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Examining the Influence of antecedents of decision influencers on buying behavior of green personal care products

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Abstract: ***This study explores the key drivers influencing consumer buying behavior in the context of green personal care products. The research examines how factors such as value orientation, accessibility, environmental sensitivity, brand image, wellness considerations, and peer influence shape purchasing decisions. The study employs a structured questionnaire administered to a diverse sample of consumers to assess the significance of these factors in their decision-making processes. Results indicate that while environmental sensitivity and wellness are strong determinants of purchasing behavior, brand image and peer influence also play crucial roles in shaping consumer preferences. Using a descriptive and causal research design, the study covers 6 districts in the Haryana regions randomly selected from six revenue divisions, each serving as a separate stratum in a stratified sampling approach. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed, with 50 per district, resulting in 410 valid responses. The findings offer valuable insights for marketers and organizations aiming to promote sustainable products, emphasizing the need to align product offerings with the values and concerns of environmentally conscious consumers.***

Keywords: ***Green Personal Care Products, Consumer Buying Behavior, Value Orientation, Accessibility, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image, Wellness and Security, Peer Influence etc.***

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing awareness of environmental and health issues has shifted consumer behavior, with a growing preference for sustainable and safe products, particularly in the personal care industry. This shift is driven by the recognition of the ecological impact of daily choices, as well as the desire for safer, non-toxic alternatives to conventional products (Joshi & Rahman, 2022). Studies indicate that today's consumers consider various factors when choosing eco-friendly products, including personal values, ease of access, brand trust, health benefits, and social influences. For instance, D'Souza et al. (2020) found that value orientation and perceived product safety significantly influence purchasing decisions, especially in sectors where consumers are sensitive to health risks associated with synthetic ingredients. Green concern and ease of access are crucial as consumers weigh the benefits of green products against the costs and convenience of purchasing them. Young et al. (2010) report that consumers are more likely to adopt green products that offer good value for money and are conveniently accessible through online or offline channels. Meanwhile, environmental sensitivity is another key factor driving green purchasing behavior. Rahman and Reynolds (2019) show that eco-conscious consumers actively prefer brands that prioritize sustainability and minimize

environmental impact. Additionally, brand image and trustworthiness play an essential role in green product adoption, with consumers becoming increasingly wary of "greenwashing." Studies by Sparks and Lang (2021) highlight that consumers are more likely to trust and support brands that demonstrate transparency and accountability in their green practices. Health and wellness concerns further bolster the preference for eco-friendly personal care products, as consumers seek options that align with personal safety and well-being (Moon et al., 2020). Finally, social influence through social networks and word of mouth has been shown to significantly shape green consumer behavior. Choi and Johnson (2021) suggest that recommendations from friends, family, and influencers validate green choices and help build trust in product efficacy and sustainability claims. In sum, these elements – value orientation, ease of access, environmental sensitivity, brand trust, health considerations, and social influence – collectively shape consumer preferences and the increasing inclination toward green personal care products. Understanding these motivations provides essential insights for brands aiming to meet the demands of eco-conscious consumers and foster sustainable purchasing behavior.

Understanding how these factors influence buying behavior is essential for businesses aiming to meet evolving consumer demands and for policymakers focused on promoting sustainable practices. By exploring the roles of value for money, accessibility, ecological consciousness, brand trust, health safety, and social dynamics, this study sheds light on the underlying motivations driving green purchasing behavior. It also offers valuable insights into strategies for encouraging more sustainable choices among consumers.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Value Orientation

Value orientation, often linked to price consciousness, reflects consumers' concern for receiving value for their money. This predictor signifies consumers' tendency to evaluate products based on the perceived benefits relative to cost. In the context of green personal care products, value-oriented consumers are more likely to purchase eco-friendly items if they perceive them to offer superior value in terms of quality, longevity, or personal health benefits (Gleim et al., 2013). Price considerations remain a significant barrier for some consumers, particularly in green markets where products are often priced higher than conventional alternatives (D'Souza et al., 2020). Therefore, brands that communicate the long-term cost savings or enhanced benefits of their green products may better appeal to value-oriented consumers.

2.2 Ease of Access

Ease of access, or product availability and convenience, is another crucial factor influencing consumer buying behavior. For consumers to choose green products, they must be easily accessible through various distribution channels, including both physical stores and online platforms. Research indicates that the accessibility of green products can significantly impact consumer decisions, as individuals are less likely to make additional efforts to locate products that aren't readily available (Young et al., 2010). A study by Roy et al. (2022) further emphasizes that convenience is a key driver in purchasing decisions, particularly for consumers who are already environmentally conscious but face accessibility barriers. Therefore, ensuring that green personal care products are widely available and easy to purchase can play an instrumental role in increasing consumer adoption.

2.3 Environmental Sensitivity

Environmental sensitivity, or ecological awareness, represents a consumer's concern for the impact of their purchases on the environment. Studies have shown that environmentally conscious consumers are more inclined to support brands that align with their values by offering sustainable products (Khare & Mukherjee, 2021). Environmental sensitivity often correlates with higher willingness to pay for eco-friendly products, as these consumers prioritize reducing their ecological footprint (Rahman & Reynolds, 2019). Research suggests that for green personal care products, such environmentally sensitive consumers evaluate

product ingredients, packaging, and company practices to ensure that they are in line with sustainable principles (Joshi & Rahman, 2022).

2.4 Brand Image and Trustworthiness

Brand image and trustworthiness refer to consumers' perception of a brand's reliability, integrity, and reputation. In the context of green products, brand trust is critical due to the prevalence of "greenwashing," where brands exaggerate their environmental claims to appeal to eco-conscious consumers. Building trust in green products requires brands to demonstrate transparency, consistency, and authenticity in their environmental practices (Sparks & Lang, 2021). Research indicates that consumers are more likely to purchase from brands they trust, especially in the personal care industry, where product ingredients directly impact personal health (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2021). Brands that foster trust and a positive image are better positioned to capture the attention and loyalty of environmentally conscious consumers (Zheng et al., 2023).

2.5 Wellness and Security

Wellness and security, encompassing health and safety concerns, are increasingly significant in shaping consumer choices in personal care. With rising awareness of potentially harmful chemicals in traditional products, consumers are looking for safer, non-toxic alternatives (Moon et al., 2020). This health-conscious approach is particularly influential in the adoption of green personal care products, as consumers prioritize their well-being and seek assurance in product safety (Sarkar & Searcy, 2023). Brands that emphasize the health benefits of their green products, such as chemical-free and hypoallergenic formulations, resonate strongly with this segment, as it aligns with their priority for safe and wellness-oriented products.

2.6 Peer Influence

Social influence, or peer influence, plays a vital role in shaping consumer preferences, particularly in the era of social media. Studies have found that consumers often rely on recommendations from friends, family, or online influencers when making purchasing decisions (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2021). In the green product market, peer influence is especially potent, as endorsements and positive reviews can reinforce trust in a brand's environmental claims. Social influence also helps mitigate concerns about greenwashing, as recommendations from trusted peers offer a form of verification (Choi & Johnson, 2021). For green personal care products, social validation through peer influence significantly impacts consumer awareness, trust, and purchase decisions, as individuals look to others for guidance on eco-friendly options (Zheng et al., 2023).

III. Research Methodology

This study presents a comprehensive approach to examining the impact of decision influencers on buying behavior of green personal care products. Using a descriptive and causal research design, the study covers 6 districts in the Haryana regions randomly selected from six revenue divisions, each serving as a separate stratum in a stratified sampling approach. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed, with 50 per district, resulting in 410 valid responses. Data collection involved reaching out to participants at their physical locations to gather sufficient responses from each district. The main data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, capturing key variables related to decision-making influences and buying behavior.

IV. Analysis and Findings

This section presents the results of the analysis conducted to examine the impact of decision influencers on the buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products. The analysis uses two main methods: Multiple Regression and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), both of which provide valuable insights into the relationships between the predictors and the dependent variable. The first part of this section details the regression analysis, including the model summary, ANOVA results, and the coefficients that highlight the significance and strength of each decision influencer. The second part explores the SEM results, including the fit indices, to assess the model's overall goodness of fit and the relationships between the decision influencers and buying behavior.

4.1 Multiple regressions to analyze the impact of decision influencers on buying behavior

The results from the multiple regression analysis provide a detailed understanding of how various decision influencers—such as Value Orientation, Ease of Access, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image, Wellness and Security, and Peer Influence—affect consumer buying behavior. The model summary and ANOVA results offer insight into the statistical significance and the explanatory power of the model. Additionally, the coefficients table reveals the specific impact of each predictor variable on the dependent variable, Buying Behavior.

Table 1: Model Summary of Regression Analysis for Decision Influencers on Buying Behavior

Model Summary[b]										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.565	.319	.302	.57000	.310	36.179	6	473	.000	1.416
a. Predictors: (Constant), Value Orientation, Ease of Access, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image, Wellness and Security, Peer Influence										
b. Dependent Variable: Buying Behavior										

The results from the regression analysis provide valuable insights into how various decision influencers—specifically Value Orientation, Ease of Access, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image and Trustworthiness, Wellness and Security, and Peer Influence—affect consumer buying behavior. The Model Summary indicates a moderate positive correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable, Buying Behavior, with an R value of 0.565. This suggests a reasonable relationship between the decision influencers and buying behavior. The R Square value of 0.319 shows that approximately 31.9% of the variation in buying behavior can be explained by the model, which means that these decision influencers account for a significant portion of the variability in consumer purchasing decisions. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.302 further refines this estimate, correcting for the number of predictors in the model and sample size, indicating that about 30.2% of the variation is explained when considering these adjustments. The standard error of the estimate is 0.57000, which reflects the average deviation between the predicted and actual values, giving an idea of the model's accuracy.

Table 2: ANOVA for Regression Analysis on Buying Behavior

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.040	6	12.407	37.279	.000[b]
	Residual	158.115	473	.326		
	Total	233.155	479			
a. Dependent Variable: Buying Behavior						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Value Orientation, Ease of Access, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image, Wellness and Security, Peer Influence						

Furthermore, the statistical significance of the model is confirmed by the F Change of 36.179 with a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that the predictors significantly improve the model's ability to explain consumer buying behavior, suggesting that the factors examined in the study have a meaningful impact. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.416 suggests that there is minimal autocorrelation in the residuals, which is acceptable for this analysis. The ANOVA results provide additional support for the regression model's significance. The Regression Sum of Squares of 76.040 and Mean Square of 12.407, coupled with the high F-value of 37.279 ($p < 0.001$), further confirm that the combination of the decision influencers significantly explains the variance in buying behavior. Together, these findings suggest that the model effectively captures the key factors driving

consumer purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of these influencers in shaping buying behavior, particularly in the context of green or sustainable consumer choices.

Table 3: Coefficients of Regression Analysis for Buying Behavior

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.108	.207		5.708	.000
	Value Orientation	.047	.021	.092	2.348	.015
	Ease of Access	.089	.021	.173	4.169	.001
	Environmental Sensitivity	.097	.022	.167	4.859	.003
	Brand Image	.186	.025	.293	7.587	.005
	Wellness and Security,	.038	.020	.077	1.487	.047
	Peer Influence	.267	.033	.313	8.857	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Buying Behavior						

The regression coefficients table provides detailed analysis of the relationship between each predictor (Value Orientation, Ease of Access, Environmental Sensitivity, Brand Image and Trustworthiness, Wellness and Security, and Peer Influence) and the dependent variable, Buying Behavior. The unstandardized coefficients (B) show the amount of change in buying behavior for each unit change in the predictor variable, while the standardized coefficients (Beta) help in comparing the relative strength of each predictor's effect on buying behavior.

a) Value Orientation:

H01: Value orientation has no significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

H1: Value orientation has a significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

The regression coefficient for Value Orientation is 0.047 (unstandardized) and 0.092 (standardized), with a t-statistic of 2.348 and a p-value of 0.015. This p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that Value Orientation has a statistically significant positive impact on the buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products. The positive coefficient suggests that as women place greater importance on values such as sustainability and eco-friendliness, their likelihood of purchasing green personal care products increases. Consequently, H1 (Value orientation significantly impacts buying behavior) is supported, while the null hypothesis H01 (Value orientation has no significant impact) is rejected.

b) H02: Ease of access has no significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

H2: Ease of access has a significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

For Ease of Access, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.089, and the standardized coefficient is 0.173. The t-statistic of 4.169 and p-value of 0.001 indicate a significant positive relationship between Ease of Access and buying behavior. A higher

ease of access, meaning that green personal care products are readily available or accessible to consumers, enhances the likelihood of purchase. This finding suggests that making eco-friendly products more accessible is crucial for encouraging consumer adoption. Therefore, H2 (Ease of access significantly impacts buying behavior) is accepted, while H02 (Ease of access has no significant impact) is rejected.

c) H03: Environmental Sensitivity has no significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

H3: Environmental Sensitivity has a significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

The coefficient for Environmental Sensitivity is 0.097 (unstandardized) and 0.167 (standardized), with a t-statistic of 4.859 and a p-value of 0.003. This indicates that Environmental Sensitivity significantly influences the buying behavior of women customers. Women who are more environmentally conscious are more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing decisions, such as buying green personal care products. As the coefficient is positive, this suggests that a higher degree of environmental sensitivity results in increased purchases of eco-friendly products. As such, H3 (Environmental Sensitivity significantly impacts buying behavior) is accepted, and H03 (Environmental Sensitivity has no significant impact) is rejected.

d) H04: Brand Image has no significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

H4: Brand Image has a significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

The unstandardized coefficient for Brand Image is 0.186, with a standardized coefficient of 0.293, a t-statistic of 7.587, and a p-value of 0.005. The significant p-value indicates that Brand Image significantly influences women's buying behavior for green personal care products. A positive brand image, where consumers perceive the brand as trustworthy and aligned with their values, increases the likelihood of purchasing green products. This emphasizes the importance of building a strong, eco-friendly brand reputation to attract environmentally conscious consumers. Therefore, H4 (Brand Image significantly impacts buying behavior) is accepted, and H04 (Brand Image has no significant impact) is rejected.

e) H05: Peer Influence has no significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

H5: Peer Influence has a significant impact on buying behavior of women customers for green personal care products

The coefficient for Peer Influence is 0.267 (unstandardized) and 0.313 (standardized), with a t-statistic of 8.857 and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that Peer Influence has a significant positive impact on buying behavior. Women are more likely to purchase green personal care products if they are influenced by their peers or social groups who advocate for sustainability. This reflects the importance of social influence in consumer decision-making. As the p-value is well below 0.05, H5 (Peer Influence significantly impacts buying behavior) is accepted, and H05 (Peer Influence has no significant impact) is rejected.

4.2 SEM to examine the relationship between decision influencers and buying behavior

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis further explores the relationships between decision influencers and buying behavior by testing the overall fit of the model. This section presents the model fit estimates, providing an evaluation of how well the model represents the data. Key fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) are reported to assess the model's accuracy and validity. These results help to

confirm the theoretical framework and offer deeper insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior in the context of green personal care products.

Figure 1: Output model for decision influencers on buying behavior

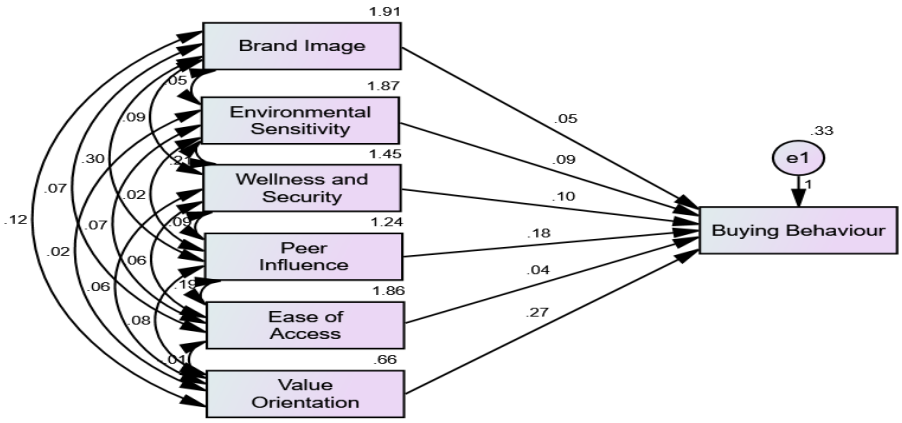

Table 4: Model fit estimates

Fit Index	Threshold Value	Model Values	Interpretation
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	CFI > 0.90	0.911	Good fit
CMIN/DF	CMIN/DF < 5	2.405	Good fit
RMR (Root Mean Square Residual)	RMR < 0.08	0.048	Acceptable fit
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	GFI ≥ 0.90	0.907	Good fit
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0.924	Good fit
PGFI (Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index)	PGFI > 0.50	0.478	Acceptable fit
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	NFI > 0.90	0.968	Good fit
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	RFI > 0.90	0.992	Good fit
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	IFI > 0.90	0.969	Good fit
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	TLI > 0.90	0.900	Good fit
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	RMSEA < 0.08	0.045	Good fit

The model fit estimates presented in Table 4 provide an evaluation of the goodness of fit for the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, which assesses the relationship between decision influencers and buying behavior. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.911 exceeds the threshold of 0.90, indicating a good fit of the model. Similarly, the CMIN/DF ratio of 2.405 is well below the threshold of 5, further supporting a good model fit. The Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) is 0.048, which is below the acceptable limit of 0.08, suggesting an adequate fit in terms of residuals. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) values are 0.907 and 0.924, respectively, both of which are above the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating a good fit of the model. While the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) falls slightly below the desired value of 0.50 at 0.478, this still represents an acceptable fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.968 and the Relative Fit Index (RFI) of 0.992 exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming the model's overall good fit. Additionally, the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) of 0.969, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.900, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.045 all indicate a good model fit, as they meet or surpass the criteria for a well-fitting model. These fit indices collectively suggest that the SEM model provides a reliable and adequate representation of the relationship between decision influencers and buying behavior.

V. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive consumer purchasing decisions regarding green personal care products. The research highlights the significant influence of environmental sensitivity, wellness considerations, and value orientation on consumer behavior. Additionally, brand image and peer influence were found to be key contributors, suggesting that consumers not only prioritize sustainability and health but are also influenced by the perceptions

and actions of their social networks. These findings underscore the importance for companies in the green personal care industry to develop products that align with the values of eco-conscious consumers, while also building strong brand identities and engaging in social marketing strategies that promote sustainability. In conclusion, as the demand for environmentally friendly products continues to grow, businesses must adopt a holistic approach that considers both personal and social factors in driving consumer loyalty and fostering long-term engagement with green products. Future research can explore the dynamics between these drivers in greater depth and assess how they evolve in different market segments or regions.

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