

# Deterministic Modeling for Evaluating Consumers' Purchasing Intentions Towards Cosmetic Brands in Bangladesh: Evidence from SEM Approach

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**Background of the study:** The Bangladeshi cosmetics market has witnessed significant growth in recent years, driven by changing consumer lifestyles, increased disposable incomes, and rising awareness of personal grooming. The study investigates the impact of content cues which influence on purchasing intention towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. **Purpose:** The basic purpose of this study was to evaluate the factors influencing consumers' purchasing intentions for cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study explored the roles of various cosmetic-related attributes and their impact on purchasing intentions within the context of Bangladesh's cosmetic industry. **Research methods:** A quantitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected through a structured survey targeting Bangladeshi consumers who frequently engage with cosmetic products. All the valid responses were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 to perform structural equation modeling. **Research findings:** The findings revealed that trust in cosmetic brands and competitive pricing significantly influence consumers' purchasing intentions, highlighting the importance of fostering trust and affordability. However, certain constructs, such as ethnocentric tendencies and concerns about ingredient safety, showed limited impact on consumers' decisions. **Conclusion:** This study contributes to the existing literature by offering empirical insights into the Bangladeshi context, particularly within the rapidly growing cosmetics market. The findings provide actionable recommendations for cosmetic brands aiming to strengthen their market position through trust-building initiatives, competitive pricing strategies, and educational campaigns to enhance consumer awareness. These insights are particularly relevant for marketing practitioners seeking to understand and respond to the unique dynamics of the Bangladeshi cosmetics industry.

*Keywords:* brand credibility, consumer ethnocentrism, ingredient safety, price, cosmetic brands purchasing intention

## Prelude

The term consumers' purchasing intention refers to that consumer's attitude towards a specific purchasing behavior and the consumer's degree of willingness to pay. It is concerned with the likelihood or tendency that an individual in a particular way with regard to the attitude object. The cosmetics industry in Bangladesh has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, driven by changing consumer preferences, rising disposable

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incomes, and growing awareness of personal grooming and skincare. Cosmetic brands of Bangladesh have gained popularity by addressing local needs and embracing cultural values. These brands often emphasize natural ingredients and cultural heritage to appeal to Bangladeshi consumers (Iqbal & Show Rav, 2018). However, with the influx of international brands, domestic companies face intense competition. Consumers' loyalty and purchase intentions are strongly influenced by the perceived quality and prestige of international products. This creates a pressing need for domestic players to focus on competitive pricing, high-quality production, and effective branding to maintain a competitive edge.

While the cosmetics industry of Bangladesh is expanding, it faces several challenges. One prominent issue is the sourcing of ingredients, which often includes a mix of chemical substances and natural herbs. The safety of these products can be compromised due to microbial contamination, especially in bulk ingredients. Insufficient quality control during manufacturing and storage exacerbates these risks, potentially leading to adverse skin conditions such as acne, eczema, and scabies.

In Bangladesh, consumer purchasing intentions are shaped by various factors, including ethnocentrism and cultural sensitivity. In developing economies, consumer ethnocentrism plays a critical role as individuals prioritize local products to support the domestic economy and uphold cultural identity. Brand credibility enhances consumer trust, particularly in the cosmetics industry, where product quality and efficacy are paramount.

This study aims to explore the factors influencing consumers' purchasing intentions towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to: (1) examine the direct relationships between purchasing intention and cultural sensitivity, brand image and perceived quality; (2) provide actionable insights for strengthening the competitiveness and market presence of local brands; and (3) contribute the broader understanding of consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry and offer strategic recommendations for the development of cosmetic brands in Bangladesh.

This study holds significant value in practical contexts by contributing to the understanding of factors influencing brand purchasing intention in the Bangladeshi cosmetics industry. With the rapid growth of the cosmetics market and the increasing presence of both domestic and international brands, understanding consumer behavior is essential for domestic brands to remain competitive. This research provides critical insights into the roles of brand credibility, consumer ethnocentrism, ingredient safety, and price in shaping consumer purchasing intentions.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 focuses on introductory issues, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature, Section 3 discusses the methodology of the study, Section 4 depicts the findings of the study, and Section 5 concludes and recommends. Finally, limitations of the study and future research direction are discussed in Section 6.

## **Literature Review**

A literature review is a comprehensive synthesis of scholarly research on a specific topic, providing an overview of existing knowledge, theories, and findings while critically analyzing and evaluating them. It identifies gaps in the literature, highlights trends, and contextualizes the research problem. By summarizing and comparing previous studies, a literature review establishes a foundation for the research, demonstrating how the study builds upon or diverges from existing work (Ridley, 2012).

### **Consumer Ethnocentrism**

Consumer ethnocentrism is the conviction that buying locally produced goods is ethically correct and advantageous for the national economy, while purchasing foreign products is seen as harmful. This concept, first introduced by Shimp and Sharma (1987), has become central to cross-cultural consumer studies. It embodies a sense of national pride and economic patriotism, where consumers deliberately select domestic goods to support local economies and cultural identity.

Ethnocentric consumers display a strong preference for domestic products, even when foreign alternatives may offer superior quality or innovation (Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998). This behavior is especially prevalent in developing countries, where local industries heavily depend on domestic consumer support for growth. Various factors contribute to ethnocentrism, including cultural pride, social responsibility, and economic concerns (Shankarmahesh, 2006). In markets like Bangladesh, ethnocentric attitudes foster consumer loyalty towards local brands, driven by a sense of moral obligation to bolster the national economy (Maison & Maliszewski, 2016).

Socio-psychological aspects, such as patriotism and nationalism, significantly shape ethnocentric tendencies. Consumers with a deep connection to their cultural heritage often reject foreign products in favour of local ones (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). In sectors like the cosmetics industry, ethnocentric consumers prefer brands that reflect their cultural values, viewing foreign products as threats to local industries and employment. This perception provides domestic brands with an opportunity to position themselves as protectors of cultural identity and economic stability.

Research has extensively examined the effects of ethnocentrism on consumer behavior, revealing its influence on both purchase intentions and perceptions of product quality (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009). Ethnocentric consumers often regard local brands as more trustworthy and consistent with their values, even when these products lack the advanced technology of international competitors. In the cosmetics market, this creates a strategic advantage for local brands that highlight their use of traditional ingredients, cultural relevance, and affordability. Marketing strategies that emphasize national pride and the economic benefits of buying domestic products can further enhance consumer appeal.

Consumer ethnocentrism inherently discourages purchasing imported goods due to fears of economic harm, job losses, and cultural dilution (Cleveland et al., 2009; Liu & Ma, 2016; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008). It plays a critical role in consumers' decisions to choose between local and foreign products (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019) and has a marked impact on their intentions to buy domestic items (Han & Guo, 2018). Recognized as a fundamental human trait influencing consumer choices across various contexts (Bojei, Tuah, Alwie, & Ahmad, 2010), ethnocentrism fosters a positive attitude towards local products (He & Wang, 2015). When consumers hold favourable views and intentions towards domestic products, their likelihood of purchasing increases (Giang, 2015). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H1: There is a relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and domestic cosmetic brand purchase intentions.

### **Brand Credibility**

The role of brand credibility in shaping purchase intentions cannot be overstated. Credible brands reduce perceived risks associated with purchasing decisions, making consumers more likely to trust their products (Baek & King, 2011). This is especially important in the cosmetics industry, where concerns about product

safety and efficacy are common. By signalling quality and reliability, brand credibility enhances consumer confidence and fosters loyalty (Mandler, Bartsch, & Han, 2021).

In competitive markets, brand credibility also serves as a differentiator. Brands that consistently deliver on their promises are more likely to retain customers and attract new ones (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000). Domestic brands can enhance their credibility by adopting sustainable practices, as eco-consciousness increasingly shapes consumer choices in the cosmetics market (Chen, Malhi, & Moulay, 2023). This is particularly relevant in areas where domestic cosmetic brands face stiff competition from international players. Local brands have successfully leveraged their credibility by emphasizing ethical practices, transparency, and alignment with consumer values (Wang & Yang, 2010).

Empirical research highlights the positive relationship between brand credibility and purchase intentions. Studies indicate that credible brands not only influence consumers' willingness to buy but also their readiness to pay premium prices (Baek & King, 2011). This is particularly significant, where consumers often weigh affordability against perceived quality. By maintaining high standards of product quality and consistency, domestic brands can enhance their credibility and compete effectively in the market. In a study of emerging markets, consumers were found to prioritize brand credibility over product novelty when making purchasing decisions (Park, Chenghui, & Kim, 2022). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H2: There is a relationship between brand credibility and domestic cosmetic brand purchase intentions.

### **Ingredient Safety**

Ingredient safety has emerged as a key concern for consumers in the cosmetics industry, driven by growing awareness of health and environmental issues. As consumers become more informed about the potential risks associated with harmful chemicals, they increasingly prioritize products that are safe, natural, and eco-friendly (Rahman, Haque, & Khan, 2020). Transparent labelling and adherence to safety standards are critical in building trust and driving purchase intentions (Ribeiro, Veiga, & Higuchi, 2015).

Consumers are particularly concerned about ingredient safety due to recurring issues with counterfeit or substandard products in the market (Kim & Chung, 2011). Concerns about skin irritation, allergies, and other adverse effects have made consumers more cautious about their purchasing decisions. This has created an opportunity for domestic brands to differentiate themselves by highlighting their use of safe and natural ingredients. Brands have actively promoted their commitment to hypoallergenic and environmentally friendly formulations, which resonate with safety-conscious consumers.

Studies by Liu and Ma (2016) suggest that ingredient safety aligns with broader consumer values, such as environmental sustainability and ethical consumption. As consumers become more informed, they demand greater transparency from brands regarding ingredient sourcing and manufacturing processes. Domestic cosmetic brands can capitalize on this trend by highlighting their commitment to safe and sustainable practices, thereby enhancing consumer trust and loyalty. The rise of organic cosmetics in Bangladesh reflects this shift, with brands offering products crafted from natural ingredients to meet consumer demand for safer options (Amlaki, 2024). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3: There is a relationship between the safety of ingredients and domestic cosmetic brand purchase intentions.

### **Price**

Price remains one of the most influential factors in consumer decision-making, particularly in price-sensitive markets like Bangladesh. Defined by Kotler and Armstrong (2006) as the monetary value

exchanged for goods or services, price significantly affects perceptions of value, quality, and affordability. In developing economies, consumers often seek a balance between cost and quality, making price a critical determinant of purchase behavior.

Research suggests that price sensitivity is highest among lower-income segments, which dominate markets like Bangladesh. Beneke et al. (2013) found that competitive pricing strategies are essential for capturing market share in such contexts. However, price is not merely a reflection of cost; it also serves as a quality cue. Consumers often associate higher prices with superior quality, creating a dual role for price in shaping purchase intentions.

Domestic cosmetic brands in Bangladesh leverage their cost advantages to offer affordable alternatives to international products. Brands position itself as a value-for-money brand by combining affordability with premium natural ingredients. This strategy aligns with Zeithaml's (1988) value-perception theory, which posits that consumers evaluate products based on the benefits they receive relative to the price paid. Consumer perception of price is as an indicator of quality, and many of these have shown price to operate in this manner (Alam & Meher, 2009).

While affordability is crucial, research also emphasizes the importance of perceived fairness in pricing. Consumers are more likely to trust brands that maintain transparent pricing practices and offer consistent value. This makes price a multifaceted variable that influences not only initial purchase intentions but also long-term consumer loyalty. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H4: There is a relationship between price and domestic cosmetic brand purchase intentions.

### **Cosmetic Brands Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention is a crucial determinant of consumer behavior, reflecting a buyer's likelihood and readiness to purchase a product based on their evaluations, attitudes, and external influences. It goes beyond brand awareness and preference, as it indicates a conscious and deliberate decision-making process influenced by both rational and emotional factors (Mulyati & Gesitera, 2020; Weismueller, Harrigan, Wang, & Soutar, 2020). Consumers develop purchase intentions when they recognize a need, which then triggers a pre-purchase evaluation where they compare product attributes, assess brand credibility, and consider affordability before making a final decision (Mirabi, Akbariyeh, & Tahmasebifard, 2015). In the cosmetics industry, purchase intention is shaped by several key factors, including product quality, safety, pricing, brand reputation, and social influence. Domestic cosmetic brands often benefit from stronger consumer purchase intentions when they effectively align with cultural values, national identity, and economic support, as consumers tend to favour brands that resonate with their socio-cultural background and contribute to local economic growth (Maison & Maliszewski, 2016). Trust in brand credibility plays a crucial role in this process, as consumers are more inclined to purchase domestic products if they perceive them to be reliable, safe, and of high quality (Li, Wang, & Sun, 2011; Wang & Yang, 2010). Additionally, pricing remains a significant determinant, with many consumers opting for domestic brands due to their affordability compared to international alternatives. In an increasingly digital world, social media influence, peer recommendations, and online product reviews further shape consumer perceptions and drive purchase intention by enhancing brand visibility and credibility (Randi, 2016; Schiffman, Kanuk, & Hansen, 2008). Indicators of purchase intention include consumers' willingness to seek product information, evaluate alternatives, consider trial purchases, and ultimately commit to buying a specific brand based on perceived benefits. For domestic cosmetic brands in emerging markets, understanding

and leveraging these factors is essential for strengthening their market position, enhancing consumer trust, and fostering long-term brand loyalty. By emphasizing cultural alignment, product safety, competitive pricing, and strategic marketing, domestic brands can effectively convert consumer interest into actual purchases, securing a sustainable competitive advantage in the local market (Misra, Patel, & Shrivastava, 2018; Phau, Teah, & Chuah, 2015).

Despite the growing demand for cosmetics in Bangladesh, limited research has examined the key factors influencing consumer purchasing intentions for domestic brands. Most existing studies focus on global markets, often overlooking the specific characteristics and preferences of consumers in emerging economies. While previous research has explored aspects such as product perception, affordability, and consumer trust, there is insufficient understanding of how these factors collectively impact purchase intentions in the Bangladeshi market. Although national loyalty is often assumed to influence consumer preferences, there is little empirical evidence confirming its effect on purchasing behavior for domestic cosmetic brands. Studies on product safety in the cosmetics industry primarily focus on international contexts, with limited insights into whether Bangladeshi consumers consider this a determining factor in their choices. With increasing competition from international brands, there is a need for an integrated approach that examines the competitive positioning of local brands and identifies strategies to enhance their market presence. This study aims to bridge these gaps by offering a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing purchasing decisions, providing valuable insights to help domestic brands strengthen their competitiveness.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

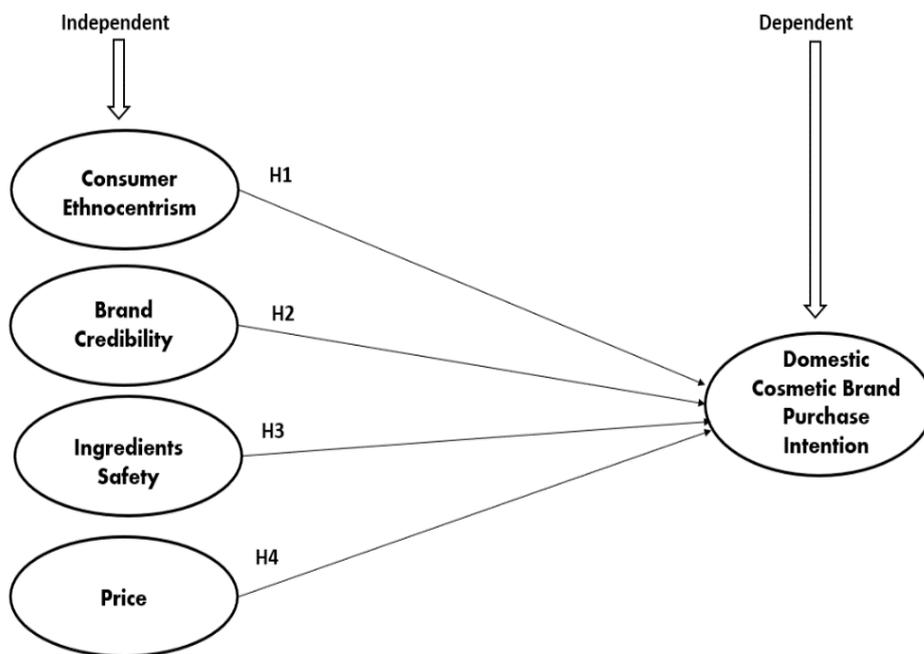


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The proposed conceptual framework aims to explore the relationships between various factors influencing consumer purchasing intention for cosmetic brands. It examines how ethnocentrism, credibility, product safety, and affordability impact the likelihood of consumers choosing local products over international

alternatives (see Figure 1). This model is grounded in two established theories “Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and Price-Quality Inference Theory (Zeithaml, 1988)” which provide a theoretical framework for understanding consumer decision-making in the context of cosmetic brand purchasing intentions. The research model integrates these theories to assess their applicability in the Bangladeshi cosmetics industry. Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory aligns with the ethnocentrism variable, explaining how cultural and nationalistic sentiments drive consumer preference for cosmetic brands. Meanwhile, Price-Quality Inference Theory supports the affordability variable, highlighting the role of pricing in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their purchase choices.

## **Methodology of the Study**

### **Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive research design to explore the factors influencing consumer purchasing intentions towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. A descriptive research design is suitable for this study as it allows for the systematic collection, analysis, and presentation of data to understand the relationships among variables without manipulating them. The focus is on describing the current state of consumer behavior and identifying patterns and trends in the context of the Bangladeshi cosmetics market.

### **Data Collection Method**

This study utilized an online survey method to collect primary data from respondents. The use of an online survey was deemed appropriate due to its convenience, efficiency, and ability to reach a wide range of participants across various locations. The survey was designed to investigate the factors influencing consumer purchasing intentions towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh.

The data collection process involved the creation of a structured questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire included both demographic questions and questions designed to measure the key variables of the study: consumer ethnocentrism, brand credibility, safety of ingredients, price, and purchase intentions. The survey employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, to capture the responses for each item.

To ensure a broad reach, the survey link was distributed through various online platforms, including email, social media groups, and instant messaging apps. Special emphasis was placed on targeting individuals who had prior experience with cosmetic brands. The survey remained open for a period of 30 days, allowing respondents to participate at their convenience and ensuring sufficient time to collect a representative dataset.

### **Sampling Technique and Size**

The study employed a “purposive sampling technique”, a type of non-probability sampling. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to deliberately select respondents who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The purposive approach ensured that the sample consisted of individuals capable of providing meaningful insights into the factors influencing their purchasing intentions. The sampling unit for this study refers to individual Bangladeshi consumers who are familiar with cosmetic brands. The selection criteria required respondents to have experience purchasing or using these brands, ensuring the relevance and quality of the data collected. However, a total of 207 valid responses were received. This exceeded the planned sample size, thereby enhancing the reliability of the study's findings.

### Construct Operationalization and Data Analysis Techniques

The variables and items used in this study were adapted from previously published articles and scientific materials to ensure reliability and validity. By using this standardized measurement, the study ensures that the data collected are quantifiable and comparable across respondents. The measurement items for the constructs in this study are summarized in Table 1.

To analyze the factors influencing consumers' purchasing intentions towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh, the following data analysis techniques are used to ensure accuracy and reliability. In this study, demographic data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26.0, which provided frequency distributions and percentages to understand the respondents' characteristics, such as gender, age, income, and educational qualifications.

To ensure that the survey instrument is both consistent and accurate, Cronbach's Alpha has been used to assess the internal reliability of constructs. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 indicated an acceptable level of reliability. Additionally, construct validity has been examined through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to confirm the appropriate factor structure of the measurement items.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is preferred for this study due to its suitability for descriptive research with complex models and its ability to work with small-to-medium sample size. In this study, PLS-SEM has been employed to test the proposed conceptual model and examine the relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable. Path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels were analyzed to test the hypotheses.

This combined use of SPSS for demographic data and SmartPLS for hypothesis testing ensured a robust and comprehensive data analysis approach for the study.

Table 1

#### *Measurement Items and Origin of the Factors*

Constructs	Number of items	Adapted from
Consumer ethnocentrism	5	Sharma et al., 1994; Shimp & Sharma, 1987
Brand credibility	5	Erdem & Swait, 2004; Alam et al., 2021
Safety of ingredients	4	Kim & Chung, 2011; Rahman et al., 2020
Price	4	Kotler & Armstrong, 2006; Alam & Meher, 2009
The intention of domestic brand purchases	4	Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975

*Note.* Source: Adopted by researches.

## Results

This study collected a total of 207 valid responses, which were analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). These methods helped assess the relationships between key variables and ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

The analysis begins with an overview of the demographic profile of respondents, followed by an evaluation of measurement reliability and validity. Hypothesis testing results are then presented, leading to an assessment of the structural model to understand the strength and significance of the proposed relationships. The following sections provide a detailed breakdown of each of these components.

### Demographic Background of the Respondents

From Table 2, the demographic analysis of the respondents indicates a nearly equal gender distribution, with 51.2% females and 48.8% males. This balanced representation ensures that perspectives from both genders are adequately reflected in the study.

Age-wise, the largest group of respondents (48.8%) falls within the 18-24 age category, followed by 22.2% in the 25-34 age range. Other age groups include 8.2% (35-44 years), 8.7% (45-54 years), 4.8% (55-64 years), and 7.2% aged 65 or older. This distribution highlights the predominance of younger participants while still including insights from older age groups.

Income levels among respondents vary, with 51.69% reporting earnings below 10,000 BDT, followed by 13.04% in the 10,000-14,999 BDT range, and 11.11% earning between 15,000-24,999 BDT. The remaining respondents fall into higher income brackets, representing a mix of financial backgrounds.

Regarding educational qualifications, the majority (45.89%) hold a Bachelor's degree, 19.32% have completed Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), and 14.98% possess a Master's degree. This range of educational backgrounds offers insights from individuals with varying levels of academic experience.

Table 2

#### *Demographic Analysis*

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Female	106	51.20%
	Male	101	48.80%
Age	18-24	101	48.80%
	25-34	46	22.20%
	35-44	17	8.20%
	45-54	18	8.70%
	55-64	10	4.80%
	65 or older	15	7.20%
	Monthly income	Below 10,000	107
10,000-14,999		27	13.04%
15,000-24,999		23	11.11%
25,000-34,999		15	7.25%
35,000-44,999		21	10.14%
Above 45,000		14	6.76%
Educational qualifications		SSC/equivalent	19
	HSC	40	19.32%
	Bachelor's degree	95	45.89%
	Master's degree	31	14.98%
	Other	22	10.63%

*Note.* Source: SPSS output from primary data.

### Assessing Measurement Model

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the constructs used in this study, internal reliability and validity tests were conducted. The reliability of the measurement model was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR), while validity was examined through convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted—AVE) and discriminant validity.

Table 3

*Summarizes the Measurement Model Outcomes*

Constructs	Items	Factors loading value	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Consumer ethnocentrism	CE2	0.803	0.881	0.601
	CE3	0.818		
	CE4	0.85		
	CE5	0.814		
Brand credibility	BC1	0.695	0.849	0.529
	BC2	0.72		
	BC4	0.755		
	BC5	0.793		
Ingredient safety	IS1	0.78	0.878	0.643
	IS2	0.846		
	IS3	0.792		
	IS4	0.788		
Price	P1	0.798	0.818	0.533
	P2	0.782		
	P3	0.759		
Domestic cosmetic brands purchase intentions	DBPI1	0.77	0.877	0.64
	DBPI2	0.856		
	DBPI3	0.82		
	DBPI4	0.751		

Note. Source: SmartPLS.

**Internal reliability.** The internal consistency reliability component in the current concepts implies that each assessment element has a suitable equal factor loading. According to reliability standards, factor loadings greater than 0.50 are considered acceptable for ensuring reliability (Truong & McColl, 2011). From Table 3, the outer loadings of the indicators ranged from 0.695 to 0.856, which are all above the threshold of 0.50. These results suggest that the items adequately measure their respective constructs, confirming the model's suitability for representing reliability.

- AVE measures the amount of variance captured by a latent variable relative to the variance due to measurement error. It reflects the degree to which the indicators of a latent construct explain the variance of the construct. AVE should be  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

- Construct reliability tests: Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR). The suggested values for composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha for research are equal to or more than 0.70, which is considered acceptable to good (Hair et al., 2017).  $\geq 0.7$ : Good reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

- Convergent validity indicates how well the indicators of a latent variable correlate with one another, confirming they measure the same construct (AVE should be  $\geq 0.5$  to establish convergent validity and outer loadings should be  $\geq 0.7$  to confirm that indicators strongly represent the construct).

**Measurement of the validity.** To assess discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were evaluated. All diagonal numbers were larger than the corresponding

off-diagonal numbers, indicating adequate discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was confirmed as the square root of AVE exceeded the shared variance among constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct surpasses correlations with other constructs. As shown in Table 4 below, all diagonal values (square root of AVE) are higher than their respective off-diagonal correlations, confirming construct distinctiveness.

Table 4

*Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	BC	CE	DBPI	IS	P
BC	0.728				
CE	0.502	0.775			
DBPI	0.286	0.266	0.800		
IS	0.204	0.249	0.273	0.802	
P	0.267	0.421	0.434	0.377	0.730

*Note.* Source: SmartPLS.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to assess construct similarity, providing a robust measure of discriminant validity. HTMT is considered an effective method for determining whether constructs are sufficiently distinct. According to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.85 indicate adequate discriminant validity.

From Table 5, HTMT ratios for all constructs were well below the threshold, confirming their conceptual and empirical distinctiveness. This reinforces the model's structural integrity, ensuring that observed relationships are not influenced by overlapping definitions. Thus, HTMT analysis further supports construct reliability in capturing unique and independent aspects of the study framework.

Table 5

*Discriminant Validity—HTMT Ratio*

	BC	CE	DBPI	IS	P
BC					
CE	0.657				
DBPI	0.325	0.311			
IS	0.278	0.295	0.326		
P	0.385	0.550	0.550	0.478	

*Note.* Source: SmartPLS.

**Multicollinearity test.** The study conducted a multicollinearity test to assess whether independent variables were highly correlated. Path coefficients were influenced by collinearity among predictor constructs. Tolerance values below 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values above five indicate collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2017). VIF analysis confirmed that all independent variables—consumer ethnocentrism, brand credibility, ingredient safety, and price—were free from collinearity, with VIF values ranging from 1.188 to 2.294, well below the threshold of five (see Table 6). This indicates that each variable uniquely contributes to explaining purchase intention towards domestic cosmetic brands. The results confirm model reliability, preventing inflated standard errors and ensuring accurate interpretation of key influencing factors.

Table 6  
*Multicollinearity Test*

	Items	VIF
Brand credibility	BC1	1.776
	BC2	2.17
	BC3	1.668
	BC4	1.391
	BC5	1.42
Consumer ethnocentrism	CE1	1.369
	CE2	1.883
	CE3	2.137
	CE4	2.144
	CE5	1.729
Domestic cosmetic brand purchase intentions	DBPI1	1.487
	DBPI2	2.154
	DBPI3	2.025
	DBPI4	1.55
Ingredients safety	IS1	1.703
	IS2	2.294
	IS3	1.842
	IS4	1.572
Price	P1	1.418
	P2	1.455
	P3	1.433
	P4	1.188

*Note.* Source: SmartPLS.

### Structural Model Estimate

The structural model was evaluated after confirming the reliability and validity of all construct measures in the study (Hair et al., 2017). The structural equation modeling approach was used to examine both significant and insignificant relationships, allowing the researcher to identify which hypotheses were accepted or rejected (Byrne, 2013). Furthermore, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was applied to assess the significance and strength of the path coefficients (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015), providing robust insights into the relationships between the constructs in the model.

Table 7  
*Results of Hypothesis Testing and Structural Relationships*

Hypothesis	Path coefficient (original sample)	t-value	Significance level (p-value $\leq$ 0.05)	Result
H1 CE $\rightarrow$ DBPI	0.010	0.118	0.906	Not accepted
H2 BC $\rightarrow$ DBPI	0.167	2.615	0.009	Accepted
H3 IS $\rightarrow$ DBPI	0.106	1.455	0.146	Not accepted
H4 P $\rightarrow$ DBPI	0.345	5.023	0.000	Accepted

*Note.* Source: SmartPLS.

Path coefficient values are standardized in a range from -1 to +1 (Helm, Eggert, & Garnefeld, 2010). Table 7 shows that the values align with the requirements. The path coefficient for brand credibility (BC), consumer ethnocentrism (CE), ingredient safety (IS), and price (P) are 0.167, 0.010, 0.106, and 0.345, respectively. This means that for each unit increase in brand credibility, domestic brand purchase intention (DBPI) will increase by 0.167 units. Similarly, for each unit increase in price, the DBPI will increase by 0.345 units. However, consumer ethnocentrism and ingredient safety show insignificant relationships with path coefficients of 0.010 and 0.106, respectively.

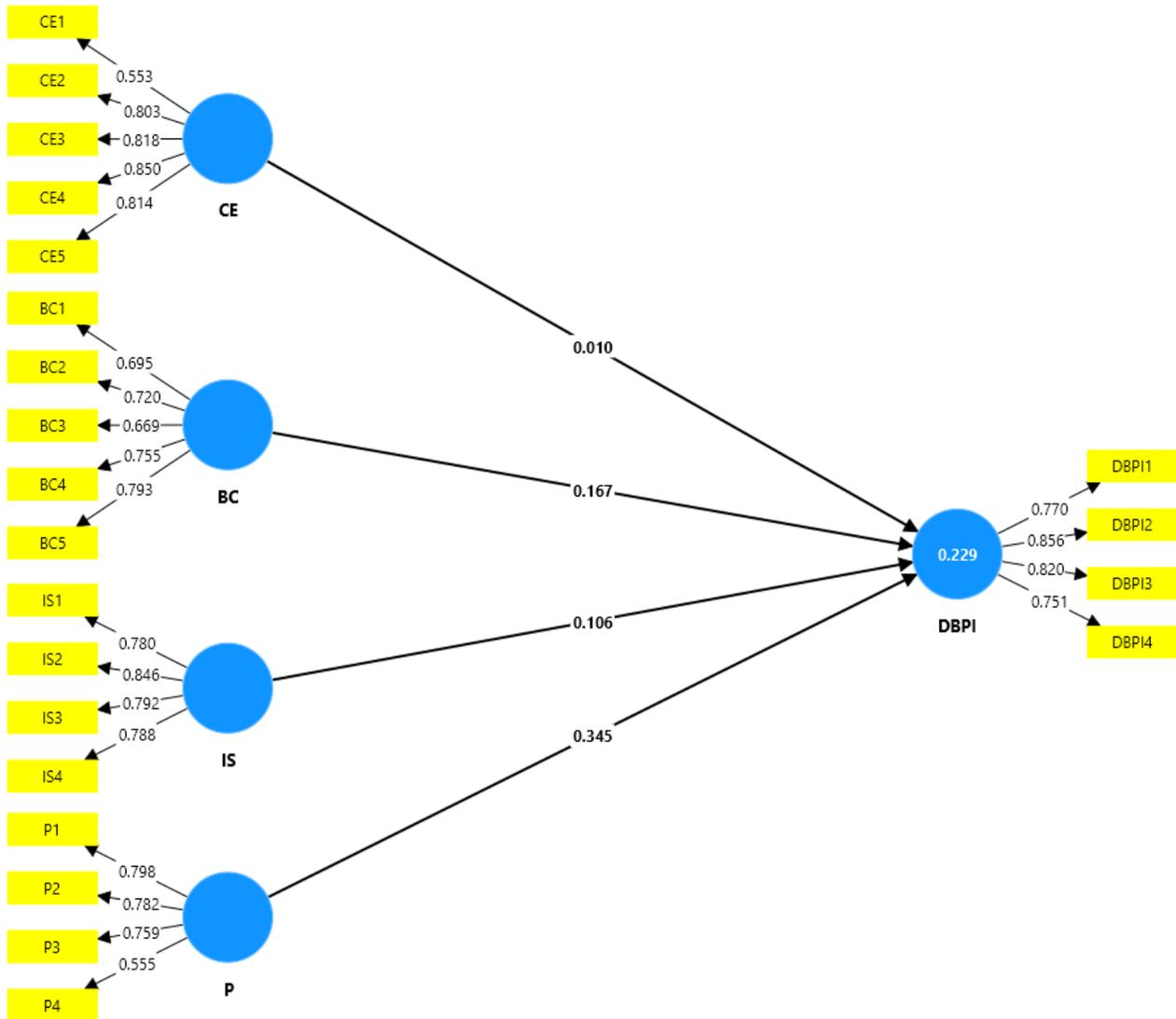


Figure 2. Measurement and structural model by Smart-PLS. Source: SmartPLS.

From the analysis, it is evident that not all hypothesized relationships were significant. Brand credibility and price emerged as strong predictors of domestic brand purchase intention, highlighting their importance in influencing consumer behavior. Conversely, consumer ethnocentrism and ingredient safety showed insignificant effects, suggesting that these factors might not hold as much relevance in this specific market (see Figure 2).

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) → domestic brand purchase intention (DBPI) is not accepted, as indicated by a low path coefficient of 0.010, a t-value of 0.118, and a p-value of 0.906. This implies that consumer ethnocentrism does not significantly influence the purchase intentions for cosmetic brands in this context. While ethnocentrism often encourages support for local products, the insignificant result in this study suggests that Bangladeshi consumers may not be strongly influenced by patriotic or cultural sentiments when purchasing cosmetics. Brand credibility (BC) → domestic brand purchase intention (DBPI) is accepted with a path coefficient of 0.167, a t-value of 2.615, and a p-value of 0.009. These results confirm that brand credibility significantly influences the purchase intentions of consumers towards domestic cosmetic brands. This finding aligns with previous studies, such as Erdem and Swait (2004), which emphasize the role of trust and reliability in fostering consumer loyalty and purchase intention. A credible brand provides assurance about product quality, safety, and consistency, which positively impacts consumer trust and motivates them to prefer domestic brands. Ingredient safety (IS) on domestic brand purchase intention (DBPI) is also not accepted. With a path coefficient of 0.106, a t-value of 1.455, and a p-value of 0.146, the relationship does not meet the threshold for statistical significance. This result contradicts existing literature that highlights the importance of safe and natural ingredients in shaping consumer preferences (Kim & Chung, 2011). The relationship between price (P) and domestic brand purchase intention (DBPI) is accepted with a strong path coefficient of 0.345, a t-value of 5.023, and a p-value of 0.000. These findings indicate that price is a significant determinant of purchasing intentions in the context of domestic cosmetic brands. Price sensitivity is a critical characteristic of Bangladeshi consumers, as supported by studies, which identify affordability as a key driver in decision-making (Zeithaml, 1988).

The findings emphasize the need for domestic cosmetic brands to prioritize building trust and offering affordable pricing while addressing awareness gaps around ethnocentrism and ingredient safety.

### **Overall Findings**

The study highlights critical variables that influence consumer purchase intentions, offering actionable insights for local businesses to thrive. Brand credibility emerged as a significant determinant, with a strong positive influence on purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.167$ ,  $t = 2.615$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ). This underscores the essential role of trust, reliability, and perceived competence in fostering consumer loyalty. Trustworthy brands reduce perceived risks, enhance confidence, and ultimately motivate consumers to purchase more frequently, as supported by prior research by Erdem and Swait (1998). For domestic brands, these findings emphasize the need for strategic investments in quality assurance, transparent communication, and reputation management. Developing a strong and credible brand image not only enhances consumer loyalty but also equips local brands to withstand competition from international counterparts, who often leverage their global reputations to dominate the market.

Interestingly, consumer ethnocentrism ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $t = 0.118$ ,  $p = 0.906$ ) did not significantly impact purchase intentions. This finding challenges the assumption that patriotic sentiments and support for local products are significant drivers in emerging markets like Bangladesh. Instead, it reflects a shift in consumer priorities towards tangible benefits such as quality and affordability. While earlier studies, such as Shimp and Sharma (1987), highlighted ethnocentrism as a strong determinant in similar contexts, Bangladeshi consumers appear to prioritize product performance and value over symbolic support for local businesses. This presents a clear challenge for cosmetic brands, which must focus on delivering competitive value propositions rather than relying solely on their local identity to attract consumers. Differentiating themselves through innovation,

superior quality, and better customer experiences is essential for cosmetic brands to remain competitive in a market increasingly saturated with international players.

Similarly, ingredient safety ( $\beta = 0.106$ ,  $t = 1.455$ ,  $p = 0.146$ ) also showed no significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. While global trends point to rising consumer concern for safe and natural ingredients, this study suggests that ingredient safety is not yet a primary consideration for Bangladeshi consumers. This could stem from a lack of consumer awareness or insufficient emphasis on safety by cosmetic brands. In contrast to studies such as Kim and Chung (2011), which found ingredient safety to be a critical factor in consumer decision-making, the findings here suggest an opportunity for cosmetic brands to educate consumers on the importance of safe and high-quality ingredients. Investing in consumer education, transparent labelling, and marketing initiatives that highlight ingredient safety could help domestic brands establish a competitive edge in the future.

Price, however, was the most influential factor driving purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $t = 5.023$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This finding reaffirms the price-sensitive nature of Bangladeshi consumers, where affordability is paramount in purchase decisions. Consistent with Zeithaml's (1988) framework, price remains a key determinant of perceived value in emerging markets. Consumers are often willing to compromise on other factors as long as the product aligns with their affordability constraints. For cosmetic brands, this underscores the importance of adopting competitive pricing strategies while ensuring that products deliver consistent value and quality. A balance between affordability and perceived value can enable local brands to gain a competitive advantage, particularly against international competitors that often target higher-income segments.

Collectively, these findings provide a strategic blueprint for cosmetic brands operating in Bangladesh. Brand credibility and price must be the focal points of their strategies, as these factors significantly influence consumer behavior. At the same time, the results point to opportunities for brands to address gaps in consumer awareness regarding ingredient safety and to move beyond relying on ethnocentric appeals. By prioritizing quality, affordability, and consumer education, domestic brands can enhance their competitive positioning, attract a broader consumer base, and foster long-term loyalty in an increasingly crowded and competitive market. This roadmap is crucial for navigating the unique challenges of Bangladesh's cosmetics industry while capitalizing on its growing demand.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings underscore the importance of fostering consumer trust and delivering value to capture market share in a highly competitive environment. Cosmetic brands must adopt a holistic approach that goes beyond the conventional emphasis on local identity to create lasting appeal among consumers.

The study also highlights key areas where cosmetic brands can refine their strategies. Building trust and enhancing product transparency are essential for establishing a credible market presence. At the same time, efforts to educate consumers about critical attributes such as safety and quality will foster greater confidence in cosmetic items. Affordability remains a cornerstone of consumer decision-making in Bangladesh, emphasizing the need for pricing strategies that cater to the purchasing power of the target market without compromising quality.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide a strategic roadmap for cosmetic brands to thrive in a dynamic market. By addressing existing challenges and capitalizing on their unique strengths, companies can not only enhance their market position but also contribute to the development of a robust and competitive

cosmetic industry in Bangladesh. These insights set the stage for future research to further explore consumer preferences and market trends, paving the way for sustained growth in the sector.

Based on the findings, several actionable strategies can be proposed to enhance the appeal of cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. Firstly, local companies should prioritize building trust and reliability among consumers by consistently delivering high-quality products. Transparent communication, such as sharing detailed information about manufacturing processes and quality assurance, can help establish a solid reputation. Investing in customer satisfaction initiatives and collecting feedback to improve products and services further bolster trust.

Additionally, cosmetic brands need to address the perception gap created by the dominance of international competitors. While promoting their identity as local brands, it is vital to go beyond patriotic appeals and focus on delivering tangible value to customers. Marketing strategies should emphasize the unique benefits of their products, highlighting innovation, quality, and affordability to create a strong competitive edge.

After that, awareness campaigns are crucial to educating consumers about important product attributes such as safety and quality. Efforts should be made to increase consumer knowledge through clear and accessible labelling, certifications from reputable authorities, and educational initiatives that differentiate domestic products from counterfeit or substandard options in the market.

Then, pricing strategies remain a critical area of focus. Cosmetic companies should design pricing models that balance affordability with perceived value. Offering promotional discounts, loyalty programs, or bundle packages can attract price-sensitive consumers while encouraging repeat purchases. At the same time, brands should explore ways to maintain profitability without compromising quality, such as optimizing production processes or sourcing materials efficiently.

Lastly, brands should adopt modern marketing techniques, including digital advertising and influencer partnerships, to reach younger demographics and urban consumers who are increasingly influenced by online reviews and recommendations. Leveraging social media platforms to engage with consumers and promote products can significantly enhance visibility and brand equity.

### **Future Research Direction**

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer purchase intentions towards cosmetic brands in Bangladesh. However, several areas remain unexplored, offering opportunities for future research to build upon these findings.

While this study focused on consumer ethnocentrism, brand credibility, ingredient safety, and price, future research could explore additional factors such as social media influence, celebrity endorsements, sustainability concerns, and perceived product innovation. These variables may further shape consumer behavior, especially as digital marketing and global beauty trends continue to evolve.

Qualitative research approaches such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions could provide deeper insights into consumer motivations and perceptions. This would complement the quantitative findings by uncovering the underlying psychological and emotional factors that drive purchasing decisions.

Future research could conduct comparative studies between domestic and international cosmetic brands to better understand the competitive landscape and how consumer preferences vary between local and foreign products. Exploring how globalization and cultural influences shape consumer behavior would add depth to the literature.

Longitudinal studies could assess how consumer attitudes evolve over time, particularly as awareness about product safety, sustainability, and ingredient transparency increases. With growing interest in natural and organic cosmetics, future studies could examine the role of eco-conscious consumer behavior and regulatory frameworks in influencing purchase decisions.

## Declaration

### Authors' Contribution Statement

Professor Dr. Meher Neger: Conceived and designed the experiments; performed the experiments; contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; review and editing, wrote the paper; overall supervision of the study.

Abu Obida Rahid: Conceptualization, contributed reagents, provided materials.

Fahima Akter: Performed the experiments; contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; wrote the paper.

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