



## Behavioral reasoning perspectives to brand love toward natural products: Moderating role of environmental concern and household size

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### ABSTRACT

Consumers do not easily trust brands' claims of naturalness, making it essential to understand the drivers of loyalty and the underlying brand love for such products. Responding to this need, the present study developed a conceptual model based on the Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) to examine the antecedents of brand love. The model was tested using data collected through a cross-sectional survey. The findings suggest that health consciousness is positively associated with reasons for consuming natural products and attitude, which, in turn, are also positively associated with each other. At the same time, reasons for consuming natural products and attitude are positively associated with brand love toward natural products. Whereas, reasons against consuming natural products are negatively associated with attitude and have no association with either health consciousness or brand love. Furthermore, of the two proposed moderators (environmental concern and household size, only environmental concern had a moderation effect on the association of brand love with its antecedents. This study thus provides useful, practical, and managerial implications.

### 1. Introduction

Health concerns and environmental sustainability are the major issues defining consumption patterns in the 21st century (Moscato and Machin, 2018). Recent studies have noted the growing trend of consuming foods and products that consumers perceive to be healthy and pro-environmental, such as organic food, local food, and green apparel (e.g., Kumar et al., 2021a,b; Dhir et al., 2021b; Tandon et al., 2021; Kushwah et al., 2019c). Such a rise in consciousness about these concerns has motivated consumers to opt for and prefer natural products (Binninger, 2017) that make use of natural ingredients and avoid the use of additives or chemical substances, thereby creating a less harmful effect on the natural environment and one's health (Coricelli et al., 2019). Some common examples of natural products include natural foods (Kooijmans and Palacios, 2014), natural wine (Galati et al., 2019), natural honey (Batt and Liu, 2012), and natural cosmetics (Zhang and

Zhou, 2019). Scholars have suggested various benefits of consuming natural products, which include the betterment of health (Binninger, 2017), strengthening of physical and mental health (Moscato and Machin, 2018), and fewer adverse effects on the environment (Binninger, 2017).

Despite the various advantages offered by natural products and consumers' seeming preference for them, consumers often do not buy such products (Zhang and Zhou, 2019). Indeed, Nielsen (2018) reported that sales of one category of natural products, i.e., natural cosmetic products, decreased by 1.2% in 2017 from 2016. This lack of translation of popularity into actual purchase has motivated scholars to examine the possible reasons behind such a gap. These reasons have been identified as lack of convenience (Zhang and Zhou, 2019), complex regulatory requirements to define naturalness (Klaschka, 2016), lack of knowledge (Galati et al., 2019), mistrust (Mahat, 2012), and various perceived risks (Binninger, 2017). Scholars have further suggested that consumers'

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perception of natural products as healthy and environmentally beneficial remains an essential parameter to this investigation because of the association of various environmental and health risks with the consumption of traditional products (Galati et al., 2019; Binninger, 2017). As a result, this study aims to examine why consumers tend to buy or not buy natural products.

Although prior literature has attempted to define the term “naturalness” across various contexts (Kooijmans and Palacios, 2014; Coricelli et al., 2019) and examined the possible reasons for selecting natural products, such as origin, brand reputation, and monetary value (Batt and Liu, 2012), the literature still lacks a deeper understanding of the consumer’s psychological (e.g., values) and contextual (e.g., consumer reasoning) perspectives (Binninger, 2017). Furthermore, it is also unknown how these psychological and contextual perspectives relate to each other and impact attitude and attachment (e.g., brand love) toward natural products. Scholars have argued that it is essential to study consumer values since they are relatively stable over time; furthermore, examining them more thoroughly enables marketers to understand the actual use behavior of customers better and to develop and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly (Rahman and Reynolds, 2019; De Groot and Thøgersen, 2018). To this end, health consciousness is a crucial yet often overlooked factor determining the selection of natural products (Coricelli et al., 2019).

In addition to values, our review of the literature reveals that reasons represent important elements of consumers’ behavioral responses and can be understood by examining the ‘reasons for’ and ‘reasons against’ engaging in any activity or behavior (Tandon et al., 2020b). Underlining the importance of reasons in consumers’ decision-making processes, Westaby (2005) conceptualized these reasons through Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT), which has been employed by recent studies to examine consumers’ behavioral reasoning process (Tandon et al., 2020a, 2020b; Sahu et al., 2020). However, in the context of natural products, different reasons (for as well as against) associated with consumers’ decision-making have been currently under-explored.

Regarding the varied manifestations of consumer behavior, brand love is a recent concept in the realm of consumer-brand relationships (Kaufmann, Loureiro and Manarioti, 2016), but an important one since it can help managers and marketers create a long-term relationship with consumers. Various studies have contributed to its conceptualization over time (Batra et al., 2012; Ahuvia, 2008; Vernuccio et al., 2015), describing it as a relationship between the customer and the brand that is emotional and passionate (Ahuvia et al., 2008). Ahuvia (2008) defined brand love through three main elements: (a) cognitive brand love (one’s beliefs toward the brand); (b) affective brand love (one’s feelings and emotions toward the brand); and (c) conative brand love (one’s willingness to use the brand and spend resources). Scholars have emphasized that brand love is an influential variable that has a significant association with consumers’ decision-making (Vernuccio et al., 2015; Islam and Rahman, 2016) and actual purchasing behavior (Hegner et al., 2017). However, to our knowledge, only one prior study (Kumar et al., 2021a) has examined brand love in the context of natural products.

We identified three major gaps in the literature on natural products: (a) the limited conceptualization of internal/intrinsic factors, such as values, that drive consumers’ decisions related to natural products; (b) the dichotomous factors associated with consumers’ choice behavior toward natural products are not well-understood; and (c) behavioral outcomes, such as attitude, and, particularly, brand love, have remained less-examined compared with similar contexts. Since natural products not only offer perceived health benefits but also have a perceived pro-environmental aspect, a better understanding of consumer behavior is essential for marketers, producers and researchers. Accordingly, this study proposes to bridge these gaps by examining the associations between values, dichotomous variables (represented by reasons for consuming natural products and reasons against consuming natural

products), attitude toward natural products, and brand love.

Given the nature of the variables under study, we utilize BRT to propose the underlying conceptual model. We contend that BRT is an appropriate theory for the present research due to the following reasons: first, it is a popular consumer behavior theory that provides a clear elucidation of consumers’ reasoning process while making their consumption decisions (Ryan and Casidy, 2018). BRT further implies that the values, reasoning (for and against), attitudes, intentions, and actions of customers are the primary factors in their decision-making (Sahu et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2021a). Second, the applicability of BRT has already been proven in understanding pro-environmental behaviors, such as renewable energy systems (Claudy et al., 2013) and organic food (Tandon et al., 2020b). Third, Hegner et al. (2017) have shown that global motives (attitude, subjective norms, and PBC) impact brand love. To this end, BRT, which adds contextual variables, such as reasons for and reasons against, as precedents to global motives, may be able to explain brand love even more effectively.

Bringing the preceding text together, the present study addresses four main research questions (RQs): RQ1: How are consumers’ values associated with attitude and reasons (for and against) consuming natural products? RQ2: How are reasons (for and against) consuming natural products and attitude associated with brand love toward natural products? RQ3: (a) Do reasons (for and against) act as mediators for the relationship between value and attitude, and (b) Does attitude act as a mediator for the relationship between reasons (for and against) and brand love? RQ4: Do the relevant moderating variables affect the associations among study variables, and, if so, how? Regarding relevant moderation effects, we consider environmental concern and household size as sources of personal difference among consumers by drawing upon the past findings. Prior literature has suggested that environmental concerns are the precursors of pro-environmental behaviors (Sreen et al., 2020), thereby making it relevant to consider their effect in the case of natural products as well. Similarly, scholars have argued that the number of household members acts as an indicator for choosing healthier options since individuals with more household members have been found to feel a greater sense of responsibility when making consumption choices (Cho et al., 2019). Thus, it is pertinent to consider the effect of household size to better understand the drivers of consumer behavior toward natural products. The present study thus analyzed data collected from 949 consumers to answer the proposed research questions.

This article has six sections. Section 2 presents the theoretical underpinnings and the study’s hypotheses. Section 3 discusses the adopted research methodology, while Section 4 presents the analysis of the data and results. The findings of the research, along with their implications, are discussed in Section 5. Finally, Section 6 explores the conclusion, limitations, and directions for future research.

## 2. Theory and hypotheses development

### 2.1. Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT)

BRT is a popular behavioral theory coined by Westaby (2005) that holistically uncovers human behavior. BRT comprises four components: values, reasons, attitude, and intentions/behavior (Westaby, 2005). The characterization of BRT is based on the following assumptions: (a) reasons act as essential determinants of consumer intentions and behavior; (b) in addition to reasons, attitude also predicts intentions and behavior (c) traditional belief concepts (e.g., consumer values); predict attitude and reasons; and (d) reasons and attitude act as mediating variables in the model. Prior literature has pointed out that the use of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to predict consumer intentions and behaviors often result in the attitude-intention-behavior gap, thereby necessitating an examination of context-specific variables to address it (Ertz et al., 2016). Similarly, Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) have suggested that context-specific variables should be included in

traditional acceptance and adoption theories to predict and understand context-specific intentions and behaviors more accurately. In turn, these contextual factors enable scholars to test different psychological processes that form an individual's attitude, intentions, and behavior (Claudy, Peterson, & O'Driscoll, 2013). The extant literature on BRT has particularly focused on examining organizational issues, such as employee turnover and relocation (Westaby, 2005), and leadership decisions (Westaby, 2010). However, BRT has recently gained popularity in examining issues related to consumer behavior. For instance, BRT has been utilized to examine the consumer attitude toward charitable organizations (Park et al., 2017) and consumers' predispositions for organic food (Ryan and Casidy, 2018; Tandon et al., 2020). Although BRT use is still in its nascent stages in consumer studies, exploring it in various contexts can help validate the theory and advance the knowledge across domains. The present research thus intends to extend BRT to examine consumers' psychological processes in the context of natural products. The present research extends the original BRT by considering value for health as a measure for user value. The value for health is a crucial factor determining the selection of natural products (Coricelli et al., 2019). Furthermore, no prior literature on natural products has empirically examined the impact of health consciousness on consumer decision-making for natural products. Moreover, the prior literature has mainly used BRT to examine consumer's intentions and behaviors; however, we believe that BRT can be modified to measure various dependent variables. Hence, the current research examines whether BRT can explain brand love for natural products.

2.2. Hypotheses development

The proposed research model, grounded in BRT, comprises of value, reasons for and against adopting natural products, attitude toward natural products, and brand love (see Fig. 1). The model was controlled for demographic variables, i.e., age, gender, monthly household income, and educational background. The moderation effect of environmental concern and household size were also tested. Table 1 presents the operational description of the study constructs.

2.2.1. Attitude and brand love

Attitude is rational in nature as it depends on the sum of the expected outcomes that are evaluated based on their desirability (Ajzen, 1991).

Table 1 Description of study constructs.

BRT Dimensions	Constructs	Description	Reference
Value	Health consciousness (VAL)	Observes the consumers' health awareness and self-consciousness regarding their health issues	Gould (1998)
Reasons	Reasons for consuming natural products (RF)	Examines consumers' motives that encourage natural products' consumption. Motives include the absence of additives and artificial ingredients. Natural products that are based on Ayurveda also serve as a reason for consuming natural products since Ayurveda is a well-known alternative medicine system in India made out of natural ingredients.	Stephoe et al. (1995)
	Reasons against consuming natural products (RA)	Evaluates consumers' resistance toward consumption of natural products from the perspective of image and risk barriers.	Laukkanen (2016)
Global Motives	Attitude toward natural products (ATT)	Examines consumers' feelings of pleasantness, satisfaction, and liking for natural products	Honkanen et al. (2006)
Behavioral	Brand Love (BL)	Examines consumers' passionate feelings of love, attachment, and admiration toward natural products brands	Carroll & Ahuvia (2006)
	Environmental Concern (EC)	Evaluates consumers' awareness regarding environmental degradation and desire to act pro-environmentally.	Maloney and Ward (1973); Kushwah et al. (2019a)

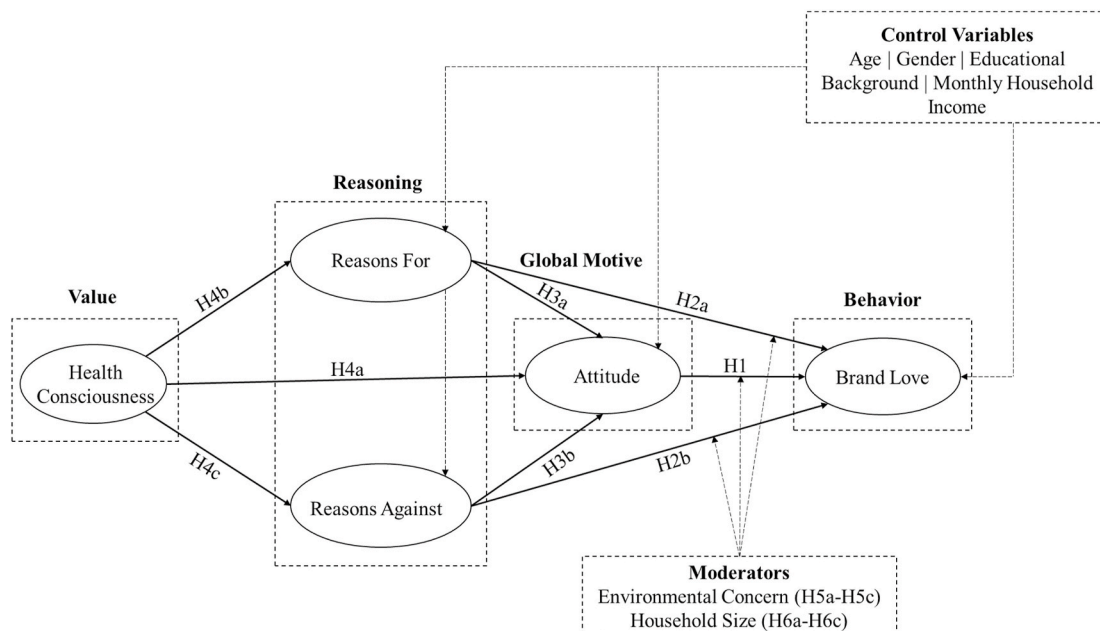


Fig. 1. Proposed research Model.

Several studies have emphasized that attitude can be an important antecedent to brand love (Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar, 2014), which, by contrast, is an emotion. The attitude toward a brand positively affects the ability of customers to develop a long-term relationship with it (Chaudhari and Holbrook, 2001). In addition, Hegner et al. (2017) showed that attitude has a significant effect on brand love for customers with both low and high involvement products. However, consumer perceptions of brands remain unclear in the context of natural products. Furthermore, the literature on brand love is still in its infancy, where major focus has been on its conceptualization (Batra et al., 2012; Ahuvia, 2008; Vernuccio et al., 2015). While product perceptions play a role in forming a strong relationship with the brand, rarely any studies have tested the influence of product perceptions on brand love. Moreover, Sarkar (2014) found that consumers love brands associated with environmental and societal benefits. Given that natural products protect one's health and the environment, which are attributes that consumers seek in their products (Kumar et al., 2021a), a positive attitude toward natural products may thus enhance customers' satisfaction, create customer value, and lead to a stronger connection with the brand. Thus, we propose the hypothesis:

**H1.** Consumers' attitude toward natural products positively relates to brand love.

### 2.2.2. Reasons and brand love

Reasons are the subjective factors that individuals use for explaining their actions (Westaby, 2005). They can be categorized into two types, reasons for and reasons against (Westaby, 2010). 'Reasons for' include benefits and facilitators/motives, whereas 'reasons against' include costs and inhibitors/barriers (Westaby, 2005). Holbrook (1997) found that an individual's behaviors, when driven by romantic love, involve subjective personal introspection, thereby indicating that reasons may play an essential role in forming brand love. Batra et al. (2012), meanwhile, examined the possible factors that could motivate consumers to love a brand. For example, positive aspects and good characteristics, such as design, ingredients, etc., could inculcate brand love. In this regard, consumers' reasons for selecting a natural product comprising of qualities they desire in a product can inspire them to form love toward the brand. In contrast, reasons against natural products can hurt a consumer's love for any brand. For example, a brand claiming to be natural but that contains genetically modified organisms could attract a negative response to brand love, while if such a brand has no additives, as they claim, it could result in brand love.

Inferences about the significance of reasons to generate brand love can also be drawn from various theoretical frameworks, such as the Means-End theory (Reynolds et al., 1995) and the Uses and Gratification theory (Malik et al., 2016). Both of these theories infer that consumers have reasons to like (dislike) products/services, and these reasons can be linked to more abstract constructs. Love is an abstract construct and is difficult to measure (Batra et al., 2012). As a result, following the Means-End theory and Uses and Gratification theory, one can view love as an end goal that is achieved through reasons (Gengler and Reynolds, 1995). Other studies that may help to infer the relationship between reasons and brand love include Huber, Meyer, and Schmid (2015), who found that utilitarian and hedonic motives create passionate brand love. Motives further act as reasons for selecting a product (Velema et al., 2019).

Although reasons seem to have a logical connection informing brand love, the literature does not have much empirical evidence supporting it. We intend to uncover whether reasons for and reasons against can help understand the formation of brand love. Therefore, we hypothesize:

**H2a.** Consumers' reasons for consuming natural products positively relate to brand love.

**H2b.** Consumers' reasons against consuming natural products negatively relate to brand love.

Additionally, reasons (for and against) may also influence brand love through the mediating effect of attitude toward natural products. A recent study has found that when consumers evaluate products with skepticism, they then form negative attitudes and perceptions toward the brand (Amawate and Deb, 2019), implying that consumer's reasons against adopting natural products may lead them to form negative attitudes that may cause a negative image of the concerned product or service as well. Similarly, the literature on cause-related marketing has indicated that when consumers believe in the positive aspects of the product, they possess positive attitudes and likeness for the brand (Lavack and Kropp, 2003), which suggests that reasons for adopting natural products may form positive attitudes and as a result, generate brand love for such products. In addition, previous BRT literature has focused on the mediating influence of attitude between the association of reasons and the dependent variable (Westaby, 2005). For instance, Claudy et al. (2013) found that the relationship between reasons (for and against) and the intention to use renewable energy is mediated by attitude. Based on the discussion above, attitude may act as a mediator between reasons (for and against) and brand love in the present study. Therefore, we propose the hypotheses:

**H2c.** Consumers' attitude toward natural products mediates the relationship between reasons for consuming natural products and brand love.

**H2d.** Consumers' attitude toward natural products mediates the relationship between reasons against consuming natural products and brand love.

### 2.2.3. Reasons and attitude

Reasons are the context-specific variables that distinguish BRT from other reason theories (Westaby, 2005). Previous theoretical frameworks, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, have indicated that beliefs form attitudes (Ajzen, 1991). However, reasons differ from beliefs on three aspects: (a) the level of specificity (diverseness of thoughts/cognition), (b) temporality (the time-frame in mind while decision-making), and (c) empirically (empirical verification) (Westaby, 2005; Claudy et al., 2013). Beliefs comprise a wide range of thoughts, whereas reasons comprise the thoughts/cognitions specifically for the behavior in question. Similarly, the time-frame for beliefs is the future, whereas it is the present for reasons. For example, a consumer's belief in natural products can be that consuming natural products will have positive consequences on the environment and health, while a person's reasons for consuming the natural product is that the product is free from additives and is ayurvedic. In this example, reasons explain the specific, central idea that leads an individual to adopt a natural product. In contrast, beliefs are broad ideas about future outcomes. Furthermore, beliefs and reasons have been empirically verified as discriminant constructs, with reasons showing better predictive ability than beliefs (Westaby, 2005). Accordingly, BRT proposes that values/beliefs can be linked with reasons to explain attitudes toward a particular behavior in a more effective manner.

Spreading Activation Theory (Colling and Loftus, 1975) proposes that specific central cognitions relate to cognitions at a higher order of abstraction. To this end, reasons are specific central cognitions that can be related to global motives, such as attitude toward natural products. The extant literature has verified the association between reasons and attitudes in different contexts, such as leadership decision making (Westaby et al., 2010), renewable energy (Claudy et al., 2013), and organic food (Ryan and Casidy, 2018). The majority of the prior literature has also shown that reasons for positively influence attitudes, while reasons against negatively influence them. Certain studies have indicated that consumers select natural products as they contain no additives (Chamber, Chamber and Castro, 2018). However, empirical evidence in the context of natural products is lacking for the relationship between reasons for and against consuming natural products. Therefore, taking guidance from the studies mentioned above, we test the



hypotheses:

**H3a.** Consumers' reasons for consuming natural products positively relates to the attitude toward natural products

**H3b.** Consumers' reasons against consuming natural products negatively relate to the attitude toward natural products.

#### 2.2.4. Health consciousness, attitude, and reasons

Values are internal criteria that guide individuals across varied situations (Schwartz and Boehnke, 2004). As such, products that are aligned with users' values possess a strong bond with their consumers (De Groot and Thøgersen, 2018). In contrast, attitudes are established ways of responding to a situation, person, or object that are guided by values. Consequently, attitudes are specific to an object or a situation, whereas values transcend situations (Ajzen, 1991). Both of these variables are thus essential in influencing an individual's cognition and behavior.

Several studies have shown that values are positively linked with attitudes toward a given behavior. For example, values have been found to influence user attitudes with regards to green hotels (Rahman and Reynolds, 2018) and green purchase intentions (Sreen et al., 2018, 2019). Furthermore, the Values-Attitude-Behavior theory also indicates that values act as precedents to attitudes (Nguyen et al., 2016).

In the present context, health consciousness is the most appropriate value to study. Consumers' increasing concern regarding self-conservation drives their product selection. For example, they may not consider using products with chemical ingredients, thereby promoting the selection of products with health benefits instead (Cabuk et al., 2014). Hence, it can be inferred that consumers who value health may possess a positive attitude toward natural products as these use natural ingredients and promote a healthy lifestyle. While the literature on natural products has not tested the relationship between health consciousness and attitude, the literature has indicated that consumers relate the naturalness trait of such products to health-related benefits (Moscato and Machin, 2018; Coricelli et al., 2019), thus indicating that health is an essential consideration for liking or disliking natural products. Hence, we form the hypothesis:

**H4a.** Consumers' health consciousness positively relates to their attitude toward natural products.

The value structure of individuals further plays a prominent role in defining their reasoning behind performing a particular action (Ryan and Casidy, 2018). Furthermore, theories like Values-Beliefs-Norms (Han et al., 2017) have shown that values help individuals develop the reasoning to justify their behaviors. Indeed, several studies have reported that people align their reasoning with their value structures. For example, individual values can influence reasons for and against the selection of renewable energy sources (Claudy et al., 2013) and organic food (Ryan and Casidy, 2018).

The extant literature thus provides evidence that value structures relevant for a specific behavior positively influence reasons for and reasons against selecting that behavior. Health consciousness further increases consumers' propensity to scrutinize the credentials, certifications, and quality of the products (Gineikiene et al., 2017). Therefore, health consciousness may lead consumers to evaluate the reasons for and against adopting natural products closely. Hence, we posit:

**H4b.** Consumers' health consciousness positively relates to reasons for consuming natural products

**H4c.** Consumers' health consciousness negatively relates to reasons against consuming natural products.

Contrary to H4a, several studies have indicated that values should not be directly linked with attitudes and behaviors as they lead to measurement specificity issues (Sreen et al., 2020), which attenuate the relationship between the two constructs. However, these studies have

indicated that such measurement specificity issues may be resolved by creating multiple levels between values and attitudes. In this regard, BRT proposes that reasons can indirectly link values to attitudes and behaviors and, thereby, may help reduce this issue (Westaby, 2005).

As mentioned above, there are diverse viewpoints regarding the relationship between values and attitudes. Some studies have indicated a direct effect (Nguyen et al., 2016), while others have observed an indirect effect (Sreen et al., 2020). We propose that the value structure of health leads to the development of a positive attitude toward foods and products that promote a healthy lifestyle through the mediating effect of reasons for and reasons against consuming natural products. Consumers valuing health will thus evaluate these reasons before forming their attitude toward natural products. If they conclude that natural products are truly free from additives, they may form a positive attitude toward natural products. Otherwise, they will form a negative attitude toward such products. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H4d.** Consumers' reasons for consuming natural products mediate the relationship between health consciousness and attitude toward natural products.

**H4e.** Consumers' reasons against consuming natural products mediate the relationship between health consciousness and attitude toward natural products.

#### 2.2.5. Environmental concern as a moderator

Environmental concern can be represented as individuals' knowledge of environmental issues, their beliefs that adopting certain behaviors can help solve these problems, and their willingness to act on these behaviors (Kumar et al., 2021a; Kushwah et al., 2019a). The customer decision-making literature has suggested that need recognition is the first step in generating the incentive to act in a certain way (Yacout and Vitell, 2018). To this end, environmental concern generates the need to act pro-environmentally. Furthermore, individuals' environmental concern has been growing with increasing evidence of environmental degradation. For example, a recent Gallup (2017) poll showed that people believe that global warming is real, and to avoid it, they need to behave pro-environmentally. A significant connection between environmental concern and attitude toward pro-environmental behaviors and pro-environmental intentions has also been documented in several studies (Tandon et al., 2020b; Kushwah et al., 2019b; Talwar et al., 2021). Many studies have further integrated environmental concern as a pro-environmental activity indicator. The results of the correlation between environmental concern and pro-environmental behavior, however, have been inconsistent and inconclusive (Tam and Chan, 2017). Notably, environmental concern as a moderator has provided intuitive insights regarding sustainable behaviors (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, Rindell et al. (2014) indicated that environmental concern may play a crucial role in forming a relationship with the brand. Several examples also exist in which consumers have avoided brands that contribute to environmental degradation. For example, 61% of global consumers reported that they are less willing to buy products that harm the environment (ING Research, 2019). Also, consumers show strong love toward brands that keep their promises of delivering environmental benefits. For example, 90% of individuals surveyed by Forbes mentioned that they wanted to be associated with brands that save the environment (Forbes, 2018). Hence, whether consumers view natural products as favorable or unfavorable for the environment will delineate their brand love for such products. The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

**H5a.** The positive relationship between reasons for consuming natural products and brand love will be stronger for people with great environmental concern than for those with low environmental concern

**H5b.** The negative relationship between reasons against consuming natural products and brand love will be weaker for people with great environmental concern than for those with low environmental concern

**H5c.** The positive association of attitude toward natural products and brand love will be greater for people with great environmental concern than for those with low environmental concern.

### 2.2.6. Household size as a moderator

Individuals make purchases to either fulfill their own requirements or those of their household members (Cho et al., 2019). Self-requirements include purchasing for one's own use, such as a shaving kit for oneself. Household members' requirements include purchases that will affect all members of the household, such as buying food that would be consumed by every household member. Household members thus not only influence purchases that affect themselves but also individual-level purchases. For example, a person may buy a piece of clothing for themselves but in a color that their spouse will love. Therefore, household members are an essential unit that can explain consumer purchasing behaviors. The survival and betterment of household members are also of prime importance to an individual. Indeed, their behavior is guided by their responsibility toward others and the consequences that their behaviors may have (Stern et al., 1999). In this regard, if buying natural products assures an individual that the products are better for their household members' health and well-being, then the probability of having a positive attitude toward the product and loving the brand associated with it should increase.

Several studies have shown that consideration of close others (e.g., family or household members) can lead individuals to adopt pro-environmental and healthy behaviors (Moscato and Machin, 2018; Sreen et al., 2019). The responsibility of adopting practices that assures the health and safety of household members should thus increase with each addition to the number of household members. For example, Sreen et al. (2018) implied that individuals in a joint family may be more inclined to behave pro-environmentally than ones in nuclear families. Furthermore, multiple studies have shown that the number of household members influences consumer decision-making differently (Ezel and Russell, 1985; Kim et al., 2018). Cho et al. (2019) showed that single-member households consider the attributes of quality for food apps differently than those in multiple member-households. Knowing that differences exist based on household size, the following is hypothesized:

**H6a.** The positive association of reasons for consuming natural products and brand love will be greater for people with bigger household sizes.

**H6b.** The negative association of reasons against consuming natural products and brand love will be greater for people with bigger household sizes.

**H6c.** The positive association of attitude toward natural products and brand love will be greater for people with bigger household sizes.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Data collection

A pen and pencil survey was administered to the target respondents (consumers of natural products) using a mall intervention method. The target participants were recruited outside of popular retail stores. The questionnaire was distributed to 1055 respondents who were clearly informed about the research objectives and outcomes. At the same time, they were assured complete anonymity and the safety of their personal information and other shared details. A total of 949 complete responses were received, culminating in a response rate of 90%. The respondents comprised 411 males (43.3%) and 285 females (30%), while 253 respondents (26.7%) did not report their gender information. The respondents fell in the age range of 23–33 years, with a mean age of 28.80 years (SD = 4.10). With regards to educational background, 50.8% of respondents were graduates. Furthermore, 36.9% were employed in the

private sector, and about 23.9% earned INR 91,000 or above.

We studied consumers' natural product selection in India for a number of reasons. First, India houses more than 1.36 billion people and is the fifth-largest economy in the world; consequently, any adverse environmental and health effects from this population's consumption habits can have staggering consequences (Economic Times, 2020). Second, natural products have a rich historical tradition in the Indian context. Various companies have entered the market with traditional ayurvedic products. Ayurveda is a popular traditional alternative medicine system in India. The ayurvedic product market is expected to grow at a CAGR of more than 10% due to increasing health consciousness among consumers (TechSci Research, 2019). Accordingly, ayurveda will allow us to peek into the rich traditional heritage of the Indian context and the way consumers respond to products promoting this natural product tradition.

### 3.2. Survey development

All of the measurement items were adopted from prior studies. Each item was quantified using a five-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)). A panel of three experts, consisting of two professors with prior experience in food research and one practitioner with domain-specific knowledge, was consulted, leading to changes in the wording of a few items for easy understanding. Four items from Gould (1998) operationalized health consciousness, while three items from Honkanen et al. (2006) operationalized attitude toward natural products. A three-item scale measured reasons for consuming natural products (Steptoe et al., 1995), with another four items (adapted from Laukkanen, 2016) quantifying reasons against consuming them. A four-item scale also measured brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Furthermore, demographic information was collected, such as age, gender, educational background, monthly household income, and household size. Such information was utilized to control the proposed research model since usage perceptions for natural products have been found to vary across demographics (Phuah et al., 2015). Finally, a four-item scale operationalized environmental concern (Maloney and Ward, 1973).

### 3.3. Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted using statistical tools, namely, SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 26.0. Several recent studies have indicated the significance of using covariance-based structural equation modeling (e.g., Talwar et al., 2019, 2020). As such, a two-step approach was used for the data analysis (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Talwar et al., 2020). The first step evaluated the survey instrument's validity and reliability using the measurement model, while the second step evaluated the proposed research model using structural equation modeling. Finally, moderation and mediation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (models 1 and 4, respectively). The following section discusses the results of the conducted data analysis.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Common method bias

We used Harman's one-factor test to confirm that common method bias did not exist in our study (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The test was conducted by developing a single unrotated factor with all items. This single factor explained 45.20% of the variance, which fell below the threshold value of 50%, thus indicating that common method bias was not present in the data under study.

### 4.2. Measurement model

The measurement model assessment was done using Confirmatory

Factor Analysis (CFA). A good model fit was established:  $\chi^2/df = 4.97$ ,  $CFI = 0.96$ ,  $TLI = 0.95$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.07$  (Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). The internal reliability of the survey instrument was also ensured since the values of the composite reliability (CR) ranged between 0.85 and 0.95 (i.e., above the threshold of 0.70) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), thereby contributing as well to the establishment of convergent validity. All items had factor loading values of 0.50 or more (see Table 2). Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all study constructs were found to be above 0.50. Together, these statistical tests provide sufficient evidence regarding the possession of convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 3). Finally, the discriminant validity of both studies was ensured since the inter-correlations among the study constructs were less than 0.80 and were found to be smaller than the square of their respective AVE values (Barclay et al., 1995). Furthermore, all HTMT values were less than 0.90, thus establishing discriminant validity (Barclay et al., 1995), as presented in Table 4.

4.3. Control variables

Age, gender, educational background, and monthly household income were the control variables. Reasons for consuming natural products were found to be significantly controlled by educational background (-0.21\*\*\*). In comparison, reasons against consuming natural products were confounded by educational background (0.08\*) and monthly household income (-0.09\*).

4.4. Structural model

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to evaluate the proposed research model and underlying hypotheses. The SEM model

Table 2  
Factor loading scores.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	
		CFA	SEM
Brand Love (BL)	BL1: Natural product brands makes me feel good	0.85	0.85
	BL2: Natural product brands are totally awesome	0.91	0.90
	BL3: I love natural product brands	0.93	0.93
	BL4: I am passionate about natural product brands	0.92	0.92
Attitude toward natural products (ATT)	ATT1: Using natural products is good	0.89	0.88
	ATT2: Using natural products is pleasant	0.86	0.85
	ATT3: Using natural products is satisfying	0.90	0.90
Reasons for consuming natural products (RF)	RF1: Natural products contain no additives	0.84	0.84
	RF2: Natural products contain no artificial ingredients	0.87	0.87
	RF3: Natural products are based on Ayurveda	0.76	0.75
Reasons against consuming natural products (RA)	RA1: I have doubts about the "natural" product labeling	0.80	0.80
	RA2: I believe that natural products currently sold in the market are not really "natural."	0.87	0.86
	RA3: I fear that natural products are packaged in non-environmentally friendly material	0.63	0.63
	RA4: I fear that all of the natural products claiming to be natural are not actually natural	0.79	0.79
Health consciousness (VAL)	VAL1: I reflect on my health a lot	0.59	0.59
	VAL2: I am very self-conscious about my health	0.79	0.79
	VAL3: I am alert to changes in my health	0.83	0.83
	VAL4: I am usually aware of my health	0.82	0.81

returned a good model fit ( $\chi^2/df = 4.43$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ ,  $TLI = 0.93$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ). Furthermore, the results indicated that H1, H2a, H3a, H3b, H4a, and H4b were supported, whereas H2b and H4c were not.

The study explained the variance among the dependent variables as follows: 15.4% of reasons for, 1.3% of reasons against, 66.5% of consumer attitude, and 71.6% of brand love. The results are presented in Fig. 2 and Table 5.

4.5. Mediation analysis

The mediation analysis was conducted to evaluate the mediation effect of attitude on the association of reasons (for and against) with brand love (H2c and H2d). The results showed that attitude partially mediated the relationship between both reasons for consuming natural products and reasons against consuming natural products with brand love, thereby supporting the two hypotheses.

In addition, the study also examined the mediation effect of reasons for and against on the association of health consciousness and attitude toward natural products (H4d and H4e). The results demonstrated that reasons for consuming natural products partially mediated the relationship between health consciousness and attitude. In contrast, reasons against consuming natural products were found to have no mediating influence among consumer values and their attitude. Thus, H4d was supported, while H4e was not. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

4.6. Moderation analysis

A moderation analysis was performed to examine the moderation effect of environmental concern (H5a-H5c) and household size (H6a-H6c). The analysis was performed using the PROCESS macro in SPSS by computing the interaction effect of the moderator and independent variable. The results revealed that environmental concern positively moderated the association of reasons for and brand love, supporting H5a (see Fig. 3). In comparison, it negatively moderated the association between reasons against and brand love, thereby supporting H5b (see Fig. 4). The findings showed that environmental concern as a moderator does influence the relationship between attitude and brand love, thereby disconfirming H5c. The analysis further revealed that the other proposed moderating variable, household size, had no moderation effect on any of the hypothesized associations between brand love and its antecedents, in contrast to the expectations of H6a-H6c. The results are presented in Table 8.

Fig. 3 shows that consumers who are highly concerned for the environment and have favorable reasons for consuming natural foods tend to experience higher brand love than those who are less concerned about the environment. In contrast, the consumers having strong reasons against consuming natural products and who are not concerned about the environment experience lower brand love than those with a deeper environmental concern (see Fig. 4).

5. Discussion

This study examines the association of health consciousness with brand love through contextual variables, such as reasons for and reasons against consuming natural products and attitude toward natural products. The results show that brand love was positively and significantly associated with the attitude toward natural products and reasons for consuming natural products. In contrast, reasons against consuming natural products did not have any statistically significant association with brand love. In addition, attitude positively impacted reasons for consuming natural products and negatively impacted reasons against consuming natural products. Furthermore, health consciousness had a significant positive association with both reasons for consuming natural products and attitude. In contrast, it did not have any association with reasons against consuming natural products. A partial mediation effect

**Table 3**  
Convergent and discriminant validity.

	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	RA	VAL	RF	ATT	BL
RA	3.06	0.93	0.86	0.60	0.16	0.10	0.78				
VAL	3.85	0.78	0.85	0.58	0.14	0.09	-0.01	0.76			
RF	3.31	0.96	0.86	0.68	0.67	0.40	-0.40	0.33	0.82		
ATT	3.33	0.95	0.91	0.78	0.67	0.40	-0.38	0.37	0.82	0.88	
BL	3.08	1.07	0.95	0.80	0.66	0.38	-0.33	0.32	0.81	0.82	0.90

Note. CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance explained, MSV: Maximum shared variance, ASV: Average shared variance.

**Table 4**  
HTMT analysis.

	VAL	RF	ATT	BL	RA
VAL					
RF	0.38				
ATT	0.40	0.84			
BL	0.37	0.82	0.82		
RA	0.02	0.39	0.36	0.32	

of reasons and attitude was also confirmed, along with the moderation effect of environmental concern.

The results of the study thus indicate that attitude positively impacts brand love (H1), in line with the findings of *Batra et al. (2012)*. A possible explanation for this finding could be that consumers perceive certain behaviors, such as consuming natural products, to be rewarding (e.g., healthy and environmentally friendly), which could clarify the association between attitude and brand love (*Hegner et al., 2017*).

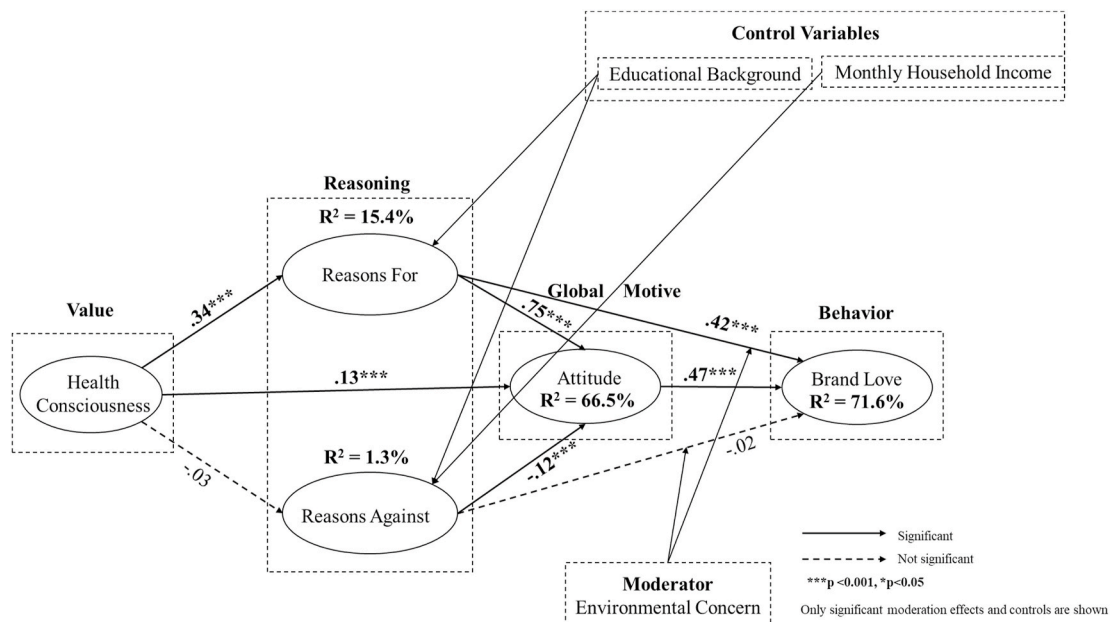
Reasons for consuming natural products were also positively associated with brand love (H2a), as hypothesized. However, reasons against consuming natural products were not found to have a negative association with brand love, as proposed (H2b). Overall, the findings related to reasons for and against consuming natural products indicate that consumers evaluate only the positive aspects of the product when forming brand love. Drawing parallels from inter-personal love, an individual in love with another person tends to avoid anything negative about that person and only considers their positive aspects. Similarly, this study reveals that consumers form brand love on the basis of the positive aspects of natural products, represented by reasons for, and tend to avoid the negative aspects, represented by reasons against.

Reasons for and reasons against consuming natural products were positively (H3a) and negatively associated with attitude toward natural products (H3b), respectively. These results support prior literature (*Claudy et al., 2013; Ryan and Casidy, 2018*). Given that reasons are essential context-specific variables that can play a dominant role in shaping consumers' favorable or unfavorable perceptions toward a particular behavior, i.e., their attitude, consumers perceiving natural products to be natural in the true sense, i.e., free from additives and artificial ingredients, are thus likely to develop a favorable attitude toward such products. In contrast, an unfavorable attitude results in situations where the consumers are unsure about the authenticity of the claimed naturalness of the product under consideration.

Next, health consciousness was positively associated with attitude toward natural products (H4a) and reasons for consuming natural products (H4b). However, it had no association with reasons against consuming natural products (H4c). Support for H4a is in consonance with studies on organic food that indicate health consciousness as the most important predictor of consumption of organic food (*Tandon et al.,*

**Table 5**  
Results of hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Path	Beta	p-value	Support
H1	ATT → BL	0.47	<0.001	Yes
H2(a)	RF → BL	0.42	<0.001	Yes
H2(b)	RA → BL	-0.02	>0.05	No
H3(a)	RF → ATT	0.75	<0.001	Yes
H3(b)	RA → ATT	-0.12	<0.001	Yes
H4(a)	VAL → ATT	0.13	<0.001	Yes
H4(b)	VAL → RF	0.34	<0.001	Yes
H4(c)	VAL → RA	-0.03	>0.05	No



**Fig. 2.** Results of hypotheses testing.



**Table 6**  
Results - mediation analysis.

VAL → RF & RA → ATT						
	B	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
VAL → RF	.40	.04	10.53	.00	.3267	.4762
VAL → RA	-.03	.04	-.76	.45	-.1061	.0470
VAL → ATT	.17	.03	6.08	.00	.1142	.2230
RF → ATT	.65	.02	27.37	.00	.6037	.6969
RA → ATT	-.10	.02	-4.13	.00	-.1414	-.0503
The total effect of VAL → ATT	.43	.04	11.67	.00	.3598	.5053
RF → ATT → BL						
	B	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
RF → ATT	.73	.02	33.61	.00	.6833	.7681
RF → BL	.43	.03	13.66	.00	.3679	.4914
ATT → BL	.55	.03	17.05	.00	.4825	.6080
The total effect of RF → BL	.83	.02	33.99	.00	.7777	.8730
RA → ATT → BL						
	B	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
RA → ATT	-.33	.03	-10.43	.00	-.3875	-.2648
RA → BL	-.06	.03	-2.19	.03	-.1050	-.0058
ATT → BL	.85	.02	34.15	.00	.8009	.8986
The total effect of RA → BL	-.33	.04	-9.30	.00	-.4028	-.2624

**Table 7**  
Indirect effects.

	Indirect Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
VAL → RF → ATT	.26	.03	.2090	.3183
VAL → RA → ATT	.003	.00	-.0048	.0130
RF → ATT → BL	.40	.03	.3325	.4570
RA → ATT → BL	-.28	.03	-.3442	-.2083

2021). Although natural foods are different from organic foods, their property of no additives and use of natural ingredients make health consciousness an attractive value-structure for consumers to decide on natural products.

The results also confirmed the partial mediation effect of attitude on the association of reasons (for and against) with brand love (H2c and H2d). This mediating role of attitude implies that reasons for consuming natural products enhance brand love through a positive attitude toward natural products. Similarly, reasons against consuming natural products erode brand love not only directly but also by reducing the positive disposition of consumers toward natural products. The findings also show that reasons for consuming natural products partially mediated the relationship between health consciousness and attitude toward natural

products (H4d), whereas reasons against consuming natural products had no mediating effect on the relationship between health consciousness and attitude toward natural products (H4e). This is what Westaby (2005) calls extensive cognitive processing, which helps consumers justify their decision-making and, in turn, helps researchers understand this behavioral process better than traditional behavioral theories. Here, we understand that health consciousness leads the individual to follow the reasoning that natural products contain no additives and are better for one's health and, as such, lead to a positive attitude toward natural products.

The findings partially supported the role of environmental concern as a moderator (H5a-H5b). Environmental concern increased the positive strength of the relationship between reasons for consuming natural products and brand love and reduced the negative strength of the relationship between reasons against consuming natural products and brand love. However, environmental concern did not moderate the strength of the association between attitude and brand love. A potential reason for this finding could be that a pro-environmental disposition is already incorporated in attitude formation, making the further impact of environmental concern redundant in the association of attitude with brand love. Similarly, household size was not found to have any moderation effect on the association of reasons (for and against) with attitude (H6a-b) and attitude with brand love (H6c). This is quite unanticipated since prior studies have observed that household size drives pro-environmental behavior (e.g., Sreen et al., 2018). A potential explanation for this finding could be that individuals tend to use natural products as a healthy way of living, rather than something that is related to their family size. On the whole, however, we contend that the two moderation effects need to be tested further before drawing any conclusions.

5.1. Theoretical implication

This study provides three main theoretical implications. First, it adds to the extant literature on BRT as a theoretical framework. Specifically, it responds to the call by Westaby (2005) for future studies to demonstrate the boundary conditions in BRT by including moderating variables. Toward this end, this study contributes by examining the moderation effect of environmental concern and household size on the association of brand love with its antecedents. Motivated by the work of Aschemann-Witzel and Aagaard (2014), among other studies, we examined the mediation effect of reasons and attitude to better understand the consumers' evaluation process. This study thus provides

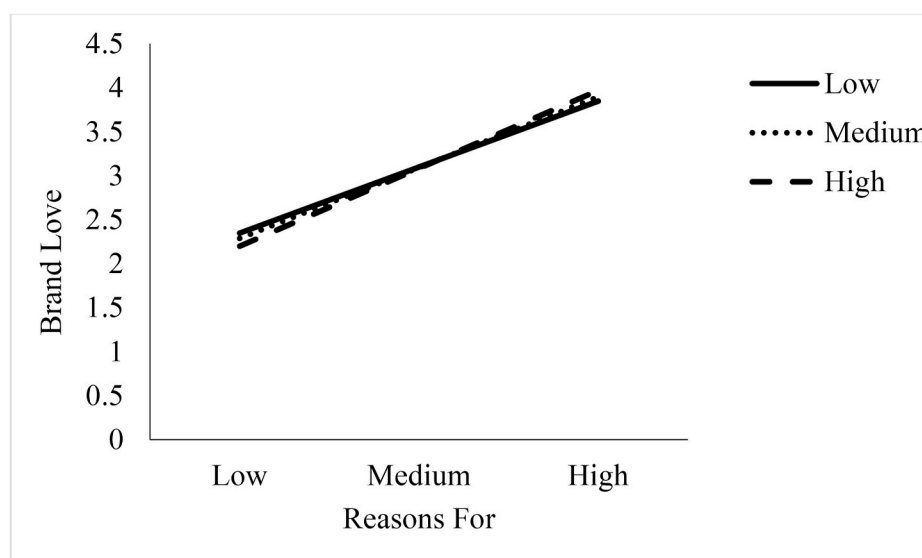


Fig. 3. Moderation effect of environmental concern on the association of reasons for and brand love.

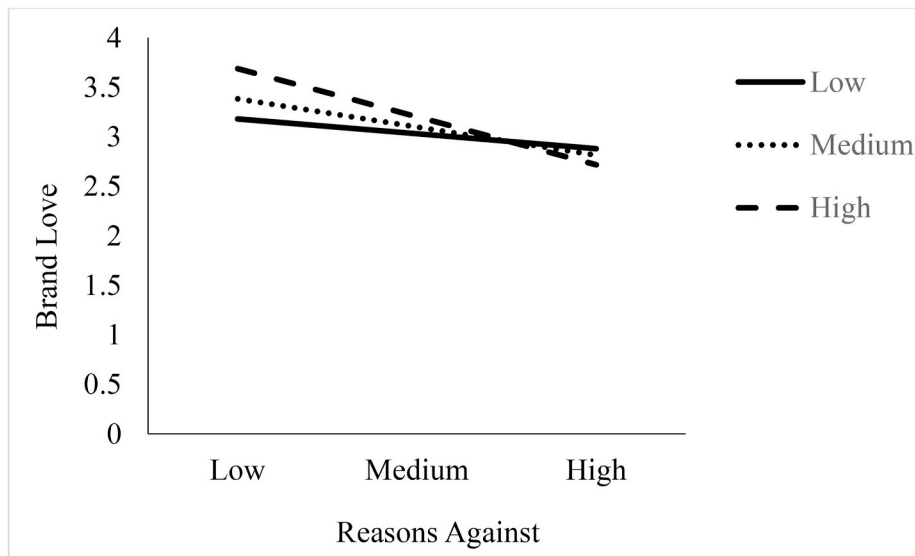


Fig. 4. Moderation effect of environmental concern on the association of reasons against and brand love.

Table 8  
Moderation analysis.

Environmental Concern						
	B	T	p	LLCI	ULCI	Moderation?
RF → BL	.08	2.61	.01	.0202	.1423	Yes
RA → BL	-.20	-4.24	.00	-.2939	-.1081	Yes
ATT → BL	.04	1.30	.19	-.0199	.0986	No
Household Size						
	B	T	p	LLCI	ULCI	Moderation?
RF → BL	-.00	-.12	.91	-.0436	.0387	No
RA → BL	-.03	-.97	.33	-.0857	.0292	No
ATT → BL	-.02	-1.03	.31	-.0592	.0185	No

insights regarding consumers’ propensity to fall in love with natural products. In sum, through the addition of mediating and moderating variables, the present study allows for a better understanding of the psychological processes involved in consumers’ decision-making.

Second, contrary to previous research on BRT that included intentions as a dependent variable (Claudy et al., 2013; Ryan and Casidy, 2018), this study introduced a new dependent variable, i.e., brand love. As such, the research findings also contribute to the extant understanding of the concept of brand love. Brand love positively influences consumers’ willingness to spread word-of-mouth and pay a premium for a brand (Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar, 2014). However, the majority of the literature on brand love has focused on its conceptualization. To take the research to the next level, scholars must examine the theoretical relationships that can determine brand love. We thus add new information on the possible antecedents of brand love in the context of natural products. To this end, the study reports reasons for consuming natural products and attitude as predictors of brand love. Furthermore, this study shows that the application of BRT to examine brand love is acceptable, as evident from the fact that the model is able to explain more than 70% of the variance in brand love.

Third, this study adds to the literature on natural products by applying the theoretical framework of BRT to examine consumers’ brand love with regards to natural products. This study supports the assertion that values are essential determinants of reasons (for and against), global motives, and brand love in the context of natural products. The application of a theoretical framework in the natural product literature provides a systematic perspective regarding the behavioral aspects related to the consumption of natural products and the generation of emotional attachment with the natural product

brands. As the literature on natural products has mainly focused on defining naturalness (Kooijmans and Palacios, 2014; Coricelli et al., 2019), this study further adds to the literature by going beyond conceptualization to examining consumers’ propensity to love a brand associated with natural products. It is the first study of its nature in the context of natural products that not only combines psychological and contextual variables but also defines the boundary conditions by including two moderators, environmental concern and household size.

### 5.2. Managerial implications

Four key managerial and practical implications can be derived from the findings of this study. First, this study found health consciousness to be an essential determinant for increasing brand love toward natural products because it enhances the reasons for consuming them. In turn, these reasons have a direct influence on attitude toward natural products and brand love. Drawing upon this finding, we recommend that managers clearly communicate the anticipated health benefits associated with consuming natural products through promotional campaigns in both print and electronic media. Furthermore, knowledge may not necessarily lead to the consumption of natural products if consumers are skeptical about the claimed benefits. In this regard, the producers and marketers of natural products should lobby for clear government policies and certifications that can help them substantiate their claims. Consuming such products that can uphold their claimed standards of health benefits and naturalness can eventually lead to enhanced brand love among consumers.

Second, this study found that the reasons for consuming natural products generate positive emotions about the brand, i.e., brand love and a positive attitude toward natural products. This implies that consumers seek natural products as they contain no additives and artificial ingredients and are based on Ayurveda. Thus, producers of these products should design labels that highlight these product attributes. In turn, these product labels can help consumers develop a positive attitude toward the product and make an informed decision at the point of purchase. In addition, fulfilling these promises could facilitate greater consumer trust in the associated brand and encourage consumers to develop a passionate attachment to it. Therefore, it is important for producers to have rigid quality standards that are consistently enforced.

Third, since this study found that reasons against consuming natural products are indirectly negatively associated with brand love via attitude, producers and marketers should endeavor to address these inhibitors. Reasons against developing a positive attitude and brand love

for natural products are rooted in consumers' doubts regarding the claims of naturalness and the packaging of natural products. For example, the use of plastic packaging on a product claiming naturalness may create doubt over the authenticity of this claim since plastic itself is environmentally unfriendly. Similarly, labels claiming naturalness without giving any related information may create skepticism among consumers. As such, we recommend that marketers and practitioners make sure that they substantiate their claims of naturalness by giving specific information about the content and formulation of their products. In addition, they should ensure that their product packaging uses biodegradable materials so that it sends the correct cues to the consumer.

Finally, the study confirmed the moderation effect of environmental concern and household size. To this end, marketers could also focus on the segment of consumers having serious environmental concerns and a higher number of household members. This information can help producers and marketers define their target segment more clearly and formulate strategies directed at garnering their brand love. Furthermore, to attract new customers, producers and marketers of natural products can also collaborate with non-profit organizations and various social media groups to increase the saliency of consumers' environmental concerns by highlighting the adverse and degrading effect that their consumption patterns have on the environment. Finally, marketers and practitioners can reiterate and emphasize that natural products can improve the health and wellness of the consumers' family members, including children, thereby increasing their positive attitude toward natural products.

## 6. Conclusion, limitations, and future research areas

The study proposed to examine four research questions related to (a) the association of consumers' health consciousness, representing value, with attitude and reasons (for and against) consuming natural products, b) the association of reasons (for and against) consuming natural products and attitude with brand love towards natural products, (c) the mediation effect of reasons (for and against) between the association of health consciousness and attitude as well as of attitude between the association of reasons (for and against) and brand love, and (d) the moderation effect of environmental concern and household size on the associations between reasons, attitude, and brand love. The proposed conceptual model was grounded in the theoretical framework of Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) and tested through a cross-sectional study of 949 consumers. Regarding the direct effects, the statistical analysis confirmed support for H1, H2a, H3a, H3b, H4a, and H4b, while H2b and H4c were not supported. Regarding the mediation effect of attitude and reasons, H2c, H2d, and H4d were supported, while H4e was not. Furthermore, regarding the moderation effect of environmental concern, H5a-b were supported, but not H5c. Regarding the moderation effect of household size, H6a-H6c were not supported. Finally, among the control variables, educational background had an effect on both reasons (for and against), whereas monthly household income had an effect only on reasons against consuming natural products. The study thus contributes to the growing literature by advancing the growing research on ethical and pro-environmental consumption (e.g., [Kushwah et al., 2019b](#); [Talwar et al., 2021](#)).

Recent literature has suggested that limited research efforts have been expended toward examining consumers' perception of natural products by applying a theoretical framework ([Kumar et al., 2021a](#)). The study contributes novelly toward this end by extending a popular consumer behavior theory, BRT, to examine consumer behavior toward natural products for the first time. Furthermore, the present study provides findings related to consumer behavior toward natural products in a developing market, thereby augmenting the existing insights in this context. To our knowledge, no previous study has yet examined consumers' brand love of natural products by linking contextual variables, such as reasons (for and against), and intrapsychic variables (i.e.,

variables associated with the mind), such as values and attitude. Accordingly, this study provides a unique perspective on consumers' psychological processes for building brand love toward natural products. Finally, this study demonstrates the moderation effect of environmental concern and household size on the relationship between brand love and attitude, which represents maiden empirical findings in this context.

### 6.1. Limitations and future research areas

Although the study provides significant insights into the natural products literature, some limitations still exist that need to be addressed by future researchers. First, this study introduced natural products as a general product category. Specific categories of products and the attendant levels of involvement with them may have varying effects on the relationships in the model. Future studies can thus use a specific product category, such as natural honey, natural toothpaste, and so on, to test consumers' perceptions regarding natural products. Second, the present study examined value from the health perspective; however, different values may have a different impact on these relationships. The value of tradition may be equally relevant since ayurvedic or natural products have been part of Indian traditions since times immemorial. Future studies may test the varying effect of different values on consumers' brand love and perform cross-cultural studies to understand how the impact of a certain value structure changes across cultures. Third, this study exclusively examined the behavior of Indian consumers with regard to natural products. Due to this, the findings lack generalizability, which can be addressed in future studies by examining the study findings in different contexts (e.g., specific product categories) and across geographical boundaries. Finally, reasons for and against natural products are contextual in nature. This study used existing studies and practical insights to identify constructs representing reasons for consuming natural products and reasons against consuming natural products. A qualitative study to find reasons for and reasons against adopting natural products can provide more relevant variables, which can then be tested through quantitative analysis. Thus, we recommend that future studies employ a mixed-method design to expand our conceptual model.

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