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MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Advancing Perspectives on Consumer Behavior in Healthy Food Consumption within Modern Digital and Social Environments

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Abstract

Background: Despite increasing exposure to health-related information in digital environments, many consumers still do not consistently translate health awareness into healthy food purchasing behavior, reflecting a persistent attitude-behavior gap.

Purpose: This study examines how digital and perceptual factors shape healthy food purchase behavior through consumers' internal psychological processes.

Method: A quantitative cross-sectional approach was used, involving 300 respondents from Tangerang Raya, Indonesia. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to examine the proposed relationships among the variables.

Findings: The findings show that digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value significantly contribute to health consciousness, with influencer credibility emerging as the strongest predictor. Health consciousness significantly influences healthy food purchase behavior and serves as an important mechanism linking external stimuli with consumer responses. Furthermore, food neophobia does not significantly moderate this relationship, suggesting that health-oriented consumers tend to maintain healthy purchasing behavior regardless of their reluctance toward unfamiliar foods.

Conclusions: These findings provide a deeper understanding of how consumers process digital information and translate it into healthy food purchasing behavior through internal psychological mechanisms.

Research implication: This study extends the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework by integrating digital marketing and value-based perceptions within a single model while highlighting the central role of health consciousness in healthy food purchase decisions.

Keywords: consumer behavior, digital marketing, health consciousness, healthy food consumption, influencer credibility, perceived ethical value

JEL Classification: D12, M31, I12



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Healthy food consumption has become increasingly important as consumers are exposed to food promotions, influencer recommendations, and brand messages through digital platforms. However, consumers may still experience difficulty determining whether healthy food products are credible, beneficial, and relevant to their health needs. This study examines how digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value shape health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior. The findings provide practical insights for consumers, food businesses, marketers, and public health stakeholders seeking to encourage healthier purchasing decisions through credible, authentic, informative, and ethically responsible digital communication.



1. Introduction

Growing public awareness of healthier and more sustainable lifestyles has gradually changed the way people think about food and consumption (Deksne et al., 2025; Reisch, 2021). At the same time, digital platforms have become an important part of everyday life, giving consumers easy access to a wide range of health-related information. Through social media, online advertisements, influencers, and digital content, people are constantly exposed to messages about healthy eating and wellness. However, awareness of healthy food does not necessarily translate into consumers' actual purchase or consumption of such products (Hashem, 2025). Many individuals express concern about health issues, yet their consumption behavior often does not fully reflect those concerns. This gap between awareness and actual behavior has become increasingly visible in digital environments where consumers are surrounded by competing information, persuasive marketing messages, and continuous online influence (Damaj & Nofal, 2026). Consequently, understanding how digital exposure shapes consumers' internal thinking and eventually influences their purchasing behavior remains an important issue in contemporary consumer behavior research (Dirwan, 2023; Syarif et al., 2025).

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework helps explain how consumers react to the many influences surrounding them in everyday life. The framework suggests that external factors can shape the way individuals think and feel, which later affects how they behave (Maleknia & Enescu, 2025). In the context of healthy food consumption, consumers are constantly exposed to digital content such as social media promotions, influencer recommendations, brand communication, and ethical claims related to products (Sofi & Waskito, 2026). These forms of exposure may gradually influence how consumers perceive health and evaluate their food choices (Ngo et al., 2026). In this process, health consciousness becomes an important part of consumer decision-making, as it reflects how strongly individuals consider health-related aspects when choosing what to consume (Li & Shan, 2025). Therefore, the S-O-R framework provides a useful theoretical perspective for understanding how external digital and perceptual stimuli are translated into consumer behavior through internal psychological processes.

Research on healthy food consumption and digital consumer behavior has expanded rapidly over the past few years. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value in shaping consumer perceptions and behavioral outcomes. However, empirical findings remain fragmented and inconclusive. For example, while influencer credibility has been found to positively influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in several studies (Palazón et al., 2024), other studies suggest that its influence is indirect and highly dependent on consumers' internal evaluations and contextual factors (Nagaraj, 2021). Similar inconsistencies have been observed regarding the effects of brand authenticity and perceived ethical value on consumer decision-making, with some studies reporting significant positive effects while others indicate weaker or context-specific relationships (Ogiemwonyi & Jan, 2023).

Moreover, existing studies have predominantly examined these factors independently, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how multiple digital and perceptual stimuli jointly influence healthy food purchase behavior. From a theoretical perspective, limited attention has been devoted to explaining the psychological mechanism through which these external stimuli are translated into behavioral responses. Although the S-O-R framework emphasizes the role of internal psychological processes, the function of health consciousness as a central organismic mechanism remains underexplored in healthy food consumption research (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2025). Furthermore, the potential moderating role of food neophobia has received limited empirical attention

despite evidence suggesting that reluctance toward unfamiliar foods may weaken consumers' willingness to transform health awareness into actual purchasing behavior (Siddiqui et al., 2022). These gaps indicate the need for a more comprehensive framework that simultaneously examines multiple external stimuli, underlying psychological mechanisms, and contextual factors influencing healthy food consumption behavior.

To address these issues, this study develops an integrated framework based on the S-O-R framework perspective by examining how digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value are associated with healthy food purchase behavior through health consciousness (Maleknia & Enescu, 2025; Simpson et al., 2025). In addition, food neophobia is incorporated as a moderating variable to evaluate whether consumers' reluctance toward unfamiliar foods weakens the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior (Katsikari & Varela, 2026; Raza et al., 2021). By integrating multiple digital and perceptual stimuli within a single framework, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive explanation of healthy food consumption behavior in contemporary digital environments.

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends the application of the S-O-R framework by integrating both digital marketing-related factors and value-based perceptual factors within a single healthy food consumption model. Second, it identifies health consciousness as a central psychological mechanism through which external stimuli influence consumer behavior, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes underlying healthy food purchasing decisions. Third, it introduces food neophobia as a boundary condition that may explain variations in consumers' ability to translate health awareness into actual purchasing behavior. Collectively, these contributions enrich the consumer behavior literature and advance understanding of healthy food consumption within modern digital and social environments (Rouf et al., 2026).

Based on these considerations, this study examines how digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value are related to health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior within the S-O-R framework (Vera-Falcón et al., 2025). The study focuses particularly on the role of health consciousness in explaining how consumers process external digital and perceptual influences before translating them into purchasing decisions related to healthy food (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2025). In addition, food neophobia is included to explore whether consumers' reluctance toward unfamiliar foods influences the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior, providing a broader perspective on consumer behavior in contemporary digital consumption settings (Rahman, 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R)

The S-O-R model is commonly used to explain how individuals respond to influences from their surrounding environment. The model suggests that external stimuli can shape individuals' internal psychological conditions, which later influence their behavioral responses (Chaudhuri et al., 2026). In consumer behavior research, the S-O-R framework is often applied to understand how marketing-related factors affect consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing decisions. In the context of this study, digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value are viewed as external stimuli that may influence consumers' internal cognitive

responses, particularly health consciousness (Abu-Alhaija & Elsaywy, 2026; Rouf et al., 2026). Health consciousness reflects the extent to which individuals pay attention to and care about health-related aspects when making consumption decisions. This internal process may subsequently encourage consumers to engage in healthy food purchase behavior (Su et al., 2022). Therefore, the S-O-R framework provides a useful perspective for explaining how external marketing and perceptual factors are translated into consumer behavior through psychological processes.

2.2 Digital Marketing Quality and Health Consciousness

Digital marketing has become one of the main sources through which consumers obtain information related to food, health, and lifestyle. However, the influence of digital marketing is not simply determined by how often consumers are exposed to content, but also by the quality of the information being delivered (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Soodan et al., 2026). Content that is informative, credible, and visually engaging tends to attract greater consumer attention and makes health-related information easier to understand and evaluate (Migkos et al., 2025). In the context of healthy food consumption, digital content can gradually shape consumers' awareness and concern about health, particularly when the information is perceived as relevant and trustworthy (Ngo et al., 2026). From the perspective of the S-O-R framework, digital marketing quality can be viewed as an external stimulus that influences consumers' internal psychological responses, especially health consciousness. Therefore, higher digital marketing quality is expected to strengthen consumers' health consciousness.

H1: Digital marketing quality has a positive effect on health consciousness.

2.3 Influencer Credibility and Health Consciousness

Influencers have become an important part of digital communication and increasingly shape how consumers view products, brands, and lifestyles. In digital environments, consumers are often exposed to recommendations and opinions shared by influencers through social media platforms. However, the influence of these individuals does not depend solely on popularity or visibility, but also on how credible they are perceived to be (Wang et al., 2025). Influencers who are viewed as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and authentic are generally more effective in shaping consumers' attitudes and perceptions (Araujo et al., 2025). In the context of healthy food consumption, influencers who consistently promote healthy lifestyles may encourage consumers to pay greater attention to their own well-being and eating habits (Palazón et al., 2024). As consumers become more engaged with the information delivered by credible influencers, they may also develop stronger awareness and concern regarding health-related issues. This indicates that influencer credibility can function as an external stimulus that contributes to the development of health consciousness.

H2: Influencer credibility has a positive effect on health consciousness.

2.4 Brand Authenticity and Health Consciousness

Brand authenticity is often considered an important factor in developing consumer trust, especially in markets where consumers are increasingly cautious about marketing claims and product information. Consumers generally respond more positively to brands that are perceived as honest, transparent, and consistent in communicating their values (Poulis et al., 2026). In the context of healthy food products, authenticity becomes particularly important because consumers are frequently concerned about exaggerated claims or misleading health information (Wu et al., 2021). When a brand is viewed as

genuine and reliable, consumers may feel more confident in the health-related benefits associated with the product. This perception can gradually strengthen consumers' awareness and concern about health-related issues, particularly when choosing food products (Albornoz et al., 2024). Within the S-O-R framework, brand authenticity can therefore be understood as an external stimulus that shapes consumers' internal psychological responses, especially health consciousness.

H3: Brand authenticity has a positive effect on health consciousness.

2.5 Perceived Ethical Value and Health Consciousness

Perceived ethical value reflects consumers' evaluation of the moral aspects of a product, including environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Previous research suggests that ethical considerations can influence not only consumer preferences but also their cognitive and emotional responses (Amin & Tarun, 2022; Ogiemwonyi & Jan, 2023). However, the extent to which ethical value translates into behavior remains a topic of debate. In the context of healthy food, ethical value may enhance consumers' awareness of the broader impact of their consumption choices, thereby strengthening health consciousness (Pan et al., 2025). This implies that ethical value serves as a stimulus that activates internal cognitive processes related to health and responsibility.

H4: Perceived ethical value has a positive effect on health consciousness.

2.6 Health Consciousness and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness is often associated with the extent to which individuals pay attention to their health when making everyday consumption decisions, particularly related to food. Consumers who are more conscious about health generally tend to be more careful in evaluating the nutritional value, safety, and long-term effects of the products they consume (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2025). As awareness of health-related issues increases, consumers are more likely to consider healthier alternatives and make food choices that support their well-being (Su et al., 2022). In recent years, the growing availability of health-related information through digital platforms has also encouraged consumers to become more attentive to what they eat and how their consumption habits may affect their health. Previous studies indicate that individuals with stronger health consciousness are more likely to develop healthier purchasing habits and show greater preference toward healthy food products (Wicher et al., 2026). Accordingly, consumers with higher levels of health consciousness are generally more inclined to engage in healthy food purchase behavior.

H5: Health consciousness has a positive effect on healthy food purchase behavior.

2.7 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Digital Marketing and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness is expected to play an important role in explaining how digital marketing quality influences healthy food purchase behavior. Consumers who are repeatedly exposed to digital content that is clear, credible, and engaging may gradually become more aware of the importance of maintaining healthy consumption habits (Devi et al., 2023). In many cases, digital marketing does more than simply introduce products; it also shapes how consumers understand health-related information and evaluate the benefits associated with certain food choices. When consumers perceive the information presented through digital platforms as trustworthy and relevant to their daily lives, they are more likely to pay closer attention to nutritional value and the possible health

consequences of their eating behavior (Nazzaro et al., 2025). This growing awareness can eventually encourage consumers to make healthier purchasing decisions and become more selective when choosing food products. Within the S-O-R framework, health consciousness can therefore be understood as an internal psychological process through which digital marketing quality influences healthy food purchase behavior.

H6: Digital marketing quality positively influences healthy food purchase behavior through the mediating role of health consciousness.

2.8 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Influencer Credibility and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Influencer credibility is expected to influence healthy food purchase behavior through the development of health consciousness. In digital environments, consumers are often exposed to health-related information shared by influencers through social media platforms. However, consumers are generally more likely to pay attention to messages delivered by influencers who are considered trustworthy, knowledgeable, and genuine (Nagaraj, 2021). Credible influencers also serve as sources of information on healthy eating and personal well-being. When consumers perceive influencers as credible, they may become more aware of the importance of maintaining healthy consumption habits and more thoughtful in evaluating their food choices (Palazón et al., 2024). This increased awareness can gradually encourage consumers to prefer healthier food products and adopt healthier purchasing behavior. Within the S-O-R framework, health consciousness can therefore be understood as an internal psychological mechanism through which influencer credibility influences healthy food purchase behavior (Su et al., 2022).

H7: Influencer credibility positively influences healthy food purchase behavior through the mediating role of health consciousness.

2.9 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Brand Authenticity and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Brand authenticity is expected to influence healthy food purchase behavior through the development of health consciousness. Consumers generally respond more positively to brands that are perceived as honest, transparent, and consistent in communicating their values. In the context of healthy food products, authenticity becomes particularly important because consumers are often careful when evaluating health-related claims and product information (Chan et al., 2025; Södergren, 2021). When a brand is viewed as genuine and aligned with healthy values, consumers may develop stronger trust in the information provided and become more attentive to the potential health benefits associated with the product. This process can gradually increase consumers' awareness of the importance of maintaining healthier consumption habits and encourage them to make more health-oriented purchasing decisions (García-Salirrosas et al., 2024). Within the S-O-R framework, health consciousness can therefore be understood as an internal psychological mechanism through which brand authenticity influences healthy food purchase behavior.

H8: Brand authenticity positively influences healthy food purchase behavior through the mediating role of health consciousness.

2.10 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Perceived Ethical Value and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Perceived ethical value is expected to influence healthy food purchase behavior through the development of health consciousness. Today, consumers often consider not only the functional benefits of food products, but also the ethical values associated with them, including environmental sustainability, responsible production practices, and social responsibility. Products perceived as environmentally friendly and ethically produced are frequently viewed as safer and more beneficial for personal well-being (Amin & Tarun, 2022; Köse & Kircova, 2021). In digital consumption environments, ethical information shared through brands, social media, and online platforms may shape how consumers evaluate products and reflect on the broader impact of their consumption choices. As consumers become more aware of health-related issues, they may also become more selective in choosing products that align with both their personal health concerns and ethical considerations (Nguyen et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2025). Within the S-O-R framework, health consciousness can therefore be understood as an internal psychological mechanism through which perceived ethical value influences healthy food purchase behavior.

H9: Perceived ethical value positively influences healthy food purchase behavior through the mediating role of health consciousness.

2.11 The Moderating Role of Food Neophobia

Food neophobia reflects consumers' reluctance or hesitation toward trying unfamiliar food products. Although individuals with strong health consciousness may be more interested in healthier food choices, not all consumers are equally willing to adopt new consumption habits. Some consumers may still avoid unfamiliar foods even when they recognize the potential health benefits associated with them (Kashif et al., 2023; Laureati & Cattaneo, 2019). This tendency is particularly relevant in the context of healthy food products, where consumers are often introduced to new ingredients, alternative diets, or unfamiliar forms of food consumption (Siddiqui et al., 2022; Vermetten et al., 2026). As a result, the influence of health consciousness on healthy food purchase behavior may vary depending on the level of food neophobia experienced by consumers. Individuals with higher food neophobia may be less likely to translate their health awareness into actual purchasing behavior (Welk et al., 2025). Therefore, food neophobia is expected to weaken the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior.

H10: Food neophobia moderates the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior.

3. Conceptual Framework

Based on the preceding theoretical arguments, the proposed relationships among digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, health consciousness, food neophobia, and healthy food purchase behavior are presented in Figure 1.

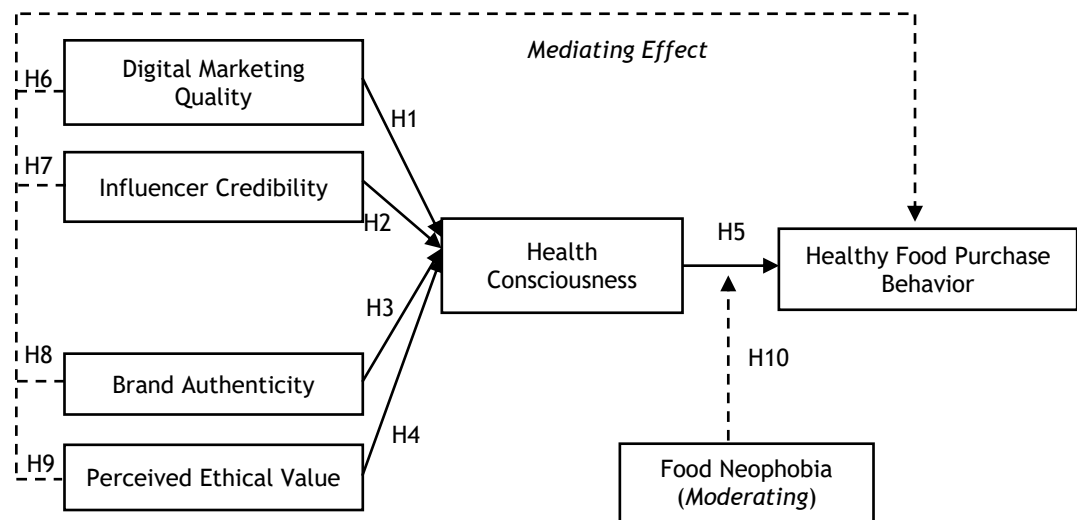


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of healthy food purchase behavior in digital and social environments

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- H1: Digital marketing quality positively affects health consciousness.
- H2: Influencer credibility positively affects health consciousness.
- H3: Brand authenticity positively affects health consciousness.
- H4: Perceived ethical value positively affects health consciousness.
- H5: Health consciousness positively affects healthy food purchase behavior.
- H6: Health consciousness mediates the relationship between digital marketing quality and healthy food purchase behavior.
- H7: Health consciousness mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and healthy food purchase behavior.
- H8: Health consciousness mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and healthy food purchase behavior.
- H9: Health consciousness mediates the relationship between perceived ethical value and healthy food purchase behavior.
- H10: Food neophobia moderates the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior.

4. Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, health consciousness, food neophobia, and healthy food purchase behavior within the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. A quantitative design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to test theoretically derived hypotheses and evaluate the relationships among multiple latent constructs simultaneously (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Data were collected at a single point in time to capture consumers' perceptions, evaluations, and behavioral tendencies regarding healthy food consumption in a contemporary digital environment.

This approach is suitable for studies that focus on explaining relationships among variables and validating a theoretical model rather than examining changes in behavior over extended periods (Ringle et al., 2023). Consistent with the S-O-R framework, digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived

ethical value were conceptualized as external stimuli, health consciousness as the organismic state, healthy food purchase behavior as the behavioral response, and food neophobia as a moderating factor that may influence the relationship between health consciousness and purchasing behavior.

4.2 Sampling

This study employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique to recruit respondents who were considered relevant to the research objectives (Hair et al., 2021). The sampling approach was selected because the proposed model requires respondents who have experience with both healthy food consumption and digital marketing exposure. To ensure the relevance of the collected data, participants were required to be at least 18 years old, actively use social media platforms, have been exposed to digital marketing content related to food, health, nutrition, or wellness within the previous six months, and have purchased or considered purchasing healthy food products during the same period. These criteria ensured respondents' relevance to the study context. A total of 300 valid responses were collected from residents of Tangerang Raya, Indonesia. Tangerang Raya was selected because it represents an urban metropolitan area characterized by extensive internet usage, active social media engagement, and substantial exposure to digital marketing activities, making it a suitable setting for examining healthy food consumption behavior in a contemporary digital environment. The sample size is considered adequate for PLS-SEM analysis and exceeds the minimum recommendations for estimating complex structural relationships involving multiple latent constructs. Although the use of non-probability sampling limits the generalizability of the findings, the approach remains appropriate because the primary objective of the study is theory testing rather than population estimation.

4.3 Measurement

All constructs in this study were measured using multi-item scales adapted from prior studies published in reputable journals to ensure content validity and reliability. The measurement items were slightly modified to fit the context of healthy food consumption without altering their original meaning. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was employed to capture respondents' perceptions. The constructs include digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, health consciousness, food neophobia, and healthy food purchase behavior, each operationalized based on established dimensions (Table 1).

Table 1. Operational definition and measurement indicators of healthy food purchase behavior determinants

Variable	Definition	Measurement Item
Digital Marketing Quality (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Soodan et al., 2026)	Consumers' perception of the quality of digital marketing content that is informative, credible, and visually appealing	• The information about healthy food is easy to understand • The content provides complete information about healthy food benefits • I trust the information presented in the content

Table 1. Operational definition and measurement indicators of healthy food purchase behavior determinants (Continue)

Variable	Definition	Measurement Item
Digital Marketing Quality (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Soodan et al., 2026)	Consumers' perception of the quality of digital marketing content that is informative, credible, and visually appealing	• The information provided is accurate • The content is visually appealing • The content design attracts my attention
Influencer Credibility (Araujo et al., 2025; Lou & Yuan, 2019)	Consumers' perception of the credibility of influencers in delivering healthy food information	• The influencer has knowledge about healthy food • The influencer appears to be an expert in the topic • I believe the influencer is honest • The influencer provides trustworthy information • The influencer is attractive to follow • I find the influencer relatable
Brand Authenticity (Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli et al., 2014; Södergren, 2021)	Consumers' perception of the genuineness and honesty of a brand	• The brand appears genuine and not artificial • The brand provides transparent information • The product information is clearly communicated • The brand is consistent in its messaging • The brand shows commitment to healthy values
Perceived Ethical Value (Mpinganjira & Maduku, 2019; Suphasomboon & Vassanadumrongdee, 2022)	Consumers' perception of the ethical value of a product in terms of environmental and social responsibility	• The product is environmentally friendly • The product does not harm the environment • The product is produced ethically • The product reflects strong moral values
Health Consciousness (Espinosa & Kadić-Maglajlić, 2018; Su et al., 2022)	The degree to which individuals are aware of and concerned about their health	• I pay attention to health when choosing food • I am concerned about the health impact of food • I try to choose healthy food • I consider nutritional value when selecting food
Food Neophobia (Coulthard et al., 2022; Siddiqui et al., 2022)	The degree of reluctance to try new or unfamiliar foods	• I am hesitant to try new foods • I feel uncomfortable trying unfamiliar food • I avoid foods that I am not familiar with • I prefer foods that I already know

Table 1. Operational definition and measurement indicators of healthy food purchase behavior determinants (Continue)

Variable	Definition	Measurement Item
Healthy Food Purchase Behavior (Hoenink et al., 2020; Lazaroïu et al., 2019)	Consumers' actual behavior in purchasing healthy food products	• I frequently purchase healthy food • I regularly buy healthy food • I choose healthy food over alternatives • I prioritize healthy food when shopping

4.4 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through an online survey using Google Forms from January to March 2026. The questionnaire was distributed through digital platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok to reach respondents who are actively engaged with digital content and social media environments. The survey link was shared through both open and targeted distribution to individuals considered relevant to the context of healthy food consumption and digital marketing exposure. At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were asked screening questions to ensure that they met the predetermined research criteria. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research prior to completing the survey. To maintain respondent comfort and encourage honest answers, anonymity and confidentiality were assured throughout the data collection process. Responses were monitored regularly to identify incomplete or inconsistent entries, and only fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Before the main distribution, the questionnaire was also pre-tested to ensure that the wording and structure of the items were clear and easy for respondents to understand. These procedures were carried out to support the overall quality and consistency of the collected data.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with Smart-PLS 4 software (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). PLS-SEM was considered appropriate because the study aims to examine predictive relationships among multiple latent constructs within an integrated S-O-R framework involving direct, mediating, and moderating effects. The analysis was conducted in two stages.

First, the measurement model was evaluated by assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Second, the structural model was assessed using path coefficient estimation and bootstrapping procedures to test the proposed hypotheses, including mediation and moderation effects.

5. Findings

5.1 Demographic Profile

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A total of 300 valid responses were included in the analysis. The sample was predominantly female, aged between 18 and 35 years, and held a bachelor's degree. Most respondents reported moderate levels of healthy food consumption and high engagement with social media platforms.

In addition, a substantial proportion indicated frequent exposure to influencer-related content and regular experience with healthy food products. These characteristics suggest that the sample is appropriate for examining healthy food purchase behavior within a digitally connected consumer environment.

Table 2. Selected sample characteristics (n=300)

Classification	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	114	38.0
	Female	186	62.0
Age	18-25 years	126	42.0
	26-35 years	102	34.0
	36-45 years	48	16.0
	>45 years	24	8.0
Education Level	High School	88	29.3
	Bachelor's Degree	158	52.7
	Postgraduate Degree	54	18.0
Monthly Income	< IDR 3,000,000	75	25.0
	IDR 3,000,000 - 5,000,000	106	35.3
	IDR 5,000,000 - 10,000,000	82	27.3
	> IDR 10,000,000	37	12.3
Healthy Food Consumption Frequency	Rarely	45	15.0
	Sometimes	112	37.3
	Often	94	31.3
	Very often	49	16.3
Social Media Usage (Daily)	<1 hour	34	11.3
	1-3 hours	109	36.3
	3-5 hours	103	34.3
	>5 hours	54	18.0
Exposure to Influencer Content	Never	29	9.7
	Occasionally	121	40.3
	Frequently	150	50.0
Experience with Healthy Food Product Consumption	Never tried	24	8.0
	Tried occasionally	126	42.0
	Regular consumer	150	50.0

5.2 PLS Model Scheme

The structural model describes the relationships among the main constructs examined in this study, namely digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, health consciousness, food neophobia, and healthy food purchase behavior. The model illustrates how various forms of digital and perceptual influences may shape consumers' level of health consciousness, which subsequently relates to their purchasing behavior toward healthy food products. In addition, the model considers the moderating role of food neophobia in explaining whether consumers' reluctance toward unfamiliar foods influences the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior. Each construct in the model is measured using several indicators to capture the complexity of consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies within contemporary digital and health-oriented consumption contexts (Figure 1).

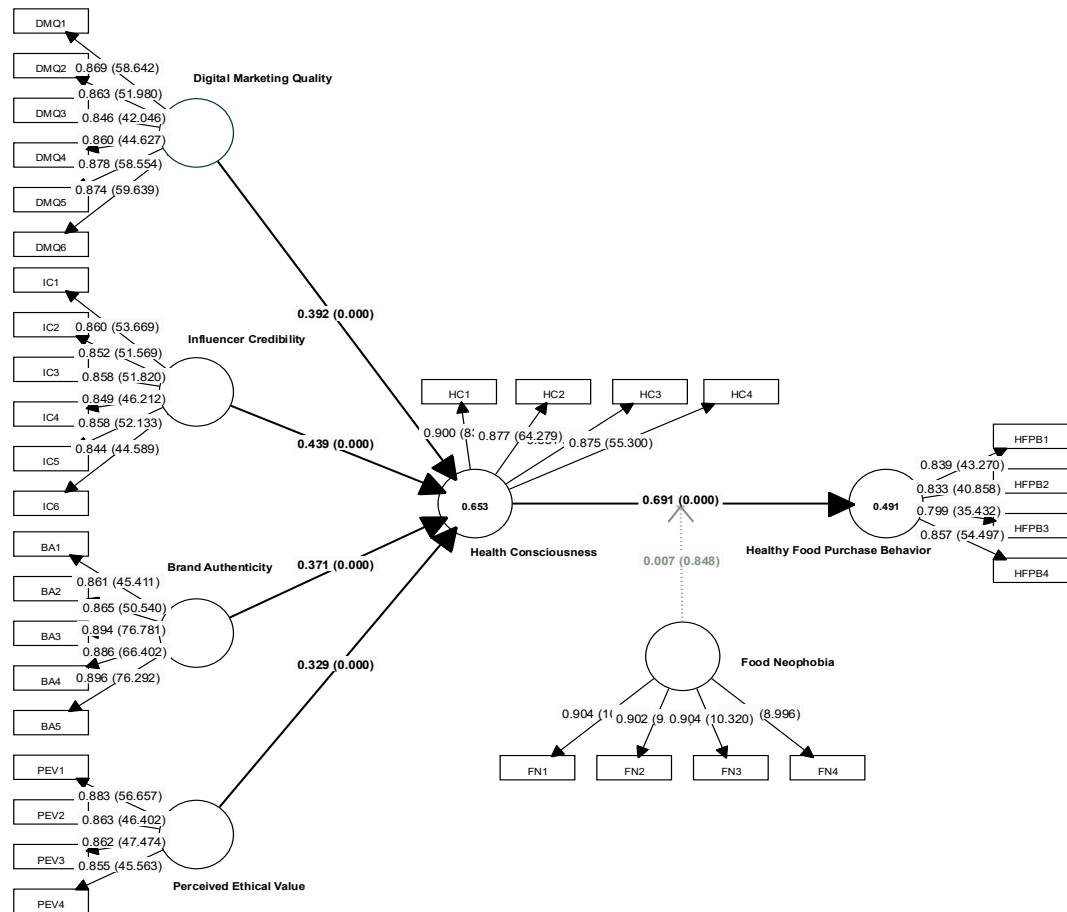


Figure 2. Structural model of the relationships among digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, health consciousness, food neophobia, and healthy food purchase behavior

5.3 Outer Model

Table 3 present the measurement model was evaluated by assessing the reliability and validity of each construct through several commonly used indicators, including outer loadings, cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). The results show that all indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each measurement item was able to represent its corresponding construct adequately. The reliability assessment also demonstrated satisfactory results, as both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all constructs were above 0.80, reflecting strong internal consistency among the measurement items. In addition, all AVE values were greater than 0.50, suggesting that the indicators explained a sufficient proportion of variance in their respective latent constructs. Overall, these findings indicate that the measurement model meets the recommended criteria for reliability and convergent validity, supporting the adequacy of the constructs used in this study.

Table 3. Outer loading and construct reliability

Variable	Code	Measurement Item	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Digital Marketing Quality (DMQ)	DMQ1	The information provided about healthy food products is easy to understand	0.869	0.933	0.947	0.748
	DMQ2	The content provides comprehensive information about the benefits of healthy food products	0.863			
	DMQ3	I trust the information presented in the digital content about healthy food products	0.846			
	DMQ4	The information presented about healthy food products is accurate.	0.860			
	DMQ5	The digital content related to healthy food products is visually appealing	0.878			
	DMQ6	The presentation of the digital content attracts my attention.	0.874			
Influencer Credibility (IC)	IC1	The influencer has knowledge about healthy food	0.860	0.925	0.941	0.728
	IC2	The influencer appears to be an expert in the topic	0.852			
	IC3	I believe the influencer is honest	0.858			
	IC4	The influencer provides trustworthy information	0.849			
	IC5	The influencer is attractive to follow	0.858			
	IC6	I find the influencer relatable	0.844			
Brand Authenticity (BA)	BA1	The brand appears genuine and not artificial	0.861	0.928	0.945	0.776
	BA2	The brand provides transparent information	0.865			
	BA3	The product information is clearly communicated	0.894			
	BA4	The brand is consistent in its messaging	0.886			
	BA5	The brand shows commitment to healthy values	0.896			

Table 3. Outer loading and construct reliability (Continue)

Variable	Code	Measurement Item	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Perceived Ethical Value (PEV)	PEV1	The product is environmentally friendly	0.883	0.889	0.923	0.750
	PEV2	The product does not harm the environment	0.863			
	PEV3	The product is produced ethically	0.862			
	PEV4	The product reflects strong moral values	0.855			
Health Consciousness (HC)	HC1	I pay attention to health when choosing food	0.900	0.906	0.934	0.780
	HC2	I am concerned about the health impact of food	0.877			
	HC3	I try to choose healthy food	0.881			
	HC4	I consider nutritional value when selecting food	0.875			
Food Neophobia (FN)	FN1	I am hesitant to try new foods	0.904	0.919	0.943	0.805
	FN2	I feel uncomfortable trying unfamiliar food	0.902			
	FN3	I avoid foods that I am not familiar with	0.904			
	FN4	I prefer foods that I already know	0.878			
Healthy Food Purchase Behavior (HFPB)	HFPB1	I frequently purchase healthy food	0.839	0.852	0.900	0.693
	HFPB2	I regularly buy healthy food	0.833			
	HFPB3	I choose healthy food over alternatives	0.799			
	HFPB4	I prioritize healthy food when shopping	0.857			

5.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. HTMT values below 0.85 indicate that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another and adequately capture different conceptual domains. As shown in Table 4, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity and supporting the adequacy of the measurement model.

Table 4. Discriminant validity HTMT

Construct	BA	DMQ	FN	HC	HFPB	IC	PEV
Brand Authenticity (BA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Digital Marketing Quality (DMQ)	0.050	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food Neophobia (FN)	0.113	0.071	-	-	-	-	-
Health Consciousness (HC)	0.452	0.433	0.052	-	-	-	-
Healthy Food Purchase Behavior (HFPB)	0.337	0.382	0.132	0.789	-	-	-
Influencer Credibility (IC)	0.066	0.042	0.103	0.524	0.390	-	-
Perceived Ethical Value (PEV)	0.061	0.036	0.055	0.431	0.348	0.086	-

5.5 Inner Model

The structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R-square) for the endogenous constructs included in the study. The results indicate that health consciousness achieved an R-square value of 0.653 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.648, suggesting that digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value explain 65.3% of the variance in health consciousness. In addition, healthy food purchase behavior recorded an R-square value of 0.491 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.486, indicating that the proposed model explains 49.1% of the variance in consumers' healthy food purchase behavior. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the model possesses a moderate to substantial level of explanatory power in explaining both health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square) for Endogenous Constructs

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
Health Consciousness	0.653	0.648
Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.491	0.486

5.6 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing results show that digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value have positive effects on health consciousness. The findings also confirm that consumers who are more aware of health issues are more likely to engage in healthy food purchase behavior. In addition, health consciousness plays a mediating role in the relationship between the proposed variables and healthy food purchase behavior. Meanwhile, food neophobia was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior. These findings suggest that consumers' health awareness still plays an important role in shaping healthy food purchasing decisions.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Relationship	B	T-Value	P-Value	Result
H1	Digital Marketing Quality → Health Consciousness	0.392	11.330	0.000	Supported
H2	Influencer Credibility → Health Consciousness	0.439	12.137	0.000	Supported
H3	Brand Authenticity → Health Consciousness	0.371	10.199	0.000	Supported
H4	Perceived Ethical Value → Health Consciousness	0.329	9.641	0.000	Supported
H5	Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.691	22.071	0.000	Supported
H6	Digital Marketing Quality → Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.217	6.491	0.000	Supported
H7	Influencer Credibility → Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.243	7.099	0.000	Supported
H8	Brand Authenticity → Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.205	6.408	0.000	Supported

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results (Continue)

Hypothesis	Relationship	B	T-Value	P-Value	Result
H9	Perceived Ethical Value → Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.182	6.319	0.000	Supported
H10	Food Neophobia × Health Consciousness → Healthy Food Purchase Behavior	0.007	0.192	0.848	Not Supported

6. Discussion

6.1 The Effect of Digital Marketing Quality on Health Consciousness

The positive effect of digital marketing quality on health consciousness indicates that informative, relevant, and visually engaging digital content can increase consumers' attention to health-related issues. Digital marketing therefore functions not only as a promotional instrument but also as an information source that helps consumers evaluate nutritional value, product benefits, and healthy consumption practices. This result aligns with Dwivedi et al. (2021), who explain that interactive and information-rich digital environments can influence consumer cognition. Similarly, Alharbi et al. (2026) found that exposure to health-related digital content strengthens health awareness and perceptions of healthier lifestyles.

6.2 The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Health Consciousness

The positive effect of influencer credibility on health consciousness suggests that consumers are more receptive to health information delivered by influencers perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and relatable. Credible influencers can make health-related messages more understandable and personally relevant, encouraging consumers to reflect on their eating habits and food choices (Martias et al., 2026). This result is consistent with Kumar et al. (2024), who reported that influencer credibility strengthens consumer trust and increases message acceptance. Jamuni and Halijol (2025) similarly reported that credible influencers shape consumer awareness and attitudes in health- and lifestyle-related contexts.

6.3 The Effect of Brand Authenticity on Health Consciousness

The positive relationship between brand authenticity and health consciousness indicates that consumers pay greater attention to health information when brands communicate honestly, transparently, and consistently. In the healthy food market, authentic communication may reduce skepticism toward product claims and increase confidence in the health benefits presented by brands. Lee and Chung (2019) explain that brand authenticity strengthens consumer trust and influences responses to brand-related information. Albornoz et al. (2024) likewise found that authentic brands encourage stronger engagement and shape how consumers interpret brand messages. Thus, authenticity helps health-related claims become more credible and meaningful to consumers.

6.4 The Effect of Perceived Ethical Value on Health Consciousness

The positive effect of perceived ethical value on health consciousness indicates that consumers may associate environmentally responsible and ethically produced products with safer and healthier consumption. Ethical considerations related to sustainability,

environmental impact, and social responsibility encourage consumers to evaluate both the personal and broader consequences of their food choices. Amin and Tarun (2022) found that ethical perceptions influence attitudes and awareness toward responsible consumption. Ogiemwonyi and Jan (2023) similarly demonstrated that ethical value shapes consumer perceptions and behavioral tendencies. These results show that responsible product values can strengthen consumers' attention to health and well-being.

6.5 The Effect of Health Consciousness on Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness positively influences healthy food purchase behavior because health-oriented consumers are more attentive to nutritional value, product safety, and the long-term consequences of food consumption. This awareness encourages them to become more selective and prioritize products that support healthier lifestyles. Su et al. (2022) found that consumers with stronger health awareness are more likely to prefer healthy food products. Consistent with this result, Wicher et al. (2026) reported that health consciousness is closely associated with healthier consumption habits. Health consciousness therefore represents an important internal mechanism that translates health concerns into purchasing behavior.

6.6 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Digital Marketing Quality and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness mediates the relationship between digital marketing quality and healthy food purchase behavior. High-quality digital content can improve consumers' understanding of nutritional information and the health consequences of their food choices. However, such content contributes to purchasing behavior primarily when consumers internalize the information and incorporate health considerations into their decisions. This result supports Dwivedi et al. (2021), who explain that interactive digital communication influences consumer cognition. Nguyen et al. (2024) similarly found that health consciousness helps translate exposure to health-related information into consumer behavior.

6.7 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Influencer Credibility and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness also mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and healthy food purchase behavior. Credible influencers can attract consumers' attention to health-related recommendations, but these messages are more likely to influence purchases when they strengthen awareness of healthy lifestyles and nutritional considerations. Kumar et al. (2024) found that influencer credibility enhances trust and message acceptance, while Jamuni and Halijol (2025) showed that credible influencers shape health-related awareness and attitudes. Thus, influencer credibility contributes to healthy food purchases by first activating consumers' health consciousness.

6.8 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Brand Authenticity and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

The mediating effect of health consciousness indicates that brand authenticity influences healthy food purchase behavior by increasing consumers' attention to health-related information. Authentic brands make product messages more credible, enabling consumers to evaluate the health implications of their food choices with greater confidence. Lee and Chung (2019) found that brand authenticity strengthens trust and consumer responses to brand information. Albornoz et al. (2024) also reported that

authentic brands improve consumer engagement and the interpretation of brand messages. Therefore, authenticity encourages healthy purchasing behavior through stronger awareness of health and personal well-being.

6.9 The Mediating Role of Health Consciousness in the Relationship between Perceived Ethical Value and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Health consciousness mediates the relationship between perceived ethical value and healthy food purchase behavior. Consumers who value ethical production and environmental responsibility may become more attentive to how their consumption decisions affect both personal health and broader social outcomes. As these considerations become more salient, consumers are more likely to choose products consistent with their health goals and personal values. Wiśniewska (2025) explains that ethical perceptions shape consumer awareness and attitudes toward sustainable consumption. Nguyen et al. (2024) similarly found that ethical considerations influence behavior through increased awareness and personal responsibility.

6.10 The Moderating Role of Food Neophobia in the Relationship between Health Consciousness and Healthy Food Purchase Behavior

Food neophobia did not significantly moderate the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior. This result indicates that consumers with stronger health awareness tend to maintain healthy purchasing behavior regardless of their reluctance toward unfamiliar foods. Health-related motivations may outweigh concerns about product novelty when consumers evaluate food alternatives (Chang et al., 2022). This interpretation is consistent with Kashif et al. (2023) who found that health-oriented motivations can reduce hesitation toward unfamiliar food products. Respondents' familiarity with healthy foods promoted through digital platforms may also have reduced the relevance of food neophobia in their purchasing decisions.

6.11 Managerial Implication

Healthy food brands should strengthen consumers' health consciousness through credible digital communication. Since influencer credibility was the strongest predictor, firms should collaborate with knowledgeable and trustworthy influencers and provide accurate, engaging, and relevant content. Brand messages should remain authentic and emphasize ethical product values. Rather than relying solely on promotion, these strategies should help consumers understand the health implications of their food choices and encourage healthier purchasing behavior.

6.12 Theoretical Contribution

This study extends the application of the S-O-R framework by integrating digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value as external stimuli influencing healthy food purchase behavior through health consciousness. The significant indirect effects establish health consciousness as the central organismic mechanism linking these stimuli to behavior. The nonsignificant moderating effect further shows that food neophobia does not condition this mechanism in the present context.

6.13 Limitations

This study has several limitations. Its cross-sectional design captures consumer perceptions and behavior at one point in time, preventing the assessment of changes over time. Self-reported data may also be affected by social desirability and differences in individual interpretation. Because the sample was limited to Tangerang Raya, the findings may not generalize to other demographic or cultural contexts. In addition, the model did not include potentially relevant factors such as culture, product availability, and price. Finally, reliance on perceptual rather than observed behavioral data means that the results may not fully reflect actual purchasing behavior.

7. Conclusions

This study examines how digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, and perceived ethical value influence health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior within the S-O-R framework. The findings indicate that digital and perceptual factors play an important role in shaping consumers' awareness of health-related issues, with Influencer Credibility emerging as the strongest antecedent of Health Consciousness. Health Consciousness was also found to function as an important psychological mechanism connecting external digital influences with healthy food purchase behavior. In addition, health Consciousness mediates the relationships between digital marketing quality, influencer credibility, brand authenticity, perceived ethical value, and healthy food purchase behavior. However, food neophobia was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between health consciousness and healthy food purchase behavior. Overall, the findings suggest that health-related awareness remains a key factor influencing healthy food purchasing decisions and provide further support for the application of the S-O-R framework in explaining consumer behavior within contemporary digital consumption environments.

8. Recommendation

Future studies are encouraged to further explore consumer behavior related to healthy food consumption by using broader research approaches and more diverse research settings. Since this study applies a cross-sectional design, future research may consider longitudinal approaches to better understand how consumers' health awareness and purchasing behavior develop over time, particularly in rapidly changing digital environments. Expanding the research to different regions and cultural contexts may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of healthy food consumption behavior across diverse consumer groups. In addition, future studies could include other factors that may influence purchasing decisions, such as price sensitivity, product accessibility, lifestyle, or cultural influences. Researchers may also explore additional moderating or mediating variables to better understand the psychological and behavioral mechanisms underlying healthy food purchase behavior within digital consumption environments.

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