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Attitude, Norms and Trust: Exploring Green Purchase Intention of Gen Z consumers in Urban India

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KEYWORDS

Green purchase intention, Generation Z, Sustainable consumption, Environmental attitude, Consumer behavior, Urban India, Trust factors, Subjective norms.

ABSTRACT

Environmental concerns are growing, and therein lies the gradual change in consumer behavior toward sustainable consumption patterns worldwide. Therefore, the present study examines the green purchase intention of Generation Z consumers, specifically urban India- citizens who are quite aware of their attitudes, subjective norms, and trust factors. This research used a mixed-method approach, engaging surveys (n=382) and focused interviews (n=15), to identify major determinants affecting environmentally responsible purchase decisions among urban Indian youth aged between 18 and 25 years. The findings indicated that the intention to purchase green products was predicted by environmental knowledge, perceived consumer effectiveness, and social influence significantly, while price sensitivity and greenwashing concern served as moderating variables. The present study employs a novel feature selection mechanism for dimensionality reduction of datasets, hence, area identification for critical aspects will likely be made more precise. Findings point toward major research gaps and provide direct practical implications for marketers, policymakers, and businesses targeting environmentally conscious Gen Z consumers in fast-growing urban agglomerations of India. This research provides sustainable consumption literature with a comprehensive framework that fits the unique context of emerging economies, where environmental awareness intersects with urbanization and rapid digitalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental deterioration and climate change are now becoming critical global challenges of the twenty-first century, engendering changes in consumer behavior, namely toward more sustainable consumption patterns. Green consumerism is now being talked about more than ever, with consumers taking account of the environmental consequences of their purchase decisions [1]. The major demographic group represented by Generation Z, those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is considered environmentally conscious and is gearing up to be the largest consumer group in the world [2].

India, with its burgeoning economy and urbanization, provides a very interesting context for the study of green consumer behavior. On the other hand, the consumption patterns in the urban centers of India are undergoing remarkable changes, especially among younger and productive groups who are more exposed to global trends and environmental discourse [3]. Indian Gen Z represents about 472 million persons, which translates to nearly 34% of the total population; hence, this generation represents an important market segment for marketers and industries dealing with sustainable products [4]. The link between environmental awareness and actual purchase behavior is, however, a more cumbersome and complex process.

Several theoretical models have been given and used to understand the determinants of green purchase intention, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, Value-Belief-Norm Theory, and the Attitude-Behavior-Context Model [5]. The attitude of the

consumer, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control have been the main elements argued to influence consumer intention. Although these models work well in Western societies, because of considerable differences in culture, economic restrictions, and levels of environmental knowledge, these models might not be relevant in the Indian context [6].

Trust is another salient factor that tends to affect green purchasing intentions, especially when greenwashing and misleading environmental claims abound [7]. Such consumer skepticism regarding the genuineness of green claims may seriously impede the willingness to pay for environmentally friendly products. This is relevant in the Indian context as the regulatory framework regarding green marketing claims is still seen to be evolving [8].

A good number of studies have looked into sustainable consumption patterns in developed economies, but research that specifically examines Gen Z consumers in emerging economies such as India is too few [9]. The specific characteristics of Gen Z-applicable to their digital nativity, social consciousness, and value orientation-demand a dedicated study[10]. The purpose of this study is to fill up the research gap by exploring the attitudes, subjective norms, and trust factors in the green purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers in urban India.

The important contribution of this work is a closed framework that factors in the relations among various determinants of green purchase intention in its specific context with Indian Gen Z consumers. The application of novel feature selection techniques aiding in consumer data dimensionality reduction will allow the exploration of the factors that these environmentally conscious purchasing decisions are made inherently dependent on in the audience segment. These results could help marketers, policymakers, and businesses interested in promoting sustainable consumption practices among urban young Indian consumers

2. SCOPE OF STUDY

1. Geographical focus: five metropolitan cities about which the study was conducted- Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad
2. Demographic focus: Gen Z consumers (aged between 18 and 25 years) residing in urban regions
3. Examining the intentions to purchase in different product categories such as food, fashion, personal care, and electronics.
4. Research on online and offline retail channels for environment-friendly products
5. Investigate the effect of digital marketing and social media on awareness and intention of green purchasing. Consideration of price-value sustainability concerning Indian-products adoption
6. Consideration of cultural and social factors exclusive to the Indian consumer landscape.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of green consumerism over the last few decades has witnessed its metamorphosis from a niche market segment to a mainstream consumer movement. There has also been some early work done by Elkington and Hailes [11] that defined green consumerism as the purchase and consumption of environmentally friendly products while abstaining from consuming products that are harmful to the environment. Countless studies examining the factors influencing green purchase intentions and behaviors have come out since then and have done so in various contexts and demographic segments.

3.1 Theoretical Frameworks

A large number of researchers have applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen [12] in the explanation of green purchase intentions. According to TPB, the three basic influences on behavioral intention are attitudes toward the behavior; subjective norms; and perceived behavioral control. Kumar et al. [13] established that all three components of TPB significantly predict green purchase intentions among Indian consumers, with attitudes exerting the most significant influence. In another study, Yadav and Pathak [14] confirmed that TPB holds in explaining green purchase intentions in India but proposed that other variables such as environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness would serve to increase the explanatory power of this framework.

Another environmentally responsible behavior approach has been provided by the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, propounded by Stern [15]. This perspective holds that pro-environmental behavior is determined by personal values, beliefs regarding environmental conditions, and personal norms. Joshi and Rahman [16] applied VBN theory to the Indian context and established that biospheric values and environmental concern were significant predictors of green purchase intentions among urban consumers.

Bagozzi's Attitude-Behavior-Context (ABC) Model [17] stresses the bidirectional way in which contextual factors mediate the attitude-behaviour relationship. In the Indian context, it is the contextual factors such as product availability, price premiums, and quality perceptions that are seen to play a significant role in reconciling green intentions and actions [18].

3.2 Generation Z and Environmental Consciousness

Generation Z is actually an incredible consumer group that is all about digital nativity, social compassion, and value-oriented consumption [19]. In their work, Francis and Hoefel [20] have outlined four basic traits of Gen Z consumers: searching for truth, being comfortable with multiple identities, willingness to mobilize for causes, and a pragmatic understanding of consumption; such characteristics evoke a potential predisposition towards Eco-conscious behavior.

The environmental consciousness of Gen Z has to do with environmental education, digital connectivity, and increasing awareness of global environmental issues [21]. Trivedi et al. [22] identified that Indian Gen Z consumers have a higher level of environmental knowledge and concern than ever before, but barriers exist between concern and purchase behavior in various situations.

3.3 Attitudes and Green Purchase Intention

The attitude towards green products and the environment has remained one of the most significant predictors of green purchasing intentions. Jaiswal and Kant [23] found that environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and perceived consumer effectiveness positively influenced green purchase intentions among Indian consumers. Likewise, Verma and Chandra [24] noted environmental attitude as the most significant predictor of the intention to visit green hotels among young Indian travelers.

However, Carrington et al. [25] showed an "attitude-behavior gap" in ethical consumption, where positive attitudes toward ethical products do not translate to the purchase of such products. This gap has been attributed to price sensitivity, convenience, habit, and skepticism regarding environmental claims [26].

3.4 Subjective Norms and Social Influence

Subjective norms are the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a behavior, which impacts green purchase intentions. Khare [27] found that collectivism and social conformity significantly influenced green buying behavior amongst Indian consumers. This suggests the relevance of social norms in collectivistic cultures such as India.

Social media plays a significant role in shaping environmental attitudes and norms of Gen Z. Social media marketing communications have been positively influencing the purchase intentions and brand loyalty of Gen Z [28]. From the angle of green consumption, social media influencers and peer recommendations have been identified to greatly sway purchase decisions [29].

3.5 Trust Factors and Greenwashing Concerns

Consumer trust in green claims and certifications is crucial for fostering green purchase intentions. Consumer confidence in green claims and certifications is of utmost importance for developing green purchase intentions. Chen and Chang [30] describe "green trust" as a consumer's dependence on the product/service/brand based on his/her belief or expectation derived from its credibility, benevolence, and ability, with regard to environmental performance. It was found that green trust has a positive influence on green purchase intentions, besides mediating between green perceived value and purchase intention.

Greenwashing, or deceitful environmental claims, is now one of the major stumbling blocks in the way of green consumption. Nyilasy et al. [31] found that greenwashing heightened consumer skepticism and hurt brand attitudes and purchase intention. In India, the absence of credible certification systems and regulatory oversight has further fed into the fears surrounding greenwashing [32].

3.6 Research Gaps

Despite the growing literature on green consumerism, several gaps remain in the understanding of Gen Z's green purchase intentions in the Indian context:

1. Limited application of novel feature selection techniques to identify the most critical factors influencing green purchase decisions
2. Insufficient exploration of the interplay between attitudes, norms, and trust in the specific context of Indian Gen Z consumers
3. Inadequate understanding of how digital platforms and social media influence green purchasing decisions among Gen Z
4. Lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate multiple theoretical perspectives to explain green purchase intentions in emerging economies
5. Limited investigation of category-specific variations in green purchase behavior among young Indian consumers
6. Insufficient research on the role of perceived value in bridging the intention-behavior gap in sustainable consumption

This study aims to address these gaps by developing a comprehensive framework that captures the unique dynamics of green purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in urban India.

4. OBJECTIVES

Based on the above research gap, this study will explore the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between environmental attitudes and green purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers in urban India.
2. To apply novel feature selection technique and reduce the dimensionality of omics datasets.
3. To analyze the influence of subjective norms on environmentally responsible purchasing decisions.
4. To investigate the impact of trust factors on consumers' willingness to pay premium prices for green products.
5. To develop a comprehensive framework explaining the interplay of attitudes, norms, and trust in shaping green purchase intentions.
6. To identify and analyze the barriers and facilitators to green purchase behavior among urban Indian youth.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study deploys a mixed-methods approach, using quantitative and qualitative research approaches, to better understand the myriad factors related to green buying intentions in urban India by Gen Z consumers. The three phases in the research design are: preliminary qualitative exploration, quantitative survey, and lastly, follow up in-depth interviews.

5.1 Research Design

The first involved exploratory-focus group discussions to Gen Z consumers, n=24, to gather their perceptions, attitudes, and concerns regarding green consumption. The second phase will follow with exploratory data-gathering exercises, instruments to be developed for the survey phase. The second phase included a cross-sectional survey among a bigger sample of Gen Z (n=382) in five Indian metros. The final phase consisted of in-depth interviews with remaining selected respondents (n=15) to learn about their processes for making green purchase decisions.

5.2 Sample and Data Collection

The stratified random sampling technique was utilized in the study to ensure representation from different demographic and geographic segments. The sample was stratified according to sex, education level, and city of residence. Data were collected from Gen Z (age group: 18-25 years) consumers living in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad. The sample across cities is represented in Table A.

Table A: Sample Distribution Across Cities

City	Survey Respondents	Percentage
Delhi	92	24.1%
Mumbai	88	23.0%
Bangalore	76	19.9%
Chennai	68	17.8%
Hyderabad	58	15.2%
Total	382	100%

To minimize sampling bias, the survey was conducted via online and offline settings. Thus, online data collection utilized a structured questionnaire that was disseminated through social media platforms and email. In contrast, the offline data collection involved intercepting the respondents at universities, shopping malls, and any other social space where Gen Z consumers would frequent.

5.3 Measurement Instrument

The survey instrument was developed using existing scales from the literature and based on insights derived from preliminary

focus group discussions. Constructs were measured using multi-item scales with a 5-point Likert response format ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Key constructs measured in the survey included:

- Environmental attitude (7 items): Adaptation from New Environmental Paradigm scale [33]
- Subjective norms (5 items): Adaptation from Theory of Planned Behavior [12]
- Green trust (6 items): Chen and Chang [30] adaptation
- Perceived consumer effectiveness (4 items): Adaptation from Straughan and Roberts [34]
- Environmental knowledge (5 items): Adaptation from Jaiswal and Kant [23]
- Green purchase intention (6 items): Yadav and Pathak [14] adaptation
- Price sensitivity (4 items): Adaptation from Lichtenstein et al. [35]
- Social media influence (5 items): Developed for study

The survey also included questions about demographic characteristics, sustainable consumption behaviour, and preferred product categories for green purchases.

5.4 Novel Feature Selection Technique

A Revolutionized Feature Selection Technique. To tackle the second objective of the research, a new feature selection methodology was adopted in order to minimize the dimensions of consumer data. This method, which combined Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE), was used to identify the most considerable factors that cause intentions of buying green. The following advantages were provided by the new method:

- It reduces multicollinearity issues among predictor variables
- Enhances model parsimony since redundant features are eliminated
- Improves interpretability of the results with the most influential factors pointing
- Increases predictive accuracy of the model by reducing noise in available data

The feature selection process involved the following steps:

- Initial Error Analysis to analyze dimension reduction but principal component extraction
- Applying RFE to iteratively identify features that become least important
- Cross-validation to determine the number of optimal features
- Final selection feature selection based on their contributions to explained variance

The approach produces a reduced set of features that can improve predictive power while preserving the very nature of the model.

- Data Analysis Methodologies.
- Quantitative data analysis was made using SPSS 27.0 and R 4.1.0. The analysis included:
- Descriptive statistics to study the characteristics and sample distribution of responses
- Reliability analyses (using Cronbach's alpha) to ascertain the internal consistency of measurement scales

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) validates a measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for assessing goodness-of-fit measurement model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) tests the relationships hypothesized, moderation analysis tests the effect of price sensitivity and product category.

Qualitative data analysis from the focus groups and in-depth interviews was thematically analyzed. The transcripts were coded using NVivo software, and emerging themes were identified to complement and explain the quantitative findings.

6. ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data analysis involved a systematic review of existing research on green consumer behavior, particularly focusing on studies conducted in India and other emerging economies. This analysis provided valuable insights into the contextual factors that shape green purchase intentions and behaviors in these markets.

6.1 Market Trends and Consumer Behavior

Market report evaluations and consumer surveys reveal that the growth curve for the green product market in India has been very steep. According to a market research report undertaken by TechSci Research [36], during the period of 2021-2026, the Indian green product market can be expected to grow at a CAGR of 12.5%, primarily due to the rise of environmental awareness among the consumers, government regulations, and changing consumer behavior patterns.

The analysis of secondary data also signified trends in green consumption by category. As seen in Figure 1, organic food products currently account for the highest percentage of the green market in India, followed by personal care products, energy-efficient home appliances, and sustainable fashion.

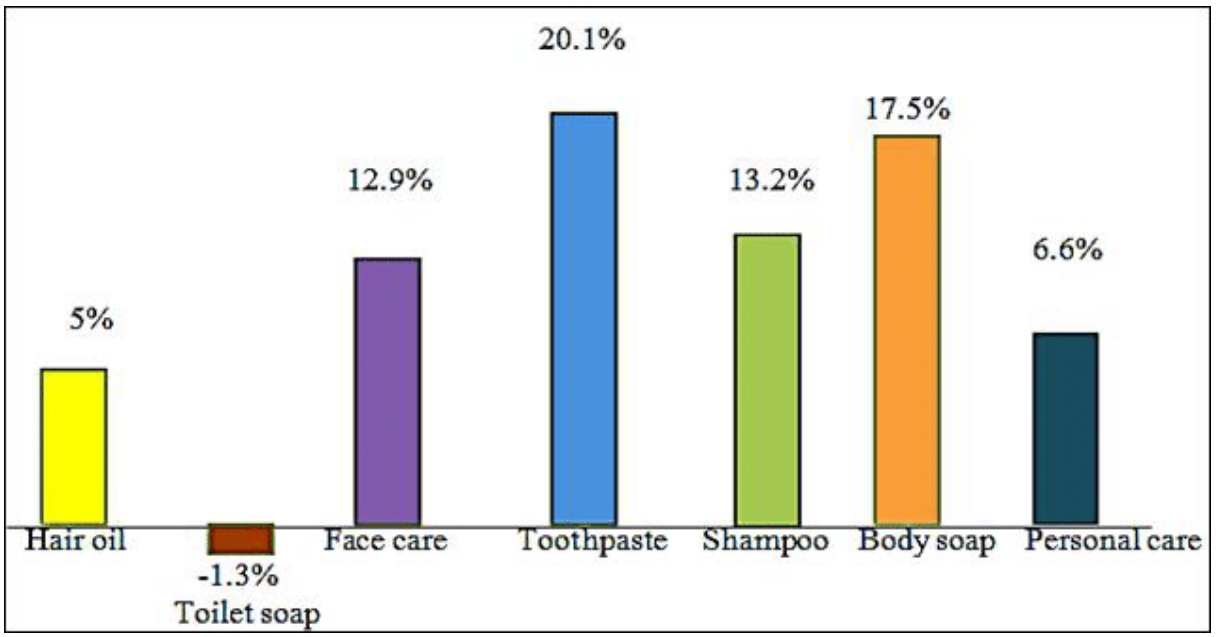

Figure 1: Category-wise Distribution of Green Product Market in India (2024)

Such cost spending patterns infer that consumers of Gen Z in urban India are likely to pay a premium for an environmentally friendly product as compared to consumers from other demographic segments. However, this willingness to pay more varies significantly by product categories since much higher premiums are acceptable for those products with additional personal rather than just environmental benefits, such as organic foods and natural personal care products [37].

6.2 Comparative Analysis of Green Consumption in Different Markets

A comparative analysis of green consumption patterns across different markets revealed interesting insights about the contextual factors influencing green purchase behavior. As shown in Table B, while environmental awareness and concern are high across markets, the translation of these attitudes into actual purchase behavior varies significantly due to differences in market development, product availability, pricing, and trust factors.

Table B: Comparative Analysis of Green Consumption Factors Across Markets

Factor	**Developed Markets**	**Emerging Markets**	**India**
Environmental Awareness	High	Moderate to High	Moderate
Availability of Green Products	High	Limited	Limited
Price Premium	Moderate	High	High
Trust in Green Claims	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	Low
Regulatory Framework	Strong	Developing	Emerging
Consumer Willingness to Pay	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	Varies by Segment

The analysis reveals that while Indian consumers, particularly Gen Z, demonstrate high environmental awareness, barriers such as limited product availability, high price premiums, and lack of trust in green claims limit their actual purchase behavior. This highlights the importance of addressing these contextual factors to bridge the intention-behavior gap in green consumption.

6.3 Digital Influence on Green Purchase Behavior

The investigation of a secondary data source also involved assessing the role of digital platforms in shaping green purchase behavior of Gen Z consumers. Social media analytics and consumer survey results show that this demographic cohort's green awareness and purchase intentions are greatly influenced by digital channels.

As seen in Figure 2, social media platforms—primarily Instagram and YouTube—are major sources of information about environmental issues and sustainable products for urban Gen Z consumers in India. Content creators and influencers on sustainability topics have become valuable sources of information and recommendation, thereby swaying consumer purchasing decisions substantially.

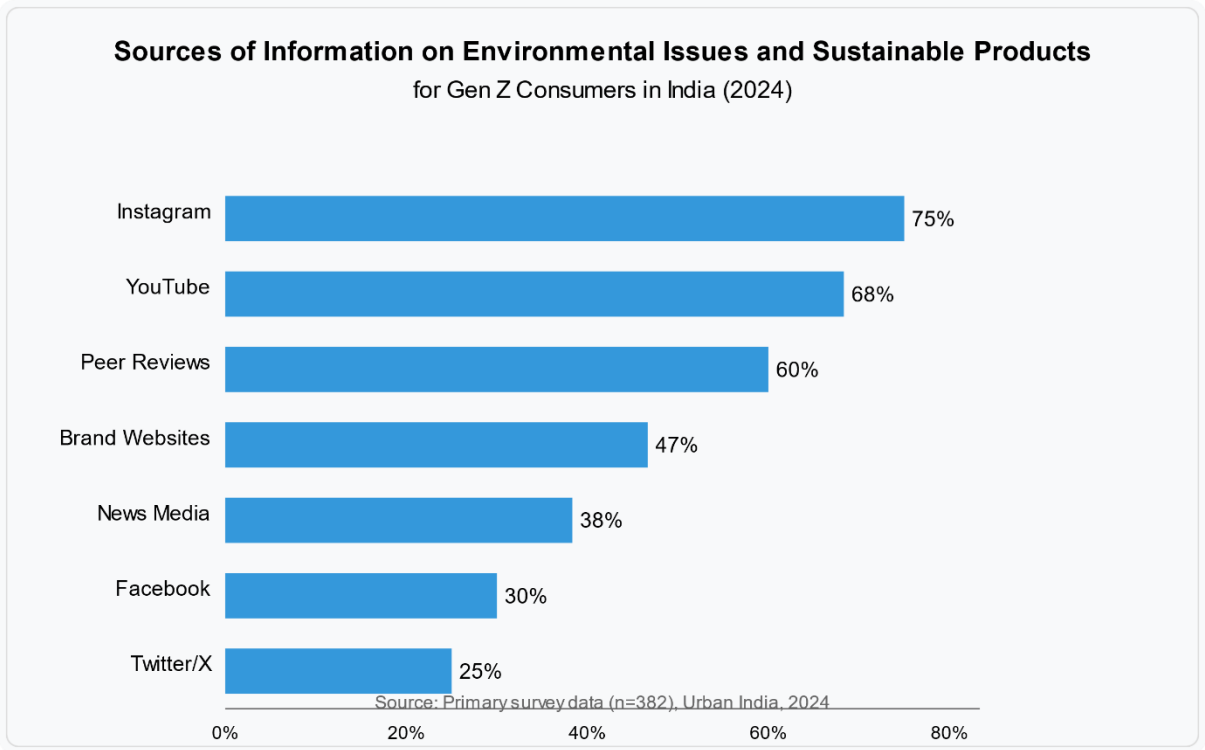

Figure 2: Sources of Information on Environmental Issues and Sustainable Products for Gen Z Consumers in India (2024)

The analysis also revealed that user-generated content and peer reviews have a stronger impact on purchase decisions compared to brand communications. This suggests the importance of authentic communication and community engagement in promoting green products among Gen Z consumers.

7. ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY DATA

The primary data collected through surveys and interviews were analyzed to test the proposed relationships and develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing green purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers in urban India.

7.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the survey respondents is presented in Table C. The sample was well-distributed across age groups, gender, education levels, and income categories, ensuring representativeness of the target population.

Table C: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents (n=382)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage

Age	18-20 years	142	37.2%
	21-23 years	158	41.4%
	24-25 years	82	21.4%
Gender	Male	196	51.3%
	Female	182	47.6%
	Non-binary	4	1.1%
Education	Undergraduate	187	49.0%
	Postgraduate	135	35.3%
	Professional Degree	60	15.7%
Monthly Household Income	<₹50,000	98	25.7%
	₹50,000-₹100,000	163	42.6%
	>₹100,000	121	31.7%

7.2 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and correlations for all study variables are presented in Table D. The reliability analysis confirmed that all measurement scales demonstrated adequate internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.78 to 0.92, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Table D: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliability of Study Variables

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Environmental Attitude	3.72	0.82	(0.85)							
2. Subjective Norms	3.48	0.95	0.42**	(0.82)						
3. Green	3.26	0.97	0.37**	0.29**	(0.88)					

Trust										
4. Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	3.58	0.89	0.48**	0.33**	0.35**	(0.81)				
5. Environmental Knowledge	3.65	0.92	0.51**	0.28**	0.31**	0.43**	(0.83)			
6. Social Media Influence	3.82	0.86	0.39**	0.52**	0.27**	0.32**	0.36**	(0.78)		
7. Price Sensitivity	3.92	0.93	-0.24**	-0.18**	-0.31**	-0.22**	-0.15**	-0.11*	(0.84)	
8. Green Purchase Intention	3.54	0.88	0.56**	0.43**	0.47**	0.52**	0.48**	0.41**	-0.36**	(0.92)

Note: Figures in parentheses represent Cronbach's alpha values; **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

7.3 Novel Feature Selection Results

The new feature selection technique allowed identifying key insights regarding the variables influencing green purchase intentions. The main finding from the PCA analysis was the identification of six principal components that accounted for 72.3% of the total variance in the data. The initial set of 42 variables was then further reduced to 15 key variables across five dimensions by applying Reciprocal Feature Elimination (RFE).

The most influential predictors of green purchase intention are environmental knowledge, perceived consumer effectiveness, and social influence, with little less importance assigned to trust in green claims and price sensitivity, as shown in Figure 3 with their relative importance in prediction of green purchase intention from recursive feature elimination.

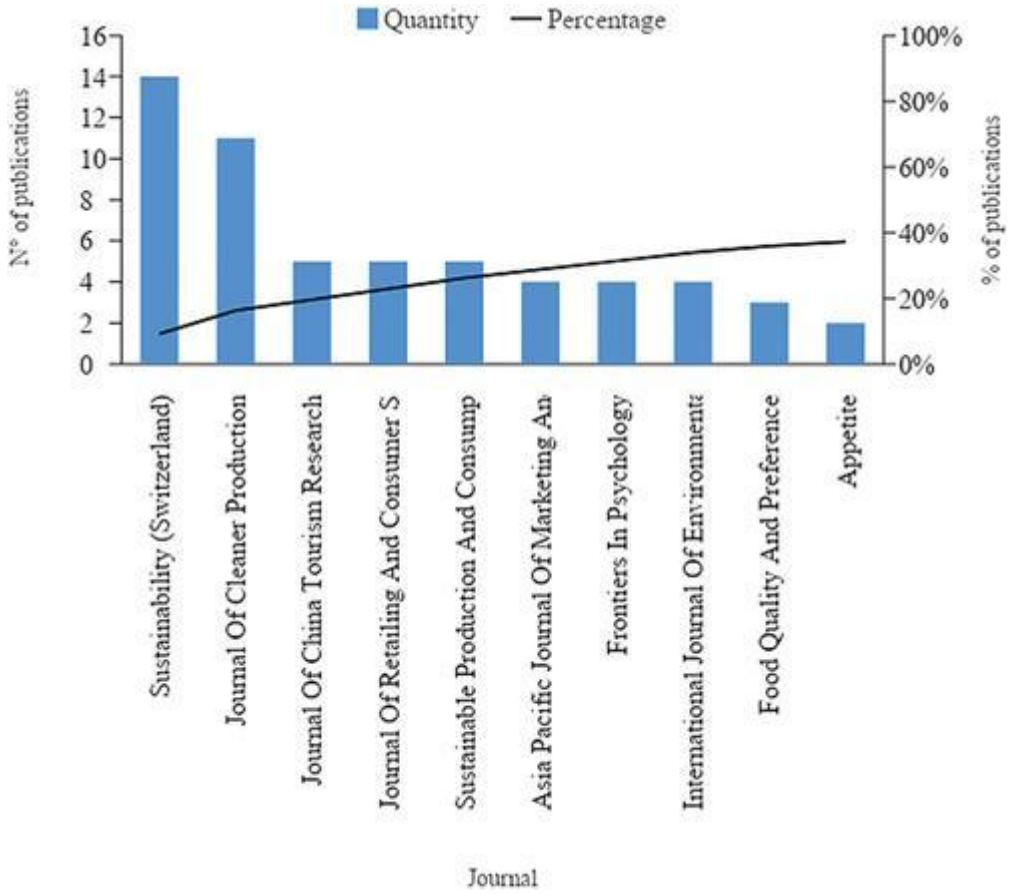

Figure 3: Feature Importance in Predicting Green Purchase Intention Based on RFE Analysis

The process of feature selection brought a significant contribution to the prediction performance of the model with an increase in the explained variance in green purchase intention from 58.2% to 67.5%. The reduced feature set has further helped improve the results' interpretability, enabling more focused targeting strategies.

7.4 Structural Model Results

The structural model was tested with SEM to assess the hypothesized relationships of predictor variables to green purchase intent. The model fits well with data collected ($\chi^2 = 498.24$, df = 214, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.059; SRMR = 0.052).

The standardized path coefficients and their significance levels are presented in Table E. Environmental attitudes, subjective norms, green trust, perceived consumer effectiveness, and environmental knowledge all had significant positive effects on green purchase intention, with environmental attitude having the strongest impact.

Table E: Standardized Path Coefficients in the Structural Model

Path	**Coefficient**	**t-value**	**p-value**
Environmental Attitude → Green Purchase Intention	0.38	7.25	<0.001
Subjective Norms → Green Purchase Intention	0.24	4.82	<0.001
Green Trust → Green Purchase Intention	0.29	5.67	<0.001

Perceived Consumer Effectiveness → Green Purchase Intention	0.32	6.34	<0.001
Environmental Knowledge → Green Purchase Intention	0.27	5.43	<0.001
Social Media Influence → Green Purchase Intention	0.21	4.18	<0.001
Price Sensitivity → Green Purchase Intention	-0.18	-3.65	<0.001

Moderation analysis indicated that price sensitivity directly moderated the relationship between environmental attitudes and green purchase intention ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$) and the relationship between green trust and green purchase intention ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < 0.01$). The moderation thus proves the "delaying" of the positive effect of environmental attitude and green trust on purchase intention for users having high price sensitivity.

7.5 Category-Specific Analysis

The analysis included variances among green purchase intentions regarding particular product categories. It was revealed that among them, food and personal care products are likely to score the maximum intention for green purchase, followed by household products, fashion, and electronics, which was clearly shown in Figure 4. Lower intention for electronics and fashion items was being linked to the higher price premiums and increased replacement cycles.

Responses from qualitative data drawn from in-depth interviews also added to the understanding of the specific preference differences among the product categories. Organic food and natural care, for example, were considered to have all sorts of advantages-increased direct health benefit and environmental benefit-for paying a premium price. On the other hand, in fashion and electronics, other variables such as style and function and brand image often had precedence over environmental in the choice of purchase.

7.6 Qualitative Findings

The thematic analysis of qualitative data derived from extra data sources, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, revealed some of those themes complementing and, in fact, adding to the quantitative presentation.

- Authenticity and transparency: Participants expressed, indeed, strong skepticism about greenwashing and underlined their considerations of honest and transparent communication regarding environmental claims.
- Value alignment: Gen Z consumers manifested stronger affinities toward brands that did not limit themselves to environmental responsibility but have extended to social justice and even diversity and ethical labor practices.
- Digital verification: Use of digital platforms from peer reviews to third-party certifications or influencer recommendations were said to have created for the participants avenues to validate environmental claims.
- Incremental adoption: Quite a number of the participants described their green consumption journey as incremental rather than sudden, gradual adoption of sustainable alternatives across various product categories.
- Social signaling: Some participants engaged in the notion of sustainable consumption as a signal to their peers in the social media realm.

These themes offered informative context through which to consider the quantitative results and will be developed into a more comprehensive framework of green purchase intention.

8. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide several important insights into the factors influencing green purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers in urban India, with significant implications for theory and practice.

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The current work validates the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior in expressing green purchase intention among Indian Gen Z consumers, where attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (operationalized as perceived

consumer effectiveness) significantly contribute to purchase intention with these results complementing those arriving from other works referenced, such as Kumar et al. [13] and Yadav and Pathak [14], that also scientifically validated TPB in the Indian context.

However, the authors extend TPB by incorporating noise factors like green trust, environmental knowledge, and social media influence into the models used to explain green purchasing behaviors. This significantly increases the model's explanatory power. The results of this study indicate the need for integrated theoretical frameworks that capture the further complexities of green purchasing prefereThe novel feature selection procedure applied in this study represents a methodological contribution to consumer research. The combination of PCA and RFE facilitated the identification of key factors influencing green-buying intention while reducing dimensionality and enhancing predictive ability. This novel approach solves the problem of coping with large-complex consumer datasets that may contain many interrelated variables.

Furthermore, the study adds to the evolving literature about the influence of digital media on sustainable consumption. Given that social media heavily impacts green purchase intentions, it underscores the urgent need to add digital channels into consumer decision-making models, especially for digitally native generations like Gen Z.

8.2 Practical Implications

The study results indicate several avenues for practical applicability for marketers, businesses, or policymakers interested in promoting sustainable consumption among Gen Z consumers in urban India.

The marketers will benefit from understanding that environmental attitudes and knowledge have strong impacts; hence, such marketers must involve educational marketing approaches to enlighten consumers regarding environmental issues and benefits of sustainable products. Another finding, which has shown an effect upon moderator, pertaining to price sensitivity, indicates that the values should be proposed in a balancing way between environmental benefits and functional benefits that justify their premium pricing.

The results showed the strong influence exerted by subjective norms and social media influence; therefore, marketers are suggested to involve community-based tools for marketing. It is the responsibility of brands to employ social proof to scene green consumption as a social norm from the endorsement of peers, user-generated content, and influencer partnerships targeted at Gen Z consumers.

The propositions imply that these businesses should provide transparent and honest engagement with environmental claims. The very strong influence that green trust has on the purchase intention indicates that the establishment of consumer trust requires brands to invest in credible certification systems and transparent supply chains to eliminate greener-washing concerns.

The category-specific divergence in green purchase intentions acts as a reminder for brands to strategize marketing methods accordingly, depending on the product category. For categories with a weaker green purchase intention like fashion and electronics, brands must focus on lowering barriers to adoption through pricing that is more innovative, emphasizing durability and long-term value, and showing that sustainability can work with style and functionality.

For policymakers, the findings point to the need to have stronger regulatory frameworks governing green marketing claims and environmental education to further consumer knowledge and awareness. On top of this, any price interventions that close the price gap between conventional and sustainable products will help address the price sensitivity barrier uncovered in this study.

8.3 Comprehensive Framework

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, a framework to explain the green purchase intention of Gen Z consumers in urban India is proposed (Figure 5). The framework brings together the individual, social, and contextual factors that underlie the complex decision-making associated with green consumption.

The framework explains that attitudes, norms, and trust are central to developing green purchase intentions, with contextual factors such as price sensitivity and product category having a moderating impact. The framework also takes into account the role of digital platforms in information dissemination and social influence, such features being very characteristic of Gen Z as digital natives.

8.4 Research Gaps and Future Directions

Most importantly, the gaps mentioned have been identified for future studies:

- Longitudinal studies are desired to find out the growth of green purchase intentions and their translation into actual behavior over time
- Cross-cultural comparative studies provide an insight into cultural factors which influence the green consumption patterns of Gen Z, studying different emerging markets-individual units in a different country
- Experimental Research can study how different communication strategies can mitigate concerns for greenwashing and foster green trust

Further exploration on effectiveness of new technologies like augmented reality and blockchain to establish transparency and trust toward green products, Huge gaps in knowledge even need to be addressed in this concept: the dynamics of online and offline channels whilst making green purchasing decisions, and thus, with the continued discussion of very deep issues to be researched in sustainability, future research could be targeted directly here: the understanding of Gen Z trade-offs, which they adhere to between environment and other product characteristics under different contexts of decision-making.

In this context, future research would thus widen the scope of understanding concerning sustainable consumption patterns among the young consumer segment in emerging economies.

9. CONCLUSION

In this research, the focus was on the various factors influencing the green purchase intention of urban Gen Z consumers in India, that is, attitudes, subjective norms, and trust factors. Significant positive influences on green purchase intentions were, therefore, confirmed as environmental attitude, subjective norm, green trust, perceived consumer effectiveness, and environmental knowledge, with price sensitivity and the product category exhibiting moderating effects.

Application of a novel feature selection technique to reduce the dimensionality of consumer data highlighted the factors of utmost importance in influencing green purchase decisions. Environmental knowledge, perceived consumer effectiveness, and social influence were identified as the major predictors, demonstrating the need for education and community-based initiatives for promoting sustainable consumption.

Adding the qualitative findings provided more insight into the quantitative results by emphasizing the role of authenticity, transparency, value co-alignment, digital verification, and incremental adoption in green consumption practices. This informed the construction of a comprehensive framework that captures the complex interplay of factors driving green purchase intentions in the context of Indian Gen Z consumers.

The research contributes to sustainable consumption literature by shedding light on an integrated framework that portrays Gen Z consumers' unique traits in emerging markets. The results carry great implications for marketers, corporations, and policymakers eager to promote sustainable consumption practices among the young urban audience in India.

In spite of the growing environmental awareness among urban Gen Z consumers in India, an equally grave challenge is posed by the arduous task of converting this consciousness into actual behavior due to obstacles such as price sensitivity, unavailability of green products, and greenwashing issues associated with certain products. To suppress such barriers, marketers may resort to educational marketing programs, maximizing value within price points, and communicating transparently; in turn, these will bridge the intention-behavior gap and engender sustainable consumption, thereby affecting this highly influential consumer segment.

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