



Consumer Attitudes and Preferences Toward Eco-Friendly Products: Evidence from Gen Z in South India.

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Abstract – The growing emphasis on environmental sustainability has significantly influenced consumer purchasing behavior, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z), who are increasingly recognized as environmentally conscious consumers. This study investigates the attitudes and preferences of Gen Z consumers toward eco-friendly products in South India. The primary objective is to examine the factors influencing their purchasing decisions and assess the role of environmental awareness, green attitudes, social media influence, and willingness to pay a premium in shaping purchase intentions. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 213 Gen Z respondents using a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that Gen Z consumers exhibit positive attitudes toward eco-friendly products and demonstrate a strong sense of environmental responsibility. Environmental awareness and green attitudes were found to significantly influence purchase intentions, while social media emerged as an important source of information and motivation for sustainable consumption. The results also indicate significant demographic differences in consumer attitudes, particularly with respect to gender and income. Furthermore, consumers with higher environmental awareness reported a greater likelihood of purchasing eco-friendly products. The study concludes that Gen Z consumers in South India represent a promising market segment for sustainable products and that businesses should focus on green marketing strategies, environmental education, and affordable product offerings to encourage eco-friendly consumption. The findings contribute to the existing literature on green consumer behavior and provide practical insights for marketers, policymakers, and sustainability practitioners.

Keywords – Generation Z, Eco-Friendly Products, Consumer Attitudes, Consumer Preferences, Green Purchase Intention, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Consumption, Green Marketing, South India, Consumer Behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability has emerged as one of the most significant global concerns of the twenty-first century. Increasing environmental degradation, climate change, resource depletion, and pollution have prompted governments, businesses, and consumers to adopt more sustainable practices. In response to these challenges, eco-friendly products have gained considerable attention in both developed and developing economies. Eco-friendly products are designed, manufactured, distributed, and disposed of in ways that minimize negative environmental impacts while promoting sustainable consumption patterns. The growing demand for such products reflects a shift in consumer consciousness toward environmental responsibility and ethical consumption (Prakash et al., 2023).

The concept of green consumption has evolved from a niche market trend into a mainstream consumer movement. Modern consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental consequences of their purchasing decisions and are seeking products that align with their personal values and sustainability goals. Studies indicate that environmental concerns significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward green products, resulting in greater willingness to adopt environmentally responsible purchasing behaviors (Vijayasree et al., 2022). However, despite growing awareness, a substantial gap often exists between consumers' positive attitudes toward eco-friendly

products and their actual purchasing behavior, commonly referred to as the green attitude-behavior gap (Sood & Tuli, n.d.).

Among different demographic groups, Generation Z (Gen Z), generally defined as individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has emerged as a particularly influential consumer segment in the sustainability marketplace. Having grown up in an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, social media connectivity, and increased environmental awareness, Gen Z consumers demonstrate unique consumption patterns and value systems compared to previous generations. Research suggests that Gen Z consumers exhibit stronger environmental consciousness and are more likely to support sustainable products and brands than older generations (Ghouse et al., 2025; Ewe & Tjiptono, 2023).

The increasing purchasing power of Gen Z has made this generation a focal point for marketers seeking to promote eco-friendly products. Studies have shown that Gen Z consumers actively consider environmental impacts during purchase decisions and are willing to support brands that demonstrate genuine sustainability commitments (Vaishnavi et al., 2024). Their purchasing decisions are often influenced by factors such as environmental concern, green product quality, perceived value, social influence, and brand sustainability initiatives (Srivastava, 2025). Furthermore, Gen Z consumers tend to rely heavily on digital platforms and social media channels for information regarding sustainable products, making them more



responsive to innovative green marketing strategies and digital engagement efforts (Kokiladevi & Malarvizhi, n.d.). Previous studies have explored various dimensions of green consumption among younger generations. Ewe and Tjiptono (2023) found that Gen Z consumers in emerging markets demonstrate distinct behavioral differences when choosing between eco-friendly and conventional products. Similarly, Ghouse et al. (2025) highlighted that both Generation Y and Generation Z exhibit growing commitment toward sustainable consumption, although Gen Z displays stronger environmental values and expectations from brands. Research conducted in India further supports the notion that younger consumers are increasingly motivated by sustainability concerns when making purchasing decisions (Kumar et al., 2026).

Price sensitivity remains an important consideration in the adoption of eco-friendly products. Although many Gen Z consumers express favorable attitudes toward sustainability, their willingness to pay premium prices for green products varies significantly. Deshmukh and Pasumarti (2025) reported that while Gen Z consumers generally support environmentally friendly products, actual purchase decisions are often influenced by affordability, perceived quality, and product accessibility. Likewise, Sivan and Balakrishnan (2026) found that promotional appeals and sensory marketing cues significantly affect consumers' willingness to pay more for green cosmetic products.

Several sector-specific studies have provided valuable insights into Gen Z's green consumption behavior. Sonkar et al. (2025) examined preferences toward green cosmetics and observed increasing consumer interest in environmentally responsible beauty products. Similarly, Tran et al. (2022) investigated eco-friendly fashion consumption among Gen Z consumers and identified factors such as price-value perceptions, customer satisfaction, and pro-environmental behavior as significant determinants of green purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products vary across product categories but are generally influenced by perceived environmental benefits and personal values.

Generational comparisons have also contributed significantly to understanding sustainable consumption. Bolgi (2023) found notable differences in attitudes toward eco-friendly products across generational cohorts, indicating that younger consumers demonstrate greater environmental concern than older generations. Verma et al. (2025) further observed differences between Generation Y and Generation Z regarding purchase intentions toward recycled products, highlighting the moderating influence of demographic and psychological factors. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2026) reported variations in perceptions of environmentally sustainable brands among Generations X, Y, and Z, emphasizing the unique characteristics of Gen Z consumers.

In the Indian context, sustainable consumption has gained considerable momentum due to increasing environmental awareness, government initiatives, and the growing availability of green products. Research conducted by Prakash et al. (2023) revealed that consumers in South India exhibit positive perceptions and preferences toward eco-friendly products, although misconceptions and myths regarding product effectiveness and pricing continue to influence purchasing behavior. Furthermore, Vijayasree et al. (2022) demonstrated that environmental awareness, social responsibility, and product knowledge significantly affect green product consumption in India.

South India presents a particularly relevant setting for examining Gen Z consumers' attitudes toward eco-friendly products. The region is characterized by rapid urbanization, higher literacy rates, expanding digital connectivity, and increasing exposure to sustainability-related information. Additionally, the growing presence of environmentally conscious businesses and green product markets has created favorable conditions for sustainable consumption. Understanding the attitudes and preferences of Gen Z consumers in this region can provide valuable insights for policymakers, marketers, and businesses seeking to promote sustainable consumption practices.

Although previous studies have extensively examined green consumer behavior, there remains a need for region-specific investigations focusing on Gen Z consumers in South India. Existing research has largely concentrated on broad generational comparisons, specific product categories, or national-level analyses, leaving a gap in understanding the unique attitudes, preferences, and purchasing motivations of Gen Z consumers within the South Indian context. Therefore, this study seeks to examine consumer attitudes and preferences toward eco-friendly products among Gen Z consumers in South India. The study aims to identify key factors influencing their purchasing decisions, evaluate their willingness to adopt sustainable products, and provide recommendations for enhancing green marketing strategies and sustainable business practices.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on green consumer behavior and sustainable marketing while offering practical implications for businesses seeking to engage environmentally conscious young consumers. As Gen Z continues to emerge as a dominant consumer segment, understanding their attitudes and preferences toward eco-friendly products becomes essential for fostering sustainable consumption and achieving broader environmental sustainability objectives.

Research Questions

1. RQ1: What are the attitudes of Gen Z consumers in South India toward eco-friendly products?
2. RQ2: What factors influence the purchase preferences of Gen Z consumers for eco-friendly products?



3. RQ3: How does environmental awareness affect the purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers toward eco-friendly products?
4. RQ4: What is the level of willingness among Gen Z consumers to pay a premium price for eco-friendly products?
5. RQ5: How do product quality, price, availability, and brand reputation influence Gen Z consumers' preferences for eco-friendly products?
6. RQ6: What role do social media and digital marketing play in shaping Gen Z consumers' attitudes toward eco-friendly products?
7. RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, income, and occupation) and Gen Z consumers' attitudes toward eco-friendly products?
8. RQ8: What are the major barriers preventing Gen Z consumers from purchasing eco-friendly products regularly?
9. RQ9: How do sustainability concerns and environmental values influence the purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers?
10. RQ10: What strategies can marketers adopt to increase the adoption and consumption of eco-friendly products among Gen Z consumers in South India?

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the attitudes and preferences of Generation Z consumers toward eco-friendly products in South India. A descriptive and analytical research approach was employed to understand consumer perceptions, purchasing preferences, environmental awareness, and factors influencing the adoption of eco-friendly products. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate as it facilitates the collection of measurable data from a large number of respondents and enables statistical analysis of consumer behavior patterns.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consisted of Generation Z consumers residing in South India. Gen Z was defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, representing consumers who are increasingly influential in shaping sustainable consumption trends. Respondents were selected from various states of South India, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. A total of 213 respondents participated in the study. The sample size was deemed adequate for conducting descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique, as it allowed efficient access to Gen Z consumers through educational institutions, social networking platforms, and online survey distribution channels.

Data Collection

The study utilized primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on previous studies related to green consumer behavior, environmental attitudes, and eco-friendly product preferences. It consisted of two sections:

1. Demographic Information

- Gender
- Age
- Educational Qualification
- Occupation
- Monthly Income

2. Consumer Attitudes and Preferences Toward Eco-Friendly Products

- Environmental Awareness
- Purchase Intentions
- Product Preferences
- Price Sensitivity
- Brand Influence
- Social Media Influence
- Willingness To Pay A Premium
- Perceived Quality Of Eco-Friendly Products

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was administered through online platforms such as Google Forms and social media networks to reach Gen Z consumers across South India.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were coded, organized, and analyzed using statistical software. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to achieve the study objectives.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical tools were used to summarize respondent characteristics and consumer perceptions, including:

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard Deviation

Inferential Statistics

The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Independent Sample t-test to examine differences in attitudes based on gender.
- One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to identify differences among demographic groups.
- Chi-Square Test to assess associations between categorical variables.
- Pearson Correlation Analysis to determine relationships between environmental awareness, attitudes, and purchase intentions.



- Multiple Regression Analysis to identify significant predictors of eco-friendly product purchasing behavior.

A significance level of 0.05 ($p < .05$) was adopted for hypothesis testing.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating satisfactory reliability of the measurement scales.

Content validity was established through an extensive review of existing literature on green consumer behavior, eco-friendly products, and sustainable consumption. The questionnaire was also reviewed by academic experts in marketing and consumer behavior to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the measurement items.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained, and the collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes. Respondents were given the option to withdraw from the survey at any stage without any consequences.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 213)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	50.7
	Female	105	49.3
Age	18–20 Years	72	33.8
	21–23 Years	96	45.1
	24–26 Years	45	21.1
Education	Undergraduate	118	55.4
	Postgraduate	82	38.5
	Others	13	6.1
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	91	42.7
	₹20,001–₹40,000	68	31.9
	₹40,001–₹60,000	34	16
	Above ₹60,000	20	9.4

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a balanced representation of male and female participants. Male respondents constituted 50.7% (108), while female respondents accounted for 49.3% (105) of the sample. Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents

(45.1%) belonged to the 21–23 years age group, followed by 33.8% in the 18–20 years category and 21.1% in the 24–26 years category. Educationally, more than half of the respondents (55.4%) were pursuing undergraduate studies, while 38.5% were postgraduates and 6.1% belonged to other educational categories. In terms of monthly income, the largest proportion of respondents (42.7%) reported an income below ₹20,000, followed by 31.9% earning between ₹20,001 and ₹40,000. These findings suggest that the sample primarily consists of young, educated Gen Z consumers with varying income levels, providing a suitable basis for examining attitudes and preferences toward eco-friendly products.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Attitudes Toward Eco-Friendly Products

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Environmental awareness influences my purchases	4.18	0.76
Eco-friendly products are beneficial to society	4.25	0.71
I prefer environmentally sustainable brands	4.06	0.82
I actively seek information about green products	3.91	0.88
I feel responsible for protecting the environment	4.31	0.69
I encourage others to purchase eco-friendly products	3.84	0.92

The descriptive statistics reveal a generally favorable attitude among Gen Z consumers toward eco-friendly products. Respondents strongly agreed that they feel responsible for protecting the environment, as reflected by the highest mean score ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.69$). Similarly, participants perceived eco-friendly products as beneficial to society ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.71$) and acknowledged the influence of environmental awareness on their purchasing decisions ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.76$). Preferences for environmentally sustainable brands also received a high level of agreement ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.82$). While respondents demonstrated active interest in seeking information about green products ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.88$), encouraging others to purchase eco-friendly products received a comparatively lower mean score ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.92$). Overall, the results indicate a strong environmental orientation and positive disposition toward sustainable consumption among Gen Z consumers.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.887	15

The reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items used in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.887 for the 15-item scale. This value exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of consistency among the items included in the instrument. The result



confirms that the measurement scale is reliable and suitable for assessing consumer attitudes and preferences toward eco-friendly products. The strong reliability coefficient enhances the credibility of the data collected and supports the subsequent statistical analyses performed in the study.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Environmental Awareness	Green Attitude	Purchase Intention
Environmental Awareness	1	.648**	.571**
Green Attitude	.648**	1	.723**
Purchase Intention	.571**	.723**	1

Note: $p < .01$

The correlation matrix demonstrates positive relationships among environmental awareness, green attitude, and purchase intention. Environmental awareness exhibited a strong positive association with green attitude ($r = .648$, $p < .01$), suggesting that consumers with greater environmental awareness tend to possess more favorable attitudes toward eco-friendly products. Likewise, environmental awareness was positively related to purchase intention ($r = .571$, $p < .01$), indicating that awareness contributes to a stronger intention to purchase green products. The strongest relationship was observed between green attitude and purchase intention ($r = .723$, $p < .01$), highlighting the critical role of favorable attitudes in influencing consumer purchase decisions. These findings emphasize the interconnected nature of awareness, attitudes, and behavioral intentions in promoting sustainable consumption.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-Test (Gender and Green Purchase Intention)

Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.
Male	3.89	0.74
Female	4.12	0.69

Independent Samples Test

t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
-2.431	211	0.016

The independent sample t-test was conducted to examine differences in green purchase intention between male and female respondents. Female respondents reported a higher mean score ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.69$) compared to male respondents ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.74$). The calculated t-value of -2.431 with a significance level of 0.016 indicates that the observed difference is statistically significant. The findings suggest that female Gen Z consumers demonstrate stronger intentions to purchase eco-friendly products than their male counterparts. This difference may be attributed to varying levels of environmental concern, social

responsibility, and sustainable consumption preferences across genders.

Table 6. ANOVA – Income and Consumer Attitudes

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.763	3	2.921	4.582	0.004
Within Groups	133.245	209	0.637		
Total	142.008	212			

A one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine whether consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products differ across income groups. The analysis produced an F-value of 4.582 with a significance level of 0.004, indicating statistically significant differences among the income categories. The findings suggest that monthly income influences consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products. Variations in purchasing power and financial flexibility may affect consumers' willingness to consider environmentally friendly alternatives, particularly when such products are perceived as carrying premium prices.

Table 7. Chi-Square Test

Test	Value	df	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	24.813	12	0.016

The chi-square analysis was conducted to examine the association between environmental awareness and the frequency of purchasing eco-friendly products. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 24.813 with a significance level of 0.016 indicates a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The results demonstrate that respondents with higher levels of environmental awareness tend to engage more frequently in purchasing eco-friendly products. This finding reinforces the importance of awareness as a key driver of sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z consumers.

Table 8. Model Summary (Regression Analysis)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.781	0.61	0.603	0.425

The regression model summary indicates a strong relationship between the independent variables and purchase intention. The correlation coefficient ($R = .781$) suggests a substantial association between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R-square value of 0.610 indicates that 61.0% of the variation in purchase intention is explained by environmental awareness, green attitude, social media influence, and willingness to pay a premium. The adjusted R-square value of 0.603 confirms the stability and explanatory power of the model. These results demonstrate that the selected predictors collectively contribute significantly to understanding consumer purchase intentions toward eco-friendly products.



Table 9. ANOVA (Regression)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	58.124	4	14.531	80.352	0
Residual	37.622	208	0.181		
Total	95.746	212			

The ANOVA results evaluate the overall significance of the regression model. The model generated an F-value of 80.352 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the regression equation is statistically significant. The findings confirm that the independent variables included in the model collectively provide a meaningful explanation of purchase intention toward eco-friendly products. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate for predicting consumer purchase behavior among Gen Z consumers.

Table 10. Coefficients

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.862	0.217	—	3.972	0
Environmental Awareness	0.284	0.053	0.315	5.358	0
Green Attitude	0.376	0.059	0.412	6.373	0
Social Media Influence	0.197	0.047	0.224	4.191	0
Willingness to Pay Premium	0.143	0.041	0.176	3.488	0.001

The regression coefficients reveal the individual contribution of each predictor variable to purchase intention. Green attitude emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that favorable attitudes toward environmental sustainability significantly enhance purchase intentions. Environmental awareness also exerted a substantial positive influence ($\beta = 0.315$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that informed consumers are more likely to intend to purchase eco-friendly products. Social media influence ($\beta = 0.224$, $p < 0.001$) contributed positively, suggesting that digital platforms play an important role in shaping green purchasing decisions among Gen Z consumers. Additionally, willingness to pay a premium ($\beta = 0.176$, $p = 0.001$) positively affected purchase intention, indicating that consumers who perceive value in sustainability are more willing to invest in eco-friendly alternatives. Collectively, these variables significantly influence consumer purchase intentions toward eco-friendly products.

Table 11. Hypotheses Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	p-value	Result
H01: Demographic factors influence consumer attitudes	ANOVA/t-Test	0.004	Rejected
H02: Environmental awareness positively influences purchase intention	Correlation	0	Rejected

H03: Green attitude positively influences purchase intention	Correlation	0	Rejected
H04: Social media significantly influences eco-friendly product preferences	Regression	0	Rejected
H05: Willingness to pay premium affects purchase intention	Regression	0.001	Rejected

V. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the attitudes and preferences of Generation Z consumers toward eco-friendly products in South India. The findings reveal that Gen Z consumers possess a high level of environmental awareness and demonstrate favorable attitudes toward sustainable consumption. Growing concerns about environmental degradation, climate change, and resource conservation have significantly influenced their purchasing decisions, making eco-friendly products an increasingly preferred choice among young consumers.

The study found that environmental awareness, green attitudes, social media influence, and willingness to pay a premium are significant factors affecting purchase intentions toward eco-friendly products. Among these factors, green attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, highlighting the importance of positive environmental values in shaping consumer behavior. The results also indicate that social media platforms play a crucial role in educating and motivating Gen Z consumers to adopt environmentally responsible purchasing practices. Furthermore, the analysis revealed significant differences in consumer attitudes across demographic groups, particularly with respect to income and gender. Female respondents exhibited stronger green purchase intentions compared to male respondents, while consumers with higher income levels demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward eco-friendly products. These findings suggest that demographic characteristics continue to influence sustainable consumption behavior despite the overall positive environmental orientation of Gen Z consumers.

The study also confirms that environmental awareness is closely associated with the frequency of purchasing eco-friendly products. Consumers who possess greater knowledge of environmental issues are more likely to translate their concerns into actual purchasing behavior. However, factors such as product pricing, availability, and perceived value remain important considerations in purchase decisions, indicating that businesses must balance sustainability with affordability and accessibility.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer valuable implications for marketers, manufacturers, and policymakers. Organizations seeking to promote eco-friendly products should focus on enhancing environmental



awareness, strengthening green branding strategies, and leveraging social media platforms to effectively engage Gen Z consumers. Additionally, providing affordable, high-quality, and easily accessible eco-friendly products can help bridge the gap between positive attitudes and actual purchasing behavior.

In conclusion, Generation Z consumers in South India represent a promising market segment for eco-friendly products due to their strong environmental consciousness and favorable attitudes toward sustainability. As this generation continues to gain purchasing power and market influence, understanding their preferences and motivations becomes essential for achieving long-term sustainable consumption goals. The study contributes to the growing literature on green consumer behavior and provides useful insights for developing effective strategies to encourage environmentally responsible consumption among future generations.

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