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# Mediating Role of Expectation in the Correlation between Food Safety, Product Knowledge and Purchase Intention on Complementary Foods for Infants and Young Children in China

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#### Abstract

This paper aims to examine consumers' intention to purchase complementary foods for infants and young children in China. It focusing on the mediating role of expectations in the relationship between food safety, product knowledge, and purchase intention. The research utilizes structural equation modeling to analyze the data, which was conducted through a survey of 607 respondents across 20 Chinese provinces, primarily recruited from WeChat social media groups. Findings reveal that food safety and product knowledge significantly impact consumer expectations, influencing purchase intentions for these foods. Furthermore, expectations mediate the relationship between food safety, product knowledge, and purchase intentions. Notably, the study also identifies no significant difference in purchase intentions between consumers who have previously purchased complementary foods for infants and young children and those who have not. This indicates a consistent pattern of purchase intentions across different consumer experiences. The research contributes to understanding the factors influencing consumer behavior in the market for infant and young child complementary foods in China, highlighting the crucial roles of food safety, product knowledge, and consumer expectations.

Keywords: China, Purchase Intention, Expectation, Product Knowledge, Food Safety

# Introduction

This paper aims to analyze the factors influencing consumer behavior in China's complementary foods market. The necessity of complementary feeding arises around the age of six months when breast milk alone becomes insufficient to meet the nutritional demands of an infant (World Health Organization, 2023). This process is crucial for infants' growth and development. A preference for homemade complementary foods over commercial alternatives is observed in China, attributed to the latter's uniform taste and higher cost (Chang et al., 2008).

The Chinese market for these complementary foods is expanding, with the National Health Commission reporting approximately 42 million infants and young children aged 0-3 (People's Daily Online, 2021). This market, valued at 52.7 billion yuan in 2022, is expected to grow to 70.4 billion yuan by 2025 (iResearch, 2023), driven by policies like the three-child birth policy and heightened consumer awareness. However, the current research on complementary foods primarily focuses on nutritional content and feeding practices (Zhao et al., 2020; Alexy et al., 2022; Pang et al., 2023), with less emphasis on consumer behavior towards these products.

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This paper's landscape reveals a gap in understanding consumer behavior regarding complementary foods in the Chinese market. Following the 2008 milk formula scandal, consumer skepticism towards food safety has heightened (Liu & Niyongira, 2017). The subsequent government regulations and industry reorganization (Wang et al., 2021) have not fully addressed the consumer's perspective. Furthermore, the influence of product knowledge on consumer decisions is well-documented (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Shan et al., 2022; Limbu et al., 2022), but its impact in the context of complementary foods in China is not thoroughly explored. Existing studies have delved into aspects like price, quality, and parental feeding knowledge (Pan & Lu, 2010; Han, 2017; Wang, 2018; Mo, 2018; Qiu et al., 2022), yet an indepth analysis of these factors in shaping consumer purchase intentions remains scarce.

This paper aims to examine the research gap by exploring the mediating role of consumer expectations in the relationship between food safety, product knowledge, and purchase intentions in China's infant complementary food market, as conceptualized within the framework of Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980). It is based on the understanding that consumer behavior in this market is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, emphasizing the influence of perceptions of food safety and product knowledge on shaping consumer expectations and, consequently, their purchasing decisions.

Based on the research objective above, there are two research questions. First, how does expectation mediate the relationship between food safety and purchase intention for commercial complementary foods in China? This research question examines how consumers' expectations, shaped by their perceptions of food safety, influence their willingness to purchase commercial complementary foods. It addresses the impact of food safety concerns, heightened post the 2008 milk formula scandal (Liu & Niyongira, 2017), on consumers' decision-making process regarding infant and young child nutrition.

Second, how does expectation, informed by product knowledge, affect the purchase intention of commercial complementary foods among Chinese consumers? This research question seeks to understand how consumers' level of product knowledge alters their expectations and purchase intentions. This inquiry is grounded in the premise that well-informed consumers are likely to make more discerning choices regarding the nutritional products they choose for their children, as suggested by previous research (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Shan et al., 2022; Limbu et al., 2022).



# Literature Review

Figure 1. Research Hypothetical Model.

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# Food Safety and Purchase Intention

Food safety incidents make consumers more concerned regarding food safety issues (Hsu et al., 2019), that made people pay more attention on organic food, and food safety became one of the main factors to influence consumers' purchase intention. For example, Iqbal et al., (2021) founds that individuals' food safety concerns are positively related to their intentions of purchasing organic food products through consumer involvement. Eyinade et al. (2021) showed that human health, food safety, attitudes and perceptions and willingness to pay for a price premium are some of the factors influencing consumers' willingness to consume organic foods. And health consciousness, environmental consciousness, food safety consciousness, price consciousness, novelty consciousness, and trust are factors that significantly affect purchase intention of organic foods (Zheng et al., 2021). In addition, information on food safety was significantly associated with purchase intention (Liu et al., 2022).

Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Food safety significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions on complementary foods.

## Product Knowledge and Purchase Intention

Cordell (1997) believed that consumer knowledge affected the way that consumers collect and use information, and ultimately affected their final consumption behavior. Scholars have found that high level of product knowledge greatly helps consumers become more confident and decisive in making purchasing decisions (Phillips et al., 2013). On the result of finding the influence of framing effect on consumers' purchase intention of artificial meat showed that consumers with higher product knowledge levels have higher purchase intention under the positive information frame (Shan et al., 2022). Limbu et al. (2022) found that green-cosmetics-related knowledge was positively related to green cosmetics purchase intention. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2: Product knowledge significantly influences consumers' purchase intention on complementary foods.

#### **Expectation and Purchase Intention**

Expectations have been broadly defined as beliefs about the future, which can range from general beliefs about products to anticipation about specific characteristics of products (Diehl and Poynor 2010). Expectations encompass the qualities that a customer looks for in a product or service, which make it more appealing when compared to other similar offerings (Kosiba et al., 2020). Expectation factors can influence customers' purchase intention directly or indirectly (Zafar et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023; Ahmadi et al., 2023). For example, customer's expectation factors, effort expectancy, performance expectancy and perception of trust has found a substantial impact on individual's purchase intention (Zafar et al., 2020). Li et al. (2020) divided 578 consumers into three groups: "propensity type" "intermediate type" and "non-inductive type", and performance expectation have a significant influence on the purchase intention of all kinds of the consumers, effort expectation have a significant influence on the purchase intention validation positively affects perceived value and satisfaction on the continuous purchase intention under live broadcast, and perceived value and satisfaction are the main factors driving consumers to continue to buy clothing. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed for testing:

H3: Expectation significantly influences consumers' complementary foods purchase intentions.

### Food Safety and Expectation

Consumer expectations play a significant role in shaping perceptions, decisions, and behaviors related to food safety. Consumers' high expectation about food safety was rely on the food sector to adhere to the highest safety standards. On the aspect of food safety, customers have different expectation on different delivered mode in off-premise restaurant service modes. For food-related performance, consumers reported lower expectations for food safety and food quality from robot- and human-delivered food (Byrd et al., 2021). Kantono et al. (2021) used Partial Least Squares Path Modelling (PLS-PM) to further identify that perceived meat quality by Chinese consumers will satisfy consumer expectation. Thus, the following are hypothesized:

H4: Food safety significantly influences consumers' expectation on complementary foods.

**H5:** Expectation mediates the relationship between food safety and purchase intention on complementary foods.

## **Product Knowledge and Expectation**

Expectation and product knowledge sometimes have positive effects on consumers' attitudes and purchase intention, like concerning SE product (Ng, M., 2022). Product knowledge also had direct influence on customer expectation. For example, Suchánek and Králová (2019) showed that repeated purchase was reflecting in product knowledge and its fluctuation, this knowledge should influence customer expectation. The greater the customer's product knowledge, the higher the customer's expectation. Chen et al. (2023) found perceived lecturer expertise, prior learning experience, and personal trial experience are positively associated with trust and performance expectation, which in turn influence purchase intention towards online paid courses. As we knew, product knowledge was the information that obtain in the consumers' purchasing decision process, which includes subjective knowledge, previous experience, and objective knowledge (Beatty & Smith, 1987), that meant product knowledge is positively associated with performance expectation. The following hypothesis was proposed.

H6: Product knowledge significantly influences consumers' expectation.

**H7:** Expectation mediates the relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention of complementary foods.

# Methodology

#### **Data Collection**

On 2021, there are about 42 million infants and young children aged  $0\sim3$  in the country (GuangMing Daily, people.com.cn). Based on this amount and to better represent the population of China, a questionnaire survey was conducted in the form of an online survey. Most of the respondents of this study were parents or grandparents who had purchased or had intention to purchase the complementary foods for infants and young children in the family. The questionnaire was transmitted through social media WeChat groups, a total of 607 questionnaires were collected from 20 provinces. The details of respondents' demographic

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profiles are presented in Table 1.

Characteristics	Frequency (N=607)	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	293	48.3
	Female	314	51.7
Age	19-23 (After 2000)	103	17.0
	24-33 (1990-1999)	198	32.6
	34-43 (1980-1989)	237	39.0
	44 & Above (Before 1979)	69	11.4
Education Level	High School & Below	235	38.7
	Diploma	149	24.5
	Undergraduate	137	22.5
	Postgraduate	86	14.2
Monthly Income (Yuan)	4000 & Below	53	8.7
	4001-6000	180	29.7
	6001-8000	188	31.0
	8001-10000	163	26.9
	11001 & Above	23	3.8
Behavior	Purchased	396	65.2
	Non-Purchased	211	34.8

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Of the total respondents, 51.7% were female, which was slightly higher than males (48.3%). The majority of respondents were on the age 34-43 (39%), who were born on the year 1980-1989. The overall education level of the respondents had a high school or bachelor's degree ( 63.2% ), 22.5% had a undergraduate degree and 14.2% had a postgraduate degree. In addition, the income distribution of the respondents was uneven. The monthly income of 60.7% respondents were under 8000 yuan, the rest 39.3% respondents' monthly income were 8001 yuan above. Of all the respondents, 65.2% had purchased complementary foods, 34.8% hadn't.

#### Instrument

The overall instrument was developed in Mandarin, which is a common language used for speech, reading, and writing in China. An English translation of the instrument is provided in Table 2. Before the actual data collection, a pilot study involving 60 respondents was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument. It took between 5 to 10 minutes for respondents to complete the questionnaire. The instrument was composed of two sections. The first section was basic information about their sex, age, education level, monthly income and occupation . The second section focused on intention on purchasing complementary foods, (1) expectation (four items), (2) food safety (four items), (3) product knowledge (four items), and (4) complementary foods purchase intentions (four items). The respondents were required to provide their responses according to a seven-point Likert scale, with one indicating "strongly disagree" and seven indicating "strongly agree". This study focused on complementary foods for infants and young children in particular. The introductory of complementary foods were provided in the second section: "Complementary foods for infants were required to provide the second section: "Complementary foods for infants were required to provide the second section: "Complementary foods for infants and young children in particular. The introductory of complementary foods were provided in the second section: "Complementary foods for infants were many foods for infants and young children in particular. The introductory of complementary foods were provided in the second section: "Complementary foods for infants were many foods for infants and young children in particular. The introductory of complementary foods were provided in the second section: "Complementary foods for infants were many foods for infants

and young children" refers to various complementary foods (except breast milk or formula milk) that can meet nutritional needs during the growth and development of infants and young children.

Construct Scale item		Source
Expectation	<ol> <li>The complementary food was better than what I had expected.</li> </ol>	Bhattacherjee (2001)
	(2) I feel the complementary food meets all my expected needs.	
	(3) Overall, most of my expectations from buying the complementary foods were confirmed	
	(4) My child grew very well after eating the complementary foods, as well as I expected	
Food Safety	<ul> <li>(1) I will not buy complementary foods for infants and young children with additives.</li> </ul>	Knight et al. (2007)
	(2) I concern about the package of complementary foods for infants and young children whether damage or not.	
	(3) I concern about where the raw materials of complementary foods for infants and young children comes from.	
	(4) I concern about the energy value of complementary foods for infants and young children.	
Product knowledge	<ol> <li>I understand the differences in price of complementary foods for infants and young children.</li> </ol>	Brucks (1985) 、 Mitchell and Dacin (1996)
	(2) When I purchase complementary foods for infants and young children, I will read the specific information on the label.	
	(3) I understand the differences between the complementary foods and normal foods	
	(4) I always search the information about complementary foods for infants and young children.	
Purchase intention	<ol> <li>I am willing to purchase complementary foods for infants and young children.</li> </ol>	Zheng et al., (2021)、 Iqbal et al.,(2021); Taghipour & Loh, (2017)
	(2) I will consider to purchase complementary foods for infants and young children.	
	(3) I will purchase the complementary foods that I am not available to make in home.	
	(4) I already have the intention to purchase complementary foods.	

Table 2. Constructs and Scale Items of the Instrument.

Subsequently, the respondents were required to respond whether they purchased the complementary foods or not. If the answer was "yes", respondents should respond the following two questions, "Which kinds of complementary foods have you purchased?" and "The brands of complementary foods you purchased mainly came from domestic or foreign country?"

# Results

# Measurement Model

The main aspects to be considered when performing CFA are composite reliability (CR), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted, AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to previous researches, 0.70 is the cut-off value for CR, and 0.50 for AVE (Wu, 2010). As shown in Table 3, the reliability of each item surpass Cronbach's alpha. The values are 0.946 (expectation), 0.912 (food safety), 0.909 (product knowledge) and 0.954 (purchase intention). These reliability coefficients are higher than the critical value of 0.60, suggesting high internal reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The construction reliability CR is greater than 0.7, the average variance extraction amount AVE is greater than 0. 5, indicating that the scale has good convergence validity.

Construct	Number of Items	Reliability	Convergence Validity	Discriminant Validity				
		Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	EX	FS	РК	PI
EX	4	.946	.948	.861	.928			
FS	4	.912	.913	.792	.279	.890		
PK	4	.909	.909	.785	.247	.297	.886	
PI	4	.954	.954	.878	.466	.480	.459	.937

Table 3. Results of Reliability, Convergence Validity, and Discriminant Validity.

**Note:** EX=Expectation; FS=food safety; PK=Product knowledge; PI=Purchase intention. The diagonal elements represent the square roots of AVE; the off-diagonal elements are the correlation estimates.

As known, multicollinearity is defined as a condition where two or more explanatory variables are related amongst themselves which may cause misleading predictions. Usually the variance inflation factor (VIF) is used in regression analysis to evaluate collinearity of the formative indicators, the larger the VIF value, the more severe the multicollinearity. It is generally believed that when the VIF is greater than 10 (strictly 5), it means that the model has serious collinearity problems (James et al. 2013). As shown in Table 4, the VIF value of each item is less than 5, that means the model has no multicollinearity problem and the model is well built. The variance inflation factor (VIF) is often used to evaluate collinearity of the formative indicators. VIF values of 5 or above indicate critical collinearity issues among the indicators of formatively measured constructs

Item	EX	PI	FS	РК	VIF
EX1	.928	.461	.272	.237	3.999
EX2	.925	.408	.237	.223	4.183
EX3	.932	.445	.257	.228	4.290
EX4	.925	.414	.266	.228	4.076
PI1	.448	.939	.435	.438	4.880
PI2	.431	.939	.431	.421	4.925
PI3	.422	.933	.480	.432	4.421
PI4	.447	.937	.451	.428	4.663
FS1	.224	.429	.889	.280	2.792
FS2	.258	.434	.890	.264	2.757
FS3	.264	.397	.885	.255	2.741
FS4	.246	.444	.895	.259	2.849

Table 4. Results of Multiple Regression.

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PK1	.237	.397	.290	.884	2.663
PK2	.212	.403	.241	.889	2.795
PK3	.206	.404	.258	.876	2.546
PK4	.220	.421	.263	.895	2.840

#### Structural Model and Testing of Hypotheses

#### **Direct Effect and Mediating Effect Test**

By controlling the demographic variables and using the results for the bootstrap procedure of Smart PLS to analysis the variables. 5000 bootstrap samples were involved to estimate the 95% confidence interval of the direct indirect and total effects in terms of percentiles and biascorrected confidence intervals: if the lower and upper bounds did not include zero, then statistical significance was achieved (Hayes, 2009). According to the model framework in Figure 1, Using linear regression to predict the direct effect on expectation, food safety, product knowledge and purchase intention, food safety, product knowledge and expectation of complementary foods. Also to examine the mediating effect of expectation in the relationship between food safety, product knowledge and purchase intention of complementary foods. As shown in Figure 2 and Table 6, expectation had a significant positive effect on purchase intention (path coefficient=0.309, standard deviation=0.039, p<0.001, confidence interval excluding 0). Food safety had a significant positive effect on expectation (path coefficient=0.225, standard deviation=0.048, p<0.001, confidence interval excluding 0). Food safety had a significant positive effect on purchase intention (path coefficient=0.307, standard deviation=0.039, p<0.001, confidence interval excluding 0). Product knowledge had a significant positive effect on expectation (path coefficient=0.180, standard deviation=0.047, p < 0.001, confidence interval excluding 0), and product knowledge had a significant positive effect on purchase intention (path coefficient=0.291, standard deviation=0.040, p<0.001, confidence interval excluding 0). The hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H6 have been successfully validated. Furthermore, the investigation revealed that expectation plays a significant mediating role in both identified pathways. Specifically, the mediating effects of food safety and product knowledge, channeled through expectation, were quantified at 0.070 and 0.056, respectively. In summary, the comprehensive impact of food safety and product knowledge on expectation is substantial, leading to the acceptance of hypotheses H5 and H7.

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Figure 2	. The	Result	of Path	Analysis.
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Path	Original sample (O)	Standard d 95% CI B	leviat ias-C	viation (STDEV) as-Corrected				I	Bootstrapping 5000 times				
		Lower	r l	Upper									
Direct Effect													
	Food Safety -> Purc	hase Intention		.307		.039		.228		.381			
	Product Knowledge -> P	urchase Intentio	n		.291		.040		.206		.364		
	Expectation -> Purc	hase Intention		.309		.039		.230		.384			
	Food Safety ->	Expectation	.225		.048		.128		.315				
	Product Knowledge	-> Expectation	L	.180		.047		.088		.270			
		Indir	ect E	ffect									
	Food Safety -> Expectation	on -> Purchase	Inter	ntion	.070		.017		.040		.106		
]	Product Knowledge -> Expect	ation -> Purcha	ase Ir	ntentio	on	.056		.016		.028		.090	
Total Effect													
	Food Safety -> Purc	hase Intention		.070		.017		.040		.106			
	Product Knowledge -> P	urchase Intentio	on		.056		.016		.028		.090		

Table 5. Results of Mediation Effects of Food Safety, Product Knowledge, Purchase Intention.

#### **Multiple Group Analysis**

In order to further explore the heterogeneity among different consumers, this paper selects two specific groups of consumers who have purchased and have not purchased complementary foods for infants and young children. Using SmartPLS to conduct a multi-group comparative analysis. The results showed that food safety -expectation, food safety-purchase intention, expectation-purchase intention, product knowledge-expectation, and product knowledge-purchase intention were all reached a significant level of more than 5% in this two specific groups that consumers who have purchased and have not purchased complementary foods for infants and young children. That means there is little difference in the purchase intention of consumers who have purchased and have not purchased complementary foods for infants and

young children. The reason for the lack of discrepancies is because, with the intergenerational migration, the parents who were born after 1985 have gradually occupy the mainstream, and the new parents' concept of parenting and consumption has changed. With the increasing attention of food safety for infants and young children, most families have a strong motivation to learn the knowledge about the products of maternal and infant before or while the families having a baby. Therefore, there is little difference in the purchase intention of consumers who have purchased and have not purchased complementary foods for infants and young children.



Product Knowledge

Purchase Intention





Product Knowledge

Purchase Intention

Figure 4. The Result of Path Analysis of Non-Purchased Group.

Table 6.	able 6. The Result of Multi-Group Analysis of Purchased and Non-Purchase Group.								
Path	Path Original (P) Original (NP) Mean (P) Mean (P)						STD	EV (P)	
:	STDEV (NP)	t value (P)	t value (	(NP)	Differen	nce (P-]	NP)	1-tailed	
	(P vs	s. NP) p value	2-tail	ed (P v	s. NP) p	value			
			Direct Effe	ect					
Expect	ation -> Purch	ase Intention	.343	.261	.343	.259	.048	.065	
		7.162	4.008 .08	.182	155 .3	11			
Food S	afety -> Expect	ation .222	.230	.222	.231	.065	.069	3.415	
	. –	3.31	2008	.534	.932				

Table 6. The Result of Multi-Group Analysis of Purchased and Non-Purchase Group

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Each Safety > Dyrahass Intention 200 226 200 227 052	060
Food Safety -> Purchase Intention .299 .326 .299 .327 .052	.060
5.780 5.484028 .641 .718	
Product Knowledge -> Expectation .199 .161 .200 .160 .058	.076
3.444 2.121 .038 .348 .696	
Product Knowledge -> Purchase Intention .264 .325 .265 .327	.055
.059 4.779 5.504061 .776 .448	
Indirect Effect	
Product Knowledge -> Expectation -> Purchase Intention.068 .042 .069	.041
.023 .022 2.988 1.937 .026 .197 .395	
Food Safety -> Expectation -> Purchase Intention .076 .060 .076	.060
.023 .024 3.236 2.528 .016 .309 .617	
Total Effect	
Food Safety -> Purchase Intention.375.386.374.387.054	.058
6.892 6.631012 .560 .879	
Product Knowledge -> Purchase Intention .332 .367 .333 .368	.055
.058 6.015 6.316035 .670 .659	

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**Note:** P=Purchase Group; NP=Non-Purchase Group.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Based on the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ETC), this paper constructs a model of expectation, food safety and product knowledge on the purchase intention of complementary foods for infants and young children. By using SPSS and SmartPLS to examine consumers' expectation, food safety and product knowledge will affect consumers' purchase intention of complementary foods or not. Also to explore the mediation effect of expectation among food safety, product knowledge and purchase intention. The following conclusions are obtained: firstly, expectation, food safety and product knowledge can positively and significantly affect consumers' purchase intention of complementary foods for infants and young children. Secondly, food safety and product knowledge affect the purchase intention of complementary foods through expectation, that is, expectation plays a mediating role in the impact of food safety and product knowledge on purchase intention. Finally, there was no significant difference between consumers who had purchase and had not purchased complementary foods for infants and young children in the purchase intention of complementary foods.

Mention to food safety, several studies have shown that food safety has a significant positive impact on purchase intention (Iqbal et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2021; Eyinade et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022). A number of food safety incidents have occurred in China, especially the milk formula scandal in 2008, which has led to families paying more attention to the safety of infant food. Therefore, this paper examined that food safety also has a positive and significant impact on the purchase intention of complementary foods, which is consistent with the conclusions of previous studies.

It has been confirmed that product knowledge has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of complementary foods. As the other relevant studies shown, high level of product knowledge have higher purchase intention (Shan et al., 2022; Limbu et al., 2022). Therefore, the conclusions of this paper are consistent with those of previous studies. Consumers who have high level of product knowledge will easily have purchase intention, because they can get

a more complete picture of the product and thus be better able to meet their needs. In addition, they are also more able to rationally evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of products, and weigh the proportion between price and performance, in order to make better purchasing decisions.

Moreover, food safety and product knowledge also have a significant positive impact on expectations. In other words, consumers with higher food safety awareness and product knowledge levels will have greater expectations of the product. The study found that expectation can have a significant positive impact on purchase intention (Zafar et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Consumers will have expectations before shopping, and not all products can meet consumer expectations. After consumers have a full understanding of the products and still have expectation for the products, that will greatly promote consumers to have purchase intention. Therefore, in this study, expectation can significantly and positively affect the purchase intention of complementary foods for infants and young children, which is consistent with the conclusions of the previous study. The effect of expectation partially mediates food safety and purchase intention, as well as product knowledge and purchase intention, so this paper highlights the importance of expectation.

So, in order to enhance consumers' purchase intention of complementary foods, consumers must have high level of food safety and product knowledge to distinguish whether the commercial complementary foods on the market are suitable for the growth of infants and young children. And to encourage consumers to purchase more product, manufacturers should produce complementary foods in strict accordance with the national standards for complementary foods for infants and young children, and publicize the diversity and comprehensiveness of complementary foods on the market. At the same time, government departments should gradually improve the product standards of complementary foods on the market, intensify supervision over manufacturer in strict accordance with complementary foods, so that more consumers can be familiar with the standards that complementary foods should be implemented, so they will purchase the healthy and convenient complementary foods correctly.

# Limitations and Further Research

The study has three limitations. First, the study sample includes young parents born after 1999, as well as elderly parents or grandparents born before 1979. People with different age have very different thought. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies can research consumers in different ages for cross-comparison.Second, this study only explores the underlying factors influencing the purchase intention of Chinese consumers in complementary foods. So we suggests that future research can study consumers in other countries for cross-comparison. Third, this study only included expectation as a mediating variable, and future studies could consider the impact of other marketing variables, such as promotion and distribution channels, or demographic characteristics, such as gender, education level, and income.

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