

Factors Influencing Indian Millennials' Green Purchase Intention

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Abstract

The research on millennials' green intention is at a nascent stage in the Indian context. Though inconsistent results can be observed across the literature regarding the antecedent variables on youth intention of purchasing green products, analysing their impact on green intention will help in developing suitable strategies for green marketing. This research aims to find out the f

actors affecting the intention of young educated millennials in buying eco-friendly products. In this quantitative study, primary data was collected from 220 university students. The sample for questionnaires was based on non- probability sampling technique named convenience sampling. The present study aims to understand the influence of three independent variables such as environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and environmental attitude on green purchase intention of millennials. The findings of the study will assist in expediting the sluggish growth of green sector in India.

Keywords: Green Purchase Intention, Environmental Knowledge, Environmental Concern

INTRODUCTION

The rising global awareness of harmful human effects on the environment (Mostafa, 2007; White and Hunter, 2009; Zhou, 2013) has been transferred into an environmental attitude towards purchasing green products (Pagiaslis, 2014). Mostafa, 2007 viewed green products are non-toxic, and organic products made from recycled materials. Chen and Chai (2010) specified that organic products bring less harmful effects to humans and the environment. Dagnoli (1991) mentioned that green customers, who increase in recent years, prefer to purchase environmentally sound products i.e. green products. This green movement resulted in the emergence of green marketing as one of the major trends in competitive modern business (Kassaye, 2001). In reality, the rapid expansion of green marketing could help the business to survive in the changing global environment (Smith, 2009). The gradual unfolding of green consumerism and empathetic consumers are the signs of acceleration of green movement (Sivadas, 1997; Menon, Chowdhury and Jankovich, 1999). In this context, the Asian region too became more responsible in sustaining the environment by accepting the power of going green (Lee, 2008). The increasing purchasing power of Asian consumers and their rising environmental awareness encourage international marketers to target Asian countries. (Noor & Muhammad, 2012). However, they often face difficulties in developing and implementing effective marketing strategies due to a lack of information related to the eco-friendly buying behaviour of native consumers (Aman et al., 2012). Though western scholars such as Chan and Lau (2000); Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbara-Forleo (2001); Moisander (2007) conducted large-scale studies pertaining to green purchase intention, only a few of them concentrated on the willingness of Asian particularly Indian consumers in purchasing eco-friendly products. (Haytko & Matulich, 2008; Menichelli et al., 2014). Similarly, a few studies concentrated on the young educated millennials' green intention who will play a vital role in the future global economy (Chaudhary et.al., 2018). As young consumers constitute a large citizen group globally, they have the potential to influence others towards sustainability, and environmental protection (Lee, 2008; Lukman et al., 2013). Millennials are well educated, and well connected to the world with their proficiency in information technology (Morgan

Stanley, 2017). Green marketers should strive to focus on Indian millennials as they comprise the world's largest number of millennials (400 million), and constitute more than one-third of the Indian working population (Morgan Stanley, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green purchasing refers to buying eco-friendly products (Chan, 2001). Green purchase intention often acts as the motivational factor that influences the behaviour of consumers in purchasing eco-friendly products (Ramayah et al., 2010). If an individual prefers to buy eco-friendly products rather than conventional products, it is defined as green purchase intention. (Aman et al., 2012). In the Theory of Planned behaviour, the intention is marked as the prime indication of actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Hence, green purchasing intention will act as an indicator of subsequent green purchasing behaviour (Park & Ha, 2012). A consumer with a strong purchase intention will show great determination in purchasing a specific product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Even though in the past, numerous studies have examined the antecedents of consumers green purchase intention in the context of developed nations (Kim et al., 2011) only a very few studies have focused on the consumers' responses towards green products in the Indian context.

ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Several studies establish that environmental knowledge positively affects consumer intention, and their actual purchase of green products (Chan et al., 2000; Smith & Paladino 2010; Eze et al., 2013). Inversely, lack of environmental knowledge deters customers from interpreting their green intention into the absolute buying behaviour of green products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Mostafa (2009) acknowledged the crucial role of environmental knowledge in predicting green consumer behaviour. However, the results of some studies reported an insignificant association between environmental knowledge and the eco-friendly behaviour of consumers (Chan & Lau, 2000; Bang et al., 2000; Wolsink, 2007). It indicates that a mere basic understanding of ecological issues might not be enough to motivate consumers to adhere to sustainable practices. The green consumption of consumers will not take place unless they are made to deeply understand the consequences of their irresponsible consumption. As previous studies show contradictory results regarding the impact of environmental knowledge of consumers on their intention of purchasing green products, it would be meaningful to investigate the relationship between these two variables. This current study, therefore, hypothesized that:

H1: Environmental Knowledge positively relates to Green Purchase Intention

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Environmental concern, an affective attribute, refers to an individual's care, concern affinity, and appreciation about the environment (Chan & Yeung, 2005). At the low end of environmental concern, people may show less concern about environmental issues, and at the high end, people may show genuine concern about environmental problems (Mostafa, 2007). Maloney et al., (1975) refers to environmental concern as the degree of emotionality in which an individual is devoting to the ecological issues. According to Alibeli and Johnson (2009), environmental concern denotes not only the awareness of individuals about environmental problems but also their eagerness in solving those problems. A similar view was emphasized by the finding of several studies. (Mostafa, 2009; Paul et al., 2016; Maichum et al., 2016). The previous literature of consumer research studied extensively the positive interrelationships of two variables such as the environmental concern of consumers, and their green purchasing intention (Ramayah et al., 2010; Chan & Lau, 2000). The findings reveal that consumers who exhibited stronger environmental concerns willing to purchase eco-friendly products apparently than those who expressed less concern. But several other studies suggest only a weak interaction between environmental concern, and green intention (Bamberg, 2003; Mostafa, 2007). Due to contradictory results emerged from previous studies, the research intends to explore the relationship of these two variables, thus it is hypothesized that:

H2: Environmental Concern positively relates to Green Purchase Intention

ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE AND GREEN PRODUCT PURCHASING INTENTION

Environmental attitude is considered as the most rational factor in envisaging consumers' intention in buying green products (Chyong et al., 2006). The studies conducted by Kim (2011); Kim and Chung (2011); Cowan & Kinley (2014) found relationship between environmental attitude and green purchase intention is significant. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) opined that people normally behave in tune with their intention. However, Yeoh & Paladino (2008) established that attitude only partially acts as a mediator in the association of environmental knowledge with consumers' intention of buying green products. Another study that involved residential electricity customers revealed a similar result of attitude fully mediating the relationship between environmental knowledge, and green purchase intention (Paladino & Baggiere, 2008). This literature emphasize that environmental attitude does not directly influence the intention of consumers in purchasing eco-friendly products. These divergent views encourage the researcher to review the influence of environmental attitude on youth millennials' green buying intention. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Environmental Attitude positively relates to Green Purchase Intention

ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE, ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE

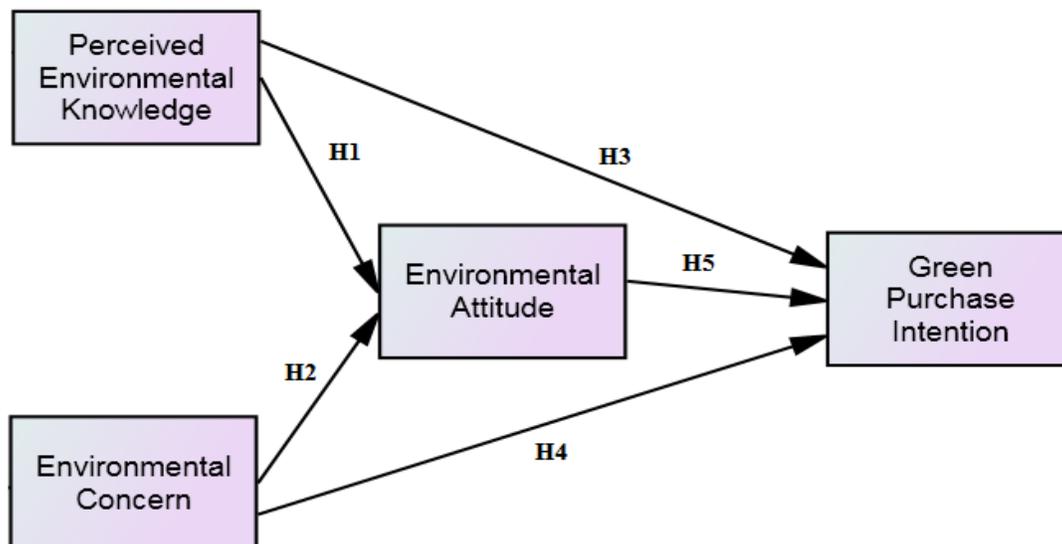
Some studies produced indecisive results relating to the association among environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and environmental attitude (Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Though the influence of knowledge and concern on attitude is ascertained by numerous studies, many such studies are needed to confirm the relationships. To evaluate the same, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Environmental Knowledge positively relates to Environmental Attitude

H5: Environmental Concern positively relates to Environmental Attitude

The conceptual framework constructed after establishing the hypothesized relationships between the constructs is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework



SAMPLE

University students were selected as the representatives of the millennial consumer population because of their accessibility, and homogeneity as a group (Calder et al., 1981). Convenience sampling was used to collect data for this study. This sampling method was adopted since it proved to be the easiest, fastest, and most economical way of collecting data (Aaker et al., 2007). To maintain the acceptable level sampling

error, the appropriate sample size is to be at least 30 and below 500 (Roscoe, 1975). Quantitative research was carried out by applying a self-administered survey questionnaire. In this research, 220 questionnaires were distributed among the sample population. To make sure the quality of the survey questionnaire, a total of 30 copies of the pre-test sample have distributed and carried out. As per instrument reliability test results, all items in the research variable are reliable as Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.70. (Hair et al., 2010).

DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire items were taken from reliable and valid scales of previous study literature which were pre-tested. The research instrument used in the study comprised two sections. The first section had questions on demographics such as educational qualification, family monthly income, gender, and age group of respondents while the second section had twenty-five items wherein a 5-point Likert-type scale was employed (where 1=Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree) to explore factors affecting green purchasing behaviour of young educated millennials. Five items of Perceived Environment Knowledge (GPB) and four items of Green Intention was adapted from the scale suggested by LEE (2017). Five items for measuring Environmental Concern (EC) were based on the scale developed by Mostafa (2007) and Straughan and Roberts (1999). The items for Environmental Attitude were taken from Lee (2008; 2009).

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The empirical validation of the proposed conceptual framework was carried out using path analysis in SPSS AMOS version 22. The process involved an initial confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the relationship between the scale items/measured variables, and latent constructs followed by the path analysis to validate the hypothesized relationships between the latent variables.

The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the data collected for the 18 items evaluating the four constructs. The measurement model built using the 18 items grouped under four latent constructs was found to have a good model fit indicated by the goodness-of-fit indices. The results revealed that the standardized factor loadings of all items were above 0.5 and significant. The modification indices were low and insignificant.

The reliability assessment of the latent constructs showed that the values ranged from 0.82 to 0.92 which were above the prescribed limit of 0.7 as indicated in Table 1. Also, the items measuring the four latent constructs were found to valid as shown in Table 2. Hence, all items were retained for further path analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Assessment

S.No.	Variable	Reliability
1	Perceived Environmental Knowledge	0.82
2	Environmental Concern	0.92
3	Environmental Attitude	0.88
4	Green Purchase Intention	0.9

Table 2: Validity Assessment

S.No.	Variable	Table Value	Calculated Value	Result
1	Perceived Environmental Knowledge	0.159	0.324 to 0.685	Valid
2	Environmental Concern	0.159	0.413 to 0.752	Valid
3	Environmental Attitude	0.159	0.259 to 0.589	Valid
4	Green Purchase Intention	0.159	0.384 to 0.872	Valid

For the path analysis, the average of the measured variables was used to represent their corresponding latent construct which was connected using relationships as shown in the conceptual framework (Refer

Figure 1). Perceived environmental knowledge and environmental concern were the exogenous variables while environmental attitude and green purchase intention were the endogenous variables. The endogenous variables were associated with error terms. Both perceived environmental knowledge, and concern were hypothesized to have a positive effect on environmental attitude which is hypothesized to have a positive effect on the ultimate dependent variable of green purchase intention in the conceptual framework.

The path model was estimated using the Maximum Likelihood estimation technique in SPSS AMOS 22. The path model was run and estimated with a good model fit as indicated by the fit indices in Table 3. The model fit indices table shows that the chi-square value is 1.842 and the p-value is larger than the 5% level which indicates a good model fit. The AGFI and GFI values were larger than 0.90. The computed NFI and CFI scores were larger than 0.90. It was established that RMSEA and RMS scores were less than 0.08. The above indicators indicate that the model was fit with the observed data.

Table 3: Model Fit Indication

Indicators	Observed Values	Recommended Values (Premapriya et al., 2016)
Chi-Square	1.842	---
P	0.175	Greater than 0.050
GFI	0.997	Greater than 0.90
AGFI	0.916	Greater than 0.90
CFI	0.999	Greater than 0.90
NFI	0.999	Greater than 0.90
RMS	0.013	Less than 0.080
RMSEA	0.001	Less than 0.080

The next step was the assessment of the nomological validity of the path model which involves examining the relationships between the constructs. It includes the review of path coefficients of the linkages and squared multiple correlations (R^2 values) of the endogenous variables.

The R^2 values in the estimation results show that the model explains 45 percent of the variance in the green purchase intention construct, and 35 percent of the variance in the environmental attitude construct. Given the fact that a large number of factors can influence consumers' green purchase intention in the real world, the variance explained by the model seemed reasonable.

The path coefficients and their p-values indicated that all hypothesized relationships in the model were significant as shown in Table 3.

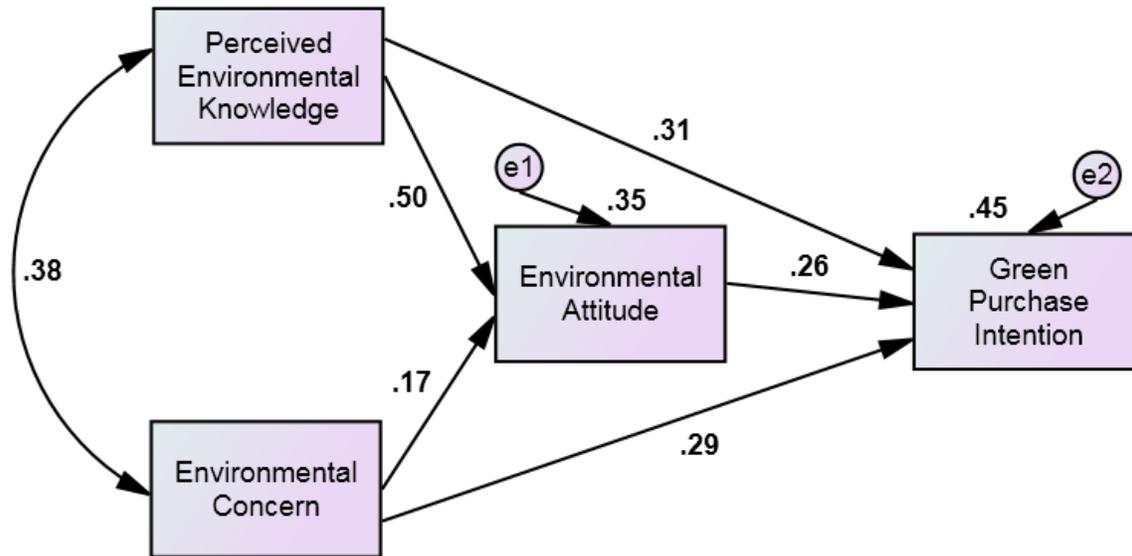
Table 3: Path Model Relationships and Regression Weights

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable	Estimate	Beta	P
Environmental Attitude	<-	Environmental Knowledge	0.374	0.504	0.001
Environmental Attitude	<-	Environmental Concern	0.161	0.166	0.001
Green Purchase Intention	<-	Environmental Knowledge	0.415	0.309	0.001
Green Purchase Intention	<-	Environmental Concern	0.503	0.289	0.001
Green Purchase Intention	<-	Environmental Attitude	0.461	0.255	0.001

Perceived environmental knowledge was found to be the strongest predictor of green purchase intention with a path coefficient of 0.31 followed by the environmental concern with a path coefficient of 0.29, and the environmental attitude with a path coefficient of 0.26.

Perceived environmental knowledge had a greater impact on environmental attitude with a path coefficient of 0.50 compared to environmental concern with a path coefficient of 0.17. The path model with estimation results is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Path Analysis – Estimation Results



The results of the path analysis indicate that all the five formulated hypotheses in the present study were validated.

IMPLICATIONS

The theoretical implication of this study is that the impact of environmental knowledge and environmental concern on environmental attitude and green purchase intention is positive and significant. Similarly, the influence of environmental attitude on green purchase intention is meaningful and relevant. Whereas the managerial implications of this study help the company to understand the importance of augmenting environmental knowledge, concern, and attitude owned by Indian educated millennials in purchasing green products. Since the growing spending ability of millennials makes them a powerful economic force in India (Morgan Stanley, 2017) understanding their green purchase intention is crucial for the marketers. The present study is beneficial for policymakers. The pressing environmental problems of India can be mitigated by pro-environmental intentions and behaviour. The understanding green intention of consumers is imperative to formulate environmental policies, and programmes to boost environmentally friendly behaviour. This can help the policymakers to decide on what approaches they should follow to enhance young Indian millennials to support green products.

LIMITATIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research has its limitations. The results of the study cannot be generalized for other regions or settings since this study was carried out by collecting data exclusively from university students in Chennai City, India. For instance, adolescents are highly susceptible to emotional appeals. The research findings can be generalized once these findings are replicated with other age and cultural groups. Apart from three independent variables of environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and environmental attitude analysed in this study, other variables such as trust, price, the social influence which influence the green intention of millennials can be tested in future studies. Though the use of quantitative methods is worthwhile in establishing relationships between variables (Chisnall, 1997) using qualitative research together with quantitative methods in future studies will allow us to further investigate the relationships among variables.

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