



THE STATE OF GREEN CONSUMERISM ON GEN Z TRANSFORMATION: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT ON THEIR SUSTAINABLE- CONSCIOUS LIVES.

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ABSTRACT

Eco-consciousness has become so ingrained in our culture, it's understandable we feel confident enough to tackle climate change for good. Green consumerism refers to a state in which consumers demand products and services that have undergone an eco-friendly production process or one that involves recycling and safeguarding the planets' resources. Government of India has already taken initiative by imposing many rules and regulations regarding environmental preservation but there is need to play the role on marketing green ideas more intensively to make people more aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues and problems, so that there will be a new breed of green minded consumers to keep themselves healthy as well as there will be a great contribution to preserve our planet healthy for our next generations. The study seeks to critically analyze the factors contributing to the rising green consumerism and to further study the governmental interventions which can effectively benefit both the marketers and consumers as well. When it comes to sustainability, 90 percent of Gen Z consumers surveyed said they have made changes to be more sustainable in their daily lives and more sustainable fashion practices play a central role. "Generation Green," millennials and Gen Z demonstrate environmentally and socially-conscious consumer behaviour. With rising spending power and digitally-enhanced information access, they are translating awareness into conscientious, organic, and environment-friendly product choices. Generation Z (or Gen Z for short), colloquially also known as zoomers. Researchers and popular media use the mid-to-late 1990s as starting birth years and the early 2010s as ending birth years. Most members of Generation Z are children of Generation X. The Paper has explored the effect of Gen Z's environmental responsibility on green consumption and how this effect was mediated by environmental concern and moderated by price sensitivity, especially when consumers simultaneously pay close attention to environmental and personal interests. The descriptive study reveals that environmental responsibility of Gen Z can promote environmental concern and enhance green consumption.

Key words: Gen Z, zoomers, millennials, green consumer

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic, social, and cultural forces have set the framework for green consumerism. This is because it is a social attitude and movement in the modern era, especially aimed at encouraging people to be more aware of the firms' production processes and only to buy or use products and services that do not harm the environment. For this reason, green consumerism has created a balance between the buyers' behaviours and the organizations' profit objectives as it mostly based on the sustainable and pro-environmental behaviour of consumers. As it is said that the green consumer is someone who is environmentally and socially conscious and which leads him/her to purchase the products that are eco-friendly. Green consumerism is a holistic and responsible process of management that satisfies, identifies, fulfils, and anticipates the needs of the stakeholders in maintaining the natural well-being of the environment and one that does not endanger the health of humans. Over the last few decades, it is being observed that people are changing their trends and lifestyle in a more environment conscious way paying more responsiveness towards green oriented behaviour worldwide. Gen Z are the most likely to say they desire to change their lifestyles to be more healthy, environmentally friendly and helpful to others, followed by millennials. It is a common assumption that younger generations Gen Z and millennials are more greatly concerned with global challenges. Born in the digital age, these generations are seen to be more health-conscious, socially aware and environmentally responsible. Gen Z and millennials are the most self-critical generation. They believe they have the capacity to do more than what they are doing and are also more likely to believe that what is good for them may not be good for the environment. The study and research about green consumerism have been interesting due to growing green awareness and significance of green orientation in the Gen Z consumer purchasing process globally.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Brundtland Commission had correctly stated in 1987 that "Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Consumer's awareness about eco-friendly products and their environmental impacts affects their green consuming behaviour and this growing feeling of responsibility for the environment needs to be tapped for a healthier environment for us and for the generations to come. Another study showed that 19% more Indian consumers desired product safety with respect to their global peers in Brazil, China, Germany and the U.S. and 25% more Indian consumers believed that price is not a barrier and they are likely to pay more for eco-friendly products than their global counterparts. The Greendex Survey carried out by the National Geographic Society stated that in a list of 17 countries, Indian consumers ranked at the top in showing preference for green products. In fact, India since 2008 has had the highest Greendex score. From snack foods to electricity to investment funds, ecolabels and other product certifications are becoming increasingly common tools for encouraging more sustainable forms of consumption. But can we trust these increasingly ubiquitous seals and labels? Is there any meaningful difference among the products that carry such endorsements? Boström and Klintman (2011) look behind the actual packaging and offer a pioneering and comprehensive account of how these assurance schemes and standards are manufactured and how they shape the buying practices of consumers in a new era of social and environmental consciousness. The green consumerism considers how consumers are taking responsibility and becoming more aware, driving change in the marketplace. In response, companies are integrating appropriate green strategies into their operational activities, product development processes, and marketing activities to achieve a competitive advantage in saturated markets. This helps companies gain market share and minimize their production costs. Topics discussed in the volume include green pricing, green consumer behaviour, various dimensions of consumer purchase intention, sustainable marketing, innovation techniques used to go green, eco-awareness, and other ongoing developments in this rapidly expanding area (Ruchika Singh Malyan, Punita Duhan 2018). Gen Z is about to make its presence known in the workplace in a major way and employers need to understand the differences that set them apart. They're radically different than the Millennials and yet no one seems to be talking about them until now. This generation has an entirely different perspective on careers and how to succeed in the work force. Based on the first national studies of Gen Z's workplace attitudes, interviews with hundreds of CEOs, celebrities and thought leaders on generational issues, cutting edge case studies and insights from Gen Zers themselves, Gen Z @ Work offers the knowledge today's leaders need to get ahead of the next gaps at work and how best to recruit, retain, motivate and manage them. (David Stillman, Jonah Stillman 2017) Kilbourne & Polonsky highlight that improving consumer environmental knowledge and promoting stronger environmental attitudes and values may not necessarily result in behavioural change within industrialized societies where the underlying DSP

(Demand side platform) is consumption oriented. They call for more research into how collective values would need to evolve to facilitate greener consumption and into how messages could be framed to raise awareness of the need to change the DSP. Green consumption is a problematic concept, not least because it is an apparent oxymoron. Green implies the conservation of environmental resources, while consumption generally involves their destruction. Green consumption is also contested as an idea, highly context dependent as a set of practices, as well as complex and multifaceted in both theory and practice. It overlaps other concepts, such as ethical, sustainable, or responsible consumption, leading to a lack of clarity and consistency in notions of green consumption within the research literature (Ken Peattie, 2010). The commercial potential following the recent economic crisis to further the goals of sustainability and provide ethical products and services remains considerable. In the race for economic development, governments, society, and business have created environments in which marketing has flourished to serve consumer and societies' needs. The term "sustainable" becomes a popular notion in recent era. (HarshTullani, Richa Dahiya ,2018)

3. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:

1. To study the conceptual framework regarding green awareness and green marketing and green consumerism
2. To study the changing perception of consumers towards green products among Gen Z
3. To study the Gen Z consumer awareness and their brand preferences towards green products.
4. To identify and evaluate the factors influence Gen Z buying behaviour towards green products.
5. To find out the level of Gen Z consumer's satisfaction towards green products

3.1 Hypotheses of the study

The study set to test the following hypotheses: -

H01= There is no significant difference between men and women of Gen Z awareness towards green products.

H02= There is no significant difference in satisfaction between respondents of different income group in Gen Z

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The focus of this study is to understand the factors influencing consumers green buying behaviour and further to know the Gen Z customer perception towards green products in Aluva city. The research design is exploratory cum descriptive. Primary and secondary data have been collected; Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire, personal interviews and observation. Purposive sampling method is adopted for the study. The study is confined to 18-40 age group male and female in Aluva city only. The sample size is 100 respondent consumers. The data has been collected with the help of structured questionnaire and through discussions with these respondents. The questionnaires were processed for coding the data in the computer. Microsoft Excel Data analysis tool was used for processing, classification, tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data. The following statistical techniques were applied depending on the nature of data collected from the respondents: -

T test: It is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups. With all inferential statistics, we assume the dependent variable fits a normal distribution.

ANOVA: Analysis of variance is used to test differences between two or more means. The name is appropriate because inferences about means are made by analysing variance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Section C of the questionnaire belongs to the factors, in this section there are Five factors. These factors were designed to examine the opinion of respondents about the factors and assign rank (1 to 5) according to their importance. To find out rank between the factors assigned by the respondents to factors, Likert's scale of point is used (To identify and evaluate the factors influenced consumer green buying behaviour). The reliability and validity test was conducted using Microsoft excel.

Table 1: Basic profile of the respondents

SL no.	Profile	Category	Number	Percentage
1	Gender	Male Female	36 64	36% 64%
2	Age	18-25 25-30 30-35 35-40	32 54 9 5	32% 54% 9% 5%
3	Educational Qualification	Tenth +2 Graduate Post graduate others	11 39 13 36 1	11% 39% 13% 36% 1%
4	Occupation	Self employed Service sector Private sector Others	65 17 7 11	65% 17% 7% 11%

5. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:

Data which are collected through primary source were systematically tabulated, processed and made suitable for analyses and interpretations of the data.

5.1 Consumer Awareness - Gender Wise Analyses:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between male and female awareness towards green products.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is significant difference between male and female awareness towards green products.

Table 2: Responses regarding green awareness and products (Mean & Standard deviation)

SI no.	Statements	Strong Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strong Disagree	Total	Mean	Mean 2	SD
1	Factors influencing the purchase of a green products	27	37	13	14	9	100	3.59	14.49	3.302
2	Types of green products often purchased	23	37	17	12	11	100	3.49	13.79	3.209
3	Opinion on green products is high priced	39	35	9	2	14	100	3.8	16.38	3.547
4	Brand preference for green products	14	37	30	10	9	100	3.37	12.61	3.04
5	Demand for an eco-friendly product	17	20	51	9	3	100	3.39	12.43	3.007
6	Overall experience about green product	39	41	15	3	2	100	4.12	17.8	3.699

Source: primary data and calculation through excel data analysis tool

Table 2.1: Responses regarding green awareness and products (Gender wise analysis)

SI no.	Statements	Gender	N	MEAN	SD	t sig	Result
1	Factors influencing the purchase of a green products	male	36	3.8	3.57	0.133	not significant
		female	64	3.7	3.51		
2	Types of green products often purchased	male	36	4.0	3.6	0.373	not significant
		female	64	2.2	2.7		
3	Opinion on green products is high priced	male	36	3.7	3.47	0.321	not significant
		female	64	2.1	2.6		
4	Brand preference for green products	male	36	3.5	3.33	0.29	not significant
		female	64	2.01	2.5		
5	Demand for aeco-friendly products	male	36	3.6	3.34	0.341	not significant
		female	64	2.06	2.51		
6	Overall experience about green product	male	36	4.08	3.7	0.43	not significant

Source: primary data and calculation through excel data analysis tool

As per the significance value of responses related to different statements, which shows the results according to gender indicates that there is no significant difference between responses of male and female consumers. There are six statements regarding consumer green awareness and green brand preferences towards green products and all reveal the same positive result. Value of t statistics of all the statements is more than 0.05. So genders do not impact on awareness of consumers, as responses of male and females are not significantly different. Hence null hypothesis is accepted.

5.2 Level of Satisfaction towards Green Products (Based on Different Income Groups)

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in level of satisfaction between respondent of different income group.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is significant difference in level of satisfaction between respondents different income group.

Table 3: Satisfaction level towards Green products (mean & std. dev.)

Sl no.	Statements	N	Mean	SD
1	Green products are eco-friendly and healthy	100	4.2	.612
2	Natural products are very expensive	100	2.82	.942
3	Improved promotion of green product to others	100	3.86	.894
4	Green product purchased by health-conscious consumers	100	2.78	.645
5	Green products often purchased by youth like me	100	4.02	.639
6	I do not deny to purchase green products	100	3.76	.860
7	I am very loyal for the green brand	100	2.98	.820
8	The green brand is safe to use	100	4.54	.571

Source: primary data and calculation through excel data analysis tool

As per the mean value of the responses regarding various statements which are to show the level of satisfaction of consumers and brand preferences towards green products, out of total eight statements, three statements have shown positive response i.e. agreement of the respondents as their mean values lie between four and five which represent either strongly agree or agree. Two statements have shown neutral response i.e. they are indifferent regarding these statements as their mean values lie between three and four. Three statements have shown negative response i.e. disagreement of the respondents as their mean values lie between two and three. Overall, it may be viewed that respondents are not fully satisfied regarding green brands.

Table- 3.1. Satisfaction Level towards Green Products (Annual Income Wise Analysis)

SI no.	Statements		SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.	RESULT
1	Green products are eco-friendly and healthy	Between group Within group	.965 61.9	2 87	.423 .324	1.3	.275	Not significant
2	Natural products are very expensive	Between group Within group	3.327 113.9	2 87	.091 .376	.25	.757	Not significant
3	Improved promotion of green product to others	Between group Within group	.852 123.1	2 87	1.66 .830	1.95	.145	Not significant
4	Green product purchased by health-conscious consumers	Between group Within group	.334 125.3	2 87	.352 .651	.495	.610	Not significant
5	Green products often purchased by youth like me	Between group Within group	.659 116.2	2 87	.492 .411	1.197	.591	Not significant
6	I do not deny to purchase green products	Between group Within group	.343 122.057	2 87	.357 .677	.528	.322	Not significant
7	I am very loyal for the green brand	Between group Within group	2.04 141.9	2 87	1.01 .898	.017	.147	Not significant
8	The green brand is safe to use	Between group Within group	3.04 131.65	2 87	.171 .777	.220	.983	Not significant

Source: primary data and calculation through excel data analysis tool

A one-way ANOVA test was performed on these mean scores obtained for the attributes to show the level of satisfaction towards green products based on different income groups. P value of every statement is more than 0.05. Overall, a respondent which belongs to different income group do not make any difference in responding towards satisfaction; as responses of different income group are not significantly difference.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

6.1 Findings Related to Customers Demographic Profile-

- In the present study female respondents (64%) are more in number than male respondents. It shows that female candidates preferred more the green products as compare to male.
- Age group of 25-35 years (42.5%) have more preferred green products in comparison to other age groups Though the other age groups are also interested in it but they show less interest than 25-35 years age group.
- Age group of 35-45 years and above 35 (9%) is not much in favour of green products. They also believe that green products are very costly in comparison to chemical-based product and the effect of green product is very slow.
- The result reveals that post graduate respondents (36%) like more the herbal products compared to other respondents which are followed by the graduate respondents (13%). It shows that qualified respondents are more health conscious and avoid chemical-based products.

- Employees (45%) are in more favour of green products than the other category.
- This study finds that mostly respondents (65%) lie self-employed group. It shows that middle class people prefer green products.

6.2 Findings Related to Consumer Awareness towards Green Products-

- In most of the respondent's families all the members used green products so these families know more about the benefits of green products as they are using the green products.
- More than 50% of the respondents are using green product since less than one year period. It indicates that recently consumers are more aware regarding green products

6.3 Findings Related to Consumers Green Awareness-

- Out of the total six statements regarding consumer awareness towards green products, two statements give positive response as the mean lie between four and five which shows that respondents are agree with these statements but for the other four statements, respondents are indifferent as the mean between three and four. It shows that consumers are not fully aware now regarding green brands.
- To check out the various responses on the various statements t- test is performed and result indicate that significant value of t- statistics of all the statements is more than 0.05 so gender of the respondents has no impact regarding awareness. Further we can say that male and female are equally aware regarding this brand.

6.4 Findings Related to Consumers Satisfaction towards Green Products-

- There are eight statements regarding customer satisfaction in which only three statements have shown positive response i.e., agreement of respondents as their mean value lies between four and five. Mean value of two statements lie between three and four i.e., respondents are indifferent regarding these statements and other three statements give negative response as their mean value lie between two and three.
- The statement 'this brand is well priced' has shown lowest mean value (2.82) and standard deviation (.942) is very high. It shows that respondents are not satisfied regarding the price of Green products. Overall consumers are not fully satisfied regarding this brand.
- To look out the responses on various statements according to the different income group, ANOVA test is applied and result showed that income of respondents does not make any difference in responding towards the satisfaction of respondents.

6.5 Findings Related to Customers Satisfaction towards Eco friendly Products

- To know the preference of consumers regarding different factors, Garret rank method is applied on the selected seven factors and result showed that product benefits is most important factor regarding green brand that is highly influenced the consumers of green products.
- Product quality is also very important in the case of personal care products hence respondents give second rank to it.
- Product price and product packaging of green brand do not come up the expectations of consumers of green products.

7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A more inclusive approach to green consumer behaviours would also involve shifting the focus from an individual consumer as the decision-maker to a family, a community or other unit of actors. Relatedly, the conceptualization of green consumerism would need to be broadened in order to be inclusive of diverse social, economic, and ecological constraints. For instance, in some communities, engaging in urban food-growing movements rather than purchasing organic food might represent green consumerism. Considering a diversity of cultural, socio-economic and ideological backgrounds will further enable research in green consumerism to contribute to a sustainable environmental future. In other words, consumers might be more likely to engage in green consumerism if they think of it as a "conventional" behaviour or it becomes automatic. One effective, path to promoting sustainable practices might be to remove green consumption from the domain of morality altogether.

8. CONCLUSION

Attitude toward the environment is the strongest factor that has positively influenced their purchase intention. This study confirmed that a person who has some concern for the environment would have a stronger preference in purchasing a green product. Attractive green product message contents should be aggressively developed that would stimulate interest among all the educational category and should focus keenly on unmarried respondents. Consumers should be able to easily differentiate green products from the no green based on the labels. Further, the price on the green products should be affordable to encourage purchase. Government and non-government organizations are a strong player that plays an important role in encouraging consumers to go green and embrace green purchasing behaviour the era of cut throat competition, it is very necessary to understand the behaviour of consumers as their needs, wants desires are changing very frequently. Now a day's consumers are more health conscious and prefer green products. The present study attempts to examine the perception of consumer and brand preferences towards green products in Aluva city. This study concludes that there is no significant difference between male and female awareness towards green products but consumers are not fully aware regarding green brands. This study also reveals the truth that there is no significant difference in satisfaction between respondents of different income group but consumers are not fully satisfied regarding price of green products. Product quality and product benefits are main factors which influence respondents buying behavior towards green products. The study since focused on a limited geographical area has limited generalizability but provides good insights regarding behavior of consumers towards green products. The marketing communication regarding green practices need to focus more on theme and message. Advertising appeals using green products and practices are likely to move emotions and result in persuasion. It is important for markets to be in top of mind recall of consumers to gain maximum from their green brand positioning. Constant and continuous communication from the organizations' side is required to make an impact and create a distinct green positioning and ultimately resulting a rise in green consumerism.

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