



The Relationship Between Health Awareness, Demographic Characteristics, and Mass Media Use with the Attitude of Headquarters Staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences Toward Organic Chicken Consumption

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to determine the relationship between health awareness, demographic characteristics, and mass media use with the attitude of headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences toward organic chicken consumption, as well as to predict attitude based on these variables. This was a descriptive-analytical study. The statistical population consisted of the headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences (250 individuals), of whom 148 were selected as the sample size through simple random sampling using the Krejcie and Morgan table. The main research instrument was a questionnaire, whose content validity was confirmed through expert review, and its reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.75). Given the non-normal distribution of the data based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Spearman's correlation coefficient and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data with SPSS version 26. The results showed that, among the eight independent variables, only two variables had a significant relationship with attitude toward organic chicken consumption. Health awareness showed the strongest relationship with attitude, with a correlation coefficient of 0.449 ($p = 0.000$), while age showed a positive and significant relationship with attitude, with a correlation coefficient of 0.230 ($p = 0.010$). Other variables, including gender, number of family members, income level, employment status, educational level, and level of mass media use, had no significant relationship with attitude ($p > 0.05$). The results of simple linear regression showed that age alone explained 5.1% of the variance in attitude, while health awareness explained 28.5% of its variance. In addition, the descriptive findings indicated that cyberspace and the Internet, with a mean score of 3.56, were the most frequently used media channels, whereas radio programs, with a mean score of 1.82, were the least frequently used media channels. Based on the findings, health awareness is the strongest factor associated with a positive attitude toward organic chicken consumption among the staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences. Therefore, designing systematic educational programs, including workshops, webinars, and the production of scientific content; using the capacity of cyberspace and the Internet to disseminate health-oriented content; and employing older staff members with positive attitudes as "organic ambassadors" may be effective in improving attitudes and promoting organic chicken consumption.

Keywords: Health awareness, mass media, demographic characteristics, attitude, organic chicken, Ilam University of Medical Sciences.

1. Introduction

Food consumption patterns have increasingly become a strategic concern in public health, consumer behavior, agricultural economics, and sustainable food systems. In contemporary societies, food choices are no longer understood merely as routine purchasing behaviors; rather, they reflect a complex interaction among health awareness, perceived risk, environmental concern, cultural norms, household characteristics, income conditions, information exposure, and trust in production systems. Among animal-based food products, poultry meat occupies a particularly important position because of its affordability, availability, nutritional value, and widespread use in household diets. However, the expansion of intensive poultry production has also generated growing concerns about antibiotic residues, chemical inputs, growth-promoting substances, animal welfare, microbial resistance, environmental sustainability, and the credibility of claims made about food safety. These concerns have created a fertile context for the emergence of alternative poultry products such as organic chicken, green chicken, and sustainably labeled chicken meat. In this context, understanding how consumers and institutional staff perceive organic poultry products is essential for designing effective health-promotion, market-development, and food-policy interventions (1-3).

Organic food consumption has been examined in various countries as a behavioral response to concerns about food safety, environmental degradation, and the perceived health risks associated with conventional production systems. Organic products are typically associated with fewer chemical inputs, more natural production conditions, greater attention to ecological sustainability, and stronger alignment with health-oriented lifestyles. Nevertheless, consumer acceptance of organic products is not automatic. Many consumers may recognize the general benefits of organic food while still hesitating to purchase it because of price, limited availability, insufficient information, uncertainty about certification, weak trust in labels, or lack of habitual use. Therefore, attitude toward organic food is shaped by both cognitive and contextual determinants. Studies on organic food consumers have shown that motivation, knowledge, perceptions of quality, health consciousness, environmental concern, and confidence in product claims

may influence the formation of positive attitudes and purchasing intentions (4-7).

In the specific case of organic poultry and related products, the consumer decision process becomes even more sensitive because poultry meat is directly linked to household nutrition, child health, disease prevention, and everyday food security. Organic chicken is often perceived as healthier, safer, more natural, and less exposed to harmful residues than industrial chicken. However, these perceptions depend heavily on the level of awareness consumers have regarding the production process, use of antibiotics, feed quality, farming conditions, and possible health implications of conventional poultry consumption. Research on organic chicken meat in Turkey, for example, has demonstrated that consumers' consciousness and perception levels are important factors affecting purchase intention, indicating that cognitive readiness and perceived product value play a central role in shaping demand for organic poultry products (8). Similarly, studies in Iran have addressed willingness to pay for organic or green chicken and have shown that consumer attitudes, economic capacity, and perceived benefits are important determinants of acceptance of such products (9-11).

Health awareness is one of the most important constructs in explaining attitudes toward organic food. Health awareness refers to the extent to which individuals are attentive to health-related information, recognize the relationship between lifestyle and disease prevention, and consider the health consequences of their consumption choices. Consumers with higher health awareness are more likely to evaluate food products based on safety, nutritional quality, absence of harmful residues, and long-term effects on health. In the field of organic food, health consciousness often functions as a primary motivational factor that distinguishes ordinary food selection from purposeful health-oriented consumption. Recent research has emphasized the influence of health awareness on the intention to purchase organic animal products, including organic eggs, where health consciousness and environmental concern were found to be relevant psychological drivers of purchase intention (12). Moreover, evidence on organic food consumption suggests that health consciousness can be a stronger motivator than social imitation or herd mentality, especially when consumers perceive organic food as directly

connected to disease prevention, quality of life, and family well-being (13).

Attitude toward organic chicken consumption is also closely related to the broader concept of perceived food risk. In modern food systems, consumers are exposed to conflicting messages about the safety and sustainability of food products. On the one hand, intensive production systems improve supply capacity and affordability; on the other hand, they may raise concerns about the excessive use of antibiotics, chemical residues, artificial growth enhancers, environmental burdens, and animal health management. This tension can produce distrust, confusion, or selective acceptance of alternative products. Recent discussions of poultry production have highlighted the importance of reliable information and the need to counter misinformation in order to protect food security and maintain public confidence in poultry products (3). Therefore, attitudes toward organic chicken should be examined not only as individual preferences but also as outcomes of information environments, health communication, and public trust.

Demographic characteristics represent another important group of factors that may influence attitudes toward organic food. Age, gender, household size, income, educational level, and employment status can affect both the ability and willingness of consumers to choose organic products. Age may influence food attitudes because older individuals may have greater health concerns, more experience with disease-related risks, or stronger preferences for natural foods. Gender may matter because food purchasing and household nutrition responsibilities are often socially distributed in ways that affect awareness and decision-making. Income can influence access to organic products because such products are often more expensive than conventional alternatives. Education may shape the ability to interpret food-related information, evaluate health claims, and distinguish between credible and non-credible sources. Research on demographic determinants of consumer attitudes toward organic food has shown that demographic variables can meaningfully differentiate consumers in terms of awareness, valuation, and acceptance of organic products (14). In addition, income-related studies show that economic status remains a relevant factor in understanding consumption capacity and consumer decision-making, particularly where healthier or

specialty products impose additional costs on households (15).

In the Iranian context, several studies have indicated that demographic, economic, psychological, and informational factors affect attitudes toward organic and green agricultural products. Research on consumers' attitudes toward organic agriculture in Alborz Province demonstrated that consumer perceptions are shaped by knowledge, trust, and perceived benefits of organic production (16). A study conducted in Tehran on attitudes toward consumption of organic agricultural products also emphasized the importance of consumer characteristics, awareness, and attitudinal predispositions in explaining acceptance of organic products (17). Likewise, research on willingness to pay for organic cucumber in Urmia showed that economic and perceptual factors are significant in determining whether consumers are prepared to pay more for organic agricultural products (18). These findings suggest that attitudes toward organic chicken consumption in Iran should be understood through an integrated framework that includes both health-related perceptions and demographic-economic conditions.

The agricultural and production-side literature also provides useful insight into the social acceptance of organic systems. Farmers' attitudes toward organic farming, extension experts' attitudes toward organic agriculture, and adoption of organic production practices all contribute indirectly to consumer trust and market development. When producers, experts, and institutions have favorable attitudes toward organic agriculture, the infrastructure for supply, certification, education, and public communication becomes stronger. Studies of farmers' attitudes toward organic farming in Saudi Arabia have shown that acceptance of organic systems depends on perceived feasibility, benefits, knowledge, and institutional support (19). Similarly, research in Iran on farmers' adoption of organic cucumber cultivation in Alborz Province has highlighted the role of knowledge, attitudes, and enabling conditions in the adoption of organic agricultural practices (20). In addition, agricultural extension experts' attitudes toward organic agriculture are important because these experts serve as intermediaries between scientific knowledge, producers, and the public (21). These studies show that organic consumption cannot be separated from the broader

ecosystem of production, education, and institutional communication.

Mass media use is another critical variable in shaping attitude toward organic chicken consumption. In the contemporary information environment, consumers receive health and food-related messages from television, radio, printed materials, brochures, books, websites, social media, and digital platforms. These channels can increase awareness, correct misconceptions, promote healthy dietary choices, and influence perceptions of organic products. However, the effect of media exposure depends on the credibility, accessibility, clarity, and relevance of the information presented. In many societies, digital media and the Internet have become dominant sources of food and health information, particularly among educated and urban populations. The importance of media becomes even more pronounced when consumers must evaluate complex claims such as “organic,” “green,” “antibiotic-free,” “sustainable,” or “natural.” When such claims are poorly understood, consumers may rely on fragmented information, informal recommendations, or emotional impressions rather than scientific criteria. Therefore, assessing the relationship between mass media use and attitude toward organic chicken consumption can help determine whether exposure to information channels is effectively translated into favorable food attitudes.

The role of information exposure is especially important among employees of health-related institutions, such as staff working at a university of medical sciences. These individuals operate in an environment where health, prevention, disease control, nutrition, and public education are central institutional concerns. Although they may not all be health professionals, their workplace context may increase their exposure to health messages and may shape their sensitivity to food safety and disease-prevention issues. Consequently, examining their attitudes toward organic chicken consumption has both practical and institutional significance. Positive attitudes among such staff may support healthier household food choices and may also contribute to informal diffusion of health-oriented consumption norms within the broader community. Conversely, if health-sector employees have limited knowledge or neutral attitudes toward organic poultry

products, this may indicate gaps in health communication and consumer education.

Attitude formation toward organic food also has a generational and social dimension. Studies on adolescents' attitudes toward organic food have shown that perceptions of organic products may begin to develop at relatively early stages of life and can be influenced by education, family values, and social communication (22). Although adolescents differ from adult employees in lifestyle and purchasing responsibility, such findings demonstrate that organic food attitudes are learned, socially mediated, and open to educational influence. Similarly, research on youth perceptions of renewable energy in Iran suggests that young people's attitudes toward green and sustainable options are often located between environmental ideals, practical constraints, and social norms (23). These insights are relevant to organic food studies because they show that environmentally and health-oriented choices depend not only on knowledge but also on perceived practicality, social support, and the credibility of sustainable alternatives.

Economic valuation is another theoretical foundation for studying organic food consumption. Consumers may express positive attitudes toward organic products but still avoid purchasing them when the perceived price premium is too high. The gap between stated preference and actual willingness to pay is a recurring issue in studies of environmentally friendly and health-oriented products. Research on hypothetical and actual marginal willingness to pay in choice experiments has shown that stated valuations may differ from actual economic behavior, emphasizing the need to interpret consumer attitudes carefully within real market conditions (24). This point is highly relevant to organic chicken consumption, because consumers may support the idea of healthier poultry while remaining constrained by income, availability, or uncertainty about product authenticity. Thus, attitudinal studies should be linked to demographic and economic variables in order to provide a more realistic understanding of consumer behavior.

Previous studies on sustainable and organic food products collectively suggest that consumer attitudes are multidimensional. Health awareness may strengthen positive evaluations of organic chicken; demographic characteristics may differentiate consumers in terms of

capacity, concern, and access; and mass media may serve as a channel through which knowledge, norms, and trust are formed. However, the strength and direction of these relationships can vary across contexts, products, and populations. In Iran, studies have addressed organic agricultural products, green chicken, willingness to pay, and consumer attitudes in several cities, yet there remains a need for focused research on organic chicken consumption among staff of health-sector institutions. This population is particularly important because it combines consumer identity with proximity to health-related knowledge and institutional culture. Investigating their attitudes can provide evidence for designing targeted educational interventions, digital health-promotion campaigns, and consumer-awareness programs in the field of safe and sustainable poultry consumption.

Given the growing importance of organic poultry products, the public health relevance of food safety, and the need to identify factors shaping consumer attitudes, the present study aimed to determine the relationship between health awareness, demographic characteristics, and mass media use with the attitude of headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences toward organic chicken consumption and to predict attitude based on these variables.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study was descriptive-analytical in nature. The statistical population consisted of the headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences, Ilam, who numbered 250 according to university records. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, with an error level of 0.05, the sample size was determined to be 148 participants, who were selected using simple random sampling (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The data collection instrument was a questionnaire consisting of four sections: the first section assessed demographic characteristics, including age, gender, number of family members, monthly income, employment status, and educational level, using open-ended and closed-ended questions; the second section assessed health awareness using five items; the third section measured the level of mass media use using five items based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very low, low, moderate, high, to very high; and the fourth section assessed attitude toward organic chicken consumption using 16 items based on a five-point

Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat, agree, to strongly agree.

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.75 for the entire questionnaire, indicating an acceptable level of reliability for the research instrument. The content validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through consultation with five specialists in the fields of nutrition, animal science, consumer behavior, and public health, and the necessary revisions were applied. Since the results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the data distribution was not normal ($p < .05$), nonparametric tests were used for data analysis. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to examine correlations between quantitative and ordinal variables. In addition, to predict attitude, the variables that showed a significant relationship with attitude in the Spearman correlation test, namely age and health awareness, were entered as predictor variables into simple linear regression models. The regression assumptions, including normality of residuals, absence of multicollinearity based on the variance inflation factor, and independence of errors based on the Durbin–Watson test, were examined and confirmed. All analyses were conducted using SPSS- 26.

3. Findings and Results

According to the research findings, the mean age of the studied staff members was 35.45 years, with a standard deviation of 8.65, indicating that the participants were relatively young. In terms of gender, 57.7% of the respondents were male and 42.3% were female. The number of family members among most respondents, 46.5%, was between four and six individuals. The average monthly household income of the participants was reported to be two to three million tomans. The highest frequency of employment status was related to permanent employment, accounting for 49.3% of the respondents. In terms of educational level, 53.5% of the staff members held a master's degree.

Table 1 presents the prioritization of the items related to respondents' health awareness, the mass media channels used by respondents, and respondents' attitudes toward organic chicken consumption. Among the health awareness items, "Organic chicken is natural and free from food additives and preservatives" ranked first. Among the media

channels, “cyberspace and the Internet” had the highest level of use, with a mean score of 3.56, whereas “radio programs” had the lowest level of use, with a mean score of 1.82. Regarding attitude toward organic chicken consumption, the highest levels of agreement were related to the items “When purchasing chicken, my first priority is its healthfulness, especially being free from any harmful substances and residual antibiotics” (M = 4.37), “In my opinion, purchasing

organic chicken produced without the use of chemical drugs and vaccines is highly beneficial” (M = 4.21), and “A healthy life requires access to healthy food products; therefore, the expansion of production units for organic products such as ‘green chicken’ seems necessary” (M = 4.16). In contrast, the item “Not purchasing organic chicken makes me feel guilty and worried” had the lowest level of agreement, with a mean score of 2.44.

Table 1

Prioritization of Health Awareness, Mass Media Use, and Attitude Toward Organic Chicken Consumption Items

Variable	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Health awareness	Organic chicken is natural and free from food additives and preservatives.	4.01	0.845	1
Health awareness	Organic chicken is free from residues of chemical compounds, growth hormones, and antibiotics.	3.96	0.941	2
Health awareness	Organic chicken is free from genetic modification.	3.91	0.929	3
Health awareness	Organic chicken reduces the risk of developing many diseases, including cancer.	3.68	0.911	4
Health awareness	Organic chicken is healthier and fresher.	3.61	0.955	5
Mass media use	Cyberspace and the Internet	3.56	1.188	1
Mass media use	National television network	2.23	1.115	2
Mass media use	Reading printed journals, brochures, pamphlets, or books	2.20	1.087	3
Mass media use	Provincial television network	2.04	1.263	4
Mass media use	Radio programs	1.82	1.112	5
Attitude	When purchasing chicken, my first priority is its healthfulness, especially being free from any harmful substances and residual antibiotics.	4.37	0.865	1
Attitude	In my opinion, purchasing organic chicken produced without the use of chemical drugs and vaccines is highly beneficial.	4.21	0.869	2
Attitude	A healthy life requires access to healthy food products; therefore, the expansion of production units for organic products such as “green chicken” seems necessary.	4.16	1.020	3
Attitude	From my perspective, organic chicken has higher biological and health quality than industrial chicken.	4.06	0.878	4
Attitude	Antibiotic residues in industrial chicken meat are a factor contributing to a substantial increase in the risk of cancer and the spread of antimicrobial resistance.	4.00	0.910	5
Attitude	My family supports and approves of my purchase of organic chicken.	3.96	0.893	6
Attitude	In my opinion, choosing organic chicken instead of industrial chicken is a conscious behavior and superior from a public health perspective.	3.91	0.947	7
Attitude	Purchasing organic chicken gives me the feeling that I have done something valuable and responsible.	3.90	0.939	8
Attitude	I am always seriously concerned about the risks of toxins and chemical drugs to my own health and the health of society.	3.89	1.087	9
Attitude	Compared with industrial chicken, organic chicken has higher nutritional value in terms of beneficial compounds and healthy fats.	3.87	0.970	10
Attitude	I believe that the taste and flavor of organic chicken are noticeably better than those of industrial chicken.	3.70	1.037	11
Attitude	Regular consumption of organic chicken can reduce the long-term risk of developing cancer.	3.64	1.097	12
Attitude	For me, using organic chicken means a relative guarantee of individual health.	3.55	0.996	13
Attitude	I consider organic chicken consumption an effective factor in increasing longevity and improving my quality of life.	3.52	0.961	14
Attitude	Chemical drug residues in industrial chicken have the potential to cause fatal complications in humans.	3.50	1.112	15
Attitude	Not purchasing organic chicken makes me feel guilty and worried.	2.44	1.284	16

Given the relational nature of the research hypotheses, Spearman’s correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 2. Based on the findings, age ($r = .230$, $p = .010$) and health awareness ($r = .499$, $p < .001$) had positive and significant relationships with attitude toward organic

chicken consumption. In contrast, gender, number of family members, income level, employment status, educational level, and level of mass media use did not show significant relationships with attitude toward organic chicken consumption ($p > .05$).

Table 2

Correlations Between Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable of the Study: Attitude Toward Organic Chicken Consumption

Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable	Scale	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (p)
Age	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ratio	.230*	.010
Gender	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Nominal	-.041	.663
Number of family members	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ratio	.143	.110
Income level	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ratio	-.022	.809
Employment status	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ordinal	.166	.800
Educational level	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ordinal	.038	.676
Health awareness	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Ordinal	.499**	< .001
Level of mass media use	Attitude toward organic chicken consumption	Quasi-interval	.141	.122

The regression assumptions were examined before estimating the models. For the regression model in which age was entered as the predictor of attitude toward organic chicken consumption, the Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.819. Since this value falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, the assumption of independence of errors was confirmed. In addition, the correlation coefficient between age and attitude toward organic chicken consumption was .226, and the coefficient of determination was .051, indicating that 5.1% of the variance in respondents’ attitudes was explained by age. Accordingly, the regression model had the required adequacy for prediction.

To examine the relationship between age and attitude toward organic chicken consumption, regression analysis was performed. As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient was $R = .226$ and the coefficient of determination was $R^2 = .051$. The F statistic was 6.625, and its significance level was $p = .011$, indicating statistical significance at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and a significant relationship between the two variables was confirmed. Age alone explained 5.1% of the variance in attitude toward organic chicken consumption. The

coefficient results showed that age ($B = .019$) was significant, with $t = 2.574$ and $p = .011$.

For the regression model in which health awareness was entered as the predictor of attitude toward organic chicken consumption, the Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.705. Since this value also falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, the assumption of independence of errors was confirmed. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between health awareness and attitude toward organic chicken consumption was .534, and the coefficient of determination was .285, indicating that 28.5% of the variance in attitude was explained by health awareness. Therefore, this regression model also had adequate predictive capacity.

The regression analysis results for health awareness showed that the F statistic was 49.115, with a significance level of $p < .001$, indicating statistical significance at the .01 level. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, and a significant relationship between health awareness and attitude toward organic chicken consumption was confirmed. The coefficient results showed that health awareness ($B = .487$) was significant, with $t = 7.008$ and $p < .001$.

Table 3

Summary of Simple Linear Regression Models Predicting Attitude Toward Organic Chicken Consumption

-	Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE	SS	Res.	Ddf1	Df2	MS	MS Res.	F	p	B: Intercept	B: Predictor	SE: Predictor	β	t for Predictor	p for Predictor
1	Age	.226	.051	.043	.63813	2.698	50.087	1	123	2.698	.407	6.625	.011	3.143	.019	.007	.226	2.574	.011
2	Health awareness	.534	.285	.280	.55212	14.972	37.495	1	123	14.972	.305	49.115	<.001	1.940	.487	.070	.534	7.008	<.001

4. Discussion

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between health awareness, demographic characteristics, and mass media use with the attitude of headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences toward organic chicken consumption and to predict attitude based on these variables. The findings showed that, among the eight independent variables examined, only health awareness and age had significant positive relationships with attitude toward organic chicken consumption. Health awareness had the strongest relationship with attitude and explained 28.5% of the variance in attitude, whereas age explained only 5.1% of its variance. These findings indicate that cognitive and health-related factors play a more central role than demographic or media-use variables in shaping favorable attitudes toward organic chicken consumption. In other words, the more respondents were aware of the health characteristics of organic chicken, including the absence of chemical residues, hormones, antibiotics, additives, preservatives, and genetic manipulation, the more positive their attitude toward organic chicken consumption became. This result is theoretically consistent with consumer behavior models in the organic food domain, which emphasize that health consciousness, perceived food safety, and knowledge of production quality are among the most important antecedents of positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward organic and sustainable food products (6, 7, 13).

The strongest finding of the study was the significant relationship between health awareness and attitude toward organic chicken consumption. This finding suggests that staff who had greater knowledge about the potential health benefits of organic chicken and the possible risks associated with conventional poultry production were more likely to hold favorable attitudes toward organic chicken. Such a result is aligned with evidence showing that health

consciousness is a major determinant of consumer preference for organic animal products. For example, research on organic chicken meat in Turkey showed that consumers' consciousness and perception levels significantly affected purchase intention, indicating that awareness of product safety and perceived health value can translate into stronger willingness to consume organic poultry (8). Similarly, research on organic eggs demonstrated that health awareness and environmental concern were important predictors of purchase intention, confirming that consumers' evaluation of organic animal products is strongly influenced by their understanding of health-related advantages (12). The present finding also supports studies emphasizing that health consciousness can be a stronger motive for organic food consumption than herd mentality or social imitation, especially when consumers directly associate organic food with disease prevention, family health, and quality of life (13).

This finding can also be interpreted in light of the specific nature of organic chicken as a food product. Unlike some organic plant products, chicken is an animal-based food that consumers may associate with antibiotic residues, growth-promoting substances, microbial risks, and chemical inputs. Therefore, health awareness may become especially influential when the product under consideration is poultry meat. The descriptive findings of the present study confirm this interpretation, because the highest-ranked attitude item was related to the healthfulness of chicken at the time of purchase, particularly being free from harmful substances and residual antibiotics. Respondents also showed high agreement with the usefulness of purchasing organic chicken produced without chemical drugs and vaccines and with the need to expand production units for organic products such as green chicken. These findings are consistent with studies on green chicken and sustainability-labeled chicken meat in Iran, which have shown that consumers' preferences are shaped by perceived safety, health benefits, trust in labels,

and the belief that such products are more compatible with sustainable and health-oriented consumption (9-11).

The significant predictive role of health awareness also confirms that attitude toward organic chicken is not merely a matter of taste or habitual food preference, but rather a cognitively mediated judgment. Consumers need to know why organic chicken may be different from conventional chicken, what health risks may be reduced through organic production, and how product attributes are connected to personal and family health. Previous studies on organic food consumers have similarly shown that knowledge, motivation, and perceived quality influence organic food acceptance. For instance, the motivational profile of organic food consumers has been associated with health, naturalness, and product quality concerns (4). Research on consumer perceptions of organic food has also indicated that awareness and perceived benefit are central to favorable evaluation of organic products (5). Therefore, the strong role of health awareness in the present study reinforces the view that educational interventions and evidence-based communication are key mechanisms for improving attitudes toward organic chicken consumption.

The positive and significant relationship between age and attitude toward organic chicken consumption was another important finding. Although the effect size was modest, the result suggests that older staff members tended to have more favorable attitudes toward organic chicken. This may be because increasing age is often accompanied by greater concern about health maintenance, chronic disease prevention, food safety, and family well-being. Older individuals may also have more experience with health problems or may be more attentive to the long-term consequences of diet and food quality. This finding is compatible with research showing that demographic characteristics can influence attitudes toward organic food and that age may differentiate consumers in terms of perceived risk, health motivation, and readiness to accept organic products (14). It is also consistent with studies indicating that income, social position, and demographic characteristics can influence consumption behavior and economic decision-making, particularly when consumers evaluate products that may be more expensive or more specialized than conventional alternatives (15, 24).

Nevertheless, the predictive power of age was much lower than that of health awareness. This comparison is important because it shows that demographic position alone is not sufficient to explain attitude toward organic chicken consumption. Age may create a general sensitivity to health-related food issues, but awareness appears to provide the more direct cognitive basis for attitude formation. In practical terms, this means that even younger staff members may develop positive attitudes toward organic chicken if they receive sufficient health information, and older staff members may not necessarily support organic chicken consumption if they lack accurate knowledge. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that organic food attitudes are shaped by education, awareness, and social learning across different age groups. Research on adolescents' attitudes toward organic food, for example, showed that attitudes can be developed through educational and social influences rather than being fixed demographic traits (22). Similarly, research on youth perceptions of green and sustainable issues in Iran indicates that attitudes toward environmentally and health-oriented alternatives are shaped through the interaction of awareness, perceived feasibility, and social norms (23).

The present study found no significant relationship between gender and attitude toward organic chicken consumption. This finding suggests that, among the staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences, men and women did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward organic chicken. Although some consumer studies have reported gender differences in food-related attitudes, the absence of such a relationship in this study may be explained by the relatively homogeneous organizational context of the sample. Because all respondents were staff members of a university of medical sciences, their exposure to health-related institutional norms may have reduced gender-based differences in food attitudes. This result is consistent with the broader literature showing that demographic variables do not always have uniform or stable effects on organic food attitudes and that their influence may depend on cultural context, product type, and the characteristics of the study population (14, 16, 17).

Other demographic variables, including number of family members, income level, employment status, and educational level, also showed no significant relationship with attitude

toward organic chicken consumption. This finding may initially appear inconsistent with studies that identify income and education as important determinants of organic food acceptance. However, it should be noted that the dependent variable in this study was attitude, not actual purchase behavior or willingness to pay. Consumers with different income or educational levels may hold similar positive or neutral attitudes toward organic chicken, even if their actual purchasing behavior differs due to economic constraints or product availability. Previous willingness-to-pay studies have shown that economic capacity can be especially important when consumers move from favorable attitude to actual market behavior (9, 18, 24). Therefore, the lack of a significant relationship between income and attitude in the present study does not necessarily mean that income would be irrelevant to actual consumption; rather, it suggests that income did not significantly differentiate attitudinal evaluation in this specific sample.

The non-significant relationship between educational level and attitude may also be interpreted through the specific characteristics of the participants. More than half of the respondents held a master's degree, and the sample was drawn from a health-related academic institution. Such relative educational homogeneity may have reduced the statistical variability needed to detect significant differences. Moreover, formal educational level does not necessarily reflect specific knowledge about organic poultry, antibiotic residues, or sustainable food production. A person may hold a higher academic degree but have limited specialized information about organic food systems. This supports the finding that health awareness, rather than educational degree itself, was the strongest predictor of attitude. Previous studies on organic agriculture and organic food acceptance have similarly emphasized that specific knowledge, perceived benefits, and awareness may be more influential than general demographic indicators (16, 20, 21).

The finding that mass media use was not significantly related to attitude toward organic chicken consumption is another noteworthy result. Descriptively, cyberspace and the Internet were the most frequently used media channels, whereas radio programs were the least used. However, greater use of media channels did not necessarily correspond to more positive attitudes toward organic chicken. This may suggest that the quantity of media use is less important than

the quality, credibility, and relevance of the content received. Individuals may frequently use the Internet and social media without being exposed to accurate, scientific, and health-oriented information about organic poultry. In addition, the current information environment may contain inconsistent or misleading claims about poultry production, organic labels, antibiotics, and food safety. Recent literature has emphasized the need to counter misinformation in poultry production and to protect public confidence through credible communication frameworks (3). Therefore, the lack of a significant relationship between mass media use and attitude in the present study may indicate a gap between media exposure and effective health education.

This result does not mean that media are unimportant; rather, it suggests that media-based interventions must be carefully designed. Previous research has shown that consumer perspectives on poultry production can provide critical insights for educating both consumers and producers about sustainable practices (2). In this regard, media channels can influence consumer attitudes if they deliver clear, evidence-based, and trustworthy information about organic chicken, production standards, health implications, and certification systems. The high descriptive use of cyberspace and the Internet in the present study indicates that digital platforms may be the most appropriate channel for future health-promotion strategies. However, such platforms should not merely disseminate general promotional messages; they should provide scientifically grounded, understandable, and locally relevant content that directly addresses consumers' concerns about safety, residues, nutritional value, price, availability, and authenticity.

The descriptive attitude findings also provide important interpretive value. Respondents showed the highest agreement with items related to healthfulness, absence of harmful substances, usefulness of organic chicken, and the need to expand organic production units. In contrast, the lowest-ranked item was related to feeling guilty or worried when not purchasing organic chicken. This pattern suggests that respondents' positive attitudes were more cognitive and health-oriented than moralistic or guilt-based. They appeared to value organic chicken because they perceived it as safer, healthier, and socially beneficial, not because they felt moral pressure to buy it. This distinction is important for

designing interventions. Campaigns that emphasize scientific health benefits, food safety, and public health may be more effective than campaigns based on guilt, fear, or moral obligation. This interpretation aligns with studies showing that consumer acceptance of organic and sustainable products is shaped by perceived benefits, quality evaluation, health motivation, and trust rather than by a single emotional driver (6-8).

The findings also have implications for the organic production and market-development system. Positive consumer attitudes can encourage demand, but demand must be supported by reliable production, certification, distribution, and institutional trust. Studies of farmers' attitudes toward organic farming and adoption of organic practices indicate that the success of organic systems depends not only on consumer preference but also on producer readiness, expert support, and institutional conditions (19-21). In the case of organic chicken, if consumers are educated but the market lacks reliable supply, transparent labeling, and trustworthy certification, positive attitudes may not translate into stable consumption. Therefore, improving health awareness among consumers should occur alongside strengthening the production and communication infrastructure of organic poultry.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study show that health awareness is the most important factor associated with attitude toward organic chicken consumption among headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences. Age also had a positive but limited role, whereas gender, family size, income, employment status, educational level, and mass media use were not significantly related to attitude. These findings suggest that attitude toward organic chicken in this population is primarily shaped by specific health-related awareness rather than by general demographic status or the extent of media use. The results are consistent with previous studies that identify health consciousness, perceived safety, knowledge, and consumer perception as central determinants of organic food attitudes and purchase intentions (1, 8, 12, 13). Accordingly, interventions aimed at promoting organic chicken consumption should prioritize targeted health education, credible scientific

communication, and digital dissemination of accurate information.

The present study had several limitations. First, the study was conducted among headquarters staff of Ilam University of Medical Sciences; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all consumers, rural households, poultry purchasers in open markets, or populations with different occupational and cultural backgrounds. Second, the study used a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical design, which does not allow causal conclusions about the effect of health awareness or age on attitude. Third, the data were collected using a self-report questionnaire, and responses may have been influenced by social desirability, recall bias, or respondents' tendency to provide health-oriented answers. Fourth, the study examined attitude rather than actual purchasing behavior, frequency of organic chicken consumption, or real willingness to pay; therefore, the results reflect evaluative orientation rather than confirmed market behavior. Finally, although mass media use was measured quantitatively, the study did not assess the content, credibility, source, or scientific quality of the information received through each media channel.

Future studies are suggested to examine attitudes toward organic chicken consumption in broader and more diverse populations, including households, students, health professionals, rural consumers, urban consumers, and actual buyers of organic or green chicken. Longitudinal and experimental designs are also recommended to determine whether educational interventions can increase health awareness and whether such increases lead to more favorable attitudes and actual purchasing behavior. Future research should also distinguish between attitude, purchase intention, willingness to pay, and actual consumption, because each represents a different stage of consumer behavior. In addition, qualitative studies using interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insight into consumer doubts, trust in organic labels, perceived barriers, price sensitivity, and understanding of terms such as organic, green, antibiotic-free, and sustainable. Finally, future studies should assess not only the amount of media use but also the type, accuracy, credibility, and persuasive quality of the health information presented through digital and traditional media.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that health-awareness promotion should be the central strategy for improving attitudes toward organic chicken consumption. Educational programs such as workshops, webinars, short training courses, infographics, and evidence-based digital content can be designed for university staff and other consumer groups. Since cyberspace and the Internet were the most frequently used media channels, online platforms should be used to disseminate clear and scientifically reliable messages about organic chicken, antibiotic residues, food safety, nutritional value, and correct interpretation of product labels. Older staff members with positive attitudes may also be involved as peer educators or “organic ambassadors” to support informal communication within the organization. In addition, collaboration among universities of medical sciences, public health units, agricultural organizations, poultry producers, and consumer-protection agencies can help create integrated educational and market-support programs that promote informed, realistic, and sustainable organic chicken consumption.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed substantially to the study and to manuscript development, and all approved the final version.

Declaration

The authors declare that artificial intelligence tools were used only to assist with language editing, translation, and improvement of the manuscript's readability. All conceptualization, study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final approval of the manuscript were performed by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the content.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study placed a high emphasis on ethical considerations. Informed consent obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the nature of the study and their role in it. Confidentiality strictly maintained, with data anonymized to protect individual privacy. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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