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Green Product Awareness And Green Purchasing Behavior Of Generation Z: The Case Of State Universities In Region 4A, Philippines

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Abstract: This study assesses awareness of green products and evaluates green purchasing behaviour. Key variables examined include environmental awareness, knowledge, concern, perceived consumer effectiveness and responsibility, social influence, willingness to pay, eco-label, and attitude. Data were analysed using weighted arithmetic mean, Kruskal-Wallis test, and Spearman rho correlation. Findings reveal significant positive correlations between green product awareness on environmental awareness, knowledge, and social influence. Weaker correlations were observed with environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness and responsibility, willingness to pay, eco-label, and attitude towards green purchasing. The study recommends enhancing environmental education, developing targeted awareness campaigns, and implementing continuous monitoring of green purchasing behaviours. Policy recommendations include government support for green initiatives, collaboration with educational institutions, nationwide public awareness campaigns, standardized eco-labelling, and investment in sustainable technologies. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies, broader demographic analyses, the impact of digital media, and the effectiveness of behavioural interventions in promoting sustainable purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Green Product, Green Purchasing Behavior, Generation Z

Introduction

The worldwide increased consumption of goods and services squeezes natural resources, thus causing severe damage to the environment. Hence, environmental degradation and sustainability are among the most serious issues we face in today's world, and there is a growing consciousness regarding all matters related to the environment. Consequently, the large number of environmental problems that consumers face is the key reason behind the shift from traditional—or non-green—purchasing behavior to greener purchasing patterns.

Alghamdi and Agag (2024) mentioned that consumers are trying to help improve the environment with green purchasing. One major challenge confronting nation worldwide, particularly developing countries such as the Philippines, is the inundation of consumer markets with products packaged in single-use disposable plastics (Villa, 2018). As awareness grows about environmental impacts, conscientious consumers seek environmentally benign alternatives. This global trend is driving an increasing demand for eco-friendly green products (Bautista, 2018; Hazaea et al., 2022; Witek & Kuźniar, 2021). As an emerging economy like the Philippines, there is an opportunity to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable consumption practices. Encouraging consumers to embrace green products can significantly contribute to advancing this perspective. Against the backdrop of the growing affirmative reaction of people, the inclination to buy green products is on the rise. However, further research is crucial to understand the underlying factors driving this shift, especially among younger generations.

This study prioritizes the examination of Generation Z demographics, recognizing their pivotal role as future consumers. Gaining insights into their pro-environmental inclinations holds significant implications for policymakers in formulating effective and sustainable marketing strategies. Alghamdi and Agag (2024) note that Generation Z, known for their digital nativity and heightened awareness of global issues, are poised to drive significant changes in consumer behavior towards more sustainable practices. Furthermore, it is expected that Generation Z consumers possess a sufficient understanding of ongoing environmental movements and are keen to incorporate sustainable green purchasing practices (Hazaea et al., 2022). This study aims to bridge the gap in knowledge by exploring the unique characteristics and motivations of Generation Z, thus providing valuable insights for fostering sustainable consumption. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the respondents' demographic profile concerning age, gender, and university year level. It also aims to assess the respondents' level of awareness of green products and examine their green purchasing behavior based on factors such as Environmental Awareness, Environmental Knowledge, Environmental Concern, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Perceived Environmental Responsibility, Social Influence, Willingness to Pay, Eco-Label, and Attitude. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the relationship between awareness of green products and green purchasing behavior among the respondents and identify significant differences in green purchasing behavior when grouped according to demographic profiles.

Literature Review

Green Product Awareness

Consumer awareness of green products is crucial for informed purchasing decisions. Green products are perceived as more environmentally friendly, and consumers' support or resistance towards them may be influenced by social pressures (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2020). Green products are defined as those whose production processes exert minimal impact on the environment (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024). The growing concern for conserving natural resources amidst human activities has underscored the importance of environmental protection, leading to a surge in demand for green products. These products, often referred to as sustainable or eco-friendly, are produced using methods that have minimal negative impact on the environment throughout their lifecycle, making them socially and environmentally responsible choices. Increasing consumer awareness of the environmental

and social impacts associated with product consumption facilitates the market penetration and expansion of green-labeled products (Hazaea et al., 2022).

Green Purchasing Behavior

Green purchasing behavior entails the consumption of products that are environmentally friendly, recyclable, and responsive to ecological concerns. Changes in consumer behavior have prompted organizations to promote green products and influence customers to purchase them (Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Green purchase behavior represents a complex form of ethical decision-making and is considered a type of socially responsible behavior. Acting as socially responsible consumers, individuals engaged in green consumption assess the societal implications of their private consumption and leverage their purchasing power to instigate social change (Mosavichechaklou & Bozbay, 2020). Furthermore, understanding the factors affecting green purchasing behavior can help companies produce products that satisfy green consumers (Witek & Kuźniar, 2021).

Relation Between Green Product Awareness and Green Purchasing Behavior

The relationship between green product awareness and green purchasing behavior is a critical area of study. Increased awareness of green products directly correlates with consumer buying behavior, as it influences their decision-making process (Yi, 2019). Consumers who are more aware of the environmental impacts of their purchasing choices are more likely to buy green products. This awareness drives their inclination to adopt environmentally friendly practices and make conscious choices that benefit the environment (Zhuang et al., 2021). For Generation Z, understanding and incorporating sustainable green purchasing practices is particularly relevant. As a generation highly aware of global environmental issues, Generation Z is poised to drive significant changes in consumer behavior towards more sustainable practices (Witek & Kuźniar, 2021). Their digital nativity and heightened environmental consciousness make them key influencers in the market, advocating for products that align with their values of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Environmental Awareness, Knowledge, and Social Influence

Environmental awareness refers to the recognition and understanding of environmental issues. Studies show that higher environmental awareness positively influences green purchasing behavior (Abeysekera et al., 2022). Environmental knowledge, which involves understanding environmental systems and sustainability issues, is also a significant predictor of green purchasing behavior (Ali et al., 2023). Social influence, encompassing the impact of family, friends, and media, significantly affects consumers' green purchasing decisions (Yang et al., 2021).

Weaker Correlations with Environmental Concern, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, and Responsibility

Environmental concern is the degree to which individuals are aware of and worried about environmental issues. Although it shows a positive correlation with green purchasing behavior, the relationship is weaker compared to other factors (Zhuang et al., 2021). Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) is the belief that individual actions can contribute to environmental sustainability. Studies indicate that PCE positively affects environmentally

conscious behaviors, but the correlation is not as strong (Ellen et al., 1991). Perceived environmental responsibility refers to the extent to which individuals feel responsible for protecting the environment, and it shows a similar pattern of weaker correlation with green purchasing behavior (Mosavichechaklou & Bozbay, 2020).

Willingness to Pay, Eco-Label, and Attitude Towards Green Purchasing

Willingness to pay (WTP) refers to the amount consumers are willing to spend on eco-friendly products. While WTP is positively correlated with green purchasing behavior, the relationship is relatively weak (Ansu-Mensah et al., 2021). Eco-labels, which certify the environmental impact of products, influence purchasing decisions, but their effect is also modest (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2020). Attitude towards green purchasing reflects the consumers' overall evaluation of buying eco-friendly products, showing weaker correlations with actual purchasing behavior (Witek & Kuźniar, 2021). Continued research in this area is essential to develop effective strategies that enhance consumer awareness and promote sustainable consumption patterns. By understanding these dynamics, stakeholders can better foster a culture of sustainability that resonates with current and future generations.

Methods

The study employed a structured questionnaire adapted from previous studies to collect data relevant to the research objectives. The choice of a quantitative research approach was made to systematically investigate the relationship between green product awareness and green purchasing behavior. The questionnaire was designed to capture detailed information on respondents' demographic profiles, including age, gender, and university year level, as well as their level of awareness of green products and their green purchasing behavior, which was measured based on factors such as Environmental Awareness, Environmental Knowledge, Environmental Concern, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Perceived Environmental Responsibility, Social Influence, Willingness to Pay, Eco-Label, and Attitude.

A total of 952 respondents participated in the survey. The research was conducted within Region IV-A (CALABARZON), focusing on state universities. This region was chosen because the students enrolled in these state universities are representative of Generation Z, having been born during this era. Understanding the green behavior of Gen Z students in CALABARZON is crucial as they are the relevant generation poised to drive future consumer trends. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that participants, specifically students currently enrolled in business administration programs, could provide accurate, reliable, and valid responses, thereby making them a suitable unit of analysis for this study.

The collected data were analyzed using various statistical tools. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents. The weighted arithmetic mean (WAM) was employed to determine the level of awareness of green products among the respondents. Spearman Rho Correlation was used to assess the relationship between awareness of green products and green purchasing behavior, providing insights into the strength and direction of these associations. Additionally, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was applied to determine if there were significant differences in green purchasing behavior when respondents were grouped according to their demographic profiles.

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26, ensuring a robust platform for statistical evaluation and interpretation. By employing these statistical tools, the study aimed to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing green purchasing behavior among Generation Z in the selected universities in CALABARZON.

Findings

The majority of the Filipino Generation Z respondents are aged 18-19, identify as straight, and are in their first year at five state universities in the CALABARZON region. This demographic is notably aware of green products. The respondents' awareness of green purchasing was assessed across various factors, including environmental awareness, environmental knowledge, environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, perceived environmental responsibility, social influence, willingness to pay, eco-label, and attitude. The table below shows the summary of the respondents' level of awareness on green purchasing behavior:

Table 1. **Summary of the Respondents' Green Purchasing Behavior**

Indicators	**WAM**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Environmental Awareness	3.15	Aware
Environmental Knowledge	3.02	Aware
Environmental Concern	3.33	Highly Aware
Perceived Consumer effectiveness	3.24	Aware
Perceived Environmental Responsibility	3.15	Aware
Social Influence	3.02	Aware
Willingness to Pay	3.04	Aware
Eco-label	3.08	Aware
Attitude	3.22	Aware
Overall WAM	**3.14**	**Aware**

Source: Data calculated by the author, 2024

Legend:	3.26-4.00	HA	Highly Aware	1.76-2.50	M	Moderately Aware
	2.51-3.25	A	Aware	1.00-1.75	NA	Not Aware

Table 1 summarizes the data regarding respondents' awareness levels across various variables related to green purchasing. Overall, the respondents exhibit a moderate level of awareness, with an overall mean of 3.14. Environmental concern stands out as the most highly acknowledged variable, achieving a weighted arithmetic mean (WAM) of 3.33. Other variables categorized as "aware" include Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (WAM=3.24), Attitude (WAM=3.22), Environmental Awareness (WAM=3.15), Perceived Environmental Responsibility (WAM=3.15), Eco-label (WAM=3.08), Willingness to Pay (WAM=3.04), Environmental Knowledge (WAM=3.02), and Social Influence (WAM=3.02).

The findings suggest that while there is a moderate level of awareness among respondents, specific areas such as environmental knowledge, social influence, willingness to pay, and eco-label require further enhancement. The high level of environmental concern indicates a positive inclination towards green practices, which could be leveraged by policymakers and marketers to promote sustainable consumption. The moderate awareness levels in other

factors point to the need for targeted educational and marketing strategies to improve understanding and engagement with green products.

Table 2. **Spearman-rho Test Result in Finding the Significant Relationship Between Awareness of Green Products and Green Purchasing Behavior Among the Respondents**

Variables being correlated	**df**	**Mean**	**rho- value**	***p*-value**	**Decision**	**Impression at 0.05 level of significance**
Green Products (x_1) and Environmental Awareness (x_2)	952	x_1 = 2.8235 x_2 =3.1528	0.55 Moderate Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Environmental Knowledge (x_3)	952	x_3=3.0159	0.52 Moderate Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Environmental Concern (x_4)	952	x_4 =3.3268	0.38 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (x_5)	952	x_5 =3.2368 x_6 =3.1518	0.33 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Perceived Environmental Responsibility (x_6)	952	x_7=3.0157	0.35 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Social Influence (x_7)	952	x_8 =3.0421	0.45 Moderate Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Willingness to Pay (x_8)	952	x_9 =3.0794	0.39 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Eco-Label (x_9)	952	x_{10} =3.2165	0.34 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant
Green Products (x_1) and Attitude (x_{10})	952		0.39 Weak Relationship	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant

Source: Data calculated by the author, 2024

The table reveals significant relationships between green product awareness and various environmental behaviors. Awareness is positively correlated with environmental awareness (rho = 0.55) and knowledge (rho = 0.52), both statistically significant at the 0.05 level

(Alghamdi & Agag, 2024; Hazaea et al., 2022). Weaker positive relationships were found with environmental concern (rho = 0.38), perceived consumer effectiveness (rho = 0.33), responsibility (rho = 0.35), willingness to pay (rho = 0.39), eco-labeling (rho = 0.34), and overall attitude (rho = 0.39). Social influence (rho = 0.45) also shows a moderate positive relationship (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2020). These findings underscore the need for targeted awareness campaigns to enhance green purchasing behavior among Generation Z in CALABARZON, emphasizing the importance of environmental education and the role of social influence in promoting sustainable consumer practices (Witek & Kuźniar, 2021; Zhuang et al., 2021).

Table 3. **Kruskal-Wallis Test Result of Finding the Significant Difference on Green Purchasing Behavior when Grouped According to Age**

Variables being compared	**df**	**H- value**	***p*-value**	**Decision**	**Impression at 0.05 level of significance**
Environmental Awareness	4	3.25	0.52	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Knowledge	4	0.24	0.99	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Concern	4	4.18	0.38	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	4	4.82	0.31	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Perceived Consumer Responsibility	4	2.13	0.71	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Social Influence	4	0.32	0.99	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Willingness to Pay	4	0.77	0.94	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Eco-Label	4	2.19	0.70	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Attitude	4	1.95	0.75	Accepted H_0	Not Significant

Source: Data calculated by the author, 2024

The analysis showed no significant differences in environmental awareness, knowledge, concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, responsibility, social influence, willingness to pay, eco-label perception, and attitude across age groups (16-25 years old). This indicates that age does not significantly affect these dimensions of green purchasing behavior and environmental attitudes among the sampled population. This contrasts with Sinnappan and Rahman (2021) and Bautista (2018), who found that younger consumers were more influential and knowledgeable about green purchasing. The uniformity in green purchasing behaviors across age groups suggests the potential for universal educational and marketing efforts to promote sustainable consumption among Generation Z in CALABARZON. Factors such as social influence, personal values, and digital engagement might play more pivotal roles in shaping these behaviors. These insights are vital for fostering a culture of sustainability among young consumers.

Table 4. **Kruskal-Wallis Test Result of Finding the Significant Difference on Green Purchasing Behavior when Grouped according to Gender**

Variables being compared	df	H- value	*p*-value	Decision	Impression at 0.05 level of significance
Environmental Awareness	6	3.01	0.81	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Knowledge	6	4.82	0.57	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Concern	6	9.37	0.15	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	6	10.30	0.11	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Perceived Environmental Responsibility	6	9.63	0.14	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Social Influence	6	5.19	0.52	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Willingness to Pay	6	3.91	0.69	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Eco-Label	6	4.10	0.66	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Attitude	6	4.57	0.60	Accepted H_0	Not Significant

Source: Data calculated by the author, 2024

The Kruskal-Wallis test results indicate no significant differences in environmental awareness, knowledge, concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, responsibility, social influence, willingness to pay, eco-label perception, and attitude across gender identities. This contrasts with Sinnappan and Rahman (2021) and Bautista (2018), who found younger consumers more influential and knowledgeable about green purchasing. The uniformity in responses across gender identities suggests green purchasing behaviors and environmental attitudes are influenced more by factors such as social influence and digital engagement than by gender identity. These findings highlight the potential for universal environmental education and marketing strategies that resonate with all gender identities. This approach can help policymakers, educators, and marketers foster sustainable behaviors without needing gender-specific adjustments, promoting a more inclusive and effective environmental advocacy (Tan & Lau, 2019).

Table 5. **Kruskal-Wallis Test Result of Finding the Significant Difference on Green Purchasing Behavior when Grouped according to University Year Level**

Variables being compared	df	H-value	*p*-value	Decision	Impression at 0.05 level of significance
Environmental Awareness	4	9.29	0.054	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Knowledge	4	7.44	0.11	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Environmental Concern	4	15.11	0.00	Rejected H_0	Significant
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	4	7.68	0.10	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Perceived Environmental Responsibility	4	3.57	0.47	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Social Influence	4	3.96	0.41	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Willingness to Pay	4	6.26	0.18	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Eco-Label	4	5.14	0.27	Accepted H_0	Not Significant
Attitude	4	15.20	0.00	Rejected H_0	Significant

Source: Data calculated by the author, 2024

The table shows the Kruskal-Wallis test results indicating no significant differences across various year levels in environmental awareness ($H = 9.29$, $p = 0.054$), knowledge ($H = 7.44$, $p = 0.11$), perceived consumer effectiveness ($H = 7.68$, $p = 0.10$), responsibility ($H = 3.57$, $p = 0.47$), social influence ($H = 3.96$, $p = 0.41$), willingness to pay ($H = 6.26$, $p = 0.18$), and eco-label perception ($H = 5.14$, $p = 0.27$). However, environmental concern ($H = 15.11$, $p = 0.00$) and attitudes towards the environment ($H = 15.20$, $p = 0.00$) show significant differences across year levels.

This suggests that while most variables remain stable, environmental concern and attitudes vary with year level, possibly due to increased exposure to environmental education and sustainability initiatives among upper-year students. These findings align with Sinnappan and Rahman (2021) and Bautista (2018), emphasizing the role of educational experiences in shaping environmental attitudes. Tailored environmental education programs throughout the academic journey can enhance students' environmental awareness and foster sustainable behaviors. This underscores the need for continuous, progressive curricula and targeted interventions at different educational stages to promote sustainability effectively.

Conclusion

From the results of the study, several conclusions and recommendations are drawn. The majority of Filipino Generation Z respondents, aged 18-19, identify as straight, and are in their first year at state universities in Region IV-A, Philippines. They are aware of green products and exhibit awareness of green purchasing across variables such as environmental awareness, knowledge, concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, responsibility, social influence, willingness to pay, eco-label, and attitude.

Significant positive correlations indicate that increased awareness of green products is associated with higher environmental awareness and knowledge, both statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Although environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, and perceived environmental responsibility showed weaker positive relationships, these correlations are still meaningful. Social influence demonstrated a moderate positive correlation, while willingness to pay, eco-label, and attitude towards green purchasing had weaker positive relationships. The strongest correlation was found with overall green purchasing behavior, highlighting that awareness most significantly impacts actual purchasing actions.

The analysis indicates that age does not significantly influence these variables. The Kruskal-Wallis test results show no significant differences across age groups and gender identities. However, environmental concern and attitude towards the environment are significantly influenced by student year levels, suggesting that different stages of university education impact these aspects of green purchasing behavior.

Recommendations include integrating comprehensive environmental education programs throughout the academic journey to enhance environmental awareness and knowledge consistently, and developing targeted campaigns leveraging social influence to emphasize environmental responsibility and consumer effectiveness. Inclusive marketing strategies appealing to a broad spectrum of Generation Z individuals, continuous monitoring of green purchasing behaviors, and encouraging participation in sustainability initiatives are essential. Policy recommendations involve providing tax incentives for eco-friendly products,

collaborating with educational institutions to develop environmental education programs, launching public awareness campaigns using digital media, standardizing eco-labeling for easy identification of sustainable products, and investing in sustainable technology and product development.

Future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in green purchasing behaviors, broader demographic analysis, investigating the impact of digital media, and exploring the effectiveness of various behavioral interventions. These strategies can significantly influence the green purchasing behaviors of young consumers, contributing to broader environmental sustainability goals.

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