Factors Influencing Green Purchase Intention among Indian Youth: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Growing environmental problems, increasing consumer awareness, and the expansion of sustainable products have created considerable interest in green consumption. Young consumers are particularly important in this context because their consumption choices can contribute to emerging patterns of sustainable consumption. However, environmental awareness and concern do not necessarily translate into an intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Consumers may simultaneously consider their environmental beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, financial considerations, and social surroundings when making purchasing decisions. This conceptual paper develops a framework to examine the factors influencing green purchase intention among Indian youth. Drawing primarily on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and complementary perspectives from green consumer behaviour literature, the study proposes five determinants of green purchase intention: environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, price sensitivity, and social influence. Based on previous theoretical and empirical research, five hypotheses are proposed. Environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, and social influence are expected to have positive relationships with green purchase intention, whereas price sensitivity is expected to have a negative relationship. The paper contributes by bringing together environmental, cognitive, attitudinal, economic, and social factors in a focused framework specifically directed toward Indian youth.

Keywords: Green purchase intention, Indian youth, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, green attitude, price sensitivity, social influence, sustainable consumption

1.1 Introduction

Environmental sustainability has become an increasingly important issue for consumers, organizations, governments, and society. Climate change, pollution, waste

generation, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss have increased attention toward consumption patterns and their environmental consequences. Since consumption is closely connected with the use of natural resources and the generation of waste and emissions, encouraging consumers to make environmentally responsible choices has become an important component of sustainability efforts.

One response to these concerns has been the growth of green products. Green products are generally understood as products that are perceived to cause less environmental harm than conventional alternatives because of their materials, production processes, packaging, use, or disposal. Examples include energy-efficient appliances, organic products, recyclable or biodegradable products, sustainable clothing, environmentally friendly personal-care products, and products using recycled materials.

However, the availability of green products does not automatically lead to green purchasing. Consumers may express concern about environmental problems while continuing to purchase conventional products. This phenomenon is commonly associated with the gap between environmental attitudes or intentions and actual consumer behaviour. Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) highlighted the complexity of translating environmental knowledge and concern into environmentally responsible behaviour.

Green purchase intention is therefore an important construct in sustainable consumer research. Purchase intention reflects an individual's willingness or likelihood to purchase an environmentally friendly product. Although intention does not necessarily guarantee actual purchasing behaviour, it represents an important stage in the decision-making process and is consistent with behavioural theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

The Indian context provides an important setting for examining green purchase intention. India has a large and diverse young population, and young consumers increasingly encounter sustainability-related information through education, digital media, social networks, brands, and public initiatives. Research focusing specifically on young Indian consumers has demonstrated the relevance of environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitudes, and other psychological factors in understanding green consumption. For example, Yadav and Pathak (2016) extended TPB by incorporating environmental concern and environmental

knowledge into a model of young Indian consumers' green purchase intention. Their findings supported the usefulness of TPB and indicated that incorporating environmental constructs improved the predictive utility of the model.

Other Indian studies have similarly examined young consumers and green purchasing. Prakash and Pathak (2017), for example, examined young Indian consumers' intention to purchase eco-friendly packaged products and found that purchase intention was associated with factors including attitude, environmental concern, personal norms, and willingness to pay.

Research has also demonstrated that the relationship between environmental knowledge, environmental concern, attitudes, and green purchasing can be complex. A study of Indian consumers by Kumar et al. identified environmental concern, perceived environmental knowledge, and attitude toward green products among the factors examined in relation to green purchase intention. In that study, attitude and environmental concern were significant predictors, whereas perceived environmental knowledge did not have a significant direct effect on green purchase intention. This inconsistency makes environmental knowledge particularly interesting as a variable for further theoretical investigation.

Price is another important consideration. Consumers may have favourable environmental attitudes but hesitate to purchase green products if they perceive them as more expensive than conventional alternatives. Tudu and Mishra (2021), studying Indian consumers, found that the price of green products weakened the positive relationships between environmental concern/environmental knowledge and green purchase intention.

Social influence is also potentially important among young consumers. Family, friends, peers, and social groups can shape perceptions of environmentally responsible consumption. Research involving young Indian consumers has found relationships between peer influence and environmental perceptions, although findings are not uniformly consistent across product categories and studies.

Against this background, the present paper develops a focused conceptual framework containing five explanatory variables: environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, price sensitivity, and social influence. The objective is to integrate these variables into a theoretically coherent framework for understanding green purchase intention among Indian youth.

1.2 Green Purchase Intention

Green purchase intention refers to the consumer's willingness, likelihood, or planned intention to purchase a product that is perceived to have relatively lower environmental impact than conventional alternatives.

Purchase intention is conceptually different from actual purchasing behaviour. A consumer may intend to purchase a green product but subsequently purchase a conventional product because of price, availability, convenience, product performance, or other circumstances. Therefore, studying intention provides an opportunity to understand the psychological stage preceding actual behaviour.

The importance of purchase intention is supported by the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Ajzen (1991) proposed that behavioural intention can be predicted from attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In green consumption research, TPB has been widely applied and extended with environmental and consumer-related variables. A meta-analysis of 54 empirical studies found significant positive relationships between green purchase intention and several factors, including attitude, environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and subjective norms.

The present paper therefore considers green purchase intention as the dependent variable and examines five proposed antecedents.

1.3 Theoretical Foundation

1.3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The primary theoretical foundation of this paper is the Theory of Planned Behaviour developed by Ajzen (1991).

TPB proposes that behavioural intention is primarily influenced by three factors:

1. attitude toward the behaviour;
2. subjective norm; and
3. perceived behavioural control.

Attitude refers to an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of performing a behaviour. Subjective norm concerns perceived social expectations regarding the behaviour.

Perceived behavioural control concerns the extent to which an individual believes that performing the behaviour is within their control.

The theory is highly relevant to green purchasing. A young consumer may develop an intention to buy a green product when the consumer:

- has a favourable attitude toward green purchasing;
- believes that important people approve of green purchasing; and
- perceives that purchasing the product is feasible.

The current model uses attitude toward green products as a direct determinant of green purchase intention and social influence as a broader conceptualization related to the subjective-norm component of TPB. The framework also extends TPB by incorporating environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and price sensitivity. These variables capture environmental motivation, cognitive resources, and economic constraints that are not fully represented by the three original TPB constructs.

1.4 Environmental Concern And Green Purchase Intention

Environmental concern represents the degree to which an individual is worried about environmental problems and their consequences.

Concern differs from simple awareness. A person may know that pollution or climate change exists without feeling personally concerned about these problems. Environmental concern involves a stronger psychological orientation toward environmental conditions and their consequences. Consumers with higher environmental concern may be more likely to consider the environmental consequences of their consumption choices. They may perceive green products as a means of reducing their environmental impact and therefore develop stronger intentions to purchase such products. The relationship is supported by previous research in India. Yadav and Pathak (2016) examined young Indian consumers using an extended TPB model that incorporated environmental concern and environmental knowledge. Their study found support for extending TPB and reported environmental concern as an important predictor of green purchase intention.

Prakash and Pathak (2017) also examined young Indian consumers and found environmental concern to be among the factors significantly influencing intention to purchase

eco-friendly packaged products. Further, the meta-analysis conducted by Wang et al. (2021) reported a positive relationship between environmental concern and green purchase intention across the empirical literature. These findings provide a theoretical basis for proposing that environmental concern will contribute positively to green purchase intention among Indian youth.

H1

H1: Environmental concern has a positive influence on green purchase intention among Indian youth.

1.5 Environmental Knowledge And Green Purchase Intention

Environmental knowledge refers to the extent to which individuals understand environmental issues, ecological consequences, and the characteristics or benefits of environmentally friendly products.

Knowledge can affect consumer decision-making by helping individuals identify environmental problems and understand how products differ in terms of their environmental consequences. For example, consumers with greater knowledge may be more capable of recognizing recyclable packaging, energy-efficient products, organic certification, environmentally responsible production processes, or sustainable materials.

Environmental knowledge is particularly relevant to green purchasing because consumers cannot always directly observe the environmental characteristics of a product. Knowledge can therefore provide consumers with a cognitive basis for evaluating alternatives. Yadav and Pathak (2016) explicitly incorporated environmental knowledge into their extended TPB model of young Indian consumers. Their research demonstrated the usefulness of including environmental knowledge and environmental concern in the explanation of green purchase intention. Research on young Indian consumers has also linked environmental knowledge with environmental attitudes and green purchasing. Uddin and Khan (2018), for example, examined young Indian consumers and reported relationships involving environmental knowledge, environmental attitude, and green purchasing behaviour.

However, the relationship between knowledge and purchase intention is not entirely consistent. Kumar et al. (2018) found that perceived environmental knowledge did not significantly affect green purchase intention in their Indian consumer sample, despite

significant effects for environmental concern and attitude toward green products. This inconsistency makes environmental knowledge theoretically important. Knowledge may be necessary for informed green consumption without being sufficient to produce purchase intention by itself. The present conceptual framework therefore proposes a positive relationship while recognizing that future empirical research should test the strength and significance of this relationship among Indian youth.

H2

H2: Environmental knowledge has a positive influence on green purchase intention among Indian youth.

1.6 Attitude Toward Green Products and Green Purchase Intention

Attitude toward green products refers to the consumer's overall favourable or unfavourable evaluation of purchasing or using environmentally friendly products. Attitude is one of the central constructs of TPB. Ajzen (1991) argues that favourable evaluations of a behaviour contribute to stronger behavioural intentions. In the context of green purchasing, a positive attitude may develop when consumers perceive green products as beneficial, responsible, useful, desirable, healthy, socially appropriate, or environmentally meaningful.

A consumer with a favourable attitude may believe:

- green products are worthwhile;
- purchasing green products is responsible;
- green products provide meaningful benefits; and
- choosing green products is preferable to choosing conventional alternatives.

Indian studies provide substantial support for the importance of attitude. Kumar et al. (2018) found that attitude toward green products significantly influenced green purchase intention among Indian consumers. Prakash and Pathak (2017) similarly found attitude to be an important determinant of intention to purchase eco-friendly packaged products among young Indian consumers. Yadav and Pathak (2016) also demonstrated the applicability of TPB in explaining young Indian consumers' green purchase intention. The broader meta-analysis by Wang et al. (2021) identified attitude as one of the significant factors associated with green purchase intention. Frontiers

Thus, attitude is a central component of the proposed framework.

H3

H3: A positive attitude toward green products has a positive influence on green purchase intention among Indian youth.

1.7 Price Sensitivity and Green Purchase Intention

Price represents an important economic consideration in consumer decision-making. For the present study, the concept is more appropriately operationalized as price sensitivity toward green products.

Price sensitivity refers to the extent to which consumers respond negatively to the price of a product and perceive price as a barrier to purchase. Green products may sometimes be perceived as more expensive than conventional alternatives because of their materials, production processes, certification, packaging, or smaller production scale. Consequently, a consumer may have strong environmental concern and a positive attitude toward green products but still hesitate to purchase them if the perceived price premium is too high.

This issue is especially relevant to young consumers because students and early-career consumers may operate under relatively constrained budgets. Nevertheless, the relationship should not be interpreted as universal: some consumers may be willing to pay a premium for environmental benefits. Prakash and Pathak (2017), studying young Indian consumers' intentions toward eco-friendly packaged products, incorporated willingness to pay as a relevant factor and found it significantly associated with purchase intention.

More directly relevant to the present framework, Tudu and Mishra (2021) examined Indian consumers and found that the price of green products weakened the positive relationship between environmental concern/environmental knowledge and green purchase intention. Their findings provide a useful explanation for why environmentally favourable beliefs may not always translate into stronger purchase intentions when price becomes a constraint. This suggests that price may act as an economic barrier in the green purchasing process. The present paper therefore conceptualizes price as price sensitivity, rather than simply as an objective product price.

H4

H4: Price sensitivity toward green products has a negative influence on green purchase intention among Indian youth.

1.8 Social Influence and Green Purchase Intention

Social influence refers to the extent to which an individual's decisions are affected by family, friends, peers, colleagues, social groups, online communities, and other socially important people.

Social influence is closely related to the subjective-norm component of TPB. According to Ajzen (1991), subjective norms represent perceived social pressure concerning whether a person should perform a particular behaviour. Green purchasing can have a social dimension because consumption decisions may communicate personal values and identity. Young consumers may observe the consumption choices of peers and may be influenced by whether green products are considered desirable or socially appropriate within their communities.

The Indian context provides evidence that interpersonal and peer influences can be relevant to young consumers. Uddin and Khan (2018) examined interpersonal influence and environmental knowledge among young Indian consumers and found that environmental attitudes were related to subsequent green purchasing behaviour. Research by Kumar et al. (2019) involving 20–25-year-old Indian consumers found that peer influence and institutional initiatives affected environmental knowledge and environmental concern, which subsequently contributed to perceived value, green attitude, and green purchase intention.

Research on young Indian consumers and green apparel has also investigated peer influence. Pathak et al. (2022) reported a positive relationship between green peer influence and perceived benefits associated with green apparel among young Indian consumers. At the same time, findings are not universally consistent. Khare and Sadachar (2017), studying Indian youth aged 18-24, reported that green peer influence did not have a direct impact on green apparel buying behaviour in their study. This mixed evidence strengthens the rationale for examining social influence further, particularly across broader green-product categories rather than a single product category.

H5

H5: Social influence has a positive influence on green purchase intention among Indian youth

1.9 Research Gap

The existing literature provides substantial evidence that green purchase intention is a multidimensional phenomenon. However, several gaps justify the proposed conceptual framework.

1.9.1 Fragmentation of variables

Previous studies have investigated environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude, social influence, price, and other variables using different theoretical frameworks and product categories.

For example, Yadav and Pathak (2016) examined environmental concern and knowledge within TPB among young Indian consumers. Kumar et al. (2018) investigated environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and attitude toward green products among Indian consumers. Other studies have examined price or willingness to pay and peer influence separately.

There is therefore value in bringing the five selected variables together into a single, focused conceptual framework.

1.9.2 Inconsistent role of environmental knowledge

Environmental knowledge deserves particular attention because evidence is mixed. Some studies support its relevance, whereas Kumar et al. (2018) found no significant direct effect of perceived environmental knowledge on green purchase intention in their Indian sample.

This suggests that knowledge may not automatically translate into intention and warrants further examination among young Indian consumers.

1.9.3 The attitude-behaviour gap

A major issue in green consumption research is the gap between environmental concern and actual behaviour. Consumers may express concern but encounter barriers such as price or limited availability. Tudu and Mishra (2021) specifically demonstrated how price can weaken relationships between environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and green purchase intention in India.

The present framework addresses this problem by including price sensitivity alongside environmental variables.

1.9.4 Importance of young Indian consumers

Young consumers are an important population for sustainable consumption research. Existing studies have specifically examined Indian youth and young consumers, but the findings vary depending on the product category and variables included.

A focused model that examines environmental, attitudinal, economic, and social factors simultaneously can provide a useful basis for future empirical research.

1.10 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework contains five independent variables and one dependent variable.

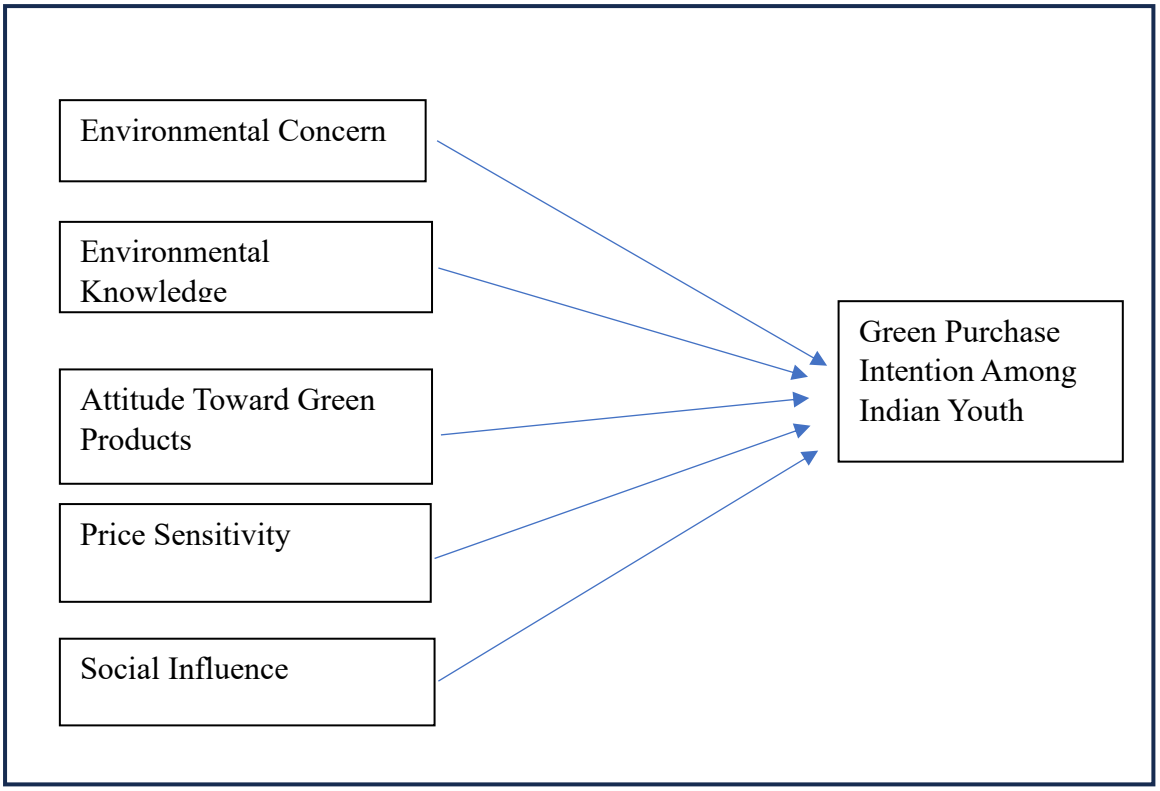
Independent Variables

1. Environmental Concern
2. Environmental Knowledge
3. Attitude Toward Green Products
4. Price Sensitivity
5. Social Influence

Dependent Variable

- Green Purchase Intention

Fig 1: 10.1 Conceptual Model



The proposed framework and summary of hypothesis illustrate the relationship between five independent variables environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, price sensitivity, and social influence and the dependent variable, green purchase intention among Indian youth. Environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, and social influence are proposed to have a positive influence on green purchase intention, whereas price sensitivity is expected to have a negative influence. The framework is primarily based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and is extended by incorporating environmental and economic factors relevant to green purchasing decisions. The proposed relationships form the basis for the five hypotheses developed in this study.

1.11 Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Proposed Relationship
H1	Environmental concern → Green purchase intention (+)
H2	Environmental knowledge → Green purchase intention (+)
H3	Attitude toward green products → Green purchase intention (+)
H4	Price sensitivity → Green purchase intention (−)
H5	Social influence → Green purchase intention (+)

1.12 Theoretical Contribution

The proposed framework makes several theoretical contributions.

First, it extends the application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to green consumption by incorporating environmental and economic variables. Attitude and social influence are conceptually related to central TPB mechanisms, while environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and price sensitivity extend the framework beyond the original TPB variables.

Second, the model integrates five different dimensions of consumer decision-making. Environmental concern represents an affective/environmental dimension; environmental knowledge represents a cognitive dimension; attitude represents an evaluative dimension; price sensitivity represents an economic dimension; and social influence represents a social dimension.

Third, the model explicitly addresses the possibility that environmental motivation may be constrained by economic considerations. A consumer can care about environmental issues and possess substantial environmental knowledge while still hesitate to purchase green products if the perceived price is too high.

Fourth, the framework provides a parsimonious model that can be empirically tested. Rather than including a large number of potentially overlapping constructs, it focuses on five variables with clear theoretical meanings.

Finally, the framework is specifically oriented toward Indian youth. This is important because existing research indicates that the relationships among environmental concern, knowledge, attitudes, peer influence, and purchasing behaviour may differ across populations and product categories.

1.13 Conclusion

This conceptual paper examined the factors influencing green purchase intention among Indian youth through five variables: environmental concern, environmental knowledge, attitude toward green products, price sensitivity, and social influence. Based on the Theory of

Planned Behaviour and green consumer behaviour literature, the framework proposes that environmental concern, environmental knowledge, positive attitudes, and social influence positively affect green purchase intention, while price sensitivity is expected to have a negative effect.

The framework suggests that businesses should provide clear environmental information, build positive attitudes toward green products, offer reasonable prices, and use credible social communication to encourage sustainable consumption. Policymakers and educators can support green purchasing through environmental education, reliable eco-labels, consumer awareness programmes, and improved access to green products. Future studies can empirically test the proposed relationships among Indian youth using surveys and statistical techniques such as regression or structural equation modelling. Researchers may also examine demographic differences, product categories, and the gap between purchase intention and actual green purchasing behaviour.

The study is limited by its conceptual nature and the inclusion of only five variables. Other factors such as green trust, perceived consumer effectiveness, and product availability could be examined in future research. Overall, the proposed framework provides a focused foundation for understanding how environmental, attitudinal, economic, and social factors influence green purchase intention among Indian youth.

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