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A Study of Factors Influencing Green Purchase Intention among Gen Z in Urban India

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Abstract

Objective: This study applies the "Theory of Planned Behavior" (TPB) to analyze the factors influencing environmentally conscious purchasing decisions among educated Generation Z consumers in India. To enhance the explanatory power of the TPB, two additional constructs—green self-identity (GSI) and sacrificial willingness (SW)—are incorporated into the model, providing a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable consumption behavior.

Methodology: Data were collected from university students enrolled at three major central universities in India, selected for their representation of the target demographic. The proposed framework was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM), with bootstrapping analysis performed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships.

Key Findings: The results largely support the TPB framework, though the direct relationship between subjective norm (SN) and purchase intention (PI) was not statistically significant. Green self-identity (GSI) indirectly influenced green purchase intention, mediated through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC). Additionally, sacrificial willingness (SW) moderated the link between purchase intention and actual green purchasing behavior, reinforcing the role of personal commitment in sustainable consumption. Purchase intention itself emerged as a strong predictor of green buying behavior.

Theoretical Contributions: By integrating GSI and SW into the TPB, this study extends existing research on sustainable consumption, particularly within the understudied context of educated Indian Gen Z consumers. The findings highlight the importance of self-identity and willingness to make trade-offs in shaping eco-friendly purchasing decisions.

Practical Implications: For marketers and policymakers, the study suggests that campaigns targeting this demographic should emphasize identity congruence (aligning products with consumers' environmental self-concept) and address potential barriers related to cost or convenience. Educational initiatives could further strengthen the intention-behavior link by fostering a stronger sense of personal responsibility.

Ethical Considerations: The study adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring participant anonymity and informed consent.

Originality: The study confirms the relevance of TPB in the Indian green consumer context and adds new psychological factors, improving understanding of how purchase intentions translate into behaviour in this culture.

Keywords: "Theory of planned behaviour", "Green purchase intention", Green self-identity, Sacrificial Willingness, Green buying behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Increasing awareness of individual responsibility towards environmental preservation has led to a notable rise in green consumerism worldwide. Consumers are progressively adopting eco-friendly products as a means to reduce their ecological footprint. This shift towards sustainable consumption not only benefits personal health but also contributes significantly to the broader objective of environmental sustainability (Leonidou et al., 2013). In response, multinational manufacturing corporations are increasingly integrating green marketing practices and developing environmentally sustainable products to align with evolving consumer expectations. Green products are characterized by their environmentally friendly attributes, which include minimizing adverse ecological impacts and promoting the conservation of natural resources through recycling and preservation efforts (Kim et al., 2013; Shamdasani et al., 1993).

Environmental movement gained momentum in Western countries during the 1960s and 1970s, leading to extensive research on green consumer behaviour predominantly in these industrialized regions. However, in recent years, the concept of green consumerism is gradually permeating developing economies, propelled by the detrimental environmental and health effects associated with rapid industrial growth. Given that social, cultural, and economic factors profoundly influence consumer attitudes and behaviour towards green products in emerging markets, it becomes imperative to investigate these dynamics within such contexts. This study focuses specifically on the green purchase intentions and behaviours exhibited by educated young consumers belonging to Generation Z in India.

The Indian context holds particular significance for this inquiry due to the nation's rapidly expanding economy coupled with one of the world's largest populations, factors which have collectively accelerated industrialisation and contributed to notable environmental degradation. India consistently ranks among the most polluted countries globally; as of 2024, the average concentration of PM 2.5 particles stands at 50.6 $\mu g/m^3$, vastly exceeding the World Health Organization's safe threshold of 5 $\mu g/m^3$. The consequences of pollution are severe, with an estimated 1.2 million deaths annually and a resultant economic loss of approximately 3% of the country's GDP. Nonetheless, there remains a paucity of research exploring their intentions and behaviours in relation to environmentally friendly products and services.

Building upon Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study examines the determinants of eco-friendly purchasing patterns among India's educated Generation Z consumers (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). The research specifically investigates how this digitally-native demographic translates environmental concerns into actual buying decisions (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). This cohort differs markedly from the general population with respect to environmental knowledge (Sheahan, 2005), their pronounced preference for sustainable goods (Smith, 2010), and their heightened readiness to purchase eco-friendly products (Rogers, 2013). According to Morgan Stanley (2017), Generation Z

individuals possess relatively higher educational attainment and greater access to information. In India, this demographic can be defined as those born between 1997 and 2012, number approximately 372 million, accounting for over one-third of the working-age population in 2024.

This study undertakes a critical evaluation of the Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in the specific reference of Indian Generation Z consumers by analysing its three principal determinants of "purchase intention" (PI): individual attitudes towards green products, the influence of subjective norms (SN) on buying behaviour, and perceived behavioural control (PBC) of buying things. To deepen the explanatory scope of the TPB model, the research integrates two supplementary variables green self-identity (GSI) and sacrificial willingness (SW) with the objective of offering a more comprehensive account of the psychological and social drivers that shape environmentally conscious purchasing behaviours. By situating this analysis within a culturally and demographically distinct population, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the existing body of knowledge, thereby reaffirming the relevance and adaptability of the TPB framework in diverse socio-economic and generational settings.

Furthermore, this investigation explores the complex interplay between predictor variables and behavioural outcomes, highlighting the socio-psychological mechanisms that underpin these relationships. A novel aspect of the study involves the introduction of sacrificial willingness as a moderating variable, which sheds light on its role in influencing the linkage between purchase intention and actual green buying behavior a facet seldom examined in prior research. By identifying the key determinants of green consumer behaviour among educated Indian Generation Z individuals, the findings offer valuable insights for marketers aiming to design tailored strategies that effectively engage this emerging and influential market segment.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

A substantial body of empirical research has validated the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a robust framework for explaining environmentally responsible consumer behaviour across diverse contexts. Chan and Lau (2002) demonstrated the cross-cultural applicability of TPB in the U.S. and China, where subjective norms and perceived behavioural control significantly influenced green purchasing. Liobikienė, Mandravickaitė, and Bernatonienė (2016) confirmed similar results in the European Union, with attitudes and perceived control emerging as dominant predictors. Yadav and Pathak (2017) found TPB highly effective in predicting green purchase intentions among Indian consumers, particularly emphasizing the role of perceived behavioural control. Likewise, Paul, Modi, and Patel (2016) extended TPB by incorporating environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness, which significantly enhanced its explanatory power. Kumar, Manrai, and Manrai (2017) further advocated the model's utility by proposing a culturally sensitive TPB-based framework for sustainable product consumption. Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) highlighted the importance of moral obligations and ethical self-identity

alongside traditional TPB variables in shaping sustainable food choices. Joshi and Rahman (2015), through a meta-analysis, supported the reliability of TPB constructs in explaining green purchase behaviour while recommending the inclusion of situational and demographic factors for improved prediction. Meanwhile, Bamberg and Möser (2007) emphasized the strength of perceived behavioural control and moral norms in explaining pro-environmental behavioural intentions across meta-analytic studies. More recently, Nguyen et al. (2019) and Arli et al. (2021) integrated green trust and eco-branding into the TPB framework, confirming their significant moderating effects on eco-friendly purchase decisions. Collectively, these empirical findings reaffirm TPB's foundational role in green marketing literature and underscore its adaptability in capturing the psychological drivers of sustainable consumption behaviour.

Attitude

Ajzen (1991) conceptualises attitude as an individual's general appraisal favourable or unfavourable regarding the execution of a specific behaviour. A broad range of empirical investigations conducted in diverse national contexts consistently highlights a significant positive association between pro-environmental attitudes and both green purchase intentions (PI) and actual green purchase behaviour (PB). This link has been substantiated in various domains, such as the consumption of organic food products (Zhou et al., 2013), the selection of environmentally responsible hotels (Han and Yoon, 2015), and the purchase of sustainable beverages (Birgelen et al., 2009). Within the Indian setting, similar patterns have emerged, indicating that supportive attitudes towards environmentally friendly products are closely tied to green consumer actions. For example, Khare (2015) identified a strong positive association between favourable pre-existing attitudes and actual environmentally responsible purchasing practices among urban Indian buyers. Correspondingly, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) observed that consumers' outlooks towards sustainability initiatives within the hospitality sector significantly impacted their preference for hotels implementing green practices. Further supporting this trend, Prakash and Pathak (2017) found that positive perceptions of eco-friendly packaging were significantly linked with consumers' green purchase intentions. Consistent evidence has also been reported by Paul et al. (2016) and Yadav and Pathak (2017), who affirmed the predictive role of green attitudes in shaping environmentally conscious purchase intentions. Nevertheless, not all findings align; for instance, Ramayah et al. (2010) reported an absence of a statistically significant link between environmental attitudes and green purchase intentions, indicating that certain inconsistencies still persist within the literature.

Subjective Norms

According to Ajzen's (1991) framework, "subjective norms" represent an individual's internalized perception of social approval or disapproval concerning the execution of a particular behaviour. Within the domain of environmentally sustainable consumption, numerous empirical investigations have affirmed the significance of normative pressures arising from close social networks, such as family, peers, and professional associates, in influencing behavioural intentions. Several studies have demonstrated that individuals tend to align their consumption patterns

with what is perceived as socially endorsed. For example, research by Dean et al. (2012) and Tang et al. (2014) found that favourable normative cues from one's social environment significantly increase the propensity to consider environmentally friendly products. This influence appears particularly salient in collectivist cultures, where group expectations often shape personal decision-making processes. Consistent with this, evidence from the Indian consumer market reveals that subjective norms are often positively associated with green purchase intentions (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). However, this influence is not universally observed across all demographic segments or geographic regions. Studies by Khare (2015) and Paul et al. (2016), for instance, found that the role of normative pressure was either weak or statistically insignificant in predicting environmentally oriented purchasing intentions. These inconsistencies in findings suggest that the predictive power of subjective norms may vary considerably based on contextual moderators such as cultural orientation, environmental consciousness, or even product category. Therefore, while social influence remains a critical determinant under TPB, its effect on sustainable consumer behaviour warrants further investigation under diverse sociocultural and market-specific conditions.

Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived behavioural control (PBC), as articulated in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, p. 183), denotes an individual's evaluation of the perceived ease or difficulty associated with performing a specific action. Within the sphere of pro-environmental consumer behaviour, this construct is widely acknowledged as a central predictor of both the intention to act and the eventual execution of environmentally conscious practices (Ajzen, 2002). Empirical studies across multiple domains have consistently validated the predictive strength of PBC in explaining sustainable consumer choices. For instance, evidence suggests that the belief in one's ability to perform green actions—such as choosing eco-labeled products or adopting low-impact lifestyles—significantly enhances behavioural outcomes (Thøgersen, 2007; Paul et al., 2016). Similarly, in the service sector, consumers with a heightened sense of control are more likely to select environmentally responsible alternatives, such as sustainable lodging or transport services (Teng et al., 2014).

In the Indian context, the influence of PBC has been particularly noteworthy. Investigations by Yadav and Pathak (2017) affirm that perceived self-efficacy in acquiring green products contributes directly to both favourable attitudes and actionable intentions. These findings are especially relevant in developing economies where structural barriers—such as limited availability, price sensitivity, or lack of infrastructure—may hinder green purchasing behaviours (Paul et al., 2016). Consequently, PBC not only serves as a facilitator of environmentally sustainable consumption but also acts as a buffer against external constraints that might otherwise obstruct such behaviours. The accumulated evidence underscores the necessity of reinforcing consumers' confidence and access to sustainable choices in order to actualize pro-environmental intentions into tangible behaviour.

Purchase Intention and Purchase behavior (PI & PB)

Behavioural intention represents an individual's readiness and commitment to perform a specific action, encompassing the motivation and effort one is willing to invest. Within the framework of planned behaviour models, intentions serve as the immediate antecedents of voluntary actions, reflecting conscious decisions to engage in particular behaviours (Ajzen, 1991, 2002; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This concept has been extensively validated in studies focusing on environmentally responsible consumption, where a strong intention reliably predicts actual engagement in green practices such as purchasing eco-friendly products or adopting sustainable lifestyles (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Kumar et al., 2017). Evidence from emerging economies reinforces this pattern, indicating that consumers who express stronger pro-environmental intentions tend to follow through with sustainable purchasing behaviours, though the strength of this relationship may vary based on contextual factors like accessibility and affordability (Paul et al., 2016; Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Papista et al., 2018). Overall, intention functions as a critical mediator linking attitudes and social influences to actual behaviour, underscoring its central role in the adoption of sustainable consumption practices.

Drawing upon the foundational principles of the TPB and the aforementioned scholarly insights, the following hypotheses are proposed for further examination:

H1. Attitude of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI

H2. SN of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI

H3. PBC of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI

H4. PBC associated with Gen Z consumers relates positively to green PB

H5. Green PI associated with Gen Z consumers relates positively to green PB

Green Self Identity (GSI)

Green self-identity (GSI) is an individual's self-concept as an environmentally concerned person, which has a strong impact on pro-environmental intentions (PI) and behaviours (PB) within the TPB framework (van der Werff et al., 2013). When people strongly identify as "green consumers," they have more favourable attitudes towards sustainable behaviours, sense stronger social expectations (subjective norms), and have more confidence in their ability to act (perceived behavioural control) (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010).

GSI enhances the relationship between intentions and behaviours by providing a consistent self-narrative that justifies actions like as recycling or paying a higher price for environmentally friendly products (Barbarossa & De Pelsmacker, 2016). Empirical investigations reveal that GSI predicts PB even when standard TPB components (for example, attitudes) are weak, emphasising its importance as a motivational anchor (Murtagh et al., 2012). Policymakers and marketers may use GSI to position sustainability as an identity-aligned choice rather than a sacrifice.

Therefore, based on above discussion following hypothesize developed:

H6. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will hold more positive attitudes toward sustainable products

H7. Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will perceive stronger subjective norms (SN) regarding sustainable consumption

H8. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will report higher levels of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

H9. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will demonstrate higher Green Purchase Intention (GPI)

Sacrificial Willingness (SW)

Thøgersen (2011) defines sacrificial willingness as accepting personal sacrifices, such as paying more or giving up convenience, for environmental reasons. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this concept helps explain why some people are more likely to take eco-friendly behaviours, even if they are difficult or expensive. For example, someone with high sacrifice willingness may purchase pricey organic food because they believe it is beneficial for the environment, even if it means stretching their budget (Bamberg & Möser, 2007).

This approach promotes their commitment to sustainability, increases their responsiveness to societal standards (subjective norms), and boosts their confidence in overcoming obstacles (perceived control) (Klöckner, 2013). According to studies, people who accept sacrifices are more likely to engage in green behaviours such as recycling or taking public transportation (Steg et al., 2014). However, income and cultural values influence people's willingness to sacrifice (Sovacool, 2011; Chan & Lau, 2000). Understanding this concept might assist governments and businesses in promoting sustainable choices by presenting them as significant trade-offs rather than simply expenses.

Hence, based on above discussion the following hypothesis is developed:

H10. Sacrificial willingness moderates the relationship between green purchase intention and the actual execution of green purchase behaviour.

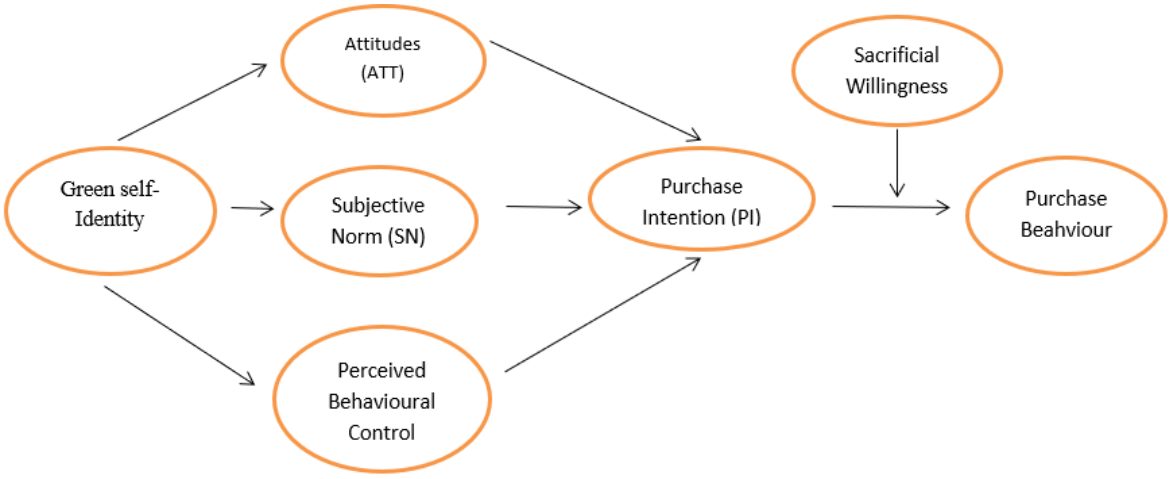

Figure 1: The hypothesized conceptual model

Research methodology

Participants and procedure

To represent India's Generation Z consumer segment, this study employed a judgmental sampling technique, targeting

university students from diverse academic disciplines across several central universities. Data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed through institutional group email systems in January 2025, with a follow-up reminder sent two weeks later to improve response rates. From an estimated population of approximately 1,200 students, 235 completed surveys were initially received, resulting in a preliminary response rate of 19.5%. After excluding incomplete responses and statistical outliers, 201 valid questionnaires remained for final analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 18.4%. The sample exhibited a notable gender imbalance, with males comprising 89% and females 11%. Age was categorized into four groups: 14–20 years (69%), 21–25 years, 26–30 years (26%), and those above 30 years, with the majority falling between 15 and 25 years. Educational qualifications were coded as undergraduate engineering degrees (BTech, 45%), postgraduate science and technology programs (MTech/MSc, 21%), and doctoral studies (PhD, 34%). Gender was coded dichotomously (0 = female, 1 = male), while age and education were coded as ordinal variables consistent with these categories. These demographic factors were statistically controlled to reduce potential confounding and to ensure the robustness of the study's findings.

Measures

Green Self-Identity (GSI) was measured by using a five-item scale initially proposed by Kilbourne and Pickett (2008), which has since been validated in sustainability-focused consumer research, including by Paul et al. (2016). To evaluate participants' Attitudes toward green products, a three-item scale adapted from Paul et al. (2016) was utilized, reflecting consumers' affective and cognitive evaluations of eco-friendly product choices. Subjective Norms (SN), which capture the perceived social expectations from referent individuals regarding green purchasing, were assessed through a four-item measurement scale adopted from the work of Chan and Lau (2002), widely used in pro-environmental behavioural studies.

Perceived behavioural control (PBC), which reflects an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform environmentally conscious purchasing, was assessed using a seven-item scale adapted from established literature (Paul et al., 2016). This scale captures both internal capacities and external constraints that influence control beliefs. Purchase intention (PI), defined as the motivational readiness to undertake green purchasing, was measured through a five-item instrument sourced from the same foundational research to maintain theoretical consistency within the behavioural framework.

Sacrificial willingness (SW), indicating an individual's preparedness to endure personal costs or inconveniences for environmental benefits, was operationalized using a three-item scale derived from prior studies focusing on altruistic and moral drivers of sustainable consumer behaviour (Jang et al., 2011; Kang et al., 2012). This measure effectively reflects the ethical commitment underlying eco-conscious consumption decisions. Finally, purchase behaviour (PB), capturing the actual execution of green buying actions, was evaluated through a three-item scale adapted from

prior empirical studies in the domain of green marketing (Wan et al., 2012), offering a valid behavioural outcome metric.

All constructs utilized a standardized five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") to ensure uniformity in response interpretation and enable comparative analysis across variables. Comprehensive details of the scale items and their internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) are provided in Table III. These measurement instruments have been widely validated within sustainability and consumer behaviour research, reinforcing their suitability for the current investigation (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Kumar et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

The dataset was subjected to analysis using SPSS version 29 and Smart PLS 4. According to the recommendations of Iacobucci (2010), a minimum sample size of 150 participants is required to achieve convergence and valid parameter estimates, especially when each factor contains three or more indicators. Various heuristic guidelines for sample adequacy support the sufficiency of the current sample size for conducting Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to assess both the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs under investigation. The fit of the hypothesized model was evaluated through SEM using conventional fit indices to verify its adequacy.

Measurement Model

The measurement model, comprising seven latent factors, was initially assessed using CFA. The results indicated that the original seven-factor model did not exhibit an acceptable fit with the empirical data, as presented in Table II. Specifically, factor loadings for the items GSI3, PBC5, PBC6, and PBC7 were below the threshold of 0.50, warranting their removal from further analyses. Subsequent CFA conducted after excluding these low-loading items demonstrated a substantial improvement in model fit. The revised model exhibited robust factor loadings significant at the 0.001 level, thereby confirming convergent validity in line with the criteria outlined by Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

Table I Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Matrix of Key Constructs

S.No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	GSI	4.3787	0.62104	1						
2	ATT	4.2313	0.77383	0.649	1					
3	SN	3.6622	0.87169	0.395	0.476	1				

4	PBC	3.9563	0.79783	0.578	0.673	0.751	1			
5	SW	3.8236	0.87529	0.505	0.634	0.619	0.542	1	1	
6	PI	4.0689	0.75667	0.617	0.793	0.662	0.672	0.811	1	
7	PB	3.3575	1.03045	0.342	0.385	0.583	0.301	0.553	0.539	1

The internal consistency of the measurement instruments employed in this study was validated through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, all of which exceeded the conventional cutoff value of 0.70, as presented in Table III. This result confirms the reliability of the constructs examined. Additionally, the one-factor model—predicated on the assumption of a single latent variable—was evaluated but did not provide an adequate fit to the data, as reported in Table II. This outcome reinforces the conceptualization of the constructs as multidimensional entities. Following Hair et al.'s (2010) guidelines, composite reliability (CR) indices for all constructs were found to be higher than their corresponding average variance extracted (AVE) values, further substantiating the convergent validity of the measures, with detailed statistics also included in Table III.

In addition, the criteria for discriminant validity were satisfied evident from Table III . This pattern confirms that the constructs are distinct and measure different conceptual phenomena, thus validating the hypothesized measurement model's factorial structure. Importantly, multicollinearity diagnostics revealed variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranging from 0.645 to 0.785, all substantially below the conservative cut-off point of 5, indicating multicollinearity is not a issue within the proposed model.

Collectively, these results affirm that the "measurement model" possesses both convergent and discriminant validity and demonstrates reliable internal consistency, ensuring the robustness of subsequent structural analyses.

Table II. Confirmatory factor analysis

Model	χ^2	χ^2 /df	GFI	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Seven-factor model	920.7	2.414	0.759	0.887	0.888	0.879	0.085
Seven-factor model (modified	525.55	1.908	0.830	0.942	0.940	0.939	0.067
One-factor model	1,348.39	4.42	0.609	0.742	0.756	0.719	0.136

Table III. Reliability and Validity Statistics of Measurement Scales

Construct	Indicators	AVE	MSV	ASV	CR/α	"Factor loadings"
Green Self Identity (GPA)	GSI1 GSI2 GSI3 GSI4	0.68	0.63	0.43	0.85/0.77	0.818 0.862 0.801 0.839
Attitude	ATT1 ATT ATT	0.72	0.63	0.46	0.93/0.90	0.864 0.912 0.953
Subjective norms	SN1 SN2 SN3 SN4	0.65	0.44	0.32	0.87/0.85	0.803 0.864 0.806 0.721
Perceived behavioral control	PBC1 PBC2 PBC3 PBC4	0.67	0.64	0.51	0.89/0.85	0.851 0.881 0.856 0.799
Sacrificial Willingness (SW)	SW1 SW2 SW3	0.72	0.64	0.43	0.89/0.89	0.853 0.883 0.833
Purchase intention	PI1 PI2 PI3 PI4 PI5	0.70	0.62	0.53	0.96/0.92	0.838 0.881 0.834 0.871 0.839
Purchase behavior	PB1 PB2 PB3	0.79	0.44	0.28	0.90/0.91	0.825 0.923 0.911

Structural model: model fit and hypotheses testing

After establishing measurement reliability and validity, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to assess the theoretical framework. Latent constructs were represented by the mean scores of

their observed indicators. The SEM results demonstrated a strong fit between the proposed model and the data. Key fit indices—Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI)—exceeded the 0.93 threshold, while the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) remained below 0.08, indicating acceptable model fit (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 2010). These results confirm the model's suitability for explaining the relationships among constructs.

The structural model accounted for a substantial portion of variance in the outcome variables, explaining 93.8% of the variance in Purchase Intention (PI) and 43.1% in Purchase Behavior (PB), respectively. Standardized path coefficients presented in Table V illustrate the direct associations between the constructs. Green Self-Identity (GSI) was found to significantly influence Attitude, Subjective Norms (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) in the context of green purchasing. Nonetheless, the direct effects of GSI and SN on PI were relatively modest. Importantly, SN exerted a notable effect on both Attitude and PBC, implying its function as an enabling mediator within the model. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) emerged as a potent predictor of both PI and PB, reaffirming its critical position within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Furthermore, PI demonstrated a strong, statistically significant effect on PB, with confidence established at the 95% level.

To examine the moderating influence of Sacrificial Willingness (SW), a moderation analysis was performed employing the standardized interaction approach. Predictors in the model included PI, SW, and their interaction term (PI × SW), targeting PB as the dependent variable. The interaction coefficient ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.10$) reached statistical significance at the 90% confidence level, supporting the hypothesized moderation effect. This model accounted for 27.1% of the variance in PB, as analyzed via SmartPLS 4. The findings indicate that the strength of the relationship between PI and PB is amplified among individuals exhibiting higher levels of sacrificial willingness toward eco-friendly products compared to those with moderate or lower levels.

Table IV. SEM model fit indices

Model fit indices	Structural model
$\chi 2$	442.23
χ 2 /df	2.034
GFI	0.833
CFI	0.937
IFI	0.933
TLI	0.929
RMSEA	0.073
R2 (PI)	0.936
R2 (PB)	0.435

Table V. Path relationships

Paths	β coefficient	t-value	p-value	Relationship
GSI-ATT	0.74	6.964	0.001	Supported
GSI-SN	0.50	5.231	0.001	Supported
GSI-PBC	0.43	6.01	0.001	Supported
GSI-PI	0.06	0.438	0.618	Not supported
SN-ATT	0.16	2.262	0.022	Supported
SN-PBC	0.64	8.824	0.001	Not Supported
SN-PI	−0.07	−0.497	0.551	Supported
PBC-PI	0.69	3.953	0.001	Supported
PBC-PB	0.93	4.63	0.001	Supported
PI-PB	0.31	2.021	0.035	Supported
PI × SW-PB	0.13	1.894	0.062	Supported
SW-PB	0.202	2.013	0.037	Supported

Table VI. Indirect effects

Paths	Indirect effect	Bootstrap BC 95% CI	
		Lower	Upper

GSI-PBC	0.322	0.235	0.435
GSI-ATT	0.083	−0.013	0.187
GSI-PI	0.775	0.527	1.215
GSI-PB	0.442	0.301	0.564
SN-PI	0.503	0.219	1.062
SN-PB	0.464	0.279	0.699
PBC-PB	−0.218	−2.22	0.141
ATT-PB	−0.11	−0.381	0.087

Table VII. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1. Attitude of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI.	Supported
H2. SN of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI	Not Supported
H3. PBC of Gen Z consumers is positively associated with green PI	Supported
H4. PBC associated with Gen Z consumers relates positively to green PB.	Supported
H5. Green PI associated with Gen Z consumers relates positively to green PB.	Supported
H6. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will hold more positive attitudes toward sustainable products	Supported
H7. Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will perceive stronger subjective norms (SN) regarding sustainable consumption	Supported
H8. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will report higher levels of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	Supported
H9. Gen Z consumers with stronger Green Self-Identity (GSI) will demonstrate higher Green Purchase Intention (GPI)	Not Supported
H10. Sacrificial Willingness moderates the relation between green PI and green PB	Supported

Discussion and theoretical implications

This study sought to rigorously evaluate the applicability and explanatory power of the Planned Behavior theory in delineating green "purchase intentions" and actual buying behaviors (PBs) within the Generation Z demographic in India, specifically focusing on a young, educated cohort. Building on prior research examining Indian consumers' environmentally conscious attitudes

through the TPB lens (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Khare, 2015; Prakash & Yadav, 2017), the current study provides empirical validation that broadly supports the applicability of TPB within this demographic. Nonetheless, an exception was observed: the anticipated direct linkage between subjective norms (SN) and green purchase intention was not substantiated. This suggests that, contrary to theoretical expectations, social influences from close referents such as family and peers exert a limited direct impact on the formation of green purchase intentions in this segment.

It diverges from other Indian studies that reported a strong, positive association between SN and GPI (Yadav & Pathak, 2017), highlighting possible differences due to contextual factors, sample characteristics, or product domains. Crucially, results indicate that while SN may not exert a direct influence on intention, it significantly shapes attitudes and perceived behavioral control, thereby indirectly affecting both intention and subsequent behavior through mediating processes.

In alignment with the core principles of TPB, the findings confirm that green purchase intention remains a robust and significant determinant of actual green purchasing behavior. This research elucidates the intricate interplay between Green Self-Identity (GSI), ATT towards green products, SN, and PBC, demonstrating their combined influence on behavioral outcomes mediated by purchase intention. These insights underscore the complex motivational framework underpinning sustainable consumer conduct and reinforce the enduring utility of TPB in explaining environmentally responsible consumption among India's Generation Z cohort.

A notable advancement presented in this study is the expansion of the traditional TPB model through the integration of supplementary constructs specifically, Green Self-Identity (GSI) and Sacrificial Willingness (SW) to enhance its explanatory strength. The incorporation of GSI proved particularly informative, as it emerged as a significant antecedent of the three fundamental TPB components. Although GSI's direct effect on purchase intention was relatively modest, its indirect influence via these TPB constructs was pronounced. This finding is consistent with Paul et al. (2016), who demonstrated that the TPB variables mediate the relationship between GSI and green purchase intention within the Indian consumer context. Consequently, the present research substantiates and extends the proposition that Green Self-Identity functions as a pivotal upstream determinant in the formation of environmentally conscious consumer intentions.

In further advancing this theoretical integration, the study examined the psychological mechanisms through which GSI influences PI, placing particular emphasis on indirect effects within a Generation Z cohort. Another important addition to the TPB framework in this study was the moderating role of Sacrificial Willingness, defined as the consumer's readiness to accept trade-offs, such as paying more or compromising on convenience, for the sake of environmental benefits. The analysis revealed that SW significantly moderated the PI–PB relationship. Specifically, the strength of the association between green purchase

intention and behavior was found to be greater among individuals exhibiting higher levels of willingness to make personal sacrifices for environmental goals. Hence, while the current findings offer promising insights, generalization may be somewhat controlled by the economic limitations of the student sample employed.

This study about behavior of Gen Z makes an important contribution to the broader understanding of sustainable consumption by elucidating the conditions under which purchase intentions translate into actual consumer behavior. While many prior investigations have focused primarily on intentions, the present research bridges the critical gap between intention and behavior, reaffirming intention as a strong precursor to action. Furthermore, it provides valuable guidance for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote green products by identifying psychological and situational factors such as identity alignment and perceived sacrifice, that can either reinforce or hinder the realization of pro-environmental intentions in real-world behavior. By revealing these conditional dynamics, the study moves beyond descriptive models to offer a more predictive and actionable framework for fostering sustainable consumer practices among India's next generation of environmentally conscious citizens.

Practical implications

The findings offer valuable practical insights for business executives and marketing professionals involved in the promotion and adoption of green products in the Indian market (Chen, 2010; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). A central contribution lies in deepening the understanding of the psychological mechanisms that drive eco-friendly purchasing behaviors, particularly among Generation Z consumers who are young, educated, and environmentally conscious (Singh et al., 2020; Yadav & Pathak, 2017). Given the robust empirical evidence demonstrating that purchase intention (PI) reliably forecasts actual purchase behavior (PB), it becomes essential for marketers to develop strategies that strengthen the key psychological antecedents identified within the conceptual framework proposed herein (Ajzen, 1991; Paul et al., 2016).

Practitioners are encouraged to move beyond the classical Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) constructs and integrate supplementary factors such as Green Self-Identity (GSI) and Sacrificial Willingness (SW), which this study identifies as influential determinants (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010; Paul et al., 2016). Incorporating GSI which significantly impacts attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control into segmentation and targeting strategies enables marketers to pinpoint consumer groups intrinsically inclined toward sustainable consumption (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Hojjati et al., 2019). Campaigns tailored to individuals with pronounced GSI are likely to resonate more effectively, enhancing engagement and driving stronger green purchase intentions and behaviors (Paul et al., 2016; Yadav & Pathak, 2017).

Within the traditional TPB constructs, only attitude and behavioral control (PBC) emerged as direct antecedents of "purchase intention' (Ajzen, 1991; Chen & Tung, 2014). Therefore, marketing efforts should

concentrate on cultivating positive consumer attitudes by emphasizing the diverse benefits of green products, spanning environmental protection, social responsibility, and personal well-being, while concurrently fostering a compelling and credible brand identity (Biswas & Roy, 2015; Rahbar & Wahid, 201). Consequently, green marketing strategies must prioritize product availability and convenience to alleviate perceived barriers and empower consumers to act on their pro-environmental intentions (Chen, 2010; Laroche et al., 2001).

To support the wider adoption of green alternatives, firms should allocate resources toward research and development initiatives that expand the range of sustainable products and introduce innovative, user-centric distribution channels (Paul et al., 2016; Ottman, 2011). Optimizing supply chain efficiency and leveraging technological advancements in logistics can facilitate easier access to green products, thereby reinforcing consumers' perceived behavioral control and encouraging actual purchasing decisions (Sarkis et al., 2010; Kuo et al., 2013).

Despite the lack of a statistically significant direct effect of subjective norms on purchase intention observed in this study, these social influences continue to warrant attention in policy formulation and marketing strategies (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; Paul et al., 2016). Influencing social narratives and collective attitudes concerning the ecological merits of green products can engender gradual but sustained behavioral shifts (Schultz et al., 2007; Cialdini et al., 1990). Strategies such as public awareness campaigns, environmental education, and carefully crafted messaging that underscores the societal benefits of green consumption such as reducing carbon footprints and mitigating environmental degradation can reshape normative beliefs (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Over time, such efforts contribute to normalizing sustainable consumption as a valued social behavior, indirectly influencing attitudes, intentions, and ultimately consumer actions aligned with sustainability objectives (Ajzen, 1991; Stern, 2000).

Corporate entities also bear considerable responsibility in fostering societal values through dedicated corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs (Carroll, 1999; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). By embedding environmental stewardship into core business strategies and visibly championing sustainability causes, organizations not only enhance brand reputation and stakeholder trust but also catalyze a broader cultural transition toward eco-consciousness (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Integrating "green" principles within mission statements and corporate identities serves a dual purpose: driving competitive advantage and aligning organizational goals with evolving market and societal expectations (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006; Hart, 1995).

Furthermore, marketers must carefully consider consumer sacrificial willingness when seeking to convert intention into behavior (Paul et al., 2016; Haws et al., 2014). Effectively communicating the enduring value and ethical gratification associated with eco-friendly purchases—despite potential higher costs or

inconveniences—can motivate consumers to accept trade-offs (Thøgersen, 2010; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). This consideration is particularly salient for younger consumers, such as students, who may face financial constraints (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Chen, 2010). Emphasizing non-economic benefits, including contributions to collective welfare and ecological preservation, may bolster commitment to sustainable purchasing even amid economic limitations (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Steg & Vlek, 2009).

In conclusion, by elucidating both direct and indirect determinants of sustainable consumer actions, the findings offer actionable guidance for policymakers and marketing practitioners committed to promoting environmentally responsible behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Stern, 2000). Crafting evidence-based interventions and policies aligned with these drivers can significantly advance the uptake of green practices at the individual level (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Through such coordinated efforts, stakeholders can collaboratively reduce the environmental impact of consumption patterns, thereby supporting the transition toward a sustainable future (Hart, 1995; Ottman, 2011).

Study Limitations and Potential Research Trajectories

While this research makes valuable contributions, it is of great important to acknowledge certain limitations that also offer promising directions for future research. A primary limitation stems from the reliance on self-reported measures to collect data on the core psychological constructs under investigation. While self-reporting remains one of the most appropriate and directs means of capturing individuals' beliefs, intentions, and subjective experiences, it inherently carries the risk of common method variance (CMV), potentially introducing systematic measurement error into the results. Although the statistical assessment using a one-factor model indicated a poor fit—suggesting that CMV is unlikely to be a pervasive issue in this context (Podsakoff et al., 2003)—it is nevertheless important to interpret the findings with a degree of caution due to this methodological constraint.

Additionally, the use of non-probabilistic, judgmental sampling limits the external validity and generalizability of the study's outcomes. Participants were drawn exclusively from a select group of educated youth enrolled in three central universities in India, which may not be fully representative of the broader Indian consumer landscape. This sampling strategy, while suitable for exploratory or theory-driven studies targeting a specific population segment, restricts the extrapolation of findings to diverse demographic or geographic groups within the country. Future studies are encouraged to adopt probability-based sampling methods, such as stratified or simple random sampling, encompassing a more heterogeneous consumer base. Such methodological enhancements would bolster the generalizability of findings and improve their applicability to a wider cross-section of Indian society.

Another methodological limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the research design, which inherently constrains the ability to establish temporal precedence or

infer causal relationships among the studied variables. Although the findings from analysis have given valuable insights into the correlational structure of the proposed model, they do not permit conclusions about the directionality or causality of the observed effects. Future investigations should therefore consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to more rigorously test causal linkages. Repeated-measures studies, for example, could capture changes in green purchase intentions and behaviors over time, thereby offering stronger evidence for causal inferences and temporal dynamics.

Although demographic factors were statistically controlled to minimize confounding effects, these variables might still meaningfully impact the associations among the theoretical constructs. Attributes such as age, gender, income, educational attainment, and geographic region could potentially moderate the relationships, altering the magnitude or direction of effects within the model (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Chen & Tung, 2014). Hence, subsequent investigations are encouraged to examine these demographic dimensions as moderating variables to deepen the understanding of how socio-demographic diversity influences green consumer behavior patterns.

Furthermore, while this study's conceptual framework is rooted in the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and extended through the integration of Green Self-Identity (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010) and Sacrificial Willingness (Paul et al., 2016), it does not encompass other relevant psychological or contextual determinants that might enhance its explanatory scope. Future research could augment this model by including variables such as perceived value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), personal moral norms (Schwartz, 1977), and ecological values (Stern et al., 1999), all of which have been recognized in prior literature as pivotal to pro-environmental decision-making processes. Incorporating these constructs would offer a more holistic perspective on the complex drivers behind green purchase intentions and behaviors.

In summary, despite the valuable insights yielded on environmentally conscious consumption among India's educated youth, addressing these limitations through both methodological refinement and theoretical expansion is crucial for future scholarly advancement. Such endeavors will improve the reliability and generalizability of subsequent findings and support the formulation of more targeted and effective interventions to promote sustainable consumer practices (Hines et al., 1987; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

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