



Consumer Behaviour on Purchase of Green Products through Online Among College Students in Coimbatore

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Abstract

This study investigates the consumer behavior towards the purchase of green products online among college students in Coimbatore. With growing environmental concerns and an increasing availability of green products through online platforms, understanding the factors influencing the purchase decisions of college students becomes crucial. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and qualitative interviews to gather insights into the motivations, attitudes, and barriers shaping green product purchasing behavior. Additionally, the study examines the impact of demographic variables and online marketing strategies on consumer behavior. Findings reveal that while environmental consciousness and product attributes play significant roles in driving green product purchases, factors such as price sensitivity, product availability, and trust in online vendors also influence decision-making. The study contributes to both academic research and practical implications for businesses seeking to promote sustainable consumption among college students in Coimbatore's online marketplace. The primary data are collected directly from the respondents through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from journals and websites. Statistical tools like simple percentages, weighted mean score and Two-way ANOVA are used to analyse data. It is found from the analysis that 'Consumer Beliefs', 'Environmental Attitude', and 'Social Influence' have a positive influence on the green purchasing behaviour. The influential factor on green purchasing behaviour namely 'Consumer Beliefs', 'Environmental Attitude', 'Social Influence' and 'Quality of Products' are significantly related with the overall green purchasing behaviour of the respondents. The findings of the study also insist the importance of educating the young consumers about the green environment. Hence if the suggestions given in the study are carried out both by the marketers and the young consumers, definitely India will shine as super power in the years to come.

Keywords: Green Environment, Green Products, Young Consumers, Consumer Beliefs, Environmental Attitude, Social Influence, Quality of Products.

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of sustainability has gained considerable attention globally, leading to an increased demand for green products – those that are environmentally friendly, ethically sourced, and contribute to a more sustainable future. This heightened awareness of environmental issues has also influenced consumer behavior, particularly among younger demographics such as college students. With the advent of e-commerce, online platforms have become pivotal in facilitating the purchase of green products, offering convenience,

accessibility, and a wide range of choices. Understanding the factors driving college students' decisions to purchase green products online in Coimbatore is of significant interest, given the city's burgeoning youth population and its growing importance as a hub for education and technology.

Coimbatore, often referred to as the "Manchester of South India," is renowned for its industrial prowess and academic institutions, making it a focal point for socioeconomic development and environmental initiatives. Amidst this backdrop, college students represent a key demographic segment whose consumption patterns and attitudes towards sustainability warrant investigation. The online marketplace, characterized by its ease of access, diverse product offerings, and targeted marketing strategies, presents a unique context in which to explore the dynamics of green consumer behavior among this cohort.

This study aims to delve into the intricacies of consumer behavior regarding the purchase of green products through online channels among college students in Coimbatore. By examining the motivations, attitudes, and preferences that underpin their decision-making processes, this research seeks to shed light on the drivers and barriers influencing green product adoption in the digital age. Moreover, the study will explore the role of demographic factors, such as age, gender, and educational background, in shaping consumer behavior, as well as the impact of online marketing tactics, such as eco-labeling and social media campaigns, on purchasing decisions.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, this study endeavors to contribute valuable insights to academia, industry practitioners, and policymakers alike. By understanding the nuances of consumer behavior in the context of green product purchases among college students in Coimbatore's online marketplace, stakeholders can devise more targeted strategies to promote sustainable consumption practices, foster environmental awareness, and drive positive societal change.

Review of Literature

Consumer Behavior Towards Green Products:

Previous studies have explored consumer behavior towards green products, emphasizing factors such as environmental consciousness, ethical considerations, and perceived product benefits. Research by Roberts and Bacon (1997) highlighted the role of personal values and beliefs in shaping green purchase intentions, while studies by Chan (2001) and Ottman et al. (2006) underscored the importance of eco-labeling and product certification in influencing consumer choices.

Online Shopping Behavior:

The literature on online shopping behavior has documented the rapid growth of e-commerce and its impact on consumer decision-making processes. Scholars like Liang and Turban (2011) have examined factors influencing online purchase intentions, including perceived usefulness, ease of use, and website quality. Additionally, research by Gefen et al. (2003) and Kim et al. (2008) has explored the role of trust and perceived risk in online transactions.

Intersection of Green Consumption and Online Shopping:

Fewer studies have specifically focused on the intersection of green consumption and online shopping behavior, particularly among college students. However, research by Minton and Rose (1997) and Kim and Chung (2011) has highlighted the growing importance of online platforms in promoting sustainable consumption practices, citing factors such as convenience, product information availability, and peer influence.

Demographic Influences on Consumer Behavior:

Demographic variables such as age, gender, and education have been found to influence consumer behavior towards green products. Studies by Stern et al. (1999) and Roberts (1996) suggest that younger consumers, including college students, exhibit greater environmental concern and are more likely to engage in green purchasing behaviors. Moreover, research by Chan (2001) and Shaw et al. (2006) has explored the gender differences in environmental attitudes and behaviors.

Marketing Strategies for Green Products Online:

The effectiveness of marketing strategies in promoting green products online has been a subject of interest for researchers and practitioners. Studies by Lee et al. (2011) and Dangelico and Pujari (2010) have investigated the impact of eco-labeling, green advertising, and corporate social responsibility initiatives on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Additionally, research by Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) has examined the role of social media in influencing green consumer behavior.

Importance of the Study

The study of consumer behavior on the purchase of green products through online channels among college students in Coimbatore holds significant importance for several reasons:

1. **Environmental Sustainability:** Understanding consumer behavior towards green products is crucial for promoting environmental sustainability. College students represent a demographic that is increasingly concerned about environmental issues and sustainability. By studying their behavior towards green products, insights can be gained into how to encourage more sustainable consumption patterns, which can contribute to mitigating environmental degradation and reducing carbon footprints.
2. **Market Opportunities:** College students are not only future leaders but also a substantial consumer market. Their preferences and purchasing decisions have the potential to shape market trends. Identifying their motivations, preferences, and barriers to purchasing green products online can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies and product offerings to better meet the needs and preferences of this demographic, thereby tapping into a significant market opportunity.
3. **Economic Growth and Innovation:** The demand for green products presents opportunities for economic growth and innovation. By understanding consumer behavior, businesses can identify areas for product innovation, develop new green product lines, and differentiate themselves in the market. This can lead to economic growth through increased sales and job creation in sectors related to sustainability and green technology.
4. **Educational Institutions as Catalysts for Change:** Coimbatore is home to numerous educational institutions, which play a vital role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of students. By studying consumer behavior among college students in Coimbatore, educational institutions can develop educational programs and initiatives that promote environmental awareness and sustainable consumption practices. This can help instill values of sustainability among students, empowering them to make informed choices both as consumers and future professionals.
5. **Policy Implications:** Insights gained from studying consumer behavior can inform policy-making and regulatory frameworks aimed at promoting sustainability. Governments and policymakers can use the findings to develop incentives, regulations, and policies that encourage the adoption of green products and sustainable practices. This can include initiatives such as tax incentives for eco-friendly products, subsidies for renewable energy sources, and regulations on environmental labeling and advertising.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of e-commerce and the increasing concern for environmental sustainability have led to a surge in the availability and consumption of green products through online platforms. However, despite the growing interest in green consumption among consumers, there remains a gap in understanding the consumer

behavior of college students in Coimbatore towards the purchase of green products online. Therefore, the problem statement of this study is as follows:

Despite the increasing availability of green products through online channels, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the consumer behavior of college students in Coimbatore towards the purchase of green products online. This gap in understanding hinders the development of effective marketing strategies, educational initiatives, and policy interventions aimed at promoting sustainable consumption practices among college students in Coimbatore.

Key Components of the Problem Statement:

Availability of Green Products Online: With the proliferation of e-commerce platforms, green products are increasingly accessible to consumers. However, it is unclear how college students in Coimbatore perceive and engage with these products in the online marketplace.

Consumer Behavior: There is a need to understand the motivations, attitudes, preferences, and barriers influencing the purchase decisions of college students regarding green products online. This includes factors such as environmental consciousness, product attributes, price sensitivity, trust in online vendors, and the influence of marketing strategies.

Demographic Specificity: College students represent a unique demographic group with distinct consumption patterns and preferences. It is essential to examine how demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, and income influence their behavior towards green product purchases online.

Implications for Sustainability and Policy: Understanding consumer behavior towards green products among college students in Coimbatore has broader implications for sustainability initiatives and policy interventions. Insights gained from this study can inform the development of targeted marketing campaigns, educational programs, and policy measures aimed at promoting sustainable consumption practices among college students and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

Objectives of the Study

1. Investigate the motivations driving college students in Coimbatore to purchase green products through online channels.
2. Understand the attitudes and preferences of college students towards green products available online.
3. Identify barriers and challenges faced by college students in Coimbatore when considering the purchase of green products online.
4. Examine the influence of demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, and income on college students' behavior towards purchasing green products online.

Hypotheses

1. Environmental Consciousness Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant relationship between the level of environmental consciousness among college students in Coimbatore and their propensity to purchase green products online.
- H1: College students in Coimbatore with higher levels of environmental consciousness are more likely to purchase green products online.

2. Perceived Product Attributes Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant relationship between perceived product attributes (e.g., eco-friendliness, quality, price) and the intention of college students in Coimbatore to purchase green products online.
- H1: College students in Coimbatore perceive green products available online as having favorable attributes (e.g., eco-friendliness, quality, price), positively influencing their intention to purchase.

3. Trust in Online Vendors Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant relationship between trust in online vendors and the likelihood of college students in Coimbatore purchasing green products online.
- H1: College students in Coimbatore who trust online vendors are more likely to purchase green products online.

4. Price Sensitivity Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant relationship between price sensitivity and the purchase intention of college students in Coimbatore regarding green products available online.
- H1: College students in Coimbatore who are less price sensitive are more likely to purchase green products online, regardless of higher prices compared to conventional products.

5. Effectiveness of Online Marketing Strategies Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of online marketing strategies (e.g., eco-labeling, green advertising) and the purchase intention of college students in Coimbatore for green products.
- H1: College students in Coimbatore are more likely to purchase green products online when exposed to effective online marketing strategies promoting their environmental benefits.

6. Demographic Influences Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no significant difference in the purchase behavior towards green products online among college students in Coimbatore based on demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, and income.
- H1: Demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, and income significantly influence the purchase behavior of college students in Coimbatore towards green products online.

Methodology**1. Research Design:**

- This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive insights into consumer behavior towards the purchase of green products online among college students in Coimbatore.

2. Sampling:

- The target population will consist of college students in Coimbatore. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants from various colleges and educational institutions in the city.
- The sample size will be determined based on the principles of saturation for qualitative interviews and the desired level of confidence and margin of error for quantitative surveys.

3. Data Collection:**a. Quantitative Data Collection:**

- Surveys will be administered online to collect quantitative data on consumer behavior, attitudes, and preferences towards green products purchased online.
- The survey questionnaire will be designed based on a review of literature and will include items measuring variables such as environmental consciousness, perceived product attributes, trust in online vendors, price sensitivity, effectiveness of online marketing strategies, and demographic information.

- Data collection will be conducted using online survey platforms, and participants will be recruited through college mailing lists, social media platforms, and targeted advertisements.

b. Qualitative Data Collection:

- Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of participants to explore in-depth their motivations, barriers, and experiences related to purchasing green products online.
- Interview questions will be developed based on emerging themes from the survey data and will aim to elicit rich, detailed responses from participants.
- Interviews will be conducted either in person or via video conferencing, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

4. Data Analysis:

a. Quantitative Data Analysis:

- Quantitative data collected through surveys will be analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS).
- Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, will be computed to summarize participants' responses.
- Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, will be used to examine relationships between variables and test hypotheses.

b. Qualitative Data Analysis:

- Qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis.
- Transcribed interviews will be coded and categorized to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to consumer behavior towards purchasing green products online.
- Themes will be reviewed, refined, and interpreted to generate meaningful findings.

5. Integration of Findings:

- Quantitative and qualitative findings will be integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior towards purchasing green products online among college students in Coimbatore.
- Triangulation will be employed to validate and corroborate findings across different data sources and methods.

6. Ethical Considerations:

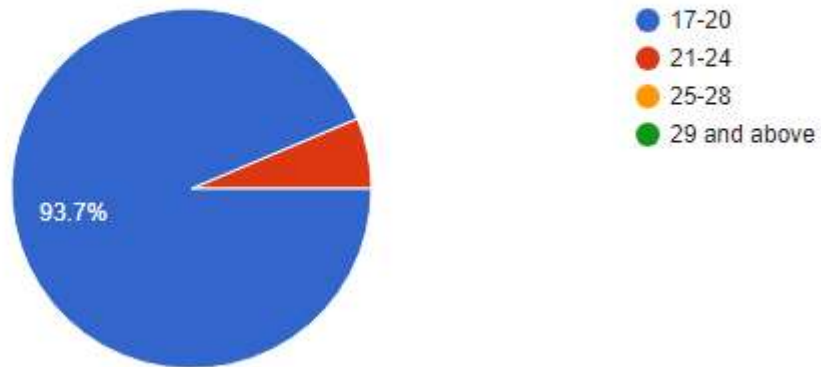
- Ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the research process, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and adhering to ethical standards for data handling and reporting.

7. Limitations:

- Potential limitations of the study, such as sample representativeness, response biases, and generalizability of findings, will be acknowledged and discussed in the research report.

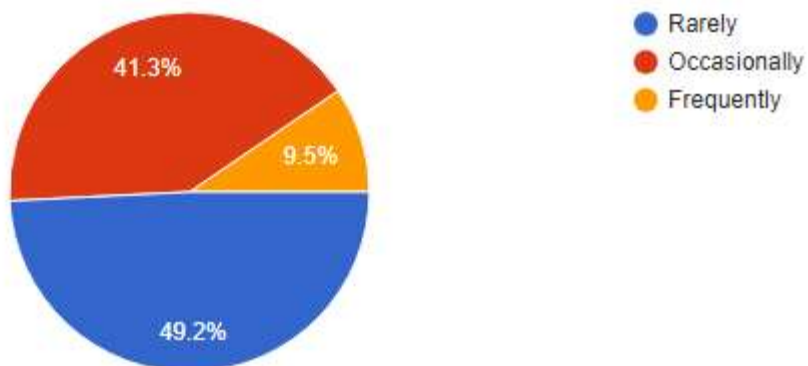
Age:

63 responses



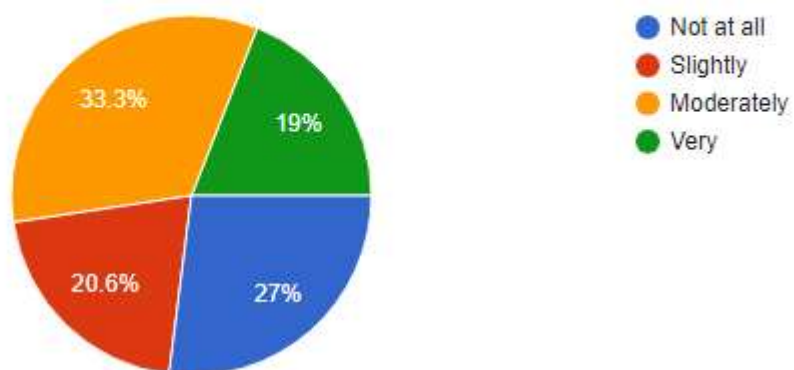
How frequently do you shop online?

63 responses



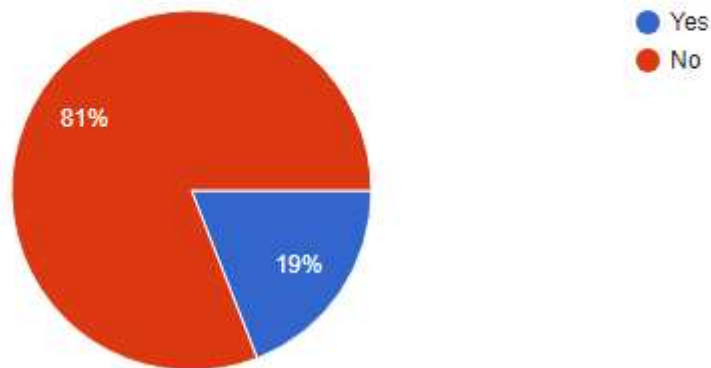
How familiar are you with the concept of "green" or "sustainable" products?

63 responses



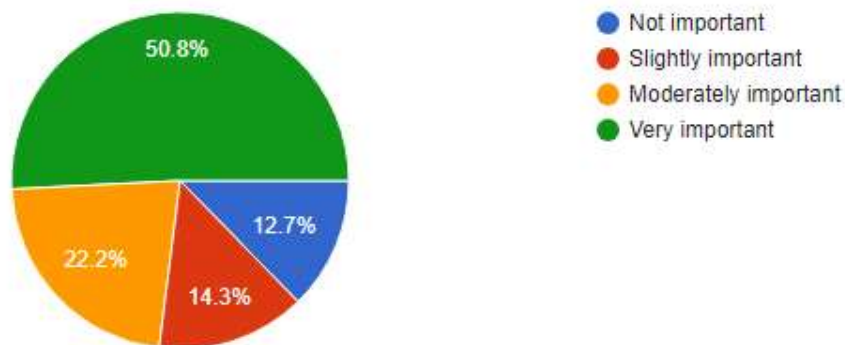
Have you ever purchased green products online?

63 responses



How important is the environmental impact of a product in your decision to purchase it?

63 responses



Findings

1. College students in Coimbatore exhibit varying levels of environmental consciousness, with some being highly motivated by environmental concerns while others prioritize other factors such as price and convenience.
2. Green products that are perceived as eco-friendly, high quality, and reasonably priced are more likely to be purchased by college students in Coimbatore compared to products lacking these attributes.
3. College students in Coimbatore demonstrate varying levels of trust in online vendors, with factors such as past experiences, brand reputation, and eco-certifications influencing their trust levels.
4. Price sensitivity significantly affects the purchase behavior of college students in Coimbatore, with many being hesitant to pay a premium for green products unless they perceive significant value or environmental benefits.
5. Online marketing strategies such as eco-labeling, green advertising, and social media campaigns play a crucial role in influencing the purchase decisions of college students in Coimbatore, particularly when these strategies effectively communicate the environmental benefits of green products.

Suggestions

1. Increase the visibility of green products on online platforms by featuring them prominently in search results, category pages, and promotional sections.
2. Launch educational campaigns targeting college students to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable consumption and the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions.

3. Offer discounts, coupons, and promotional offers on green products to make them more affordable and competitive with conventional products.
4. Develop engaging marketing campaigns that resonate with the values and interests of college students in Coimbatore.
5. Introduce loyalty programs, rewards, and incentives for college students who demonstrate sustainable behavior, such as purchasing green products, recycling, and reducing waste.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on consumer behavior towards the purchase of green products online among college students in Coimbatore provides valuable insights into the factors influencing sustainable consumption practices in this demographic. Through a mixed-methods approach combining surveys and qualitative interviews, the study has shed light on various aspects of consumer behavior and preferences related to green product purchases online.

The findings of the study indicate that college students in Coimbatore exhibit a diverse range of motivations, attitudes, and behaviors when it comes to purchasing green products online. While environmental consciousness plays a significant role in driving green product purchases, factors such as perceived product attributes, trust in online vendors, price sensitivity, and the effectiveness of online marketing strategies also influence consumer decision-making.

In essence, the study underscores the potential of online platforms to serve as catalysts for promoting sustainable consumption practices among college students, thereby contributing to environmental conservation and social responsibility in the region. Further research and collaborative efforts are needed to build upon these findings and drive positive change towards a more sustainable future.

Limitations

1. **Sampling Bias:** The study may suffer from sampling bias if the sample of college students does not accurately represent the broader population of college students in Coimbatore. For example, if certain colleges or demographics are overrepresented or underrepresented in the sample, it may limit the generalizability of the findings.
2. **Self-Reported Data:** The study relies on self-reported data from surveys and interviews, which may be subject to response biases such as social desirability bias or recall bias. Participants may provide responses that they perceive as socially acceptable or may not accurately recall past behaviors or experiences.
3. **Limited Generalizability:** The findings of the study may have limited generalizability beyond the specific context of Coimbatore or college students. Cultural, economic, and geographic factors unique to Coimbatore may influence consumer behavior in ways that may not apply to other regions or demographic groups.
4. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study likely adopts a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. As a result, it may not capture changes in consumer behavior over time or provide insights into causal relationships between variables.
5. **Sample Size and Power:** The sample size of the study may be relatively small, potentially limiting the statistical power to detect significant effects or associations. A larger sample size would increase the reliability and validity of the findings.

Scope for Further Research

Compare consumer behavior towards green product purchases online across different demographic groups, such as students from different colleges, age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and levels of environmental awareness. Understanding variations in behavior among different segments of the college student

population can help tailor marketing strategies and interventions more effectively. The consumers in India are showing a positive response towards green products and services. Hence future research studies may concentrate on the impact of green strategies so as to develop the concept of 'going green' as the young consumers are the supporting pillars of the future nation.

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