



Degree Program in Marketing

Course of SUSTAINABILITY FOR MARKETING

The Impact of Emotional Appeals in Organic Food Packaging on Consumer Purchase Intent and Willingness to Pay: The Case of Guilt vs. Pride

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Acknowledgment

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my beloved father, who fought with strength and dignity through more than four years of dialysis. His endless sacrifices, love, and belief in me laid the foundation for everything I have achieved. I know he would be proud of this milestone, and I carry his strength with me each day. I am also deeply grateful to Professor Alessandro Maria Peluso for all his support, guidance, and encouragement throughout my thesis.

Abstract

The thesis examines how emotional appeals on organic food packaging, specifically guilt and pride appeals, impact consumers' intention to purchase and their willingness to pay for organic food. The study is based on self-conscious emotion and environmental concern theories and uses a quantitative design with moderation analysis to establish the impact of these emotional appeals. The findings indicate that both guilt and pride significantly impact consumer behavior, which is moderated by environmental concern. This study provides marketers with insights into how to craft packaging that promotes consumer interaction with green products.

List of Abbreviations

PI	Purchase Intention
WTP	Willingness to Pay
EC	Environmental Concern

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter of this research explains the background and context of the study and subsequently the problem statement, aims of the study, research questions, and research hypothesis. Additionally, a preliminary description of the importance of the study is given along with its scope and delimitations. The definitions of the most important terms used are mentioned to avoid any misinterpretations. It ends with an overview of the organization of the thesis, along with a summary of all the details mentioned in this chapter.

1.2 Background and Context

The world has seen tremendous expansion in the organic food market over the years. As per a report by Statista (2025), Statista's report in 2025 has indicated that organic food market sales were approximately \$136 billion in 2023, a significant increase from \$18 billion in 2000. The organic food market has been seen as among the most successful green product markets in the world (Peerzada et al., 2024; Thøgersen, 2010).

The rise in consumer emphasis on other aspects like sustainability, health, taste, and ethical consumption has played a huge role in influencing these numbers (Kushwah et al., 2019). This rising awareness among consumers has also helped drive organic food from a niche to an important sector in the food industry.

This increase not only highlights consumers' growing understanding but also indicates that consumption choices are not merely influenced by taste or price. Instead, factors such as packaging play an important part in determining the image of the brand, signaling product values, and affecting consumer purchases. Brands use packaging to present their products and communicate their messages. This acts as a strong tool in

driving consumer decision-making as it lets them draw inferences about the product and its key attributes (Becker et al., 2011).

Packaging has the huge power of stirring emotions and gaining consumer attention and interest (Floyd, 2011). Multiple brands have turned to emotional packaging appeals to grab consumer attention. According to Muthusamy, Naseri, and Yahya (2024), emotional appeal has the power of getting immediate and subconscious responses, which helps brands differentiate their products and build stronger connections with consumers.

Out of the numerous emotional appeals used in packaging, the most prominent are guilt and pride. These are based on consumers' moral values and perceptions. Unlike other emotions like fear, joy, and happiness, these self-conscious emotions arise from self-assessment and reflection. According to Schneider et al. (2017) these two emotions are also highly important in driving environmental motivators, which affect the decision-making of consumers. Since packaging has an impact on feelings and choices, it is pertinent to examine how emotional factors in packaging, especially those inducing self-conscious emotions, affect consumers. A focus on consumer behavior in developing countries serves to fill a large gap in sustainable marketing research across the world.

Guilt is viewed as a negative emotion, which is perceived as a direct response to certain personal actions (Lima et al., 2019). According to Mahasuweerachai et al. (2023) guilt arises when a certain action does not align with one's standards and principles. Guilt can make consumers move away from certain behaviors, and they may avoid taking certain decisions (Schneider et al., 2017).

Pride is a positive psychological state which is commonly linked to the overall sense of satisfaction and happiness (Lima et al., 2019). It makes the consumers feel proud. Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2023) emphasize the fact that pride tends to strengthen pro-environmental or pro-social behaviours. It is also indicated that consumers who experience a sense of pride while consuming sustainable options, tend to maintain these behaviors for a longer period.

Anttonen and Markkanen (2014) suggest that although these two emotions are extremely different, but still, both of them are capable of positively affecting consumer behavior. Their perspective further suggests that guilt and pride are self-conscious emotions which arise out of evaluating one's action in relation to personal beliefs and social norms. Shimul and Cheah (2022) proposed that consumers get involved in certain actions to feel pride and avoid actions that would make them feel guilty.

1.3 Problem Statement

While many studies have looked at emotional appeals in marketing and examined sustainability, deeply understanding the impact of emotional appeals in terms of organic food packaging remains relatively untapped. Multiple studies have looked at the impact of emotional packaging in product advertisements or environmental campaigns, but little research has been done on how these appeals affect customers' intent to buy and willingness to pay for organic food. It has been suggested in previous research that a relationship exists between consumers' valuation of organic food, emotional appeals (guilt and pride), and the buying intentions of consumers towards those products (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2023; Onwezen et al., 2014).

Furthermore, how individual concerns about the environment influence the efficacy of emotional appeals is also an underexplored area. It is important to note that these self-conscious emotional appeals do not operate in isolation. Their effectiveness may be dependent upon the environmental concerns of the consumers.

This research gap is substantial in developing countries like Pakistan. The different cultural norms, education, religious sentiments, and access to organic food widely differ from those in developed countries. There is rather a rising need to understand how consumers in developing countries respond to emotional appeals in terms of organic food packaging. This research would help in formulating efficient communication methodologies that can help encourage sustainable consumption. Understanding consumer behavior among developing countries fills an enormous worldwide gap in sustainability marketing research.

1.4 Research Objectives

The goal of this study is to gain a thorough understanding of how emotional appeals affect sustainable consumer behavior, particularly with regard to organic food packaging. The following are the research's goals:

1. To research the effect of pride and guilt-based emotional appeals in their respective manner.
2. To understand which emotional appeal, guilt or pride, has the strongest influence on consumers' willingness to pay for the product.
3. To analyze whether the impact of emotional appeals is moderated by consumers' level of environmental concern.

1.5 Research Questions

It is critical to also understand how emotional appeal (guilt vs pride) impact consumer behavior in buying organic food. These emotions can help in increasing moral responsibility amongst consumers and may influence their intent to purchase and willingness to pay. However, emotional appeals do not operate in isolation, instead, they are also influenced by how consumers feel about environmental concerns. Multiple studies suggest that environmental concerns of a person play an important role in making consumers take pro-environmental decisions (Mahasuweerachai et al., 2023). This may also impact on how they perceive these messages. This study, therefore, also seeks to comprehend the effect of environmental concerns on increasing or decreasing the effectiveness of guilt and pride-based appeals.

The following questions were created to direct the study:

1. Which emotional appeal (guilt or pride) is more effective in increasing consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay for organic food?
2. Does environmental concern (low vs. high) moderate the relationship between emotional appeals (guilt vs. pride) and consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay for organic food?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

H1a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H2a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H3a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

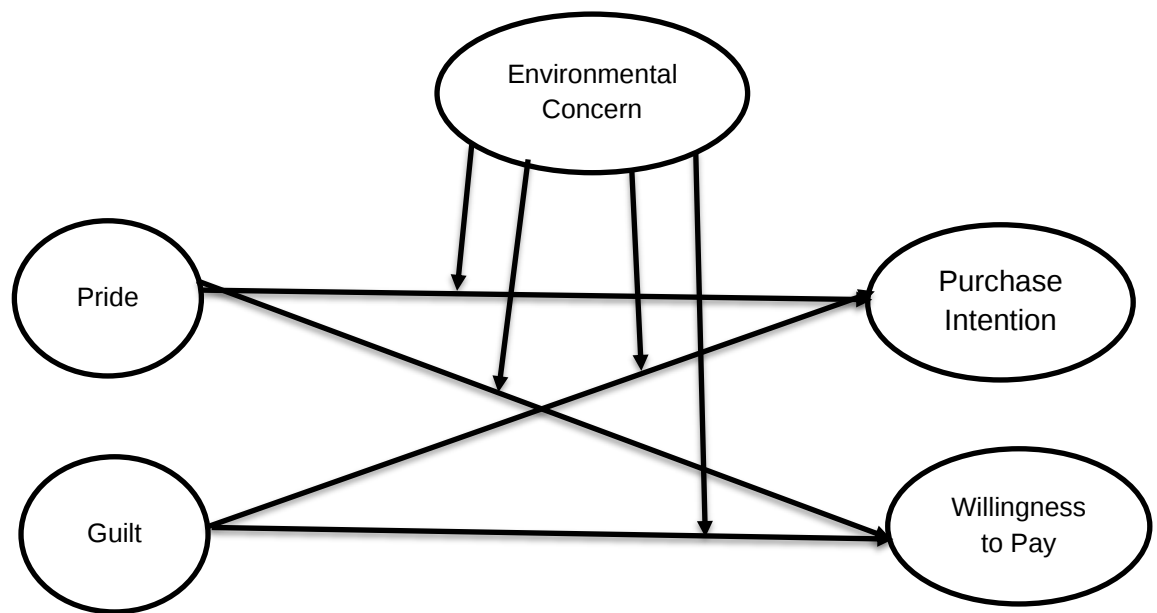
H3b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

H4a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

H4b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

Figure 1.1

Research Model



1.7 Significance of the Study

This research adds to the study's theoretical and practical aspects on sustainable consumer behavior and emotional marketing. Understanding how self-conscious feelings like pride and guilt affect consumers' decisions to buy organic food is beneficial. It also provides a detailed understanding of how different focus theories, moral psychology, and emotions impact consumer decisions. Moreover, this study addresses one of the regional gaps by focusing research on a country that remains relatively untapped. The focus of this research is on a developing country, Pakistan, which has different cultural values, mindsets compared to the countries on which previous research has been done.

In terms of practical significance, the findings can be used by brands and marketers to add to the right strategy for their product packaging. It can help them better understand what resonates the best with their consumers and what values and emotions appeal to them. The findings can further help NGOs and policymakers to design their sustainability campaigns in a manner that resonates better with the consumer and makes

an impact. Moreover, it can help in delivering targeted messages to consumers based on their level of environmental concerns.

1.8 Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses exclusively on the impact of emotional appeals regarding organic food packaging. Although other terms like sustainability and product messaging are relevant, we have further narrowed down our research into the organic food sector. In this setting of a well-defined product category, this method would enable us to gain a deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of how emotional appeals influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, this research has been conducted in Pakistan to get a better understanding of the perspective of a developing country. The different cultural values, economic, and educational factors may shape results differently from those of a developed country. By exploring an underexplored area, we are able to close the regional research gap and provide some insightful ideas to the global literature.

It should be noted that the research still holds certain limitations, although it offers significant insights into consumers' intention to purchase and a willingness to pay for organic food. A survey was used to gather data, and the results could be skewed by social desirability bias, which occurs when respondents provide answers that are based on what they perceive as socially acceptable, and extreme response bias, where respondents either overstate or understate their responses. Since the research was limited to Pakistan only, the findings may not be as broadly applicable due to the diverse environment and mindset. Other cultures might not be affected by these findings.

1.9 Definition of the Terms

1.9.1 Pride

Edward (1885) discussed pride as a desire for one's own perfection. It is further described as an emotion that is "expected to motivate the pursuit of actions or the cultivation of actions that are socially valued" (Sznycer & Cohen, 2021).

1.9.2 Guilt

Guilt, a self-conscious feeling, is defined as a feeling of “remorse and acts of reparation that accompany real or imagined wrongdoings, and their functions and consequences in people’s lives” (Zahn-Waxler & Kochanska (n.d.), p. 183).

1.9.3 Neutral

It’s an indifferent feeling that “lacks preference of one way or the other” and can “co-occur positive and/or negative affect” (Gasper et al., 2019). It can be perceived that a person feels neutral when they don’t experience strong positive or negative feelings.

1.9.4 Purchase Intent

Purchase intent is described as an effort by “consumers to choose products or services, which may be generated when the impression or attitude given to consumers meets their expectations” (Spears & Singh, 2004; Li et al., 2022).

1.9.5 Willingness to Pay

Mariani (2014) describes it as the maximum amount that a person is willing to pay in return for a good or a service.

1.9.6 Environmental Concern

It is an “attitude towards facts, one's own behaviour, or others' behaviour with consequences for the environment” (Fransson & Gärling, 1999, p. 370).

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter helps to better understand the background and context of the topic. It also highlights the problem statement that the thesis would be addressing. Additionally, the research's boundaries, importance, and extent are discussed. Both the chapter summary and a synopsis of the thesis' overall organization are included at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter shares the literature that already exists on the different kinds of emotional appeals, environmental concerns, and packaging. This helps in understanding things in a better manner and also helps with laying a foundation for research. In addition to this, different frameworks are also presented within this chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology & Design

It helps in explaining the research design, the sampling techniques, and the methods that have been used to gather data. It further goes on to explain the reason behind the selected techniques and how they help us with our research.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

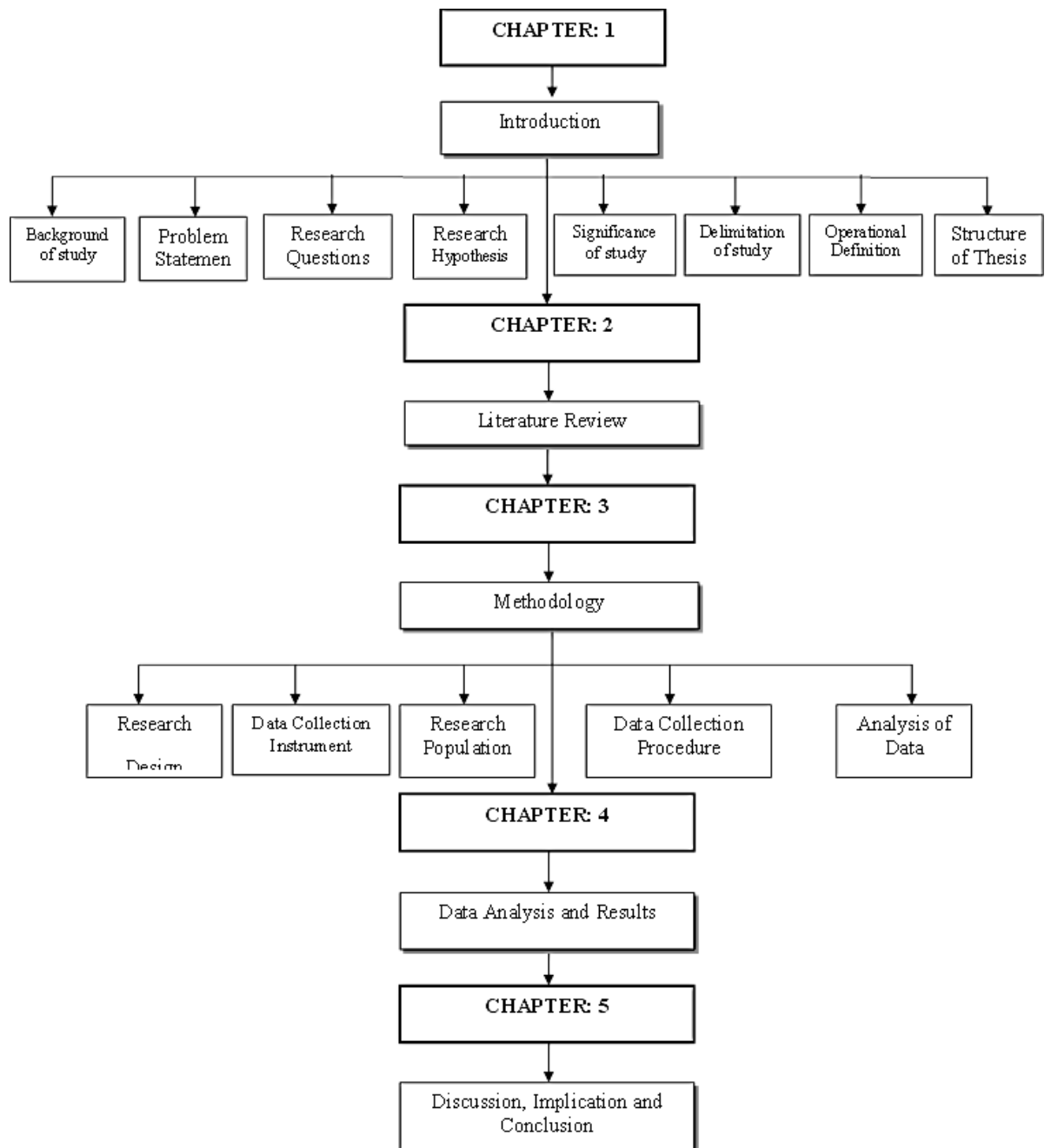
With the help of all the data covered and using the right statistical techniques, the data is analyzed in this chapter. In addition, it explains the findings from the data, which is explained with the help of different tables and charts.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations:

The findings' theoretical and practical ramifications are covered in this chapter. Additionally, this section of the report also provides guidance for future research directions. An overview of the study's conclusions and insights is given at the end of this chapter.

Figure 1.2

Visual Summary



1.11 Chapter Summary

By emphasizing the organic food market's explosive expansion and the significance of emotional appeal, pride, and guilt, this chapter contributes to the research's basis. It also makes it easier to comprehend how crucial packaging is in influencing customer choices. The issue statement aids in identifying the gap in the research, which is the understanding of how emotional appeals based on pride and guilt affect the packaging of organic foods and influence consumer choices.

The chapter also discusses research objectives, questions, and hypotheses. It also walks us through the importance, boundaries, and scope of the investigation. The literature review and theoretical framework that will be covered in the following chapter are introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the existing literature in detail and identifies gaps. In this part, we examine the influence of self-conscious emotions (such as pride and guilt), the influence of packaging, and the impact of environmental concerns. It further discusses the relevant theories, the development of the hypothesis, and the theoretical framework. This chapter provides a foundation for understanding how emotional appeals impact customer behavior. The databases used were mainly gathered through Google Scholar.

2.2 Organic Food Consumption and Packaging Influence

Organic food items are grown under special conditions with minimal use of chemicals, resulting in fewer chemical residues (Yu et al., 2014). Makatouni (2002) describes it as a naturally grown item, that is produced without the use of hormones or chemicals. According to Dettmann and Dimitri (2011), the organic food market has grown significantly due to the growing demand for organic food. This shifting demand has also given rise to organic food farming (Hughner et al., 2007). A major reason for this shift is the growing consumer interest in locally grown food, which is influenced by factors like high energy prices, greater recognition of global warming, and, as a result of the growing concerns about the economy (Batte et al., 2010).

Consumers are drawn towards organic food consumption due to several factors. Extensive literature has identified multiple factors, including taste, health, environment, education, nutritional value, and even farmers' welfare (Kushwaha et al., 2021)

Health consciousness is another driver towards organic food consumption. Munaqib et al. (2025) state that it is because people want to improve their health and the health of others around them. Multiple studies have shown that consumers with high education levels are more inclined towards organic food consumption (Dimitri & Dettmann, 2011). Environmental concerns of an individual also greatly contribute to organic consumption. Makatouni (2002) and Hughner et al. (2007) both suggest that

consumers with higher levels of environmental concern tend to buy organic food more. These factors and findings, however, may vary in different regions and cultures.

In addition to these factors, packaging also exerts a strong influence on consumer decisions. Becker et al. (2010) argue that packaging helps in setting consumer expectations and product experiences. They further talk about how different drivers, like colours and materials used, also influence consumer decisions. According to Agariya et al. (2012), packaging helps with conveying a company's brand image and identity. It serves as a strong tool to attract customers, describe the product, and make the sale.

Beyond its functional role, packaging can also evoke emotional responses—the emotional appeals on packaging help with getting more attention from consumers and creating an emotional value (Chen, 2024). These emotional values can even influence impulse buying decisions. According to Muthusamy et al. (2024), emotional appeal on packaging holds the strong power of creating a connection between the consumers and the product. This view is further explored by Zhang et al. (2014) and Sheng and Joginapelly (2012), who highlighted that emotional appeal profoundly impacts consumer decisions as it creates a feeling of exclusivity and luxury.

These insights from the existing literature highlight the significantly growing demand for organic food and how multiple factors are instrumental in determining this demand. Furthermore, we also understand that packaging is instrumental in influencing consumer decisions, and in terms of organic food, it can be a great resource in influencing consumer decisions.

The insights highlight that it has become critical to examine the effects of the various kinds of appeals used on packaging and what impact they have on the consumer. The next chapter explores the emotional and rational appeals, eventually changing the focus specifically to pride and guilt.

2.3 Emotional Appeals in Marketing

Marketing strategies often use two kinds of appeals - emotional and rational to communicate their messages. Khanna (2016) explains that rational appeals are used to describe the features and the benefits of the products. She further highlights that rational appeals align with the hierarchy of effects model, moving through stages of awareness,

knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. Rational appeals are used to logically persuade people to take a certain action (Kim et al., 2020). A study by Lindauer et al. (2023) found that rational appeals can help in motivating people, as the result of the pilot study showed that people were willing to help people in need because of the rational appeal.

In contrast, emotional appeals address the psychological, social, or symbolic needs of an individual (Khanna, 2016). According to Kim et al. (2020), it helps influence people through psychological needs. Emotional appeals use various emotions like fear, hope, shame, joy, pride, and guilt to connect with consumers at a deeper level.

Emotional appeals can help in the specific context of sustainable and ethical branding, as they allow brands to share values with their consumers and highlight environmental responsibility and ethical practices. It helps brands stand out and position themselves differently in consumers' minds (Panda & Mishra, 2013). It has become crucial to incorporate emotional appeals in packaging as it helps with differential advantage in the marketplace, because the products have similar price and taste (Schifferstein et al., 2013). Brands have now started to convey their commitment towards sustainability through emotional appeals. Kraus and Annunziata (2024) have suggested that emotional components perform better in pro-environmental behaviors.

The existing literature has explored various emotions used in emotional appeals. Fear-based appeals are often used to show the undesirable consequences that consumers would have to face as a result of their decisions (Terskikh, 2017). Humour-based appeal, on the other hand, is associated with garnering attention and is used to increase the positive effect (Alhabash et al., 2022). Marketers use shame-based appeals because it is considered a more painful emotion, allowing consumers to assess their behaviors and deem them as negative or immoral (Saarelainen, 2018). Tae Rang Choi (2015) describes hope as a powerful motivator that lets consumers engage in positive behavior. It is primarily used to motivate consumers to take a certain action.

Determining the precise function of pride and guilt-based appeals is essential to developing a greater knowledge of how emotions impact consumer choices. The next chapter will explore these emotions in detail, which will help to gain a deeper comprehension of the role of these subconscious emotions and their impact on consumers.

2.4 Self-Conscious Emotions: Guilt and Pride

2.4.1 What Are Self-Conscious Emotions?

Self-conscious emotions represent a special class of emotions that involve the self (Robins & Schriber, 2009). These emotions have a dynamic nature and are considered to modify one's thinking and behavior, and actions as the environment changes (LaVarco et al., 2022). Furthermore, these emotions exist in the form of non-verbal display, allowing one to communicate their feelings without the help of any language (Beer & Keltner, 2004)

Self-conscious emotions include empathy, guilt, pride, shame, and jealousy (LaVarco et al., 2022). These emotions play an important role in motivating people and shaping the way they feel and think, which encourages them to follow the societal norms and standards (Tracy et al., 2007). Additionally, these emotions are critical in helping people to identify and fix their mistakes (Beer & Keltner, 2004).

In order to better understand these emotions, the next two sections will delve deeper into understanding the two important self-conscious emotions; pride and guilt. These sections would help us understand the role of these emotions in shaping consumers' buying behavior in relation to organic food.

2.4.2 Guilt in Consumer Behavior

One definition of guilt is the emotion that results from believing that one's behavior has transgressed a personal standard or harmed other people. (Graton & Mailliez, 2019). It is considered a negative feeling and is directly linked to negative responses to the external environment (Lima et al., 2019). Guilt is commonly experienced in consumption choices and is used in persuasive communication (Chédotal et al., 2017). It is crucial to understand the effect guilt brings on consumers, it makes them seek and evaluate possible strategies to cope with the emotion (Peng et al., 2023)

Graton and Mailliez (2019) further state that guilt arises from a perceived sense of responsibility that has the potential to lead to certain actions like confessions, apologies, and excuses. The emotions like remorse, awfulness, and sorry are further associated with anticipated guilt (Shimul & Cheah, 2022; Han et al., 2017; Arli et al., 2021). In addition to this, guilt holds the power of impacting attitudes, satisfaction, preferences, and impulse buying behavior of an individual (Malhotra & Ramalingam, 2022).

Guilt appears in three forms: anticipated, reactive, and existential, as described by Chédotal et al. (2017). Reactive guilt occurs when one breaks their principles. In contrast, anticipatory guilt is experienced when someone thinks of doing something that is against their beliefs. Existential guilt is described as a feeling of guilt that is experienced when someone thinks they are superior to others.

Marketers have used guilt to shape consumer decisions. It has been used in advertisements to promote compliance (Peng et al., 2023). Studies suggest that marketers influence consumer behavior by evoking guilt through marketing communication. There is a connection between guilt and pro-social conduct, which makes it perfect for marketing. (Graton & Mailliez, 2019).

Guilt motivates people to take certain action because they feel their actions can make a difference (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014). It is suggested by Chédotal et al. (2017) that marketers adopt this emotion to influence consumer attitude and behavior. This can help with persuading consumers and reaching the desired outcome.

Furthermore, several studies support that guilt is a powerful motivator in making consumers take sustainability-focused decisions. As further supported by Schneider et al. (2017), guilt-oriented approaches hold the power of encouraging pro-environmental behavior. Antonetti and Maklan (2014) describe guilt as an emotion that can enhance self-control and support sustainable behavior.

Environmental awareness is one of the criteria for linking guilt to sustainable purchase, according to Shimul and Cheah (2022) (Constantinescu, 2024). As further suggested by Yu et al. (2023), guilt can help consumers understand the effectiveness of taking sustainable consumption choices as it helps increase the perceived consumer effectiveness. This helps highlight the fact that factors like environmental concerns and knowledge help influence consumer behavior, as they are more likely to purchase a product when they are more informed about the impact of their choices on the environment.

A study by Shimul and Cheah (2022) explored the relationship between consumers' knowledge of the environment and the message appeals on the packaging. This research involved 132 participants from Australia. The result of the study revealed that people with higher awareness of environmental concerns were greatly influenced by the guilt-based appeal used on packaging. The results helped in highlighting that

guilt-based appeal is an effective tool in targeting consumers with a higher level of environmental concerns.

A study by Yu et al., (2021) further explored the impact of food-related guilt and its impact on consumer behavior. This research was conducted through a focus group with 32 participants from the United States. The main purpose of this research was to deeply understand the role of guilt about various food products. The outcomes of this study suggested that guilt significantly influenced food choices, eating behaviors, and buying decisions. It eventually led consumers to opt for healthier and sustainable food products.

Although guilt is perceived to be an extremely effective emotion that can influence consumers, it doesn't work in all contexts. Evidence exists that suggests that guilt-based messages can backfire and may lead to people handling their emotions when the feeling becomes too intense (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014).

It should be noted that guilt-based appeals can lead to various outcomes, which may cause variations in the impact of guilt appeals (Peng et al., 2023). This study further suggests that the effectiveness of guilt-based appeals may vary depending on the time at which it is measured. There is a huge possibility that immediate measurement may fail to capture the desired effects of guilt-based appeals.

These findings show that guilt is a strong emotion that holds the power to influence consumer decisions. The intensity, timing, and context of the appeals also play a vital role in shaping the significance of this emotion. Moreover, it is important to pay critical attention to the kind of guilt being used, as all of them have different roles in impacting consumer decisions. It is important to understand these factors when designing guilt-based appeals.

The next chapter explores another emotion that is highly significant in influencing consumer decisions: pride. The chapter will deeply explore the emotion and provide a clear understanding of how pride impacts consumer decisions.

2.4.3 Pride in Consumer Behavior

According to Antonetti and Maklan (2013), pride is a pleasant emotion that is typically associated with a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Pride forms the foundation of self-value and contributes to our sense of uniqueness (Constantinescu, 2024). It holds the power to motivate individuals to achieve their respective goals

(Rowe, 2017). As suggested by Constantinescu (2024), pride encourages individuals to act in ways that benefit both them and other, further motivates them to excel in their performance.

The results of pride are based upon the realization that one can control and influence positive outcomes (Antonetti & Maklan, 2013). Schneider et al. (2017), along with some other research work, suggest that positive feelings (pride) have a stronger impact on the anticipated emotions related to prosocial behavior. Furthermore, consumers may engage in certain behaviors to achieve a pleasant mood and may avoid things that would make them feel guilty (Shimul & Cheah, 2022).

Furthermore, pride focuses on the self-values and self-achievement (Septianto & Garg, 2020). Constantinescu (2024) highlights that pride gives rise to feelings like fulfillment, self-esteem, motivation, and confidence. She further goes on to explain that it helps with providing a sense of self-worth and can motivate us to achieve our goals. It is also described as a feeling of delight, pleasure, and satisfaction (Coleman et al., 2019). Pride is a strong part of one's self-value and uniqueness (Constantinescu, 2024).

Pride not only creates an emotional impact but also plays a critical role in impacting consumer decisions when compared to other emotions. Pride, as opposed to guilt, attracts consumers to stimuli and motivates them to continue the conduct that produced the emotion for a longer period of time (Lima et al., 2019). The idea that people might be willing to sustain the pleasant mood by continuing the behavior that first caused pride is further supported by (Storch et al., 2020). The emotion, pride, encompasses two aspects: authentic and hubristic. Authentic pride is achieved after working hard and achieving something (Yang & Zhang, 2018). It's the feeling one gets after achieving their goal. Authentic pride supports behavior following personal values and pushes people to pursue their goals. (Antonetti & Maklan, 2013).

While authentic pride is described as a feeling of achievement, hubristic pride is described as the feeling that you are better than others. It occurs when one believes that they are superior to others. The research further talks about how authentic pride emerges from positive outcomes of specific behavior and hubristic pride emerges from positive outcomes to global view of self (Yang & Zhang, 2018).

Pride, as an emotion, is used by marketers in their campaigns in order to shape consumer decisions and make them feel happy about it. Various researchers have

studied the contexts in which pride-based appeal has been applied. It has been applied in contexts like snack consumption, service satisfaction, and wasteful consumption behavior (Rowe, 2017). Storch et al., (2020) suggest that pride can be a useful tool in offering a wide range of adaptive behavior. They further suggest that recall behavior due to pride has the potential to lead consumers to make healthier food choices.

Several findings support the idea that pride creates a positive desire in consumers to engage in future sustainable consumption. (Antonetti & Maklan, 2013). Pride has a long-term impact on the consumer, as has been suggested by Rowe (2017) that recalling feelings of pride related to previous sustainability purchasing experience can enhance purchase intention. This is further supported by Coleman et al., (2019) that pride tends to have a long-term effect on consumers towards long-term positive future behaviors. In general, it can be said that pride holds the strong power of strengthening pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors, as consumers feel responsible for a positive consequence

A study was conducted by Mahasuweerachai et al. (2023) on people from Thailand aged between 18-25. This study found that pride can influence the willingness of consumers to choose plant-based food over meat-based food. It further explained that pride came from the belief that the choices were approved by the people and contributed to sustainability. This study highlights that pride can persuade people to make ethical, eco-friendly choices, which may enhance their willingness to purchase organic food.

Pride-based appeals have been studied in other contexts as well. Research conducted by Coleman et al., (2019) showed how pride-based appeals in marketing can influence consumer decisions. In this study, a fictional company used pride appeals in its marketing. The consumer was shown the following emotional appeal: “The next crash won’t be your fault. Take pride in putting an end to texting and driving!”. The results of the study showed that consumers who had promotion-regulatory focus showed a positive behavior towards the brand and depicted higher intentions of consuming the brand. This shows that pride-based appeals can help in enhancing marketing campaigns. It further shows that pride plays a huge role in shaping consumers' purchase intent and willingness to pay. These findings are helpful in our study on understanding the impact of pride-based appeal in shaping consumer decisions towards consuming organic food.

It should, however, be noted that it is important to remain cautious when eliciting pride based on prior achievements, as pride may backfire in certain cases (Storch et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is suggested that pride may have varying results depending on certain circumstances (Yan et al., 2023)

In conclusion, pride appears to be a strong emotion that helps in creating a sense of self-worth and self-achievement and also helps with maintaining pro-social and pro-environmental behavior. They help influence consumers' decisions; however, it should be noted that the results may vary under certain circumstances. Moreover, pride may help with maintaining long-term consumption, it may be important in motivating organic food consumption, the area this study aims to explore.

2.5 Motivational Mechanisms of Guilt vs. Pride

Different emotions, like pride and guilt, adopt different pathways, which can be better understood with the help of Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997). The theory aimed to highlight that there are different processes through which people avoid pain and approach pleasure (Cui & Ye, 2017). According to this theory, human motivation and behavior are built upon two systems: promotion focus and prevention focus.

In particular, pride is associated with promotional focus, which is linked with accomplishments and achievements. In a promotion focus, people are mainly guided by their dreams, something they like to achieve and strive for (Cui & Ye, 2017). People with a promotional focus tend to have a higher level of motivation. Individuals strive towards and maintain pride, which brings a long-term impact on consumer behavior (Coleman et al., 2019).

In contrast, guilt aligns with a prevention focus, which mainly focuses on responsibility and safety. People with a prevention focus tend to avoid making mistakes and keep whatever they have safe (Cui & Ye, 2017). Mosteller and Poddar (2017) further suggest that people aim to avoid negative outcomes. Guilt appeals encourage consumers to take immediate actions that can help satisfy their feelings of guilt (Peng et al., 2023).

Thus, Regulatory Focus Theory suggests that both pride and guilt have different responses in terms of behavior and vary in time. Guilt-based focus seeks responses that

avoid negative outcomes. On the other hand, pride tends to have a long-term impact, which is driven by the desire to have a positive self-image.

2.6 Environmental Concern as a Moderator

Environmental concern is defined as an individual's level of awareness of environmental issues and their desire or effort to help find a solution (Suki et al., 2022). It is an important issue for people around the world, which is associated with one's choices of activities (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). Environmental concerns are strongly influenced by the social concerns of an individual (Suki et al., 2022).

A key factor of environmental concerns is the sense of responsibility, which further translates into the willingness to make sacrifices (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). To protect themselves from environmental threats, people buy green products even if they have to pay more for them (Suki et al., 2022).

Environmental concerns of an individual hold a critical role in shaping the buying decisions of the consumer. This concern contributes to the increased purchase of green products as they feel their actions help protect the environment (Suki et al., 2022). Moreover, the perceived consumer effectiveness further plays an important role in influencing environmentally conscious behavior towards buying and consuming goods (Chen, 2019).

Moreover, it is crucial to understand the role of emotions in influencing consumer behavior. People with a positive attitude towards the environment are more likely to buy environmentally friendly products and maintain their pro-environmental behavior (Suki et al., 2022). Gifford and Nilsson (2014) suggest that people who are more conscious about the environment tend to feel emotions like worry and sadness more easily. In short, people who are worried about other things in life are worried about the environment as well.

Schneider et al. (2017) discuss how the emotions of pride and guilt are relevant to promoting pro-environmental behavior. Both emotions play a positive role in encouraging pro-environmental action. This idea is further backed by Shimul and Cheah (2022), who talk about how the anticipated feelings of pride and guilt are used in marketing, which strongly affects the way people think about the environment, how they behave towards it, and if they choose environmentally friendly products.

Given this established link, it is important to understand how it shapes the buying behavior in the specific context of organic food. As suggested by Tandon et al. (2020), the buying behavior of organic food is guided by factors like environmental concerns, health consciousness, and social norms. The paper further suggests that consumption of organic food reflects behavior that is environmentally friendly and promotes sustainability. Furthermore, these consumption patterns help to generate a long-term and bigger impact. People who buy organic food not only support environmental concerns but also encourage others around them to purchase green products (Suki et al., 2022).

Furthermore, environmental concerns also impact on the way a consumer sees a product. With higher environmental concerns, a person becomes more conscious of the appearance, design, and style of the product (Suki et al., 2022).

It should be noted that the environmental concern reported does not always result in pro-environmental behavior (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014). The paper highlights how environmental concerns are greatly influenced by economic factors, gender, and age group.

2.7 Willingness to pay

Willingness to pay is defined as the amount that a consumer is willing to spend for a product in exchange for additional benefits (Sia et al., 2013). It also represents the maximum price a buyer is willing to offer for a good or a service (Katt & Meixner, 2020). Moreover, it is considered to be an indicator of purchase intention and can also be treated as a variable for actual consumer behavior (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2022).

Customers' willingness to pay for items is influenced by a variety of elements, such as perception, awareness, environmentalism, and healthiness (Sia et al., 2013). Furthermore, factors like brand name, labeling, and packaging have a significant influence on consumers' willingness to pay for a product (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2022).

Emotional appeals have a significant impact on willingness to pay. Unlike rational appeals, emotional appeals have the ability to link consumers with the values and feelings of the product, which in turn increases their desire to pay (Zhang et al., 2020). Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2022) propose that the willingness to pay for products

is not only influenced by the rational value of the product but is significantly influenced by emotions like pride and guilt.

Sia et al. (2013) mention that consumers were willing to pay a premium for organic products compared to conventional products. Environmental concerns are another factor that influences the willingness to pay. Strong concern about the environment increases an individual's willingness to pay, which amplifies their intention to purchase a green product (Munaqib et al., 2024)

However, willingness to pay does not always translate into demand and sales. As mentioned by Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005), multiple factors like age, education, and income level contribute to the willingness to pay. These factors impact willingness to pay in terms of awareness, affordability level, and mindset.

In summary, the willingness to pay for a product is not only influenced by the perceived value of a consumer. It is closely linked to other factors like emotional value, which closely links it to purchase intent. The next chapter aims to understand the factor, purchase intent, in greater detail.

2.8 Purchase Intent

Customers' reactions at the time of purchase are highly related to their desire to make a purchase (Lima et al., 2019). It describes the moment when a buyer is prepared to make a purchase and engage in a business dealing with a vendor (Tilahun et al., 2023). Moral connections and personal attributes are among the biggest key drivers of purchase intention (Ayyub et al., 2021). Unlike other factors, purchase intention is not directly related to any product or service; rather, it is rather linked to the aspects of thoughts and actions that shape consumers' attitude in a specific purchase (Lima et al., 2019).

Factors like health consciousness, environmental concern, and animal welfare are significant motivators in influencing purchase intentions, specifically towards organic food (Ayyub et al., 2021). In addition to this, the perceived usefulness and the perceived utility of a product are other major motivators that affect purchase intention (Tilahun et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the intention to buy organic is strongly correlated with environmental concerns (Munaqib et al., 2025). When consumers greatly care about the

environment, they show it through their willingness to buy environmentally friendly products (Suki et al., 2021)

Additionally, packaging has a significant impact on a consumer's intention to buy. Yu (2023) explains how the attractiveness of a product strongly impacts consumers' purchase intent, specifically for green products. This idea is further supported by Munaqib et al. (2025), who found that the labelling and certification, along with consumer trust, significantly impact consumers' purchase intention. Furthermore, Muthusamy et al., (2024) emphasize the fact that the attractiveness of packaging strongly influences purchase decisions.

In contrast, it is worth noting that purchase intentions may vary from country to country. This is due to the influence of factors like knowledge, safety, education, and health (Ayyub et al., 2021)

Overall, purchase intention is shaped by interactions with factors like personal values, environmental concerns, product attributes and marketing elements such as packaging and labelling. This highlights key factors that shape consumer decision-making process. The next part now explores the research gap, which highlights the limited exploration of the existing literature.

2.9 Research Gap

There exists a significant gap in understanding the role of emotional appeals in organic food packaging with consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay.

Although emotions, pride, and guilt have been extensively studied, there exists a gap in understanding the influence of emotional appeals in the specific context of organic food packaging. In addition, there is limited research in understanding the impact of these self-conscious emotions on the way consumers think in sustainable consumption contexts (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014). Yu et al. (2020) further highlights the need to understand the importance of understanding the role of guilt in consumer decision making and behaviours concerning food.

Additionally, the role of these emotions across different cultures remains relatively unexplored. Haj-Salem et al. (2022) highlight the need to understand the impact of pride and guilt across diverse cultures. Individuals across different cultures

have different attitudes, education, and lifestyles, which may deeply influence the way they perceive pride and guilt.

While the role of packaging has been explored in domains like cosmetics, beverages, its effect on organic food packaging remains relatively unexplored. It is suggested by Shimul and Cheah (2022) that future researchers may focus on the impact of packaging in multiple domains, including food.

Furthermore, a large portion of the research on the use of organic food only looks at developed countries. As suggested by Tandon et al. (2021), few studies have focused on organic food in countries like Pakistan and India. Norazah Mohd Suki et al. (2021) further support the idea that the research on green consumer behavior in Pakistan, specifically in the domain of organic food, has been limited.

Thus, this study seeks to explore this gap, understanding the role of pride and guilt-based appeal in organic food packaging and its influence on consumers' purchase intent and willingness to pay, in the specific context of Pakistan.

2.10 Hypotheses Development

A. Emotional Appeals and Purchase Intent

Emotional appeals deeply influence consumers' decision-making and purchase behaviors. These appeals can significantly impact consumer behavior by establishing a strong link between the product and the consumer (Muthusamy et al., 2024). Pride and guilt-based appeals help in influencing an individual's pro-environmental beliefs. As a result, these appeals may also influence consumers' purchase decisions for organic products. Following this idea, the following two hypotheses have been developed:

H1a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

Laurea (2024) indicates that consumers are likely to engage in behaviors that help them get a positive feeling, like pride, and avoid negative feelings like guilt. This shows that pride-based appeals may be more effective than guilt-based appeals. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

B. Emotional Appeals and Willingness to Pay

Research has shown that although pride and guilt are two opposite emotions, they can influence consumer behavior and their willingness to pay (Lima et al., 2019). Accordingly, the following two hypotheses have been supposed:

H2a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

Findings suggest that pride-based appeal holds a stronger motivating effect on pro-social behavior as compared to guilt-based appeal (Schneider et al., 2017). Based on this, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H2c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

C. Moderation by Environmental Concern

Lima et al., (2019) talk about how the opposite emotions, pride and guilt, both positively impact consumer sustainability behavior. Guilt, however, can have a stronger effect on consumers who have a lower level of environmental concerns as it encourages them to engage in sustainable behavior (Schneider et al., 2017). With the help of this idea, the following hypothesis has been suggested:

H3a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

It has been implied that pride may have a bigger impact on pro-environmental behavior (Schneider et al., 2017). This supports the hypothesis that pride-based packaging would have a significant impact on the purchase intent of consumers who are environmentally concerned. Based on this idea, the following hypotheses have been advanced:

H3b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

Research states that guilt-based appeals can influence sustainable behaviors in consumers with low environmental concerns (Shimul & Cheah, 2022). Therefore, as

supported by the hypothesis, guilt-based appeal on packaging may influence consumers who have a low concern for the environment. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H4a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

It has been suggested by research that pride plays an important role in motivating pro-environmental behavior (Schneider et al., 2017). As a result, consumers who are environmentally conscious may be willing to pay more for products with pride-based appeal. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H4b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a thorough review of the existing literature related to the study context. It offers a detailed review of the role of emotional appeals. The literature review deeply discusses the related variables of the study (guilt, pride, environmental concern, willingness to pay, and purchase intent). Furthermore, this chapter also identifies the gap in the current literature on the impact of emotion appeals in organic food packaging on consumers' purchase intent and willingness to pay. The next chapter will provide details on the research design and the methodology used.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Chapter Overview

The methodological framework used in contemporary research is covered in this chapter. It details the sampling strategy, research design, data collection techniques, and measurement instruments used to examine how emotional appeals like pride and guilt affect consumers' intentions to buy and willingness to pay for organic food. The chapter also discusses how environmental concern is used as a moderating variable. In addition, it describes the experimental setup, the survey instrument design, and statistical methods employed to test the data, including the moderation analysis using the PROCESS macro.

3.2 Research Design and Method

The present study uses a quantitative, between-subjects experimental design to examine how consumer behavior in organic food packaging is affected by emotional appeals, particularly pride and guilt. A third condition, acting as a neutral control, is added to enable a baseline comparison. This experimental design enables systematic message framing manipulation and control of extraneous variables, thereby making it possible to draw causal inferences between emotional appeals and consumer outcomes such as intention to purchase and willingness to pay.

Random assignment was used to place participants into one of three conditions: neutral, pride, or guilt. Where the only difference was in the packaging message. By having each participant assigned to a single emotional message, the design avoids possible carryover effects and provides unbiased responses. This manipulation follows prior experimental studies on emotional marketing and communication about sustainability (Schneider et al., 2017; Lima et al., 2019).

A survey-based experiment was used for this research because it is capable of recording consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral intentions cost-effectively and at a large scale (Malhotra et al., 2017). In addition, experimental manipulation

through the survey permits control over exposure to stimuli to ensure uniformity among participants.

The experimental results were analyzed through ANOVA to compare mean differences between groups and the PROCESS macro (Model 1) for testing moderation, as recommended by Hayes (2018). These are standard methods in behavioral and marketing science to examine interaction effects and conditional relationships.

The overall design captures the study's objective to transcend descriptive consumer behavior analysis and investigate causal connections between emotional framing in packaging and consumer reactions in a developing market setting (Pakistan), which has been less explored in the existing literature. This methodologically sound approach not only provides a test for theoretical predictions but also has applied significance for marketers who need to influence pro-environmental consumer behavior among emerging economies.

3.3 Experimental Manipulation

To examine the impact of emotional appeals in the packaging of organic food, this research employed a visual stimulus experimental design in which the independent variable, emotional appeal type (pride or guilt), was manipulated using brief message framings on mock product packaging. The manipulation was comprised of three different message conditions: one invoking guilt, one invoking pride, and a third neutral control.

The guilt message "If you don't buy organic food, you will contribute to damaging the environment" was intended to cause responsibility and discomfort, as encouraged by previous studies indicating guilt promotes behavior change (Lima et al., 2019; Onwezen et al., 2014).

The pride message "If you buy organic food, you will help protect the environment," aimed to induce a sense of self-achievement and positive feedback for making sustainable decisions. (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014; Onwezen et al., 2017).

The control condition included a neutral, factual message without any emotional framing: Where the message says: "This is organic." This provided a baseline comparison to measure the incremental impact of emotional appeals.

All three messages were displayed on identical packaging mock-ups (same product, image, color scheme, and layout). This was done to ensure consistency to isolate the emotional message as the sole variable. The designs were created on Figma, and the language of each message was kept simple to ensure that each participant could understand it easily without any issues. Each participant was shown one image at the start of the survey, and answers were tallied based on their exposure to one of the three versions.

In order to check the validity of the manipulation, each participant answered the emotion-specific manipulation check questions (e.g., pride or guilt) immediately after they saw the image, employing validated scales adapted from Lima et al. (2019). This is in line with standard experimental procedures in consumer emotion research, where message framing is implicit but effective in priming certain self-conscious emotions (Schneider et al., 2017).

3.4 Measurement Instrument and Scale Construction

The measurement tool used in this study was a multi-section, structured questionnaire designed to measure participants' psychological and behavioral reactions following exposure to varying emotional packaging messages. The tool was constructed based on scales validated from past literature and was distributed using an online survey tool, Qualtrics.

To maintain construct validity and reliability, all the items of measurement were taken from peer-reviewed research and were made slight changes to fit the context of organic food consumption. Each item was asked on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), which allows for the gathering of slight differences in consumer attitude and behavior intentions (Malhotra et al., 2017).

The emotional response scale was used as a manipulation check and consisted of six items: three measured guilt, and three measured pride. These items were taken from Lima et al., (2019), who created emotion-specific items to measure self-conscious emotional responses in sustainable consumption scenarios. For instance, participants indicated how much they agreed with statements like "I would feel guilty about not buying organic food" and "I would be proud to buy organic food products."

The purchase intention scale used was made up of three items based on Peerzada et al. (2025), with attention given to how likely a respondent would be to perform organic food purchasing actions after seeing the stimulus. Some of the items included statements such as "I would consider switching from standard products to organic and eco-friendly products like the one I have seen in the picture above."

Willingness to pay (WTP) was quantified through five items of the same origin, focusing on participants' willingness to pay a premium for organic foods. These encompassed items, such as "I am willing to pay a higher price for organic food products like the one shown in the image."

Environmental concern, the moderator of the study, was assessed with six items drawn from Chen (2019). These items gauged participants' ecological consciousness and values of sustainability in food buying choices. Sample items were "Whenever possible, I select organic food products that employ natural and sustainable ingredients" and "When I choose food products, I take into account how my options impact the environment."

While no official pre-test was executed, the questionnaire items were informally pre-tested with a small group of peers to assess the package messages and scale items' clarity and relevance. Minor wording tweaks were then made based on feedback from them to guarantee that the emotional appeals (guilt, pride, neutral) were conveyed by their intended meanings in the local culture. The full inventory of items included in the final version of the questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

3.5.1 Content Validity

All the measurement scales that were in the questionnaire were adapted from reputable, peer-reviewed material. Items for emotional responses (guilt and pride) were drawn from Lima et al. (2019), intent to purchase and willingness to pay were adapted from Peerzada et al. (2025), and items for environmental concern were used as per Chen (2019). The scales were chosen according to their applicability to the research subject and their effective application in earlier research. The questionnaire structure and clarity were examined and endorsed by the thesis supervisor.

3.5.2 Pre-testing and Informal Review

While no formal pre-testing was conducted, the questionnaire was informally pilot-tested by a small group of peers ($n = 4-5$) to assess the language and emotional interpretation of the packaging messages. Based on their comments, minor modifications were made to ensure that the emotional appeals were interpreted as planned, especially within the Pakistani culture. This informal pilot served to validate the fit of wording for both pride and guilt conditions.

3.5.3 Reliability Testing

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each construct were calculated using SPSS in order to assess the internal consistency of the scales utilized. The findings reflected high reliability in the majority of the variables: pride ($\alpha = 0.900$), guilt ($\alpha = 0.873$), willingness to pay ($\alpha = 0.921$), and environmental concern ($\alpha = 0.912$), all of which exceeded the generally accepted minimum of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). However, the purchase intent scale demonstrated lower reliability ($\alpha = 0.563$), suggesting that future research could benefit from revising or expanding the item set or augmenting the item set for this measure.

3.6 Population, Sampling Technique, and Sample Size

The population of interest for this research was consumers in Pakistan who are either familiar with or have bought organic food products before. The objective was to determine how various emotional appeals in packaging, namely guilt and pride, affect consumer behavior, and how this impact is mediated by environmental concern.

For data collection, the convenience sampling technique was used. The survey was made available online through social media networks, university networks, and organic food consumer groups.

Following data cleaning by the elimination of outliers via Mahalanobis distance and visual checks, 303 valid responses were kept for analysis. The sample size was deemed statistically sufficient for performing experimental comparisons and moderation analysis based on the PROCESS Macro in SPSS, as advised by Hayes (2022).

Inclusion criteria made it necessary that participants be above 18 years of age and possess basic knowledge of organic food. The final sample represented a diversified

demographic profile based on gender, age, level of education, and income group and presented a well-rounded picture of consumer attitudes within the Pakistani scenario.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Using Qualtrics, an online survey was used to collect study data in two weeks. The survey was disseminated through organic consumer organizations, academic networks, and social media.

At the start of the survey, the respondents were presented with an informed consent statement, which promised them anonymity and voluntary participation. No identifying or personal information was gathered. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of the three types of packaging message: guilt, pride, or neutral, at the start of the questionnaire.

3.8 Data Analysis Strategy

The data collected were analyzed using SPSS (version 29) and the PROCESS Macro (Model 1) of Hayes (2022). Cronbach's alpha measured the reliability of every scale.

One-way ANOVA using Tukey's post hoc tests was used to examine differences between the three message conditions (guilt, pride, neutral) for purchase intention and willingness to pay (H1a-H2c). Dummy variables were generated for experimental groups.

Moderation analysis was done using PROCESS to examine whether environmental concern (high vs low) moderate the relationships between guilt and pride and the dependent variables (H3a-H4b). Significance testing for all tests was done at $p < .05$.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This research followed the ethical principles and standards for academic research. The participation was entirely voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent at the beginning of the survey. No identifying information was gathered, so the responses were entirely anonymous and confidential.

Participants were explicitly made aware of the aim of the study, their right to withdraw at any moment, and how their data would be used solely for research purposes. The study followed LUISS University's research ethics policy and adhered to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology used to investigate the effects of guilt and pride-based emotional appeals in organic food packaging on consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay. It detailed the experimental structure, measurement instruments, sampling approach, data collection procedure, and analysis strategy. The chapter also addressed issues of scale reliability, moderation analysis using environmental concern, and adherence to ethical research standards. The following chapter presents the results of the data analysis and tests of the stated hypotheses.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results and statistical examination of the data gathered to determine the effect of emotional appeals on organic food packaging on consumer purchase intention and willingness to pay. In particular, the research seeks to examine if pride and guilt-based messages and neutral messages influence consumer behavior differently, and if environmental concerns moderate these influences.

In addressing the research objectives, the following hypotheses were examined:

H1a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H2a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H3a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

H3b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

H4a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

H4b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

4.2 Statistical Tools and Software

The data were analyzed with SPSS v29 and PROCESS Macro (Model 1) for moderation analysis. This chapter discusses preliminary checks, descriptive statistics, construct reliability, and hypothesis testing through ANOVA and Tukey post hoc tests for main effects, and PROCESS output for moderation. Results are given with tables and figures, followed by concise conclusions on each hypothesis.

4.3 Preliminary Analysis

4.3.1 Coding and Data Preparation

To prepare the dataset for analysis, the experimental condition (emotional appeal) was also converted into two dummy variables as per best practice in the employment of categorical independent variables. The first dummy variable (X1) was coded as Guilt = 1, Neutral = 0; the second dummy variable (X2) was defined as Pride = 1, Neutral = 0. This procedure facilitated an independent investigation of the effect of guilt and pride relative to the control condition. All the constructs were labeled in SPSS and were rated along a 7-point Likert scale; composite scores for every variable were then computed based on the respective items.

4.3.2 Data Screening

To make sure the reliability and validity of the data, a careful screening process was performed. First, low-quality or incomplete responses were eliminated. Exactly twenty-one responses were found and deleted based on either partial completion or extreme values, leaving a final dataset of 303 valid responses for subsequent analysis.

4.3.4 Missing Values

No missing values were identified in the data. This is due to the forced response design employed in the online survey, which did not allow respondents to leave any questions blank.

4.3.4 Outliers

Two methods were used to detect outliers: one was the stem-and-leaf method, and the other was the Mahalanobis distance analysis using SPSS. Twenty-one outliers were detected and excluded according to Kline's (2016) rule of multivariate outliers, $p < 0.001$. The rest of the analysis was performed with the remaining 303 cases, which were all within acceptable ranges.

4.3.5 Normality Check

Normality of the dataset was checked using histograms, P–P plots, and descriptive measures like skewness and kurtosis. Skewness and kurtosis for all measured items were in the acceptable range (usually ± 2), meaning data had a normal approximation. This ensures that conditions for conducting parametric tests like ANOVA and moderation analysis via regression were met. The dataset was consequently deemed fit for further inferential statistical analysis.

4.3.5.1 Histograms and p-plots

The Purchase Intention histogram reveals a fairly normal distribution with a minor left skew, revealing that the majority of respondents indicated moderate to high purchase intentions. The shape in the form of a bell indicates the location of responses in the vicinity of the upper end of the scale and provides evidence supporting the normality assumption in parametric analysis.

The P–P plot of Purchase Intention indicates that the observed values adhere very closely to the diagonal line, meaning the data points are nearly normally distributed. This visual validation confirms that statistical procedures with the assumption of normality can be used, e.g., ANOVA and regression analysis.

The Willingness to Pay histogram also closely resembles a normal distribution, though it is slightly left-skewed. Most of the responses fall in the mid-to-high range,

indicating that most of the respondents are fairly or very willing to pay more for organic products. The distribution validates the assumption of normality.

Figure 4.1

Histogram for Purchase Intention

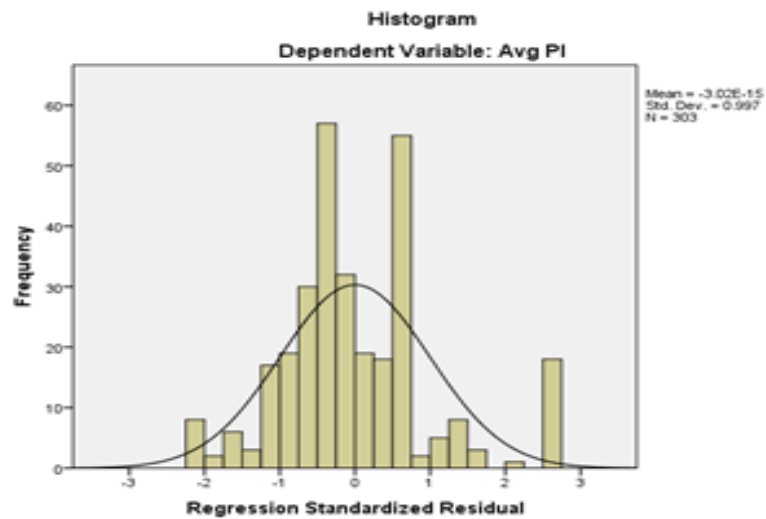


Figure 4.2

P-Plot for Purchase Intention

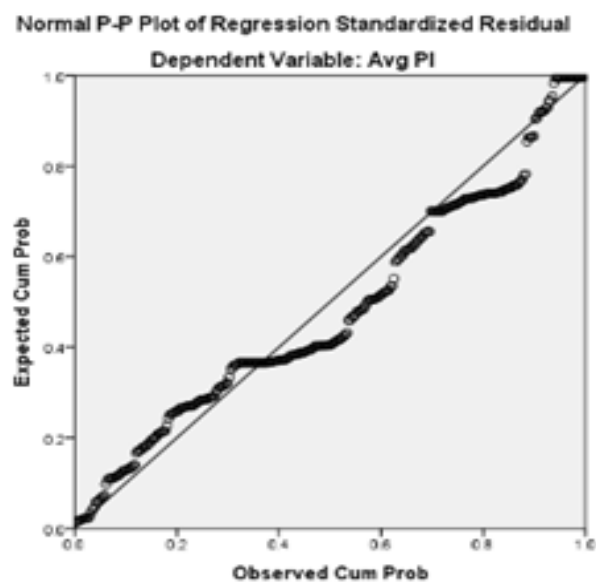
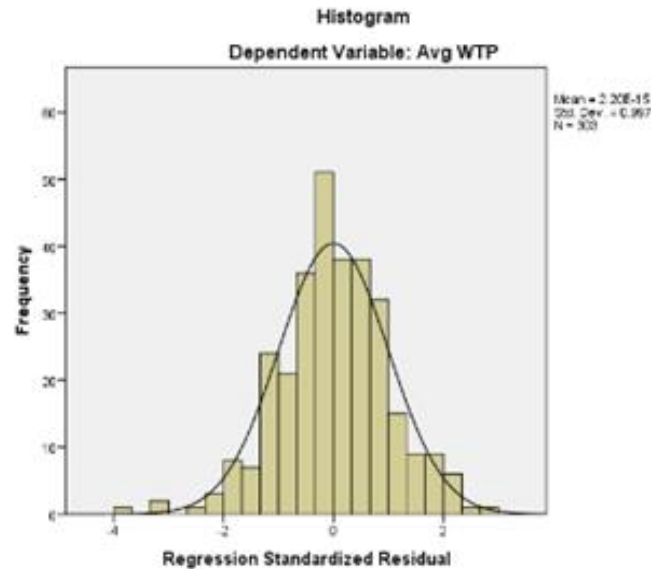


Figure 4.3

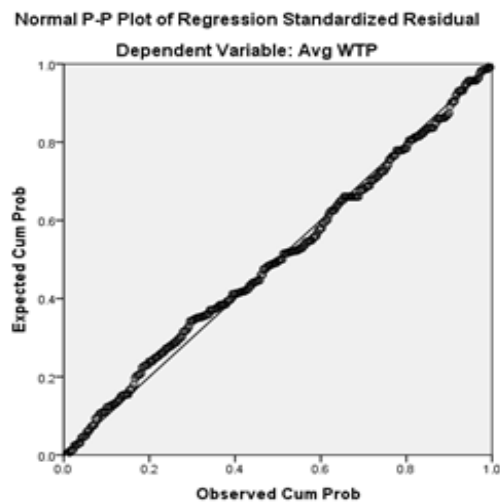
Histogram for Willingness to Purchase



The P–P plot for Willingness to Pay shows that the points correlate well along the line that is normally expected, with minimal deviation. This shows that the variable is fairly normally distributed and can be further used to analyze using parametric methods.

Figure 4.4

P-Plot for Willingness to Purchase



4.3.5.1 Skewness and Kurtosis

The skewness and kurtosis measures for all the items for the major constructs, pride, guilt, purchase intention, WTP, and environmental concern, were within the widely acceptable range of ± 2 , thus showing about normality. In most items, there was a slight negative skew, particularly in the pride and WTP constructs, which indicated a slight tendency toward higher levels of agreement. But the values did not exceed threshold levels indicative of extreme non-normality. Thus, data distribution was regarded as normal enough to conduct parametric tests like ANOVA and regression-based moderation analysis.

Table 4.1

Skewness and Kurtosis Values

	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis
P1	I would be pleased to purchase organic food products.	-1.015	.216
P2	I would feel satisfied about purchasing the organic food product.	-1.151	.539
P3	P3 I would be proud to purchase organic food products.	-1.024	.280
G1	I would feel remorse for not buying organic food.	-.108	-.865
G2	I would feel bad about not purchasing organic food.	-.196	-.978
G3	I would feel guilty about not purchasing organic food.	-.060	-.992

PI1	I would consider switching from regular products to organic and environmentally friendly products like the one I saw in the image above.	.254	.181
PI2	After seeing the product shown in the image, I would consider increasing the number of organic and environmentally friendly products I buy.	.157	.169
PI3	After seeing the product shown in the image, I will try to consume more organic foods when they are available.	.217	.331
WTP1	After seeing the product shown in the image, I will continue to consume organic food products regardless of price changes.	-.394	-.532
WTP2	I am willing to pay a higher price for organic food products like the one shown in the image.	-.344	-.710
WTP3	After seeing the product shown in the image, I am willing to buy organic food because the benefits outweigh the cost.	-.694	.052
WTP4	I am willing to pay more for organic food like the one shown in the image because it is environmentally friendly.	-.701	-.177
WTP5	Buying organic food, like the one shown in the image, is the right thing to do, even if it costs more.	-.610	-.208
EC1	When choosing food products, I prefer options that have the least negative impact on the environment.	-.637	-.402

EC2	Whenever possible, I choose organic food products that use natural and sustainable ingredients.	-1.022	1.024
EC3	I avoid purchasing food products from companies that do not prioritize organic farming or environmental responsibility.	-.594	-.338
EC4	I try to buy organic food that is certified for its environmental and health benefits.	-.724	-.071
EC5	When selecting food products, I consider how my choices affect the environment.	-.641	-.137
EC6	I try to limit my consumption of food products that contain artificial additives or pesticides to reduce my impact on the environment.	-.988	.408
EC7	To support sustainable agriculture, I prioritize purchasing organic food whenever possible.	-.822	.247

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This section provides the descriptive statistics and correlation findings for the study's major variables. The analysis gives an overview of the central tendencies and the correlation between emotional appeals, purchase intention, willingness to pay, and environmental concern.

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to give an overview of the central tendencies and dispersion of the key variables. Findings showed a mean Purchase Intention (PI) value of 5.49 (SD = 1.173) reflected a relatively high tendency toward

organic food among respondents. Willingness to Pay (WTP) also reflected a positive trend with a mean of 4.85 (SD = 1.343). Among the appeals based on emotion, Pride (M = 5.39, SD = 1.50) was rated higher than Guilt (M = 4.27, SD = 1.56), implying that pride-based messaging would have been received more positively. Environmental Concern had a mean of 5.29 (SD = 1.14), reflecting a moderate-to-high level of environmental awareness in participants.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	M	SD
Pride	5.39	1.50
Guilt	4.27	1.56
Purchase intention	5.49	1.17
Willingness to Pay	4.85	1.34
Environment concerns	5.29	1.14

4.4.2 Correlational Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationships among the study variables. As shown in the results, Purchase Intention was significantly correlated with Pride ($r = .517$, $p < .01$) and Guilt ($r = .364$, $p < .01$), indicating that both emotional appeals positively influence consumer intent. Willingness to Pay was also positively related to Pride ($r = .387$, $p < .01$) and Guilt ($r = .364$, $p < .01$). Additionally, Environmental Concern was strongly correlated with both PI ($r = .523$) and WTP ($r = .516$), reinforcing its relevance as a moderating variable in the study.

Table 4.3*Correlational Analysis*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Pride	1				
Guilt	.121*	1			
Purchase intention	.517**	.364**	1		
Willingness to Pay	.387**	.364**	.549**	1	
Environment concerns	.426**	.254**	.523**	.516**	1

Note. **p< 0.01

4.5 Multicollinearity

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined for all independent and moderating variables used in the regression-based moderation analysis to assess multicollinearity. All VIF scores were well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5, indicating no serious multicollinearity concerns among the predictors. This confirms that the independent variables, guilt, pride, and environmental concern did not exhibit problematic levels of correlation that could distort the regression coefficients or the overall model interpretation.

4.6 Demographic Analysis

The final sample consisted of 303 respondents. In terms of gender, the majority were male (52.8%), followed by female participants (45.2%), with 2% identifying as other or preferring not to disclose. Most respondents were between 18–34 years old (82.2%), indicating a relatively young sample. Regarding education, the majority held a bachelor's degree (61.4%), with 29.4% having completed a master's degree or higher. Monthly household income was fairly distributed across categories, with the largest group earning between PKR 50,000–100,000 (23.4%). Additionally, 37.3% of respondents reported that they “often” or “sometimes” purchase organic food, suggesting a solid base of organic consumers within the sample.

Table 4.4

Demographics of the Study (N=303)

Demographics	Category	F	%
Gender	Female	137	45.2
	Male	160	52.8
	Other / Prefer not to say	6	2.0
Age	18-34	249	82.2
	35-44	39	12.9

	45-54	12	4.0
	55+	3	1.0
Education level			
	High school or below	28	9.2
	Bachelor's degree	186	61.4
	Master's degree or higher	89	29.4
Monthly Income			
	Less than 50,000	43	14.2
	50,000 - 100,000	71	23.4
	100,000 - 200,000	69	22.8
	200,000 -300000	62	20.5
	Unemployed	58	19.1

As shown in Table 4.5, the majority of respondents reported purchasing organic food either “sometimes” (37.3%) or “often” (37.3%), indicating moderate engagement with organic products. A smaller proportion reported “always” (10.9%), while only 2.3% stated they never buy organic food, suggesting overall familiarity and interest in the category among the sample.

Table 4.5*How often do you purchase organic food?*

Scale	F	%
Never	7	2.3
Rarely	37	12.2
Sometime	113	37.3
Often	113	37.3
Always	33	10.9

4.6.1 Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Cronbach's Alpha values were computed for each construct to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. The results indicated high reliability for Pride ($\alpha = .900$), Guilt ($\alpha = .873$), Willingness to Pay ($\alpha = .921$), and Environmental Concern ($\alpha = .912$). However, Purchase Intention showed a relatively low reliability ($\alpha = .563$), which may slightly limit the strength of conclusions drawn from this construct. Overall, the majority of scales demonstrated acceptable to excellent internal consistency, supporting the robustness of the instrument used.

Table 4.6*Cronbach's Alpha*

Variables	α
Pride	.900
Guilt	.873

Purchase intention	.563
Willingness to Pay	.921
Environment concerns	.912

4.7 Hypothesis Testing: Main and Moderation Effects

This section presents the results of hypothesis testing based on experimental data. The main effects of emotional appeals (guilt, pride, and neutral) on purchase intention and willingness to pay were analyzed using ANOVA and post hoc tests. Additionally, moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS Macro (Model 1) to examine whether environmental concern influenced these relationships.

4.7.1 Main Effects on Purchase Intention

The Levene's Test was conducted to verify the assumption of equal variances across the three emotional appeal groups, guilt, pride, and neutral, for the dependent variable purchase intention. The result was not statistically significant ($F = 1.715$, $p = .182$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. This validates the use of one-way ANOVA for further analysis of group differences in purchase intentions.

Table 4.7

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance for Purchase Intention Across Emotional Appeal Conditions

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	<i>p</i>
Purchase Intention	1.715	2	300	.182

The one-way ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant difference in consumer purchase intention based on the type of emotional appeal used in organic food

packaging ($F = 5.378$, $p = 0.005$). Among the three groups, pride-based messaging resulted in the highest average purchase intention ($M = 5.67$), followed closely by guilt-based messaging ($M = 5.59$), while the neutral message condition showed the lowest mean ($M = 5.16$). These findings suggest that emotional appeals, particularly pride and guilt, are more effective than neutral messaging in motivating consumers to consider purchasing organic food.

Table 4.8

One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Emotional Appeals (Guilt, Pride, Neutral) on Consumer Purchase Intention for Organic Food

	N	Mean	SD	F	<i>p</i>
Guilt	105	5.59	1.160	5.378	0.005
Pride	106	5.67	1.097		
Neutral	92	5.16	1.218		
Total	303	5.49	1.173		

The Tukey HSD test was used to compare the effects of guilt, pride, and neutral messages on purchase intention. The results showed that both pride and guilt messages significantly increased purchase intention compared to the neutral condition, with mean differences of 0.507 ($p = 0.006$) and 0.431 ($p = 0.026$), respectively. However, there was no significant difference between pride and guilt ($p = 0.882$), indicating that while emotional messaging is more persuasive than a neutral approach, pride and guilt appeals are similarly effective in influencing consumer intention to purchase organic food.

Table 4.9

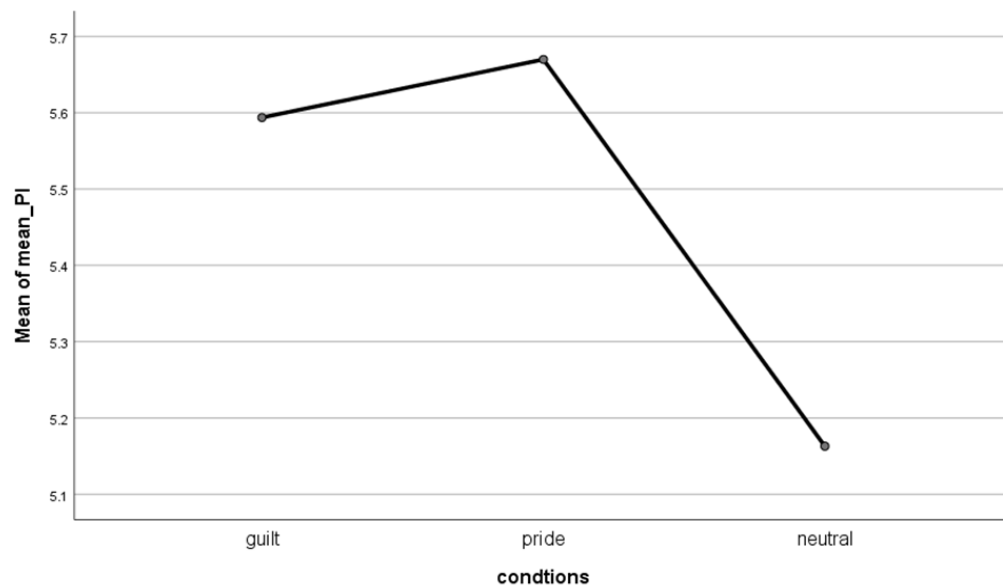
Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test: Pairwise Comparison of Emotional Appeals on Purchase Intention for Organic Food

(I) Conditions	(J) Conditions	Mean Difference		<i>p</i>
		(I-J)	Std. Error	
Guilt	Pride	-.076	.159	.882
	Neutral	.431*	.165	.026
Pride	Guilt	.076	.159	.882
	Neutral	.507*	.165	.006
Neutral	Guilt	-.431*	.165	.026
	Pride	-.507*	.165	.006

The line graph illustrates the mean purchase intention scores for each emotional appeal condition. As shown, pride-based messaging resulted in the highest level of purchase intention, followed closely by guilt-based messaging. In contrast, the neutral condition led to a noticeably lower purchase intention score. This visual representation reinforces the statistical findings, suggesting that emotional appeals, particularly pride, are more effective than neutral messaging in motivating consumers to consider buying organic food.

Figure 4.5

Line Graph Showing the Effect of Emotional Appeals (Guilt, Pride, Neutral) on Mean Purchase Intention for Organic Food



4.7.2 Main Effects on Willingness to Pay

Levene's Test was conducted to examine whether the assumption of equal variances holds across the three emotional appeal conditions, guilt, pride, and neutral, for the dependent variable willingness to pay. The result was not statistically significant ($F = 0.716$, $p = 0.490$), indicating that the variances among the groups are similar. This confirms that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is satisfied and supports the use of ANOVA for analyzing group differences in willingness to pay.

Table 4.10

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance for Purchase Intention Across Emotional Appeal Conditions

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p
------------------	-----	-----	---

Willingness to Pay	.716	2	300	.490
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The one-way ANOVA test examined the effect of emotional appeals on consumers' willingness to pay for organic food. Although the pride ($M = 4.98$) and guilt ($M = 4.94$) groups reported slightly higher willingness to pay compared to the neutral group ($M = 4.59$), the overall difference among the three conditions was not statistically significant ($F = 2.463$, $p = 0.087$). This suggests that the emotional messaging, while showing directional effects, did not produce a strong enough influence on willingness to pay to reach statistical significance.

Table 4.11

One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Emotional Appeals (Guilt, Pride, Neutral) on Consumer Willingness to Pay for Organic Food

	N	Mean	SD	F	<i>p</i>
Guilt	105	4.94	1.314	2.463	0.087
Pride	106	4.98	1.414		
Neutral	92	4.59	1.267		
Total	303	4.85	1.343		

The Tukey HSD post hoc analysis was conducted to explore differences in willingness to pay between the three emotional appeal groups. While both pride and guilt conditions showed higher mean willingness to pay than the neutral group, none of the pairwise comparisons reached statistical significance. The largest difference was

observed between pride and neutral (mean difference = 0.388, $p = 0.105$), followed by guilt and neutral (mean difference = 0.350, $p = 0.161$), but both fell above the 0.05 threshold. These findings suggest that although emotional appeals may slightly enhance willingness to pay, the effects are not strong enough to be considered statistically significant.

Table 4.12

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test: Pairwise Comparison of Emotional Appeals on Willingness for Organic Food

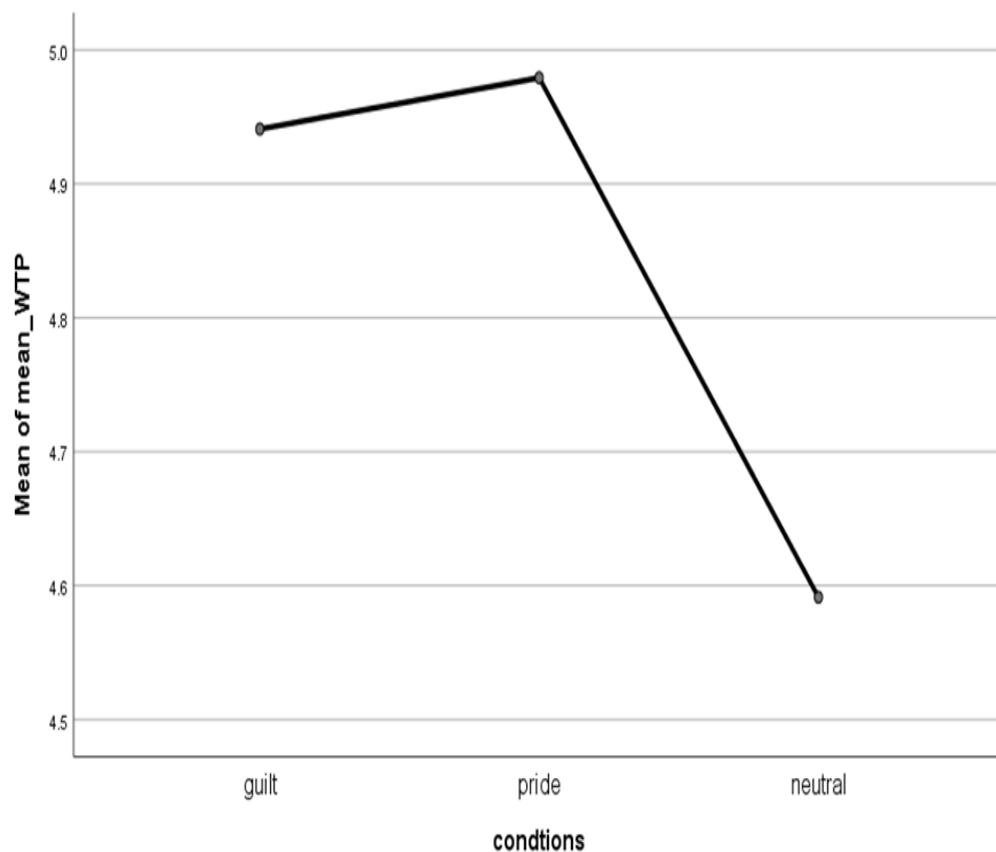
(I) conditions		(J) conditions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Guilt		Pride	-.038	.184	.976
		Neutral	.350	.191	.161
Pride		Guilt	.038	.184	.976
		Neutral	.388	.190	.105
Neutral		Guilt	-.350	.191	.161
		Pride	-.388	.190	.105

The line graph illustrates the average willingness to pay scores across the three emotional appeal conditions. Participants exposed to pride-based packaging showed the highest means of willingness to pay, followed closely by those in guilt condition. In

contrast, respondents in neutral condition reported the lowest willingness to pay. While the visual trend suggests that emotional messaging, particularly pride, may positively influence willingness to pay, these differences were not statistically significant based on the ANOVA and post hoc tests.

Figure 4.6

Line Graph Showing the Effect of Emotional Appeals (Guilt, Pride, Neutral) on Mean Willingness to Pay for Organic Food



4.7.3 Moderation Effects of Environmental Concern on Purchase Intention

The analysis shows a significant negative interaction effect ($B = -0.3515$, $p = 0.0009$, 95% CI $[-0.5570, -0.1460]$). This indicates that as environmental concern increases, the positive effect of guilt-based packaging on purchase intent decreases. In other words, guilt messaging is more effective for consumers with low environmental concern, as they are more influenced by emotional triggers that highlight negative

outcomes. This finding supports Hypothesis H3a, which predicted that guilt would be more persuasive among less environmentally concerned consumers.

Table 4.13

Guilt × Environmental Concern → Purchase Intent

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	Bootstraps at 95%	
					LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.4851	.0565	97.1624	.0000	5.3740	5.5962
Guilt (X1)	.1835	.1186	1.5465	.1230	-.0500	.4170
Environmental Concern (W)	.5374	.0495	10.8534	.0000	.4399	.6348
Guilt x EC	-.3515	.1044	-3.3666	.0009	-.5570	-.1460
R ²	.3059					
ΔR ²	.0263			.0009		

The analysis reveals that the interaction term is not statistically significant (B = 0.0149, p = 0.8861, 95% CI [-0.1897, 0.2195]). This indicates that environmental concern does not significantly moderate the relationship between pride-based packaging and purchase intent. In other words, the effectiveness of pride messaging on purchase intent remains relatively stable regardless of whether consumers have low or high concern for the environment. Therefore, Hypothesis H3b is not supported.

Table 4.13

Pride × Environmental Concern → Purchase Intent

Bootstraps at 95%						
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Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.4888	.0578	95.0131	.0000	5.3751	5.6025
Pride (X2)	.1642	.1213	1.3536	.1769	-.0745	.4029
Environmental Concern (W)	.5306	.0508	10.4394	.0000	.4306	.6307
Pride × EC	.0149	.1039	.1433	.8861	-.1897	.2195
R ²	.2781					
ΔR ²	.0000			.8861		

The analysis shows a non-significant interaction effect ($B = -0.1986$, $p = 0.1046$, 95% CI $[-0.4387, 0.0415]$). While the negative coefficient suggests that the effect of guilt-based packaging on willingness to pay becomes weaker as environmental concern increases, it is more effective for those with low concern; this effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis H4a is not supported, as the moderation does not reach the threshold for significance.

Table 4.14

Guilt × Environmental Concern → Willingness to Pay

					Bootstraps at 95%	
Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.8457	.0660	73.4611	.0000	4.7158	4.9755
Guilt (X1)	.1727	.1386	1.2457	.2138	-.1001	.4455
Environmental Concern (W)	.6069	.0579	10.4910	.0000	.4931	.7208

Guilt × EC	-.1986	.1220	-1.6281	.1046	-.4387	.0415
R ²	.2763					
ΔR ²	.0064			.1046		

4.7.4 Moderation Effects of Environmental Concern on Willingness to Pay

The analysis shows a marginally significant interaction effect ($B = 0.2299$, $p = 0.0546$, 95% CI [-0.0045, 0.4644]). Although the p -value is slightly above the conventional 0.05 threshold, the positive coefficient indicates that pride-based packaging becomes more effective in increasing willingness to pay among consumers with higher environmental concern. This suggests that environmentally conscious individuals are more likely to pay a premium when they feel proud about making sustainable choices. Therefore, Hypothesis H4b is partially supported, showing a meaningful trend in the predicted direction.

Table 4.14

Pride × Environmental Concern → Willingness to Pay

Predictor	Bootstraps at 95%					
	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.8371	.0662	73.0464	.0000	4.7068	4.9674
Pride (X2)	.0613	.1390	.4412	.6594	-.2123	.3349
Environmental Concern (W)	.5945	.0583	10.2038	.0000	.4799	.7092
Pride × EC	.2299	.1192	1.9298	.0546	-.0045	.4644
R ²	.2757					

ΔR^2	.0090	.0546
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4.8 Discussion

The The conclusions from this study provide valuable insight into the effects of emotional appeals—guilt and pride—on consumer reactions towards organic food packaging. Emotional appeals are an extremely influential instrument for framing consumer attitudes and actions, especially in the context of sustainable and ethical consumption. This study affirms the idea that emotional triggers can have a considerable effect on both purchase intent and willingness to pay (WTP), but that the effect depends on the appeal type and the degree of environmental concern.

As illustrated by past research, guilt appeals most often function by evoking a feeling of responsibility for possible harm inflicted by one's consumption practices (Graton & Mailliez, 2019; Chédotal et al., 2017). Pride appeals, however, evoke a feeling of self-contentment or moral superiority due to making a good decision, e.g., choosing organic or eco-friendly products (Coleman et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2024). In the current study, guilt outperformed pride in enhancing purchase intention and WTP among consumers with low environmental concern—consistent with Peng et al. (2023), which showed guilt appeals to elicit strong behavioral response, particularly when consumers were not previously motivated to act pro-environmentally.

Notably, the moderating role of environmental concern coincides with evidence from Mukherjee & Chandra (2022) and Haj-Salem et al. (2022). High environmental concern consumers were more likely to respond favorably to pride-based appeals due to the reason that such people already possess internalized green values and are driven more by those messages that reflect their self-concept as green consumers. It validates regulatory focus theory, where it is theorized that consumers with a promotion focus (such as high concern consumers) tend to be more responsive to positive reinforcement such as pride (Cui & Ye, 2017).

Additionally, emotional value design in packaging is seen to impact here. Chen (2024) discovered that emotional triggers infused in packaging appearance and message design can strongly impact perceived value and product selection. Guilt or pride, when

meaningfully added to packaging beyond appearances, can create stronger emotional appeal and message believability (Shimul & Cheah, 2023; Lombardi et al., 2024).

The findings also concur with recent green consumption and emotion-based decision-making literature. For instance, Constantinescu (2024) and Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2024) confirm that pride and guilt can both influence sustainability purchases, but their effectiveness is contingent on contextual variables like message framing and the moral identity of the consumer. Similarly, Raggiotto et al. (2024) point out that guilt can be an effective driver in inducing adoption of eco-packaging, particularly when combined with value-based storytelling.

Lastly, although both appeals can motivate behavior, the long-term efficacy of guilt versus pride is controversial. Guilt could lead to compliance in the short term, while pride could in still greater emotional engagement and habitual behavior. This finding necessitates future research investigating the temporal influence and message fatigue consequences of emotional appeals in sustainable marketing.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the findings of the statistical tests run to test the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were followed by moderation analysis via PROCESS macro in SPSS. The results showed that both guilt and pride appeals have significant effects on purchase intention and willingness to pay for organic food, with environmental concern moderating these relationships in certain ways. These findings offer evidence for the theoretical framework and help in explaining the influence of appeals to emotion and personal values on consumer behavior in relation to sustainable consumption.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, And Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings, interprets the results, and analyses implications. It also highlights the limitations and makes recommendations for future research and practical application. The chapter points out how guilt and pride appeals messaging can influence consumer behavior and what this implies for marketers, policymakers, and researchers.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This section provides the overall summary of the study's main findings corresponding to the defined research questions and hypotheses. The summary offers a basis for the interpretation of the theoretical and practical significance of the results in the following sections.

5.2.1 Research Questions

The above study has answered the following questions:

Q1. Which emotional appeal (guilt or pride) is more effective in increasing consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay for organic food?

Q2. Does environmental concern (low vs. high) moderate the relationship between emotional appeals (guilt vs. pride) and consumer purchase intent and willingness to pay for organic food?

5.2.2 Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this study were as follows:

H1a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H1c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

H2a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H2c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

H3a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

H3b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

H4a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

H4b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

5.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

The following hypotheses outcomes were studied in this research:

H1a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

The analysis results supported that pride-based messages on packaging had a positive effect to increase purchase intent than neutral messages; hence, H1a is supported.

H1b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

The analysis results supported that guilt-based messages on packaging had a positive effect to increase purchase intent than neutral messages; hence, H1b is supported.

H1c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' purchase intent for organic food.

The analysis results indicated no statistical difference between guilt and pride appeals in consumers' purchase intent; thus, H1c is not supported.

H2a: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between the pride and guilt messages on willingness to pay; therefore, H2a is not supported.

H2b: A guilt-based packaging message will be more effective than a neutral (no emotion) message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between the guilt and neutral messages on willingness to pay; therefore, H2b is not supported.

H2c: A pride-based packaging message will be more effective than a guilt-based packaging message in increasing consumers' willingness to pay for organic food.

The analysis results findings indicated no statistical difference between guilt and pride appeals on consumers' willingness to pay; thus, H2c is not supported.

H3a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

Moderation analysis showed a significant interaction, this shows that guilt appeals were stronger in the case of consumers with low environmental concern; hence, H3a is supported.

H3b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on purchase intent is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

Moderation analysis indicated that there was no significant interaction between pride and environmental concern on purchase intention; hence, H3b is not supported.

H4a: The effect of guilt-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with low environmental concern than for those with high concern.

Moderation analysis showed that there was no significant interaction between guilt and environmental concern on willingness to pay; thus, H4a is not supported.

H4b: The effect of pride-based packaging messages on willingness to pay is stronger for consumers with high environmental concern than those with low concern.

Moderation analysis revealed that there was no significant interaction between pride and environmental concern on willingness to pay; so, H4b is not supported.

Table 5.1

Summary of the Results

Hypothesis	Description	Results	Explanation
H1a	Pride > Neutral in Purchase Intent	Supported	$p = .006$
H1b	Guilt > Neutral in Purchase Intent	Supported	$p = .026$
H1c	Pride > Guilt in Purchase Intent	Not supported	$p = .882$
H2a	Pride > Neutral in WTP	Not supported	$p = .105$
H2b	Guilt > Neutral in WTP	Not supported	$p = .161$
H2c	Pride > Guilt in WTP	Not supported	$p = .976$

H3a		Supported	$p = .001$ (effect increases with EC)
	Guilt $\times$ EC $\rightarrow$ PI		
H3b	Pride $\times$ EC $\rightarrow$ PI	Not Supported	$p = .8861$ (interaction not significant)
H4a	Guilt $\times$ EC $\rightarrow$ WTP	Not supported	$p = .1046$ (effect decreases with EC, but not significant)
H4b	Pride $\times$ EC $\rightarrow$ WTP	Partially supported	$p = .0546$ (positive trend; marginally significant)

Note: PI = Purchase intent, WTP = Willingness to pay, EC = Environmental Concern.

5.3 Limitations of the Study and Direction of Future Research

This research, although giving useful information, is not without its limitations. Firstly, the reliance on self-reported data using an internet-based questionnaire may have introduced social desirability effects or response bias, influencing the validity of the findings. Secondly, this research was performed within one country, Pakistan, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other places with varying cultural, economic, or environmental values. Thirdly, the study examined only two emotional appeals, guilt and pride, and did not examine other pertinent feelings like fear, empathy, or hope. Finally, the study just tested purchase intention and willingness to pay instead of actual consumer purchase behavior, which can vary in practice.

Future studies can improve on these limitations by using a more heterogeneous sample from various countries or cultural contexts to increase generalization. Using experimental designs within actual shopping settings or tracking behaviors can also be

used to confirm the gap between intention and actual buying behavior of the consumer. Researchers may also gain by extending the emotional construct to capture other relevant sustainable consumption-related emotions. Additional examination of moderating factors like age, income status, or sustainability consciousness can also provide more insight into the effects of emotional appeals across various consumer groups.

5.4 Study Contributions

The study contributes theoretically to academic literature and empirically to marketing in the generation of new knowledge regarding the impact of emotional appeals, guilt and pride, on consumer choice in organic food products. One of the theoretical contributions is an extension of self-conscious emotion literature to sustainable consumer choice. Although previous work has focused primarily on emotions such as fear, joy, or shame, the current study investigates the two emotions of guilt and pride in parallel using a controlled experimental paradigm to quantify their respective influences on purchase intention and willingness to pay. The inclusion of a neutral control condition also contributes to method strength by allowing for a comparison baseline, whereby the impact of the emotions can be separated and understood better.

Another major theoretical contribution is the use of environmental concern as a moderator. By investigating the reaction of consumers with varying levels of environmental concern to emotion-based appeals, this research enhances the understanding of the potential impact of awareness and personal values to identify the persuasiveness of messages. The finding that guilt appeals are more effective among consumers with lower environmental concern, whereas pride appeals are more effective among consumers with higher concern enhances message tailoring and segmentation theories in environmental marketing. Practically, the research gives brand strategists and marketers concrete recommendations on how to craft packaging and communications for organic food. In an ethics-based, competitive market where the battle for hearts and minds is intense, emotive framing can be a powerful weapon to drive higher levels of consumer engagement. The findings indicate that emotional framing can be a powerful driver of behavioral intentions, especially in markets where

organic consumption continues to grow. This is particularly true in developing economies such as Pakistan, where awareness and uptake of sustainable practices are increasing but are still limited by price sensitivity as well as limited access. By identifying which emotions resonate with which consumer segments, the research gives marketers the evidence they need to craft stronger, more effective, and more targeted campaigns.

Lastly, the research provides a context-specific contribution in that it addresses the consumer behavior of an emerging economy. The majority of the previous research in this direction has been done in Western or highly industrialized countries, which may not be reflective of the cultural and economic forces that shape developing economies. By gathering data from Pakistani consumers, this research addresses the geographic and contextual research gap in sustainability and marketing research and provides a steppingstone for further research in the same markets.

5.5 Recommendations of the Study

These findings have some implications which can be drawn for policymakers, brand managers, and marketers who seek to promote organic food consumption more effectively. Guilt and pride appeal

need to be used effectively through marketing communications and packaging to influence consumer behaviors. Since pride-based messages were found to have strong positive impacts on purchasing intentions, green consumerist-oriented brands need to communicate pride-based stories that promote a sense of responsibility and self-concept in selecting sustainable alternatives.

Second, for consumers with lower environmental concern, guilt appeals are a good impulse to activate to get consumers buying more ethically. Cost-of-inaction or cost-of-poor-choice messages can be effective if framed sensitively. One does need to watch out, though, not to frame these messages in a way that comes across as too confrontational or accusatory, or that might trigger a backlash.

Third, businesses would be wise to segment their public by environmental concern and build corresponding messaging strategies. Placing environmental cues or emotional appeals subtly on packaging, instead of just through extrinsic advertising, can make messages more effective at the point of purchase.

Lastly, policymakers and organic and sustainable consumption advocacy groups must invest in campaigns involving emotional engagement, particularly in markets where awareness is still in infancy. Emotional narratives can personalize sustainability, making behavior change more likely.

5.6 Conclusion

Emotional appeals in organic food packaging content were used in this study. i.e., pride and guilt were experimentally tested for their effects on purchase intention and willingness to pay. The findings indicated that pride and guilt messages both showed a significant increase in purchase intention compared to a control (neutral) message with a slightly greater effect for pride. However, when tested against willingness to pay, the emotional appeals did not produce statistically significant outcomes.

The study also showed that the degree of guilt appeals on purchasing intention is moderated by environmental concern, particularly in low-concern consumers. The implication is that affective framing is more potent where it is also consistent with concern and awareness among consumers.

In total, the study presents a critical contribution to knowledge regarding emotional messaging within sustainable marketing, particularly in a developing economy. It identifies the possibility of using specialized emotional appeals to steer consumer reaction towards alternatives that promote ethical and environmentally conscious choices.

5.7 Chapter Summary

An overview of the study's key findings was provided in this chapter, along with an explanation of the findings in relation to the research questions and hypotheses, and outlined their theoretical and practical significance. The chapter further acknowledged the study's limitations and recommended areas of future study. The chapter concluded by outlining the study's contribution and offering suggestions to legislators and marketers on how to best maximize the use of emotional appeals in organic food packaging, particularly in developing country contexts.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Section 1: Experimental Exposure

Participants will be randomly assigned to view one of the following organic food packaging messages:

Condition 1_ GUILT:

“If you don’t choose organic food, you will contribute to harming the environment.”



Condition 2_PRIDE:

“If you choose organic food, you will contribute to protecting the environment.”



Condition 3_ NEUTRAL:

“This is organic.”



Participants will be shown an image of organic food packaging featuring one of these messages before proceeding to the next section.

Section 2: Emotional Response to the Packaging Message

(Adapted from [Lima, Costa & Félix, 2019](#))

Instructions for Participants:

After viewing the packaging, please indicate how much you feel the following emotions.

(7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

Pride

1. I would be pleased to purchase organic food products.
2. I would feel satisfied about purchasing the organic food product.
3. I would be proud to purchase organic food products.

Guilt

1. I would feel remorse for not buying organic food.
2. I would feel bad about not purchasing organic food.
3. I would feel guilty about not purchasing organic food.

Section 3: Purchase Intent

(Adapted from [Peerzada et al., 2025](#))

(7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

Based on the message you saw, indicate how likely you are to take the following actions.

1. I would consider switching from regular products to organic and environmentally friendly products like the one I saw in the image above.
2. After seeing the product shown in the image, I would consider increasing the number of organic and environmentally friendly products I buy.
3. After seeing the product shown in the image, I will try to consume more organic foods when they are available.

Section 4: Willingness to Pay (WTP)

(Adapted from [Peerzada et al., 2025](#))

Based on the message you saw, indicate how likely you are to take the following actions.

(7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

1. After seeing the product shown in the image, I will continue to consume organic food products regardless of price changes.
2. I am willing to pay a higher price for organic food products like the one shown in the image.
3. After seeing the product shown in the image, I am willing to buy organic food because the benefits outweigh the cost.
4. I am willing to pay more for organic food like the one shown in the image because it is environmentally friendly.
5. Buying organic food, like the one shown in the image, is the right thing to do, even if it costs more.

Section 5: Environmental Concern

(Adapted from [Chen, 2019](#))

Based on your values and beliefs, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

1. When choosing food products, I prefer options that have the least negative impact on the environment.
2. Whenever possible, I choose organic food products that use natural and sustainable ingredients.
3. I avoid purchasing food products from companies that do not prioritize organic farming or environmental responsibility.
4. I try to buy organic food that is certified for its environmental and health benefits.
5. When selecting food products, I consider how my choices affect the environment.
6. I try to limit my consumption of food products that contain artificial additives or pesticides to reduce my impact on the environment.
7. To support sustainable agriculture, I prioritize purchasing organic food whenever possible.

Demographic Information

1. **Age:**
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55+
2. **Gender:**
 - Male

- Female
 - Other / Prefer not to say
- 3. **Education Level:**
 - High school or below
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree or higher
- 4. **Monthly Household Income (in PKR):**
 - Less than 50,000
 - 50,000 - 100,000
 - 100,000 - 200,000
 - 200,000 & Above
- 5. **How often do you purchase organic food?**
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always