



**GAUGING THE GREEN GAP: BARRIERS TO
SUSTAINABLE SKINCARE CONSUMPTION AND THE
MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED VALUE AMONG
LOW-INCOME (B40) WOMEN IN MALAYSIA**

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Abstract:

This study investigates the factors influencing the willingness of low-income women in the B40 category in Malaysia who purchase green skincare products. This study focuses on affordability, environmental awareness, trust, and perceived value within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling to examine both direct and mediated relationships. The findings reveal that affordability and awareness alone do not directly predict willingness to purchase but exert significant influence when channeled through perceived value. Trust emerges as a distinct and powerful driver, exerting a direct impact on willingness to purchase without relying on value perceptions. Perceived value is identified as the strongest predictor of purchase intention and fully mediates the effects of affordability and awareness, bridging the well-documented attitude-behavior gap in green consumption. This research contributes to theory by clarifying the interplay between economic, psychological, and relational factors shaping green purchasing behavior and resolving inconsistencies in previous studies regarding the roles of price sensitivity, awareness, and trust. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for marketers and policymakers by highlighting the importance of fair pricing, transparent communication, and trust-building strategies to strengthen consumer confidence and promote sustainable consumption among price-sensitive segments.

Keywords: green skincare products, perceived value, affordability, awareness, trust, low-income women

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1. Introduction

Understanding the dynamics of affordability, awareness, and trust is crucial, especially when considering the unique challenges faced by low-income women in Malaysia. Research indicates that while there is a growing environmental consciousness among consumers, the perception that green skincare products are more expensive often deters potential buyers from making eco-friendly choices (Nazri *et al.*, 2024). This highlights the need for targeted educational campaigns that not only promote the benefits of green products but also address misconceptions about their cost-effectiveness (Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015). Furthermore, enhancing trust through transparent marketing and community engagement can significantly influence purchase intentions, as consumers are more likely to invest in products that align with their values and offer perceived value (Mamun *et al.*, 2020). Ultimately, bridging the gap between awareness and purchasing behaviour among this demographic could foster a more sustainable market for green skincare products (Suphasomboon & Vassanadumrongdee, 2022). By addressing these factors, stakeholders can help empower low-income women to make informed choices that benefit both their health and the environment. This approach not only supports individual well-being but also contributes to the broader goal of promoting sustainable consumption practices within the community. This research underscores the importance of understanding how affordability, awareness, and trust interact to influence the willingness to purchase green skincare products among low-income women in Malaysia. Promoting green skincare products effectively requires a comprehensive strategy that considers the unique socio-economic challenges faced by this demographic (Chin *et al.*, 2018).

1.1 Research Problem Statement

Sustainability has become a focal point of marketing and consumer behavior research. But the willingness to purchase green skincare products continues to lag, particularly among low-income women in Malaysia. Past studies have highlighted affordability, awareness, and trust as central factors influencing purchase decisions, but the findings are inconclusive. Some research argues that affordability encourages purchase intention by making products more accessible, whereas other studies contend that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for green alternatives if they perceive them as offering superior quality or value (Tran *et al.*, 2022; Rahman *et al.*, 2022). This inconsistency raises an important question: whether affordability directly stimulates purchase intention, or does it only do so when it elevates perceived value.

Environmental awareness presents a similar enigma. While it is frequently shown to positively influence green purchase behavior, there is also evidence that increased awareness may lead to greater skepticism when consumers encounter greenwashing, thereby reducing their willingness to purchase (Urbanski & ul Haque, 2020; Volschenk *et al.*, 2022). This suggests that awareness may require the reinforcement

of perceived value to be converted into actual purchasing behavior, a notion supported by the (TPB) Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which theorizes that attitudes and perceived control must translate into intention before behavior occurs.

Trust further complicates this understanding. Although prior research indicates that trust enhances green purchase intention and can mediate the effect of brand image and quality (Azizi & Kalantari, 2024; Noor *et al.*, 2025), other studies find no significant mediation through perceived value, implying that trust might function as an independent driver (Herawati *et al.*, 2022; Pertiwi *et al.*, 2024). These inconsistencies indicate a critical research gap where the combined effect of affordability, awareness, and trust on purchase intention has not been tested within a single integrated model, nor has the mediating role of perceived value been fully examined.

Addressing this gap is vital for both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, this study deepens the application of the TPB by clarifying whether perceived value serves as the mechanism that converts affordability and awareness into intention, and whether trust operates within or outside this pathway. From a practical perspective, the findings will assist marketers, sustainability advocates, and policymakers in designing targeted interventions such as fair pricing strategies, awareness-building campaigns, and trust-enhancing communication. This can then transform environmental concern into purchase behavior among economically constrained consumer groups.

1.2 Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between affordability and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between awareness and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between trust and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between affordability and perceived value?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between awareness and perceived value?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between trust and perceived value?

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between perceived value and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ8: Is there a significant mediating effect of perceived value between affordability and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ9: Is there a significant mediating effect of perceived value between awareness and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

RQ10: Is there a significant mediating effect of perceived value between trust and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products?

1.3 Research Objectives

RO1: To examine if there is a significant relationship between affordability and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO2: To examine if there is a significant relationship between awareness and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO3: To examine if there is a significant relationship between trust and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO4: To examine if there is a significant relationship between affordability and perceived value.

RO5: To examine if there is a significant relationship between awareness and perceived value.

RO6: To examine if there is a significant relationship between trust and perceived value.

RO7: To examine if there is a significant relationship between perceived value and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO8: To examine if there is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between affordability and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO9: To examine if there is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between awareness and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

RO10: To examine if there is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between trust and women's willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2. Literature Review

The following sections provide the underpinning theory, literature review and hypothesis development.

2.1 Underpinning Theory

This research will employ the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) developed by (Ajzen, 1991), which will be applied to the investigation of low-green skincare product purchases among B40 women in Malaysia. TPB is known for its robustness in understanding the purchasing behaviour of customers. Ajzen (1991) suggests three independent determinants, which are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour. Even if there are only three determinants suggested by (Ajzen, 1991), it was confirmed by (Kim & Han, 2010) as the best in understanding consumer purchasing behaviour. Regardless of other determinants that are available as suggested by (Rani, 2014; Slaba, 2020), the paper will need to get accurate data focusing on consumer purchasing behaviour that leads to low purchases of green skincare products. Hence, employing TPB by (Ajzen, 1991) would help to reach this objective.

2.2 Women's Willingness to Purchase Green Skin Care Products

Women's willingness to purchase green skin care products is influenced by their attitudes, awareness, social norms, and perceived benefits, with factors like price, trust, and product knowledge playing significant roles (Lin *et al.*, 2018). A growing awareness of health and environmental issues drives a desire for natural and sustainable products, though a lack of clear information and high prices can hinder purchase intent (Ghazali *et al.*, 2017). To enhance women's willingness to purchase green skincare products, companies should focus on improving product transparency and offering competitive pricing. This approach aligns with (Green Cosmetics, 2023) findings that emphasize the importance of environmental awareness and lifestyle in influencing purchase intentions for green cosmetics. Additionally, (Green Cosmetics, 2023) discovered that improving brand trust and providing clear certification labels can further enhance consumer confidence and willingness to buy green skincare products. Moreover, companies should engage in effective marketing strategies that highlight the benefits of green products to address consumers' health concerns and ethical considerations. Research by (Kazançoğlu & Köse, 2024) indicates that addressing consumer skepticism and enhancing emotional value are crucial for increasing the adoption of green skincare products among women. Ultimately, fostering a deeper understanding of the environmental impact of products can significantly enhance women's commitment to purchasing green skincare items. Furthermore, (Hazra *et al.*, 2024) affirms that brands must also leverage social media to effectively communicate their sustainability efforts and engage consumers in meaningful dialogues about green skincare products. This strategy not only builds trust but also aligns with the growing consumer demand for transparency and authenticity in the beauty industry. Likewise, a study by (Christian *et al.*, 2024) shows that women's perceptions of their ability to contribute positively to the environment are significant predictors of their purchasing decisions regarding green skincare products. Therefore, companies should prioritize building strong relationships with consumers through transparent communication and community engagement to foster a culture of sustainability in the beauty industry. This approach can lead to increased consumer loyalty and a more sustainable market for green skincare products, eventually benefiting both the environment and the beauty industry. Moreover, understanding the barriers women face, such as affordability, perceived awareness, trust, and product quality, can help companies tailor their offerings to better meet women's needs and enhance purchasing behavior. This tailored approach can significantly influence women's purchasing behavior, as it addresses their specific concerns while promoting the benefits of green skincare products.

2.3 The Relationship Between Affordability and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

The growing consciousness of environmental sustainability has significantly influenced consumer behavior across various sectors, including the skincare industry (Lavuri *et al.*,

2022; Green Cosmetics, 2023). As consumers become increasingly conscious of the ecological impact of their purchasing decisions, the demand for green skincare products has surged (Das, 2022).

Affordability has been widely studied in relation to green skincare purchasing, though findings remain mixed. Several studies highlight its positive role, showing that accessible pricing increases willingness to purchase and enhances perceived value, particularly when combined with environmental awareness and brand experiences (Tran *et al.*, 2022; Rahman *et al.*, 2022; Priyanidewi & Hadi, 2025; Layna & Hidayat, 2023). Therefore, affordability acts as both a direct driver and a catalyst for loyalty and willingness to pay. Conversely, other research suggests its influence may be limited. In Pakistan, consumers prioritized product quality, eco-awareness, and social influence over affordability, indicating a willingness to pay premium prices for organic cosmetics (Shah *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, in Jakarta, affordability and availability showed no significant effect, with environmental attitudes and subjective norms proving more decisive (Ruslim *et al.*, 2022). These contrasting outcomes suggest that affordability's impact is highly context-dependent, varying with cultural values, consumer priorities, and market conditions. These dissimilarities in findings reveal a gap in the literature, which led to the formation of hypothesis H1.

H1: There is a significant relationship between affordability and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.4 The Relationship Between Awareness and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Awareness is often identified as a key driver of willingness to purchase green skincare products, though its influence is mixed. Studies show that higher awareness enhances purchase intention by reinforcing attitudes, perceived value, and trust in eco-friendly brands (Wang *et al.*, 2022; Najm *et al.*, 2023). Research in Jakarta found environmental concern and perceived behavioral control increased purchase intention and actual behavior (Ruslim *et al.*, 2022), while other work highlighted links between awareness, health consciousness, and ecological motives in promoting green consumption (Iqbal *et al.*, 2021; Lius & Salim, 2024). Awareness also reshaped sustainable buying patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gu *et al.*, 2021) and influenced halal-green purchasing among Muslim Gen Z (Irfany *et al.*, 2023).

Conversely, awareness can discourage purchases when linked to greenwashing or purchasing barriers. Awareness of deceptive claims reduces willingness to buy sustainable products and leads to a “greenwash penalty” where consumers punish misleading brands (Urbański & ul Haque, 2020; Volschenk *et al.*, 2022). High sustainability awareness may also weaken perceived control over purchasing, lowering intention to act (Shang *et al.*, 2024), while perceptions of greenwashing damage brand image and word-of-mouth (Raihana & Purwanegara, 2023).

Therefore, awareness can both motivate and deter green purchases, depending on whether it builds trust and value or triggers skepticism and perceived barriers. Hence, these variances in previous studies reveal a gap in the literature, which led to the development of hypothesis H2.

H2: There is a significant relationship between awareness and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.5 The Relationship Between Trust and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Trust is widely recognized as an important factor shaping green skincare purchasing behavior, though evidence remains mixed. Many studies confirm its positive role, showing that consumer and influencer reviews enhance purchase intention when trust is present, with trust acting both as a direct driver and a moderator (Putri & Kuswati, 2025; Senalasarani *et al.*, 2025). Green trust also mediates the influence of brand image and perceived quality on willingness to purchase, particularly among younger consumers, while eco-label knowledge has been shown to strengthen trust and, in turn, raise purchase intention (Noor *et al.*, 2025; Hidayah *et al.*, 2023). These findings suggest that trust not only predicts willingness directly but also amplifies the effects of reviews, eco-labels, and brand perceptions.

In contrast, some studies report that trust exerts only an indirect effect. Research in China found that trust influenced willingness to purchase green cosmetics through attitudes and brand equity, rather than directly (Zhai *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, studies in Indonesia revealed that green trust had no significant impact on cosmetic purchasing decisions, where product safety, environmental preservation, and green advertising were stronger predictors (Herawati *et al.*, 2022). Another case study on The Body Shop consumers showed that while green marketing enhanced trust, this trust did not translate into higher purchase intentions, likely due to insufficient environmental awareness among buyers (Pertiwi *et al.*, 2024).

Therefore, past studies show that trust can be both a decisive driver and a limited factor, depending on perspective. Its influence appears strongest when paired with credible factors such as eco-labels, brand image, and authentic reviews, but weaker when consumer awareness is low or when other factors like safety and advertising dominate decision-making. These differences in previous findings reveal a gap in the literature, which led to the formation of hypothesis H3.

H3: There is a significant relationship between trust and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.6 The Relationship Affordability and Perceived Value

Affordability is closely tied to the perceived value of green skincare products, though its effects are not always consistent. Several studies confirm that affordable pricing enhances value perceptions and strengthens purchase intentions. Consumers often adapt their

behavior to pricing strategies by waiting for promotions or shifting to more affordable alternatives. This suggests that affordability directly shapes perceived value according to (Harahap & Hidayat, 2025). Green customer value and psychological benefits have also been found to mediate this link, making affordability a critical factor in driving purchase intentions (Sabani *et al.*, 2024). Evidence from both Indonesian and international contexts highlights that price consciousness, brand positioning, and informative marketing improve perceived value, particularly when supported by environmental awareness and knowledge (Tsaabitah, 2022; Elvaretta & Roslina, 2025; Husna *et al.*, 2024; Priyanidewi & Hadi, 2025).

On the contrary, other research emphasizes the challenges posed by price sensitivity. Studies in Malaysia and Bangladesh report that many consumers view green products as expensive, leading to diminished perceived value despite positive attitudes toward sustainability (Ur Rehman *et al.*, 2022; Honey & Hossain, 2024). Similarly, research indicates that premium pricing can act as a barrier, with consumers questioning price fairness when costs are perceived as excessive (Dekhili & Achabou, 2013; Völker & Tachkov, 2013). While high prices may signal environmental quality, they risk undermining perceived value if not aligned with consumer expectations of fairness (Mahenc, 2007; Fan *et al.*, 2019). These findings highlight a persistent attitude–behavior gap, where expressed willingness to pay does not always translate into action.

Hence, previous studies indicate that affordability enhances perceived value when unfair price premiums can reduce value perceptions and weaken purchase intentions. This duality underscores the need for balanced strategies that communicate both the environmental benefits and fairness of green product pricing. These conflicting previous findings reveal a gap in the literature, which guided the development of hypothesis H4. **H4:** There is a significant relationship between affordability and perceived value.

2.7 The Relationship Between Awareness and Perceived Value

Environmental awareness is frequently cited as a driver of perceived value, though evidence is mixed. Multiple studies report that heightened awareness strengthens consumers' evaluation of green products, improving perceived benefits and ultimately encouraging purchase decisions (Royani & Imaningsih, 2024; Siagian *et al.*, 2025). Research from Starbucks Indonesia showed that awareness and brand image positively influence perceived value, provided that higher prices are justified by clear environmental benefits (Zemafi & Haryono, 2024). Similar results from Lithuania, India, and Nepal suggest that younger consumers prioritize sustainability over price and respond favorably to eco-branding, transparency, and credible information, reinforcing value perceptions and purchase intent (Kisieliauskas & Jančaitis, 2022; Singh Bagga, 2025; Bhattarai, 2024). Collectively, these findings support the argument that promoting awareness enhances perceived value and justifies green product premiums when supported by strong brand image and communication strategies (Nittala & Moturu, 2021; Abbas *et al.*, 2024).

In contrast, several studies indicate that awareness does not always translate into higher perceived value. Study by (Han, 2021) identified that green image, knowledge, and value as the principal drivers of sustainable consumption, but not awareness. While (Uncu & ÖZKAN, 2024) shows that awareness, concern, and price have no significant indirect effect on purchase intention. Research in developing markets found that awareness levels were low and often overshadowed by price, availability, and functionality, leading to negligible attitudes and weak value perceptions toward green products (Goyal, 2015; Hamid, 2014). Additional studies by (Aprilia *et al.*, 2022) highlight that health, hedonic, and environmental values, but not awareness that shape attitudes toward green skincare purchases, and that social value, as a component of awareness, can even negatively influence purchase intention in certain contexts (Ma *et al.*, 2018). These findings underscore a persistent awareness behavior gap, where awareness alone is insufficient to elevate perceived value without supporting indicators such as quality signals or credible branding (Kaur & Bhatia, 2018).

Thus, awareness can enhance perceived value when supported by branding, education, and transparent communication, but may not influence when consumers are skeptical, poorly informed, or prioritize functional attributes and price. These variances in previous outcomes reveal a gap in the literature, which steered to the creation of hypothesis H5.

H5: There is a significant relationship between awareness and perceived value.

2.8 The Relationship Between Trust and Perceived Value

Trust is widely recognized as a key driver of perceived value, and it leads to purchase intention for green products. Multiple studies show that trust in green labeling, marketing, and brands enhances perceived value, which then strengthens satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase behavior (Brimah *et al.*, 2022; Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2023). Meta-analytic evidence confirms that green trust, perceived value, and attitudes jointly predict purchase intention, while perceived risk weakens these effects (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021). Research also highlights that trust acts as a mediator between green marketing and repurchase intention, fostering platform identification and positive word-of-mouth (Huang *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, environmental knowledge has been found to strengthen the translation of trust into actual purchasing behavior. This highlights that informed consumers are better positioned to act on their trust (Li *et al.*, 2025).

Conversely, trust can be undermined by negative perceptions, leading to a reduction in perceived value and lower purchase. According to (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021) greenwashing perceptions erode consumer trust and weaken both perceived value and green word-of-mouth, which create barriers to purchase intention. Moreover, (Wahyoedi *et al.*, 2023) mention that green trust may not significantly influence perceived value or purchase intention when consumer skepticism is high. Furthermore, (Lisnaningrum *et al.*, 2020) elucidate that negative product experiences can diminish trust, lowering repurchase intentions.

Thus, trust tends to elevate perceived value and strengthen purchase behavior when supported by credible branding, eco-labels, and transparent communication, but its effect can be weakened or reversed when greenwashing concerns or negative experiences dominate consumer perceptions. Therefore, these dissimilar views reveal a gap in the literature which guided the conception of hypothesis H6.

H6: There is a significant relationship between trust and perceived value.

2.9 The Relationship Between Perceived Value and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Perceived value is widely recognized as a key driver of willingness to purchase green skincare products, yet its effects are sometimes complex. Numerous studies confirm that higher perceived value enhances purchase intention, acting alongside attitudes, trust, and perceived behavioral control to translate environmental concerns into pro-environmental behavior (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021; Ruslim *et al.*, 2022; Royani & Imaningsih, 2024). Additionally, (Alzubaidi *et al.*, 2021; Cao & Zhang, 2024; Kim & Lee, 2023) highlight that perceived consumer effectiveness, eco-label credibility, and sustainability amplify perceived value, which motivates consumers' actual purchase behavior. Likewise, (Najm *et al.*, 2023) elucidates that attitudes often mediate this relationship, with factors like natural packaging design and product safety certification strengthening consumers' intention to buy. These findings position perceived value as a central psychological mechanism that links green product attributes with consumers' willingness to purchase. Contrasting studies, however, suggest that perceived value can also act as a barrier when it is low or negatively framed. Some research indicates that unfavorable value perceptions deter purchase intention, even when environmental concern is high, pointing to an attitude–behavior gap (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2025; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Evidence shows that materialism and mixed consumer preferences complicate the impact of perceived value, leading to inconsistent pro-environmental behaviors (Alzubaidi *et al.*, 2021). Other studies report that negative value perceptions or skepticism about premium pricing reduce willingness to purchase or pay more for green skincare products (Mamun *et al.*, 2023; Royani & Imaningsih, 2024).

Hence, perceived value plays a dual role as it can strongly motivate purchase when aligned with attitudes, trust, and credible product attributes, but it can equally suppress willingness to purchase when value perceptions are weak, negative, or associated with unfair pricing. This highlights the importance of shaping value through transparent communication, credible eco-labels, and strategies that justify price premiums to bridge the intention–behavior gap. These disparities reveal a gap in the literature, which led to the realisation of hypothesis H7.

H7: There is a significant relationship between perceived value and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.10 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Value Between Affordability and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Perceived value is widely recognized as a critical mediator linking affordability with willingness to purchase green products. Multiple studies confirm that affordability enhances perceived value, which subsequently drives purchase intention. Research by (Zhao & Chen, 2021) shows that both emotional and social benefits strengthen value perceptions, significantly predicting willingness to buy green housing and other sustainable products. Moreover, (Duong *et al.*, 2021) found that perceived value can fully mediate this relationship, with cultural dimensions shaping its strength. Similar studies from India, Malaysia, and Indonesia demonstrate that affordability influences perceived value, which then drives willingness to pay for green buildings, eco-packaging, and green cosmetics, though price must be justified by clear benefits to avoid reducing value (Dutta *et al.*, 2022; Mamun *et al.*, 2023; Zemafi & Haryono, 2024; Yan *et al.*, 2025). Further research by (Sheng-hong *et al.*, 2024) highlights that reducing perceived greenwashing and effectively communicating sustainability claims enhances value perceptions and strengthens purchase intentions.

Conversely, some studies find no significant mediating effect of perceived value. Research on green tourism found that green product price and attributes did not significantly influence purchase intention, suggesting that perceived value failed to translate affordability into willingness to purchase (Rahayu *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, (Hartanto *et al.*, 2023) report that certain dimensions of value, such as social value, do not significantly affect purchase attitudes. Furthermore, (Zulfikar & Mayvita, 2018) discovered that trust and not perceived value is the primary driver of green product purchase intention.

Therefore, perceived value appears to be a key psychological mechanism when it is anchored in tangible benefits, clear brand communication, and credible pricing. However, its mediating effect weakens or disappears when value is poorly communicated, social value is weak, or consumers rely more heavily on trust than on price–benefit evaluations. These differences in past breakthroughs reveal a gap in the literature which guided the formation of hypothesis H8.

H8: There is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between affordability and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.11 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Value Between Awareness and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Perceived value is often identified as a significant mediator between awareness and willingness to purchase green skincare products. Several studies confirm that greater awareness enhances attitudes and perceived value, which then strengthens purchase intention. Research by (Shimul *et al.*, 2021) highlights that consumer involvement magnifies this relationship, while perceived behavioral control and health consciousness show weaker effects. Similarly, studies in Malaysia and emerging markets show that

natural packaging cues, safety certifications, and green attitudes strengthen perceived value's mediating effect, particularly when combined with high environmental knowledge (Najm *et al.*, 2023; Lavuri *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, (Sun & Xing, 2022) mention that social media information sharing has raised awareness and perceived value, thereby encouraging Generation Z consumers toward sustainable purchases. Additionally, (Sakshi & Naval, 2022) suggest that health and appearance awareness contribute meaningfully to value perceptions, even when general environmental concern is secondary. Likewise, studies by (Adil *et al.*, 2024) emphasize that transparency and credibility are crucial, as trust in green marketing claims enhances the perceived value's ability to translate awareness into purchase willingness

Contrarily, (Keelson & Johnson, 2021; Firdaus, 2023) report no mediating effect of perceived value. Their research indicates that awareness can influence purchase intention directly, bypassing perceived value entirely. Moreover, studies by (Kamalanon *et al.*, 2022) discovered that company image, rather than perceived value, mediates the relationship between awareness and intention to purchase. Similarly, (Royani & Imaningsih, 2024) found that environmental concern and altruistic values act as direct drivers of intention without the mediation of perceived value. Comparably, (Layna & Hidayat, 2023) highlight that brand love and loyalty play a stronger role than perceived value in motivating willingness to purchase.

Hence, perceived value can be a powerful mediator when awareness is paired with reliable products, trust, and involvement. However, the effect of perceived value diminishes when consumers act on awareness directly or rely more heavily on brand-related emotional connections and company reputation. These variances in previous findings reveal a gap in the literature, which led to the realisation of hypothesis H9.

H9: There is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between awareness and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.12 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Value Between Trust and Willingness to Purchase Green Skincare Products

Perceived value is frequently denoted as a significant mediator between trust and willingness to purchase green products. Studies by (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Ma & Chang, 2022) affirm that trust enhances perceived value, which then drives purchase intentions, satisfaction, and loyalty. A meta-analytic study by (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021) reinforces this pathway, showing that green trust, value, and attitude jointly predict willingness to purchase, while perceived risk dampens the relationship. Moreover, (Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2023) research highlights that perceived value not only mediates trust's effect but also strengthens green satisfaction and word-of-mouth, encouraging ongoing engagement with green brands.

On the other hand, research by (Rani *et al.*, 2024; Kharbanda & Singh, 2022) indicates that trust and perceived value exert independent effects on purchase intentions, with trust directly driving green consumption without value acting as a mediator.

Additionally, according to (Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2022; Braimah *et al.*, 2022) reveal that green trust and satisfaction are the primary determinants of purchase intentions but not perceived value. Moreover, (Vebriyanto & Hadi, 2023; Wahyuni & Zulfikar, 2024) discovered that while perceived value may predict purchase behavior on its own, it fails to mediate the relationship between trust and willingness to purchase green products such as electric vehicles.

Thus, perceived value appears to be a significant mediator between trust and willingness to purchase, but it is not universally accepted by all research. Its mediating role is strongest when trust is supported by clear product quality, credible communication, and satisfaction, but weakens when consumers rely more on direct trust indicators or authenticity; therefore, bypassing value evaluations in their purchase decisions. These contradictory findings reveal a gap in the literature which steered to the formation of hypothesis H10.

H10: There is a significant mediating effect of perceived value between trust and willingness to purchase green skincare products.

2.13 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research is to scrutinize the mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between key determinants of women’s green skin care purchasing behaviour. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual model to highlight how these variables interact.

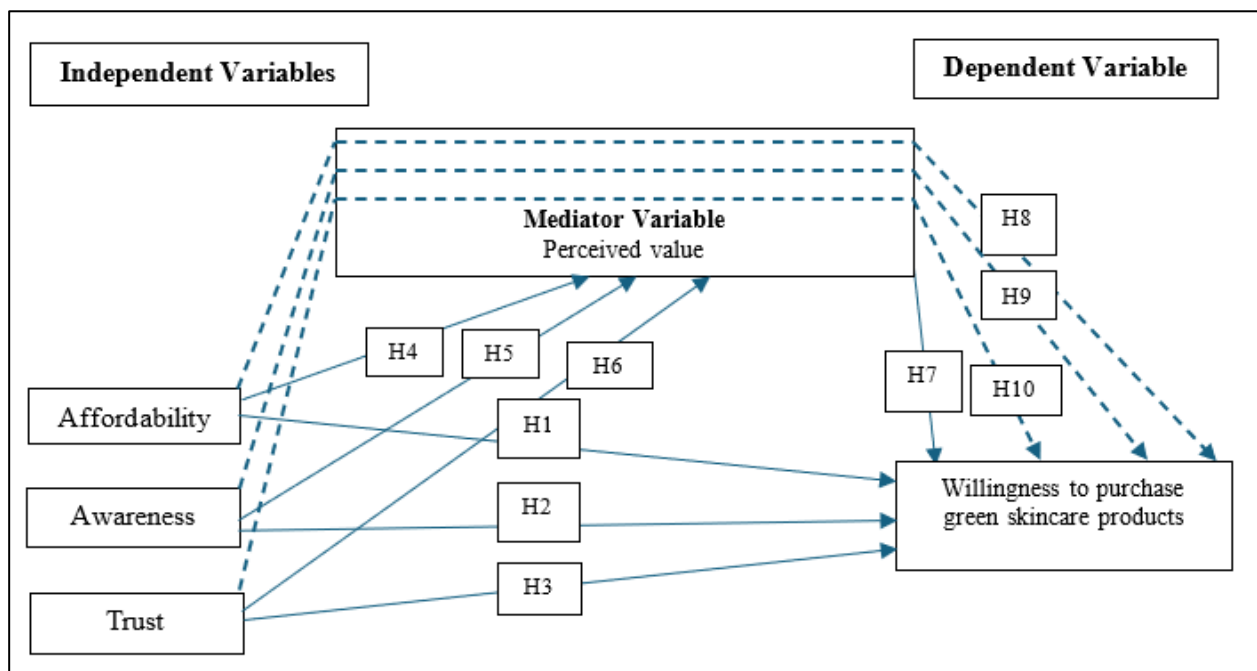


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design to explore how affordability, environmental awareness, and trust in brand all relate to the purchase of green skincare products. This study is based on a cross-sectional survey method to gather data at a single moment, which allowed the researchers to statistically test the relationships that were hypothesized.

The target group of this study consisted of B40 or low-income women in Malaysia, particularly those living in Klang Valley, as this area showcases a diverse urban consumer base. 162 respondents out of 300 contributed the data for this study. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling. All participants were female, aged between 18 and 55 years, and fell within the B40 income classification (monthly household income below RM4,850). This demographic was chosen because it represents a crucial yet under-explored segment of the Malaysian consumer market.

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed both in person and online (via Google Forms) to enhance accessibility. The data collection took place over a six-week period. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SmatPLS).

4. Findings and Interpretation

This section provides the findings of this study.

4.1 Reliability Test

Table 1: Reliability Test (N=40)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Willingness to purchase green skincare products	0.912	5
Affordability	0.852	5
Awareness	0.926	8
Trust	0.935	6
Perceived value	0.946	7

Table 1 reliability test demonstrates that all constructs in this study achieved high levels of internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.7$). Willingness to purchase green skincare products recorded $\alpha = 0.912$ across 5 items, showing excellent reliability. Affordability, with $\alpha = 0.852$ from 5 items, also reflects strong consistency. Awareness achieved an even higher score of $\alpha = 0.926$ across 8 items, confirming that the scale used to measure this construct is both stable and dependable. Trust, measured with 6 items, produced an $\alpha = 0.935$, again indicating very high reliability. Finally, perceived value obtained the highest coefficient $\alpha = 0.946$ with 7 items, signifying exceptional internal consistency.

These results collectively suggest that the measurement instruments used for all five variables are highly reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis, ensuring that the findings derived from them can be considered valid and trustworthy.

4.2 Normality Test (Q-Q Plot)

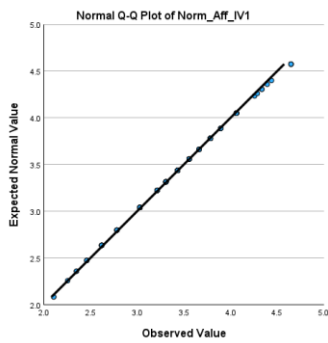


Figure 4.2.1: Affordability

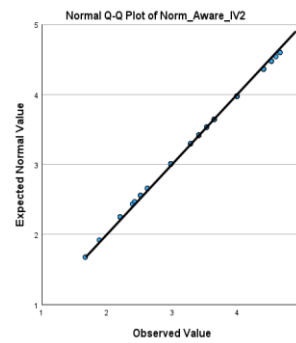


Figure 4.2.2: Awareness

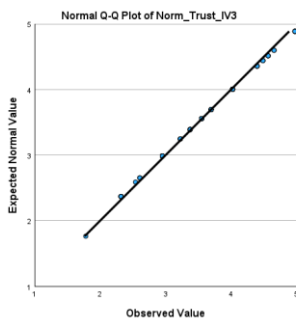


Figure 4.2.3: Trust

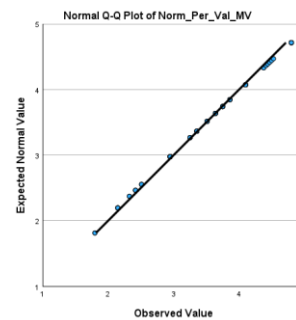


Figure 4.2.4: Perceived Value

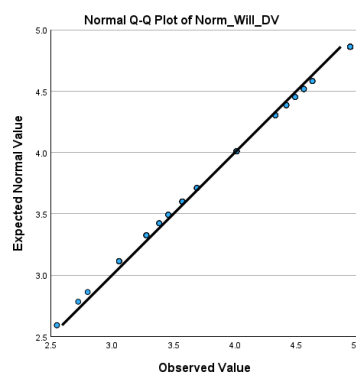


Figure 4.2.5: Willingness to Purchase

Figure 2: Q-Q Plot Results

The Q-Q plots in Figures 4.2.1 – 4.2.5 for the study variables, which are affordability, awareness, trust, perceived value, and willingness to purchase, indicate how closely the data follow a normal distribution. In each case, the plotted points align

closely with the diagonal reference line, with only minor deviations at the tails. This pattern suggests that the data for all five constructs approximates normality reasonably well. Since the deviations are minimal and not systematic, the assumption of normal distribution required for regression and mediation analysis can be considered valid. Thus, the Q-Q plots confirm that the dataset is suitable for the planned statistical tests, and no severe violations of normality are present that would undermine the robustness of the findings.

4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Profiles of Respondents (N = 162)

Criteria	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-27	17	10.7
	28-37	14	8.4
	38-47	11	6.8
	48-57	12	7.4
Income Per Month	Below RM2,560	7	4.3
	RM2,561 – RM3,439	9	5.4
	RM3,440 – RM4,309	16	10.1
	RM4,310 – RM5,249	22	13.6
Education Level	Degree	23	14.0
	Diploma	14	8.9
	Postgraduate	4	2.3
	Primary School	1	0.6
	Secondary School	12	7.6

The demographic profile of the respondents participating in the study is shown in Table 2. According to the table, the majority of respondents were younger women aged 18–27, making up 10.7 percent of the sample. In terms of income, most participants were at the upper end of the B40 category, with 13.6 percent earning between RM4,310 and RM5,249. Education levels were also relatively high, with degree holders forming the largest group at 14.0 percent. These findings suggest that green skincare products are mainly purchased by younger, better-educated women who are positioned toward the higher income range within the B40 segment.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

To study the correlation between variables, the correlation test is done, and the analysis is exhibited in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson’s Correlation (N = 162)

Variables	AFF	AWA	TR	PV	WP
Affordability (AFF)	1				
Awareness (AWA)	0.613	1			
Trust (TR)	0.613	0.736	1		
Perceived Value (PV)	0.649	0.610	0.539	1	
Willingness to Purchase (WP)	0.422	0.515	0.548	0.608	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)					

Table 3 shows the Pearson’s correlation analysis and reveals several important relationships among the variables. Affordability shows a strong positive correlation with awareness ($r = 0.613; p < 0.01$) and trust ($r = 0.613; p < 0.01$), indicating that as affordability perceptions increase, consumers are also likely to feel more aware of green skincare products and develop greater trust in them. Awareness has the strongest correlation with trust ($r = 0.736; p < 0.01$), suggesting that consumers who are more knowledgeable about green skincare tend to have higher confidence in product claims. Perceived value is strongly associated with affordability ($r = 0.649; p < 0.01$) and awareness ($r = 0.610; p < 0.01$), and moderately with trust ($r = 0.539; p < 0.01$), showing that consumers’ evaluation of value is shaped by how affordable they perceive the products to be, how much they know about them, and the extent to which they trust the brand.

When it comes to willingness to purchase, the highest correlation is with perceived value ($r = 0.608; p < 0.01$), followed by trust ($r = 0.548; p < 0.01$), awareness ($r = 0.515; p < 0.01$), and affordability ($r = 0.422; p < 0.01$). This indicates that perceived value plays the most influential role in shaping purchase intention, while affordability has the weakest but still significant relationship. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, which confirms that the observed relationships are statistically robust. Overall, the results highlight that while affordability, awareness, and trust are important, it is the perceived value that most strongly drives B40 women’s willingness to purchase green skincare products.

4.5 SEM Model, Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, Total Effects and Mediation Results

The SEM model in Figure 5 illustrates the mediating role of perceived value between affordability, awareness, and willingness to purchase green skincare products. Both affordability and awareness exert significant effects on willingness to purchase exclusively through perceived value, confirming full mediation. Trust, however, bypasses perceived value and directly influences willingness to purchase, indicating that it operates as an independent driver rather than through value enhancement. The path from trust to perceived value is non-significant, suggesting no mediating effect. Comprehensive and detailed interpretations are provided in Table 4 below.

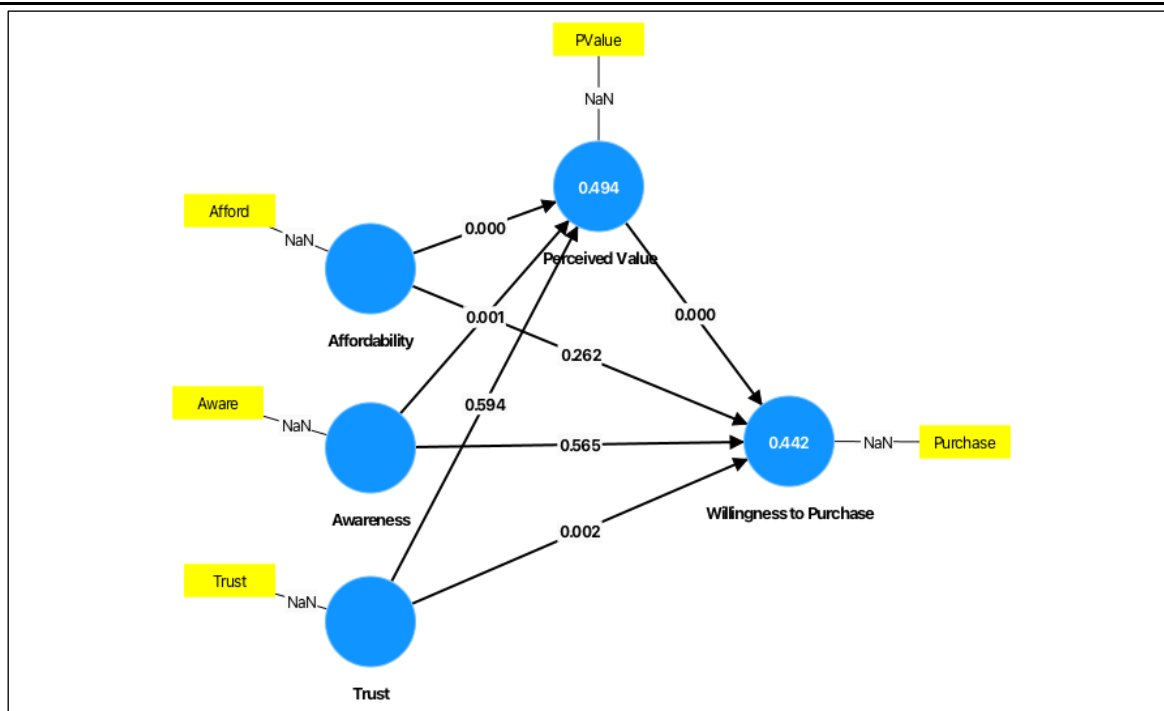


Figure 5: SEM Model

Table 4: Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, Total Effect, Mediation Type

Path	Direct Effect (β , t, p)	Indirect Effect via Perceived Value (β , t, p, 95% CI)	Total Effect (β , t, p)	Mediation Type
Affordability → Willingness to Purchase	$\beta = 0.079$, $t = 1.122$, $p = 0.262$	$\beta = 0.196$, $t = 3.670$, $p < 0.001$, CI [0.101, 0.313]	$\beta = 0.117$, $t = 1.431$, $p = 0.152$	Full Mediation
Awareness → Willingness to Purchase	$\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.575$, $p = 0.565$	$\beta = 0.143$, $t = 2.648$, $p = 0.008$, CI [0.055, 0.270]	$\beta = 0.204$, $t = 1.995$, $p = 0.046$	Full Mediation
Trust → Willingness to Purchase	$\beta = 0.304$, $t = 3.061$, $p = 0.002$	$\beta = 0.021$, $t = 0.529$, $p = 0.597$, CI crosses zero	$\beta = 0.326$, $t = 3.020$, $p = 0.003$	No Mediation

The mediation analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) results in Table 4 provides compelling evidence that perceived value plays a pivotal role in mediating affordability and awareness with willingness to purchase green skincare products. For affordability, the direct path to willingness to purchase was weak and non-significant ($\beta = 0.079$, $t = 1.122$, $p = 0.262$), indicating that price-related considerations alone do not directly translate into buying intention. However, the significant indirect path through perceived value ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 3.670$, $p < 0.001$, CI [0.101, 0.313]) confirms that affordability primarily shapes willingness to purchase by enhancing consumers' evaluation of the value they receive. This finding supports a case of full mediation, where affordability impacts purchasing decisions only when it succeeds in elevating perceived value.

A similar pattern emerges for awareness. The direct effect of awareness on willingness to purchase was statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.575$, $p = 0.565$), suggesting that simply being environmentally aware does not necessarily prompt action. Yet the indirect effect via perceived value was both significant and meaningful ($\beta = 0.143$, $t = 2.648$, $p = 0.008$, CI [0.055, 0.270]), turning the total effect significant ($\beta = 0.204$, $t = 1.995$, $p = 0.046$). This indicates that awareness exerts its influence indirectly by strengthening perceived value, confirming another instance of full mediation. Together, these results highlight perceived value as a crucial mechanism through which affordability and awareness translate into behavioural intention.

Trust demonstrates a distinct dynamic. Unlike affordability and awareness, trust shows a strong and statistically significant direct effect on willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.304$, $t = 3.061$, $p = 0.002$), with no evidence of mediation through perceived value ($\beta = 0.021$, $t = 0.529$, $p = 0.597$, CI crosses zero). This result suggests that consumers who trust green products or brands are willing to purchase them regardless of how they evaluate perceived value, pointing to trust as an independent and powerful determinant of purchase intention.

Hence, these results suggest a model where perceived value is the central mediator connecting affordability and awareness to purchase willingness, while trust functions as a parallel direct driver. From a managerial perspective, this implies that strategies to boost purchase intention should focus on reinforcing perceived value through clear communication, fair pricing strategies, and education initiatives that elevate consumer awareness. Building trust remains crucial, but its role appears to bypass value formation, meaning that brand credibility and transparency campaigns may directly influence consumer intent regardless of the perceived value of the product.

5. Discussion

This study examined the determinants of willingness to purchase green skincare products among B40 or low-income women in Malaysia. This study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The analysis focused on affordability, awareness, trust, and the mediating role of perceived value. Each research question (RQ) and hypothesis (H1–H10) is discussed below.

Answering the first research question (RQ1) and testing the hypothesis H1, the results revealed that affordability does not have a significant direct impact on willingness to purchase green skincare products ($\beta = 0.079$, $t = 1.122$, $p = 0.262$). This indicates that price alone is insufficient to trigger purchase behavior among B40 women. These findings resonate with (Shah *et al.*, 2024; Ruslim *et al.*, 2022), who found that consumers often value product quality, eco-awareness, and health benefits more highly than price, and are sometimes willing to pay more for eco-friendly alternatives. However, the result is inconsistent with studies by (Tran *et al.*, 2022; Rahman *et al.*, 2022), which emphasized affordability as a major driver of green product purchasing. Hence, this suggests that

affordability may serve as an enabling factor that becomes meaningful only when it contributes to perceived value.

Resolving the second research question (RQ2) and hypothesis H2, awareness was found to have no significant direct effect on willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.575$, $p = 0.565$). This finding highlights that awareness, while necessary, does not automatically translate into purchase behavior. It supports the observations of (Urbański & ul Haque, 2020; Volschenk *et al.*, 2022), who reported that heightened awareness of greenwashing can sometimes backfire, leading to consumer skepticism and reduced intention to buy. Nevertheless, these results challenge studies such as (Wang *et al.*, 2022; Najm *et al.*, 2023; Lius & Salim, 2024), who demonstrated that awareness enhances purchase intention by shaping favorable attitudes and trust in green products.

The results related to RQ3 and hypothesis H3 showed that trust significantly predicts willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.304$, $t = 3.061$, $p = 0.002$). This confirms that trust plays a decisive role in driving consumer behavior. These findings are consistent with (Noor *et al.*, 2025; Putri & Kuswati, 2025), who found that trust amplifies the effect of brand image and customer innovativeness on purchase intention. On the other hand, the results differ from (Zhai *et al.*, 2022), who proposed that trust affects purchase behavior indirectly through attitudes and brand equity, suggesting that for this population, trust operates as an independent and direct motivator.

With respect to the fourth research question (RQ4) and hypothesis H4, affordability was found to significantly and positively affect perceived value ($\beta = 0.428$, $t = 5.047$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that fair pricing leads consumers to view green skincare products as offering greater value. This outcome aligns with (Harahap & Hidayat, 2025; Sabani *et al.*, 2024), who highlighted the role of pricing in shaping customer perceived value and psychological benefits. However, it contrasts with the work of (Ur Rehman *et al.*, 2022; Dekhili & Achabou, 2013), who indicated that price sensitivity can lower value perception and act as a barrier to purchase.

Considering the fifth research question (RQ5) and hypothesis H5, awareness was found to significantly influence perceived value ($\beta = 0.313$, $t = 3.264$, $p = 0.001$). This demonstrates that consumers who are more knowledgeable about environmental issues place a higher value on green products. The finding is consistent with (Zemafi & Haryono, 2024; Royani & Imaningsih, 2024), who observed that awareness enhances perceived value and justifies premium pricing. However, it addresses the gap raised by (Han, 2021; Goyal, 2015), who argued that awareness alone may not raise perceived value when price and functionality are consumers' primary concerns.

In terms of the sixth research question (RQ6) and hypothesis H6, trust did not significantly predict perceived value ($\beta = 0.047$, $t = 0.533$, $p = 0.594$). This result suggests that trust does not necessarily shape consumers' value judgments about green products. This outcome is in line with (Pertiwi *et al.*, 2024), who concluded that trust works as a direct determinant of purchase rather than a contributor to perceived value. However, it

stands in contrast to (Brammah *et al.*, 2022; Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2023), who reported that trust enhances value perception and fosters greater loyalty and satisfaction.

When addressing the seventh research question (RQ7) and hypothesis H7, perceived value emerged as the strongest predictor of willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.458$, $t = 5.552$, $p < 0.001$). This underscores the centrality of perceived value as the psychological mechanism linking attitudes to behavioral intention. This finding supports (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021; Kim & Lee, 2023), who demonstrated that perceived value is a decisive factor in converting environmental attitudes into purchasing behavior. These results oppose the view of (Kanapathipillai *et al.*, 2025; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021), who argued that perceived value can act as a barrier when consumers doubt the benefits of green products.

Answering at the eighth research question (RQ8) and hypothesis H8, the results showed that perceived value fully mediates the relationship between affordability and willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 3.670$, $p < 0.001$, CI [0.101, 0.313]). This indicates that affordability exerts an influence on purchasing behavior only when it improves consumers' value perception. This is consistent with (Zhao & Chen, 2021; Dutta *et al.*, 2022), who stressed the critical role of perceived value in linking pricing to purchase intentions.

Similarly, for the ninth research question (RQ9) and hypothesis H9, perceived value was found to fully mediate the relationship between awareness and willingness to purchase ($\beta = 0.143$, $t = 2.648$, $p = 0.008$, CI [0.055, 0.270]). This suggests that awareness on its own is insufficient to influence purchase behavior unless it translates into a perception of added value. These results are in line with (Najm *et al.*, 2023; Lavuri *et al.*, 2023), who observed that natural packaging design and safety certifications transform awareness into purchase intention. However, this contrasts with the findings of (Keelson & Johnson, 2021; Firdaus, 2023), who argued that awareness can directly shape green purchase behavior without mediation.

Finally, responding to the tenth research question (RQ10) and hypothesis H10, the mediating effect of perceived value between trust and willingness to purchase was insignificant ($\beta = 0.021$, $t = 0.529$, $p = 0.597$). This finding indicates that trust operates independently and exerts a direct effect on purchase intention rather than being channeled through value perceptions. This supports the conclusions of (Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2022; Kharbanda & Singh, 2022), who reported that trust is a direct determinant of green purchase behavior, bypassing the value pathway.

Hence, these findings offer an understanding of green skincare consumer behavior of B40 or low-income women in Malaysia. The findings confirm that affordability and awareness shape purchase behavior primarily through perceived value, while trust exerts a direct influence. This provides valuable insight for marketers and policymakers who aim to bridge the attitude–behavior gap by combining fair pricing, transparent communication, and credible trust-building strategies to strengthen consumer confidence and foster sustainable buying behavior.

6. Conclusion

This research sought to address ten specific objectives to understand the willingness of low-income women within the (B40) category in Malaysia who purchase green skincare products. The first objective was to determine whether affordability directly influences willingness to purchase. The study concluded that affordability alone does not significantly predict purchase intention, narrowing the gap between studies that argued price was a key determinant of green purchasing (Shah *et al.*, 2024) and those that highlighted other factors such as brand image and perceived quality (Ruslim *et al.*, 2022). By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this finding reinforces that affordability must shape attitudes, reflected here as perceived value, before it can trigger behavioral intention.

The second objective examined whether environmental awareness directly impacts willingness to purchase. The findings revealed no significant direct relationship, addressing the conflicting evidence where some studies reported awareness as a positive driver (Iqbal *et al.*, 2021; Najm *et al.*, 2023) while others linked high awareness to consumer skepticism (Urbański & ul Haque, 2020). This study clarified that awareness does not operate independently but becomes effective only when it translates into value perception, which closes an important conceptual gap.

The third objective was to evaluate whether trust influences willingness to purchase green skincare products. The results confirmed trust as a strong, direct driver of behavioral intention, supporting (Noor *et al.*, 2025; Putri & Kuswati, 2025), who emphasized trust as central to purchase decisions. This finding resolved the inconsistency of prior studies where trust was found to be non-significant in certain contexts (Herawati *et al.*, 2022), positioning trust as an independent relational construct that can directly motivate purchase.

The fourth objective sought to assess the impact of affordability on perceived value. The significant relationship observed confirms that fair and accessible pricing enhances consumers' perceived value of green products, aligning with (Harahap & Hidayat, 2025; Sabani *et al.*, 2024). This outcome narrows the debate in the literature by affirming that affordability shapes value judgments, which are essential precursors to behavioral change.

The fifth objective focused on whether awareness enhances perceived value. The study confirmed this relationship, providing evidence that environmental knowledge and concern improve how consumers evaluate the worth of green skincare products (Royani & Imaningsih, 2024). This bridges the gap between studies that identified awareness as an attitudinal driver and those that reported it as ineffective in influencing value perceptions (Goyal, 2015), clarifying its catalytic role in value creation.

The sixth objective examined the relationship between trust and perceived value. The findings revealed no significant association, challenging assumptions that trust necessarily elevates value perception. This result supports studies such as (Pertiwi *et al.*,

2024), which found trust to be impactful primarily as a direct predictor of purchase rather than as a value enhancer. This insight contributes to theory by showing that trust may function through an independent pathway outside attitudinal mediation.

The seventh objective was to determine whether perceived value predicts willingness to purchase. The study confirmed perceived value as the most powerful driver of green purchase intention, consistent with (Zhuang *et al.*, 2021; Kim & Lee, 2023). This finding bridges the long-standing attitude–behavior gap by showing that when consumers perceive strong value, balancing price, quality, and sustainability benefits, they are more likely to act on pro-environmental intentions.

The eighth objective investigated whether perceived value mediates the relationship between affordability and willingness to purchase. The study established full mediation, affirming that affordability alone is insufficient to drive purchase unless it enhances value perception. This aligns with (Fan *et al.*, 2019; Dekhili & Achabou, 2013), who emphasized the importance of price fairness and psychological benefit assessments. The ninth objective assessed whether perceived value mediates the relationship between awareness and willingness to purchase. The results confirmed full mediation, demonstrating that awareness is only effective when it improves perceived value, supporting (Najm *et al.*, 2023; Lavuri *et al.*, 2023), who highlighted the role of packaging, certifications, and knowledge in converting awareness into intention.

The tenth objective examined whether perceived value mediates the relationship between trust and willingness to purchase. The study found no mediation, confirming that trust drives purchasing behavior directly rather than through value enhancement. This finding is in line with (Román-Augusto *et al.*, 2022; Herawati *et al.*, 2022), who observed that trust can motivate behavior even when value perceptions remain unchanged.

Thus, this study contributes to theory by validating perceived value as the central attitudinal mechanism that converts affordability and awareness into behavioral intention, thereby extending the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It resolves conflicting findings by clarifying the indirect and direct impact of perceived value on affordability, awareness and trust by offering a more comprehensive understanding of low-income or (B40) category women’s willingness to purchase green skincare products.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study only focuses on workers from one industry only. Thus, restricting the generalisability of the results to other sectors or geographic settings. Therefore, to acquire more insight into this mediation study, future research could be expanded to more industries in Malaysia. Additionally, the contributions of this study close critical gaps in the literature and provide a robust platform for future research, particularly in examining cultural norms, brand authenticity, and digital engagement that may further shape sustainable consumption patterns.

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Conflict of Interests Statement

The authors assert that this study was conducted devoid of any conflicts of interest. Moreover, this study was conducted fully autonomously, with no other organisation providing funding or exerting influence. The content provided is original and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere.

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Kumaran Kanapathipillai, a prominent figure in academia, earned his PhD in management and business from Management and Science University (Malaysia). With an impressive tenure of 24 years in the academic world, he has honed expertise in areas such as Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management, and Logistics Management. Within academia, he plays a pivotal role in guiding and assessing both Masters and PhD candidates. He also serves as an external examiner for several universities in Europe and Asia. Additionally, he is a peer reviewer for numerous academic journals. Beyond academia, he provides specialised training sessions on entrepreneurship, creative problem-solving, and project management across diverse industries. His scholarly pursuits predominantly concentrate on contemporary entrepreneurship, management, and marketing.

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