

Analysing Factors Influencing Sustainable Consumption Habits in Generation Z: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Over the past few years, people have turned out to be more conscious regarding environmental issues. When pandemic struck the country, people became more sensitive and vigilant for environmental concerns. To lessen down the global warming and its pessimistic impact had been on the fore front for many countries. Green products also known as Eco-friendly products play a very crucial role here. Consumption of such goods lay a positive impact on environment all together. This research paper aims to comprehend the green purchase behaviour of Gen Z belonging to Gandhinagar, Gujarat. A detailed survey of 126 graduate students was done to scrutinize the factors that affect green purchase behaviour. The study also investigates the relationship between demographic variable and green purchase behaviour. An attempt is also made to study the sources of information and the problems that Gen Z face while buying the green products. Simple Random sampling method is used to select respondents. Primary data is collected from respondents with the help of structured close-ended questionnaire comprising of 5 point Likert scale. The data collected is analysed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics and average mean is calculated further. To check the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha is applied. Since the study undertaken is quite elaborative in nature, major findings of the study are presented and discussed at the end.

Keywords: Green Product, Green Purchase behaviour, Environment and Gen Z.



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INTRODUCTION

Along with intensification in technology there has been a surge in industrial activities which has impacted the environment unsympathetically. The environment has been exploited extensively, this over manipulation of environment has given rise to in climate change, global warming, pollution, depletion of the ozone layer etc. these issues have raised anxieties to shield our environment which has commanded to the concept of going green. Government has acquainted with policies to save the environment from additional degradation. Not only that, but, corporations or firms in the present day are faced with consumers who are environmentally cognizant while making a consumption. Subsequently, the corporations determine for environmentally friendly practices. Hereafter, keeping in mind the environmental concerns, products which were environmentally friendly were familiarized and its consumption was encouraged. These products have positive effects on the environment as they are less lethal, bio-degradable, decomposable, energy efficient, renewable due to which they are characterized as 'green products.' Green products are usually identified by having two basic goals – reducing waste and maximizing resource efficiency. They are manufactured using toxic-free ingredients and environmentally-friendly procedures and are certified by recognized organizations like Energy star, Forest Stewardship Council, etc.

“Green” is an umbrella term that refers to products and practices that are organic, sustainable and/or otherwise environmentally friendly.

A product may be considered “green” if it:

- Conserves water and energy
- Prevents contribution to air, water and land pollution
- Protects indoor air quality
- Uses renewable, responsibly sourced material
- Produces little environmental impact
- Is manufactured in an environmentally conscious way
- Using one's own bag, rather than a plastic carrier provided by a shop

The aspiration of consumers to purchase such green/ eco-friendly products and services is intensifying. Although green products cost additional, more people are becoming aware and picking products that do not damage the environment over less environmentally friendly products. Environmentally superior products are sometimes more priced to purchase than alternative products. Businesses that offer products which are manufactured and designed with an environmental marketing mix have an extensive competitive lead. So as to sustain in competitive market, a better understanding of consumer buying behaviour is required. This will provide better market-applicable approach to reach sustainability.

There are multiple factors that affect the buying-decision process of consumers. A number of researcher have recognized many factors as influencing this process including; environmental knowledge (Mostafa, 2006), perceived product price and quality (D'souza et al., 2007), companies' environmental reputation (Schwepker and Cornwell, 1991), environmental concerns (Phauh and Ong, 2007) and credibility of environmental advertising (Thogersen J, 2000)

The success of producing eco-friendly products will depend on whether consumers will accept the products or not. Uncertainties of marketing eco-friendly producers discourage farmers to produce green agricultural products. This paper aims to study Gen Z's knowledge, preferences and barriers affecting their purchase behaviour.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Author	Year	Finding/Conclusion
Oanh, T. T. T.	2024	The findings revealed that customers were keen to help safeguard the environment, were aware of their environmental responsibilities, and were eager to learn more about sustainable products. Supporting environmental protection, the urge for responsibility for the environment, green product experience, the sustainability of companies, social attractiveness, and green brand image are all regarded as important characteristics
Ekawati et al.	2023	The findings revealed that social influence had no substantial impact on green purchasing behaviour. Green attitudes, values, and trust all had a favourable and significant impact on green purchasing behaviour.
Kennedy et al.	2023	The study found a moderately positive association between green buying attitudes, green perceived values, green perceived trust, and ecological knowledge and green purchase intention.
Tran et al.	2022	The study shows that while customers' perceived behavioural control plays a more significant role in stimulating purchase intention, only product-service quality factors impact loyalty. It suggests that businesses should prioritize improving service and product quality rather than funding green marketing when targeting Vietnamese Gen Z in case of financial constraints.
Varah et al	2021	The present study is an attempt to examine young consumers' intention toward green products using an extended version of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB),

		which incorporates willingness to pay premium and environmental concern. The empirical results suggested that extended version of the TPB influenced the intention of the young consumers' toward green products.
Chems Eddine Boukhdimi	2021	This paper aims to check the influence of the age of customers on its awareness in green products markets in Algerian territory. There is no relationship between the age of customers and awareness about the use of green products. All ages categories are concerned by the purchase of healthy products.
Jyotsna Pahuja and Rohit Sharma	2021	The objective of the paper is to make aware to sell products that are harmless to the environment, whilst simultaneously actively encouraging consumers to support and protect the environment. Marketers also have the responsibility to educate the consumers about the need for and benefits of green products in comparison to traditional products.
Dr. Bhavik U. Swadia	2021	Consumers' perceptions and attitudes pertaining to firms' green marketing activities is examined by this thesis. It also studies as to how they impact green consumption. This study adds to the theory and practice of green marketing and green consumption.
Mrs.P.Anitha & Dr. C.Vijai	2020	The objective of this paper is to study the consumer's perception of green products and green marketing. The paper also aims to understand the concept of green marketing, green products, and green eco-labels and also highlights consumer awareness about green products and green marketing.
Anupam Pareek and Dr.Neha Mathur	2020	This study talks about the green marketing and understanding the awareness of consumers towards ecofriendly product. It seems that people who belong to the service category among occupation are more aware and willing to pay for eco-friendly products. Overall 40% of the people are aware of the concept of Green Marketing.
Anupam Pareek and Dr.Neha Mathur	2020	This research paper is presenting importance of green marketing and also describes the problems faced by companies while adopting green marketing. Although marketer has adopted the environment friendly concept green marketing but marketers must also ensure that there is awareness in consumer

RESEARCH GAP

The superlative situation should be that all consumers are inclined to purchase green products, as it leads to sustainability. But, the question is whether all the purchase intentions clue to reliable consumption. The key question remains regarding the factors that impact the decision or the pattern of purchase. Thus, the goal of this study is to check the level of awareness, to examine factors and to identity problems that affect green purchase behaviour not in consumers as whole, but the niche targeted area remains as Gen Z. In this work, attempt is also made to scrutinize relationship between demographic variable and Consumer's buying behaviour for green products.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the level of awareness of green products amongst Gen Z.
2. To examine the factors that affect consumer's buying behaviour for green products.

3. To investigate the relationship between demographic variable and Consumer's buying behaviour for green products.
4. To identify the problems in buying green products.

FIGURE SHOWING FACTORS AFFECTING GREEN PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR:



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/D4rZ1RzbdnAFR9qi9>

1. Emotions:

Environmental concerns and responsibility were found to have a positive and direct impact on ecological knowledge, purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour (Makatouni, 2002; Padel and Foster, 2005; Wang, Liu, and Qi, 2014; Zhao et al., 2014). In one study each, consumer guilt (Young et al., 2010) and generativity (Paco et al., 2013) were found to have a significant influence on consumer green purchase behaviour.

2. Knowledge:

Kempton et.al (1995) notified that most people do not know enough about environmental issues to act in an environmentally responsible way. Environmental knowledge can be defined as “a general knowledge of facts, concepts, and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems (Fryxell & Lo, 2003, p. 45).

3. Awareness:

Environmental awareness is defined as “knowing the impact of human behaviour on the environment”. Environmental awareness has both a cognitive, knowledge-based component and an affective, perception based component (Kollmuss and Agyeman, p. 253). Panni (2006) found, that the more the consumers are aware regarding the societal and environmental issues the more they are involved in pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour.

4. Habit:

Habit has been reported as a significant obstacle to purchasing green products (Tsakiridou et al., 2008). Habit and past behaviour guide consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behaviour, making it difficult to change. However, limited studies have observed the influence of habit on consumer green purchase behaviour.

5. Eco-Labeling and Certification:

Eco-labelling or eco-certification informs consumers about the green characteristics of the product and motivates them to purchase green products (Young et al., 2010). These studies have suggested that reliable information should be provided in a simple and user-friendly way through product labels.

6. Brand Image:

Brand image in terms of green products can be defined as “a whole range of impressions, conceptions and apprehensions towards a brand in the customers’ memory which is correlated to the sustainability and eco-friendly concerns” (Chen, 2010). Consumers generally have personal favourite brands and they prefer them over green brands (Young et al., 2010). Also, consumer trust in a green brand is an important purchase criterion which positively influences their purchase of green products (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011).

7. Values and Personal Norms:

Studies report a positive correlation between environmental, social and ethical values of consumers and their purchase behaviour toward green products (e.g., Chen et al., 2012; Eze et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2014; Young et al., 2010). It was further found that individualistic values such as health and safety, and hedonistic values such as pleasure in eating positively affected purchase behaviour of green products, specifically green food products (Cerjak et al., 2010; Padel and Foster, 2005).

8. Trust:

In the context of green products, trust is defined as a belief or expectation about the environmental performance of such products (Chen, 2013). In one study, green trust was found to mediate the relationship between green perceived value and green perceived risk - the two antecedents of green purchase intention (Chen *et. al.*, 2012). Hence, it can be said that lack of consumer trust in green products acts as a barrier towards green purchase behaviour.

9. Product Availability:

Limited availability of a product had a negative influence on consumer green purchase intention and behaviour (Young *et. al.*, 2010); conversely, four studies reported that availability of a product had a positive relation with green purchase intention and behaviour (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study undertaken is descriptive in nature. Simple Random sampling method is implemented. Primary data from Gen Z was collected from the age group of 17-23 years and survey was carried on. This data was collected from Samarpan Science and Commerce College, Gandhinagar. A structured non-disguised questionnaire was prepared and then administered through Google Form. This link was shared with around 140 respondents. The final data analysis of 126 respondents is presented in the study. From amongst the total respondent’s survey, majority of respondents belong to Gandhinagar.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Demographic details and responses relating to the level of awareness, mode of information and factors affecting green purchase behaviour. Factors were further administered by using 5 point Likert scale. A pilot test was conducted locally on 25 respondents before administering the final questionnaire to the targeted respondents. Some minor changes were made in the first draft of the questionnaire to improve the accuracy of the respondents.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS:

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	50	39.7	39.7	39.7
	Male	76	60.3	60.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17 to 20 years	103	81.7	81.7	81.7

20 to 23 years	21	16.7	16.7	98.4
Above 23	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

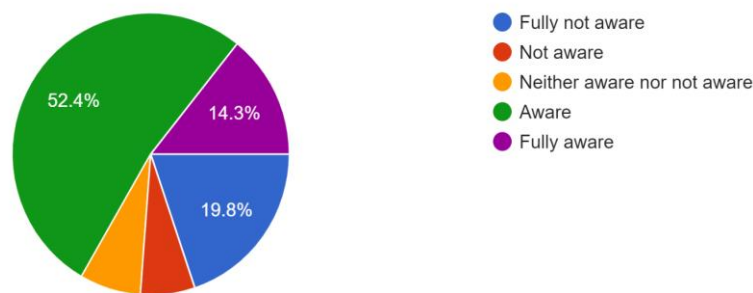
Under the study taken, there were total 126 respondents. Out of which, 60.3% were boys; and 39.7% were girls. The research revealed some interesting facts in regard of level of awareness, mode of information of green products and type of green purchase incitation.

Awareness of Green Products

Consumers are responsible for environmental destruction due to unethical practices in their day-to-day activities that harm the environment. Their irresponsible behaviour in the usage of non-renewable energy thereby causing strain on natural resources, improper waste disposal methods, absence of recycling activities etc. Hence consumers have a very big role to play in environmental conservation. The ground question to start with, is the level of awareness concerning green products. Majority of respondents i.e. about 52% have confidence in that they are aware; only a few are of the believe of – Not aware as depicted.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Aware	66	52.4	52.4	52.4
	Fully aware	18	14.3	14.3	66.7
	Fully not aware	25	19.8	19.8	86.5
	Neither aware nor not aware	9	7.1	7.1	93.7
	Not aware	8	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

To what extend are you aware about green products?
126 responses



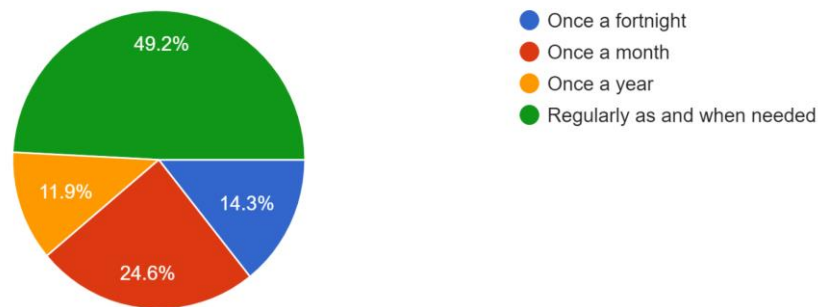
Purchase duration of green product

In reference to the awareness, the next question asked was related to duration of buying green products. Out of 126 respondents, 62 consumers were certain of buying it regularly as and when needed. Only a few number of respondents, i.e. 11% answered that they would purchase green products once a year.

Statistical Representation - If yes, how often do you buy green product?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a fortnight	18	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Once a month	31	24.6	24.6	38.9
	Once a year	15	11.9	11.9	50.8
	Regularly as and when needed	62	49.2	49.2	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

If yes, how often do you buy green product?

126 responses

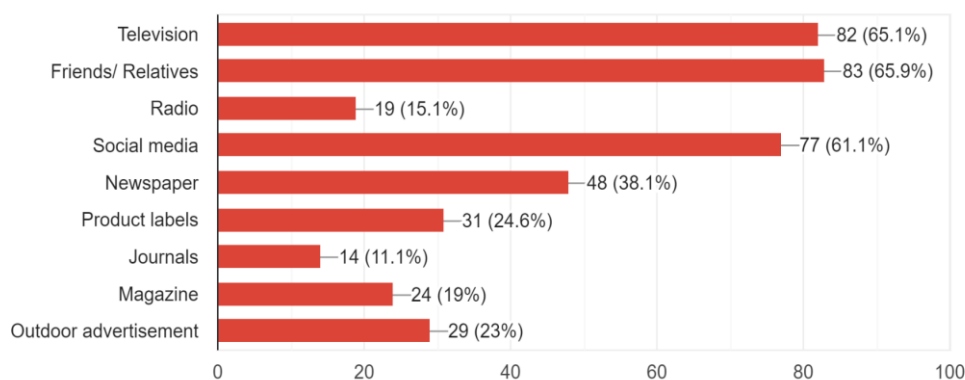


Source of Information for green product

Surge in consumption of green products or Eco-friendly can be seen only if there are multiple efforts made to make it widespread. Various tools of advertisement and communication should be implemented. People need to be cognizant and more familiar regarding green products and its benefits. Under this study, when respondents were asked about their source of information, maximum marked that friends/relatives and Television is a source of their awareness. And in the other hand, they got the least information from Journals and Radio.

In general, from the following sources of information put a tick against the source from where you have got information. (Multiple ticks)

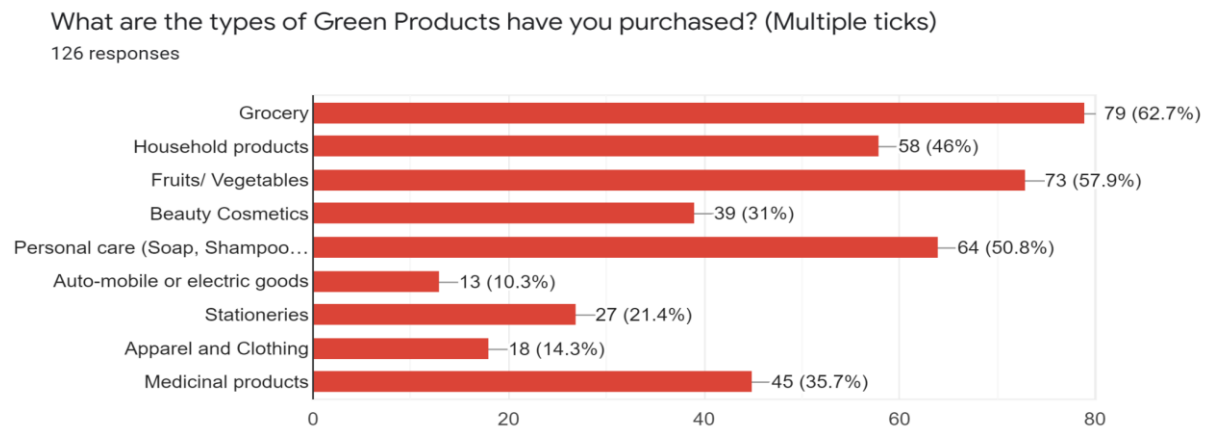
126 responses



Type of purchase in Green products

In a consumer market infatuated with eco-friendly products, companies are scrambling to find ways to brand themselves as green. Various products like grocery, Household products, Fruits/Vegetables, Beauty Cosmetics, Personal care products (Soap/Shampoo), Auto-mobile or electric goods, Stationary, Apparel and

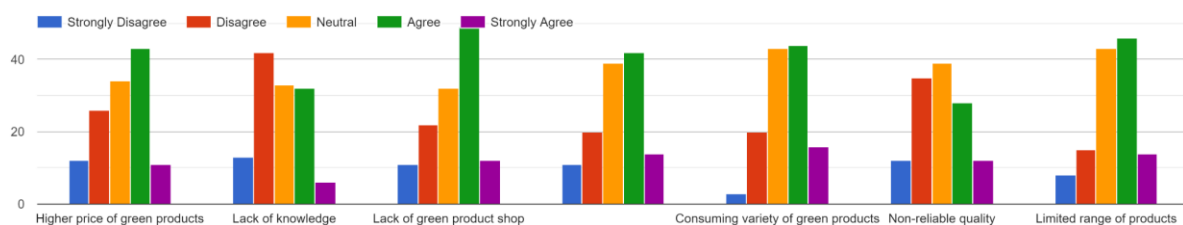
clothing, Medicinal products, etc. are available in market. The maximum respondents supported the answer that they are more likely to purchase grocery as well as Fruits/Vegetables which are healthier. Respondents amounting to 31% purchase Personal care items in their day to day life. The least purchased product is apparel and clothing due to lack of awareness of its availability.



• Problems faced in buying green products

The emergence of environmental-related issues or problems and increased awareness towards green consuming have received more attentions especially among consumers and enterprises who have demonstrated positive impact towards nature in the emerged nations, but the trends remain unobserved due to certain factors. When reviewed, the main constraint is lack of green shops available in surroundings, verity of green products being sold is also minimal. Paying a premium price for such commodities is also perceived as a barrier.

For the following factors tick circle the option that applies to you.



LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. Owing to the time constraint, the sampling frame for this study was only limited to 126 respondents.
2. This study is restricted to Gandhinagar city only and the result may not be applicable to other places.
3. The data for the presented study were collected through questionnaire. Hence, generalization of the finding is not applicable to any similar situation.
4. The outcome gained is based on the respondents' opinion so there is a chance of consumer bias.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

From extensive study it can be summarized that not much work has been done on Gen Z's Green Purchase Behaviour in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Indian industry has been fast growing and customers are chaining their attitude towards green products. But no major analysis has been done. If generation Z is given more prominence, their level of awareness and inclination towards green purchase will flourish. This will then lead to spreading out in production of Eco-friendly products, and so environment sustainability can be attained.

OUTCOME OF THE STUDY:

1. 87% of the respondents are aware of the term green products, up to a range of Aware in the Likert scale ranging from Fully not aware to Fully aware.
2. 75% of the respondents prefer to buy green products.
3. According to 65% of the respondents, the main source of information of green products is Television and/or Friends/Relatives.
4. 49 respondents agree that due to the high price of the products, their green buying behaviour is impacted.
5. On the report of the study carried on, it can also be analysed that consumers according to their demographic profile purchase green products more if they are a female. They are more inclined to the beauty cosmetic and green apparel/clothing.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCHER:

The concept of green consumption has come in existence in response to development of green products/ eco-friendly products. The green products swap the artificial ingredients with natural ingredients and they contribute to protecting the environment. Present study examines the green purchase behaviour of Gen Z. Further research can be carried on viewing preferences of different age groups. In general awareness of Green products have increased, but there is still a gap between its level of awareness and level of consumption. The factors affecting negative purchase behaviour can be minimized and encouragement should be given for its consumption.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this study was to analysis consumers behaviour towards purchase of green products. With the help of questionnaire, we can conclude that Gen Z is aware of the term green products, but more purchase in not happening due to constraints like price, non-availability of goods and reliability. But, if these factors are worked on, green products will be more preferred.

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