

Attitude and Purchase Behavior Towards Beauty Products: Parallel Mediation and Moderation by Psychological and Social Factors

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Received: 30/09/2025

Revised: 17/10/2025

Accepted: 18/11/2025

Published: 28/11/2025

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the relationships between attitude (ATT), public self-consciousness (PSC), social anxiety (SA), and purchasing behaviour (PB). The study also examined the moderating effects of confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural capital in this relationship.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Data was collected from 478 women in North India using a purposive sampling approach. Further, SPSS and Smart PLS were used to evaluate the data and test hypotheses using structural equation modelling.

Findings: Through the mediators' PSC and SA, the attitude has a strong direct and indirect impact on purchase behaviour. While social anxiety has a negative effect on purchasing behavior, public self-consciousness enhances the beneficial effect of attitude on purchasing behaviour. Moreover, socio-cultural capital does not significantly influence the attitude and purchase behaviour relationship, while skin complexion and confidence level do.

Implications: The study expands on previous theoretical frameworks by combining mediating and moderating variables in a single model. Practically, marketers can effectively treat social anxiety and boost confidence by implementing targeted techniques such as low-pressure or virtual shopping settings, marketing campaigns, brand messaging, or even personal development programs.

Originality: This is the first study to look at PSC and SA as mediators with various moderators in a single model, bringing new insights into consumer behavior dynamics.

Keywords: Attitude, beauty products, confidence level, public self-consciousness, Purchase Behavior, Social anxiety, skin complexion, socio-cultural capital

INTRODUCTION:

In an era where visual culture dominates societal values, appearance and physical attractiveness have taken centre stage in shaping self-identity and social dynamics. The human body is no longer perceived merely as a biological entity but as a cultural artefact and a project to be cultivated and enhanced, reflecting societal expectations and personal aspirations. This shift is particularly evident in consumer behaviour, where body-related consumption—ranging from cosmetics and skincare to clothing and other beauty-related services has become a primary avenue for self-expression and social positioning (Nayak et al., 2021). Researchers such as Lotti (2022), Shilling (2007) and Spencer (2024) have underscored the pivotal role of physical appearance in modern consumer culture which highlights how beauty practices transcend mere personal grooming to embody socio-cultural motivations and status indicators. The conceptualization of the body as a form of “physical capital” underscores its significance in a competitive and image-conscious society (Shilling, 2003). Beauty products, particularly cosmetics, serve as tools to enhance physical attractiveness, boosting confidence and

influencing interpersonal dynamics (Faust et al., 2024). As Holla (2018) and Shabangu (2016) found choices in make-up and clothing are not just aesthetic decisions but reflections of deeper self-perceptions and societal expectations (Fantoni, 2024). Therefore, the drive for beauty intertwines with broader socio-cultural and economic factors, making the beauty and personal care market a significant area of interest for both researchers and marketers (Latu, 2020).

In India, the beauty and personal care market has witnessed unprecedented growth, driven by rising disposable incomes, urbanization, and evolving consumer preferences. By 2020, the industry was valued at \$25.9 billion, with projections to reach \$32.7 billion by 2024, growing at a CAGR of 8.1 per cent (Growth Of The Cosmetic Industry In India | IBEF, n.d.). The growing emphasis on appearance, combining the influence of media and advertising has amplified the demand for beauty products, particularly among young women. Teenagers and women in their 20s represent a substantial portion of this market, spending significantly more on beauty

products than older generations. Their purchasing behaviour is shaped by various factors, including self-esteem, societal pressures, and the desire for social acceptance (Pudaruth et al., 2015). Similarly, the global beauty and personal care market also reflects the same trends, with a remarkable shift toward luxury and sustainable products. The luxury beauty segment alone generated \$62.3 billion globally in 2022 and is projected to reach \$87 billion by 2028 (Statista, 2023). Such figures underscore the importance of understanding the motivations and attitudes driving beauty product consumption, particularly in the context of socio-cultural and economic transformations.

Moreover, from a sociological perspective, the consumption of beauty products is not solely about enhancing physical attractiveness but also about navigating social structures and fulfilling societal roles (Kuipers, 2022). The concept of beauty as a reflection of health, confidence, and socio-economic status has deep historical roots. Colonial influences, particularly in Asia and Africa, perpetuated a racialized hierarchy of beauty, associating fair skin with privilege and success (Hall, 2018). This legacy continues to shape consumer attitudes and advertising narratives, as seen in campaigns promoting skin-whitening products like Fair & Lovely, which suggest that lighter skin complexions equate to greater opportunities and societal acceptance (Sharda, 2020; Kullrich, 2022). In contemporary consumer culture, beauty is also closely tied to individual well-being and self-perception. Research by Moustabshirah et al., (2022) and Kim et al., (2020) suggests that self-confidence and self-directed pleasure are significant motivators in purchasing beauty products. Venciute et al., (2025) further emphasize the role of consumer confidence in market behavior, noting that individuals with high confidence levels are more likely to make rational decisions and are less influenced by societal expectations. Conversely, social anxiety and public self-consciousness can drive heavy usage of beauty products as individuals seek to overcome feelings of inadequacy and enhance their social image (Sharma, 2024). Despite these viewpoints, limited research has explored the intersection of beauty product consumption, consumer attitude, purchasing behaviour, public self-consciousness, social anxiety, skin complexion, confidence, and socio-cultural capital. While previous studies have explored these constructs independently (López-Bonilla et al., 2021; Marjerison et al., 2022, Acar, 2022; Lee, 2009), no research to date has integrated these variables into a single comprehensive model. Furthermore, the role of moderating factors such as confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural influences in shaping this relationship has not been thoroughly examined. In this way, this study addresses these gaps by being the first to investigate the parallel mediating roles of public self-consciousness and social anxiety, with the moderating effects of confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural capital in a single framework. By combining these mediators and moderators into a single model, this work provides a more complete understanding of the mechanisms that influence purchasing decisions. Public self-consciousness and social anxiety refer to the internal psychological processes that mediate the relationship between attitudes and conduct which provide insights into how personal insecurities and

social anxieties influence decision-making. Simultaneously, the inclusion of confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural capital as moderators sheds light on how external factors increase or reduce these psychological impacts. This layered approach captures the complexities of real-world consumer behaviour, in which intrinsic and extrinsic influences rarely function independently. It also extends theoretical frameworks by stressing the interplay between psychological and societal elements, challenging standard linear models and presenting a more dynamic perspective on the attitude-behaviour relationship. By bridging these gaps, this study sets a foundation for further exploration of consumer decision-making processes in diverse contexts. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the purchasing behaviours, attitudes, and preferences of young female consumers toward natural beauty products. By examining these dynamics, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between self-identity, societal influences, and consumer behaviour in the beauty market.

Hypotheses Development

Attitude and Purchase Behaviour

Attitudes about conduct have a considerable impact on people's tendency to engage in specific actions, especially when those attitudes are favourable. Prior research has shown a substantial relation between favourable customer attitudes and behavioural intentions across cultures and product categories (Ewe & Tjiptono, 2023; Irfany, Khairunnisa, & Tieman, 2023; Islam & Ali Khan, 2024; Haq et al., 2025; Shehawy & Khan, 2024 Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005). For example, Zbib et al. (2020) discovered that consumer perceptions of French cosmetic products in China were influenced by levels of involvement, underlining the need for country-specific marketing methods. Baird (2021) emphasized the impact of the "Black is Beautiful" movement on changing beauty standards in the Black community, while simultaneously reinforcing colourism for corporate purposes. Similarly, Suryadi et al. (2020) discovered that beliefs positively influenced Muslim consumers' purchase intentions for halal cosmetics in Indonesia, which were mediated by attitudes. According to Singhal and Malik (2018), income has a substantial impact on attitudes toward green cosmetics, whereas religiosity and knowledge indirectly influence halal cosmetic purchasing intentions (Putri et al., 2019; Koc et al., 2024). Further, Ajitha and Sivakumar (2017) found that status value and hedonism have a substantial impact on attitude towards luxury cosmetic purchases, while marketing methods at purchase points are critical (de Vasconcellos Ribeiro et al., 2021; Suvattanadilok, 2014; Khan et al., 2017). These studies highlight the importance of consumer attitudes, impacted by personal, cultural, and socioeconomic factors, in shaping purchase intentions, which serve as the foundation for this study's hypotheses. So, based on these studies, the study proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Attitude positively influences the purchasing intentions of consumers towards beauty products.

Parallel mediation of self-consciousness (Public consciousness and social anxiety)

Self-consciousness has a major effect on consumer behaviour, including purchase decisions, perceptions, and responses to marketing stimuli (López-Bonilla et al., 2021;

Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). Consumer research has investigated self-consciousness, which includes both private and public elements (Williams & Poehlman, 2017). Public self-consciousness is linked to sensitivity to social settings and a preference for things that improve exterior appearances (Burnkrant & Page, 1982; Lau-Gesk & Drolet, 2008). According to research, people with high levels of public self-consciousness are more fashion-conscious (Lee & Workman, 2020; Solomon & Schopler, 1982; Talaat, 2022), and prefer branded products to improve their image (Bushman, 1993; Balabanis & Stathopoulou, 2021), and have stronger attitudes and intentions toward products in socially consumed categories (Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002) (Kaur & Anand, 2021). Furthermore, young consumers with high levels of public self-consciousness exhibit materialistic tendencies and are more likely to acquire luxury fashion products (de Vasconcellos Ribeiro, 2021; Xu, 2008). The research reveals that public self-consciousness is heavily emphasized in consumer behaviour studies. These results highlight how important public self-consciousness is in influencing consumer attitudes and preferences, especially in situations where social visibility and outside perceptions are important.

Additionally, according to Carleton (2010), social anxiety can be viewed as either an innate condition or a result (Pittelkow et al., 2021). To overcome emotions of inadequacy, a person with high social anxiety is inclined to worry about his looks and turn to beauty care items (Hajli, 2014; Pan, 2023). Also, McComb & Mills (2021) posited that comparing oneself to those who are physically more appealing, such as those in the media, can make one feel less attractive. This can cause anxiety about one's looks, which can serve as motivation to work on improving oneself (Janany, 2017). In addition to the self-perception of physical attractiveness, other facets of the social self are also impacted by the social comparison contrast effect (Lee et al., 2020). Despite its potential importance, the mediators have been underexplored in existing literature. This study seeks to bridge this gap by systematically analyzing its role. Thus, considering previous studies that have demonstrated the impact of self-consciousness on consumer behaviour, the current study aims to determine how self-consciousness (public self-consciousness and social anxiety) parallelly shapes an individual's attitude toward beauty product purchases. Consequently, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H2: Public self-consciousness positively mediates the influence of attitude on the purchasing intentions of

consumers towards beauty products.

H3: Social Anxiety positively mediates the influence of attitude on the purchasing intentions of consumers towards beauty products.

Moderating role of confidence level, skin complexion, and social-cultural capital

Self-competence an individual's evaluation of their ability to achieve desired outcomes plays a critical role in motivating purposive behavior (Kamila et al., 2024). Confidence in identifying and differentiating products is a sign of high self-competence, which facilitates well-informed purchasing decisions (Hao & Chenyue, 2021). Confidence in relation to beauty goods can affect customers' capacity to evaluate product details and their propensity to choose novel or natural items over well-known ones. Thus, confidence can influence the role of attitude in purchasing behaviour (Philp, 2016; Huang & Pricer, 2024). Further, as a physical characteristic, skin complexion may have an impact on how opinions are translated into buying habits (Shah & Islam, 2024; Joshi et al., 2022; Frisby, 2006). Variations in skin tone can evoke diverse social and cultural perceptions, potentially affecting self-image, brand preferences, and the evaluation of product attributes. Moreover, positive attitudes may be translated into consumer behaviour with the help of socio-cultural capital (Carfagna et al., 2014; Prikshat et al., 2024). Socio-cultural capital includes elements such as social networks, cultural knowledge, and shared values which play a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences and behaviours (Takagi et al., 2024). It facilitates the alignment of individual attitudes with broader social norms and cultural practices, reinforcing purchasing decisions. Thus, building on previous research, this study intends to investigate how attitudes regarding the purchase of beauty goods are influenced by confidence level, skin complexion, and social-cultural capital. Therefore, the study makes the following hypotheses considering these findings:

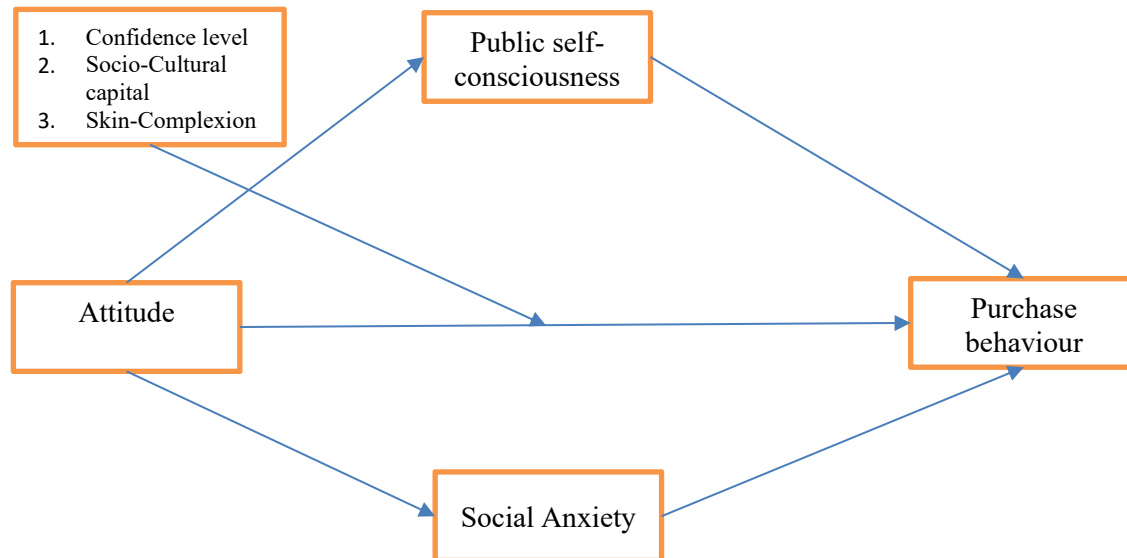
H4: Confidence level positively moderates the influence of attitude on purchasing intentions of consumers towards beauty products

H5: Skin complexion positively moderates the influence of attitude on the purchasing intentions of consumers towards beauty products

H6: Socio-cultural capital positively moderates the influence of attitude on the purchasing intentions of consumers towards beauty products

Conceptual Model

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

This study examines the impact of attitude on the purchasing behaviour of consumers toward beauty products in North India, focusing specifically on women. While beauty products are relevant to both male and female consumers, female consumers remain the dominant target market in the beauty product industry, enjoying more attention from both beauty retailers and marketers alike (Pudaruth et al., 2015). So, the respondents for this research will be the females only. The scope of the research includes a variety of beauty products such as skincare and makeup products which reflects the broad spectrum of consumer preferences in this region.

To collect data, a self-administered questionnaire was designed and piloted with 50 women representing 10% of the targeted sample size of 500 to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the items (Connelly, 2008; Treece & Treece, 1982). Based on the results of the pilot test, minor revisions were done in the final questionnaire. A purposive sampling approach was adopted to target women who

actively engage in purchasing and using beauty products to ensure the data's relevance and reliability (Campbell et al., 2020). Data collection was conducted over three months, from August to October 2024, through online and offline methods. For the online mode, questionnaires were distributed as Google Forms through email and social media platforms, accounting for 200 invitations. Offline data collection involved distributing 300 physical questionnaires to women by visiting malls, and beauty/cosmetic shops. A total of 478 responses were received, with 182 responses offline and 296 online. After screening for incomplete and partially filled questionnaires, 478 valid responses were included in the analysis. The sample size surpassed the requirements for robust model evaluation using PLS-SEM, adhering to the “ten times rule,” and meeting established recommendations for structural equation modelling (Richter et al., 2016; Rezaei, 2015). Therefore, this rigorous data collection process ensured the validity and reliability of the findings.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variables	Categories	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	100
Age Group	18-25	37.4
	26-35	33.3
	36-45	21.1
	Above 45 years	8.2
Marital Status	Married	63.8
	Single	36.2
Education Qualification	Matriculation	9.5
	Under Graduate/Diploma	26.4
	Post-Graduation	46.8
	Ph.D.	3.2
	Any other	14.1
Occupation	Students	6.8
	Self-employed	26.2
	Government employee	32.1
	Private sector employee	34.9

Annual Income (INR)	0-3,00,000	5.3
	3,00,001-6,00,000	19.4
	6,00,001-9,00,000	22.8
	9,00,001-12,00,000	23.3
	12,00,001-15,00,000	21.4
	Above 15,00,000	7.8

(Source: Primary Data)

Instruments

This study used three items taken from Azjen (1980) & Ajitha et al. (2017) to measure attitude, such as "Using skin-whitening cream is good for skin," and three items taken from Baumgartner & Steenkamp (1996) and Tandon et al. (2020) to measure purchase behaviour, such as "I am a regular buyer of skin-lightening products." The three items on the scale, which were taken from Wang and Yu (2023), were then used to measure public self-consciousness. One of the statements was "I care a lot how I present myself to others." Additionally, four items that were modified from a Wang and Yu (2023) scale were used to measure social anxiety. One of the items was "I am concerned with how others evaluate my looks."

Also, a three-item scale from Unnithan's study was used to gauge the degree of confidence (Unnithan, 2003). The sample item is "I trust my judgment when deciding which brands to consider." A scale of three items from Chen et al. (2009) and Folk et al. (1993) was used to measure socio-cultural capital, which included items like "I am conscious of my appearance" And skin-complexion scale was modified from the scale of Rosenberg (1985) such as "The fairer I am, the more attractive I feel."

A five-point Likert scale was used to rate each item, with 1 denoting strong disagreement and 5 denoting strong agreement.

Data Analysis

The study's analysis was conducted utilizing a combination of SPSS and Partial Least Squares (PLS) methodologies (Ringle et al., 2015). Initially, SPSS was used to code the collected data and perform descriptive statistics on the sample characteristics and response distribution. The assessment scales' validity and reliability were then assessed using PLS (Mohd Dzin & Lay, 2021). The constructs' convergent and discriminant validity were checked to demonstrate that the items appropriately represented the desired latent variables (Ali et al., 2018). Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability were also employed to assess the scales' reliability (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). The structural modelling was then conducted using PLS to investigate the proposed relationship between consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior toward beauty products, as well as the mediating roles of public self-consciousness and social anxiety, and the moderating influences of confidence, skin-complexion, and socio-cultural capital. This thorough method provided a strong analysis structure, allowing for the validation of the suggested model as well as the investigation of mediation and moderation effects within the study (Hair et al., 2019).

Measurement Model

The values recommended in the literature were compared with the values of the study measurement model to verify

Table 2: Validity Statistic of Variables

Variables		Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
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the model fit (Hair et al. 2010). Chi-square/df ratio (CMIN/df), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit in the study. CMIN/df = 2.098 (< 3), CFI = 0.921 (>0.90), RMSEA = 0.075 (< 0.08), TLI = 0.911 (> 0.9), GFI = 0.923 (> 0.9), and NFI = 0.970 (> 0.9) (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015) are among the chi-square statistics and other indicators that indicate that the data fit the study model well.

Common Method Biasness (CMB)

To identify common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was employed. This method assumes that if there is a significant amount of CMB, either (a) the factor analysis will reveal a single factor, or (b) most of the covariance between the variables will be explained by a single general factor (Andersson and Bateman 1997; Aulakh and Gencturk 2000; Podsakoff, et al., 2003). By limiting the factor to 1, the factor analysis was performed on each of the study's variables. The findings showed that there was no common method bias because the variance of the single component was 35.039%, which is below the 50% threshold value (Harman, 1976).

Validity and Reliability Analysis

To do the statistical analysis of the data, the measurement scales of the constructs of the study model were examined. Thus, the study examined the connections between the variables and their items to verify the convergent and discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (1998), to accept the model, these requirements must be met. At the beginning, every item had outer loading values higher than 0.5 (Kline, 2023). Additionally, three metric tests are used to verify the convergent validity: average variance extracted (AVE) from the latent variables should be greater than 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), composite reliability should also be >0.70 (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2010), and reliability of the indicators should be greater than the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally et al., 1994). As seen in Table 2, every variable met the specifications.

The Fornell and Larcker Criterion was used to further investigate discriminant validity, and the results indicated that all diagonal values were higher than the matching row and column values, proving discriminant validity (Table 3). A further analysis utilizing the Heterotrait-Monotrait correlations (HTMT) method (Henseler et al., 2015) with a cut-off value of no more than 0.85 (Kline, 2005) was necessary because this approach was criticized (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4 illustrates the discriminant validity of the HTMT technique. The hypothesis was then tested using the model in the final analysis.

Attitude	ATT1	0.825	0.716	0.884	0.882
	ATT2	0.861			
	ATT3	0.852			
Purchasing Behaviour	PB1	0.866	0.746	0.898	0.898
	PB2	0.857			
	PB3	0.868			
Public consciousness	PSC1	0.776	0.783	0.805	0.803
	PSC2	0.695			
	PSC3	0.815			
Social Anxiety	SA1	0.839	0.780	0.850	0.845
	SA2	0.750			
	SA3	0.680			
	SA4	0.768			
Confidence Level	CL1	0.838	0.787	0.812	0.807
	CL2	0.726			
	CL3	0.729			
Skin-complexion	SC1	0.775	0.649	0.850	0.847
	SC2	0.801			
	SC3	0.839			
Social-culture capital	SOC1	0.728	0.763	0.795	0.786
	SOC2	0.823			
	SOC3	0.694			

Note: 1) AVE= Average variance extracted, CR= Composite reliability

2) ATT- Attitude, PB- Purchasing Behaviour, PSC- Public Consciousness, SA- Social Anxiety, CL- Confidence Level, SC- Skin Complexion, SOC- Socio-cultural capital

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (Fornell and Larker Criterion)

Variables	ATT	CL	PB	PSC	SA	SC	SOC
ATT	0.846						
CL	0.743	0.766					
PB	0.378	0.386	0.863				
PSC	0.409	0.438	0.449	0.764			
SA	-0.513	-0.455	-0.358	-0.227	0.761		
SC	0.649	0.512	0.248	0.220	-0.438	0.805	
SOC	0.634	0.478	0.285	0.292	-0.446	0.598	0.750

Note 1. The diagonal reflects the maximum value in either column or row and is calculated as the square root of the latent variables' AVE.

2) ATT- Attitude, PB- Purchasing Behaviour, PSC- Public Consciousness, SA- Social Anxiety, CL- Confidence Level, SC- Skin Complexion, SOC- Socio-cultural capital

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criteria)

Variables	ATT	CL	PB	PSC	SA	SC	SOC
ATT							
CL	0.749						
PB	0.378	0.385					
PSC	0.427	0.453	0.451				

SA	0.506	0.473	0.361	0.221			
SC	0.656	0.525	0.252	0.228	0.443		
SOC	0.651	0.519	0.292	0.328	0.453	0.607	

Note: 1) ATT- Attitude, PB- Purchasing Behaviour, PSC- Public Consciousness, SA- Social Anxiety, CL- Confidence Level, SC- Skin Complexion, SOC- Socio-cultural capital

Explanatory power of the model

Thereafter, Table 5's results demonstrated the model's explanatory power (R Square (R²)) for each of the study's dependent variables (Hair et al., 2013). The model's predictors may account for about 25.4% of the variance in purchasing behavior as the R² value for purchasing behavior is 0.254. Similarly, public self-consciousness (PSC) has an R² value of 0.131, meaning that the model explains 13.1% of the variation in PSC. Additionally, social anxiety's R² value is 0.202, which indicates that the factors in the model account for 20.2% of the variance in social anxiety.

Table 5: Explanatory power of the model

Variables	R Square (R ²)
PB	0.254
PSC	0.131
SA	0.202

Structural Model Analysis

Hypotheses Testing

Once the validity and reliability results were good, the structural model was evaluated. To evaluate the proposed hypotheses, path coefficients in SmartPLS were examined. Purchasing behavior (PB) (Estimate = 0.203, t-value = 3.023, p < 0.01), public self-consciousness (PSC) (Estimate = 0.362, t-value = 7.768, p < 0.001), and social anxiety (SA) (Estimate = -0.449, t-value = 12.441, p < 0.001) were found to be significantly related with attitude (ATT). Furthermore, purchasing behavior was positively impacted by public self-consciousness (Estimate = 0.255, t-value = 4.426, p < 0.001). Likewise, there was a significant relation between social anxiety and buying behavior (Estimate = -0.188, t-value = 9.020, p < 0.001). Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the relationship between attitude and purchase behavior was significantly moderated by skin complexion (Estimate = 0.137, t-value = 2.640, p < 0.01) and confidence level (Estimate = 0.153, t-value = 3.377, p < 0.01), but not by socio-culture capital (Estimate = 0.057, t-value = 0.813, p > 0.01). These findings are also reported in Table 6 and Figure 2.

Table 6: Direct Effects

Relationships	Estimate	t-value	P	Remarks
ATT→PB	0.203	3.023	***	Significant
ATT→PSC	0.362	7.768	***	Significant
PSC→PB	0.255	4.426	***	Significant
ATT→SA	-0.449	12.441	***	Significant
SA→PB	-0.188	3.696	***	Significant
Moderation analysis				
CL*ATT->PB	0.153	3.377	***	Significant
SC*ATT->PB	0.137	2.640	***	Significant
SOC*ATT->PB	0.057	0.813	-	Non-significant

Notes: 1. *** p-value < 0.01 and ** p-value < 0.05

2) ATT- Attitude, PB- Purchasing Behaviour, PSC- Public Consciousness, SA- Social Anxiety, CL- Confidence Level, SC- Skin Complexion, SOC- Social-cultural capital

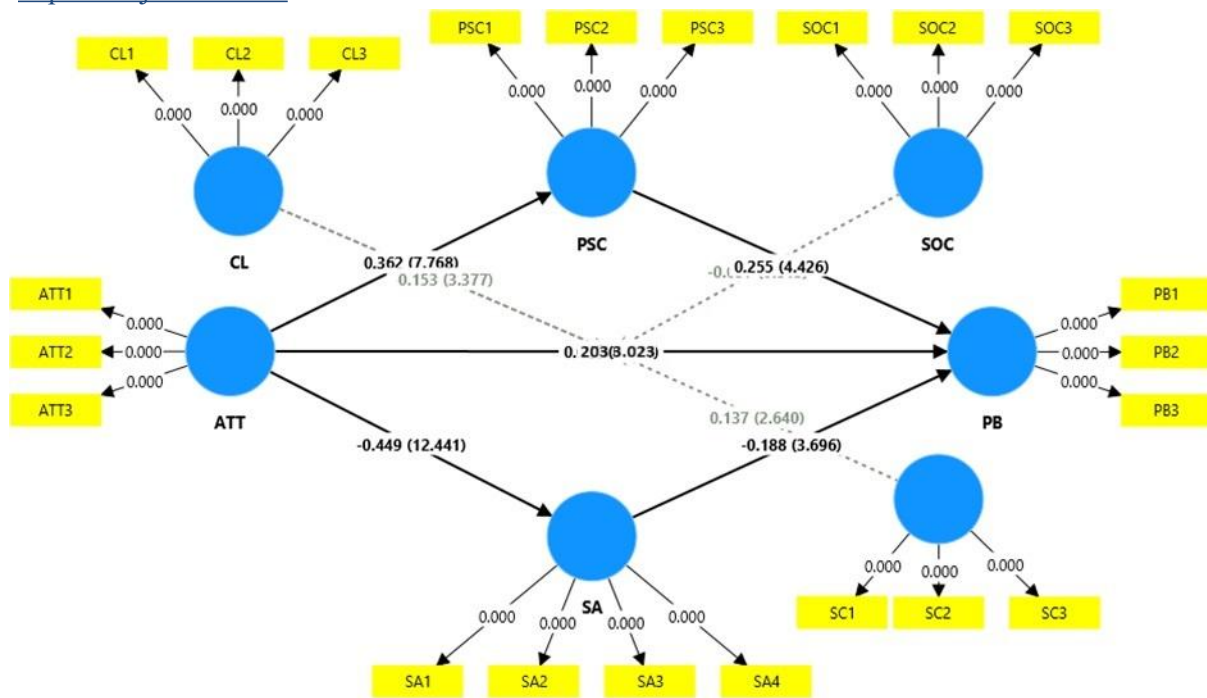


Figure 2: Structured Path Model

Mediation Analysis

Table 7 presents the indirect effects observed in the study. The analysis shows that attitude (ATT) positively influences purchasing behaviour (PB) through public self-consciousness (estimate= 0.092, t-test value = 4.034) and social anxiety (estimate= 0.084, t-test value = 3.582), indicating a significant effect. Overall, the total indirect effect of attitude (ATT) on purchasing behaviour (PB) is substantial, with an estimate of 0.176 and a t-test value of 5.812, affirming the significance of the pathways identified in the model. Moreover, the direct relation between attitude (ATT) and purchasing behaviour (PB) is also significant which demonstrates that the association between attitude (ATT) and purchasing behaviour (PB) is partially mediated by public self-consciousness and social anxiety (Hayes, & Rockwood, 2017) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Indirect Effects

Relationships	Estimate	t-test	p	Label
Specific Indirect effect				
ATT->PSC->PB	0.092	4.034	***	Significant
ATT->SA->PB	0.084	3.582	***	Significant
Total Indirect effect				
ATT->PB	0.176	5.812	***	Significant

Notes: 1. *** p < 0.01 and ** p-value < 0.05

2) ATT- Attitude, PB- Purchasing Behaviour, PSC- Public Consciousness, SA-Social Anxiety, CL- Confidence Level, SC- Skin Complexion, SOC- Social-cultural capital

Discussion

The current study examined the moderating effects of confidence level, complexion, and socio-cultural influences as well as the relations between attitude (ATT), public self-consciousness (PSC), social anxiety (SA), and purchasing behavior (PB). By employing a structural equation modeling technique in SmartPLS, the results enhance an advanced understanding of customer behavior. The findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between attitude and purchasing behavior, highlighting the role that positive attitudes play in influencing consumer decisions supporting H1. This result is consistent with earlier studies that found that attitudes

held by consumers have a major role in forecasting their purchase behavior (Baird, 2021, Pappu & Quester, 2016, Putri et al., 2019, Zbib et al., 2020). Furthermore, it was shown that public self-consciousness was a crucial feature that supported theories by mediating the relationship between attitude and purchasing behavior supporting H2. This emphasizes how crucial self-awareness is in social contexts as a factor influencing consumer decisions. According to theories that contend that consumers who are highly self-conscious are more likely to match their behavior with their attitudes to preserve social approval, public self-consciousness seems to magnify the impact of attitude on purchasing behavior (Solomon & Schopler,

1982, Dabholkar & Bagozzi, 2002). Similarly, social anxiety mediated the interaction between attitude and purchasing behavior providing support to H2. The results demonstrate that attitude positively influences purchasing behavior, and this relationship is significantly mediated by social anxiety. Specifically, individuals with a more positive attitude are likely to exhibit higher purchasing behavior, and social anxiety plays a crucial role in amplifying this effect supporting previous studies (Hajli, 2014; Pan, 2023; McComb & Mills, 2021). This suggests that when individuals experience social anxiety, it enhances the way their attitudes translate into purchasing decisions, possibly due to increased sensitivity to social cues or pressure to conform through purchases.

Additionally, the relationship between attitude and purchasing behavior was found to be significantly moderated by confidence level (H4) and skin complexion (H5). This suggests that people who are more confident and who have positive opinions about their physical characteristics are more likely to convert their attitudes into purchases. These findings are in line with the findings of previous studies (Philp, 2016; Huang & Pricer, 2024, Shah & Islam, 2024). However, the relationship was not moderated by socio-cultural capital, which may suggest that cultural norms play a less impact in the consumer setting, contradicting these research studies (Carfagna et al., 2014; Prikshat et al., 2024) which discussed the positive role of socio-culture capital in purchase behaviour. In conclusion, the parallel mediation analysis showed that the relationship between attitude and purchasing behavior is mediated by social anxiety and public self-consciousness. According to Hayes and Rockwood (2017), this partial mediation emphasizes the two ways that attitude affects behavior both directly and indirectly. Additionally, the overall indirect impact of attitude on buying behavior highlights the combined effect of psychological mediators, confirming the significance of these concepts in comprehending how consumers make decisions. Bottom of Form

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study makes a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of consumer behavior by being the first to concurrently examine the mediating roles of public self-consciousness and social anxiety alongside the moderating effects of confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural capital in a single model. This study offers a thorough framework that captures the interaction between psychological and extrinsic factors impacting purchase behavior, in contrast to earlier studies that frequently examined these constructs separately (López-Bonilla et al., 2021; Marjerison et al., 2022, Acar, 2022; Lee, 2009). The results broaden the conventional attitude-behaviour framework by highlighting the two ways that attitude affects purchase behavior, both directly and indirectly. Unlike earlier models that primarily focused on the linear influence of attitudes on behavior, this research demonstrates how psychological states, specifically social anxiety and public self-consciousness, mediate this relationship. By integrating these internal psychological dimensions, the study provides a richer understanding of the nuanced mechanisms that shape consumer decision-

making processes.

Furthermore, the findings extend theoretical perspectives by exploring the complex moderating roles of external variables like skin complexion and confidence level. These results reveal that the interaction between intrinsic psychological states and extrinsic factors is more intricate than previously assumed. For instance, skin complexion and confidence level emerged as significant moderators, underscoring their role in shaping the strength and direction of the attitude-behavior link. Conversely, the non-significant moderating effect of socio-cultural capital challenges conventional assumptions about its universal applicability, suggesting that its influence may be context-dependent.

In this way, by bridging psychological and extrinsic factors, this study offers a holistic framework that better reflects the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior. Thus, it fills a critical gap in the literature by integrating these elements into a single model, paving the way for more comprehensive investigations. Additionally, the findings provide actionable insights for marketers and policymakers, who can leverage an understanding of these complex interactions to design more effective interventions and strategies tailored to diverse consumer segments. The findings strengthen theories of consumer behavior while unlocking the way for more research into psychological factors.

Practical Implications

The results provide marketers looking to influence consumer behavior with useful information. Marketers can create campaigns that appeal to consumers' demand for social acceptance or self-expression by realizing that public self-consciousness mediates the relationship between attitude and purchase behavior. Likewise, establishing secure and stress-free shopping spaces, including private shopping alternatives or virtual interaction tools, may aid in overcoming behavioral obstacles for customers with high levels of social anxiety. Brands should concentrate on increasing consumer confidence and encouraging good self-perceptions through inclusive marketing and portrayal, as indicated by the strong moderating effects of skin complexions and confidence levels. Moreover, target audiences are more receptive to campaigns that highlight diversity and self-acceptance. The lack of significance of socio-cultural moderation also suggests that individual psychological characteristics should take precedence over general cultural abstractions in marketing efforts, guaranteeing a more customized approach to customer interaction. These revelations offer a guide for developing interventions that target the psychological and contextual underpinnings that affect customer attitudes and purchase decisions.

Limitations and future research

Firstly, a cross-sectional method was used in this study instead of a longitudinal one. This suggests that observing customer behavior has received a lot more attention than observing behavioral changes. Therefore, a longitudinal study is required to track changes in consumer behavior over time. Secondly, According to Mohajan (2020), quantitative approaches are useful for establishing correlations between variables, but they are deemed inadequate for attempting to determine the causes of those associations. Future research may be able to further

explore correlations among factors by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Lastly, as this study had female participants and was carried out in India, care should be taken when extrapolating its findings to other nations. Nonetheless, according to Rambocas and Metivier (2024), there are several market commonalities among other nations regarding how customers react to specific marketing stimuli. Future research could explore these relationships in diverse cultural and product contexts to enhance generalizability. Additionally, investigating other potential moderators and mediators, such as personality traits or situational variables, could provide deeper insights into consumer behavior dynamics.

Conclusions

This study highlights the relationships between attitude, public self-consciousness, social anxiety, and purchasing behavior, along with the moderating roles of confidence level, skin complexion, and socio-cultural capital. The findings of the research support the idea that attitude both directly and indirectly affects consumer behavior, with public self-consciousness and social anxiety enhancing this effect. Additionally, complexion and confidence level were significant mediators, highlighting the importance of self-assurance and a positive self-perception in converting attitudes into behavior. Socio-cultural capital, however, did not mediate this association, indicating that they played a limited influence on the environment under study. To sum up, these findings highlight the necessity for marketers to investigate interventions or strategies that can boost self-assurance and promote positive self-perception among consumers. This could include marketing campaigns, brand messaging, or even personal development programs. On the other hand, the limited influence of socio-cultural capital as a mediator in this study presents an opportunity to explore its role in different environments or cultural contexts. By incorporating important psychological and contextual elements, the study enhances theoretical frameworks and offers a solid basis for further investigation and real-world applications.

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