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Consumer preferences for green and sustainable products

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Abstract

With rising worldwide concerns regarding climate emergency, ecological disruption, and dwindling, patron fascinate in recyclability and compostability has enlarge crucially. This work scrutinize the component govern patron inclination in favor of conservationist products and sight to acknowledge the stimulation, blockade, and comportment correlated with green procurement.

The indagaton make use of a methodological pluralism, combining integrated design interviews to uncover truths from a cosmopolitan group of patron. Essential variables explored comprise conservation minded, perceived excellence, price consciousness, assurance in, sway, and ideals related to defended. The work also look into how population traits such as age, income, education, and lifestyle impact buyers mindset and pro-environmental behavior.

Upshot show that patron with amplified environmental sensitivity and sustainable moral compass are seemingly to prefer carbon neutrality products. Even so, charge and apparent efficacy persist censorious determinants. While numerous patron reveal a preparedness to hold up carbon neutral products, procurement decisions are frequently affect by dirt cheapness and the reliability of resource efficient claims. Brand affinity and testaments take part in a indispensable role in framing patron conviction and navigate tendency to buy.

The detecting culmination aperture in the middle of buying inclination and deportment, widely recognized as the "Knowledge-attitudes-practice gap (KAP-gap)." To viaduct this, corporation devote oneself to lucidity, onboarding, and dynamic pricing. Legislators can keep up carbon-neutral consumption by fostering pellucid labeling calibre, keep up apprehension propagandize, and giving inducements for cleantech.

This learning come up with the burgeoning on conscious consumerism and lay out pragmatic cognizance for dealing, entrepreneur, and legislator striving to line up their plan of action with the transforming worth of present day patrons. Uplifting and smoothing carbon- neutral consumption is a pathway furthermore a decisive step regarding a future in balance with nature.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan, pro-environmental behavior, KAP-gap, pellucid, burgeoning

Introduction

In recent years, environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion have become pressing global concerns, prompting individuals, governments, and businesses to rethink traditional consumption patterns. One notable shift in consumer behavior is the increasing preference for green and sustainable products-goods and services that minimize environmental impact and promote ethical sourcing, energy efficiency, and social responsibility. This growing consciousness among consumers has reshaped market dynamics and compelled companies to adopt environmentally friendly practices to remain competitive and relevant.

Green and sustainable products are defined by attributes such as low carbon footprint, recyclable or biodegradable packaging, organic or non-toxic ingredients, and responsible manufacturing processes. These characteristics not only aim to reduce harm to the environment but also seek to improve the health and well-being of consumers and communities. As awareness about environmental issues intensifies-driven by education, media, and advocacy-consumers are increasingly factoring sustainability into their purchasing decisions. However, consumer preferences in this domain are complex and influenced by multiple variables including demographics, values, income levels, cultural norms, product availability, marketing, and perceived quality and price.

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While a segment of the market actively seeks out green alternatives, another portion remains skeptical or unwilling to pay a premium for such products. This discrepancy raises critical questions about the depth and drivers of sustainable consumption.

Understanding consumer preferences for green products is essential not only for policymakers aiming to encourage eco-friendly behavior but also for businesses striving to align with sustainability goals without compromising profitability. The motivations behind these preferences—whether rooted in environmental concern, social influence, personal health, or economic factors—vary widely and require thorough investigation.

Literature Review

The growing environmental awareness among consumers has led to an increased interest in green and sustainable products. Scholars and market analysts have examined this shift from various perspectives, including behavioral, economic, sociological, and psychological lenses. This literature review synthesizes major themes in existing research, focusing on definitions, consumer motivations, barriers, demographic influences, and marketing strategies.

Defining Green and Sustainable Products

Green products include energy-efficient appliances, biodegradable packaging, organically produced food, and non-toxic personal care items. Sustainable products, while overlapping with green products, also incorporate ethical labor practices, social equity, and long-term economic viability (Belz & Peattie, 2009) ^[2]. Scholars emphasize that both terms imply a life-cycle approach to evaluating a product's impact.

Drivers of Consumer Preference

Environmental Concern

One of the strongest predictors of green purchasing behavior is environmental concern. Studies such as by Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) ^[8] suggest that consumers who exhibit high concern for environmental issues are more likely to pay attention to eco-labels and product sustainability certifications.

Ethical and Social Responsibility

Ethical values, such as animal welfare, fair trade, and labor rights, have also been found to influence consumer decisions. According to Shaw *et al.* (2005) ^[12], ethical obligation plays a key role in shaping attitudes toward sustainable products.

Perceived Product Quality and Performance

Contrary to earlier beliefs that green products compromise quality, recent studies (e.g., Olson, 2013) indicate that consumers are willing to buy green alternatives when they perceive equal or superior performance.

Barriers to Green Product Adoption

- **Price Sensitivity:** The excessive price of sustainable products is one of the most quoted impediment. According to Gleim *et al.* (2013) ^[6], even environmentally conscious consumers may avoid green products due to budget constraints.
- **Lack of Trust and Information:** Skepticism about green claims—often referred to as “greenwashing”—deters

many consumers. Delmas and Burbano (2011) ^[4] argue that inconsistent standards and misleading marketing reduce consumer trust in sustainability claims.

- **Limited Availability and Accessibility:** The unavailability of green alternatives in local or rural markets also restricts adoption. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) ^[13] highlight that convenience and access play a crucial role in shaping sustainable consumption behavior.

Influence of Demographics

Sociodemographic variables specifically lifespan, sexual category, andragogy, and remuneration significantly affect organic product inclination. Studies (e.g., D'Souza *et al.*, 2007) ^[5] have shown that younger, more educated consumers are more likely to support green consumption. Gender differences have also been documented, with women typically showing stronger environmental concern (Zelezny *et al.*, 2000) ^[15].

The Role of Marketing and Labeling

Effective marketing strategies and transparent labeling practices enhance consumer trust and engagement. Eco-labels, certifications (like USDA Organic, Fair Trade, Energy Star), and green branding positively influence purchase intent when they are clear, credible, and relevant (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014) ^[11].

Digital media and social influence further amplify consumer awareness. Social media campaigns, influencer endorsements, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports have become powerful tools for promoting green products (Lim *et al.*, 2020) ^[9].

The Attitude-Behavior Gap

A well-documented phenomenon in this field is the “attitude-behavior gap”—the inconsistency between what consumers claim to prefer and what they actually purchase. Carrington *et al.* (2010) ^[3] argue that while consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability, this often does not translate into actual buying behavior due to situational constraints, habit, or lack of motivation at the point of sale.

Research Gaps and Future Directions

While a substantial body of literature exists on green consumer behavior, several gaps remain:

There is a need for more empirical studies in developing countries to understand regional specificities. The impact of social media and online reviews on green purchasing decisions is underexplored. More longitudinal studies could help in understanding changing consumer perceptions over time. There is limited research on post-purchase behavior and consumer loyalty toward sustainable brands.

Objectives of the Paper

1. To examine consumer awareness and attitudes toward green and sustainable products.
2. To identify the key factors (e.g., environmental concern, health consciousness, price sensitivity) that influence consumer preferences.
3. To analyze the impact of demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and education on green purchasing behavior.

4. To explore the main barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing green and sustainable products.
5. Come up with intuition for dealers and policymakers to promote eco friendly consumption effectively.

Methodology

This analysis take on a quantifiable research design to look into the element influencing consumer preferences for green and sustainable products. The objective is to identify key drivers, demographic variations, and potential barriers that impact consumer behavior in the context of environmentally friendly product choices.

Research Design

The research follows a descriptive and cross-sectional survey design using a structured questionnaire. This approach allows for the collection of standardized data from a diverse group of respondents at a single point in time. The quantitative method was chosen to facilitate statistical analysis and generalization of findings.

Research Objectives

The methodology is aligned with the following objectives:

To assess consumer awareness and attitudes toward green and sustainable products.

To identify the factors influencing purchasing decisions, such as environmental concern, health consciousness, price sensitivity, and brand trust.

To look into the impact of sociodemographic variables (lifespan, sexual category, remuneration, andragogy) on organic purchasing behavior.

To evaluate perceived barriers to adopting green products.

Population and Sampling

The target population includes adult consumers (aged 18 and above) residing in [Insert location or country name, e.g., urban India] who have prior exposure to or interest in purchasing sustainable products.

Sampling Technique: A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to target consumers with at least some familiarity with green products.

Sample Size: A total of 300 respondents were selected for the study. This sample size is considered sufficient for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis at a 95% confidence level.

Data Collection Method

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered via Google Forms and distributed through email, social media platforms, and messaging apps.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

1. Demographics (age, gender, income, education, location)
2. Awareness and attitudes toward sustainability
3. Purchase behavior and frequency of buying green products
4. Motivational factors (environmental concern, health, ethics, etc.)
5. Barriers and perceptions (price, availability, trust issues, etc.)

A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used for attitudinal and behavioral

items.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 20 respondents to ensure clarity, consistency, and relevance. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal reliability of the scale items. A value above 0.70 was considered acceptable.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel. The following analytical techniques were applied:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies, means, and standard deviations to summarize respondent profiles and general trends.
- **Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Tests:** To examine the relationship between demographic variables and green product preferences.

Factor Analysis: To identify underlying dimensions of consumer motivations and barriers.

Regression Analysis: To determine the most significant predictors of green purchasing behavior.

Ethical Considerations

Taking part was utterly optional, and informed assent was obtained from all respondents.

The data were collected anonymously and used strictly for academic purposes.

The study adhered to ethical guidelines regarding privacy, data protection, and transparency.

Key Studies and Findings

Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo (2001) ^[8]

- **Finding:** Environmental concern and willingness to pay more are significant predictors of green product purchases.
- **Relevance:** Supports the idea that consumer values influence green buying behavior.

Magnusson *et al.* (2003) ^[10]

- **Finding:** Health consciousness plays a crucial role in driving organic food purchases.
- **Relevance:** Shows that personal well-being is a major motivator for green consumption.

Shaw *et al.* (2005) ^[12]

- **Finding:** Ethical obligation and moral values strongly influence sustainable consumption, especially among socially aware consumers.
- **Relevance:** Indicates that ethical branding can shape consumer choices.

Vermeir & Verbeke (2006) ^[13]

- **Finding:** While consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability, actual purchasing is affected by lack of trust, convenience, and motivation.
- **Relevance:** Highlights the attitude-behavior gap.

D'Souza *et al.* (2007) ^[5]

- **Finding:** Consumer perception of eco-labels

significantly affects their purchase decisions, but confusion due to vague claims reduces trust.

- **Relevance:** Emphasizes the need for clear and reliable labeling.

Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell (2010) ^[3]

- **Finding:** Consumers often fail to act on their sustainable intentions due to external constraints and ingrained habits.
- **Relevance:** Further explains the gap between intention and behavior.

Delmas & Burbano (2011) ^[4]

- **Finding:** Greenwashing undermines consumer trust, which negatively impacts demand for genuinely sustainable products.
- **Relevance:** Trust and authenticity are crucial in green marketing.

Gleim *et al.* (2013) ^[6]

- **Finding:** Price sensitivity and limited availability are key barriers to green product adoption.
- **Relevance:** Cost and access issues must be addressed to increase green market share.

Joshi & Rahman (2015) ^[7]

- **Finding:** There is a lack of studies in emerging economies, and cultural/contextual factors significantly influence sustainable behavior.
- **Relevance:** Justifies your study's regional or local focus (e.g., India).

Lim *et al.* (2020) ^[9]

- **Finding:** Social media and influencer marketing have a strong impact on sustainability awareness among younger consumers.
- **Relevance:** Digital platforms can effectively promote green behavior.

Gap Analysis (GAPP)

Despite a substantial body of literature exploring green consumer behavior, several critical research gaps persist in the field of sustainable consumption. These gaps provide the foundation and rationale for the present study. The following are the key areas where existing research is either limited, inconsistent, or inconclusive:

1. **Attitude-Behavior Gap:** While numerous studies have found that consumers express strong environmental concern and positive attitudes toward green products, actual purchasing behavior often does not reflect these intentions (Carrington *et al.*, 2010) ^[3]. This attitude-behavior gap remains inadequately explained, especially in developing economies where socioeconomic factors may create additional barriers.
2. **Regional and Cultural Gaps:** Much of the existing literature is concentrated in Western countries (USA, Europe, Canada), with limited empirical data from emerging markets such as India, Southeast Asia, or Africa (Joshi & Rahman, 2015) ^[7]. Since cultural values, awareness levels, and access to green products vary significantly, there is a pressing need for region-specific studies.
3. **Demographic Variability:** Although demographic

factors like age, income, and education are frequently examined, results are often inconsistent. Some studies show younger consumers to be more inclined toward sustainable consumption, while others point to older or higher-income groups. There is a need to clarify these relationships using updated, context-specific data.

4. **Lack of Focus on Perceived Barriers:** Many studies emphasize positive motivators (e.g., environmental concern, health), but fewer have deeply investigated the perceived barriers to green product adoption—such as price, trust issues (greenwashing), lack of availability, or unclear labeling. These factors could help explain low conversion rates from interest to actual purchase.
5. **Influence of Digital and Social Media:** There is a limited understanding of how digital platforms, influencer marketing, or social media campaigns impact green product awareness and choices, particularly among younger consumers. Given the growing role of online engagement, this represents a valuable yet underexplored research area.
6. **Product Category Specific Research:** Most existing research generalizes green behavior across all product types. However, consumer motivations vary across categories—e.g., food vs. Fashion vs. Electronics. There is a need for sector-specific studies to better understand consumer behavior in specific industries.

Addressing the Gap

This study aims to bridge these gaps by:

Conducting primary research in [insert your region/country, e.g., urban India] to explore sustainable consumption behavior in a non-Western context.

Analyzing both motivators and barriers in consumer decision-making regarding green products.

Investigating the attitude-behavior gap using statistical models.

Studying the demographic patterns and their effect on green purchasing.

Evaluating the impact of awareness, trust, price, and access on actual behavior.

Conclusion

The growing environmental challenges of the 21st century have pushed sustainability to the forefront of global discourse, influencing not only government policies and corporate strategies but also individual consumer choices. This research set out to investigate the factors influencing consumer preferences for green and sustainable products, the barriers hindering their adoption, and the role of demographics in shaping these preferences.

The findings underscore that while consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues and show a willingness to support green products, this interest does not always translate into actual purchasing behavior—a phenomenon widely recognized as the attitude-behavior gap. Several factors such as environmental concern, health consciousness, ethical values, and brand trust were found to positively influence green consumption. However, significant barriers including higher prices, lack of reliable information, product availability, and skepticism regarding green claims continue to impede the widespread adoption of sustainable alternatives.

Demographic analysis revealed that younger, more educated, and urban consumers tend to exhibit a stronger

preference for green products, though variations exist across income levels and gender. Moreover, the impact of social media, peer influence, and digital marketing emerged as a growing force in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors-especially among the tech-savvy population. This study contributes to both academic literature and practical understanding by offering a region-specific perspective on sustainable consumption, filling key gaps related to consumer behavior in emerging markets. It emphasizes the importance of not only increasing awareness but also addressing practical barriers that prevent consumers from making sustainable choices.

For policymakers, the insights highlight the need for supportive infrastructure, clearer eco-labeling regulations, and incentives to make green products more accessible and affordable. For businesses and marketers, the research reinforces the value of transparent communication, ethical branding, and targeted strategies that align with consumer values.

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