

Consumer Attitude towards Kudumbashree Food Products: A Study among Women in Ernakulam District

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of consumption values on women's attitude towards Kudumbashree food products in Ernakulam District. Data was collected from 206 respondents through snowball sampling and was analyzed using PLS-SEM. The study evaluates Functional value, Emotional value, Social value, Conditional value and Health value. The finding reveals that Health value significantly and positively influences women's attitude, while social value has significant negative effect. Functional, Emotional and Conditional values were insignificant. The study highlights the importance of health consciousness in shaping consumer attitudes.

Keywords: Attitude, Health Value, Kudumbashree Food Products, PLS SEM, Theory of Consumption Values.

Introduction

Over the past decade, research into the consumption of eco-friendly products has grown significantly, driven by increasing environmental concerns and a shift towards more conscientious purchasing (Megha, 2024). Green purchasing behaviour is an environmentally friendly buying behaviour of purchasing environmentally beneficial products (Luthra et al., 2024). To a great extent, green purchasing is a crucial factor in attaining sustainability and motivating several stakeholders (Luthra et al., 2024). The academic literature has used words such as "green consumption", or "adoption of ecological or organic products," or "green purchasing" to the different purchasing behaviours that are aligned with sustainability (Carrión-Bósquez et al., 2025). According to (Liobikiene & Bernatoniene, 2017), this type of consumption does not focus on decreasing the acquisition of products by consumers and its main objective is to reduce the environmental impact. To make a healthier and better world, consumers are starting to think more about ethically produced products (Ho et al., 2023).

Kudumbashree project is a women's empowerment programme in Kerala launched in 1988, with the aim to improve the socio-economic status of women in rural and urban areas (Lubaba, 2024). Women should be allowed to participate in the financial market and expand social networks to generate income and wealth (Lubaba, 2024). The women have started micro enterprises as a means to generate stable income for them. Many of these enterprises focus on food products such as snacks, pickles, curry powders, ready to eat meals etc. Through the production of such foods, they can generate a stable income and also contribute to the society by providing a healthier food option.

Many studies have been conducted on green consumption and ethical buying behaviour, but very few studies have examined how consumption values influence attitude, particularly in the context of social initiatives like Kudumbashree. There is also a lack of empirical studies focusing on women consumers, who are more concerned with health. They play a vital role in purchasing healthy foods and are more inclined towards ethically responsible consumption. Addressing this gap, this study applies the consumption values to examine how functional value, emotional value, social value, conditional value and health value influence women consumers' attitude towards Kudumbashree food products in Ernakulam District.

Following are the research questions:

RQ1: What are the major consumption values that influence women consumers attitude towards Kudumbashree food products?

RQ2: What is the overall women consumer attitude towards Kudumbashree food products?

Literature Review

Attitude (AT)

Attitude is the consumer's overall evaluation of a product. It is considered as one of the key predictors of purchase intention in many consumer behaviour studies. If consumers perceive a product positively, they are more likely to purchase it. In the context of Kudumbashree products, consumers' attitudes toward quality, safety, other benefits influence their willingness to buy. When consumers perceive high functional value, emotional value, social value, health value, and conditional value, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards the food products. In Kerala, Kudumbashree has a strong presence, and the consumer attitude towards their products provides valuable insights into the behavioural outcomes.

Consumption Value

The determinants of organic products purchase are analysed by applying many leading theories (Liobikiene & Bernatoniene, 2017). Recent studies have shown that perceived value influences attitude in the case of organic products. Consumption values refer to the benefits that influence the purchase of a product. These are the key factors that influence the choice of a product in the context of social initiatives like Kudumbashree. The concept was proposed in the Theory of Consumption Values. It is the most prominent and widely used theory in green consumption studies (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025a). According to this theory, consumers' decisions are influenced by different values, these are the reasons why consumers purchase a product (Handriana et al., 2025). This theory identifies 5 types of values that shape an individual's purchasing decision: 1. Functional value, 2. Social value 3. Emotional value, 4. Conditional value, 5. Epistemic value (Sheth et al., 1991) (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025a). Functional value relates to price, quality and convenience, while emotional value shows the feeling of pride associated with supporting women initiatives. Social value is the social image or social status from the product usage, while conditional value depends on situational factors like availability. This study focuses on Kudumbashree food products. In such a context, consumers are more likely to prioritize health value rather than the curiosity associated with epistemic value. Because the foods, snacks, pickles, curry powders are mostly familiar items that consumers regularly use in their daily life. So, such curiosity will be limited in this context. So, health value (Halan et al., 2025), (Ghazali et al., 2017) is taken as a key construct in this study. Health value plays a significant role in food consumption, it reflects safety, hygiene and nutritional benefits. These values provide a framework to understand how different consumption values translate into attitude towards Kudumbashree food products. It is helpful to understand the factors that shape attitudes. The research framework and hypotheses of the study are based on a strong theoretical foundation.

- **Emotional Value (EV)**

Emotional value refers to the perceived psychological benefits derived from a product. It is associated with the moral satisfaction and well-being related to eco-friendly products highlights that when consumers experience positive emotions enhance their overall attitude toward green products and brands (Liu et al., 2025). In the context of kudumbashree products, consumers feel a sense of happiness and social responsibility. Every purchase supports women initiatives and the local livelihood. These emotions increase their overall attitude toward Kudumbashree products. So, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: EV has a significant influence on attitude.

- **Conditional Value (CV)**

Conditional Value represent a products utility under specific purchase situations (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025a) . This value is the situations that consumers must face to make decision (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025a) . CV is relevant in the case of food consumption, as consumer attitudes are shaped by several situational factors. In the case of Kudumbashree food products, conditional value plays a crucial role in shaping women’s overall attitude.

H2: CV has a significant influence on attitude

- **Functional Value (FV)**

Functional value is defined as the perceived utility derived from an alternative capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance (Dangelico et al., 2021). It refers to the products performance including quality, durability, reliability, efficiency. Consumers evaluate the product based on their ability to perform tasks effectively. In the case of Kudumbashree food products, consumers evaluate them based on health benefits, absence of chemicals, freshness and quality. These are considered as safer and healthier. If a product has more functional benefits, it increases the attitude of the consumer towards that product. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: FV has a significant influence on attitude.

- **Social Value (SV)**

Social value is the benefit a consumer derives when a product helps them to improve their social image, express their identity and gain appreciation from others. This value can be positive or negative and may be influenced by factors such as the consumers personal beliefs and social norms (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025a) . In the context of Kudumbashree products, consumers may feel that their choice communicates social values. Consumers perceive that purchasing Kudumbashree products reflects socially responsible behaviour. This increases their social image and acceptance within the society. So, social value becomes an important determinant of attitude.

H4: SV has a significant influence on attitude.

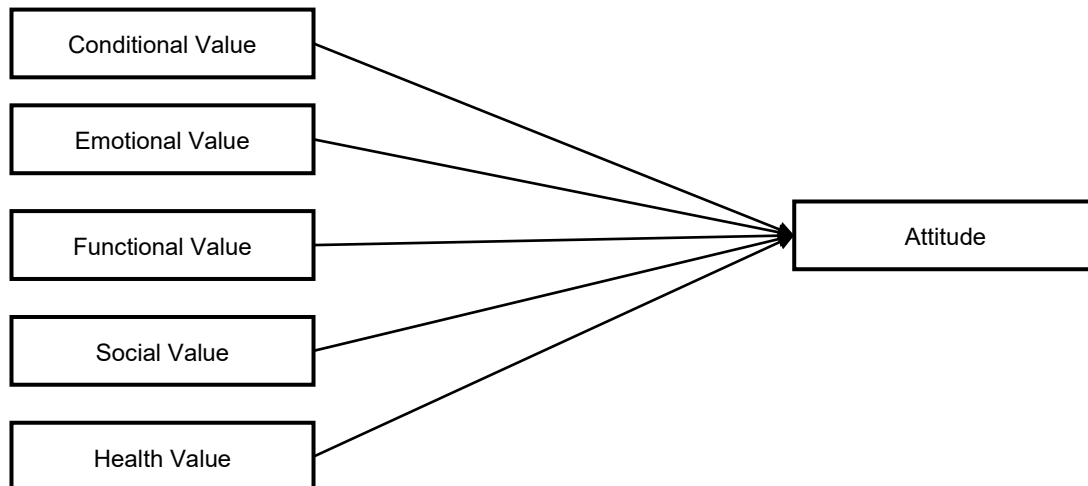
- **Health Value (HV)**

Consumption of organic products is higher among those who wish to have a helathier life style (Halan et al., 2025). Kudumbashree foods are free from harmful chemicals. While choosing Kudumbashree food, consumers believe that these products are safer, more nutritious and beneficial for long term health. As health consciousness increases, health value becomes a strong predictor of their attitude toward food consumption. Hence the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5: HV has a significant influence on attitude

Conceptual Model

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Research



*Source: Author's own work.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model for the study. It shows the relationships of conditional value, emotional value, functional value, social value and health value with attitude of consumers about the Kudumbashree food products.

Methodology

The research followed an empirical approach to examine consumers attitude towards Kudumbashree food products. Data was collected from women residing in Ernakulam District. A total of 250 respondents were selected using the snow ball sampling technique. A structured bilingual questionnaire was prepared to collect the data through google forms. 206 completed responses were received and used for the final analysis. The collected data were analyzed using Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) in Smart PLS 4. The measurement model was assessed to examine the reliability and validity of the constructs. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were evaluated. Convergent Validity was assessed through factor loading and AVE. Structural model was analyzed to test the relationships between variables. Path coefficients, t-values and p-values were examined through bootstrapping. R² was used to evaluate the explanatory power of the model and to understand how well independent variables explain consumers' attitude.

Results and Discussion

- **Demographic characteristics of respondents**

The top category of respondents was from generation Z (38.8%), closely followed by generation X (32%). Most of the respondents had a PG qualification (41.7%) and were private sector employees (29.1%). 28.2% of the respondents had monthly income below ₹10000 and 15.5% respondents had monthly income above ₹40000. Majority of the respondents (51.5%) resides in rural area, while 26.2% lives in semi-urban and 22.3 % lives in urban areas. The most purchased Kudumbashree food product are pickles, followed by snacks and sweets.

- **Estimation of the measurement model**

Table 1: Factor Loadings of Measurement Items

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings
Attitude	AT1	0.848
	AT2	0.936
	AT3	0.886
	AT4	0.748
Conditional Value	CV1	0.795
	CV2	0.796
	CV3	0.742
	CV4	0.827
	CV5	0.763
Emotional Value	EV1	0.665
	EV2	0.88
	EV3	0.89
	EV4	0.88
	EV5	0.815
Functional Value	FV1	0.692
	FV2	0.795
	FV3	0.796
	FV4	0.8
	FV5	0.764
	FV6	0.759
Health Value	HV1	0.882
	HV2	0.89
	HV3	0.919
	HV4	0.893
	HV5	0.912
Social Value	SV1	0.871
	SV2	0.843
	SV3	0.934
	SV4	0.891
	SV5	0.932

*Source: Author's own work using PLS SEM

Table 1 shows the factor loadings of the measurement items. Factor loadings are used to assess the reliability of individual indicators in representing their respective constructs. Almost all of the items have factor loadings value above the threshold limit of 0.70, except the items EV1 and FV1. Further the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures. All constructs exhibit Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Further all of the constructs have AVE values above 0.50. This shows satisfactory convergent validity. Hence the items EV1 and FV1 are not removed as the overall construct-level validity remains unaffected.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Measurement Using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	AT	CV	EV	FV	HV	SV
AT						
CV	0.709					
EV	0.466	0.687				
FV	0.594	0.731	0.633			
HV	0.826	0.859	0.58	0.764		
SV	0.367	0.694	0.733	0.462	0.585	

*Source: Author's own work using PLS SEM

Table 2 shows the discriminant validity calculated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) measure. It examines whether each construct is empirically distinct from the others. All the HTMT values are below the threshold limit of 0.85, except the HTMT value for Health Value and Conditional Value. To resolve this issue, the problematic measurement item in Health value construct is removed after assessing the cross loadings value. All the other constructs represent conceptually distinct constructs.

Table 3: Cross Loadings of Measurement Items of Health Value Construct.

Measurement Items	Conditional Value	Health Value
HV1	0.725	0.882
HV2	0.653	0.89
HV3	0.715	0.919
HV4	0.699	0.893
HV5	0.696	0.912

*Source: Author's own work using PLS SEM

Table 3 presents the cross-loadings of items under the Health Value construct. Cross-loading analysis helps identify whether any item loads significantly on multiple constructs, thereby affecting discriminant validity. The cross-loading value of measurement item HV1 exhibits the smallest difference for Health Value compared to its loading on Conditional Value, indicating a lack of discriminant validity. This suggests that respondents may interpret HV1 in a way that overlaps with conditional aspects, such as situational or contextual benefits. Therefore, HV1 was removed from the model to improve discriminant validity and ensure clearer construct differentiation.

Further HTMT analysis shows that all HTMT values have fallen within the threshold of 0.85 after removing the measurement item HV1. This improvement indicates that the removal of HV1 effectively resolved the overlap between Health Value and Conditional Value. Now all the constructs of the study represent conceptually distinct constructs. Discriminant validity is successfully established in the study.

Table 4: Assessment of Multicollinearity Using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

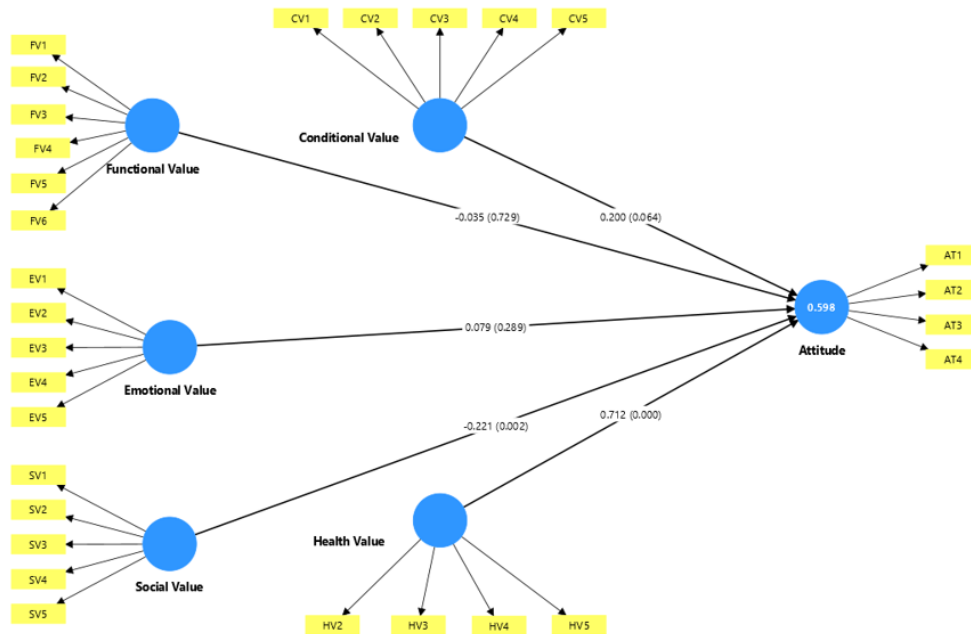
	VIF
CV -> Attitude	2.937
EV -> Attitude	2.181
FV -> Attitude	2.131
HV -> Attitude	2.819
SV -> Attitude	2.161

*Source: Author's own work using PLS SEM

Table 4 shows the multicollinearity assessment. Multicollinearity can distort path estimates and affect model interpretation. A VIF value below 3.3 is considered ideal in PLS-SEM. All the VIF values in

the model are between 2.131 and 2.937, which are well below the threshold. This shows, there are no multicollinearity issues in the model.

Figure 2: Result of Full Model



*Source: Author's own work using PLS SEM

Figure 2 shows the Structural Equation Model along with the path coefficients and coefficient of determination (R^2). The model explains 59.8% of Attitude ($R^2=0.598$), indicating moderate to strong explanatory power. The structural model significance testing results done using bootstrapping shows that among the five predictors, Health Value and Social Value show statistically significant relationships with Attitude. Conditional Value, Emotional Value and Functional Value does not have a significant relationship with the attitude of consumers towards Kudumbashree products. This indicates that product performance, emotional appeal, and situational benefits are not key determinants of consumer attitude in this context. One possible reason may be that consumers consider these attributes as basic expectations rather than differentiating factors. As a result, they do not significantly influence overall attitude.

Health Value has a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$), making it the most influential predictor. This indicates that consumers place high importance on health-related attributes such as safety, quality, and nutritional benefits. This finding aligns with the increasing consumer awareness of healthy and safe food consumption, particularly in locally produced or community-based products.

In contrast, Social Value shows a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.221$, $p = 0.002$). This suggests that social factors, such as status or social approval, may not positively influence attitudes toward Kudumbashree products. One possible explanation is that these products are perceived as practical or necessity-driven rather than status-enhancing. This negative relationship provides an interesting insight into consumer perception and highlights the unique positioning of Kudumbashree products.

Table 5: Summary of hypothesis testing

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	EV has a significant influence on attitude.	Rejected
H2	CV has significant influence on attitude	Rejected
H3	FV has a significant influence on attitude	Rejected
H4	SV has significant influence on attitude.	Accepted
H5	HV has a significant influence on attitude.	Accepted

*Source: Author's own work

Conclusion and Future Direction

The study examined the role of consumption values in shaping women's attitude toward Kudumbashree food products. The findings show that emotional value does not have a significant relation with attitude which is aligned with the study of Hoyos-Vallejo et al., (2025), which states that emotional value does not have a significant influence on attitude and behavioural intentions, such as environmental attitude and organic purchase intention. Conditional value doesn't have any significant relation with attitude, and is supported by previous study (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025), as attitude are shaped by quality. Functional value does not have a significant influence on attitude. Health value is the most influential factor and significantly affect attitude. This reflects the increase in awareness for a healthy life style, and the safe food options positively influence the consumer attitude. This indicates the growing health consciousness among consumers; Kudumbashree products are considered as homemade and free from additives. So, emphasizing health value strengthens consumer engagement and thereby promotes sustainable growth for Kudumbashree initiatives. Social value has a significant negative relationship, it shows that Kudumbashree foods are perceived as necessity-driven rather than status-enhancing. Women purchase such products mainly for health and safety benefits, not to gain any social status. Overall, the study emphasizes that the health value dominates consumer decision-making in the context of Kudumbashree food products.

Future studies can be conducted by including male consumers. This study focused only Ernakulam District; future studies can expand to other geographical regions. Additional variables such as price, trust, and environmental concern can be studied to gain deeper insights for policy makers and Kudumbashree units.

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