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CONSUMER WILLINGNESS-TO-PAY FOR ECO FRIENDLY PRODUCT: with reference to India

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ABSTRACT

In the present era, there has been a notable surge in environmental awareness, sustainability concerns, and the recognition of climate change as prominent issues. Consequently, consumers have increasingly shown interest in eco-friendly products. However, bringing sustainable consumption to main stream instead of a niche market, it is important to comprehend how individual perceptions contribute to intention to buy eco-friendly product. Consumer environmental awareness, concern, attitude and price, quality, availability of product plays a significant role in the decision-making process and purchasing behaviour. However, annual family income emerged as a significant factor influencing buying toward eco-friendly products.

The data were collected through a survey of Indian consumers, aged over 18. Data collection through survey conducted by self-administered questionnaire. A total of 312 were considered valid (the final sample). The questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first part examines the environmental sensitivity and willingness to pay. In the Second part, data are collected about the demographic characteristics of respondents. After collection, the data were statistically analysed. The results of this study shows that the perception of eco-friendly products as expensive, lack of promotion, difficulty in distinguishing them from conventional products, and uncertainty about quality or performance.

KEY WORDS: eco-friendly product, environment, attitude, concern, consumer behaviour.

INTRODUCTION:

You can't live a healthy life on sick planet - John Replogle

In present era concern for environment and sustainability became a buzz word. People are really worried for their health and life style. Awareness for environment became prime concern people around the world have become more willing to pay for sustainability: in 2022, In other words, shoppers worldwide were willing to pay up to an average of 24 % more for sustainably produced consumer goods. 29 Jan 2024 <https://www.statista.com/>

Indian market is price sensitive; Consumers would like to purchase eco-friendly products but perception for the same, that eco-friendly product is costlier than conventional product. Last

decade awareness for eco -friendly products increased, green awareness pertains to the degree to which customers patronize eco- friendly products (Suki, 2013). Such awareness is necessary in improving customers' ability to effectively assess the eco-friendly products available to them and select those that satisfy their needs.

As a result, marketer have increased their focus on environment conscious consumer.

Consumers are interested in buying products, that are designed to minimize their environmental impact throughout their lifecycle. Consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing intentions are governed by pricing strategy of the business. Consumers are ready to adapt eco-friendly products but at the same time sensitive to price.

The word "eco-friendly" is commonly used to describe products and practices that are good for the environment. Eco-friendly or ecologically-friendly actions include the preparation and implementation of environmentallyfriendly alterations to one's own behaviour and way of life, as well as the creation of environmentally-friendly products (Jha et al, 2017).

Eco-friendly products are not just limited to those products that can save your energy and water, or those that are recyclable. In this research paper Eco-friendly products refer to those products that are environmentally friendly throughout their product life cycle, from raw material acquisition to disposal (this is also referred to as 'from cradle to grave')

This research paper aims to explore the multifaceted relationship between pricing and consumer willingness to pay eco – friendly products and support businesses to tailoring their marketing strategies by identifying key determinants that influence consumer purchase behaviour – environment awareness, concern, attitude, price, quality and availability of product including perceived value, affordability, social norms, and environmental consciousness.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Price Sensitivity and Elasticity:

Chan et al. (2015) indicates that while some consumers are willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products, others may prioritize lower prices over green attributes. Understanding price elasticity among different consumer segments is essential for effective pricing strategies for green products. Consumer price sensitivity plays a crucial role in determining their willingness to pay for green products.

Government Policies and Consumer Behaviour:

Lam et al. (2014) investigated the impact of government policies on eco-friendly consumption. Their study suggests that supportive regulatory frameworks and incentives can significantly influence consumer behaviour, leading to a higher willingness-to-pay for sustainable alternatives.

Environmental Awareness and Consumer Behaviour:

Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh (2010), said that - the impact of environmental awareness on consumer decision-making. Consumers with heightened environmental consciousness are more likely to express a willingness-to-pay premium prices for eco-friendly products, driven by a sense of responsibility toward the environment.

Information Availability and Trust

Luchs. (2010) suggests that providing transparent and credible information about the environmental impact of products enhances consumer trust and willingness to pay a premium for green products. Consumers rely on information about the environmental attributes of products to make informed purchasing decisions.

Personal Values and Ethical Consumption:

Thøgersen (2004) and Auger et al. (2008) emphasize the role of personal values in influencing consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly products. Individuals with strong environmental values are more likely to exhibit a willingness-to-pay for sustainable alternatives, aligning their purchases with their ethical beliefs.

Perceived Product Quality and Performance:

Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) explore the influence of green marketing on consumers' willingness-to-pay. Their findings suggest that effective eco-labelling and communication of environmental benefits positively impact consumer perceptions, fostering a higher willingness-to-pay for eco-friendly products.

Social Norms and Peer Influence:

Schultz et al. (2007), As discussed social norms and peer influences play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour. Consumers are more likely to pay a premium for eco-friendly products when they perceive such choices to be socially acceptable and consistent with the behaviours of their peers.

Thøgersen (2004), suggests that individuals are more likely to purchase green products if they perceive social approval and conformity with prevailing norms. Pricing strategies can be designed to leverage social influence positively.

Consumer Perception of Value:

Ottman et al. (2006) suggests that consumers perceive green products as having intrinsic value beyond their functional benefits, such as contributing to environmental conservation. This perception influences consumers' willingness to pay a premium for green products. Consumers often assess the value proposition of green products concerning their pricing.

Economic Factors and Affordability:

Tietenberg (2002) The economic dimension of willingness-to-pay is addressed, suggests that as eco-friendly options become more affordable and accessible, a broader consumer market emerges, encompassing individuals from diverse income levels.

Demographic and Psychographic Factors

Roberts (1996) indicate that factors such as age, income, education level, and environmental awareness influence consumers' willingness to pay for green products. Consumer attitudes and behaviours towards green product pricing vary across demographic and psychographic segments.

In summary, the literature indicates that consumer willingness-to-pay for eco-friendly products is influenced by a combination of - environmental awareness, personal values, marketing strategies, social norms, economic factors, government policies. perceived value, price sensitivity, information availability, and demographic characteristics.

Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights for businesses and policymakers seeking to encourage sustainable consumption. This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the key factors influencing consumer behaviour in the context of eco- friendly product drawing insights from academic research in the field.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of this paper are as follows –

- To study consumer willingness-to-pay for eco-friendly product.
- To find out the role of pricing in the consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly products.
- To discuss the characteristics of consumers on the basis of income towards eco-friendly products.
- To analyse pro-environmental attitudes having influence on purchase decisions of eco-friendly product.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The proposed research incorporates three independent variables: Environmental concern and attitude of the consumer, Price, product quality, and availability of eco-friendly products, Environmental awareness. The dependent variable is willingness-to-pay for eco -friendly products, in addition, a mediating variable family income of customer. The paper would like to understand the essential drivers that, the researchers believe impact consumers' willingness to buy eco-friendly product at a price premium.

Academic studies examining environmental concern include that of Fritzsche and Dueher (1982) who examined the effects of concern for the environment on the choice of deodorant container. Other studies include, for example, that of Prothero and Mc Donald (1992) examining green cosmetics and toiletries and that of Barr, Ford and Gilg (2003) examining recycled packaging. Predictably, people's level of environmental concern is linked to their interest in and willingness to purchasing eco-friendly products. (Biswas, Liecata, Mckee, Pullig and Daughtridge, 2000; Mainieri, Barnett, Unipan and Oskamp, 1997; and Schwepker and Cornwell, 1991).

However, a number of studies have found either a moderate relationship between environmental attitude and ecological behavior (e.g. Axelrod and Lehman, 1993 and Smith, 1994) or a weak relationship (e.g. Berger and Corbin, 1992). Beckford I. (2010) and Cornelissen (2008) also found in their studies that environmental attitude has a significant impact on consumer environmental/green purchasing behaviour. Mostafa (2009) found that both environmental concern and attitude have significant positive effect on the consumers' intention to buy eco-friendly products.

Recent studies have studied the elements that influence the purchasing of environmentally friendly goods under the attitude-behaviour-context (ABC) theory and the moderating impact of applications of information and communication technology (ICT) innovation (Chen et al., 2021).

So, from the above discussion the first hypothesis for a correlated set of consumer behaviour variables can be developed:

H₀₁: Environmental concern and attitude significantly influence consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Previous marketing research has examined the effect of price on consumers' perception of quality (Leavitt, 1954; Rao and Monroe, 1988; Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds, 1991). Innate in this type of research is often a determination of consumers 'willingness-to-pay' for features either intrinsic or extrinsic to the item.

Product performance appears to play a key role in influencing consumer adoption and retention of environmental products. So, when there is consumer scepticism of the relative performance of

environmental products or a performance gap exists (i.e. consumer expectations of the product's performance have not matched up to the in-use experience), this may strongly influence the product's acceptance (Wong, 1996).

Some authors suggest that companies charge a premium for environmentally friendly products in order to recover additional costs incurred in the production, marketing and disposal. The cost of product recapture, remanufacture and reuse; or to recover the indirect costs of not achieving economies of scale (Wong, 1996; Fuller, 1999; Peattie, 1999).

Marketplace examples also suggest that in reality consumers are not always prepared to pay the premium prices suggested by research (Fuller, 1999). Although our knowledge about consumers' acceptance of paying a higher price for eco-friendly products appears to be inconsistent and inconclusive, it has often been found that consumers will pay on average around 5 percent more (Schwartz, 1990; Kapelianis., 1996; Speer, 1997).

Quality and price have a significant association on the consumers' intention to buy ecofriendly products. So, from the above discussion the second hypothesis for a correlated set of consumer behaviour variables can be developed:

H₀₂: Price, product quality, and availability of eco-friendly product are significantly associated with consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Panni (2006) notified that consumers are concerned and aware regarding different adulteration practices done by the unethical marketers. Ahmad and Juhdi (2008) found that belief about product safety for use has a significant positive impact on consumers' intention to buy green products.

Since one of the most common mentioned reasons for purchasing organic products is that it is perceived as healthier than conventional alternatives (Chinnici 2002; Harper and Makatouni, 2002), which in turn influences green buying behaviour.

Recent studies have shown that the price of a product has a significant impact on the likelihood that a customer will purchase a new product ([Mustafa et al., 2022a](#)). So from the above discussion, the hypothesis for a correlated set of consumer behaviour variables can be developed:

H₀₃: Availability of product information and belief about product safety for use has a significant influence on consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Environmental awareness is defined as “knowing the impact of human behaviour on the environment”. Environmental awareness has both a cognitive, knowledge-based component and an affective, perception-based component (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). Panni (2006) found that the

more consumers are aware regarding the societal and environmental issues the more they are involved in pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour.

Consumers with environmental awareness are not only interested in the consumption process, but also in the production, the scarcity of consumed resources, and post-use processes of products [22222222]

From the above discussion, the fourth hypothesis for a correlated set of consumer behaviour variables can be developed:

H₀₄: Environmental awareness is significantly associated with consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

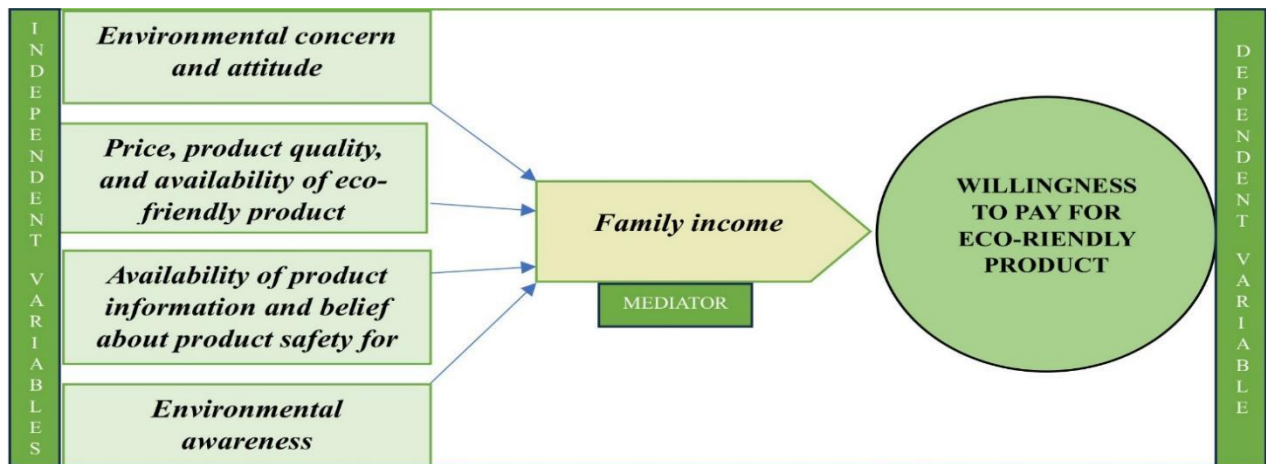
Income is generally thought to be positively related to environmental sensitivity. The most common justification for this belief is that individuals can, at higher income levels, bear the marginal increase in costs associated with supporting green causes and favouring green product offerings.

Numerous studies have addressed the role of income as a predictor of environmental concern or a related construct (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Anderson, 1974; Antil, 1978; Kasarjian, 1971; Kinnear, 1974; McEvoy, 1972; Newell and Green, 1997; Roberts, 1995; 1996b; Roberts and Bacon, 1997; Roper, 1990; 1992; Samdahl and Robertson, 1989; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981; Zimmer, 1994).

H₀₅: Family income play the role of a mediator between the dependent and the independent variables.

DATA COLLECTION:

The data were collected through a survey of Indian consumers, aged over 18. Data collection through survey conducted by self-administered questionnaire. A total of 321 were considered valid (the final sample). The questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first part examines the environmental sensitivity and willingness to pay. In the Second part, data are collected about the demographic characteristics of respondents.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

DATA COLLECTION:

DATA ANALYSIS

After the data collection, the next task was the analysis of data. The analysis of data requires a number of closely related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and then drawing statistical inferences.

1.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY:

The study was carried out with the help of both quantitative and qualitative method. The entire variables were categorised and measured on 5 point rating Likert scale. For testing the instrument reliability, a reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) was used.

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	312	83.0
	Excluded ^a	64	17.0
	Total	376	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

The study was carried out with the help of both quantitative and qualitative method. The entire variables were categorised and measured on 5point rating Likert scale. For testing the instrument reliability, a reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) was used. The reliability was calculated and obtained as 0.755 on the basis of 312 valid cases out of 376 cases.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.755	.762	17

This table suggests strong evidence of reliability in the constructs of measuring instruments for the concerned variables for the study. Therefore, the questionnaire has high reliability.

Descriptive Statistics				
Q.No.		Mean	Std.Devia- -tion	Analysis N
1	The eco-friendly products are different from conventional products.	3.81	1.016	312
2	I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	4	0.984	312
3	Before buying the product, I prefer to obtain detail information regarding available brands.	4.05	0.922	312
4	The available eco-friendly products meet my standard of quality	3.5	0.921	312
5	The eco-friendly products by and large are available with consistent quality	3.2	1.014	312
6	Qualitatively eco-friendly products last long	3.6	1.086	312
7	The packaging of eco-friendly products are attractive.	3.36	1.088	312
8	The eco-friendly products are made without synthetic contents.	3.52	1.094	312
9	The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	3.51	1.128	312
10	I would prefer to buy eco-friendly products when discounts are available.	3.55	1.215	312
11	The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	2.81	1.256	312
12	The eco-friendly products are available without any govt. control	3.11	1.072	312
13	Use of eco-friendly products increases awareness towards health consciousness among family members.	4.31	0.823	312
14	Use of eco-friendly products is perceived as status symbol in society.	3.56	1.065	312
15	The reduced environment pollution motivates me to buy eco-friendly products.	4.07	1.01	312
16	I prefer to buy recyclable material.	4.08	0.975	312
17	I always choose the products, which have less harmful environmental effects.	3.95	1.008	312

KMO and Bartlett's Test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				.793
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square			893.390
	Df			136
	Sig.			<.001

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.793, Bartlett's Test the chi-square value is approximately 893.39 with 136 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is less than 0.001.

The KMO value indicates good sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's Test indicates significant correlations among the variables. Therefore, we conclude that the correlations among the variables in dataset are statistically significant, supporting the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.806	22.390	22.390	3.806	22.390	22.390
2	1.743	10.253	32.643	1.743	10.253	32.643
3	1.228	7.226	39.868	1.228	7.226	39.868
4	1.095	6.444	46.312	1.095	6.444	46.312
5	1.046	6.150	52.462	1.046	6.150	52.462
6	1.008	5.931	58.393	1.008	5.931	58.393
7	.967	5.689	64.081			
8	.792	4.661	68.742			
9	.776	4.562	73.304			
10	.730	4.294	77.598			
11	.668	3.931	81.529			
12	.639	3.761	85.290			
13	.576	3.389	88.680			
14	.535	3.147	91.827			
15	.494	2.907	94.734			
16	.461	2.715	97.449			
17	.434	2.551	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Environmental concern and attitude: This is the most important factor explaining 22.390% of the total variance is 3.806 and loadings range from 0.668 to 0.294.

Construct	Component factor1	Loading
<i>Environmental concern and attitude</i>	The reduced environment pollution motivates me to buy eco-friendly products.	0.668
	The eco-friendly products are different from conventional products.	0.660
	I prefer to buy recyclable material.	0.591
	I always choose the products, which have less harmful environmental effects.	0.565
	Use of eco-friendly products increases awareness towards health consciousness among family members.	0.548
	.The available eco-friendly products meet my standard of quality	0.301
	The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	0.252
	.I would prefer to buy eco-friendly products when discounts are available.	0.294

The findings suggest that the three constructs influence on the intention to buy eco-friendly products. These are environmental concern and attitude as well as price for eco-friendly products, It supports the hypothesis.

H₀₁: Environmental concern and attitude significantly influence consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Price and availability of ecofriendly products: This is the second most important factor,

Construct	Component factor2	Loading
<i>Price and availability of ecofriendly products</i>	I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	0.777
	The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	0.668
	.The eco-friendly products are available without any govt. control	0.502
	.I would prefer to buy eco-friendly products when discounts are available.	0.479
	The packaging of eco-friendly products are attractive.	0.422
	Use of eco-friendly products is perceived as status symbol in society.	0.302

explaining 10.233 % of the total variance is 1.743 and loadings range from 0.777to 0.302

The findings suggest that the constructs influence on the intention to buy eco-friendly products which have information about product, brand, product quality, make and availability of the same.

Price and Quality of ecofriendly products: This is the third factor, explaining 07.226 % of the total variance is 1.228 and loadings range from 0.774 to 0.259

Construct	Component factor3	Loading
<i>Price and Quality of ecofriendly products</i>	.I would prefer to buy eco-friendly products when discounts are available.	0.774
	Use of eco-friendly products increases awareness towards health consciousness among family members.	0.697
	The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	0.415
	The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	0.370
	I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	0.298
	I prefer to buy recyclable material.	0.269
	Before buying the product, I prefer to obtain detail information regarding available brands.	0.259

The highest loading in this factor is meeting the expectation of quality, and the factor supports the hypothesis.

H₀₂: Price, product quality, and availability of eco-friendly products are significantly associated with consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Availability of product information and belief about product safety: This is the fourth factor, explaining 06.444 % of the total variance is 1.095 and loadings range from 0.824 to 0.281.

Construct	Component factor 4	Loading
<i>Availability of product information and belief about product safety.</i>	The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	0.824
	The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	0.619
	I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	0.356
	I prefer to buy recyclable material.	0.319
	Before buying the product, I prefer to obtain detail information regarding available brands.	0.281

loading in this factor is meeting the availability of product information and belief about product safety and the factor supports the hypothesis.

H₀₃: Availability of product information and belief about product safety for use has a significant influence on consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Environmental awareness: This is the fifth factor , explaining 06.150 % of the total variance is 1.046 and loadings range from 0.723 to 0.258.

Construct	Component factor5	Loading
<i>Environmental awareness</i>	Use of eco-friendly products increases awareness towards health consciousness among family members.	0.723
	The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	0.614
	The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	0.460
	I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	0.336

	I prefer to buy recyclable material.	0.276
	Before buying the product, I prefer to obtain detail information regarding available brands.	0.258

The factors covered here are awareness for environment in terms of processing, packaging and durability. Result supports the hypothesis

H₀₄: Environmental awareness is significantly associated with consumers' buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

Income and Purchasing Behaviour of eco-friendly Products: Income level is much related to consumer behaviour while taking purchasing decisions. Justification for this belief is that consumers with higher income levels can bear the marginal cost associated towards green products (Robert, 1999.) Consumers with higher salaries are more willing to adopt green products, even if they have to pay little extra. (Zarnikau 2003)

The consumers belonging to higher income groups respond positively to the green energy programs, moreover they are also willing to pay more for green energy. (Parker, 2003, Jain and Kaur 2006)

The results of the study reveal that there is a significant relationship between income and environmental awareness, concern, attitudes. People with higher levels of income are willing to pay for eco-friendly products.

If P value is <.05in cell, this tells us that there is statistically significant association between consumer behaviour and family income .	Income
The eco-friendly products are different from conventional products.	0.02
I prefer to obtain detailed information about new eco-friendly products.	0.07
Before buying the product, I prefer to obtain detail information regarding available brands.	0.11
The available eco-friendly products meet my standard of quality	0.02
The eco-friendly products by and large are available with consistent quality	0.04
Qualitatively eco-friendly products last long	0.01
The packaging of eco-friendly products are attractive.	0.01
The eco-friendly products are made without synthetic contents.	0.50
The eco-friendly products' price is worth its quality.	0.00
The price of green product is as good as of traditional products.	0.00
I would prefer to buy eco-friendly products when discounts are available.	0.05
The eco-friendly products are available everywhere.	0.00
The eco-friendly products are available without any govt. control	0.07

Use of eco-friendly products increases awareness towards health consciousness among family members.	0.02
Use of eco-friendly products is perceived as status symbol in society.	0.02
The reduced environment pollution motivates me to buy eco-friendly products.	0.37
I prefer to buy recyclable material.	0.32
I always choose the products, which have less harmful environmental effects.	0.00

Result supports the hypothesis

H05: Family income play the role of a mediator between the dependent and the independent variables.

CONCLUSION:

This research examines the relationships between Environmental awareness, concern, attitude and the willingness-to-pay a higher price for eco-friendly products. The data suggest that there are positive correlations between the willingness-to-pay and the independent variables in the model. Price, quality, information and availability of eco-friendly product have a significant association on the consumers buying ecofriendly products. In addition. This research also shows that individuals can at higher income levels, bear the marginal increase in costs associated with supporting environmental causes and favouring eco=friendly product offerings. In conclusion, the analysis significantly fills the paucity of empirical research in the area of consumer behaviour modelling, shedding light on consumers ‘motives’ to buy eco-friendly products. It provides strategic recommendations for marketing managers and policy makers.

Study results are valuable to both practitioners and theoreticians, in their effort to understand environmentally conscious consumers better.

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