



A STUDY ON HOW PSYCHOGRAPHIC VARIABLES INFLUENCE GENERATION Z'S PREFERENCES FOR GLUTEN FREE PRODUCTS

Yashika Sharma

Research Scholar,

IIS Deemed to be University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Email :yashikasharma33122@iisuniv.ac.in

Abstract: Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable shift in consumer food preferences, with gluten free products becoming a popular choice among health-conscious individuals- especially the younger generation. What was once a dietary requirement for people with gluten intolerance or celiac disease has now evolved into lifestyle trend followed by many individuals. The present study was conducted using responses from 413 participants in Jaipur, Rajasthan, the samples were collected through an online survey using stratified random sampling method. The main objective of this research was to understand how psychographic variables such as personal taste, lifestyle preferences, health consciousness, and individual attitudes impact the purchase intention for gluten free products among Generation Z. Unlike demographic factors like age, or gender, psychographics offer deeper insight into consumer behaviour. To analyze the data, regression analysis was used, which shows a strong and statistically significant relationship between psychographic traits and the decision to purchase gluten free items. Findings from this study indicates that Generation Z is not choosing gluten free products solely for health concerns. Many are influenced by their desire to follow a healthy lifestyle, adopt modern food trends, and even project a status symbol. The result suggests the marketers and product developers should shift their focus from just basic demographic segmentation to a more detailed psychographic approach. Understanding values, motivations, and lifestyle choices can help brands to create better targeted strategies that connects with young, health-conscious consumers. Overall, the study provides meaningful insights into the rising demand for gluten free products in India and the opportunities it presents for growth and innovation in the health and wellness food sector.

Key Words: Buying Behaviour, Gluten Free Products, Management Marketing, Purchase Intention.

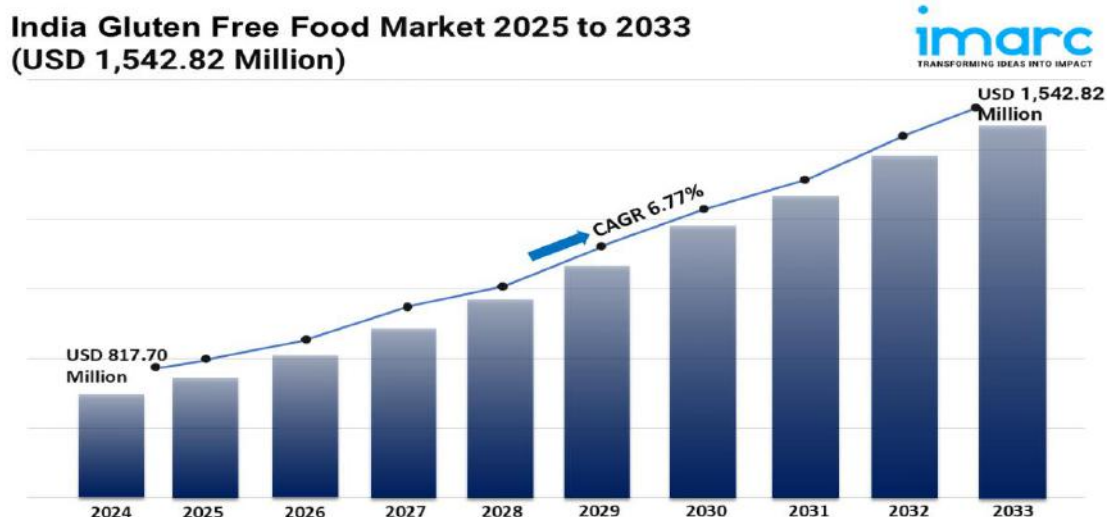
1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's image conscious and wellness driven society, food choices are becoming more important among people as they are considered statements of identity. Young adults, particularly those from Generation Z age group (people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010's) are increasingly turning their dietary choices to those that reflect their personal values and social lifestyle. For Generation Z, maintaining a healthy lifestyle has become a cultural norm as most of the people from this generation go to the gym and also follow fitness influencers to explore more clean eating trends, and which food will help them to keep their body in shape. In recent years, gluten-free diets have gained popularity beyond medical necessity. The shift is largely influenced by celebrities, health influencers, and digital media as they are promoting gluten free diet as a healthy lifestyle choice (Gorgiotano & Sodano, 2019). As a result, gluten-free consumption is increasing as consuming gluten can lead to severe gastrointestinal distress, fatigue and long-term health risks (Capacci, Leucci, & Mazzocchi, 2018).

Gluten is a naturally occurring protein found in grains such as wheat, barley and rye. Wheat flour primarily contains two key proteins – glutenin and gliadin. When mixed with water, these proteins interact to form 'gluten' which is a kind of protein that plays an important role in providing elasticity and it also helps to give structure to baked products. This elasticity allows dough to trap air bubbles, giving wheat based bread its light and airy texture. As a result, wheat bread rises high and yields more volume as compared to breads made from other grains like barley, rye, corn or millet. However, this gluten can cause negative effects on health of those who have gluten related disorders such as celiac disease, wheat allergy, and non – celiac gluten sensitivity. For such individuals, consuming gluten may lead to digestive distress, inflammation, and other health complications (Guenouni et al., 2022). The most severe disease occurred by consumption of gluten is celiac disease, which is a serious autoimmune disorder. If a person is suffering

from celiac disease, then consuming gluten can lead to a severe reaction which can damage the linings of the small intestine and the person can face these symptoms - bloating, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal cramps, gas, joint pain, itchy skin, and skin rashes. This damage interferes with the body's ability to absorb essential nutrients and minerals resulting in health complications. In response to these health risks, gluten free diets have emerged as the only solution for the people suffering from celiac disease or any other gluten related disorder. But today, beyond clinical necessity, many individuals are adopting gluten free diets as the consumption of gluten free food can reduce digestive discomfort and can increase energy, and can cure feeling of lightness or also helps to reduce bloating.



Source - <https://blog.libero.it/wp/imarcgroup/wp-content/uploads/sites/79553/2025/05/india-gluten-free-food-market-2025-1200x675.png>

Figure 1

Figure 1, illustrates the growth of Indian gluten free food market from the year 2025 to 2033, the graph is based on the data provided by International Market Analysis Research and Consulting (IMARC) Group. According to the report, it can be observed that the market is expected to grow from USD 817.70 million in 2024 to USD 1,542.82 million by 2033, registering a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.77% during this period. The increase in the market value year by year is highlighting the rising demand for gluten free products in the Indian market. The growth shows that people in India are becoming more aware about their health and also about the growing of food allergies like gluten intolerance and celiac disease which leads them to shift their dietary preferences to gluten free diet. Particularly, the young population, such as the Generation Z age group, is becoming more health-conscious and loves to follow a healthy diet. Among their generation, taking care of health and eating healthy food is becoming a fashion trend. This growing trend reflects significant market potential and also helps the business opportunities in the health and wellness food segment across the country.

- Indian Gluten Free Food Market Overview:**

Report Attribute	Key Statistics
Base Year	2024
Forecast Years	2025-2033
Historical Years	2019-2024
Market Size in 2024	USD 817.70 Million
Market Forecast in 2033	USD 1,542.82 Million
Market Growth Rate (2025-2033)	6.77%

Source - <https://www.imarcgroup.com/india-gluten-free-food-market>

Source - <https://www.imarcgroup.com/india-gluten-free-food-market>



*The India gluten free food market size reached **USD 817.70 Million** in 2024. Looking forward, IMARC Group expects the market to reach **USD 1,542.82 Million** by 2033, exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of **6.77%** during 2025-2033. The growing prevalence of gluten intolerance, rising health consciousness, and increasing demand for sports nutrition are driving India's gluten-free food market, with manufacturers innovating certified products using indigenous ingredients while fitness influencers, wellness centers, and online platforms further expand accessibility and consumer adoption across demographics.*

1.2 Generation Z as a Target Consumer

As most of the young generation who comes under generation z age group (people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010's) loves to go for gym to maintain their body healthy as for that purpose also the youth are well aware about the gluten free diets as consuming these products has evolved into a symbol of clean and mindful eating. For many Gen Z individuals, adopting gluten free diet is a reflection of their personal values, attitudes, and self-image, all of which are the key components of psychographic behaviour. As a target market, this generation has more purchasing power and a tendency to influence family and peer decisions. Therefore, the demand for gluten free products has evolved beyond medical necessity and now has become a lifestyle choice but it has been seen that there are many challenges faced by individuals related to high prices. Limited availability and affordability of gluten free products particularly for those individuals with lower incomes or dietary restrictions (Burden et al., 2015; Capacci et al., 2018; Crocker et al., 2024) also suggests that the labels mentioned on gluten free products are not enough to the quality as nutritional value also plays a significant role. It was observed that very fewer studies have focused on this issue as most of the studies were done with the main focus on the economic burden and nutritional aspects of gluten free products (Burden et al., 2015; Capacci et al., 2018), the areas like psychological and behavioural factors influencing consumption of gluten free products particularly among non celiac individuals got the least attention. Very limited studies have focused on Generation Z in the Indian context.

1.3 Importance of Psychographic Variables

Psychographic variables such as lifestyle, values, preferences, personality, interests and factors that go beyond basic demographics like age or income, helps to provide deep insights about the consumer's preferences (Lim et al., 2016; Garcia-Salirrosas et al., 2025; Kukar-Kinney et al., 2012). These variables help to offer a more comprehensive understanding of why individuals make certain decisions. In case of gluten free products, psychographic characteristics such as health consciousness, willingness to try new dietary trends and Generation Z's habit to follow the influencers in social media platforms, led them to make their dietary choices. Most of the research has primarily focused on the effects on economy due to rising demands for gluten free products. Therefore, to fill this gap, the current study has investigated the impact of psychographic variables on Generation Z's purchase intention for these products. By collecting samples from 413 respondents in Jaipur by distributing an online questionnaire with the help of stratified random sampling. This study will give an idea of consumer buying behaviour, specially the young generation and it also helps to understand their product perspective and other psychographic variables.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Today, gluten free products have gained high level of popularity not only among individuals but also with those who are facing severe gluten related allergies like patients of celiac disease. researchers like Cureton (2007) and Jnawali et al. (2016) have shown in their research that gluten free diets are only for those who are suffering from celiac disease. however, people of this time and specially the generation Z age group is well aware about their surroundings whether it is related to any fashion trend, movie or any healthy trending diet promoted by influencers. Zebini et al. (2024) and Hassan et al. (2024) observed that most of the people who consume gluten free diet are those who are health conscious and also very aware of their lifestyle choices. The trend of adoption of gluten-free products is highly affected by the way these products are marketed. Bogue and Sorenson (2008) explained that how these marketers are promoting these products among youth as they know that this particular group is more concern about their health and diet, Therefore in this particular study, it was seen that how marketers show their product as a healthy eating breakfast cereal. Gorgitano and Sodano (2019) even argued that the "gluten free label" has a most powerful impact on the marketing strategies as marketers can put high prices for these products but due to this, some companies are misleading customers by using this label unnecessarily to offer more value. Several studies have been conducted to understand the requirements and what really drives consumers to choose gluten free options. According to Nascimento et al. (2014), the consumer behaviour is dynamic in nature and for these products, consumers not only look for the label, but also expects good taste, affordable pricing, availability and nutritional value. Zsigmond et al. (2023) added that few factors like psychographic factors



which includes trust for the brand and health related awareness helps to change consumer preferences. Consumer's decision-making also plays an important role which heavily influence marketing strategies and pricing. The companies motive should not be limited to profit earning, but they should also think about their customers. Kukar – Kinney et al., (2012) observed that customers are willing to pay extra price on gluten free products as they are marketed as healthier or trendier. Bahacicu (2022) and Pandey et al. (2019) observe that customers are paying more attention on the ingredients, quality and product origins.

Despite the rising demand, there are some barriers existing at social, personal and systematic level (Mehtab, Agarwal, Chauhan, et al., 2024). Lack of nutritional adequacy is also a concern, especially for pediatric and adult celiac patients (Melini & Melini, 2019; Ozturk, Karabudak, & Egritas, 2024). Limited availability and higher cost of gluten free products is creating an additional burden on consumer as this can affect their long term compliance (Panagiotou & Kontogianni, 2017; Qashqari, Shakweer, Alzaben, & Hanbazaza, 2024). Furthermore, there are some studies which focuses on the need for improving product quality, and price which can help celiac patients to purchase these products with satisfaction (Rahm, 2025; Abel, et., 2025). Overall, the literature highlights that mane factors like psychographic variables have a big effect on consumer perception and many challenges will remain there in terms of diet adherence, nutritional adequacy, cost and consumer perception, which can help in development of these products in the market (Rostami, Bold, PaRR, & Johnson, 2017; Melini & Melini, 2019).

3. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS:

Objective: To analyse the impact of psychographic variables on the purchase intention of Generation Z for gluten-free products.

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of psychographic variables on the purchase intention of Generation Z for gluten-free products.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The data was collected with the help of a self-designed questionnaire which was divided into five sections: the first part gathered information related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The demographic variables included questions like age, gender residence etc.. Understanding these aspects was particularly important in the context of Generation Z, as this cohort exhibits diverse consumer behaviours influenced by various external and internal factors.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to assess the awareness level of Generation Z regarding gluten-free products. This will help the respondents to understand the concept of gluten-free products, their ability to identify such products in the market, and their perceptions regarding the associated health benefits. The third section aimed to explore the motivational factors and barriers influencing whether or not Generation Z chooses to purchase gluten-free products. Respondents were asked a series of questions to assess their attitudes towards purchasing such products, considering aspects like health consciousness, dietary preferences, taste expectations, pricing concerns, brand influence, and social influences. The fourth section was dedicated to identifying the most popular gluten-free product categories among Generation Z. The gluten-free market has expanded significantly in recent years, offering consumers a wide range of product options. However, consumer preferences vary based on factors such as taste, availability, and perceived benefits. The fifth and final section of the questionnaire explored psychographic variables influencing the purchase intention of gluten-free products among Generation Z. Psychographic variables, which include personal values, lifestyle choices, and attitudes, play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour. This section sought to understand the underlying motivations behind why Generation Z may choose to purchase gluten-free products beyond just dietary needs.

5. DATA ANALYSIS:

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), regression analysis helps to predict or explain the variance in a dependent variable based on independent variables. Hair et al. (2010) further emphasize that it is used to model and analyze relationships between variables and test hypotheses about how they interrelate. Field (2013) highlights that simple linear regression, as used in this study, examines the influence of one independent variable on a dependent variable, providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour. The application of regression analysis enables the study to quantify the effect of psychographic factors on purchase intention and assess their significance in shaping Generation Z's attitudes towards gluten-free products. The result of regression analysis is presented below..

Table 1.1 Model Summary for Regression Analysis of Psychographic Variables on Purchase Intention

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.794 ^a	.630	.629	.43330



a. Predictors: (Constant), AVG12PSYV

Table 1.1 shows about the model summary that the independent variables AVG12PSYV has a strong impact with dependent variables, reflected by R value of 0.794. the R square value of 0.630 shows that 63% of the variance in dependent variables is explained by the predictor. The Adjusting R Square 0.629 indicates that the model maintains a high level of explanatory power after adjustment. 0.43330 show sthat the model has a relatively low level of prediction error.

Table 1.2 Results of ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	131.556	1	131.556	700.702	.000 ^b
	Residual	77.165	411	.188		
	Total	208.720	412			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Psychographic Variable						

The ANOVA table 1.2 shows that regression model is statistically significant. The F value is 700.702 with a p value of .000 indicating that the psychographic variables significantly predicts Purchase Intention.

Table 1.3 Coefficients Table

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.682	.109		6.239	.000
	Psychographic Variable	.807	.030	.794	26.471	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention						

Table 1.3 shows that the psychographic variable has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.807, meaning that for every 1 unit increase in the psychographic variable, the purchase intention increases by 0.807 units, holding other factors constant. The t-value of 26.471 and the p-value of .000 confirm that this relationship is statistically significant. The constant value of 0.682 represents the predicted purchase intention when the psychographic variable is zero. Therefore, Purchase Intention = 0.682 + 0.807 x (Psychographic Variable)

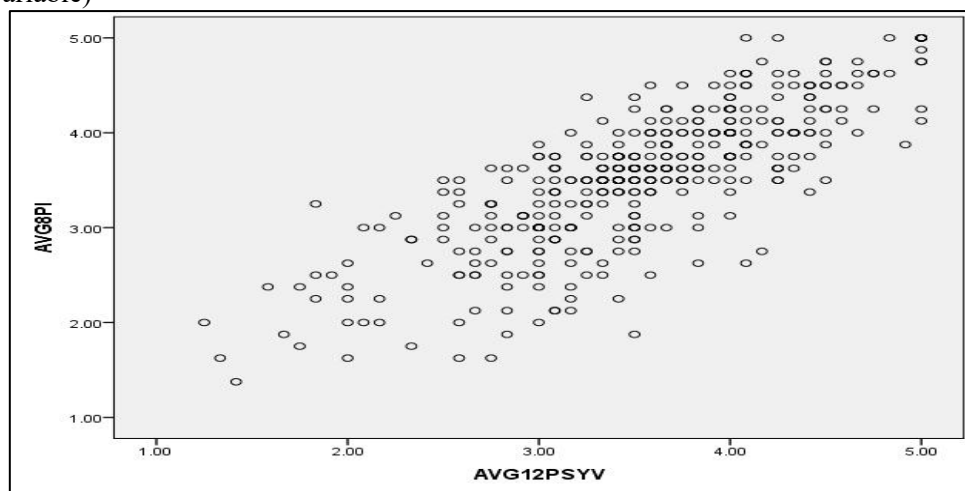


Figure 1.1 Scatter plot



The Scatter plot illustrates a strong positive linear relationship between both variables. The clustering of data points along upward trend line suggests that individuals with higher psychographic score are more likely to exhibit stronger intentions to purchase gluten free products.

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The findings of the study shows that the regression analysis revealed a strong and stastically significant relationship between psychographic traits and purchase intention. The scatter plot and coefficient table confirms that an increase in psychographic variables score is positively associated with higher level of purchase intention. This implies that the purchasing behaviour is not merely influenced by medical needs but by their lifestyle, identity, and social preferences. Overall, the results supports the hypothesis that psychographic variables play a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's buying behavipur for gluten free products. It was also found that the study done in other areas are very limited and very few studies were done in Indian context.

7. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY:

The study has several practical and theoretical implications:

- **For Marketers:** The findings of the study provide a brief idea to marketers regarding the target customers. This will help the marketers to make effective marketing strategies by focusing generation Z age group as they will make their decisions on the bsis of lifestyle trends, social identity and other factors which affect the young generation.
- **For Product Developers:** There is a huge competition in food industry in the market therefore, the product developers can use these insights to innovate gluten free products not only as a medical alternative but also as a lifestyle product.
- **For Academic Product:** The study opens doors for further deep research on non – demographic influences on health oriented food consumption.

REFERENCES

1. Abel, E. K. (2025). *Gluten Free for Life: Celiac Disease, Medical Recognition, and the Food Industry*. NYU Press.
2. Bahacicu, M. (2022). *Consumer Trends and Product Labels in Food Choice*.
3. Bogue, J., & Sorenson, D. (2008). *Marketing Breakfast Cereals to the Youth Market*.
4. Burden, M., Mooney, P. D., Blanshard, R. J., White, W. L., Cambray-Deakin, D. R., & Sanders, D. S. (2015). Cost and availability of gluten-free food in the UK: in store and online. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 91(1081), 622–626.
5. Capacci, S., Leucci, A., & Mazzocchi, M. (2018). *Consumer response to gluten-free food products*.
6. Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2014). *Business Research Methods*. McGraw Hill.
7. Crocker, S. J., et al. (2024). *Market Trends in Gluten-Free Consumption Among Youth*.
8. Cureton, P. (2007). *Gluten-Free Living and Public Health*.
9. Field, A. (2013). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed.). SAGE.
10. Garcia-Salirrosas, E. E., et al. (2025). *Psychographics and Health Food Choices*.
11. Gorgitano, M. T., & Sodano, V. (2019). *Gluten-free products and consumer perception: An Italian case*.
12. Guennouni, M., et al. (2022). *Gluten Sensitivity and Celiac Disease Overview*.
13. Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson.
14. Hassan, M., et al. (2024). *Dietary Trends Among Youth and Impact on Health Behavior*.
15. IMARC Group. (2024). *India Gluten-Free Food Market Report 2025–2033*. Retrieved from <https://www.imarcgroup.com/india-gluten-free-food-market>
16. Jnawali, P., et al. (2016). *Gluten-related disorders and food trends*.
17. Kukar-Kinney, M., et al. (2012). *Psychographic Insights in Consumer Research*.
18. Lim, W. M., et al. (2016). *Understanding the Role of Lifestyle and Personality in Buying Behaviour*.
19. Mehtab, W., Agarwal, A., Chauhan, A., Agarwal, S., Singh, A., Ahmad, A., & Rizwan, M. (2024). *Challenges in Gluten-Free Product Markets in India*.



20. Melini, V., & Melini, F. (2019). Nutritional adequacy of gluten-free diets: Challenges and solutions. *Nutrients*, 11(1), 170.
21. Nascimento, A. B., et al. (2014). *Consumer behaviour and expectations of gluten-free foods*.
22. Ozturk, A., Karabudak, E., & Egritas, O. (2024). *Diet Compliance and Nutritional Challenges*.
23. Panagiotou, A., & Kontogianni, M. D. (2017). *Gluten-Free Diet and Nutritional Risks*.
24. Pandey, R., et al. (2019). *Food Preferences and Label Sensitivity*.
25. Qashqari, M., Shakweer, L., Alzaben, F., & Hanbazaza, M. (2024). *Barriers to Gluten-Free Diet Adherence*.
26. Rahm, K. (2025). *Improving Gluten-Free Product Satisfaction*.
27. Rostami, K., Bold, J., Parr, A., & Johnson, M. W. (2017). *Developments in Celiac Disease Management*.
28. Zebini, C., et al. (2024). *Gluten-Free Trends and Health Consciousness*.
29. Zsigmond, T., et al. (2023). *Psychographic Influences on Consumer Food Choices*