

## **Purchase Intentions of the University Students toward Green Products: A Literature Review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sustainability has been one of the contemporary themes due to many reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted sustainability in a broader sense. This had a major impact on the way people consume. Green purchasing being one such marketing activity, which involves buying products designed to have minimal environmental impact, is becoming increasingly significant as global awareness of environmental sustainability grows. Therefore, this study aimed to review related literature in purchase intentions toward green products specially focusing on university students which can firmly address the above contemporary environmental impact. Accordingly, the recent literature was comprehensively reviewed following the respective definitions for green products, green customers, and purchase intentions toward green products. This study also reviewed several theories and models related to purchase intentions. Then, the review identified five factors affecting purchase intentions as many authors suggested. They were environmental attitudes, product attributes, social influence, personal experience, and environmental knowledge. The literature provided evidence for the existence of the relationships between those factors and purchase intentions hence; the necessary hypotheses were derived accordingly. This review also revealed several other factors affecting the purchase intentions toward green products.

**Keywords:** Green Products, Purchase Intentions, University Students

### **1.0 Introduction**

Sustainability has become a contemporary requirement causing many reasons. Amongst, the COVID-19 pandemic impact is significant (Abbas et al, 2021; Begam et al., 2021; Mekonnen & Aragaw, 2021). This had a major impact on the way people consume. People ate less and focused on the main products causing the lockdowns. Hence, the demand for non-essential products was reduced, leading to lesser emissions from the production and delivery process (Le Quere et al., 2020). The growing consumption of personal protective equipment that included masks and gloves led to a high demand for waste disposal and recycling. Also, governments promoted working from home that minimized travelling and led to reduced carbon footprint. Many nations developed green policies as they attempt to move from the pandemic (Cohen, 2020). Amongst, marketing related activities and policies were also reshaped and modernized.

Green purchasing being one such marketing activity, which involves buying products designed to have minimal environmental impact, is becoming increasingly significant as global awareness of environmental sustainability grows. Recently passed years noted a shift towards more sustainable consumption patterns driven by heightened consumer consciousness and the urgent need to address environmental degradation (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). This shift is evident in various sectors,

including food, fashion, and electronics, where consumers are gradually prioritizing eco-friendly products over conventional ones. Understanding the factors that influence green purchase intentions is crucial for promoting sustainable consumption and mitigating environmental harm. Consequently, by identifying market opportunities and putting together creative resource combinations to pursue them, this strategy helps businesses create value in an environmentally friendly manner (Zahra & Dess, 2001; Antoncic et al., 2018).

## **2.0 Definitions of Key Terminologies**

### **2.1 Green Products**

Global warming, depletion of existing natural resources, overflowing of wastes, and increasing global and local pollution levels have become significant (Thilinika & Gunawardana, 2020). These are created by human activities which impact both directly and indirectly on the environment. Answering all these impacts, green products evolved as Srivastava (2007). Azevedo et al. (2011) identified these green products as having less impact on the environment and human health. They further highlighted the proofs on reducing harmful side effects, hazards, toxic substances, and health issues through green products while improving recyclability and environmental friendliness. Also, Maniatis (2015) explained the economic gains to the consumers through the improved recyclability in waste management. Thus, green products evolved creating minimum impact on the environment.

The substantive literature provided several definitions for green products. Amongst, Lee et al. (2020) introduced them as products or services that have been created, produced, and marketed with the primary purpose of avoiding adverse environmental impacts throughout their lifecycle. They were often referred to as eco-friendly or environmentally friendly products. These authors further distinguished these products by their lower resource consumption, lower pollution emissions, and less detrimental effects on ecosystems, compared to conventional alternatives. Comparing with traditional items, green products emphasize usually safer, healthier, and less harmful to the environment. They do not include any toxic compounds, pollutants, or dangerous chemicals that could endanger ecosystems or human health. Therefore, the use of sustainable, biodegradable, and non-toxic materials was prioritized in green products (Geng et al., 2012).

Definitions were also reviewed based on the identified characteristics of the green products. Amongst, many researchers identified significant characteristics of green products which distinguished those from the conventional ones. Green products were identified to be made with as little impact as possible on the environment, including waste production, water use, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy consumption. By using sustainable production methods and materials, they found to preserve ecosystems and natural resources (Charnley & Lemon, 2018). According to Hsu et al. (2021), durability and longevity were key design features of green products, which minimized waste production and the need for regular replacement. When compared to single-use or disposable products, they were designed to last longer, keep working overtime, and have less of an impact on the environment. Further, transparency and certifications also help to distinguish green items (Beynon et al., 2018). To give customers clear information about how environmentally friendly a product is, green items frequently go through eco-labeling or third-party certification. Moreover, the authors emphasized that the products bearing certifications like Energy Star, USDA Organic, and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) follow strict environmental requirements and regulations. Another definition was presented by Singh et al. (2019) considering resource efficiency as another key characteristic of green products. Accordingly, green products put resource efficiency first by encouraging recycling and reuse, reducing waste production, and making the most use of renewable

resources. To lessen reliance on scarce resources and prevent environmental deterioration, they were identified to be frequently made utilizing recycled materials or renewable resources.

This comprehensive literature review also provided several definitions based on the categories of green products. Appliances that use less energy while still meeting performance standards are called energy-efficient appliances. These included refrigerators, washing machines, and light bulbs. According to Sarkis et al. (2019), these items assisted minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, cut utility costs, and reduced electricity use. Also, clean, renewable energy is produced via renewable energy systems, which harness natural resources like sunshine, wind, and water. Examples of these systems are solar panels, wind turbines, and hydroelectric generators. According to Vassilieva et al. (2020), these systems could lower carbon emissions, provide sustainable fossil fuel substitutes, and advance energy independence. Moreover, products that are grown, harvested, and processed using ecologically friendly methods reducing the use of chemicals, preserving soil and water resources, and encouraging biodiversity are considered organic and sustainable food. Hughner et al. (2007) stated that these items were devoid of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Literature also reviewed definitions for green products significantly contributing to tackling climate change and alleviating environmental degradation by lowering resource consumption, pollution, and waste generation. They included biodiversity, ecological services, and preservation of natural ecosystems (Eckelman & Chertow, 2013).

Further, green products were defined to protect the public from dangerous chemicals, poisons, and pollutants that are frequently included in traditional items. To lower hazards to human health, they assisted in improving indoor conditions and fostering better living spaces (Rosenbaum et al., 2019). Thereby, businesses, entrepreneurs, and inventors can benefit financially from the market for eco-friendly products. Thus, increasing need for sustainable alternatives stimulates innovation, job creation, and investment in environmentally friendly technologies and sectors, hence promoting economic growth and competitiveness (Horbach & Rammer, 2019).

Based on the above literature review, green products can be identified as signifying a fundamental change in consumer behavior toward more ecologically friendly and sustainable practices. Green products are essential for advancing environmental preservation, public health, and economic growth. They are characterized by their lower environmental impact, resource efficiency, health and safety advantages, and transparency. Thus, green goods are anticipated to have a bigger influence on how people consume and produce goods in the future as consumer awareness and demand for sustainable alternatives rise.

## 2.2 Green Customers

Authors defined green customers emphasizing their interest in the environment as a common aspect. Therefore, a growing market sector known as "green customers," often referred to as "eco-conscious" or "environmentally friendly" consumers, is defined by their desire for goods and services that are consistent with their environmental beliefs and values. that display particular traits as buyers, such as a greater awareness of environmental concerns and a preference for goods and companies that share their environmental beliefs. Tanner and Kast (2003) defined green customers as those who practice sustainable consumption, which includes buying environmentally friendly goods, recycling, and resource conservation. According to their definition, green consumers show their dedication to environmental stewardship by the things they buy and how they live. According to Thøgersen (2004), people who are ecologically conscious but exhibit conflicting views and behaviors suffer from cognitive dissonance. By definition, to overcome this dissonance and preserve consistency in their behavior, green buyers look for and buy products that are consistent with their environmental ideals.

Further, these authors highlighted the willingness to pay for eco-friendly products hence; they presented several definitions linking the environmental concerns with the economic aspects. According to Laroche et al. (2001), "green customers" are those who prioritize buying environmentally friendly items because of their benefits to the environment and are willing to pay a premium for them. Thus, green customers are those who are prepared to spend more money on things that are environmentally friendly, even if it means paying a higher price. Also, Peattie (2001) defines "green customers" as buyers who are prepared to pay more for goods with advantageous environmental features. According to his description, green customers actively look for eco-friendly substitutes and are prepared to pay more for goods that share their beliefs, even if they are more expensive.

These differing interpretations demonstrate the complexity of green customers and the range of variables influencing their views and actions related to sustainability. Green customers have a broad range of interests and driving forces that influence their purchase decisions, from being prepared to pay more for ecologically friendly goods to practicing sustainable consumption practices.

Moreover, literature highlighted defining green consumers. Amongst, some authors suggested green consumers as the ones who consider environmental issues while supporting businesses to operate in an environmentally friendly manner (Chen & Chai, 2010; Renfro, 2010; Samarasinghe, 2012). Thus, they avoid consuming products creating harmful impact on the environment and their health. Further, green consumers also consider significant damages to the environment during the product manufacturing, creating harmful emissions and disposals, and using unnecessary amounts of energy (Samarasinghe, 2012). Therefore, they sign petitions, organize boycotts, and promote planet-saving preservation efforts to the businesses (Shaikh et al., 2023). Accordingly, the green consumers can be identified to be fully environmentally friendly in fulfilling their needs.

### .2.3 Purchase Intention toward Green Products

Researchers who studied consumer behavior and environmental sustainability have focused a lot of attention on purchase intention toward green items, which is an important component of consumer behavior. Chen (2011) identified the society and the public concern on environmental issues created by themselves and industrial activities. Thus, various scholars have presented different definitions of purchasing intention for green items. According to Chen and Chai (2010), a consumer's subjective likelihood or willingness to acquire environmentally friendly products is what they characterize as their purchasing intention toward green products. They stressed how crucial it was to comprehend consumers' intents to buy environmentally friendly products as a way to forecast their real behavior. Erdil (2018) and Yadav and Pathak (2017) mentioned that consumers' propensity to make future purchases of environmentally friendly goods was what they referred to as their purchasing intention toward green items. They drew attention to how customer attitudes, convictions, and perceptions influence their propensity to make green product purchases. According to Biswas et al. (2021), a buyer's desire to acquire environmentally friendly products was defined as their propensity to buy goods that they believe to possess favorable environmental qualities. They drew attention to how crucial customer perceptions of product quality, cost, and environmental benefits are in influencing their propensity to buy.

A consumer's intention to participate in environmentally friendly purchasing behavior is their purchase intention toward green products. Bock et al. (2020) placed a strong emphasis on how perceptions of consumer efficacy, environmental consciousness, and belief in green claims affected purchasing intentions. According to Lee et al. (2010), a consumer's intention to purchase environmentally friendly items was determined by their values and environmental concerns. They

placed a strong emphasis on how buying intentions were influenced by perceived product features and environmental attitudes. Usmani et al. (2015) also stressed the same idea, mentioning that the consumer's decision to buy green products was positively affected by the inner desire and willingness to purchase less environmentally detrimental products. Therefore, through these efforts, green customers show their eco-friendly behavior as a critical factor in predicting future purchases of products (Mei et al., 2012).

Literature revealed several authors defining purchase intention based on cognitive aspects. Amongst, Hansen et al. (2017) introduced this term as "something obtained from the learning process and thought processes forming perceptions toward purchasing". Therefore, this buying interest motivated consumers continuously recording in their own minds hence; they create a strong desire to get products which can fulfill their needs with self-actualization. Also, Kotler and Keller (2016) explained purchase intentions as self-arisen feelings and attention of the consumers after they received necessary information about the product hence; stimulated. These results create desire to try products and finally to buy them.

Moreover, literature possessed many definitions for purchase intentions of green products including environmental concerns, knowledge on environment, self-beliefs and attitudes, motivation, and needs and wants (Mei, 2012; Chan & Lau, 2000). Therefore, these differing definitions highlight how purchasing intentions for green items are multifaceted and how several circumstances affect customers' propensity to buy eco-friendly alternatives.

### **3.0 Theories Related to Purchase Intentions**

Applications of behavioral and psychological theories are necessary to comprehend purchase intentions, especially when considering customer behavior toward environmentally friendly items. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable understanding of the variables that impact people's propensity to purchase specific goods.

#### **3.1 The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB):**

According to Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, behavioral intentions are shaped by three primary elements: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control relates to ideas about one's capacity to carry out the action, subjective norms are views of societal pressures to engage or not engage in the behavior, and attitudes are people's assessments of the behavior in question. Using the TPB in the context of green products, researchers have determined how people's intentions to buy are influenced by their beliefs about environmental preservation, social norms surrounding sustainability, and their sense of control over their green purchasing decisions (Ajzen, 1991).

Further, the concept of purchasing was linked with psychology extensively using in behavioral studies (Dodd & Supa, 2011). Accordingly, purchase intention was characterized as a behavioral tendency in purchasing green products (Monroe & Krishnan, 1985) while Tan (1999) introduced it as an important indicator of actual purchasing Decision. Literature provided evidence emphasizing the same idea stating this as a common measure to assess the respective effectiveness (c). Based on these reviews, the TPB can be used to get a proper understanding of purchase intentions.

Moreover, the TPB was used to analyze the existing relationships among the related constructs and purchase intentions. Thus, the theory focused on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls that would measure purchasing intentions. Moreover, feelings and specific

behavior of the consumers would be affected by these respective attitudes, peers, and perceived behavioral controls. Thus, Ajzen (1991) emphasized the necessity of the TPB in understanding respective consumer behaviors. This would allow marketers to improve their abilities in predicting consumer behaviors based on above measures. Therefore, they can gain a significant amount of benefits providing necessary information of the products to be promoted. Accordingly, the TPB was reviewed that these measures could be used to predict purchase intentions and ensure the purchasing behavior.

### 3.2 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA):

Ajzen (1991) also identified the TRA as one of the most widely investigated models by the social psychologists. Thus, he put forth the TRA, which is comparable to the TPB but focuses more on attitudes and subjective norms. According to TRA, people's intentions regarding behavior are determined by their attitudes toward the activity and the subjective standards that surround it. Subjective norms record impressions of societal pressures or expectations related to behavior, whereas attitudes represent people's assessments of the behavior. Studies have used TRA to investigate how customers' intentions to buy eco-friendly products are influenced by their views toward environmental issues and social norms surrounding green purchasing (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

### 3.3 Innovations Theory:

Rogers (2003) created this theory to describe how novel concepts, goods, and practices proliferate throughout a community. Based on their inclination to accept innovations, people are categorized as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. According to this hypothesis, a consumer's intention to buy a green product may depend on where they are in the adoption curve. Due to their receptivity to new ideas and behaviors, innovators and early adopters may have stronger intentions to buy green items, but the majority may be swayed by societal norms and perceived benefits (Rogers, 2003).

### 3.4 Cognitive Dissonance Theory:

According to Leon Festinger's theory, people feel uncomfortable when their attitudes or beliefs don't match what they're doing. People may adjust their attitudes or behaviors to better reflect their beliefs in an effort to ease this pain. When considering eco-friendly products, buyers could feel dissonant if their selections to buy seem at odds with their environmental principles. They might decide to change their plans to buy or look for goods that more closely match their values resulting from this disparity (Festinger, 1957).

### 3.5 Social Cognitive Theory:

This theory developed by Bandura (1986) places a strong emphasis on how social influence, imitation, and observational learning shape behavior. It implied that people pick up knowledge from watching others and modify their actions in response to the results and repercussions they experience. Social norms, role models, and environmental activism are examples of social cognitive factors that can affect customers' purchase intentions in the context of green products by influencing how they perceive these products and their ability to promote sustainability (Bandura, 1986).

These theories offer helpful frameworks for comprehending the social factors and psychological mechanisms underlying purchasing intentions. Researchers and marketers can create strategies to encourage sustainable consumption practices and obtain insights into consumer decision-making processes by utilizing these theories.

#### **4.0 The Necessity of Studying on Purchase Intentions of the University Students**

Today, the world is struggling with a global issue that has arisen through pandemic dimensions. A negative impact of COVID-19 has created a great threat on the world wide environment and social contexts (Jayasekara et al., 2020). Thus, many marketing functions have already started advancing. Therefore, green purchasing has become immersed to address the environmental aspects. Environmental sustainability is an emerging concept to reduce the environmental impact created by businesses. This concept is defined as an activity of addressing issues in environmental and social aspects while providing innovative solutions for them (Jayasekara et al., 2020). Furthermore, it should be extended toward sustainability aspects. Amongst, few examples applying in purchasing products adopting the green philosophy can be highlighted as follows.

- Green publishing- This lays a basis focusing on human living in an environmental friendly manner using technology through environmental blogs.
- Package free shopping- This introduces package free options for products hence; to minimize the plastic and polythene consumption in packaging.
- Green materials for construction- This introduces sustainable construction materials and value adding products for buildings and construction industries.
- Handmade all-natural/ organic products- This introduces chemical-free and natural or organic products to prevent environmental harm.

Therefore, this emerging recognition is timely necessitated and can move the marketing environment to a new paradigm assuring its sustainability.

Moreover, social marketing in higher education institutes and communities can shape the intended behavior of wanting to advance purchase intentions toward green products. The notion of "Green adopted social marketing" aims to instill purchasing intentions of customers and encourage them to act as Green adopted. Effective social marketing of the most important target segment can lead to the growth of Green purchasing. To ensure that programs related to purchasing of green products should be introduced while Green purchasing in social marketing can employ a partnership and policy strategy in addition to university-based entrepreneurship and marketing related teaching. Thereby, the difficulty in influencing the target segments of different categories to behave in certain ways should be acknowledged.

Moreover, research in Green purchasing is very hard to find in the Sri Lankan context (Jayasekara et al., 2020). Thus, researching in this field is a contemporary requirement in the local academia. Also, the higher education sector of the country is seeking further advancements incorporated to the existing structure. The Sri Lankan universities have not yet attempted this much since the Green concept is still new and emerging (Jinendri & Chandrasekara, 2017). Though few marketing-related and entrepreneurial courses are available in the present academic curricula, the university education does not provide sufficient level of knowledge and skills for Green entrepreneurship. Jinendri and Chandrasekara (2017) investigated the awareness of the students in one Sri Lankan state university. These authors found that the majority was aware of the green concept but the minority was aware of its applicability. Thus, Sri Lankan universities need to rethink their academic programmes. This necessity is highlighted in the current Covid-19 pandemic environment in Sri Lanka. Developing and continuing relationships with industries, working on virtual bases hence; the insufficient

practical experience of both the academic courses and technology transfer and insufficient motivation toward ecological work have become challenged (Jinendri & Chandrasekara, 2017). Also, less number of industry recruitments creates less job opportunities (Sudyasjayanti, 2017). Thus, intention toward Green entrepreneurship is a timely need to minimize unemployment of the graduates.

## **5.0 Factors Affecting Purchase Intention toward Green Products**

A wide range of factors, from personal traits to environmental concerns and product aspects, impacts consumers' intention to purchase green products, which include ecologically friendly goods and services. To encourage sustainable purchasing habits, businesses, marketers, and legislators must have a thorough understanding of these factors. Therefore, this study reviewed the main variables influencing consumers' intentions to buy environmentally friendly items, which were supported by literature.

### **5.1 Environmental Attitudes**

People who have a good attitude toward the environment are more willing to buy environmentally friendly products and solve environment related problems (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). Therefore, environmental attitudes are important in making decisions by customers. Also, customers who value environmental sustainability and show a greater awareness of environmental issues are more likely to choose environmentally friendly items (Chang et al., 2019). Fazio (1995) defined attitudes as an interaction in memory created between an identified product and its evaluation summary. Accordingly, attitudes of consumers can be used to conduct a psychological assessment of any product. This study could review related studies focusing on the relationship between such attitudes and purchasing intention of the consumers. Amongst, Irland et al. (2003) concluded that customers' purchasing intention was affected by their environmental attitudes. Moreover, Tsen et al. (2006) identified these environmental attitudes that played a major role in creating purchasing intention toward green products. Therefore, this study found evidence for the existence of a relationship between environmental attitudes and purchasing intentions of the customers. Further, Mostafa (2007) found this relationship to be positive among many cultures. Therefore, the customers are more likely to make a purchase because they believe that green items reflect their values and views. Accordingly, the study possessed the following hypothesis.

H<sub>1</sub>: Environmental attitudes have a positive relationship with purchasing intention toward green products.

### **5.2 Product Attributes**

Literature also discussed the impact of product attributes on purchase intention. Product attributes were defined as the physical properties of a product that are quantitative and measurable (Forbes, 2008). Further this author reviewed the most recent definition including all evaluation criteria which were both objective and physical properties. When purchase intention is high, this criterion involves more attributes. Thus, researchers suggested that the number of product attributes were decided based on the consumers' requirement level. Amongst, authors have considered different sets of product attributes such as brand, quality, price, packaging, labeling, and complementary services. Kotler and Keller (2012) used product design, quality, packaging design, and other features as the product attributes. When products are purchased, the consumers evaluate products based on the strength of various attributes hence; purchase decision is taken. Also, Armstrong and Kotler (2009)

stated that these evaluation criteria can be both favourable and unfavourable. However, they should ensure environmental protection. Therefore, product attributes are well predictors of pro-environmental behavior (Padel & foster, 2005).

However, many authors found a significant positive relationship between product attributes and purchase intentions in this decision-making process (Florenthal & Arling, 2011; Erdil, 2018). The perceptions of the features have a big impact on whether or not people decide to buy them. Based on eco-labeling, certifications (such organic or fair trade), recyclability, energy efficiency, and other environmental aspects, consumers assess green products (Yilmaz & Ergin, 2021). Accordingly, this study reviewed that consumers were more likely to be interested in and motivated to make purchases of things that they believe offer environmental benefits, such as a smaller carbon footprint or less of an ecological impact. Based on these reviews, the study possessed the following hypothesis.

H<sub>2</sub>: Product attributes have a positive relationship with purchasing intention toward green products.

### 5.3 Social Influences

Purchase intentions for green items are significantly influenced by social norms and peer pressure (Forbes, 2008; Han et al., 2010). They can include relatives, friends, colleagues, and other business partners (Han et al., 2010). People's aspirations to engage in sustainable consumption can be strengthened by positive attitudes and behaviors in social networks. People are more inclined to purchase environmentally friendly products if they believe they are getting social approbation or see others in their social circles making eco-friendly decisions (Wu et al., 2020). Furthermore, the impact of subjective standards on purchase intentions might be amplified by peer recommendations and social media endorsements.

However, past studies proved that social influence creates a positive impact on purchase intentions toward sustainable and green products. Amongst, Ewing (2001) identified a significant impact of social influence on improving the motivation of environmentally friendly behavior. This can be caused by the characteristics of each social groups attempting to share their own thinking, desires, and habits which are supporting eco-friendly behavior. Some studies assumed that social influence significantly affect green purchase behavior in developed countries (Costa et al., 2021). This provided evidence for the level of social influence to be vital. Therefore, considering the above literature reviews, this study possessed the following hypothesis.

H<sub>3</sub>: Social influences have a positive relationship with purchasing intention toward green products.

### 5.4 Personal Experience

Future aspirations are shaped by individual experiences with environmentally friendly products and past purchasing history. Intentions to keep buying green products are reinforced by positive experiences and pleasure with them (Wu et al., 2020). Positive views and intentions toward green products are further reinforced by brand loyalty and repeat purchases. Accordingly, literature was reviewed identifying the personal experience affecting purchase intentions to be multi-dimensional. Literature revealed these dimensions as behavioral, cognitive, sensory, and social customers' responses (Schallehn et al., 2019; Schmitt, 1999). Therefore, personal experience has a high impact on purchase intentions in many ways hence; it can be considered as memorable in marketing. Also, the ultimate goal of having a good customer experience is to provide a good service which is well-

fit to the customers' expectations (Esmailpour & Mohseni, 2019). Thus, based on the above evidence, the study possessed the following hypothesis.

H<sub>4</sub>: Personal experience has a positive relationship with purchasing intention toward green products.

## 5.5 Environmental Knowledge

Knowledge is a key determinant of customers' decision making toward purchasing green products. Purchase intentions for green products are influenced by consumer knowledge and awareness of sustainability techniques and environmental challenges. Research indicated that knowledgeable customers with a thorough understanding of environmental matters are more likely to acknowledge the significance of sustainable consumption and indicate their desire to purchase eco-friendly items (Kaiser & Gutscher, 2003). Thus, the level of environmental knowledge of the customers would determine the number of environmental issues created by their purchasing of green products. Maichum et al. (2017) reviewed that environmental knowledge supports to create necessary attitudes to purchase and consume green products hence; environmental sustainability is ensured. Moreover, these authors emphasized that environmental knowledge is the key element in the decision-making process of young customers who are the base of this study.

Consumers' buying intentions can be stimulated by increasing their understanding of the advantages of eco-friendly items through environmental education and awareness-raising efforts. Thus, they can address environmental issues using the environmental knowledge. Also, their awareness level gives rise to the environmental attitudes which would lead them toward green purchases. Maichum et al. (2017) supported this same idea revealing the awareness of consuming green products to be an essential part to create environment related ethics hence; the subsequent changes in their purchasing behavior have happened. Therefore, environmental knowledge was proved to have a positive relationship with purchase intention toward green products (Erdil, 2018; Maichum et al., 2017; Ewing, 2001; Noor et al., 2012). Based on this literature evidence, this study possessed the following hypothesis.

H<sub>5</sub>: Environmental knowledge has a positive relationship with purchasing intention toward green products.

## 6.0 Other Factors Affecting Purchase Intentions toward Green Products

### 6.1 Personal Beliefs and Values

Purchase intentions for environmentally friendly products are highly influenced by personal beliefs about social responsibility, sustainability, and environmentalism. Customers that place a high priority on these principles are more likely to say that they intend to buy eco-friendly products. According to Stern (2000), people who have high environmental values are more likely to believe that using green products will help them meet their moral and ethical commitments, which will increase their propensity to make a purchase.

### 6.2 Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

People's intentions to buy environmentally friendly products are influenced by their perception of their ability to positively impact the environment through their purchases. Green product purchases are more likely to be expressed by consumers who believe that they are powerful change agents

(Hair et al., 2012). Customers are more inclined to support environmentally friendly brands and products when they believe in their own abilities.

### 6.3 Price Sensitivity and Economic Factors

Intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products are influenced by both price sensitivity and economic factors. While some consumers could be ready to pay more for environmentally friendly products and value such factors over price, others might be limited by financial considerations (Chan et al., 2019). Consequently, purchasing intentions are highly influenced by the perceived value proposition of environmentally friendly items in relation to their cost.

### 6.4 Trust and Credibility

Purchase intentions for environmentally friendly items are significantly influenced by consumer confidence in green claims, environmental certifications, and corporate responsibility programs. According to Biswas et al. (2021) customers are more likely to make purchases from reliable and respectable firms that show a sincere dedication to sustainability. Various elements including open and honest communication, social responsibility programs, and environmental compliance support the development of trust and increase purchase intents.

### 6.5 Availability and Accessibility

A product's propensity to be purchased is greatly influenced by its availability and accessibility on the market. Purchase intentions are positively impacted by more readily available and easily accessible green alternatives (Chan, 2019). Through partnerships with sustainability-focused groups, distribution networks, and effective marketing, retailers and manufacturers can increase the availability of environmentally friendly products.

## 7.0 Conceptual Research Framework

Based on the above reviews and possessed hypotheses, this study developed the following conceptual research framework as depicted in Figure 1. Accordingly, the independent variables included Environmental attitudes, product attributes, social influence, personal experience and environmental knowledge whereas the dependent variable was green purchase intention of university students in Sri Lanka. This model asserted that there is a positive association between each of the five independent factors and the green purchase intention of university students in Sri Lanka.

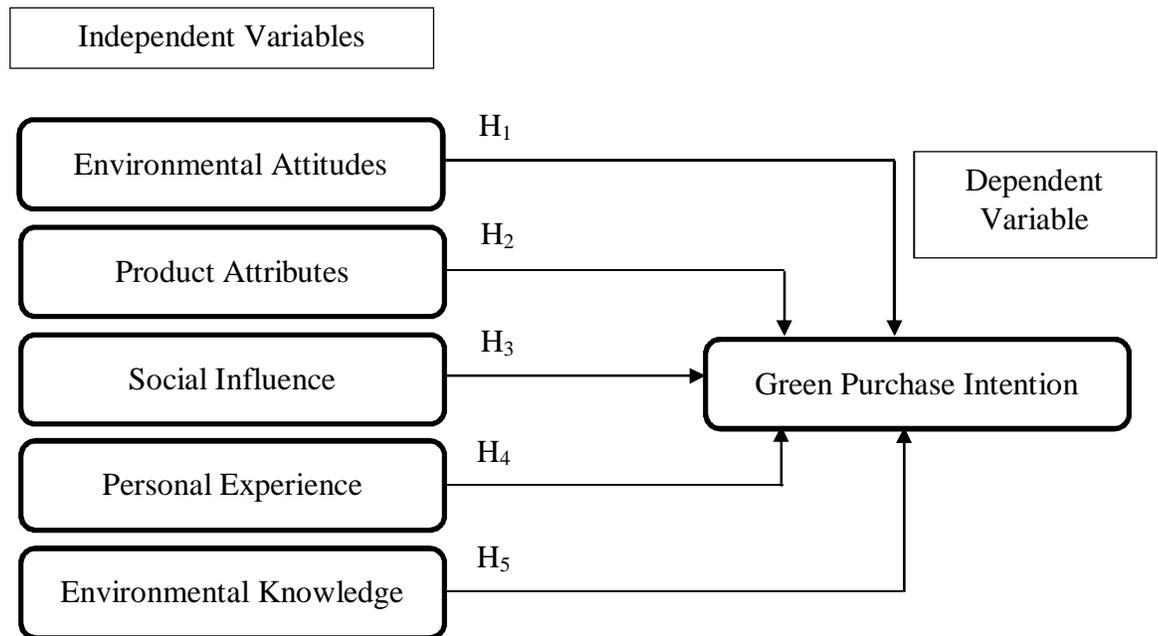


Figure 1: Conceptual Research Framework

## 9.0 Conclusions

This study gave the emphasis on the environmental impact caused by today's industry hence; serving the environment has become a contemporary requirement. Therefore, this paper comprehensively reviewed related recent literature and found evidence for the current impact of such industrial and human activities. Accordingly, the definitions were first reviewed to get a precise understanding on green products, green customers, and their intentions toward purchasing green products. This paper also presented reviewed theories for purchase intentions and followed by the factors affecting purchase intentions toward green products. Accordingly, environmental attitudes, product attributes, social influences, personal experience, and environmental knowledge were identified as those factors hence; the necessary hypotheses were derived for continuing the study. Moreover, several other factors were also presented at the end of this substantive literature review.

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