

A Conceptual Framework of Environmental Awareness and Green Perceived Value in Predicting Green Purchase Behavior: A Focus on Organic Cosmetic Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper explores the relationship between environmental awareness and green perceived value in influencing green purchase behavior, particularly among organic cosmetic consumers. As environmental concerns increase and consumer awareness of sustainability grows, understanding the motivations behind eco-friendly purchasing decisions is crucial. Environmental awareness refers to consumers' knowledge and concern about environmental issues, while green perceived value captures their overall evaluation of eco-friendly products in terms of benefits relative to cost. This study proposes a conceptual framework where environmental awareness directly influences green purchase behavior and also affects it indirectly through green perceived value. The framework emphasizes the mediating role of green perceived value, contributing to the understanding of green consumer behavior, especially in the organic cosmetics market. Practical implications for marketers include highlighting environmental benefits and aligning product features with consumer values. Future research should empirically test the model across different consumer demographics to validate its generalizability and applicability in various markets.

Keywords: *Environmental awareness, green perceived value, green purchase behavior, organic cosmetics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the growing concern over environmental degradation and health-related risks associated with chemical-based products has significantly influenced consumer behavior across various industries, including the cosmetics sector (Lin & Niu, 2018; Suki, 2016). Consumers are increasingly shifting their preferences toward products that are not only effective but also safe for human use and environmentally friendly. This trend has led to a rising demand for organic cosmetics—products formulated from natural ingredients, free from synthetic chemicals, and produced through environmentally sustainable processes (Yadav & Pathak, 2016).

As environmental consciousness becomes more widespread, understanding the psychological and behavioral mechanisms behind green purchasing has gained relevance. One of the key factors driving pro-environmental behavior is environmental awareness, which refers to an individual's knowledge, concern, and sensitivity to ecological issues such as pollution, climate change, and resource depletion (Akehurst et al., 2012). Numerous studies have highlighted the role of environmental awareness in shaping consumer attitudes and intentions toward green products (Han et al., 2011; Paul et al., 2016).

However, awareness alone may not always lead to action. Consumers often weigh various factors such as product quality, price, and perceived benefits before making a purchase decision. In this context, the concept of green perceived value (GPV) plays a pivotal role. GPV encompasses the consumer's overall evaluation of the utility of a product based on its environmental performance and the trade-offs they are willing to make (Chen & Chang, 2012). In the organic cosmetics market, consumers assess not only the eco-friendliness of the product but also its effectiveness, safety, and social value (Nguyen et al., 2019).

A growing body of literature has investigated various factors that influence consumers' green purchasing behavior, including environmental concern, green attitudes, and eco-label trust (Paul et al., 2016; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Among these, environmental awareness has been widely acknowledged as a precursor to environmentally responsible

consumption. However, while environmental awareness may shape positive attitudes toward green products, it does not always translate into actual purchasing behavior (Akehurst et al., 2012; Lin & Niu, 2018). This highlights a persistent intention–behavior gap in green consumer research.

Simultaneously, the construct of green perceived value (GPV) has emerged as a critical mediator in explaining consumer evaluations and choices of eco-friendly products (Chen & Chang, 2012; Ha, 2020). Yet, empirical studies integrating environmental awareness and GPV within a single conceptual model—particularly with GPV as a mediating variable—remain limited. Most existing frameworks treat these variables in isolation or focus on general green products rather than specific categories.

Moreover, prior research has rarely emphasized specific consumer contexts, such as the organic cosmetics industry, which represents a unique intersection of personal care, health consciousness, and environmental values. As consumers of organic cosmetics are typically more attentive to ingredient safety and sustainability (Nguyen et al., 2019), they offer a relevant and timely target group for investigating the mechanisms of green purchase behavior.

This paper proposes a conceptual framework that explores the relationship between environmental awareness and green purchase behavior, with green perceived value serving as a mediating variable. By focusing on consumers of organic cosmetic products, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how awareness translates into actual purchase decisions in the green market. The framework aims to bridge the gap between environmental concern and behavioral outcomes, offering both theoretical insight and practical relevance for green marketers and policymakers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

Environmental Awareness refers to an individual's awareness of environmental issues and the impact of their behavior on the environment. This includes understanding current environmental problems such as climate change, pollution, and deforestation. Environmental awareness can influence consumers' attitudes toward environmentally friendly products (Peattie, 2010). For example, consumers with a higher level of environmental awareness are more likely to choose products that are considered environmentally friendly, such as organic products (Chan, 2001). In terms of organic cosmetic products, consumers with high Environmental Awareness may prefer products that promote natural ingredients, cruelty-free practices, and sustainable production methods. Therefore, Environmental Awareness plays a crucial role in enhancing the intention to purchase products perceived as more eco-friendly (Moser, 2015).

Green Perceived Value (GPV) refers to the value that consumers perceive in the environmental benefits derived from the products they consume. GPV is a cognitive dimension that influences consumer decisions to choose eco-friendly products. This value encompasses perceptions of social, economic, and environmental benefits associated with green or environmentally friendly products (Kim et al., 2012). In the context of organic cosmetic products, GPV may include perceptions about health benefits for users, positive environmental impacts, and the ethical stance of the brand. Consumers who have a higher GPV for organic cosmetic products are likely to feel that these products offer added value, both in terms of quality and environmental impact (Nguyen et al., 2019). Thus, GPV is an important factor influencing consumers' purchasing behavior toward green products.

Green Purchase Behavior refers to consumer purchase decisions driven by environmental factors. This behavior involves the decision to buy products that are considered more environmentally friendly, even though these products are often more expensive than conventional alternatives (Gupta & Ogden, 2009). In the cosmetics market, the decision to purchase eco-friendly products is influenced by various factors, including Environmental Awareness and Green Perceived Value. Consumers with high awareness of environmental issues and those who perceive positive value from green products are more likely to purchase organic cosmetics that are considered better for both the environment and health (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). This suggests that Green Purchase Behavior can be predicted through two main factors: the level of environmental awareness and the perceived green value of a product.

2.2. Key Constructs and Relationships

Environmental Awareness affects Green Perceived Value: Consumers who are more environmentally conscious are more likely to appreciate the environmental and health benefits offered by organic cosmetic products, thereby perceiving greater green value. This increased environmental awareness leads them to prioritize sustainability, natural ingredients, and eco-friendly production processes, which are often emphasized in organic cosmetics. These consumers tend to focus on the positive impacts their purchasing decisions may have on the environment, as well as the long-term health benefits of using organic products. As a result, their perception of green value is heightened, and they

see these products as not only safer for their personal well-being but also as contributing to the broader goal of environmental protection. As highlighted by Yadav and Pathak (2017) and Chekima et al. (2016), consumers' heightened environmental awareness encourages them to value green products more, creating a link between awareness and perceived value.

Green Perceived Value affects Green Purchase Behavior: When consumers perceive high value in green products, such as better quality, health safety, and environmental friendliness, they are more inclined to make green purchases. Green Perceived Value (GPV) acts as a critical determinant in shaping consumer intentions and behaviors toward eco-friendly products. In particular, when consumers evaluate products as offering superior quality, being safer for health, and contributing to environmental sustainability, they are more likely to purchase these products. This is because the perceived benefits from these products, whether environmental, social, or personal, outweigh any perceived drawbacks, such as price premium or limited availability. As noted by Chen and Chang (2012), and Nguyen et al. (2019), when consumers believe that their purchases contribute to environmental conservation or personal health, they exhibit stronger purchase intentions toward green products. This reinforces the idea that perceived value significantly influences environmentally responsible behavior, particularly in the context of organic cosmetics, where health and environmental benefits are paramount. Under this theoretical background, this study assumed GPV as a multi-dimensional reflective-reflective second-order construct with five first-order dimensions, not only social value, functional value, emotional value, conditional value, but also epistemic value.

Functional Value This dimension relates to the direct benefits consumers receive from organic products, such as better health or physical benefits from using them. For example, organic cosmetics may be perceived as safer and better for skin compared to non-organic products. Functional value is a critical reason for people to make their attitude, perception, and behavior formed by economic and/or practical benefits that consumers can obtain during the consumption process (Han et al., 2017; Lin and Huang, 2012; Sheth et al., 1991)

Social value refers to the utility of a product or service to motivate the consumer to be involved in specific social groups (Sheth et al., 1991). Smith and Colgate (2007) defined this social value associated with symbolism. In other words, this dimension of perceived value is closely related to self-image and social identity (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Social Value: Consumers may perceive that purchasing organic products enhances their social status. This is related to social norms, where consumers feel accepted or appreciated by their social groups (e.g., friends, family, or the wider community) for buying ethical and environmentally-friendly products.

Emotional value refers to a perceived utility that consumers can attain from a product or service in the form of feeling or affective states (Sheth et al., 1991). In the domain of green consumption, emotional value also plays a critical role in the consumers' decision-making process (Lin and Huang, 2012).

Conditional value refers to the perceived benefit that individuals derive from alternatives depending on specific situations or conditions that influence their decision-making (Sheth et al., 1991). Various infrastructural and contextual elements serve as either facilitators or barriers to pro-environmental behavior (Lorenzoni et al., 2007). Examples of these conditional factors include financial aspects such as government incentives or subsidies (Gallagher & Muehlegger, 2011), promotional discounts (Biswas & Roy, 2015b), legal regulations (Song et al., 2020), and the physical accessibility to environmentally-friendly products (Lin & Huang, 2012).

Epistemic value refers to the perceived benefit that consumers gain from a product or service through the pursuit of knowledge and the novelty of information that piques their curiosity (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of green consumption, a consumer's interest in learning more about a product's features can positively influence their purchasing behavior. This is often the case as eco-friendly products typically offer additional details highlighting their sustainable qualities, such as environmentally friendly ingredients.

Environmental Awareness indirectly influences Green Purchase Behavior through Green Perceived Value: Consumers with higher environmental awareness tend to recognize and evaluate the benefits of green products more positively, which in turn strengthens their intention to purchase these products. This indirect relationship suggests that environmental awareness not only fosters greater appreciation for the value of green products but also serves as a catalyst for actual purchase behavior through increased Green Perceived Value. Environmentally aware consumers are more likely to connect the dots between the ecological advantages of organic products and their own purchasing decisions. This heightened awareness fosters a deeper understanding of the environmental and personal benefits associated with organic cosmetics, making these consumers more inclined to choose these products over conventional alternatives. As evidenced in the studies by Kumar et al. (2021) and Liobikienė & Bernatienė (2017), the stronger the environmental awareness, the more likely it is that consumers will develop positive perceptions of green products, which ultimately influences their purchasing actions.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The proposed conceptual model illustrates the relationship between environmental awareness, green perceived value (GPV), and green purchase behavior, with GPV acting as a mediating variable. The model is grounded in the idea that increased environmental awareness enhances the perceived value of eco-friendly products, which in turn, influences consumers' intention to purchase these products. The model also explores the different dimensions of green perceived value, such as functional value, social value, emotional value, conditional value, and epistemic value, and their impact on green purchase behavior. This section outlines the development of the hypotheses based on the reviewed literature and the conceptual model.

3.1. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model is developed to address gaps in understanding the factors influencing green purchase behavior in consumers of organic cosmetics. By integrating environmental, psychological, and social factors, it provides a comprehensive framework for examining the mediating role of green perceived value (GPV). The relationships among the variables in the model are guided by three theoretical foundations. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control drive green purchase intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory highlights the role of environmental awareness and personal norms in shaping pro-environmental behavior (Stern, 2000). The Consumer Behavior Model (CBM) emphasizes the influence of perceived value on purchasing decisions, suggesting that perceived value enhances consumers' willingness to engage in sustainable consumption (Zeithaml, 1988).

The proposed model assumes that environmental awareness (EA) positively influences green perceived value (GPV), which, in turn, drives green purchase behavior (GPB). EA enhances GPV by increasing the perceived functional, social, emotional, conditional, and epistemic benefits of green products, while GPV influences GPB by highlighting the overall value of eco-friendly purchases. Additionally, the model suggests that environmental awareness also indirectly affects green purchase behavior through the mediating effect of green perceived value. This demonstrates the combined direct and mediated effects of these factors on consumers' green purchase decisions, as illustrated in Figure.

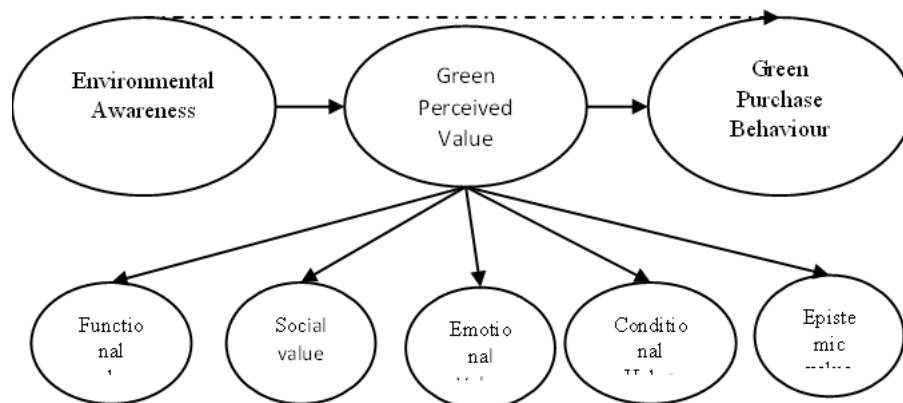


Figure 1 Research Framework

3.2. Hypotheses Development

Hypothesis 1: Environmental Awareness (EA) has a positive effect on Green Perceived Value (GPV).

Consumers with a heightened awareness of environmental issues, such as climate change and pollution, are more likely to appreciate the eco-friendly attributes of organic cosmetic products. This aligns with findings by Akehurst et al. (2012) and Yadav & Pathak (2016), which suggest that environmental awareness influences the perceived benefits of sustainable products. Consumers who understand the environmental impact of their purchases are more inclined to value green products, including their health, environmental, and ethical benefits (Moser, 2015).

Hypothesis 2: Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively affects Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

The perceived value of a product plays a crucial role in determining whether consumers will make a purchase. As highlighted by Chen & Chang (2012) and Nguyen et al. (2019), when consumers perceive higher value in green products, such as better health benefits, eco-friendliness, and superior quality, they are more likely to engage in green

purchasing behavior. This hypothesis is grounded in the idea that when a product provides tangible and intangible benefits (e.g., environmental and personal health benefits), consumers are more likely to purchase it (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Hypothesis 3: Environmental Awareness (EA) has an indirect effect on Green Purchase Behavior (GPB) through Green Perceived Value (GPV).

Environmental awareness influences green purchase behavior not only directly but also indirectly through green perceived value. Consumers who are more environmentally conscious tend to evaluate green products more favorably, which enhances their likelihood of making a green purchase (Kumar et al., 2021; Liobikienė & Bernatoniene, 2017). This hypothesis suggests that environmental awareness increases the perceived value of green products, which then leads to green purchase behavior. The mediating role of GPV is essential in linking environmental awareness with actual consumer purchases.

Hypothesis 4: Functional Value of Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively influences Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

The functional value of a product refers to the practical benefits that consumers derive from using it, such as health and safety benefits. In the context of organic cosmetics, consumers often perceive these products as safer and better for their skin compared to non-organic products. As noted by Han et al. (2017), the functional value is a key factor in consumers' purchasing decisions, particularly when it comes to health-related products like organic cosmetics.

Hypothesis 5: Social Value of Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively influences Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

Consumers are motivated by the social value of green products, which enhances their social status or aligns them with ethical social groups. Purchasing organic cosmetics may be seen as a socially responsible decision, which could be viewed positively by consumers' peers and social circles. Social value influences purchase decisions by connecting personal identity with ethical consumption (Sheth et al., 1991; Smith & Colgate, 2007).

Hypothesis 6: Emotional Value of Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively influences Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

Emotional value refers to the feelings or emotional satisfaction consumers derive from a product. In green consumption, emotional value can come from the satisfaction of making an environmentally conscious choice or supporting ethical practices. Lin and Huang (2012) suggest that emotional value significantly affects decision-making, particularly when consumers feel positive emotions associated with green products, such as organic cosmetics.

Hypothesis 7: Conditional Value of Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively influences Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

Conditional value refers to the benefits consumers perceive based on specific situational factors, such as financial incentives or discounts. For example, promotions or government subsidies can increase the attractiveness of organic cosmetics, making them more accessible to consumers. This type of value influences consumers' willingness to engage in green purchasing behavior under certain conditions (Sheth et al., 1991; Gallagher & Muehlegger, 2011).

Hypothesis 8: Epistemic Value of Green Perceived Value (GPV) positively influences Green Purchase Behavior (GPB).

Epistemic value refers to the benefit consumers gain from learning about a product's features, particularly when they are curious about its sustainable attributes. Eco-friendly products often provide additional information about their environmental benefits, which can enhance consumers' knowledge and drive their purchasing decisions (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of organic cosmetics, epistemic value is associated with consumers' interest in learning more about the product's ingredients and sustainability practices, which increases their intention to purchase.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This conceptual framework provides a solid foundation for future empirical research investigating the intricate relationship between environmental awareness, green perceived value, and green purchase behavior, particularly within the context of organic cosmetics. The model highlights the importance of understanding how environmental awareness influences consumers' perceptions of value in eco-friendly products, which in turn affects their purchasing decisions. This understanding is critical for marketers in the organic cosmetics industry, as it suggests that effective marketing strategies should focus on emphasizing the multiple dimensions of perceived value that consumers associate with these products. Specifically, marketers should stress not only the health and environmental benefits but also the social, emotional, and ethical values embedded in organic cosmetics. By aligning their marketing efforts with these consumer

values, companies can more effectively appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and foster stronger green purchase intentions.

Future studies should aim to empirically validate the proposed model through quantitative research methods, such as surveys or experimental studies, across diverse consumer segments and product categories. It would be valuable to explore different demographic factors, such as age, gender, income, and education, to assess how these variables interact with environmental awareness and green perceived value in shaping purchase behavior. Additionally, investigating other product categories, such as organic food or eco-friendly household items, could provide insights into whether the proposed framework holds across various industries or if modifications are needed for specific product types.

Moreover, future research could delve deeper into the mediating role of green perceived value in the relationship between environmental awareness and green purchase behavior. A longitudinal study could also be conducted to examine how these factors evolve over time, as consumer attitudes and behaviors toward sustainability may shift as environmental concerns become more pressing or as consumers' knowledge of sustainable practices increases. Another potential avenue for research is exploring the role of trust in sustainable brands and how it might moderate the relationship between environmental awareness and green perceived value.

Finally, studies could investigate the practical implications of the framework for policymakers, as it can inform the development of strategies aimed at encouraging sustainable consumer behavior. For example, understanding how environmental awareness influences the perceived value of green products could guide the design of effective public awareness campaigns or incentives for sustainable consumption. This would contribute not only to academic literature but also to real-world applications in promoting environmentally responsible consumer behavior on a broader scale.

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