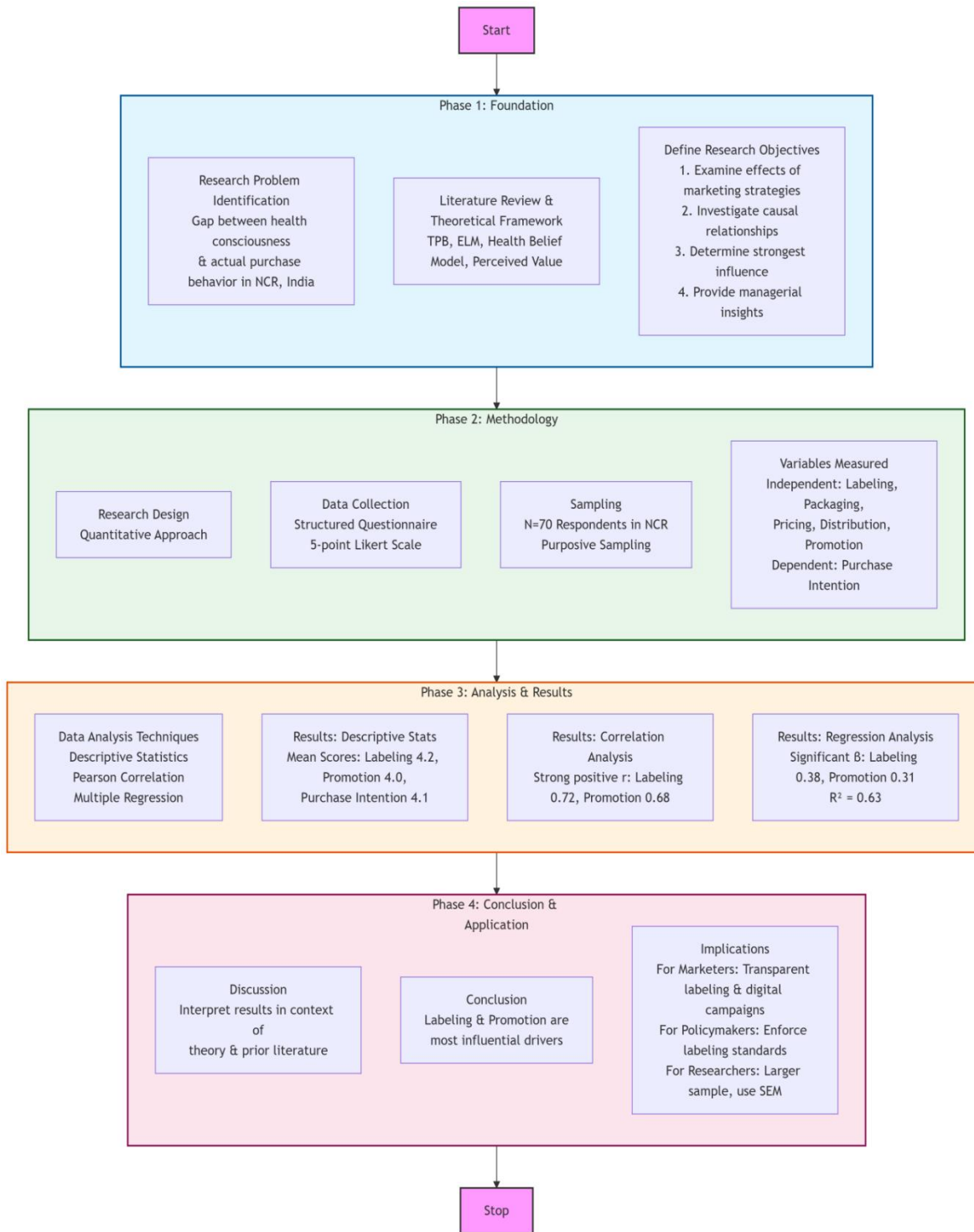
Sales -promoting strategies affect consumers' attitudes and intentions against healthy food. Lee and Yun (2015) demonstrated that the marketing of social media and influencer marketing, especially in health and wellness domains, affects purchasing decisions from millennial and Generation Z consumers greatly. Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2019) emphasize that digital marketing allows brands to make emotional connections with health -conscious consumers. Traditional promotional methods, such as sampling and discounts in the store, remain effective. Verbekes (2008) research revealed that trial opportunities reduce consumers' uncertainty regarding taste and quality, especially for new healthy products. In India, Euromonitor (2021) reported that endorsement of celebrities and cultural resonance messages improves consumers' confidence in packed health food.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Consumer decisions regarding healthy foods can be understood through several theoretical lenses. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is still central, and shows that purchase intentions are affected by attitudes (health awareness), subjective norms (peers or cultural influences) and perceived behavioral control (affordability and accessibility). Empirical studies, such as Chen (2011), validate this model to predict functional food consumption. The elaboration model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) provides further insights, suggesting that consumers treat health -related marketing messages through either central routes (carefully evaluation of evidence such as health claims) or peripheral router (brand trust and packaging appeal). Complementary perspectives, including the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, 1974) and consumer -converted world theory (Zeithaml, 1988), also provide a useful framework for understanding drivers for consumer commitment with healthy food. For example, Grunred and Wills (2007) noted that consumer sensitivity to health risks increases the response for preventive messages in labeling and promotional material.



3.5 Study Framework



4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing structured surveys and statistical analysis techniques.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic

The study surveyed 70 respondents in the NCR through purposive sampling. Respondents comprised working professionals (40%), homemakers (25%), college students (20%), and retirees (15%). Gender distribution was 55% female and 45% male.



Table : 1 Demographic Characteristic

Gender	Female	39	55%
	Male	32	45%
Total Sample		70	100%

Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data

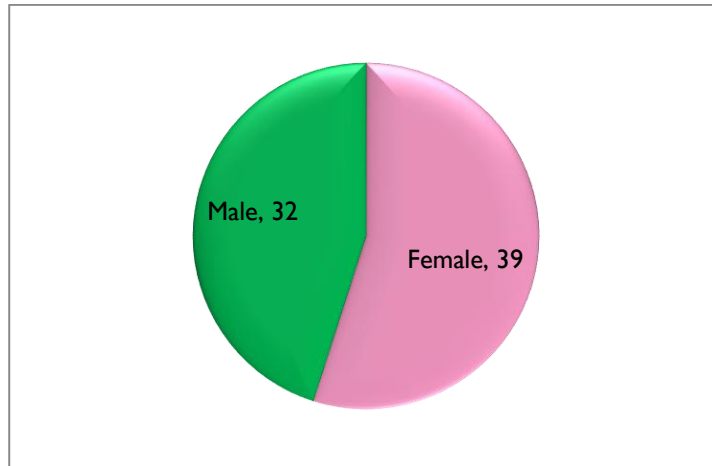


Figure : 2 Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

Table :- 2 Occupation

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Occupation	Working Professionals	28	40%
	Homemakers	18	25%
	College Students	14	20%
	Retirees	11	15%

(Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

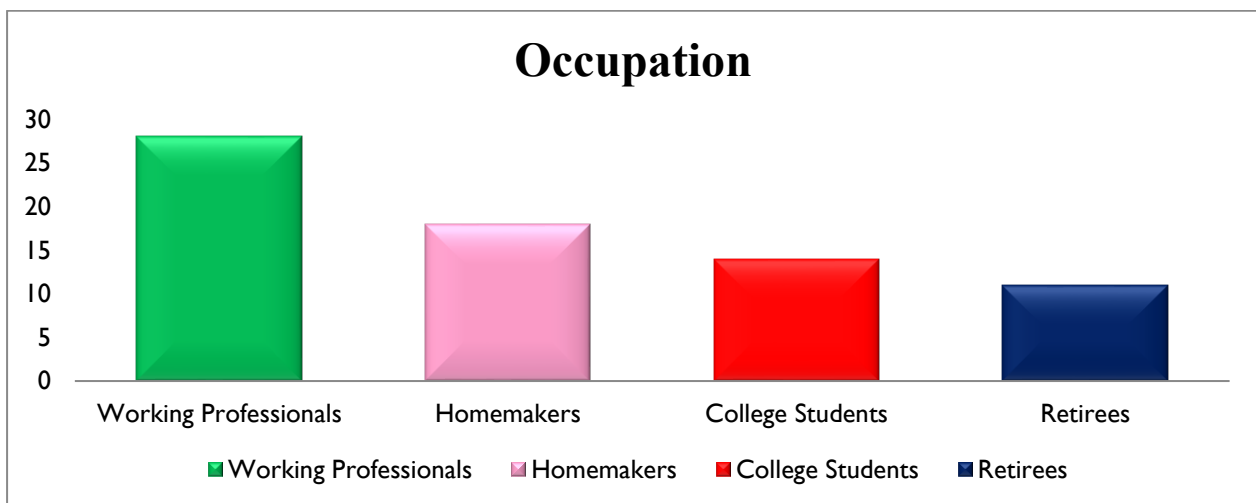


Figure:- 3 (Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

4.3 Research Instrument



A structured questionnaire was developed featuring Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) measuring:

- **Labeling** (readability and trustworthiness)
- **Packaging** (design appeal and eco-friendliness)
- **Pricing** (affordability and value perception)
- **Distribution** (availability and accessibility)
- **Promotion** (social media presence, advertisements, and endorsements)
- **Purchase Intention** (willingness to purchase and likelihood of repeat purchase)

4.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to examine causal relationships between variables.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 : Mean scores (out of 5):

Variable	Mean Score
Labeling	4.2
Packaging	3.8
Pricing	3.4
Distribution	3.7
Promotion	4
Purchase Intention	4.1

(Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

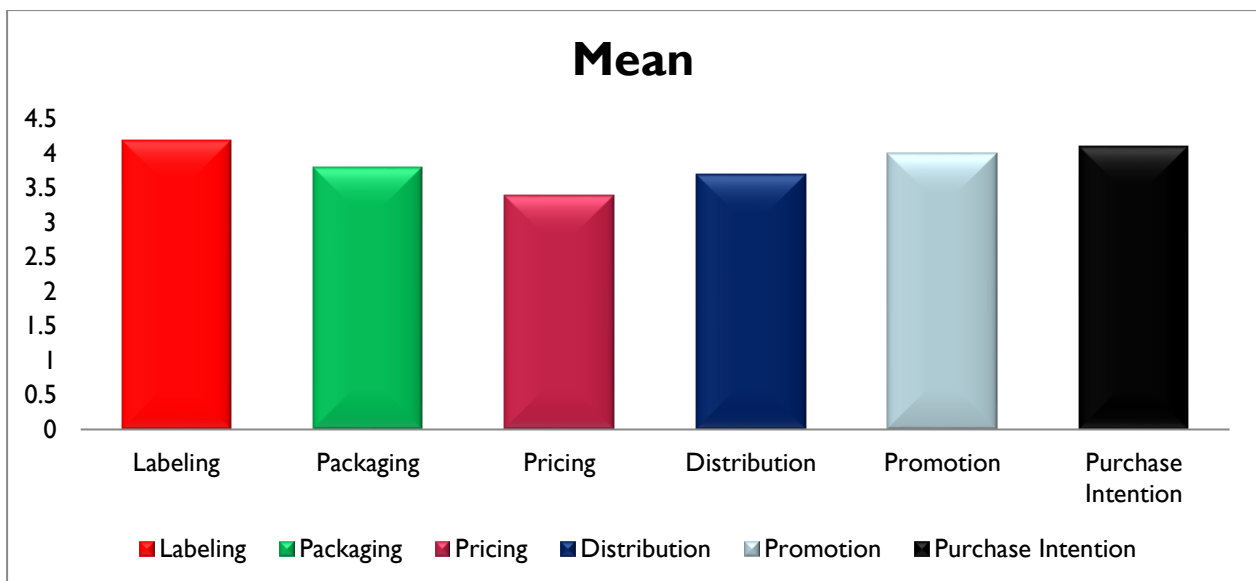


Figure:- 4 (Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

5.2 Correlation Analysis



Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted to examine the linear relationship between marketing strategies and purchase intention. The results are presented in **Table 5.1**.

Table 4 : Correlation between Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intention

Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Coefficient Significance (p-value)	(p-Strength Relationship) of
Labeling	0.72	< 0.01	Strong Positive
Packaging	0.58	< 0.01	Moderate Positive
Pricing	0.46	< 0.05	Moderate Positive
Distribution	0.52	< 0.01	Moderate Positive
Promotion	0.68	< 0.01	Strong Positive

(Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

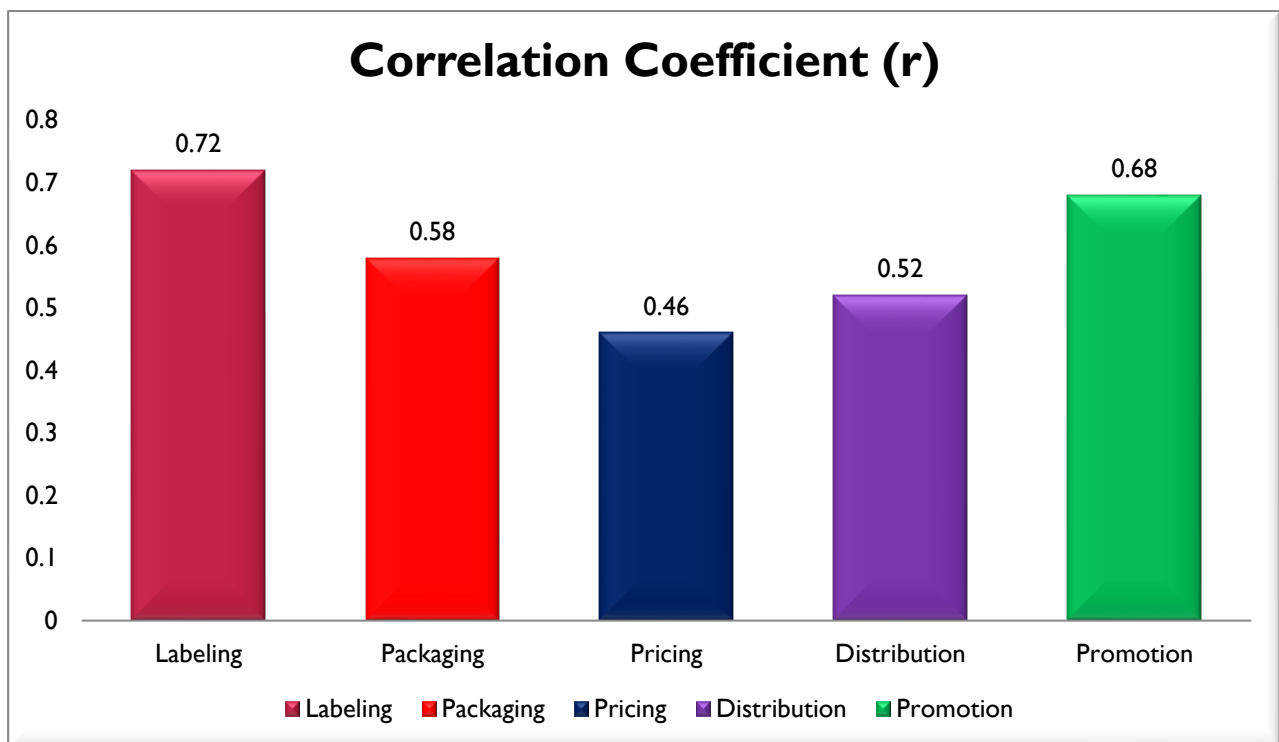


Figure:- 5 (Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The correlation evaluation indicates that every one independent variable shows an effective affiliation with buy purpose. Among them, labeling ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$) and advertising ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) exhibit the most powerful correlations, suggesting these techniques play a greater tremendous position in influencing patron purchase intention for healthy food merchandise. Packaging, distribution, and pricing also display mild however enormous effective relationships, indicating their relevance in consumer decision-making.

5.3 Regression Analysis



Table 5.2: Multiple Regression Analysis of Marketing Strategies on Purchase Intention

Predictor Variable	Standardized Beta (β)	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
Labeling	0.38	< 0.01	Strong, Significant
Packaging	0.21	< 0.05	Moderate, Significant
Pricing	0.12	0.08	Weak, Not Significant
Distribution	0.18	< 0.05	Moderate, Significant
Promotion	0.31	< 0.01	Strong, Significant

(Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

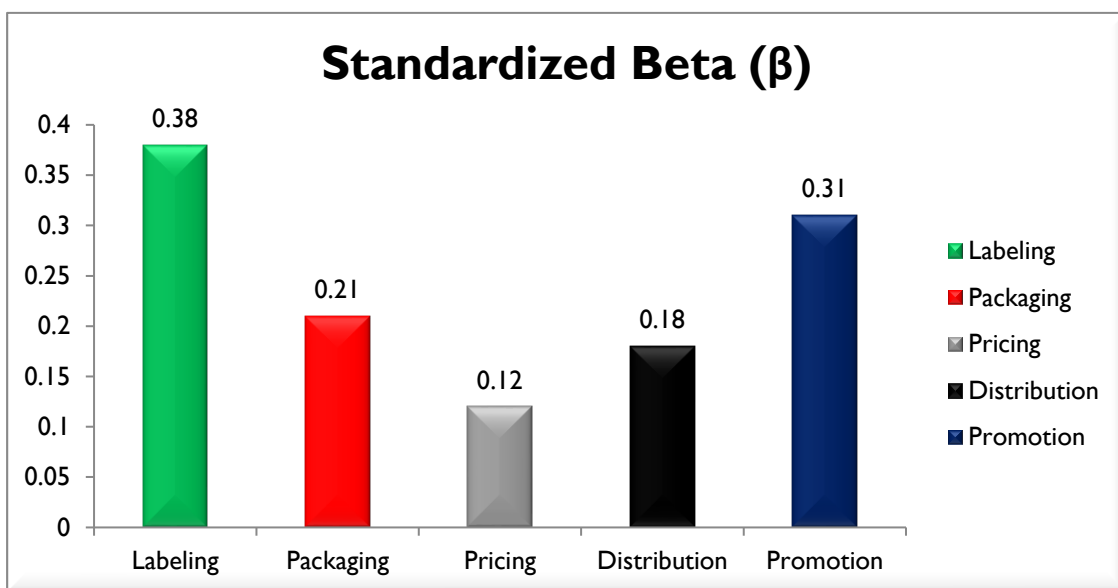


Figure:- 6 (Source: Author Calculation Based on Primary Data)

Model Summary:

- **R² = 0.63**, indicating that 63% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by the five marketing strategy variables collectively.
- **F-statistic significant** at $p < 0.01$, suggesting that the regression model is fit and reliable.

Interpretation: The regression consequences highlight labeling ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$) and advertising ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) as the most influential predictors of buy goal for wholesome meals products. Packaging ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$) and distribution ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) act as mild predictors, at the same time as pricing ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.08$) indicates a weak and statistically insignificant affect. This shows that purchasers in the pattern populace prioritize accurate product data and promotional activities over rate issues whilst making purchase choices for healthy food merchandise.

5.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this look at emphasize that labeling and promoting are the most vital marketing strategies influencing consumer purchase intentions for wholesome meals merchandise. This is steady with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), where product facts (which include nutritional labeling) undoubtedly shapes client attitudes and complements behavioral goal. Clear and obvious labeling strengthens credibility, allowing customers to form rational critiques earlier than purchase. This helps Magnusson et al. (2003), who determined that consumers perceive organic and useful ingredients as more truthful when product claims are specific. Similarly, Grunert and Wills (2007) emphasized that nutritional statistics fosters knowledgeable selection-making and increases self-belief in buy picks.



Promotional techniques, particularly virtual and influencer marketing, were also identified as robust predictors of purchase aim. This aligns with Lee and Yun (2015), who determined that social media engagement and celeb endorsements considerably affect younger purchasers' selections of organic and healthy meals. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2019) argue that emotional connection thru virtual advertising and marketing no longer best shapes emblem believe however also creates social norms that enhance healthy intake. This is in line with TPB's perception of subjective norms, where peer and social affects force aim. Additionally, Verbeke (2008) counseled that promotional interventions including in-save tastings lessen uncertainty and encourage trial behavior, which can explain why promotional cues have been more effective than charge considerations on this study.

The function of packaging and distribution become found to be wonderful but less influential as compared to labeling and advertising. Packaging acts as a peripheral cue underneath the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), wherein visible attraction, comfort, and logo symbolism have an impact on patron choices without deep cognitive evaluation. Research by means of Underwood and Klein (2002) helps this, noting that packaging design communicates brand cost and authenticity. Furthermore, accessibility and distribution channels also have an effect on patron trust and perceived comfort (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This reflects findings through Suresh and Biswas (2019) inside the Indian context, in which urban customers valued smooth availability and hygienic packaging as reassurance of product safety.

Interestingly, pricing changed into not a big predictor of purchase aim, which contrasts with classical financial principle but aligns with greater latest patron behavior studies. Health-aware clients often prioritize perceived price and consider over value issues. Suki (2016) observed comparable effects in Malaysia, displaying that willingness to pay is higher when health benefits are perceived as credible. Michaelidou and Hassan (2008) additionally observed that clients committed to fitness and sustainability are much less charge-sensitive, treating health-related purchases as a funding in properly-being in place of discretionary spending. However, research which includes Gupta and Singh (2016) warning that this fashion can be greater reported in affluent or urban segments, while price remains a barrier for center- and lower-earnings customers in growing markets like India.

Overall, these findings highlight a hierarchy of marketing inputs: Labeling and promotional strategies conduct trust and social validation, while packaging and distribution improve product accessibility and brand image. Although the price is traditionally seen as a critical determinant, it can be secondary in contexts where consumers show high health awareness and risk average (Dean et al., 2012). This suggests that marketers should prioritize credibility strategies (accurate labeling, transparent health claims) and social impact mechanisms (digital campaigns, endorsement) over price -based competition.

6. CONCLUSION

This quantitative study confirms a strong cause -effect relationship between marketing strategies and consumer purchase intentions in the healthy food sector. Among the strategies that were investigated, marking and promotion appeared as the most influential drivers for consumer decisions, and shaped both trust and perceived value. Packaging and distribution, although less dominant, play important supportive roles by improving convenience, accessibility and branding. Prices, on the other hand, present a complex dimension. It acts as an indicator of quality, but also acts as a barrier for more price -sensitive consumers, which shows that the price of price and value must be carefully balanced.

The findings suggest that marketers need to formulate comprehensive strategies that go beyond simple promotion and focus on building trust, credibility and accessibility for consumers. Clear and transparent labeling, engaging campaign campaigns and effective distribution systems can significantly improve the purchase intentions. At the same time, pricing strategies should reflect both the first character of healthy food products and the need to remain inclusive for broader societal segments.

In summary, the study emphasizes that successful marketing of healthy food products requires a comprehensive approach - one that integrates information, trust, accessibility and affordability. By addressing these dimensions together, companies can not only strengthen consumers' purchase intention, but also help to encourage healthier consumption patterns in society.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 1. For marketers:** Invest in transparent labeling and strong digital campaigns. Balance Premium positioning with value offerings.
- 2. For decision makers:** Enforcement of strict health labeling and support consumer awareness programs.
- 3. For researchers:** Future studies can expand sample size and use structural equation modeling (SEM) to strengthen the causal requirements.

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