

Women's Consumer Behaviour towards Organic Personal Care Products

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ABSTRACT

The growing awareness of health, environmental sustainability, and the harmful effects of synthetic chemicals has led to a significant shift in consumer preferences towards organic personal care products. This study explores the consumer behaviour of women regarding the purchase and use of organic personal care items, with a focus on factors influencing their buying decisions. The research aims to identify key motivators such as health consciousness, environmental concern, brand trust, product availability, and social influence. A structured questionnaire was administered to women across various demographic groups to gather data on their attitudes, preferences, and purchasing patterns. The findings indicate that women are increasingly inclined to choose organic products due to their perceived safety, eco-friendliness, and natural ingredients. However, challenges such as high prices and limited awareness still hinder wider adoption. This study provides valuable insights for marketers and manufacturers to better understand female consumer behaviour in the organic personal care segment and to tailor their strategies accordingly.

Keywords: Organic personal care, consumer behaviour, natural ingredients, perceived safety, post-purchase satisfaction.

1.1 Introduction

The increasing global awareness of health, sustainability, and environmental concerns has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in the personal care sector. As people become more conscious of the potential risks associated with synthetic chemicals in conventional products, there is a growing preference for safer and eco-friendly alternatives (Kaur & Bhatia, n.d.). This shift has led to a rising demand for organic personal care products, which are formulated with natural ingredients and free from harmful chemicals. In India, this trend is particularly evident among women, who are the primary consumers in the personal care industry. Women are increasingly opting for organic personal care products due to their perceived safety, natural composition, and environmentally friendly attributes. Unlike conventional products, which often contain artificial preservatives and harsh chemicals, organic alternatives are made from plant-based and naturally derived ingredients, making them a preferred choice for health-conscious consumers (Donata Tania Vergura et al., 2020).

However, despite the growing interest in organic personal care products, various factors influence women's purchasing decisions (Khan et al., 2024; Shaaban & Alhajri, 2020). Key determinants include price, brand reputation, product ingredients, and perceived health benefits. Additionally, factors such as product availability and trust in brand claims play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences. Understanding these influences is essential for businesses and policymakers to enhance consumer

adoption, address potential barriers, and promote market growth. By analyzing women's purchasing behavior and decision-making processes, businesses can develop more effective marketing strategies and improve product accessibility (Minakshi Sharma et al., 2021). Similarly, policymakers can implement initiatives to raise awareness and ensure the credibility of organic personal care products (Ghazali et al., 2017). As the demand for sustainable and health-conscious options continues to grow, a deeper understanding of consumer behavior will be instrumental in shaping the future of the organic personal care market.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study aims to examine the purchasing behavior and decision-making process of women in India regarding organic personal care products. It seeks to identify key factors influencing their choices, such as product ingredients, pricing, brand reputation, and perceived health and environmental benefits. The research will explore pre- and post-purchase behavior to assess satisfaction levels and brand loyalty. Additionally, it will analyze demographic influences, including age and urban versus semi-urban residency, to understand variations in consumer preferences. Barriers to adoption, such as cost, availability, and lack of awareness, will also be investigated. Furthermore, the study will evaluate the impact of information sources, including advertisements, social media, and word-of-mouth, on consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.

1.3 Research Methods

This study investigates women's attitudes, preferences, and purchasing behavior regarding organic personal care products using a mixed-methods approach. Structured questionnaires were administered to women in Erode District, targeting those aged 18 to 50 years. A stratified random sampling technique ensured proportional representation based on location (urban/semi-urban) and age groups (18-30, 31-40, 41-50). Eligibility criteria required participants to have resided in the district for at least one year and be familiar with both organic and conventional personal care products. The final sample included 436 respondents, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the target population. For the purpose of statistical analysis using SPSS and AMOS Path analysis.

1.4 Theory of Planned Behaviour Model

The Theory of Planned Behavior is a widely recognized framework used to understand and predict human behavior. It proposes that behavioral intention, the best predictor of actual behavior, is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). These three constructs shape an individual's decision-making process and subsequent actions. The theory has been applied in various contexts, including food choice, pro-environmental behaviors, and health behaviors. Studies have found these constructs to be significant predictors of behavioral intention, and consumer purchase behavior towards green electronic products (Madahi & Sukati, 2016). The model is evaluated through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, assessing path coefficients, significance levels, and model fit indicators to gain insights into the relationships between these key factors (David & Rundle-Thiele, 2018; Rukhsar et al., 2024).

1.4.1 Hypothesis Development

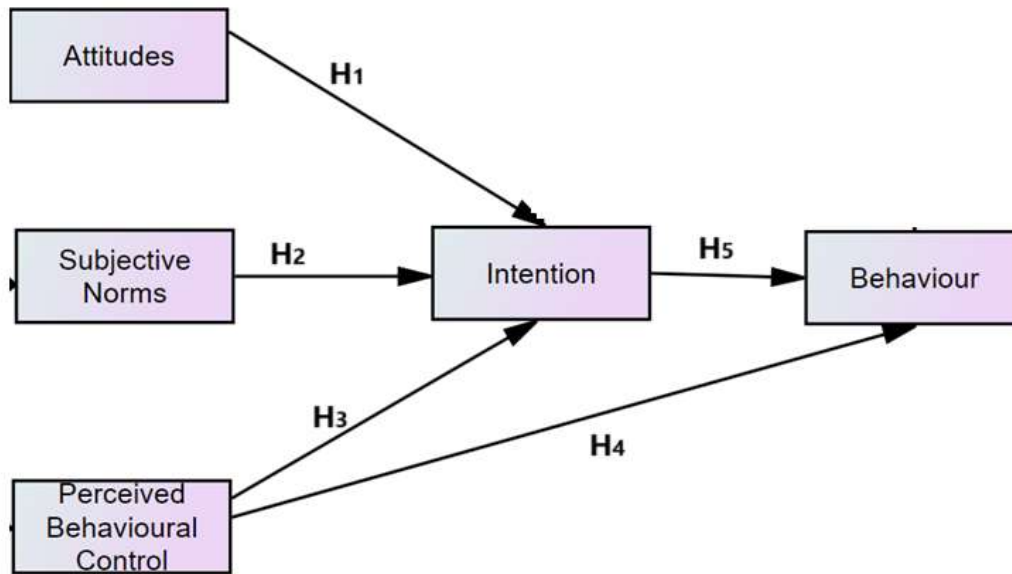


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour – Measurement Model

When women perceive these products as safe, effective, and environmentally friendly, they are more likely to use them regularly. Positive attitudes driven by health awareness, sustainability concerns, and trust in natural ingredients enhance the likelihood of purchase (Ghazali et al., 2017). Marketing efforts reinforcing these positive perceptions can further strengthen consumer intent. However, other factors may moderate the relationship between attitudes and purchasing behaviour (Lupindo et al., 2024). Price sensitivity, product availability, and brand trust can act as barriers despite a positive attitude. For instance, a woman may prefer organic products but refrain from buying them due to high costs or limited accessibility. Skepticism about product claims, such as false labeling or greenwashing, can also weaken the impact of positive attitudes on actual buying decisions. While attitudes play a role, they are not the sole determinant of purchasing intention (Donata Tania Vergura et al., 2020). Social influence, habitual purchasing behavior, and promotional strategies may also impact consumer decisions. Thus, a combination of external factors ultimately shapes purchasing behavior.

H1 : Women's Attitude has a positive significant impact on intention to buy organic personal care products

The idea that social influences significantly impact women's intentions to buy organic personal care products suggests that opinions from family, friends, and social media play a vital role in purchasing decisions. When important people in a woman's life support these products, it builds trust and encourages her to buy in line with social norms. Positive reviews and increased awareness about sustainability can further strengthen this influence, making women more likely to purchase organic products. However, social pressure may not always be strong enough to drive purchase intentions (Kaur & Bhatia, n.d.). If women do not personally value organic products or find them expensive and less effective than regular options, social pressure alone may not be enough to change their behavior. Conflicting opinions from family or lack of awareness in certain communities can also reduce the impact of social influences on purchasing decisions. While social influences can impact purchase intentions, they are just one of many factors. Personal preferences, money concerns, brand reputation, and product

availability also shape consumer behaviour (Minakshi Sharma et al., 2021). Social influences are important, but they work together with other influences to determine what people buy.

H2 : Subjective norms have a positive significant impact on women's intention to buy organic personal care products

The idea that women's belief in their ability to buy organic personal care products can positively impact their intention to buy these products suggests that when women feel they have the money and access to buy these products, they are more likely to do so (Minakshi Sharma et al., 2021). Factors like financial capability, product availability, and ease of access shape this belief. If women think they can easily find and afford organic personal care products, they are more likely to buy them. Additionally, confidence in their knowledge about organic products and their benefits can also strengthen their belief, further increasing their intention to buy. However, even with positive beliefs, there may be barriers that limit actual purchases. High prices, lack of availability in local stores, and uncertainty about product authenticity can weaken the impact of this belief. Even if women want to buy organic personal care products, a lack of money or difficulty accessing them may prevent them from doing so. Additionally, confusion over misleading labels and greenwashing may make consumers hesitant despite their belief in their ability to buy. Also, Other factors, such as attitudes, social influences, marketing strategies, and personal preferences, also play a role in shaping purchasing behavior. So, a woman's belief in her ability to buy organic products matters, but it interacts with other influences to determine actual purchase decisions.

H3 : Perceived behavioural control has a positive significant impact on women's intention to buy organic personal care products

The hypothesis that perceived behavioral control has a positive significant impact on women's purchasing behavior of organic personal care products suggests that (Kian & Chia, 2021; Kim & Chung, 2011; Thamaraiselvi G et al., 2020) when women feel they have the ability and resources to purchase these products, their buying behavior increases. Factors such as financial capability, product availability, and ease of access influence this perception (Ghazali et al., 2017). If women believe they can easily find and afford organic personal care products, they are more likely to make a purchase. Additionally, confidence in their knowledge about organic products and their benefits can enhance perceived behavioral control, further strengthening their purchasing behavior.

H4 : Perceived behavioural control has a positive significant impact on women's purchasing behaviour of organic personal care products

The hypothesis that women's intention has a positive significant impact on their purchasing behavior of organic personal care products suggests that when women form a strong intention to buy these products, they are more likely to follow through and make actual purchases (Kian & Chia, 2021; Kim & Chung, 2011). A woman's intention reflects her readiness and commitment to engage in the purchasing behavior, which can serve as a key driver of her eventual actions. If a woman intends to buy organic personal care products, she is more likely to seek out these products, allocate the necessary resources, and overcome any barriers that may arise, ultimately leading to the desired purchasing behavior. This intention-behavior link is a crucial component in understanding and predicting consumer behavior in the organic personal care market.

H5 : Women's Intention has a positive significant impact on purchasing behaviour of organic personal care products

1.5 Result and Discussion

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Attitudes | 436 | 17.2913 | 4.89429 | -.348 | -.650 |
| Subjective norms | 436 | 17.7018 | 5.19311 | -.975 | .464 |
| Perceived behaviour Control | 436 | 17.7752 | 5.28845 | -.934 | .215 |
| Intention | 436 | 17.3945 | 4.94757 | -.764 | .119 |
| Purchasing Behaviour | 436 | 17.0229 | 4.71480 | .103 | -1.175 |

Source: Computed

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 provide an overview of the key characteristics of the study variables, including sample size, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. The sample size (N) for all variables is 436, indicating consistency in the number of responses across the measures. The attitudes variable has a mean of 17.29 and a standard deviation of 4.89, suggesting moderate agreement with attitude-related statements. The slightly negative skewness value of -0.348 indicates that the responses are slightly concentrated on the higher end, and the kurtosis value of -0.650 suggests a distribution that is somewhat flatter than normal.

Subjective norms have a mean of 17.70 and a standard deviation of 5.19, with a skewness of -0.975, indicating a stronger leftward skew. The kurtosis value of 0.464 suggests a near-normal distribution, but it is slightly more peaked. Perceived Behavioral Control has a mean of 17.78 and a standard deviation of 5.29. The skewness of -0.934 shows a moderate leftward skew, while the kurtosis value of 0.215 suggests a shape close to a normal distribution. Intention has a mean of 17.39 and a standard deviation of 4.95. The skewness of -0.764 suggests a moderate leftward skew, and the kurtosis of 0.119 indicates a near-normal distribution. Finally, Purchasing Behavior has a mean of 17.02 and a standard deviation of 4.71. The skewness value of 0.103 is close to 0, suggesting an almost symmetric distribution. The kurtosis value of -1.175 suggests a flatter distribution compared to the normal distribution.

Table 2: Regression Weights – Fitted Path Analysis

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Sign. |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------------|----------|------|--------|------|-------------------|
| Intention | <--- | Attitudes | .202 | .028 | 7.273 | *** | Significant at 1% |
| Intention | <--- | Perceived Behavioural Control | .642 | .052 | 12.387 | *** | Significant at 1% |
| Intention | <--- | Subjective Norms | .073 | .054 | 1.360 | .174 | Not Significant |
| Purchasing Behaviour | <--- | Perceived Behavioural Control | .001 | .071 | .017 | .986 | Not Significant |
| Purchasing | <--- | Intention | .549 | .076 | 7.251 | *** | Significant at 1% |

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Sign. |
|-----------|--|--|----------|------|------|---|-------|
| Behaviour | | | | | | | Level |

Source: Primary Data

The regression analysis results highlight the relationships between key constructs in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model. Attitudes have a positive and significant effect on intention ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals with favorable perceptions toward a product or behavior are more likely to develop an intention to purchase. Among all predictors, Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) has the strongest influence on intention ($\beta = 0.642$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that when individuals feel confident in their ability to make a purchase, their intention to buy becomes significantly stronger.

However, Subjective Norms do not show a significant effect on intention ($\beta = 0.073$, $p = 0.174$), implying that social influences, such as peer pressure or family opinions, do not play a crucial role in shaping purchase intention in this case. When examining the impact on actual Purchasing Behavior, Intention has a strong and significant effect ($\beta = 0.549$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that individuals with a strong intention to purchase are more likely to follow through with their actions. On the other hand, PBC does not significantly influence purchasing behavior directly ($\beta = 0.001$, $p = 0.986$), suggesting that while perceived control is important for forming an intention, it does not necessarily translate into actual purchasing behavior.

The findings reinforce the importance of attitudes and perceived control in shaping purchase intentions, while also demonstrating that intention remains the key driver of actual purchasing behavior. However, the lack of significance for subjective norms and the direct effect of PBC on purchasing behavior suggests that external social influences and perceived control over purchasing may not always directly lead to action.

1.5.1 Path Analysis

The regression path analysis evaluates the relationships between various psychological and behavioral factors that influence consumers' intention to buy and actual purchasing behavior of organic personal care products. The study examines five key hypotheses (H1 to H5) based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The findings indicate which factors significantly impact consumer decision-making and which do not, providing valuable insights for marketers and policymakers in the organic personal care industry.

Impact of Attitudes on Intention to Buy (H1)

The analysis shows that attitudes have a significant positive impact on the intention to buy organic personal care products, with an estimate of 0.202 and a highly significant p-value (***) at 1%. This confirms that consumers with favorable attitudes towards organic personal care products are more likely to intend to purchase them. Attitudes towards organic products are often shaped by perceived benefits such as being environmentally friendly, free from harmful chemicals, and beneficial for skin health. The significant impact of attitudes suggests that brands should focus on strengthening positive perceptions through education, marketing campaigns, and transparency in product ingredients.

Impact of Subjective Norms on Intention to Buy (H2)

Contrary to expectations, subjective norms do not have a significant impact on the intention to buy organic personal care products (estimate = 0.073, $p = 0.174$). This means that social influences, such as recommendations from family, friends, or influencers, do not strongly determine a consumer's intention to purchase these products. One possible explanation for this is that personal care product choices are highly individualistic and based on personal needs rather than social pressures. Unlike fashion or technology products, where peer influence plays a larger role, organic personal care purchases may be driven more by personal experiences and product benefits.

Impact of Perceived Behavioral Control on Intention to Buy (H3)

The study finds that perceived behavioral control (PBC) has a significant positive impact on intention to buy (estimate = 0.642, p -value *** at 1%). PBC refers to the extent to which consumers feel they have control over purchasing organic products, including factors such as affordability, availability, and ease of access. The strong significance of this variable suggests that when consumers feel that organic products are accessible and within their control, they are more likely to develop an intention to buy. This highlights the importance of ensuring product availability in mainstream retail stores, competitive pricing, and convenient purchasing options to encourage consumer interest.

Impact of Perceived Behavioral Control on Purchasing Behavior (H4)

Interestingly, perceived behavioral control does not have a significant impact on actual purchasing behavior (estimate = 0.001, $p = 0.986$). While consumers who believe they have control over purchasing organic products may intend to buy them, this does not necessarily translate into actual purchases. This gap could be due to external barriers such as higher costs, lack of immediate necessity, or competing non-organic alternatives that offer better convenience or perceived effectiveness. This suggests that while making organic products accessible is important, it is not the sole determinant of actual purchases. Brands may need to provide incentives, discounts, or enhanced product effectiveness to drive actual purchases.

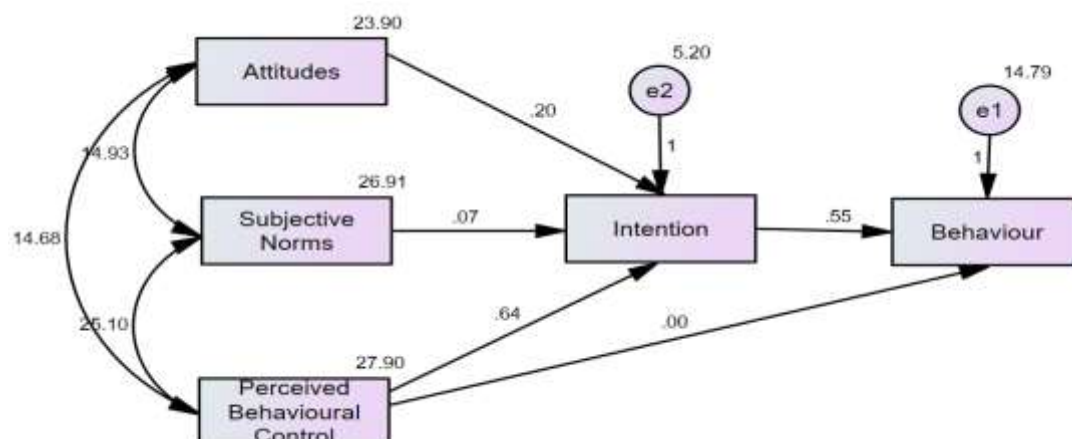


Figure 2: Consumer Behaviour Model: Fitted Path Analysis

Impact of Intention on Purchasing Behavior (H5)

The findings confirm that intention has a significant positive impact on purchasing behavior (estimate = 0.549, p -value *** at 1%). This indicates that consumers who express a strong intention to buy organic

personal care products are much more likely to follow through with their purchase. This aligns with the TPB framework, where intention acts as the strongest predictor of actual behavior. However, given the gap observed in the effect of PBC on purchasing behavior, it is clear that while intention plays a crucial role, additional motivators such as promotions, product trials, and trust-building measures are necessary to bridge the gap between intent and action.

Table 4: Covariances: Consumer Behaviour Model: Path Analysis

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------------------------|
| Attitudes | <--> | Perceived Behavioural Control | 14.680 | 1.424 | 10.307 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |
| Attitudes | <--> | Subjective Norms | 14.931 | 1.411 | 10.582 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | <--> | Subjective Norms | 25.098 | 1.782 | 14.088 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |

Source: Primary Data

The study findings indicate the strength and significance of connections between the key elements in the Theory of Planned Behavior model. The data shows that people's attitudes and perceived control over a behavior are closely linked (Estimate = 14.680, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that those with strong personal views on a behavior also tend to feel more in control of doing it. Similarly, attitudes and social norms have a significant positive relationship (Estimate = 14.931, $p < 0.001$), meaning that individuals who perceive social support for a behavior are more likely to develop positive attitudes about it. Furthermore, the strongest link is between perceived control and social norms (Estimate = 25.098, $p < 0.001$), highlighting that people who feel in control of their ability to perform a behavior are also heavily influenced by social expectations. This suggests that external factors, like peer and societal pressures, can shape both an individual's confidence and their overall sense of control. The results demonstrate that these psychological factors are interconnected and collectively shape behavioral intentions and actions. The significant relationships reinforce the integrated nature of attitudes, perceived control, and social influences in decision-making processes.

Table 5: Variances: Path Analysis

| | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------------------------|
| Attitudes | 23.899 | 1.621 | 14.748 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | 27.904 | 1.892 | 14.748 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |
| Subjective Norms | 26.907 | 1.824 | 14.748 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |
| e2 | 5.204 | .353 | 14.748 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |

| | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|----|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------------------------|
| e1 | 14.794 | 1.003 | 14.748 | *** | Significant at 1% Level |

The variance analysis results indicate the degree of variability within each construct in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model. The significant variances suggest that each construct exhibits a meaningful level of variability, highlighting differences in individual perceptions and responses. Attitudes, Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Subjective Norms all show significant variance at the 1% level, with estimates of 23.899, 27.904, and 26.907, respectively. This indicates that participants' attitudes, their perceived ability to control their behavior, and the influence of social norms vary significantly across individuals. Among these, PBC has the highest variance, suggesting that individuals perceive different levels of control over their ability to engage in the behavior being studied (Shafira & Mayangsari, 2020).

Additionally, the error variances ($e1 = 14.794$, $e2 = 5.204$) are also significant, indicating the presence of unexplained variance in the model. These values represent the residual error, meaning that while the model explains a substantial portion of the variance in these constructs, there are still external factors influencing individual responses.

1.6 Conclusion

The study provides valuable insights into women's purchasing behavior towards organic personal care products applying the model of Theory of Planned Behavior, using Path Analysis. The findings indicate that attitudes and perceived behavioral control significantly influence purchase intention. Women who view organic products positively and feel confident in their ability to purchase them are more likely to intend to buy. However, subjective norms do not significantly impact purchase intention, suggesting that external social pressure may not strongly influence consumer choices in this category. Purchase intention strongly influences actual purchasing behavior, confirming that a strong intention leads to action. While perceived behavioral control plays a crucial role in shaping intention, it does not directly lead to purchasing behavior, indicating that external barriers such as price, availability, and skepticism about product claims may hinder actual purchases.

These findings have important implications. Brands should focus on enhancing consumer awareness, reinforcing positive attitudes, and improving accessibility and affordability to bridge the gap between intention and action. They should also build trust through transparency in ingredient sourcing, certifications, and marketing strategies. Overall, the study reinforces that women's purchase decisions for organic personal care products are primarily influenced by personal attitudes and perceived control rather than social pressure. This emphasizes the need for targeted marketing strategies that highlight product benefits and improve accessibility.

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