

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS AND BUYING INTENTION OF RURAL BUYER

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Abstract

This study analyses the effect of elements adopted from social psychology, that is attitude and subjective norms, on the buying intention of rural buyers for purchasing hand hygiene products. Several studies in the FMCG sector has examined the role of social-psychological elements on buying intention. However, there is a paucity of research examining the impact of attitude and subjective norms on buying intention of rural buyers for hand hygiene products. Therefore the study aimed to examine the effect of social-psychological elements on buying intention of rural buyers. After concluding from the theory of reasoned action, conducting experimental research with 384 rural respondents and conducting analysis using the stepwise multiple regression analysis, the result exhibit that attitude affects the buying intention. However, subjective norms also influenced the buying intention. The study concludes that buying intention of rural buyers was substantially influenced by the social-psychological elements associated with them.

Keywords: *Attitude, Hand Hygiene, Indian Rural Buyer, Social Psychology, Subjective norms, Theory of reasoned action (TRA).*

JEL Codes: *M31, R0.*

Introduction

Human behaviour is generally unpredictable, thereby necessitating the need for its prediction while inducing an appropriate marketing strategy. Human behaviour has dimensions like attitude, outside stimuli, peer pressure, and social environment (Arun & Nivekha, 2019). In the marketing analogy, this behaviourism is termed as 'consumer behaviour.' The consumer's behaviour seems to influence their buying intention. This behaviour is determined by the theory of reasoned action (TRA)(Ajzen, I and Fishbein, 1980). This theory states that an individual behaviour is predicted by his attitude towards the buying intention and subjective norms (Hansen et al., 2012). In a country like India, where behavioural norms are strictly enforced due to social compulsions, attitudes and

subjective norms play a vital role in the buying intention in hand hygiene products purchase. India is a large country categorised as rural and urban population. India is home to a nearly 835 millions rural population, approximately 68% of the country's total population (Census 2011).

Rural India has one of the largest consumer base for the hand hygiene market. According to CAGR estimates, rural India's GDP per capita (per person) has risen by six percent since 2000. While the FMCG sector in rural market performed relatively well and surpassed \$20 billions in 2018, it is expected to exceed \$25 billions by 2025. This vast rural market provides an ideal opportunity for marketers in the hand hygiene sector (Nagaraja,

2004). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Ahmed et al., 2021), the need for hand hygiene products has gradually gone up, especially for hand hygiene products. Companies have now begun focusing on the rural market and its population of 835 million.

The purpose of the research study is, after conducting a survey of rural buyers, to determine how social psychological elements influence the buying intention of rural buyer for hand hygiene products.

The rural buyer is vastly different from the urban buyer because the socio-cultural phenomenon of rural India is complicated. Moreover, rural buyers have different levels of attitude and subjective norms towards buying a product (Muruganandan et al., 2012). Community norms and the environment mainly drive the rural buyer attitude toward buying, thereby continuously affecting their buying intention (Gillani, 2012). A recent study by Hawkins et al. (2020) states that a buyer's attitude changes toward product mainly due to the environmental stimuli. Another recent study states that buyers evaluate products through their attitude towards a specific product or offering (Boone et al., 2019). A more recent study by RizalUla et al. (2021) found that subjective norms were a specific behaviour towards purchase because of social encouragement, which affected the intention. It has also been found that subjective norms are an expectation from a product or offering, and thus the subjective norms influence the individual's buying intention (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013). These studies focused on purchasing FMCG products by urban buyers through the retail store, internet or online shopping. Very few studies with certain limitations are related to purchasing personal care products. Primarily, there is a noticeable lack of literature exploring the relationship of attitude and subjective norms with buying intention of rural buyers for hand hygiene products. Secondly, the effects of attitude and subjective norms have not yet been explored for hand hygiene products. Therefore the pertinent question arises as to whether the attitude and subjective norms are profound enough to lead to the buying intention of rural buyers.

The prime objective of this study was to examine the relationship and the effect of

attitude and subjective norms on the buying intention of rural buyers for hand hygiene products purchases. The study was based on the theory of reasoned action and classified it as an attitude and subjective norms with certain modifications. The authors expect the utilization of the theory of reasoned action in the effective marketing of hand hygiene products due to the findings the study conducted. Marketing managers can benefit from finding and knowing how the attitude and subjective norms influence the buying intention of the rural Indian buyer.

Literature Review

The guiding basis for this study is the theory of reasoned action, which was chosen over TAM and TPB for various reasons. Though TAM has an edge due to its broad implication in IOTs, it would be interesting to examine the less used theories which were well applied to predicting behaviour (Hasbullah et al., 2016). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) hypothesizes that individuals have wilful control over their behaviour, which influences control over their decision-making (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). According to TRA, every individual chooses how to behave, which is cogent for most situations. If the wilful behaviour is not under much control, people can be motivated by attitude and subjective norms. In rural India, it is found that people do not perform a specific behaviour due to the interference of environmental conditions. Therefore, TRA seems to be much more relevant in the scope of rural India in order to understand the buying intention of people for hand hygiene products.

In order to better understand the gaps in past research studies, a detailed analysis of previous research is needed. The above research question throws up essential points which can be analysed through a detailed literature review. These points in question are attitude, subjective norms, and buying intention.

Attitude is a learned attribute possessed by an individual person (Lien & Cao, 2014; Hawkins et al. (2020) and bonded with their behaviour. Hence attitude is resistant to change and leads to difficulty in accepting the use of a

needed product. However, it can be influenced by satisfying the psychological motivation (Lien & Cao, 2014), like in the case of hand hygiene products. Attitude changes over time via increased exposure to the modern world, especially in the time of technology. People can learn new concepts and evaluate their attitudes based on newly learned concepts (Shaouf et al., 2016; RizalUla et al. (2021). Hence attitude can be best described as how a people responds to any given situation or an object (Ajzen, I and Fishbein, 1980). Baron & Byrne (1987) described attitude as how a people evaluates an object, a situation, or an offering. Petty et al. (1997) suggest people's attitude to responds to a buying environment like a retail outlet, online program, or product and offerings. A past study by Dholakia et al. (1993) states that buyers evaluate their buying decisions through a general attitude towards a product or a company. Dale (2003) found that both positive and negative feelings adhere to a product because of a people's attitude towards it. It altered the people's behaviour towards buying the product. Therefore, it can be stated that attitude influences the buying intention of an individual (Bhattacharya, 2000). It has also been noted that a people's attitude can be altered by influencing the tri-component of attitude, viz., the cognitive component, the conative component, and the affective component (Ikechukwu et al., 2012). In their study, Muhammad et al. (2010) suggested the cultural effect on an attitude that culture framed, buyer's attitude, which ultimately affected their buying intention. While Zimmerman (2012) suggested that the buying behaviour can be predicted through the buyer's attitude towards a product, he also stated that different people had different attitude towards the same products. He further added that implicit attitude was less controllable but better predictors of buying intention. Jianlin et al. (2010), in their study on ethnocentrism, find that attitude played a mediatory role in the buying intention of buyers. Pande & Soodan (2015) in their study on personal care items suggested that attitudes have a variable effect on the buying intention of buyers.

Subjective norms are defined as the social norms and the environment in which people lives. Ajzen & Driver (1991) describe subjective norms as the perceived pressure that people feel due to societal norms, peers, neighbours, and family, whose actions directly or indirectly affect the people's behaviour. Subjective norms have been exhibited to motivate a buyer, and they can be received either from their surroundings or from the environment (Kim et al., 2013). Kreitner & Kinicki (2013) refer to subjective norms as buyer's expectations to behave according to their family, friends, and peers. The subjective norm has been defined as a buyer's behaviour to satisfy the surroundings or other people (Dharmesta, 2011). The subjective norms are also influenced by a buyer's beliefs (Tingchi Liu et al., 2013). Therefore in a country like India, where archetypal socio-cultural phenomena, subjective norms play an essential role in shaping an one's behaviour. It has been observed that since social norms compel an individual to behave toward an offering specifically, subjective norms can affect a buyer's buying intention by reorient their behaviour towards a specific offering (Yeon Kim & Chung, 2011). Hasbulah et al. (2016) noted in their study that subjective norms in the form of pressure from friends affected the buying intention of buyer. While Noor'ain et al. (2018), in their study on personal care, observed that subjective norms influenced the behaviour of buyer in buying items.

Aizen (1991) defines buying intention as the intention of people to carry out a certain kind of behaviour, which in this research study translates to the buying intention of the rural buyer. Buying intention has been vastly studied, especially in marketing example like green marketing (Nguyen et al., 2016). Prestwich et al. (2011) defined buying intention as the perceived value of a product that pushes the buyer to buy the same. The authors also suggest that the buying intention is influenced by reorient the attitude of a potential buyer through advertisements. Burgess and Blackwell (2001) noted that buying intention represents what a buyer believes will purchase the same.

A past study by Niessen & Hamm (2008) suggested that buying intention had significant differences between actual and declared buying since behaviour of buyers is specifically different. Various research has noted that buyers use cohort norms for buying (Noguti and Russell, 2014). Kurt et al. (2011) observed that subjective norms influenced the buying, i.e., when a buyer explores with a friend, their attitude towards buying is influenced. However, attitude and subjective norms are neither equal nor the same for each buyer because each type of buyer is different. Each buyer has a unique attitude and subjective norms. Nevertheless, it has been established from past studies that attitude and subjective norms somehow affect the buying intention. These studies state an effect of attitude and subjective norms on the buying intention, but these studies were neither country-specific nor product-specific. The analysis of the effect of attitude and subjective norms on rural Indian buyer is still lacking. The present research aims to fill this gap, as India is one of the world's emerging markets for FMCG goods.

From the literature review, it can be established that attitude and subjective norms influence a buyer's buying intention. Therefore, this research explores the effect of these two. Furthermore, Fatima & Lodhi (2015) add that the buyer chooses a product according to their attitude and potentially fulfils the social norms. Sometimes, the consumer buys a product due to their attitude towards a product, peer pressure, or influence from friends and family. So the impact of attitude and subjective norms has a diverse effect on the buying intention, especially for rural buyers. The above argument

leads to the development of the framework and hypotheses for the current study which stems from past researches.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

The study aims to determine the impact of social-psychological elements on buying intention of hand hygiene products in rural India. This study consists of two elements i.e. attitude and subjective norms affecting buying intention of hand hygiene products in rural India.

From the review of the literature and the knowledge gaps found in the past studies, it is now postulated that an buyer's attitude and subjective norms influence the buying intention of buyer. Moreover, the condition of hand hygiene in rural India is not good i.e. the attitude towards hand hygiene and subjective norms influences the rural people not to opt for hand hygiene products. The trend has been evolving as the marketers have continuously worked on reorient the attitude of the rural buyer and social norms through advertisements and awareness programs. Studies by Jung and Kau (2004) suggested that uniqueness manifested in a person's behaviour was mainly due to the attitude and social norms adopted from the environment. In their study, Kaur and Singh (2006) found that subjective norms tended to form a positive attitude towards the buying intention of buyer. The above literature review demonstrated the attitude and subjective norms shaped the buying intention of individuals. The authors develop a conceptual framework to explain the phenomenon by extending the above argument.

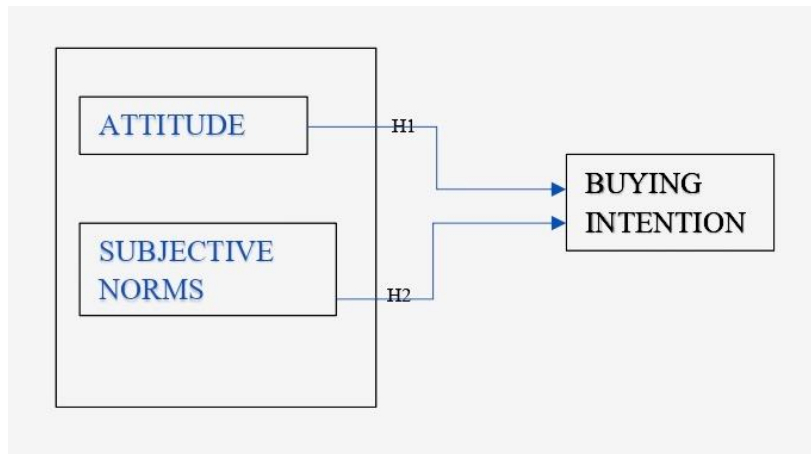


Figure 1. Model is adopted from TRA by Fishbein and Ajzen,1975 and modified by Author

The attitude in this research can be understood as an assessment of the buyer's buying intention. According to TRA, intentions are the reaction of attitude toward specific behaviour. A past study by Amaro & Duarte (2015) found that the greater the positive attitude, the greater the intention to buy. In another study, Baron et al. (2008) argued that attitude affected a buyer's intention by shaping a particular behaviour. In separate studies, Hu et al. (2018) and Lai & Wang (2012) independently observed that attitude positively influenced the buying intention in online shopping. In their study on personal care Yeon Kim & Chung (2011) exhibited that people may have a positive attitude towards buying, but they may not necessarily execute it. In other words, if a buyer exhibits a positive attitude towards personal care products, it may not mean that he/she would always buy that product or even become a prospective buyer. In a more recent study, Noor'ain et al. (2018) argue that an buyer's attitude does not influence the buyer's decision to buy personal care products. The study concluded by stating that attitude had a mixed effect on the buying intention of buyer. Based on this argument, it is expected that if the buyer's assessment is positive towards hand wash, then there is an increase in the chance of the buyer purchasing a product. Therefore we postulates that:

H1. *Attitude has a significant impact on buying intention.*

Subjective norms are a perception of others for a person in question to behave acceptably in a society. Accordingly, the person is either rewarded or punished for their behaviour. Tingchi Liu et al. (2013) finds that subjective norms get shaped by society's culture and belief system. In their study, Kim et al. (2013) stated that the subjective norms could be broadly defined as the motivation from peers, friends, and family to buy a product. More often than not, subjective norms have been observed to be used as an impulse for the decision to buy a product (Sandve & Ogaard, 2014) because the buyer wants to perform according to their role models or friends, or peers. Nor & Pearson (2008) argued that friends, family, and peer groups as subjective norms have positively affected the buying intention of the buyer. Sumaedi et al. (2015) also suggest that a buyer's buying intention is influenced by someone with whom the buyer is associated (subjective).

Conversely, Chuchinprakarn (2005) argued that subjective norms exert a meager influence compared to other factors involved. It is to be noted that the majority of the studies and observations are west-centric or urban India-centric. Although the urban-rural divide is shrinking in India, many rural Indian buyers adhere to their social norms more than urban buyers. So it becomes imperative to examine the effect of subjective norms concerning the

rural buyer. Therefore, study proposes a hypotheses that:

H2. *Subjective norms influences buying intention.*

Methodology

A quantitative research method was used in this study. Since this study aims to analyse how the socio-psychological elements influence the buying intention of rural buyers, descriptive research is used. Attitude and subjective norms are investigated as independent variables that influence the buying intention of rural buyers. This study used a structured questionnaire with the 5-point (1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree) Likert scale to collect the data. The present study used a measurement tool which was used in prior past research studies (A. A. Syed et al., 2021; A. Syed et al., 2022). The measure for attitude, 6 items were adopted from past studies by Ajzen

(1991) and Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, and Vitale (2000) then modified according to the research question. 6 items were taken to measure subjective norms adopted from Chuchinprakarn (2005) and Wu and Chen (2005) studies to suit the present study. Studies by Hoonsopon (2016) and George (2004) used to measure buying intention and used six items under it.

For this research study, the focus was on the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh in India. Rural Uttar Pradesh is divided into four distinct geographical regions East, West, North, and South. The random probability sampling technique was used for sample collection due to a large target population. A pilot study was done using 50 respondents from East Uttar Pradesh to verify the validity of the questionnaire and finds the validity of the questionnaire is .78 (Table 1) and it was peer-reviewed by two professors.

Table 1. Reliability

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	
	N of Items	
.786	.754	17

**Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.*

The sampling was done in the local bazaars and weekly haats from each region. 96 responses (at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error) were taken from each region, cumulatively totalling a sample size of 384. The sample profile was composed predominantly of men (66%), and women were in the minority (34%). Most of the respondents were farmers (35.9%), most of whom (24.7%) were in the Rs. 5001-7000 income group (highlighted in Table 2). This study used ANOVA (Ahmed et al., 2021; A. Syed et al., 2022) to confirm whether there was any effect of respondent's demographic profile on buying

intention. The result of ANOVA (Table 2) shows that demographic profile does not influence the buying intention ($p > .05$). Besides the demographic profile, hand hygiene awareness was also checked (Table 3). A total of 44% of the respondents were aware of the importance of hand hygiene, and 88% used hand hygiene products. However, handwashing with hand hygiene products was low, as 44% used hand hygiene products only when required. ANOVA (Table 3) shows that awareness of hand hygiene significantly affects buying intention ($p < .05$).

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents and ANOVA of Buying Intention

	Category	No. (N=384)	%		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Man	253	65.9	Between Groups	12.282	7	1.755	2.063	.555
	Woman	131	34.1	Within Groups	78.228	92	.850		
				Total	90.510	99			
Occupation	Daily wagers	85	22.1	Between Groups	3.507	7	.501	1.283	.268
	Farmer	138	35.9	Within Groups	35.933	92	.391		
	MNREGA	96	25.1						
	Skilled la- bour	65	16.9	Total	39.440	99			
Monthly Income	<= 5000	63	16.4	Between Groups	4.453	7	.636	1.942	.072
	5001 - 7000	95	24.7						
	7001 - 9000	57	14.8						
	9001 - 11000	65	16.9	Within Groups	30.137	92	.328		
	11001 - 13000	58	15.1						
	> 13000	46	11.9						

*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Table 3. Awareness of Hand Hygiene and ANOVA of Buying Intention

Variable	Category	No.	%		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Are you using hand hygiene product?	No	56	14.6	Between Groups	29.435	7	4.205	7.706	.000
	Yes	328	85.4	Within Groups	50.205	92	.546		
				Total	79.640	99			
Are you aware with the hand hygiene and its various benefits?	No	82	21.3	Between Groups	11.950	7	1.707	3.156	.005
	Yes	302	78.6	Within Groups	49.760	92	.541		
				Total	61.710	99			
How frequently you use hand hygiene products to clean your hands?	Daily	146	38	Between Groups	10.250	7	1.464	2.937	.008
	Not daily but when require	169	44	Within Groups	45.860	92	.498		
	When come from work	65	16.9						
	when go some- where	4	1.1						

*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Results

A stepwise multiple regression method was used to test the hypotheses. As observed based on the results which is highlighted in Table 4, attitude and subjective norms appear to be significant predictors of buying intention of rural buyer (criterion variables). Both the variables (attitude and subjective norms) were upheld as significant predictors in combination and contributed significantly to the buying intention [$F(2, 381) = 71.691, p < 0.01$] (Table 5) of rural buyers. Tolerance values measure the correlation between the predictor variables and can have a value between 0 and 1. The tolerance values presented in Table 6 (attitude = 0.684 and subjective norms = 0.645) suggested the presence of low levels of multicollinearity. Multiple correlations were found to be at $R = 0.52$ for attitude and subjective norms, which accounted for 27.3% of the variance in buying intention (Table 4).

Hypotheses 1 is accepted, and it is apparent from the values listed in Table .6 that attitude had a value of standardized beta = 0.38, bearing a t value of 7.39, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The attitude can be said to have a predictive power (beta = 0.38; $p < 0.01$) for buying intention and contribute about 24.7% in buying [change $R^2 = 0.247, F(1, 382) = 125.008, p < 0.01$] (Table 4). So, it can imply that attitude helps to change rural buyers' buying intention ($r = 0.49$) (Table 4).

While Hypotheses 2, also accepted as subjective norms, emerge as another significant predictor in the current study (Beta = 0.38; $p < 0.01$) (Table .6) for buying intention, which contributed to about 2% (r^2 change = 0.027, $F(1, 381) = 14.090; p < 0.01$) of variance in buying intention, meaning subjective norms help in influencing the buying intention of the rural buyer ($r = 0.523$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Model Summary
Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Change	Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.497 ^a	.247	.245	1.18065	.247	125.008	1	382	.000	
2	.523 ^b	.273	.270	1.16093	.027	14.090	1	381	.000	1.690

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude, Subjective Norm

c. Dependent Variable: Buying Intention

*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Table 5. Anova Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	174.254	1	174.254	125.008	.000 ^b
	Residual	532.485	382	1.394		
	Total	706.740	383			
2	Regression	193.244	2	96.622	71.691	.000 ^c
	Residual	513.496	381	1.348		
	Total	706.740	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

c. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude, Subjective Norms

*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS

Table 6. Coefficients

		Coefficients ^a										
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		Collinearity Statistics		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	19.016	.519		36.665	.000	17.997	20.036				
	Attitude	.233	.021	.497	11.181	.000	.192	.274	.497	.497	.497	1.000
2	(Constant)	15.447	1.079		14.317	.000	13.326	17.569				
	Attitude	.181	.025	.385	7.298	.000	.132	.229	.497	.350	.319	.684
	Subjective Norm	.164	.044	.198	3.754	.000	.078	.250	.415	.189	.164	.645

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Intention

The model can hence be calculated as

$$\text{Buying Intention} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Attitude}) + \beta_2 (\text{subjective norm})$$

$$\text{Buying Intention} = 19.016 + 0.385(\text{Attitude}) + 0.198(\text{subjective norm})$$

According to the final model, buying intention is positively affected by the attitude and subjective norms, in stepwise regression.

Discussion

This research considered the rural buyers, who are substantially different from their urban counterparts. The social phenomenon of rural India is archetypical, although they have good access to technology (Nagaraja, 2004). The rural people in India bind themselves to social norms and beliefs, which are well reflected in their attitude. Therefore, this research studied social-psychological elements affecting the buying intention of rural buyers, proposed two hypotheses and results revealed in Table No. 4. Accordingly, this research adopted the theory of reasoned action as the basic model with appropriate modifications and examined the variables. Results were indicative of attitude potentially impacting the buying intention of the individuals ($r=.49$), so hypotheses 1 is accepted. The results align with the Augusto de Matos et al. (2007) findings. They found in their study that buyer's attitude influenced their buying intention due to the perceived risk associated with that product. The results further explore the viewpoints of Ajzen (1991) that attitude influences the behaviour of a buyers. The results were contrary,

however, to the findings of Noor'ain et al. (2018), who observed in their study that attitude did not affect the intention of a potential buyer for buying personal care products, and the study of RizalUla et al. (2021) who suggested that attitude had a negative effect on buying. However, the present study conducted on rural buyers suggested that attitude had a positive and more significant effect on the buying intention as the rural buyers considerably adhere to their specific attitude towards a certain kind of behaviour. The study's results align with Pande & Soodan (2015) findings that personal attitude leads to purchasing personal care products.

Subjective norms are the pressures on an individual to behave in a particular manner. This pressure can arise in the form of friends, family, peer groups, neighbours, or society as a whole. The findings of the current study exhibit that subjective norms influenced the buying intention of individuals ($r=.52$); therefore, hypotheses 2 is also accepted, which is in alignment with the results of Arnold (2017).

According to this study, people tended to buy a product due to suggestions from their peers. Alternatively, the product was recommended by someone related to the buyers. This study also supports the findings of Sumaedi et al. (2015), who stated that consumer decision-making was influenced substantially due to the subjective norms. It is also in line with Karabay et al. (2016), who observed that subjective norms positively influenced an individual's buying intention. The results of this study directly contradict the findings of RizalUla et al. (2021), who suggested that subjective norms negatively impacted the buying intention of buyer.

Attitude and subjective norms are integral parts of consumer behaviour which shapes their buying intention. This has importance for the rural markets. Most studies have focussed on the urban buyer, online shopping, green marketing, personal care, and perceived behaviour without distinguishing the buying intention. Studies are also available wherein the consumer purchase decision is discussed as an associated model's component but not as a free factor. Limited studies are also present that target the consumption patterns of rural buyers. The present study adds to the existing literature by providing new insight into the relationship of attitude, subjective norms and rural buyer's buying intention for hand hygiene products. The current study adds to the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which is relevant to rural buyers.

The results of this study have a profound implication for advertisers, marketers, and policymakers. Currently, advertisers use various paid and nonpaid promotions to influence buyers. The buyer is also influenced if their attitude towards a product is reorient due to the pleasant social acceptability of the product (Majumdar, 2010). For example, advertisers have begun focusing on the rural areas in their print and broadcast promotions and using a widely accepted personality by the rural society. The rural market has vast untapped potential, and marketers regularly educate people to improved hand hygiene. Amitabh Bachchan, one of India's most famous film personalities, was roped in for a caller tune to announce that

washing hands was necessary for combating the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, another well-known actress, Vidya Balan, was made the national sanitation ambassador. Despite these efforts, the problem of sanitation and personal hygiene in rural areas remains more or less the same due to attitude and subjective/social norms.

The study found that a significant number of the population were from an agricultural labour background and slot in the mid-income group (Table No. 2). However, they bind strongly with the socio-cultural norms. So, the results of this study provide a long-term strategy for marketers to influence the attitude and subjective norms of rural buyers and urge their buying intention.

Conclusions

The purpose of this this study was to examines the effect of attitude and subjective norms on the buying intention of rural buyers. A stepwise regression analysis was performed to find the effect of attitude and subjective norms on buying intention. The results obtained overwhelmingly proved that both elements of social psychology substantially affected the buying intention of the rural Indian buyer. Test runs exhibited that attitude impacted and ultimately influence the buying intention. At the same time, subjective norms also had a potential effect on the rural buyers, thereby shaping their buying intention. Therefore, we conclude that the social-psychological elements have a potential positive influence on buying intention of rural buyers.

The research study is unique in nature as it focussed on rural buyer for hand hygiene products. Till now the rural India remains untouched, this study explore the rural population on ground of social psychology. The current study has its own set of limitations. Firstly, the present study was cross-sectional, with data gathered from only a small portion of rural India. Secondly, the analysis focused on rural buyers for only hand hygiene products, with the respondents being limited to rural Uttar Pradesh with relatively small sample size.

A better sampling design can be used for future studies based on funding and other resources.

Future research may focus on a longitudinal sample study to research the causal effect of the conceptual framework on other pro-hygiene products and technology factors with TRA must be studied concerning rural buyers. This would immensely contribute to the literature TRA for assessing the buying intention of the rural population. The present research also does not include every dimension of TRA. It is

further suggested that future research could focus on other dimensions of TRA adopted from various models directly related to the rural population. The buying intention can also be analyse separately as a moderating effect. A plethora of literature is available focusing on attitude and subjective norms and their effects on buying intention in urban individuals. However, research conducted on the rural population particularly their buying intention and the subjective norms and attitude are few.

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