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## THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR WITH A SOCIAL MARKETING MODEL FOR CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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**Abstract:** One of the most widely used socio-psychological frameworks for forecasting and comprehending human behavior is the theory of planned behavior. The theory of reasoned action, which holds that most human behavior is controlled by free will, served as the foundation for its development. The idea of reasoned action was expanded to include a new element known as perceived behavioral control because volition does not fully explain all human behavior. Icek Ajzen put forth the theory of planned behavior in 1985. The purpose of the individual to carry out a specific behavior is the main idea behind the theory of planned behavior. The research that is currently accessible indicates that more instances of ecological goods also make use of the theory of planned behavior. Apart from attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, as basic variables of the theory of planned behaviour, additional variables can be included in the basic model in order to contribute to the explanation of the research problem. The theory of planned behavior was first developed, and since then, it has grown to be one of the most popular and significant models for forecasting social behavior in people. It highlights how social pressure, a sense of control, and individual views all influence how people behave. As was previously demonstrated, the notion of planned behavior has been used to explain a variety of behavioral patterns. The TPO model with standard variables was supplemented by extended models that included extra variables and "truncated" models that removed parts of the standard variables. The TPO model with standard variables states that perceived behavioral control, attitude, and subjective norm are the three factors that determine behavioral intention. Perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention are often behavioral predictors. The substantial influence of the independent on the dependent variables of the TPO (Theory of Planned Behavior) model has been substantiated by numerous prior research that used the theory of planned behavior to the setting of organic food consumer behavior. In order to do this, the theory of planned behavior and behavioral intents of consumers of organic food items for personal advantage in the Republic of North Macedonia will be applied in this study.

**Keywords:** Social marketing, consumers, strategies, behaviour.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Positive trends on the production and sales sides are the best measures of the appeal of organic agriculture production. Understanding customer purchasing behavior, or the reasons behind product purchases, is essential to adjusting to the rapidly expanding organic food product industry.

Social marketing, which blends concepts from other social sciences with commercial marketing, has shown to be an effective strategy for changing behavior over time and at a reasonable cost. It is useful in determining who to collaborate with, what behaviors to change, how to carry it out, and how to assess the results (Lee & Kotler, 2020).

### 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study's research was carried out using a quantitative model, and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) research articles were consulted in the construction of the questionnaire (Peterson, 2023).

A structured Google form questionnaire was used to conduct a direct online survey in the two largest municipalities in the country, Skopje and Kumanovo, in the northern portion of the country, in order to collect primary data (Remenyi, 2022). Profs. Shaheen Mansori, PhD, and Aleksandra Shumar, PhD, two experts, attested to the content validity of the selected questions.

Secondary information was collected from a wide source of relevant literature, government sources, commercial and industrial sources, related articles, books and journals, Internet database and reports.

### 3. RESULTS

Lokman DINC & HUANG (2023) and Naidoo & Henry Ramatsetse (2016) revealed that subjective norms considerably and favorably affect the intention to purchase organic food goods using the theory of planned behavior as a framework to analyze the purchasing of organic food products. Thus, the following hypothesis was established in light of these results:

*H3: Subjective norm significantly and positively affects the intention to buy organic food.*

Perceived behavioral control and intention together can be utilized as a direct predictor of behavior for two reasons (Peterson, 2023):

- keeping intention constant, increased effort to successfully complete a course of behaviour is likely to result in increased perceived behavioural control, and
- perceived behavioural control can frequently be a substitute for measuring actual control.

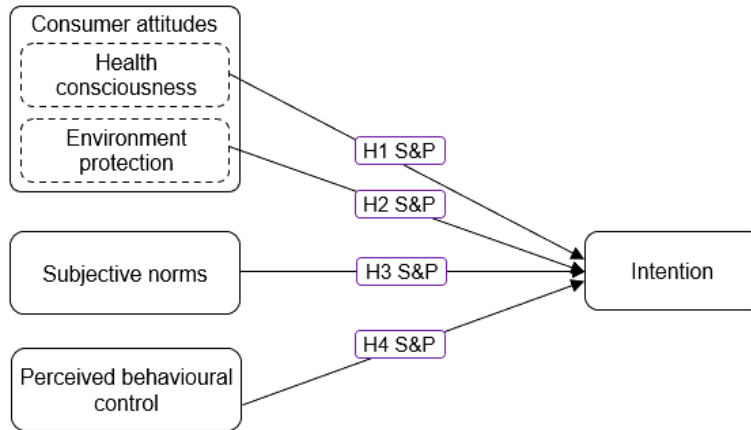
Studies that employed the theory of planned behavior to analyze how consumers of organic food goods behaved tended to focus only on behavioral intention rather than examining the direct impact of perceived behavioral control on behavior. As a result, it was not investigated how perceived behavioral control affected the behavior itself. Naidoo & Henry Ramatsetse (2016) and Parashar et al. (2023) investigated the buying of organic food goods generally and discovered that respondents had a stronger purchase intention the more perceived control they felt they had over the purchase. However, in a study aimed at identifying the variables influencing the frequency of consumption of organic food products, Maichum et al. (2016) discovered that perceived behavioral control had a large and favorable influence on consumption intention. The following hypothesis was outlined in light of the findings of the previously described study:

*H4: Perceived behavioural control significantly and positively affects intention to purchase organic food.*

The theory of planned behavior with standard variables model (Ajzen, 1991) was examined based on the established hypotheses (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework of the tested model of TPB

Note: S&P = Significantly and positively

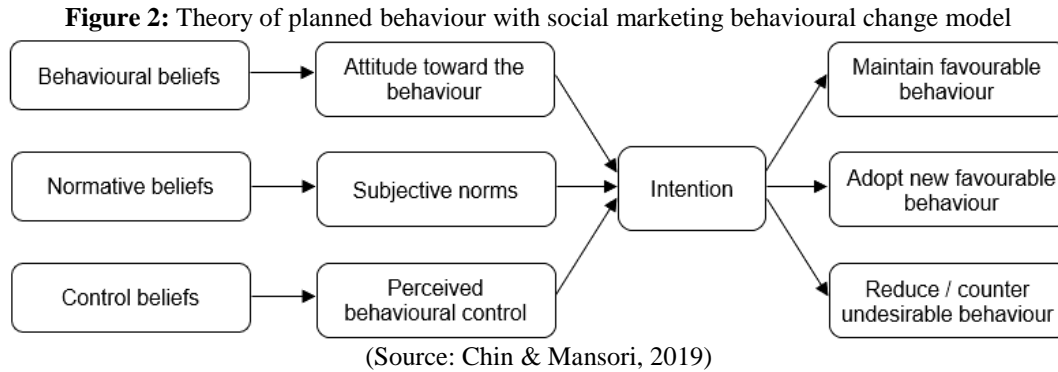


(Source: Ajzen, 1991)

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

Behavioral intention is the main variable in the theory of planned behavior. It serves as a gauge for an individual's willingness to attempt a particular behavior. Three factors affect behavioral intention: perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and attitude toward the behavior. The term "attitude towards the behaviour" describes how much a person values a particular behaviour, whether positively or negatively. Subjective norms are the supposed social pressures to act in a specific way or not. The perceived ease or difficulty of carrying out an action is referred to as perceived behavioral control. Behavior is directly influenced by intention and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Other variants of the theory of planned behavior were employed, which are expanded upon or changed with other components, in addition to the "standard" components of the theory.



In summary, the theory of planned behavior can help social marketers and social change practitioners predict healthy eating behaviors more accurately and gain a better understanding of human cognition processes by comprehending the three underlying elements (Close et al., 2018; Rouhani-Tonekaboni et al., 2018, as cited in Chin & Mansori, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Choosing organic food is typically driven by a variety of reasons and considerations, such as concerns about social and environmental responsibility, financial and economic benefits and drawbacks, personal health, the health of one's family, and the environment.

The theory of planned behavior model was employed to forecast the purchasing patterns of consumers of organic food. The findings of the study indicate that the theory of planned behavior's model is appropriate and accounts for a significant portion of the variation in the purchase of organic food, indicating that consumers purchase these goods primarily for their own gain rather than out of concern for the environment or the society in which they live.

Clarifying the findings of testing the hypotheses formulated at the level of the theory of planned behavior model is crucial for a deeper comprehension of the research hypotheses that have been confirmed. Additionally, the percentage of the tested model's primary variables' explained variance must be noted in order to determine purchase intentions.

It has been confirmed that attitudes toward the purchase of organic food, both in terms of environmental preservation and health consciousness, have a considerable and beneficial influence on consumers' intentions to make such purchases. It is consistent with earlier studies on the buying habits of organic food consumers. In particular, studies conducted in the Czech Republic (Urban et al., 2012) and Switzerland (Hansmann et al., 2020) have revealed that respondents who have a more positive attitude towards purchasing organic food products plan to do so more frequently and that participants place a significantly higher value on healthy nutrition than on nutrition that takes the environment into consideration.

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