



A STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE YOUNG BUYERS' DECISIONS TO PURCHASE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS IN UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

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Abstract

Present study was aimed to examine the factors influencing purchasing behaviour among consumer of sustainable products. A self- administered questionnaire was drawn by using street intercept method from the young consumers of age between 18-30 years from different cities of Uttarakhand, India. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was utilized to find out the structure, goodness of fit, validity of constructs and its dimensions. Structural equation model for measuring multiple causal effects was also employed. Present findings suggest that environmental knowledge, environmental awareness, environmental attitude and price of sustainable product are significantly related to youth's purchase intentions towards sustainable products.

Keywords– Environment Knowledge, Environmental awareness, Environmental Attitude, Purchase intentions, sustainable products.

1. Introduction

In current scenario, all colleges, governments, and nonprofits all regularly hold events dedicated to discussing environmental issues and their effects on human health (Kumar et al., 2021). Sustainable product purchases, or lifestyle adjustments that result in such purchases, are advocated for consumers. Green products are also known as eco-friendly products, ecological products, sustainable products, and environmentally responsible products (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). The term "sustainable products" is used to describe them in this research. Despite a rapidly expanding market, producers and marketers have struggled to move green goods. This is because there has been a shift in desire for green products among the environmentally conscious consumer base. To achieve economic (earning money), social (helping people), and environmental (saving the earth) objectives is the definition of sustainable development (World Bank, 2003; Mensah and Casadevall, 2019).

Any business relies on happy customers and long-term partnerships (Ranaweera, 2007). Many companies, responding to growing regulatory and public scrutiny, have adopted environmentally friendly marketing practices. Businesses that are motivated primarily by profit will likely adopt the concept of "green marketing" if consumers have significant environmental care and demonstrate that concern by purchasing environmentally friendly items (Zhang and Dong, 2020). As a result, businesses became more concerned of their impact on the environment and began developing eco-friendlier packaging and taking other steps to meet the demands of the environmental movement. Yet, the significant expenses associated with manufacturing green products, as well as the shifting preferences of consumers and their scepticism of green advertising claims, are among the major challenges these businesses confront (Upadhyay and Jain, 2022). So, it's crucial to learn how people think and behave on environmental issues, particularly regarding green products.

Person's environmental awareness and knowledge are two of the numerous factors that influence their decision to purchase eco-friendly products (Tan, 2011; Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Zhuang et al., 2021). Many studies in countries including Italy, Germany, the UK, and the US have examined consumer propensities to purchase green goods (Zheng et al., 2021). However, there is a lack of studies looking at how people in developing countries respond to environmentally friendly products. The key objectives of this study are to identify and to analyze the most important aspects that influence the purchasing decisions of young customers with regards to sustainable products. So, the purpose of this study is to examine what elements may motivate or dissuade buyers of eco-friendly products.

Green products are those that are good for the environment and don't harm it in any way. Green products are those that do not contribute to environmental degradation, do not deplete natural resources, and can be reused, recycled, or preserved, as defined by Shamdasami et al. (1993). A green product is one that uses environmentally friendly materials or packaging to lessen its negative effects on the planet (Elkington and Makower, 1988).

To put it another way, a "green" product is one that uses strategies like recycling, recycled content, minimal packaging, or the use of non-toxic materials to lessen its negative effects on the natural world. As Krause (1993) discovered, consumers are increasingly mindful of the effects of their daily actions on the natural world. As a result, a growing number of people are making a concerted effort to add green products to their homes (Martin and Simintiras, 1995).

Green customers are those that are environmentally conscientious and take an interest in environmental concerns (Soonthonsmai, 2007). These environmentally conscious shoppers typically organized petitions, participated in boycotts of various brands and merchants, and actively promoted the cause of environmental protection (Fergus, 1991). According to Ottman (1992), consumers were more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products when their primary needs for performance, quality, convenience, and affordability were satisfied, and when they understood how a green product could help to contribute to the solution of environmental problems. Consumers are unable to make any buying decisions because of their lack of understanding regarding the benefits and applications of environmentally friendly items.

2. Theoretical framework for Research

On the basis of the previous literature review the variables are identified and selected for the research work shown in fig 1.

3. Literature Review

Products that are sustainable are safe for human health as well as the atmosphere and the environment. On the other side, the Green products, as defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are those that reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts such those caused by pollution, waste, noise, water, air, and soil. An important demographic to reach out to in the future is the young people of India, as Jaganath's (2016) research

shows that they are more likely to make environmentally conscious purchases due to their environmental outlook. To his credit, Jaganath demonstrated that young Indian customers' environmental-conscious shopping habits are influenced by their environmental ideals.

3.1 Environmental Knowledge

Stutzman and Green argue that developing a green consumer mindset begins with environmental education. Educated citizens may be able to make a positive difference in terms of the environment and individual environmental responsibility, both of which could aid in the cause of long-term sustainability. According to Noor et al. (2012) one's environmental attitude can be changed simply by increasing one understands about the environment. As additional evidence, prior studies have shown that consumer environmental attitude is significantly influenced by environmental education. Propositions are made based on the theoretical topics covered by many researchers:

H1: Environmental knowledge shows positive impact on youth's purchase intentions towards sustainable products.

3.2 Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness means a person wants to improve their environment. Lin and Huang suggest monitoring the relationship between environmental awareness, attitude, and purchase intention because increasing environmental consciousness takes time and changes in attitudes and purchasing behaviors. Ariffin et al. (2016) found that environmental awareness increases green goods purchasing intention. Tsay (2009) believes green consumption would improve the environment and will spend more on green products. Several studies have shown that environmental awareness has an effect on the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a green product.

H2: Environmental awareness has a large impact on their intentions to buy Sustainable products.

3.3 Environmental Attitude

According to Schultz and Zeleny (2000) claim that "attitudes of environmental concern are rooted in a person's notion of self and the extent to which an individual considers him or herself as an intrinsic component of the natural world". Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) argue that consumers' environmental attitudes are a significant indicator of whether or not they will purchase environmentally friendly products. A number of studies have indicated that young people's environmental opinions affect their inclination to purchase eco-friendly products. In conclusion, consumers' feelings about the environment often have a role in their product selection decisions (Blackwell et al., 2006).

H3: Environmental attitude greatly affect their intentions to buy sustainable products.

3.4 Price of sustainable products

In the end, the price of sustainable products was a crucial deciding factor for buyers. Sustainable products, as suggested in the article, would be in demand despite their higher price tags (Mathur, 2019). According to recent studies, consumers are still willing to pay more for products of higher quality and that were produced in a more ethical and environmentally friendly way (Reints, 2019). Businesses should increase their dedication to ethical trade practices because more and more customers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products (Chang, 2019).

H4: Price of sustainable product significantly affects purchase intentions towards sustainable products

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Data Collection

The present research was conducted on 287 young consumers group among 18 to 30 year old of Uttarkhand, Questionnaire survey methods was used for collecting data. Objective of this research is to understand and explore the association of environment attitude, environment knowledge, environment awareness and pricing of sustainable product with consumer purchase intentions.

4.2. Research Instrument

Five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses as shown in (Appendix-1). In this research study the main focus was on measuring the factors which may influence the young consumers in terms of usage of sustainable products.

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Preliminary Analysis

In the current research study, an initial analysis was carried out to show the sample profile and determine the consistency of the responses by analyzing the reliability through Cronbach's alpha, further confirmatory factor analysis to identify the validity of the individual items and the constructs.

The main concern of analyzing the multiple aspects under the head of preliminary analysis was to filter the conceptual framework before putting the latent and observed variables on objective wise analysis, so that proper inference can be drawn from the study.

5.1.1. Sample Profile

The sample profile given into the table 1 represents the distribution demographic attributes of sample.

5.1.2. Common method variance

Respondent are the main source of information in the primary data collection and these respondents may have biasness in the responses. The source of bias in this study can be the response or scale format (Eichhorn, 2014). In order to find out the biasness in the response, there is a method given by Harman (1960).

The purpose of using Common method variance was to check as whether the study is having no biasness or biasness, if any, but within acceptable range.

The results indicated that there is little biasness, but it can be accepted as it is within the range i.e. there was a total variance of 29.680 % with all the dependent and independent variables. Taking inferences from the results so achieved it can be stated that there is existence of bias do exist but within the acceptable range. (Refer Table 2)

5.1.3. Reliability Analysis

Checking of reliability is very important aspect in the primary research study. The reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha was measured to find out the internal consistency or strength of the scale before analysing the relationship between the variables under study (Cronbach, 1951; Bujang et al., 2018; Malik et al., 2018). It was found that the Cronbach's alpha values for all the constructs were within the standard threshold limits.

Taking the conclusions, it can be stated that the there is enough evenness to use these latent and observed variables for the purpose of the study. (Refer Table 3)

5.1.4. Measurement model of purchase influencing factors

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used on the collected data set to validate the items of the latent variables. In the parsimonious model run itself, the results stated the good fit model with no improved run as- (CMIN /DF = 1.066, GFI = 0.957, NFI = 0.946, CFI = 0.977, RMSEA = 0.032, $\chi^2 = 79.9$, p value = 0.003, DF = 48) as shown in the table 4 and structure 1. The indicators of model fit were used in accordance with the study of Malik et al. (2018).

5.1.4. a. Convergent Validity

Average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR) are two convergent validity indices listed in Table 5. Construct dependability of 0.60 and an AVE of 0.50 are necessary for adequate convergence (Hair et al, 2006). Values were not only attained, but also considered as construct reliability was met. According to the findings, there is evidence of convergence between the latent variable components.

5.1.4. b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity used to assess how the construct are different from each other. High discriminant validity shows that the construct is exclusive. Under this study the discriminant validity was measured by using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) which shows that discriminant validity exists.

5.1.5. Structural Equation Modeling

Impact of Purchase Influencing Factors on purchase intentions:

The structural model was used to test the hypotheses. The use of structural model is done for the complex structure in order to find out the model fit and causal relationships (Malik et al., 2018). The analysis of the data indicated a good fit model.

Initially, in the parsimonious run the structural model of multiple dimensions was found to be the poor fit. Further, in the fourth improved run with improvements in the model through modification indices the final model fit was arrived as good fit with the values as (CMIN/DF = 1.922, chi-square = 165.35, GFI = 0.928, NFI = 0.907, CFI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.053, p - value = 0.000) as shown in the table 6 and Fig.2.

Further, as shown in table 7 and Fig.3 the causal effect of purchase influencing factors on purchase intentions was measured in the four different directions dimension wise. The results indicated that environmental awareness, environmental attitude is positively significantly associated with the purchase intentions of the targeted customers (standardized beta value are 0.678 and .630, *p*- value = .260 and 0.313 respectively).

Further the results provided the insights that the environmental knowledge and price of sustainable products are positive but insignificantly associated with purchase intention (standardized estimate = 0.182, and 0.150, *p*- value = .260 and 0.313 respectively). Hence, H1 and H4 supported the hypotheses. On the other hand, H2 and H3 not supported the hypotheses. (Refer table 8)

6. Discussion and Implications

The results of the study indicated that the price of a sustainable product, as well as the environmental attitude and knowledge of young customers, were all important predictors of their desire to purchase sustainable things. For buyers in Uttarakhand (India) between the ages of 18 and 30, a positive environmental attitude towards sustainable products was the most important factor in determining whether or not they made a purchase. After environmental literacy and the cost of sustainable goods, the intention to make a purchase was revealed to be the third most significant predictor of environmental attitude towards green products.

7. Limitation and Future Research

This study has certain limitations. First, this study focuses on young consumers of Uttarakhand (India) only. The results cannot be generalized to the wider range. Therefore, the future research could investigate by taking data from other aspects of the population. Second, the survey was limited to 287 young respondents that could be extended for the future studies.

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Table 1- Sample profile		
Items	Category	Responses
Gender	Male	190
	Female	97
Age	18-24	212
	25-30	75
Education	12 th	107
	Graduation	180

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.452	29.680	29.680	4.452	29.680	29.680
2	1.993	13.286	42.966			
3	1.847	12.316	55.282			
4	1.370	9.136	64.418			
5	1.340	8.934	73.352			
6	.589	3.924	77.276			
7	.543	3.618	80.894			
8	.517	3.448	84.342			
9	.439	2.925	87.268			
10	.427	2.848	90.115			
11	.399	2.660	92.775			
12	.310	2.064	94.839			
13	.293	1.955	96.794			
14	.249	1.660	98.453			
15	.232	1.547	100.000			

Note:
 a) Common method variance calculated by using principal component extraction method
 b) All the fixing all the independent and dependent variables into one.
 Source: Primary Data

Constructs	Cronbach's α
Environmental Awareness (EA)	0.809
Environmental Knowledge (EK)	0.827
Environmental Attitude (EATD)	0.839
rice of sustainable product (PSP)	0.814
Purchase Intentions toward sustainable products (PI)	0.758

Source: Primary Data

Model Fit indicators	Values
CMIN/DF	1.066
χ^2	79.9
DF	48
GFI	0.957
NFI	0.946
CFI	0.977
RMSEA	0.032
p-value	0.000
Decision	Good Fit Model

Source: Primary Data

Table 5- Convergent Validity Purchase Influencing Factors

Sr. no	Items of the constructs	Purchase Influencing Factors			
		Environmental Awareness (EA)	Environmental Knowledge (EK)	Environmental Attitude (EATD)	Price of sustainable product (PSP)
1.	EA1	0.72			
2.	EA2	0.90			
3.	EA3	0.68			
4.	EK1		0.70		
5.	EK2		0.94		
6.	EK		0.72		
7.	EATD1			0.77	
8.	EATD2			0.91	
9.	EATD3			0.72	
10.	PSP1				0.73
11.	PSP2				0.87
12.	PSP3				0.72
Average Variance Extracted (in		60.00	54.12	55.17	56.17

%) *				
Construct Reliability **	0.74	0.63	0.65	0.63
*AVE = Sum of Square of loading / Number of items*100 ** CR = (Sum of Items loading) ² / (Sum of Items loading) ² + Std. error variance Source: Primary Data				

Table 6- Discriminant validity measures

Constructs	Squared Inter Construct Correlation (SICC)				
	Average variance Extracted	EA	EK	EATD	PSP
EA	0.60	1	0.016*	0.073**	0.047**
EK	0.54	0.128*	1	0.134**	0.064**
EATD	0.55	0.271**	0.367**	1	0.045**
PSP	0.56	0.218**	0.254**	0.213**	1

Note: AVE > SICC*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Primary Data

Table 7- Goodness of fit indices of Structural model

Fit Indices	Parsimonious Model	Improved Model			
		1	2	3	4
CMIN/DF	3.885	3.123	2.777	2.426	1.992
χ^2	338.02	268.55	236.07	203.76	165.35
GFI	0.855	0.887	0.904	0.914	0.928
NFI	0.811	0.850	0.868	0.886	0.907
CFI	0.851	0.891	0.910	0.929	0.951
RMSEA	0.100	0.086	0.079	0.071	0.053
p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Primary Data Structural model is good fit.

Table 8- Causal relationship of independent and dependent variables

Causal Relationships			Standardised Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypotheses Decision
PURINT	<---	EAWARE	.678	.091	4.202	***	Supported
PURINT	<---	EKNOW	.182	.073	1.127	.260	Not Supported
PURINT	<---	POSP	.150	.068	1.008	.313	Not Supported
PURINT	<---	EATT	.630	.081	3.669	***	Supported

Source: Primary Data