JOURNAL OF
GENERAL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

FACTORS INFLUENCING GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION AND CONVINCING AND RELATIONAL VALUE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON GEN Z CONSUMERS FROM AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Environmental sustainability has become a major concern in today's time. With the ever-increasing demand for consumer goods and limited resources, the ethical responsibility of both consumers and companies has increased. Companies have started promoting green products and consumers also have become more aware and started consuming products that they believe have a less negative impact on the environment. This study analyses the factors that affect green purchase intention. Four factors that may influence green purchase behavior were analyzed in this study- environmental consciousness, eco-literacy, green promotion, and social influence. Results are based on the survey done via an online structured questionnaire method in which 254 viable responses were received from consumers in the age group of 18-25 years based in Delhi-NCR. Hypothesis testing was done using multiple regression analysis. The findings of this study suggest green promotion followed by environmental consciousness and social influence increases green purchase intention and convincing and relational value. While eco-literacy does not directly affect green purchase intention and convincing and relational value. The findings of this study can help marketers and strategists to develop their business and marketing strategies accordingly.

Keywords: *Green Purchase Intention, Sustainability, Green Promotion, Environmental Consciousness, Eco-literacy*

INTRODUCTION

In today's time of technological and developmental advancement, various products and services are available in the comforts of our homes just a click away. It is both a boon and bane for us, with convenience have come many challenges like air, and water pollution, global warming, climate change, and depletion of our limited resources. Sustainable development has become a hot topic of discussion in the last few decades. People are rapidly realizing the negative impact of reckless development and paying more and more attention to the environment. Green products refer the products which have a minimal negative impact on the environment during and after their lifecycle.

With increasing awareness of the environment, people have gradually started realizing that their purchasing behavior makes an impact on our ecological balance. Consumers began to change their lifestyles and business activities and gradually tended to increase their consumption of green products (Kong *et al.*., 2014). Consumers have actively started seeking out options that are more environmentally friendly. This shift to green purchasing is a welcome change. It is not only good for the environment but also raises living standards and promotes health in consumers and society.

In India, consumers, particularly young consumers, are aware of environment- friendly consumption choices (Khare, 2020; Khare *et al.*., 2020) and adopting green values which affect their consumption patterns (Babutsidze and Chai, 2020). Social responsibility and the rise in demand both have prompted the attention of companies to environmental issues. It has encouraged them to develop green products and adopt sustainable ways. This green market has opened a new domain for businesses which has huge potential not only in terms of positive environmental impact but also in financial aspects. It encourages a reuse/recycle policy, reduces waste generation thus reducing the cost of waste disposal, and provides healthy and safe working conditions to employees thus allowing organizations to run more sustainably and efficiently.

Though various studies have been conducted in the past to analyze what factors affect green purchase and how much this awareness towards the environment and increased demand translates into actual numbers in markets, research for exploring specific factors that explain the attitude-behavior gap is still lacking (Kumar *et al.*., 2019), also various studies often present inconsistent and conflicting results which require further study.

Human behavior is ever-evolving with new learning so is the purchase intention of consumers. This study based on 254 consumers present an analysis of whether and to what extent factors like green promotion, ecological literacy, social influence, and environmental consciousness affect their behavior while making a green purchase.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Purchase Intention can be interpreted as the likelihood and inclination of a consumer who is concerned about environmental and conscious issues to go for a more environmentally friendly product instead of the conventional products, as most of the production process now take care of the environmental impacts that the conventional processes used to cause before (Ali and Ahmad, 2012). Collectivist beliefs and green consumption intentions positively impact green purchase intention. Additionally, the level of environmental visibility and social norms exerts a significant effect on green purchasing intention (Wang, 2014). These factors that influence consumers' green purchase intention can be grouped into three categories: consumer individual characteristics, cognitive factors, and social factors (Zhuang *et al.,* 2021).

Social factors influence green purchase intention and can have an impact on the saturation of consumers in the green market by convincing and relational value. Convincing and relational value can be defined as a consumer not only moving towards greener products or brands but trying to convince others as well. So that those people also switch to green products or brands (Ali *et al.*., 2017). And show pro-environmental behavior to be a better fit in society.

Knowledge or literacy can affect how someone perceives their surroundings. Hence, Environmental behavior can also be influenced by a person's level of environmental literacy (Goulgouti *et al..*, 2019). Furthermore, one's relationship with nature influences their environmental outlook (Geng *et al..*, 2015). Moreover, environmental consciousness significantly influences green purchase attention; green purchase attitude significantly influences green behavior; green purchase intention significantly influences perceived consumer effectiveness; and green behavior significantly influences green purchase behavior (Mishal *et al.,* 2017).

The proposed model determines the impact of other variables on Green purchase intention (GPI) and Convincing and relational value (CR) (Figure 1). Environmental Consciousness (Mishal *et al.,* 2017) describes the psychological elements that influence peoples' predisposition for pro-environmental behavior (Zelezny and Schultz, 2000). A person's knowledge, attitude, behavior, intentions, and actions are all influenced by environmental consciousness, a multidimensional construct. These intentions also include green purchase intention. And actions that are reflected in the convincing and relational value. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: Environmental consciousness (EC) significantly affects green purchase intention (GPI).

H1b: Environmental consciousness (EC) significantly affects convincing and relational value (CR).

Eco literacy (Tiwari, 2022) is the measure of individuals' ability to recognize and comprehend ecologically relevant concepts, symbols, and behaviors (Laroche *et al..*,1996). Environmental knowledge helps consumers evaluate the offerings from business enterprises and thus influences their decision-making process at every stage (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Laroche *et al..*, 2001). Eco literacy also instills responsibility towards society which is reflected via convincing and relational value. Accordingly, we propose that:

H2a: Eco literacy (EL) significantly affects green purchase intention (GPI).

H2b: Eco literacy (EL) significantly affects convincing and relational value (CR).

Green promotion (Nur *et al.,* 2021) is efficient at increasing consumers' environmental and green product knowledge, which helps them to make sensible choices about the goods they purchase and their environmental impact (Ansar, 2013). Therefore, environmental advertising can aid in increasing consumer motivation to purchase green products. If used, these marketing strategies will attract customers and certainly have an impact on their decision to make green purchases (Govender and Govender, 2016). Consumers making green purchases are likely to influence others, to show pro-environmental behavior as well, i.e., show convincing and relational value. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3a: Green promotion (GP) significantly affects green purchase intention (GPI).

H3b: Green promotion (GP) significantly affects convincing and relational value (CR).

Social Influence (Wang, 2014) or subjective norms are social norms that could be taken as the opinions or views, or beliefs which influence an individual's behavior to act yes or no. Social norms are synonymous with normative belief and motivation to obey; Normative belief could be understood as beliefs that derive others to fancy that the consumers should express particular behavior or not, and Motivation to obey could be termed as consumers should follow their society. Consumers construct social norms when they believe that a certain act is inevitable and whether they should execute that behavior or not. The importance of those norms is usually affected by the perceptions of people in proximity to the consumer (Shaw *et al..*, 2015). For example, people who are convinced by their family or friends and instructed to purchase ecological products and then the norms which influenced the behavior of consumers are called subjective beliefs. Here the individual is believed to collect positive motivation to catch social norms and this positive motivation results in optimistic social norms and the intentions of the consumers to purchase ecological

products. Finally, these optimistic social norms compel consumers to purchase ecological products (Rahman, 2013). And influence others to do the same as well. And hence, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H4a: Social influence (SI) significantly affects green purchase intention (GPI).

H4b: Social influence (SI) significantly affects convincing and relational value (CR)

Figure 1: Proposed framework for Green purchase intention (GPI) and Convincing and relational value (CR)
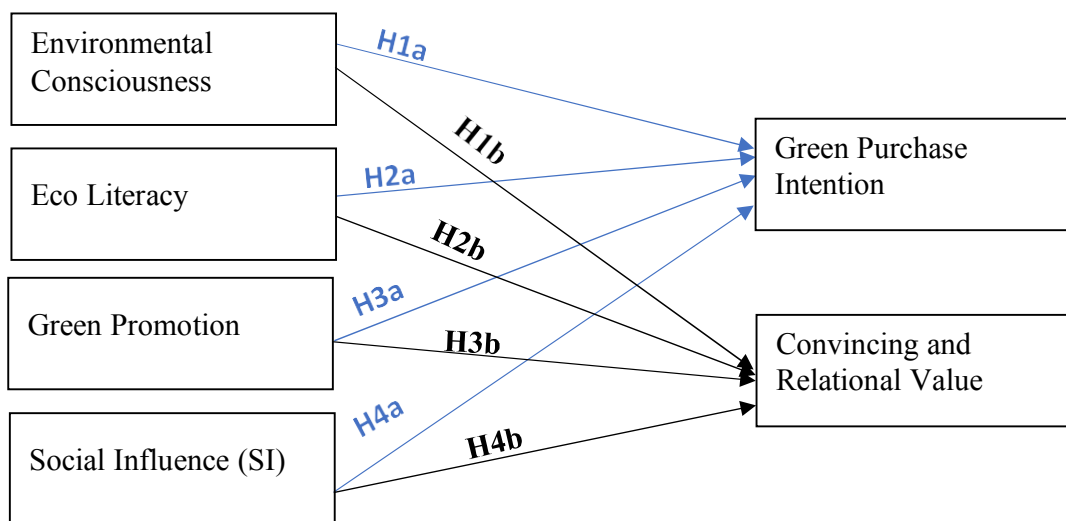
Source: Author's Proposed Framework

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and data collection

The primary data for the study was collected from the respondents using survey method. Convenience sampling technique is used to select respondents. The responses from the respondents were collected through an online structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections. The first section captured the demographic details of the respondents. The second section contained questions, measuring the variables; environmental consciousness (EC), eco literacy (EL), green promotion (GP), and social influence (SI). The third section contained questions, measuring the variables; Green purchase intention (GPI), Convincing and relational value (CR). The last section contained two questions; analyze what factors respondents think to affect the purchase of green products the most, and what change respondents

think businesses should incorporate to be more sustainable in their conduct. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, out of them, 260 questionnaires were filled. Some of the questionnaires were unviable and after discarding them, 254 viable responses constituted the final sample of the study. The sample constitute of 57.5% females and 42.5% males. The average age of the respondents was 21.43 years, with a standard deviation of 3.107 years. Out of all respondents, 78.74% were from Delhi and Delhi NCR; the remaining respondents were from other different cities and most of them were part of Uttar Pradesh.

Measures

Research models' latent constructs were measured using items from existing scales developed by other researchers. All the items were measured on a 1 to 5 Likert scale, with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' and 5 representing 'strongly agree' (Table 1)

Table 1: Measurement Scales

Constructs	Items used for measuring	Adapted from
Environmental consciousness (EC)	"Humans don't have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs." "The balance of nature isn't strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations."	Mishal, Aditi Dubey, Rameshwar & Gupta, Omprakash & Luo, Simon. (2017)
Eco literacy (EL)	"I know the meaning of global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, etc." "I know that plastic bags take many years to decompose and cause pollution."	Kirmani, Mohd & Khan, Mohammed Naved. (2016)
Green promotion (GP)	"Advertisements for green products are effective in creating awareness of problems facing the environment." "Advertisements for green products motivate me to support the environment through purchasing green products."	Jeevarathnam Parthasarathy, Govender & Govender, Tushya. (2016)
Social influence (SI)	"My choice of eco-friendly product is influenced by other consumers' word of mouth" "The purchase of eco-friendly products will make me a positive impression on other people"	Chen X, Rahman MK, Rana MS, Gazi MAI, Rahaman MA, Nawi NC. (2022)
Green purchase intention (GPI)	"When I have two choices for the same product I prefer an environmentally friendly product, especially when the quality of the product is the same." "I intend to switch to another brand for ecological reasons."	Nia, Budi & Rinawati, Dyah & Suliantoro, Hery & Bayu, Dwi. (2018)
Convincing and relational values (CR)	"I try to convince others to boycott a brand that sells products that damage the environment." "I try to convince relatives, and friends to learn about the environmental aspects of everything they use or purchase."	Ali, Julfikar. (2017)

Source: Author's Compilation

DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the reliability of scale constructs (Table 2). The Cronbach's reliability coefficients were greater than the minimum cutoff value of 0.70 for all the constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Model Testing

Four independent variables were used for conducting the hypotheses testing: environmental consciousness (EC), eco literacy (EL), green promotion (GP), social influence (SI), and two dependent variables: green purchase intention (GPI), convincing, and relational value (CR). The basic characteristics of all these variables are stated in (Table 3).

The hypothesis testing was done using multiple regression analysis. We began by testing for regression assumptions. The variance inflation factors (VIF) for the GPI and CR regression models were 1.311 and 1.266, respectively, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue. The model constructs were also subjected to correlation analysis. The results in (Table 4) reveal that the correlation between all constructs was less than 0.90, which is the threshold for substantial correlation, and thus multicollinearity does not exist.

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ISSN 2348-5434 Online
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Journal of General Management Research

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Table 2: Reliability of the Model Constructs

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Environmental consciousness (EC)	4	.702
Eco literacy (EL)	2	.701
Green promotion (GP)	2	.715
Social influence (SI)	3	.762
Green purchase intention (GPI)	4	.707
Convincing and relational value (CR)	3	.812

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 3: Regression Variables

Construct	No. of items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Environmental consciousness (EC)	4	4.2106	0.60173
Eco literacy (EL)	2	4.7264	0.58719
Green promotion (GP)	2	3.8780	0.91478
Social influence (SI)	3	3.5748	0.90252
Green purchase intention (GPI)	4	3.9265	0.78570
Convincing and relational value (CR)	3	3.7244	0.87275

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 4: Correlations

	EC	EL	GP	SI
EC	1	.401**	.243**	0.117
EL		1	.177**	0.042
GP			1	.417**
SI				1

Source: Author's Calculations

RESULTS

Green Purchase Intention (GPI) model

The model is able to explain 22.5% of the variance in the citizens' adoption of Green purchase intention (GPI). The overall model is significant (F = 19.411, P = 0.000). Hence, we further tested the significance of each of the four independent variables. Table 5a shows the variables which significantly impact green purchase intention (GPI). All the variables (EC, GP, and SI) have a significant positive influence on green purchase intention (GPI), except Eco literacy (EL). Thus, all the hypotheses (H1a, H3a, and H4a) are supported except H2a. In (Figure 2) all the research results are summarized and their implications are discussed below.

Table 5a: Multiple regression results for the Green Purchase Intention (GPI) Model

Variable	Standardized Beta (β) Coefficient	t	p-value
EC	0.232	3.762	0.000
EL	-0.030	-0.494	0.622
GP	0.320	5.114	0.000
SI	0.121	1.991	0.048

Source: Author's Calculations

Green promotion (GP) has the most significant impact on Green purchase intention (GPI) followed by Environmental consciousness (EC) and Social influence (SI). This indicates that the promotion of the sustainable policies an organization is following affects green purchase intention to a great extent. As consumers are more likely to make a green purchase when they trust that the brand is green in its conduct, and it is effectively conveyed through green promotion. Environmental consciousness which can be described as an ideology to protect the environment also affects green purchase intention; when a person buys a green product, they are contributing towards environmental protection. It impacts less than green promotion as environmental consciousness is not just limited to green purchasing practices and is much broader than that. While social influence affects green purchase intention but it is not that significant as compared to the other two variables. This indicates that people do change their purchasing behavior to more sustainable behavior to fit in the social environment. This can be explained by different forms of social influence, i.e., peer pressure, obedience, persuasion, conformity, deindividuation, social loafing, social facilitation, observer effect, and bystander effect (Izuma, 2017).

The study reveals that Eco literacy (EL) does not directly affect Green purchase intention (GPI). This is not compatible with the previous research done in other countries i.e., Sweden (Memar *et al.,* 2012), Nigeria (Ayodele, 2017), and Sri Lanka (Howshigan, Shamini., 2019). This indicates that; Eco literacy among Indian citizens doesn't impact green purchase intention. As eco literacy is limited to knowledge about the environment and issues related to it, and not the willingness to take action for it.

Convincing and Relational Value (CR) model

The model is able to explain 19.8% of the variance in the citizens' adoption of Convincing and Relational Value (CR). The overall model is significant (F = 16.614, P = 0.000). Hence, we further tested the significance of each of the four independent variables. (Table 5b) shows the variables which significantly impact Convincing and Relational Value (CR). All the variables (EC, GP, and SI) have a significant positive influence on Convincing and Relational Value (CR), except Eco literacy (EL). Thus, all the hypotheses (H1b, H3b, and H4b) are supported except H2b. The research results are summarized in (Figure 2) and their implications are discussed below.

Table 5b: Multiple regression results for the Convincing and Relational Value (CR) model

| Variable	Standardized Beta (β) Coefficient	t	p-value
EC	0.269	4.299	0.000
EL	-0.043	-0.691	0.490
GP	0.223	3.499	0.001
SI	0.169	2.723	0.007

Source: Author's Calculations

Environmental consciousness (EC) has the most significant impact on Convincing and relational value (CR) followed by Green promotion (GP) and Social influence (SI). This indicates that environmental consciousness affects the convincing and relational value to a great extent. As people are more likely to convince others, to switch to green products/brands when they believe in environmental protection and will put in their efforts for the same.

Green promotion also affects convincing and relational value; as when a person comes across an organization that is following sustainable practices and is trying to make a difference towards the environment. The person feels that by making others aware of that organization or product and convincing them to switch to it, they too are being a part of that positive difference.

While social influence affects convincing and relational value but it is not that significant as compared to the other two variables. This indicates that people try to convince others to switch to green products/brands, to better fit in the social environment. This can be explained by different forms of social influence, i.e., peer pressure, obedience, persuasion, conformity, deindividuation, social loafing, social facilitation, observer effect, and bystander effect (Izuma., 2017).

The study reveals that Eco literacy (EL) does not directly affect Convincing and relational value (CR). As eco literacy is limited to knowledge about the environment and issues related to it, and not the willingness to take action for it.

Figure 2. Results for the proposed framework
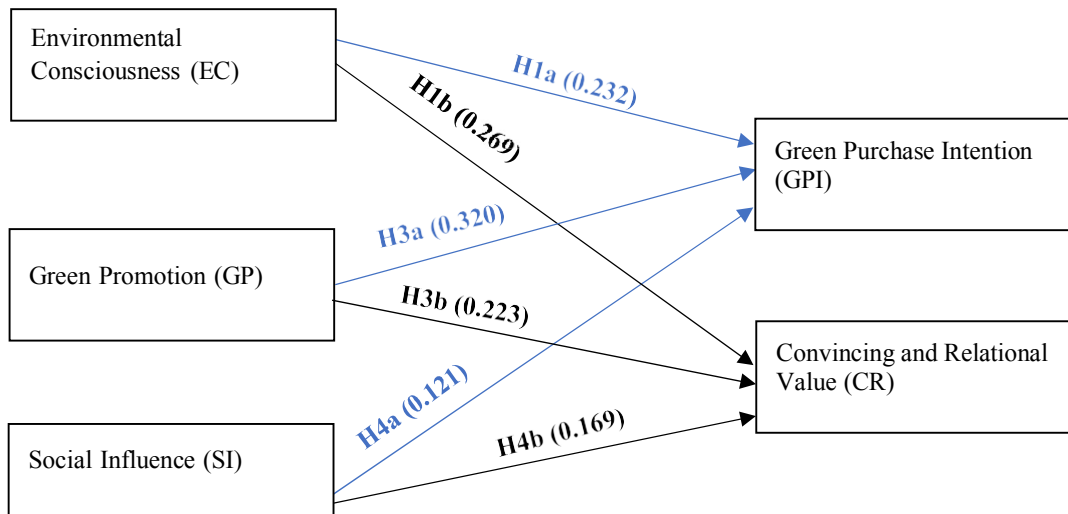
Source: Author's Proposed Framework

Table 6: Factors that affect the purchase of green products the most

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Availability	33	13.0
Awareness	94	37.0
Information provided about product	28	11.0
Past experience	12	4.7

Price	84	33.1
Others	3	1.2
Total	**254**	**100.0**

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 7: Change, organizations should incorporate to be more sustainable in their conduct

Change	Frequency	Percentage
Green supply chain	44	17.3
Properly disposing products	67	26.4
Sustainable manufacturing process	59	23.2
Switching to sustainable energy	56	22.0
Using green packaging	24	9.4
Others	4	1.7
Total	**254**	**100.0**

Source: Author's Calculations

Purchase of green product is affected by the awareness of the product; followed by the price of a product, availability of a product, information provided about the product, and past experience with the product respectively (Table 6). Organizations should incorporate proper disposal of products in their conduct; followed by sustainable manufacturing process, switching to sustainable energy, using green supply chain, and using green packaging to be more sustainable in their conduct (Table 7).

IMPLICATIONS

Managerial Implications

Organizations competing in the green and sustainable market, can use the findings of this study and incorporate them to target a wider audience and become more profitable. Environmental consciousness affects green purchase intention. A company should incorporate transparent and proactive measures which make users believe that the company is truly doing something for the environment and that its products are genuinely green. They should make their policies and procedures more transparent and make people aware of them. They should try to engage customers in such a way that when they buy a product it makes them feel they're doing something for the environment and are an environmentally responsible citizen.

The green promotion has the most significant impact on green purchases according to our data. Companies can utilize it by promoting their sustainable policies, eco-friendly operations, and all the environment-friendly measures that it has adopted, as much as possible. If people are not aware of what makes one organization more sustainable than another, an organization can't be differentiated from its competitors selling similar green products. Organizations need to create marketing strategies that will make people aware of their green products as well as the benefit their products have on the environment like how much recycling, and reusing they were able to do, how much reduction in carbon footprint they were able to do with that product, etc. Social influence also positively affects green purchases. Social influence means people's purchasing behavior is positively impacting each other. Companies can utilize it to create a chain or wave in the market. If being environmentally friendly becomes the new norm then everyone will like doing so, and people will buy more green products to fit in.

The same strategies will help firms to increase convincing and relational value among people which will help organizations instill green purchase behavior among consumers who are already not having it; hence creating new customers in a green and sustainable market. Which will help them get an edge over competitors and will result

ISSN 2348-2869 Print
ISSN 2348-5434 Online
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in more profit in an already saturated market. Apart from promotion and awareness, the price of the product should also be kept in check as it is one of the factors that affect the purchase of green products the most. Sustainable practices such as properly disposing of products, sustainable manufacturing processes, switching to sustainable energy sources, and green supply chain should be followed. As consumers believe that by incorporating these practices, an organization becomes more sustainable in their conduct and it will help in green promotion also.

Theoretical Implications

Unlike the predecessor studies, in this study eco-literacy was not significantly affecting green purchase intention and, convincing and relational value. This can be used to conclude that education does not directly influence, inclination toward sustainability; which is an interesting insight. And implies that environmental literacy is not affecting people's behavior, toward more sustainable choices.

DISCUSSIONS

Eco literacy was not identified as a significant indicator of green purchase intention and, convincing and relational value in this study. Future studies should explore and elucidate the significance of eco literacy in this context. The geographical demographics of this study were limited to Delhi NCR and some cities of Uttar Pradesh. And hence this should be investigated further. Also, it would be beneficial to study the specific variables which were significantly affecting green purchase intention and, convincing and relational value, separately; as to get more insights as to how they affect both of them. Convenience sampling has been used in this study to select the respondents, and the sample size for the study is based on 254 consumers only; which makes the results of this study probabilistic in nature. To test the generalizability of research findings, more diverse random samples must be used in future studies. Any demographic factor that may have a moderating effect on green purchase intention or convincing and relational value; such as gender, age, or geography, has not been taken into account. Future research must examine the impact of additional potential variables on both of them.

CONCLUSION

This study constructs models for Green Purchase Intention (GPI) and Convincing and Relational Value (CR) in terms of variables Environmental Consciousness (EC), Eco Literacy (EL), Green Promotion (GP), and Social Influence (SI); as study the impact of latter on the former. The results indicate that environmental consciousness, green promotion, and social influence are significant indicators of green purchase intention and, convincing and relational value. Eco literacy (EL) does not directly affect Green Purchase Intention (GPI) and Convincing and relational value (CR).

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ISSN 2348-5434 Online
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