Promoting Green Consumption: Survey of Purchase Intentions towards Green Products among Young Indian Consumers

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on the intentions of the young Indian consumers towards green products.

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire was developed to collect the data from the 370 postgraduates of University of Jammu. The respondents were contacted using purposive sampling technique, criteria being usage of green products in the last one year and readiness to fill the questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), was used to analyze the data, with the assistance of the SPSS (17.0 version) and AMOS (16.0 version) respectively.

Findings – Based on the SEM results, perceived behavioural control was found to have more significant impact on purchase intentions of consumers towards green products as compared to subjective norms.

Practical implications –This study through its findings will assist marketers to frame holistic policies to differentiate green products from the conventional products and creating more positive intention to purchase more green products. The study suggested that in order to create strong purchase intentions towards green products among consumers, the marketers should adopt extensive logistics policies, rigorously disseminate the green product information, rate green products according to the paying ability of the consumers, hire celebrities for green advertising and publish the positive views of consumers about green products in the companies' magazines.

Originality/value – The empirical results of this study address the gap in the prevailing body ofliterature in reference to the green product purchase intentions. This study found the positive and significant impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

Keywords Intention towards green products, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms.

Introduction

At the present time, sustainability practices have become indispensable for the companies to upholdlong-lasting success and retain their loyal customers (Nam, Dong and Lee, 2017). This has impelled companies to adopt green policies in the production, pricing, promotion, product attributes and distribution activities in a bid to safeguard the natural resources for sustained business development (Gupta & Abbas 2013; Boztepe, 2012). The mounting popularity of sustainability around the world augments the pressure on global companies to seriously think about developing sustainable, eco-friendly or green products.'Green' is a catchphrase that is gaining gigantic importance among the present generation as 87% of people from various nations like Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the UK and the US have shown curiosity in reducing the adverse impact on the environment either by imbibing green habits or by making use of green products (Yusuf & Fatima, 2017). So, the augmented eco-consciousness among masses, enlarged supply of green products by companies, consumer &ecological protection offered by governmental entities, specific green marketing courses developed by universities and amplified number of research publications have resulted in the intense marketing of green products (Chen, 2008). But still there is a lack of universally accepted definition of green products in the existing literature. So, to facilitate an improved image of the conception of green product in the literature, Davis, Bovin & Julien (2010) have selected some apt definitions from the literature (Table I).

Table I: Definitions of Green products in the existing literature*

Year	Author(s)	Definition
2009	Albino, Balice and Dangelico	Green productsare designed to minimise the negative environmental impacts (excessive usage of nonrenewable resources, use of toxic materials and improper usage of renewable resource more than the rate of replenishment) during the whole product life-cycle.
2005	Gurau and Ranchhod	Green products are manufactured using toxic-free ingredients and environmentally-friendly procedures and are certified as such by a recognised organization, such as SKAL in the Netherlands, BIOKONTROL in Hungary, INAC, OKO-GARANTI or QCLI in Germany.
2002	Janssen and Jager	Green products are products with an eco-friendly design such that less physical resources are required during its life cycle.

1998	Ottman	Green products are typically durable, non toxic, made of recycled materials and packaged with recycled material.
1994	Davis	Environmentally friendly or ecologically safe products are either not harmful to or is beneficial to the environment.
1991	Weber	Products which claim to be environmentally friendly and biodegradable are known as green products.
1990	Schorsch	Green products are those products that: (a) are grown organically, (b) are made of natural ingredients (c) contain little or no phosphates and (d) are not tested on animals.

Source: Durif, F., Bolvin, c., & Julian, c. (2010). In search of a green product definition. InnovativeMarketing, 6(1), 25-33.

Thus, on the basis of above mentioned definitions, this study has included the products with the fivecorecharacteristics namely, naturally or organically grown ingredients, recyclable, reusable & biodegradable, no negative impact on environment & health, non-toxic material and eco-friendly packaging.

The overall market for green products is estimated to be worth $ 3.5 trillion by the year 2020 but despite the immense amount of green wakefulness, the market share of green products is still considerably diminutive in comparison to the well established market of non-green products (Biaz, Partal, & Benito, 2017; Rakesh & Lakshmi, 2015). As, several research investigations like Valecha, Mathur & Khanna (2018), Jaganath (2016) and Anvar & Venter (2014) showed that despite global consumers positive intentions for the environment but have failed to convert these green intentions into decisive green purchases. Thus, there is a gap between intentions and attitude of consumers towards green products and green purchase behaviour, which is referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap or values–action gap, under which 70% of consumers were awfully anxious about environmental issues but struggled to make the purchases of green products (Young, Hwang, McDonald & Oates, 2010). It is, therefore, indispensable to review the related literature and the work carried on by the different researchers for eliciting the factors that influence the intentions towards green products.

There is a handful of research studies in India focusing on the cognitive construct i.e. intention toward green products that too conceptual in nature and limited to few sectors. The present study explored the purchase intentions among young consumers toward green products in north India rich in bio-diversity and remained untouched by earlier researchers.

The heart of the study is the idealistic young green consumers as a major prospect for the progressive businesses. The study explored the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on intention toward green products. The study adds insights about intention toward green products to the extant literature and thereby offers a first glance into the complex green decision-making process.

Literature review

Theory of planned behaviour confirmed that intention is a pivotal determinant of actual behaviour and evidently proposed that intention to behave is directly controlled by two other factors than the attitude viz. subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Intention is the cognitive representation of an individual willingness to carry out a given behaviour and is reflected to be the antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The same is recognised by the Jaiswal & Singh (2017) and Minton & Rose (2007) that intention towards green products is a noteworthy forecaster of final green purchase decisions. Prakash & Pathak (2018) and Jaiswal & Kant (2018) further discovered that personal norms, environmental concern & willingness to pay have significantly influenced the intention of consumers towards green products.Feraz, Buhamra, Laroche and Veloso (2017) concluded that as the intention to purchase a green product amplifies there is increased likelihood that a consumer will in reality make the purchases. Anamaria (2016) also claimed that the positive intentions towards purchasing green products usually resulted in constructive green attitude-behaviour relationship. Varshneya, Pandey & Das (2017) found that green behavioural intentions are influenced by the person's beliefs, the social pressure to authenticate to the wishes of others or so called subjective norms (SN) and the perceived ability to carry out the deed which is also called perceived behavioural control (PBC). Under the present study, green purchase intentions are also represented by two dimensions SN and PBC which are already well accepted and applied by many academicians like Anamaria (2016), Hsu et al. (2016), Karatu and Mat (2015), Giang and Tran (2014), Kumar and Anand (2013) etc.

Subjective norms

Subjective norms broadly refer to person's own guesstimate of the social pressure to perform or not to perform the target behaviour and it is assumed to have two components which work in interaction: beliefs about how other people, who may be in some way important to the person, would like them to behave (normative beliefs) and the positive & negative judgements about each beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm demonstrates the degree to which aconsumer feels ethically conscientious for others by buying green products and accordingly, purchase intentionsof consumers would be elevated if others more optimistically

refer the same product (Barber, Bishop & Gruen, 2014; Kotler and Keller, 2006). So, while buying products, a subjective norm plays a handy role in reflecting the perception of consumers about the views of his or her close acquaintances about the products and his or her urge to conform to the referents (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009). Jaganath (2016) opined that subjective norms or social norms towards green consumption behaviour take account of pressure fromgovernments, green social movements, greencommunication and influencing groups (e.g., family, surrounding people, etc.) about whether or not to implement green consumption behaviour.A study on organic food by Chen(2007) indicated a momentous & positive relationship between subjective norm and intention of consumers to engage in that behaviour. Subjective norm is the perceived social force to perform or not to perform the specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Arttachariya (2012) and Varshneya et al. (2017) found that reference groups such as friends, neighbours, relatives and others on social network sites serve as a frame of suggestions for consumers in the green consumption decisions. Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) observed that the family remains a fundamental or dominant reference group in providing suggestions for its members about green products. The subjective norm strongly influences intention towards the purchase of green products and those with a higher degree of personal control tend to have stronger behavioural intention to engage in the green purchase behaviour (Kumar and Anand, 2013; Pastiu, 2013). In this study also argues that subjective norms would positively affect intentions of consumers towards green products and proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Intentions towards green products is significantly predicted by subjective norms.

Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to the degree of control that an individual perceives over performing the behaviour and includes factors such as the availability of time and money or the possession of required skills and the person's self-confidence in his or her ability to perform the act (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Cheng et al., 2006). Hsu et al. (2016) and Kim & Karpova (2010) remarked that perceived behavioural control embrace the barriers or facilitators to help the consumers in conducting green consumption behaviour such as availability of time, money, access to information and availability of the green products. Kirby & Delai (2016) and Kumar & Anand (2013) further strengthened the notion that purchase intention of consumers is positively impacted by psychographic variables, personal norms and social norms. Karatu & Mat (2015) and Konuk (2015) confirmed the positive relationship of green trust, perceived knowledge, perceived behavioural control, green availability & green price sensitivity with the intention towards green products. Danseh et al.

(2012) and Kim & Chung (2010) discovered a positive relationship between the four variables viz approach towards purchasing green products, perceived behavioural control & past green experiences and intention to purchase green products.Ajzen (1991), Roberts (1996) and Hsu et al. (2016) stated that the factors under PBC are indispensable because it could not be feasible for the consumers lacking required resources to indulge in the green purchase behaviour. This study also asserts that perceived behavioural control positively affect purchase intentions of consumers towards green products and thus put forwards the following hypothesis:

H2: Intentions towards green products is significantly predicted by perceived behavioural control*.*

On the basis of abovementioned literature, the proposed theoretical model developed (Fig. 1) is as under:
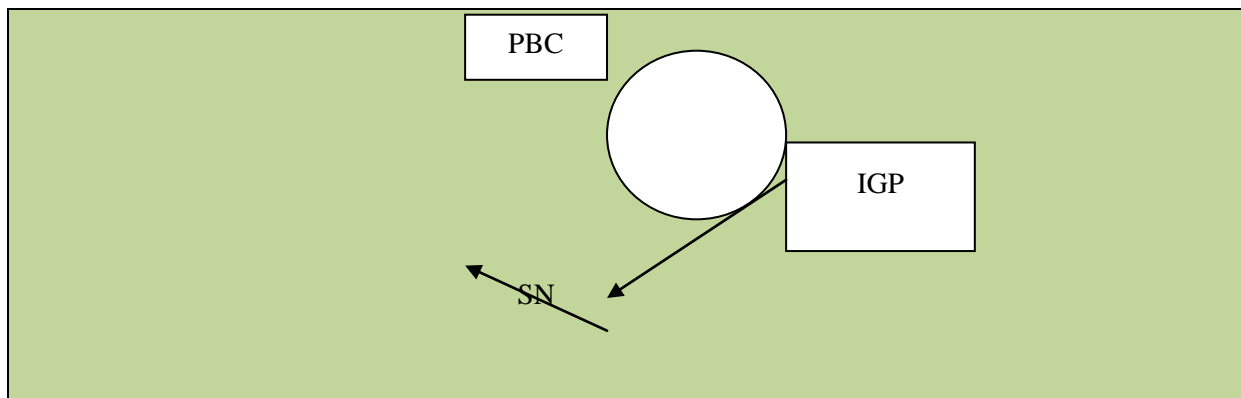

Figure 1: The proposed model

Keywords: IGP- Intentions towards green products,SN- Subjective norms and PBC- Perceived behavioural control.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For measuring the constructs of the study, relevant scale items from research studies have been used which were then accordingly modified with regard to language and need of the study. For data collection, both primary as well as secondary sources were used in the current study. Secondary data were extensively reviewed from relevant literature related to the research topic. For primary data collection, the 370 post graduate students of University of Jammu have been contacted using judgmental sampling, criteria being usage of green products in the last one year and readiness to fill the questionnaire. Q-Q plot was used to assess the normal structure of the data in SPSS (17.0) (Figure 2).
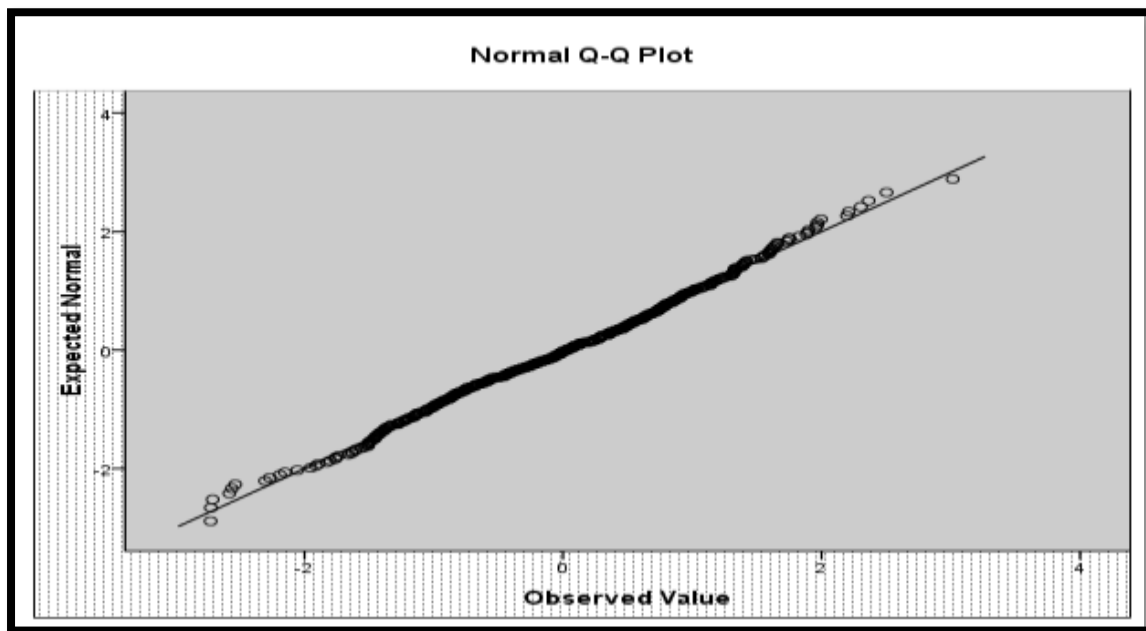
Figure 2: Normality through Q-Q plot

Exploratory factor analysis

After normalising the data, we applied EFA in SPSS (17.0) to pool down the large number of data into manageable and meaningful factor structure where KMO (> 0.60), communality values (> 0.50), mean values (>3.03), factor loading (≥ 0.60) and total variance explained confirmed the adequacy of the factorial structure so emerged in EFA (Table II). The number of statements retained after purification was subjective norms (13) and perceived behavioural control (13). Accordingly, the dimension subjective norms emerged with four factors namely, family views about green products, peer group influence, social expectations & opinions of reference group and the dimension perceived behavioural control also emerged with four factors i.e. green product information, ability to purchase, time needed to buy products & availability of products.

Table II: Summary of Results from Scale Purification of Constructs Using Rotated Component Method

Dimension	Factors	Statements	M.V.	S.D.	F.L.	C.	A
Subjective Norms (KMO=0.62)	**Factor 1: Family views about green products**						**0.83**
		SN6: People who are important to you would think that you should use green products	3.37	.824	.714	.635	
		SN7: Your parents influence you to purchase a green product	3.29	.944	.755	.705	
		SN14: Most people like you to buy green products	3.36	.971	.784	.755	
		SN15: Most of your family members approve of your decisions to buy green products	4.43	.968	.913	.684	
	Factor 2: Peer group influence						**0.85**
		SN8: Your peer group influence you to buy green products	4.35	1.10	.858	.823	
		SN9: Your peer group encourage you to buy green products	3.20	1.09	.804	.773	
		SN10: You feel social pressure to buy green products	3.12	1.17	.791	.666	
	Factor 3: Social expectations						**0.81**
		SN11: You try to pay attention to the reactions of others toward your behaviour about the green products	3.68	1.25	.835	.787	
		SN12: It's important for you to fit into the green group you are with	4.02	1.13	.873	.870	
		SN13: Your behaviour often depends on how you feel society wish you to behave about the green products	4.08	1.03	.812	.863	
	Factor 4: Opinions of reference group						**0.78**
		SN2: Positive views of your reference group develops your intention to buy green products	4.24	.890	.963	.843	
		SN3: You respect decisions made by your group about the usage of green products	3.95	.783	.771	.716	
		SN4: Green product users influence you often think that buying green is a good idea	3.70	.711	.861	.749	
Perceived Behavioural Control (KMO=0.78)	**Factor 1: Green product information**						**0.87**
		PBC7: You are confident that you are capable of indentifying and buying green products	3.58	.741	.878	.757	
		PBC8: You know where to buy green products	3.61	.767	.767	.776	
		PBC12: You have the resources, knowledge and the ability to buy the green products	3.46	.840	.775	.762	
		PBC17: You have sufficient time to purchase environmental friendly products	3.20	.882	.752	.664	
		PBC18: You have sufficient information and knowledge onenvironmental friendly products	3.83	.976	.853	.777	
	Factor 2: Ability to purchase						**0.73**
		PBC1: You have an adequate amount of money to buy the green products	3.97	.816	.961	.821	
		PBC2: Green products are difficult to buy	3.24	1.10	.868	.527	
		PBC6: You consider it acceptable to spend some extra money in order to purchase green products	3.17	1.06	.816	.761	
		PBC16: For you to get green products is convenient andeasy	3.08	1.21	.732	.661	
	Factor 3: Time needed to buy products						**0.81**
		PBC10: You can buy green products without spending much time	3.50	.876	.744	.755	
		PBC11: You think you have all the time you need to buy green products	3.25	.878	.878	.844	
	Factor 4: Availability of products						**0.76**
		PBC3: Green products are available only in few outlets	4.00	1.05	.942	.833	
		PBC5: You have to visit multiple stores to do your shopping for green products	4.28	.933	.743	.714	

Confirmatory factor analysis

After this, the emerged factorial structure was validated through CFA in AMOS (16.0) via measurement models. The items having SRW values less than 0.5 were deleted to make the model up to the prescribed goodness of fit criteria (Chi-square/df (< 5.0), RMR (< 0.08), RMSEA (< 0.08), CFI, GFI and AGFI (> 0.90)).Subsequently, under the dimension subjective norms, one factor (family views about green products) with four items namely, SN6 (People who are important to you would think that you should use green products), SN7 (Your parents influence you to purchase a green product), SN14 (Most people like you to buy green products) & SN15 (Most of your family members approve of your decisions to buy green products) and one factor (Time needed to purchase products) under the dimension perceived behavioural control with four items namely, PBC1 (You have an adequate amount of money to buy the green products), PBC6 (You consider it acceptable to spend some extra money in order to purchase green products), PBC10 (You can buy green products without spending much time) & PBC11 (You think you have all the time you need to buy green products) from perceived behavioural control dimension got deleted.Table II shows that the two models related to subjective norms & perceived behavioural control better fit according to the threshold criteria of Chi-square/df values (4.226 & 3.010), RMR (0.0460 & 0.018), RMSEA (0.060 & 0.047), AGFI (0.955 & 0.966), GFI (0.983 & 0.990) and CFI (0.986 & 0.992). Further, SRW value above 0.50, AVE above 0.70 (0.734 & 0.719), indicated that model were valid and CR values of above 0.70 (0.854 & 0.885) and alpha values of 0.75 & 0.80 made the models reliable(Table III).

Table III: Results of confirmatory factor analysis, reliability and validity of latent constructs

	Items	SRW	Cronbach alpha	AVE**	CR*	Fit indices
SUBJECTIVE NORMS						
Factor 1	Peer group influence	0.88				
	SN8	0.83				
	SN9	0.70				χ2/df =4.226
	SN10	0.51	0.75	0.734	0.854	RMR= 0.046
Factor 2	Social expectations	0.86				GFI= 0.983
	SN11	0.85				AGFI= 0.955
	SN12	0.76				CFI= 0.986
	SN13	0.70				RMSEA=0.060
Factor 3	Opinions of reference group	0.64				
	SN2	0.94				
	SN3	0.62				
	SN4	0.57				

PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL						
Factor 1	Green product information	0.82	0.80	0.719	0.885	χ2/df =3.010 RMR= 0.018 GFI= 0.990 AGFI= 0.966 CFI= 0.992 RMSEA=0.047
	PBC7	0.56				
	PBC8	0.52				
	PBC12	0.70				
	PBC17	0.73				
	PBC18	0.66				
Factor 2	Ability to purchase	0.60				
	PBC2	0.85				
	PBC16	0.80				
Factor 3	Availability of products	0.70				
	PBC3	0.91				
	PBC5	0.78				

Keywords: EA- Environmental attitude, PB- Personal benefits, GA- Green awareness, PC- Psychological characteristics, GPA- Green product attributes, SN= Subjective norms, PBC= Perceived behavioural control, GS= Green satisfaction, GL= Green loyalty, SRW-Standardised factor loading, X 2-chi-sqaure, RMR-Root mean square residual, GFI-Goodness of fit index, AGFI- Adjusted goodness of fit index, CFI-confirmatory fit index & RMSEA-root mean square.

*CR(Composite reliability)= (Sum of standardised loading)^2 / (Sum of standardised loading)^2 + (Sum of error variance).

**AVE (Average variance extracted) =Sum of squared standardised loadings / Sum of squared standardised loadings+ Sum of error variance

Structural equational modelling

SEM was used to explore the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on intentions of consumers towards green products. SEM model in figure 3 showed that subjective norms (β= 0.69, p< 0.05) and perceived behavioural control (β= 0.80, p< 0.005) are the significant dimensions of intention towards green products.The model is fitted well as illustrated by the fit indices, χ2/df = 2.546, RMR= 0.017, GFI= 0.997, AGFI= 0.980, RMSEA= 0.041, CFI= 0.993 (Table IV). These results confirmed our both hypotheses that Intentions towards green products is significantly predicted by subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.
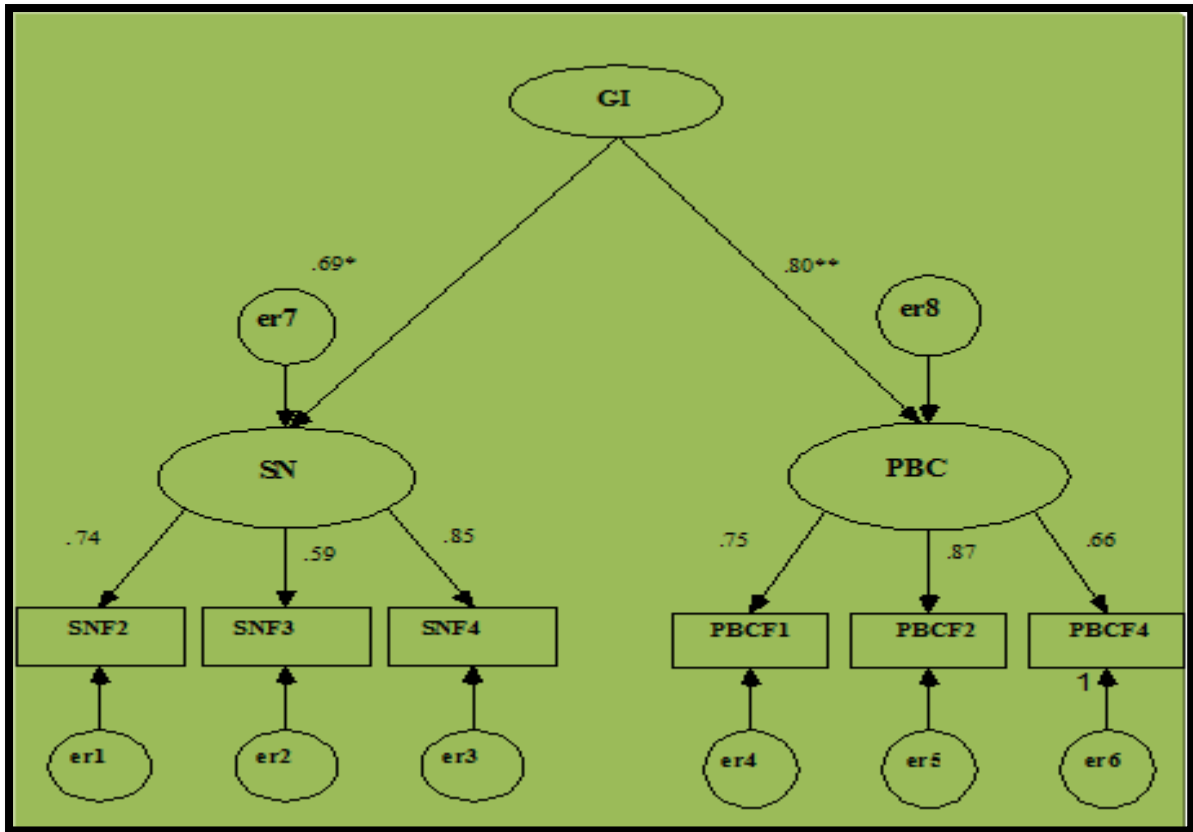
Figure 3: Impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on intention towards green products

Keywords:IGP= Intention towards green products,SN= Subjective norms, SNF2= Peer group influence, SNF3= Social expectations, SNF4= Opinions of reference groups, PBC= Perceived behavioural control, PBCF1= Green product information, PBCF2= Ability to purchase, PBCF4= Availability of products and er1-er8= error terms.

Table IV: Overall fitness of hypotheses tested

Fitness-index	Chi-square/df	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	CFI
Results	2.546	0.997	0.980	0.017	0.041	0.993
Notes:*GFI= Goodness-of-fit Index, AGFI= Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Indices, RMR= Root Mean Square, RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and CFI= Comparative Fit Index.*						

Discussion

This study assessed the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on purchase intentions of young consumers towards green products. The SEM approach accepted both the hypotheses; where it was found that subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have positive and significant impact on intentions of young consumers towards green product. Comparatively, perceived behavioural control (β= 0.80, p< 0.05) is

found to have a more positive influence on intentions towards green products than subjective norms ($\beta= 0.69$, $p< 0.05$).Someearlier studies such as the study on green food of Vermeir & Verbeke (2006), the study on organic food of Chen (2007), Nam et al. (2017), Giang (2014)and Robinson & Smith (2002) have also validated the significant and positive relationship between subjective norm and intention to undertake that behaviour.Moreover, there are equivalent conclusions from many studies viz., Taylor & Todd (1995), Giang (2014), Karatu & Mat (2015),Nam et al. (2017), Straughan & Robert (1999) and Vermeir & Verbeke (2008) that an individual's perceived ability to control and perform the behaviour has positive relationship with purchase intentions.

Conclusion and recommendations

CFA results pointed out the major contribution of factors like availability of green product (SRW= 0.82), green product information (SRW= 0.70) & ability to purchase (SRW= 0.60) in the perceived behavioural control construct. EFA results confirmed that the respondents reports moderate level of information about green products (M= 3.83), availability of green products in few outlets (M= 4.00), lack of sufficient time to find the green products (M= 3.25) and unwillingness to spend extra money on green products (M= 3.17). To encounter the difficulties in finding the green products in nearby places, green marketers should start with intensive distribution strategy so that green products are available at every small retail shop to big shopping malls and strive to cover small towns and even villages. Online green product companies like other prominent online shopping companies viz Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal etc. can make possible for the consumers to avail green products at the door steps without losing much time.Furthermore, the results indicated significant contribution of factors namely, peer group influence (SRW= 0.74), social expectations (SRW= 0.59) & opinions of reference groups (SRW= 0.85) in the subjective norm construct and respondents are not under any social pressure to use green products (M= 3.12).To inculcate the regular habits among youth to buy green products, marketers should organise campaigns to guide the parents and other family members to develop green habits among children like turning off lights and appliances when not in use, taking the bus to work, recycle the paper, glass & metals etc. In order to acquire the benefit of the celebrity influence on youth as opinion leaders, green marketers should contract with celebrities such as actors, cricketers and musicians as ambassadors for the promotion of green products. As already suggested by the Norazah, M.S. (2016) in his study related to green product purchase intentions that in order toenhance the intentions of consumers towards green products, companies should assertively use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. by circulating promising messages related to green products such as finer green product quality, product

ingredients and competitive prices. In the direction of exerting a pull on new customers, upbeat views of regular and trusted users of green products should be exhibited in print & digital media. Even the green companies should publish the photo & positive reviews of green committed consumers in the monthly magazines to boost the future green purchases.

The pragmaticresults of this study propose academic aid to the widespread theory on purchase intentions of consumers towards green products by conveying very constructive knowledge of the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on intentions of consumers toward green products. Likewise, the outcomes of this studyaddsworth mentioninginput into the marketing literature, whereby the factorsi.e., subjective norms and perceived behavioural control significantly have an effect on intentions of consumers toward green products. Previously, the comprehensive impact of these two factors on purchase intentions of Indian consumers toward green products has not been studied empirically. So this empirical research workwill facilitate the future researchers with the meticulous understanding of the purchase intentions of consumers towards green products.

Albeit this study has added new-fangledunderstanding into the intentional analysis of consumers towards green products, nevertheless some limitations have emerged and thus provide basis for future research. The current study was cramped to the university youth and thus in the future research common youth could be integrated in sample to perk up the generalisability of the results. Further, this study was carried out to analyse the impact of only two factors namely, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on purchase intentions of consumers towards green products, which necessitate that the impact of some other factors like attitude of consumers, green awareness, psychological characteristics of consumers etc. could be researched.

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