

Role of Environmental Consciousness in Green Packaging Purchase Decisions: A Study in Delhi/NCR

Namita Kapoor¹, Rekha Prasad², Richa Kapoor Mehra³, Sanskriti Kumar⁴

¹Associate Professor, Amity School of Economics, Amity University, Noida.

²Assistant Professor, Sharda University, Greater Noida.

³Associate Professor, O.P Jindal Global Business School, O.P Jindal Global University

⁴Student, Amity School of Economics, Amity University, Noida

*Corresponding Author: namita3112@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study focuses on consumer purchasing behavior towards green packaging in The Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). The purpose of this study is to inspect all the elements that might affect the consumer's purchasing habits where green packaging is concerned and how they are helpful in sustainable development. For the conceptual framework of this research, the theory of planned behavior has been considered. TPB will help to investigate the aspects that impact customers' behavior toward green packaging. The TPB framework is made up of three distinct constructs: Attitude (AT), Subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC), which are examined in connection to customers' purchase intentions for green packaging. An additional variable has been added to the TPB model, resulting in an expanded TPB model. "Environmental Consciousness" is a new variable added to the original model. The study employs a quantitative approach and gathers primary data using a structured questionnaire survey. The sample consists of 384 respondents, but we could only collect 213 responses due to financial and time constraints, and the data collected were analyzed using SMART PLS 4(version). The data analysis is conducted using a two-phase method. In the first stage of the analysis, the validity of the measurement model has been evaluated. In the second stage of the analysis, the structural model assessment has been evaluated. In the second stage, all the hypotheses regarding the variables are tested and examined to check the distinct relationship between different variables. The findings of this study are intended to shed light on the elements that impact customers' purchasing habits when it comes to green packaging, as well as their contribution to sustainable development. The study also intends to assist marketers and policymakers with practical implications for promoting green packaging and its adoption in the Delhi NCR region. Overall, the survey will add to the already expanding collection of available green marketing and sustainability resources while providing valuable insights for future research.

Keywords: Green Packaging, Responsible Behavior, Sustainable consumption, Environmental Consciousness

INTRODUCTION

A worldwide change can be noticed in the consumption preferences of consumers these days. Consumers are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the environmental issues that the world is facing in recent years. This has led to a shift in consumer preference regarding their consumption behavior. These days, consumers are trying to shift to a more sustainable/ eco-friendly way of consumption. The sudden surge in interest in green product consumption can notice this trend. Green products have a sustainable design that minimizes the environmental effects of consumption of the said product on the environment. A part of the green product design includes green packaging. Now, Packaging is crucial for all sorts of products, whether a food product or a non-food product, since its main feature is to protect the content inside the packaging. It can serve as a means of communicating and drawing recognition from the brand's consumer

base. However, consumers of modern times have shown interest in buying products with green packaging. Green packaging is crucial when talking about reducing waste generated by packaging items and the subsequent pollution caused by garbage while also encouraging sustainable development. Green packaging also referred to as “eco-friendly packaging” or “sustainable packaging,” uses environmentally friendly materials or recyclable/reusable materials to package products while accounting for the fact that these products must be both functional and secure for environmental and human health. Green packaging is often made of Starch-Based Biomaterial, Recycled Cardboard or Paper, Organic Fabrics, etc. Before we proceed with the main focus of our study, we will examine the consumers’ purchase behavior towards green packaged products. Let us look deeper into the advancements toward green packaging in India. We will also closely examine the government's initiatives to promote the use of green packaging.

The literature available on green packaging can be split into two categories depending on whether they are written from the perspective of the customer or the firm. It can also be noted that the new green packaging solutions adopted by businesses are primarily for two reasons: consumers and governance. In addition to the growing importance that consumers place on the environment, governments are pressuring companies to promote sustainable packaging due to new laws, regulations, taxes, and other policies that are intended to make packaging more environmentally friendly.

Therefore, it may be said that packaging can influence customers' perceptions of the environment. However, only a few investigations have examined the relationship between eco-friendly packaging and customer purchase intentions. When researching the topic specifically in the Asian region, we realized that there has yet to be a substantial scholarly contribution to environmental packaging. The majority of this research has put emphasis on the variables that affect buyers in industrialized nations to choose items with ecologically friendly packaging. As a result, this paper tries to comprehend the factors that influence eco-friendly packaging among Indian customers, with a particular emphasis on the Delhi NCR Region. The study's findings on the purchase behavior of consumers regarding eco-friendly packaged products are anticipated to possess a substantial impact on future studies on environmentally friendly packaged products (N Kapoor et al 2022) . We have decided to use the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as the base model for our research. Now, because we intend to examine consumers' purchase behavior for green packaged products, it is vital to assess whether the consumer's environmental consciousness plays a role in the behavior. Here, the term environmental consciousness details the consumers' awareness of environmental issues, possible solutions, and alternatives to plastic packaging. It also takes into account the willingness of a consumer to purchase the environmentally friendly options even if the prices for the said sustainable options are a little higher than the normal prices. The study's methodology, extensive literature review, and implications will guide consumers, legislatures, and firms interested in green packaged goods. The present research has a wide-ranging impact. To understand the trends of consumer behaviour towards green packaging as an alternative source to conventional packaging in a developing country like India, the current study concentrates on Delhi NCR (National Capital Region). The results of our research work might have some useful insights for the government and businesses that are debating how to implement green packaging practices and whether or not customers are welcoming to its adoption. Academicians and research researchers who intend to do research in this field will find this study to be valuable. As a result, the current study has full potential for the previously mentioned actors to gain insight into what the public thinks of green packaging, how accepting they are of green packaged goods, whether their purchase decisions are influenced by their surroundings, and how aware they are about the alternatives that exist for the conventional packaging materials. The concluding part of the paper also details how there is a need for government intervention and the different initiatives that the Indian government has adopted to create awareness about green packaging and promote it. The primary objective of the study is to determine consumer purchase behavior for green packaged products and

understand whether the environmental consciousness of a consumer affects the purchase behavior. This will help us to assess how aware the consumers are and whether this awareness and want to assist in making more sustainable choices in packaging will translate into purchasing green packaged products in Delhi NCR (National Capital Region).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a prominent psychological framework that was conceptualized by Icek Ajzen in the late 1980s. It provides important insights into comprehending and forecasting human behavior. It has since been used in a variety of disciplines, including social psychology, health psychology, marketing, and communication. TPB offers a detailed framework for understanding the variables that impact behavioral intentions and subsequent actions by taking into consideration the influence of all three components, namely Attitude (AT), Subjective norms (SN), and Perceived behavioral control (PBC).

2.1.1 Attitude (AT)

Attitudes represent an individual's favorable or unfavorable assessment of certain behavior. It includes beliefs about the outcomes or repercussions of the behavior, as well as the subjective value assigned to those outcomes. To put it another way, if someone feels that engaging in behavior would lead to favorable results and values those results, they are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards that behavior than if they believe that engaging in that behavior would result in a negative outcome. It also discusses if the said consumer would want to participate in the stated behavior. It has been stated that there exist perceived consequences of the attitude that is portrayed towards behavior. The most important predictor of behavioral intention is attitude, according to Kotchen and Reiling (2000). Attitude is a psychological sensation that is routed via the judgment of consumers, and if positive, behavioral intentions are more positive. Regarding the topic of green packaging, a favorable relationship between attitude and behavioral intention has been demonstrated across different countries or cultures. According to Birgelen et al. (2009), consumers who are mindful of the environment choose sustainable beverage packaging. It was also validated by Barber et al. (2010) that the same claim was made in the setting of wine tourism. Scholars explored a favorable association between attitude and intention to choose a behavior that relies on the consumption of organic food (Dean et al. (2012); Ha and Janda (2012); Zhou et al. (2013), indicating that attitude-intention reasoning dominates in the context of consuming green products instead of typically conventional products. Our analysis of the literature review indicates that the attitude towards green product buying is expected to shift to improve purchase intention for green products. As a result, the hypothesis proposed for this variable is:

H1: Attitude toward purchasing sustainable packaging products is favorably related to the purchasing behavior of consumers for green packaged products.

2.1.2 Subjective Norms (SN)

The subjective norms (SN) are another component that defines behavioral intentions in the TPB framework. As per Ajzen (1991), a "subjective norm" is "the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior." Hee (2000) emphasized the importance of individuals close to the consumers, like a "close friend, relatives, colleagues, or business partners." Subjective norms describe an individual's sentiments regarding the social pressure that the individual feels to engage in a particular behavior. Now, this social pressure that an individual feels is different for different people. Some individuals care more about what their surroundings are following, whereas others do not get pressured by social pressure. So, it varies from person to person, and there is no perfect choice for it. Furthermore, consumers with a

beneficial subjective norm towards a particular behavior are more likely to intend to engage in positive behavior (Han et al. (2010); Taylor and Todd (1995)). In terms of consumer purchasing patterns, several research literature available suggests that Subjective Norm is a significant determinant when it comes to intention, including participation intention (Lee, 2005), green hotel revisits intention (Teng et al. (2014); Chen and Tung (2014); Han et al. (2010)), purchasing intentions of organic food items (Nayek S & Kapoor N 2022, Dean et al. (2012); Ha and Janda (2012)) and so on. The subjective norm of said behavior and the intentions are likely to have a positive relationship in these investigations. Consumers are more likely to shift from normal to green purchasing behaviors when they believe their "significant others" also support green purchasing behaviors. As an outcome, they are often expected to be more likely to adopt collective behavior, like purchasing environmentally friendly products (Kumar (2012)). As a result, the hypothesis proposed for this variable is:

H2: Subjective norm is favorably connected to the purchasing behavior of consumers for green packaged products.

2.1.3 Perceived behavioral control (PBC)

When it comes to behaviors that are somewhat related to volitional control, when talking about the Theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control becomes one of the most important of the three antecedents. The word "perceived behavioral control" is connected to "the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior" (Ajzen (1991)), and it is said that the PBC is influenced by past experiences while practicing the behavior as well as predicted limitations. It is often said that the ability to control behavior and the purpose of it determines the behavior (Zhou et al. (2013)). As a result, the non-motivational aspects like the idea of resources (Ajzen (1989)), enabling factors (Triandis (1977)), opportunities (Ajzen (1989); Sarver (1983)), and action control (Kuhl (1985)) were included. Perceived Behavioral Control emphasizes the external and general elements of a said behavior. In several academic settings, research has revealed that Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is favorably connected to intention, including conservation (Albayrak et al., 2013), recycling (Taylor and Todd, 1995), and so on. As a result, the hypothesis proposed for this variable is:

H3: Consumers perceive behavioral control to influence the purchasing behavior of green packaged products favorably.

2.2 Derivation of extended TPB

Although Ajzen's model (2002) has gotten much empirical support, we believe some other factors should be included to better understand consumers' green product purchasing behavior. Although substantial consumer studies are available on the buying intention of green marketing, only a few research works focus on consumers' environmental consciousness while concentrating on purchasing behavior towards green packaged items.

2.2.1 Environmental Consciousness

Environmental Consciousness is a degree to which the public is aware of the problems faced by the environment due to the waste generated by normal packaging materials that include the likes of plastic, tin cards, tetra packs, etc., and the willingness to support the measures taken to solve these issues. A portion of studies focus specifically on consumers' growing concern about environmental problems and willingness to pay a little extra to have sustainable alternatives. Several studies have revealed buyers willing to pay extra money for eco-friendly versions of otherwise everyday products. The research conducted by Trudel and Cotte (2008) and Caruana (2007) provides examples of this phenomenon. Early Environmental Consciousness research focused on ecological challenges such as the pollution caused by everyday packaging items and the requirement of conserving energy (Kinnear et al., 1974). In contrast,

more recent research has focused on general environmental consciousness and concerns (Zimmer et al.,1994). The rise in people's environmental awareness emphasizes the need to investigate this relationship in depth. A growing number of studies has started to utilize different types of assessment scales to examine consumers' environmental consciousness regarding various topics (Synodinos, 1990), such as the NEP scale (Van Liere and Dunlap (1981); Dun Liere and Dunlap (1978) developed a new environmental paradigm scale. Hu et al. 2010 advocated widespread environmental awareness as a paradigm for assessing green consumption (Alwitt and Pitts (1996). Bang et al. (2000) investigated green energy using TRA and observed that attitude affects the EC-PI link. According to a meta-analysis, the relationship between Environmental Consciousness and behavior is weak (Eckes and Six (1994); Hines et al. (1988). As a result, we expect an indirect influence through a different factor. As stated by Hansla et al. (2008), environmental consciousness is substantially connected with green behaviors, such as consumer readiness

to pay higher prices for renewable energy. Environmental consciousness (EC) can also be used to explain why consumers avoid some products altogether. These products can cause a ton of damage to the environment due to the packaging or the non-biodegradability feature of the product. When consumers' inherent Environmental Consciousness rises, they are said to develop a favorable attitude towards green energy and are prepared to pay higher prices for green products (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012)). Furthermore, it also examined the direct and indirect influence of Environmental Consciousness (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012)), revealing that environmental awareness positively influences attitudes and purchasing intention toward green energy products. This research found that EC, directly and indirectly, influenced green behavioral intentions, most notably through attitudes. EC, in particular, dramatically motivates purchasing intentions toward ecologically sound items (Hutchins & Greenhalgh, 1997).

Thus, we can infer from this that environmental consciousness is related to the consumer's attitude toward purchasing green packaged products. Consumers who are worried about sustainability also influence the behavior of others through social groups or family influences, acting as "significant others" who agree or disagree with others' green purchasing behavior. Thus, increasing EC influences consumers' Subjective norms, lowering their sense of struggles about resources, time, and other factors. Individuals are more mindful of environmental issues now that they recognize the favorable effects of the consumption of green products. (Chen and Tung (2014)) designed the extended TPB to predict customers' intention to visit green hotels, figuring out that the TPB variables act as intermediaries in the connected environmental concern. Their mediation study revealed that EC indirectly affected the intention to visit green hotels via all the components of the theory of planned behavior: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. However, because EC is a component of attitude, the direct effect of EC on buying intent must explain the desire for green items better. Chen and Tung (2014) overlooked the precise relationship between environmental concern and buying intention. As a result, we propose to apply the principles of the TPB method to green products. As a result, the hypothesis proposed for this variable is:

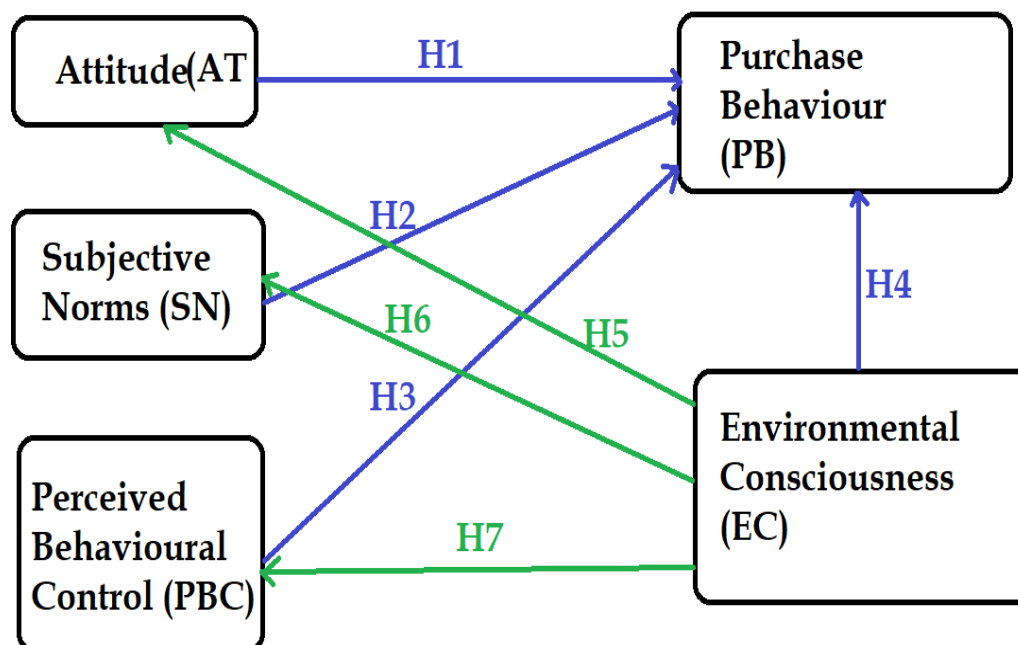
H4: Environmental consciousness is favorably connected to green product purchase intention.

H5: Environmental consciousness is favorably connected to attitude (AT) on the purchasing behavior of green packaged products.

H6: Environmental consciousness is favorably connected to subjective norms (SN).

H7: Environmental consciousness is favorably connected to perceived behavioral control (PBC).

Our research model is based on the previously mentioned literature review.



METHODOLOGY

3.1 Target Population

Adults (aged 18 or older) make up the optimal population for this study. Due to its conceptual depth, the green setting under research is highly challenging for kids to perceive and make sense of (Chan, 2001). Adults have, therefore, ven a greater capacity to contrast and assess the various options and decide. It can also be said that highly educated people may more readily comprehend the issue at hand and contribute correct data compared to those who are less educated, as indicated in the environmental literature (Hedlund, 2011; Han & Kim, 2010). Consequently, we collected data from a group of well-informed clients. We specifically went around to find consumers who have at least finished their high school degrees.

A Quota sample approach was employed to gather crucial information from the customers in the Delhi-NCR district. Due to financial and time restrictions, the survey was sent throughout the Delhi NCR region using Google Forms. 213 responses from customers were collected during data collection.

3.2. Sample Size and Composition of Data

The sample size needed for this investigation was calculated using a small sample technique. The total sample size is 384. With a sample size of 384, our study comprises five constructs with a total of 25 questions: 3 things for attitude (AT), four items for subjective norm (SN), 7 pieces for perceived behavior (PBC), six pieces for environmental consciousness, and five pieces for purchase behavior. The small sample technique is used to determine the sample size. However, only 213 responses—fewer than the number determined using the small sample technique—were considered for analysis. The lack of responses results from financial and time constraints while conducting the survey.

Table 1

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Males	104	48.83%
	Females	109	51.17%
Age	18-25	112	52.58%
	26-35	28	13.15%
	36-45	38	17.84%
	45 and Above	35	16.43%
Marital Status	Single	100	46.95%
	Married	112	52.58%
	Separated	1	0.47%
	Widow	0	0.00%
Family Size	0-2	23	10.80%
	3-4	121	56.81%
	5-6	66	30.99%
	6 and above	3	1.41%
Education	Below High School	0	0.00%
	High School	6	2.82%
	Graduate	94	44.13%
	Post Graduate	74	34.74%
	Professional	39	18.31%
Income- Annualy (Rs.)	Less than 1,00,000	44	20.66%
	1,00,000- 5,00,000	25	11.74%
	5,00,000- 10,00,000	57	26.76%
	10,00,000- 15,00,000	60	28.17%
	Above 15,00,000	27	12.68%

Table 1's summary of descriptive data shows that there is a balanced distribution of respondents' genders. Male respondents made up 104 (49%), while there were 109 (51%) female respondents. Graduates comprise most of the sample's respondents, with postgraduates being a close second, with a family size of three to four people (57%) and a yearly income evenly distributed between the different income levels. Most of the sample fell in the 18–25 age range.

3.3. Measures

A well-structured questionnaire that contained questions about bipolar order, free-form, and Likert's 5-point scale was used to gather the primary data. The questionnaire included questions regarding consumer demographics, how much the consumers are affected when talking about the different components in the theory of the planned behavior model, and whether environmental consciousness affects the purchasing behavior for green packaged products. The questionnaire comprises five constructs with a total of 25 questions: 3 things for attitude (AT), four items for subjective norm (SN), 7 pieces for perceived behavioral control (PBC), six items for environmental consciousness, and five items for purchase behavior. Taylor and Todd (1995), Kilbourne and Pickett (2008), Chen and Peng (2012), and Chang and Chen (2008) are also sources for these question statements.

All the statements are included in the Annexure.

3.4. Scale reliability

We have demonstrated scale reliability using the calculations of Cronbach's α using SMART PLS 4. As Depicted in Table 2, Cronbach's α of all constructs was found greater than the threshold of 0.7 (Kline, 2005;). Thus, it proves that the scale of constructs is reliable.

Construct reliability and validity			
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attitude	0.737	0.848	0.65
Environmental Consciousness	0.793	0.856	0.524
Perceived behavior control	0.755	0.826	0.411
Purchase behavior	0.829	0.88	0.596
Subjective norm	0.833	0.888	0.664

DATA ANALYSIS

To examine the relationship between variables, we use Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using Smart PLS (version 4). The Bootstrapping function (1000 resamples) was used to determine the path's significance level. The SEM-PLS in this work follows Hair and J. F. (2018), which includes:

1. Validity of measurement model (outer model); and
2. Evaluation of the Structural Model (inner model)

4.1 Validity of measurement model

This study's measurement model was analyzed using PLS-SEM. Tables 2 and 3 show the results of testing the reliability of factor loading (Cronbach's alpha), composite reliability, extracted average variance, and discriminator validity. According to Hair and J.K. (2018), construct scores of more than 0.7 should be regarded as trustworthy in this study; all five variables have Cronbach's alpha values of more than 0.7, indicating that all constructs fulfill the reliability requirement. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measure determines convergent validity (Hair et al., 2018). Enough convergent validity is guaranteed as long as the AVE value is at least 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3

Discriminant Validity- Fornell Larcker criterion					
	AT	EC	PBC	PB	SN
Attitude (AT)	0.806				
Environmental Consciousness (EC)	0.428	0.724			
Perceived behavior control (PBC)	0.49	0.62	0.641		
Purchase behavior (PB)	0.518	0.619	0.634	0.772	
Subjective norm (SN)	0.257	0.444	0.515	0.303	0.815

All variables in this study have AVE values more than 0.5, except PBC, which has a value of 0.411, showing partial acceptable convergent validity. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) evaluates the discriminant validity. The square root of the AVEs should be greater than the correlation between the items of one construct and the items of the other constructions. The results in Table 3 support the discriminant validity of this research work (Hair et al., 2018).

4.2 Assessment of the Structural Model

After establishing the measurement model's reliability and validity, the structural model's evaluation is examined. To test the significance of the path coefficients, a bootstrap resampling approach with 1000 repeats and 213 situations was used in this work (Hair et al., 2018). Table 4 shows the t-test results and confirms the importance of identified relationships. The findings revealed a strong positive connection between Attitude toward purchasing green packaged products and Purchase Behavior ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.04$). Also, both Perceived Behavioral Control and Environmental consciousness were positively related to Purchasing Behavior ($\beta = 0.363$, $p < 0.04$ and $\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.04$, respectively) based on the path coefficients and t-statistic measurements. However, a negative relation exists between Subjective norm and Purchasing Behavior ($\beta = -0.092$, $p < 0.04$). Thus, Hypotheses H1, H3, and H4 hold while H2 is rejected.

Table 4

	Path Coefficients	STDEV	t statistics	p values
AT -> PB	0.218	0.058	3.755	0
EC -> AT	0.428	0.059	7.309	0
EC -> PBC	0.62	0.036	17.378	0
EC -> PB	0.341	0.076	4.489	0
EC -> SN	0.444	0.057	7.833	0
PBC -> PB	0.363	0.079	4.602	0
SN -> PB	-0.092	0.045	2.056	0.04

Table 4 also demonstrated significantly positive relationships between

Attitude and Environmental consciousness ($\beta = 0.428$, $p < 0.04$)

Subjective norm and Environmental consciousness ($\beta = 0.444$, $p < 0.04$)

Perceived Behavioral Control and Environmental Consciousness ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.04$)

This proves that the Hypotheses: H5, H6, and H7 are accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this investigation was to assess the connection among each of the three elements that make up the Theory of Planned Behavior and to extend the framework by adding Environmental consciousness as an additional variable to the mix in order to understand the effects that all of these components have on consumer purchase behavior for green packaged products in India. Because India is such a large country with a diverse population, we opted to focus on the Delhi NCR region for this study. The findings show that purchase behavior is directly affected by consumers' attitudes towards green packaged products, perceived behavioral control, and the level of environmental awareness the consumers possess. However, through the analysis, it can also be seen that subjective norms do not affect a consumer's purchase behavior for green products. This revelation is inconsistent with some of the existing studies conducted about the relationship between subjective norms and purchase behavior. So, this research paper adds something new to the literature on this topic. Usually, subjective norms possess a positive relationship with purchase behavior. This contrast further opens room for discussion about what factors the consumers deem more important, such as the fact that the subjective norm does not create the effect on the individuals it usually does. This opens room for more research.

Based on the results of the path analysis, we can also find that the relationship between environmental consciousness and all other variables is positive. This proves that awareness about the environment, its issues, and measures to cope with them are important for consumers to make informed/ educated choices about the situation. This further proves the importance of government intervention in making sure that the public is made aware of the environmental issues that are currently happening; take some actions to increase awareness by implementing some types of rules that the general public has to offer while also putting a regulatory mandate on the companies to make sure that the companies are not taking advantage of the loopholes. This can be done by regulation and offering some types of schemes.

While this research analysis covers green packaged products in general, the results might change - for example, the severity of every single path in a model if particular items are included. This can include food, cosmetics, and other stuff. Future studies should put this suggested modeling to the test in other product scenarios and how different green packaging materials are utilized for different types of products, such as compostable packaging, recycled packaging, corrugated packaging, cellulose packaging, corn flour packaging, and so on. Other significant variables, such as financial standing and readiness to do something with the purchase behavior pattern, can be introduced to examine the influence such variables may have on customers' purchasing patterns for green-packaged products.

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