

INVESTIGATING CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the increasing consumer awareness and demand for eco-friendly products in light of growing environmental concerns. Various media outlets highlight issues such as climate change and pollution, driving consumers to inquire about a product's environmental footprint throughout its life cycle. Businesses recognize the competitive advantage of eco-friendly products, leading to innovation in sustainable offerings. A comprehensive review of literature and data analysis reveals key factors influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors towards eco-friendly products. Product quality, social responsibility, health benefits, and prestigious branding significantly shape consumer preferences, while demographic factors like age, education, and income also play crucial roles. The study's findings underscore the importance of educational campaigns, increased product availability, and transparency in labeling to promote eco-friendly consumption. It suggests fostering collaborations among businesses, policymakers, and environmental organizations to drive sustainable practices. Future research should explore deeper psychological and socio-economic factors influencing consumer behavior and assess the effectiveness of policy interventions and corporate sustainability initiatives. The implications extend to businesses, policymakers, environmental organizations, and consumers, encouraging informed choices that align with sustainability goals. By leveraging insights into consumer attitudes, stakeholders can collectively foster a culture of sustainability and drive positive environmental change. This study provides valuable recommendations for promoting eco-friendly products and highlights the potential for further research to advance environmental conservation efforts. Ultimately, understanding consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products empowers individuals and organizations to make decisions that contribute to a healthier and more sustainable future for the planet.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Eco-Friendly Products, Sustainable Consumption, Environmental Impact, Green Marketing Etc

1. INTRODUCTION

Society is becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact humans have on the planet. Various media outlets, such as newspapers, magazines, television, and online platforms, regularly cover environmental issues, whether they're local, like depleted fisheries and air pollution, or global, such as ozone depletion and climate change (Brzustewicz, 2024). This heightened awareness has led consumers to express growing concern about environmental degradation. They are now more inclined to inquire about a product's environmental footprint throughout its life cycle, from production to disposal (Allahham, 2024). This growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products serves as a significant driver for their development and adoption. Moreover, industries are recognizing the competitive advantage and sales potential associated with green products (Chan, 2024). As sustainability becomes a more prominent factor in consumer purchasing decisions, businesses are increasingly motivated to innovate and offer environmentally friendly alternatives (Chatterjee, 2024). This shift reflects a broader recognition within industries of the importance of aligning with consumer values and meeting the growing demand for sustainable solutions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Allahham et al. (2024) explore the impact of fintech-based eco-friendly incentives on improving sustainable environmental performance. The study investigates how technological advancements in financial services can encourage environmentally friendly behavior and enhance sustainability practices. Brzustewicz and Escher (2024) conduct a bibliometric analysis to examine the role of consumer behaviors in a circular economy. The study aims to identify key themes and trends in existing literature related to consumer behaviors within the context of circular economic principles. Chang and Lin (2022) investigate the effects of atmosphere on perceived values and customer satisfaction in theme hotels, with a focus on the moderating role of green practice perception. The study explores how environmental considerations influence consumer perceptions and satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Chatterjee et al. (2024) study the influence of demographic variables on the purchase intention of sustainable products. The research examines how factors such as age, gender, and income level impact consumers' willingness to buy environmentally friendly products. Chockalingam and Isreal (2016) propose strategies for redesigning the marketing mix to promote eco-friendly product consumption among non-purchasers in India. The study explores innovative marketing approaches to attract new consumers to sustainable products and overcome barriers to adoption. Coleman et al. (2011) investigate how the theory of reasoned action explains adult and student intentions to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. The study applies a theoretical framework to understand the psychological factors influencing individuals' decisions to engage in pro-environmental actions. Corona et al. (2024) conduct a scoping review to integrate consumer behavior into the environmental assessment of circular packaging. The research aims to identify gaps and opportunities for incorporating consumer preferences and behaviors into the life cycle assessment of sustainable packaging solutions. Elkhwesky et al. (2022) examine sustainable practices in the hospitality industry pre and post-COVID-19 pandemic. The study investigates how the pandemic has impacted sustainability initiatives in the hospitality sector and explores strategies for promoting sustainable practices in the future. Faganel and Dessardo (2024) explore the purchasing habits related to eco-friendly fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) products and premiumization. The research investigates consumer preferences for environmentally friendly products and their willingness to pay a premium for sustainable options. Hari Krishnan et al. (2024) develop a conceptual framework for understanding green consumers' purchase intentions and sustainable consumption of organic food products in the Indian middle-class market. The study aims to identify key factors influencing consumer behavior and preferences in the context of sustainable food consumption.

3. RESEARCH GAP

The research gap in the title of "Exploring Consumer Attitudes and Actions Towards Eco-Friendly Products" revolves after the need for investigation into the factors influencing consumer behaviors and attitudes towards eco-friendly products. While existing studies provide insights into various aspects of sustainable consumption, such as the impact of incentives, demographic variables, and marketing strategies, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the interplay of these factors in driving consumer adoption of eco-friendly products. Additionally, there is a gap in understanding the long-term effects of external factors, such as the consumer preferences and behaviours in relation to sustainability. Bridging this research gap is essential for developing targeted interventions and strategies to promote sustainable consumption practices and advance environmental conservation efforts.

3.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

- 1) Are consumers aware of eco-friendly products?
- 2) What behaviours do consumers exhibit in relation to eco-friendly products?

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference in the importance of factors influencing eco-friendly products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference in the importance of factors influencing eco-friendly products.

3.2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To Evaluate consumer awareness and behaviours regarding eco-friendly products to understand their knowledge levels and actions towards sustainable consumption.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

"Going green" and "Eco-friendly" have become commonplace in talk shows, advertisements, and product packaging (Chockalingam, 2016). However, the term "eco-friendly" has been applied to such a wide range of products and practices that its true meaning risks being diluted (Ikhwesky, 2022). By delving into consumer attitudes and behaviours towards eco-friendly products, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of what it truly means to be environmentally conscious (Harikrishnan, 2024). This understanding can guide consumers in adopting practices that promote healthier living for the planet and all its inhabitants, both big and small.

In recent years, more and more people are becoming interested in using products that are good for the environment (Ibrahim, 2013). These eco-friendly products are designed to be kind to the planet, so they don't harm it as much as regular products do. Words like "eco-friendly" or "green" on labels or in advertisements (Irfany, 2024). Businesses are also catching on to this trend. They're starting to make more eco-friendly options because they know people want them. From cleaning supplies to clothes, you can find eco-friendly versions of almost anything these days (Saif, 2024). This is great news for the planet because it means less pollution and damage to nature.

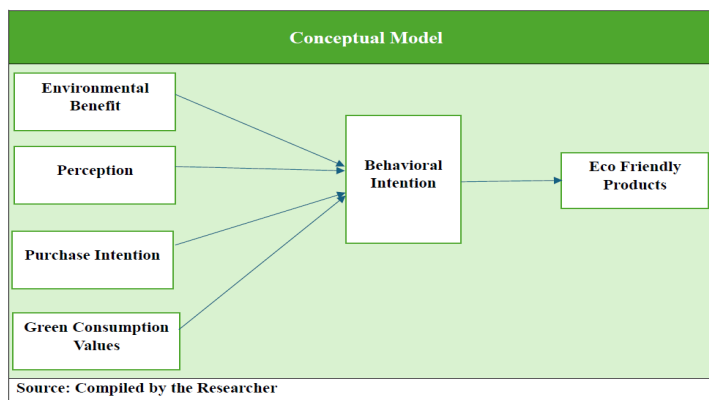
But while eco-friendly products are becoming more popular, there's still a lot to learn. We need to understand more about why people choose these products and how they can make a difference (Shafee, 2024). By learning more about eco-friendly choices, we can all help make the world a better place for everyone.

4.2. NEED OF ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

In today's world, the need for eco-friendly products has never been more pressing. With environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction becoming increasingly urgent, transitioning to eco-friendly alternatives is essential for the well-being of our planet and future generations (Thuy, 2024).

- Eco-friendly products are designed to minimize their negative impact on the environment.
- They achieve this by utilizing renewable resources, reducing energy consumption, and producing less waste.
- By conserving natural resources, protecting ecosystems, and mitigating pollution, eco-friendly products contribute to environmental preservation.
- Traditional manufacturing processes and products often contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, driving climate change.
- Eco-friendly products, however, prioritize sustainability by utilizing low-carbon materials and production methods.
- Many conventional products contain harmful chemicals and toxins that pose risks to human health and the environment.
- Eco-friendly alternatives prioritize safety by using non-toxic ingredients and materials.
- This reduces exposure to harmful substances and promotes healthier living environments for both humans and ecosystems.
- As awareness of environmental issues grows, consumers are increasingly seeking out eco-friendly options.
- Businesses responding to this demand drive innovation and market growth in the green sector.
- This consumer demand for sustainable products incentivizes businesses to prioritize eco-friendly practices and offerings.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between consumers' perceptions of environmental benefits, their purchase intentions regarding eco-friendly products, and their values regarding green consumption. By investigating these variables, researcher aim to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards eco-friendly products (Tjokrosaputro, 2020). Additionally, we seek to identify potential mediating and moderating factors that may influence this relationship. Ultimately, our goal is to contribute to the existing literature on sustainable consumption and provide insights that can inform businesses and policymakers in promoting eco-friendly products and practices.

5.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Purchase Intention: This variable represents the outcome or response that is influenced by other factors. In this case, it reflects the willingness or intention of consumers to purchase eco-friendly products. It is the dependent variable as it is influenced by other variables in the model.

Independent Variables:

Environmental Benefit Perception: This variable represents consumers' perception of the environmental benefits associated with eco-friendly products. It reflects their understanding and beliefs about how these products contribute to environmental preservation and sustainability.

Green Consumption Values: This variable reflects consumers' values and attitudes towards sustainable and environmentally friendly consumption practices. It encompasses their personal beliefs, preferences, and motivations for choosing eco-friendly products over conventional ones.

Mediating Variable:

Eco-friendly Product Awareness: This variable could potentially serve as a mediating variable between environmental benefit perception and purchase intention. It represents consumers' awareness of eco-friendly products available in the market and their understanding of the environmental benefits associated with these products. It mediates the relationship between environmental benefit perception and purchase intention by influencing consumers' decision-making process.

Moderating Variable:

Product Availability and Accessibility: This variable could potentially serve as a moderating variable in the relationship between environmental benefit perception and purchase intention. It reflects the ease with which consumers can access and purchase eco-friendly products. The availability and accessibility of eco-friendly products may moderate the relationship between environmental benefit perception and purchase intention, as consumers are more likely to purchase these products if they are readily available and accessible in the market.

Therefore,

Purchase Intention is the dependent variable.

Environmental Benefit Perception and Green Consumption Values are the independent variables.

Eco-friendly Product Awareness serve as a mediating variable.

Product Availability and Accessibility serve as a moderating variable.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Quantitative research.

Sampling Method: Purposive Sampling

Sample Size: 136

Sampling Area: Salem District, India.

Respondents: Only Eco-Friendly Product Users

6.1. MAJOR VARIABLES FOCUSED FOR ANALYSIS

- 1) Organic Vegetables and Fruits
- 2) Organic Food Products
- 3) Cosmetics (Herbal)
- 4) Toiletries
- 5) Fabric and Food Products

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Reliability Test:

Table 1

Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items
0.894	20

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.894 suggests a high level of internal consistency among the items in the scale, which indicates that the items in the scale are reliably measuring the same underlying construct. With a value of 0.894, it surpasses the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating strong reliability. Therefore, the scale consisting of 20 items is considered to be internally consistent, providing confidence in its ability to accurately measure the intended construct.

Table 2

Customer Awareness towards Eco-Friendly Products

S.No	Particulars	Responses	
		Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Crafted from natural materials	15	10.489%
2.	Eco-friendly labels and certifications	18	12.58%
3.	Cost	16	10.81%
4.	Quality of the Product	21	14.68%
5.	Deals & Rebates	14	9.7%
6.	Promotion of the Product	11	7.69%
7.	Creative Product Design	16	11.18%
8.	Utility of the Product	14	9.79%
9.	Biodegradability	18	12.58%
Total		143	100%

Source Primary Data

Interpretation

The survey results reveal varying degrees of importance attributed by respondents to different factors when considering eco-friendly products. Crafted from natural materials garnered the attention of 10.489% of respondents, highlighting a preference for products sourced from renewable resources. Eco-friendly labels and certifications were deemed significant by 12.58% of participants, indicating a desire for transparency and assurance of environmental sustainability. Cost played a pivotal role for 10.81% of respondents, suggesting a balancing act between environmental consciousness and affordability. Quality of the product emerged as a top priority, with 14.68% of participants emphasizing the importance of durability and performance. Deals and rebates influenced the decisions of 9.7% of respondents, underscoring the significance of incentives in driving eco-friendly purchases. The promotion of the product captured the attention of 7.69% of respondents, showcasing the role of marketing in influencing consumer behavior. Creative product design appealed to 11.18% of participants, reflecting an appreciation for innovation and aesthetics. Utility of the product was considered by 9.79% of respondents, underscoring the importance of functionality and practicality. Lastly, biodegradability resonated with 12.58% of respondents, indicating a preference for products that minimize environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.

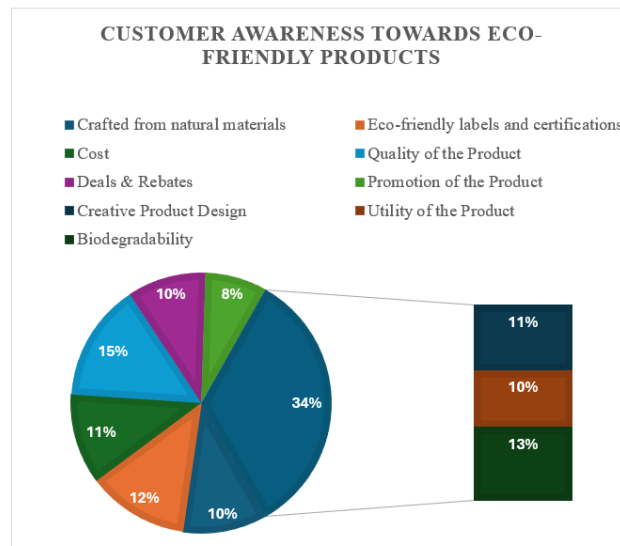


Table 3

Chi Square Test

Demographic Factors and Attitude towards Eco-Friendly Products

S.No	Demographic Factors	Pearson Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig (2 Sided)
1.	Area of Living	112.546	0.000
2.	Gender	0.547	0.025
3.	Age	24.265	0.000
4.	Educational Level	17.845	0.000
5.	Occupation	0.004	0.054
6.	Income Level	14.265	0.000
7.	Type of Family	17.456	0.000

Significant level 0.05

Pearson Chi-Square test was conducted to assess the relationship between demographic factors and the variable under study. With a significance level set at 0.05, the results indicate statistically significant relationships between the

variable and various demographic factors. Specifically, significant associations were found with area of living, gender, age, educational level, income level, and type of family. These findings suggest that these demographic factors may play a role in influencing the variable of interest. However, the relationship with occupation was marginally above the significance threshold. Overall, these results underscore the importance of considering demographic characteristics when examining the variable of interest.

Table 4

Garret Ranking

S.No	Factors	Total Score	Average Score	Final Rank
1.	Product Quality	60260	55.79	1
2.	Brand Values	47933	44.38	5
3.	Social Responsibility	58333	54.01	2
4.	Personal Health	51143	47.35	4
5.	Prestigious	53411	49.45	3

Source Primary Data

The factors were evaluated based on their total scores, average scores, and final ranks. Product Quality emerged as the top-ranking factor with a total score of 60260 and an average score of 55.79, securing the first position. Following closely behind, Social Responsibility attained the second position with a total score of 58333 and an average score of 54.01. Prestigious ranked third with a total score of 53411 and an average score of 49.45. Personal Health and Brand Values occupied the fourth and fifth positions, respectively, with total scores of 51143 and 47933, and average scores of 47.35 and 44.38. These rankings provide insights into the relative importance and performance of each factor, guiding further analysis and decision-making processes.

8. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

The usability issues are comprised of six items, each measured on a 5-point agreement scale. The initial model, which illustrates the relationship between the indicator variables (items) and the factor dimension, is presented in the following table.

Model fit Indices:

Chi.sq = 14.766, P = 0.057, CMIN/DF = 2.64

GFI = 0.924, NIF = 0.987, AGFI = 0.941, CFI = 0.925, RMR = 0.014, RMSEA = 0.057

Table 5

Estimate	Unstandardized	Standardized	S.E	C.R.	P
ECA1 ← ECA	1	0.526			
ECA2 ← ECA	1.891	0.619	0.263	7.183	***
ECA3 ← ECA	1.482	0.561	0.211	7.025	***
ECA4 ← ECA	1.424	0.532	0.209	6.816	***
ECA5 ← ECA	1.391	0.514	0.197	7.064	***
ECA6 ← ECA	2.083	0.687	0.25	8.343	***

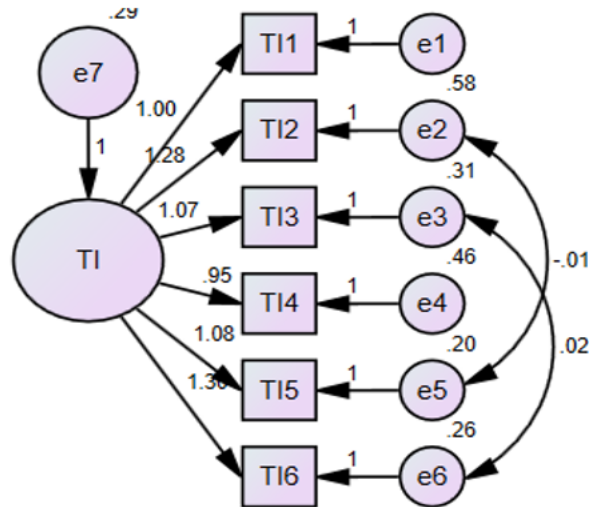


Figure 1 Unstandardized Estimates of Technical issues

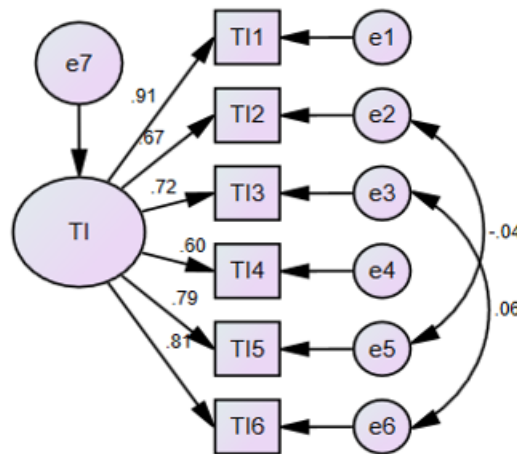


Figure 2 Standardized Estimates of Technical issues

The regression coefficients indicate strong and statistically significant relationships between the underlying factor of consumer awareness and attitudes towards eco-friendly products (ECA) and the six measured items (ECA1 to ECA6). The standardized coefficients range from 0.514 to 0.687, demonstrating that each item significantly reflects the underlying factor. High critical ratios (ranging from 6.816 to 8.343) and highly significant p-values ($p < 0.001$) confirm these relationships. Thus, a one-unit increase in ECA results in increases in the items' standard deviations, underscoring the robustness and significance of the model in measuring consumer awareness and attitudes towards eco-friendly products.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Among factors influencing eco-friendly product preferences, product quality emerges as the most significant. Consumers prioritize durability, performance, and reliability when choosing eco-friendly options.
- The study highlights the importance of social responsibility in consumer decision-making. Products associated with ethical practices and community engagement garner favorable attention, reflecting consumers' desire to support socially responsible brands.

- Consumers value eco-friendly products for their potential health benefits. Items free from harmful chemicals and toxins are preferred, indicating a growing awareness of the link between personal well-being and sustainable consumption.
- Prestigious branding contributes to consumer perceptions of eco-friendly products. Brands with a reputation for quality and reliability are more likely to attract environmentally conscious consumers, enhancing their market appeal.
- Demographic factors significantly shape attitudes towards eco-friendly products. Variables such as age, education, income, and family type play a crucial role in determining consumer preferences and purchase intentions.

10. SUGGESTIONS

- Implement educational campaigns to raise awareness about eco-friendly products, addressing misconceptions and providing accurate information on their benefits for both consumers and the environment.
- Increase the availability and affordability of eco-friendly products by expanding distribution channels, offering incentives such as discounts or subsidies, and exploring innovative pricing strategies to make sustainable options more accessible to a wider range of consumers.
- Foster collaborations between businesses, policymakers, and environmental organizations to develop and implement sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. Partnerships can drive innovation in packaging, sourcing, and production methods, further promoting eco-friendly consumption.
- Establish trust and credibility in eco-friendly products by enhancing transparency in labeling and certifications. Encourage businesses to obtain reputable eco-labels and certifications, providing consumers with reliable information to make informed purchasing decisions.
- Prioritize research and development efforts towards sustainable packaging solutions to minimize environmental impact. Invest in recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable packaging alternatives to reduce plastic waste and promote circular economy principles.
- The Role of Government Policies and Regulations in Promoting Sustainable Consumption: Lessons from Global Initiatives”
- “Consumer Trust in Eco-Friendly Certifications and Labels: Building Credibility in a Green Marketplace”
- “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Corporate Sustainability Initiatives in Influencing Consumer Behaviour: Case Studies from Leading Brands”

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, Researcher offer several recommendations for businesses, policymakers, and marketers looking to promote eco-friendly products. To enhancing consumer education and awareness through informative campaigns can help overcome knowledge gaps and dispel misconceptions. By improving product accessibility and affordability by expanding distribution channels and offering incentives can encourage more consumers to choose eco-friendly options. Additionally, collaborations between stakeholders and innovating packaging solutions can further promote sustainable consumption practices.

11.1. FUTURE SCOPE

The future scope of research in exploring consumer attitudes and actions towards eco-friendly products holds promise for several areas of inquiry. It is delving deeper into the psychological and socio-economic factors influencing consumer behaviour can provide valuable insights into the underlying motivations driving sustainable consumption. It also investigating emerging trends in eco-friendly product innovation, such as advancements in green technology and sustainable materials, offers opportunities to identify novel solutions that align with consumer preferences and environmental goals. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of policy interventions and corporate sustainability initiatives in promoting eco-friendly practices can contribute to shaping regulatory frameworks and business strategies

for a more sustainable future. Lastly, as global awareness of environmental issues continues to grow, cross-cultural studies can shed light on the cultural and regional variations in consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products, paving the way for tailored marketing strategies and targeted interventions on a global scale.

11.2. IMPLICATIONS

Businesses can utilize insights from consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products to refine their marketing strategies and develop products that align with consumer preferences. By understanding what drives consumer choices in this regard, businesses can tailor their offerings to better meet the demand for environmentally friendly options, thus enhancing their competitiveness in the market.

Policymakers can leverage knowledge of consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products to formulate and implement regulations and incentives that promote sustainable consumption practices. By aligning policies with consumer preferences, policymakers can encourage the adoption of eco-friendly products at a societal level, leading to positive environmental outcomes.

Environmental organizations and advocacy groups can use insights into consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products to tailor their outreach and educational efforts. By targeting specific consumer segments and addressing their concerns and motivations, these groups can effectively promote sustainable consumption behaviors and drive the adoption of eco-friendly products among the general population.

Fostering a culture of sustainability among consumers has the potential to have significant environmental benefits. By encouraging the widespread adoption of eco-friendly products, consumers can contribute to reduced resource depletion, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and enhanced ecological resilience. This, in turn, can lead to a healthier and more sustainable future for the planet.

Understanding consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products empowers individuals to make informed choices that align with their values and preferences. By providing consumers with access to accurate information and a range of sustainable options, businesses, policymakers, and advocacy groups can enable consumers to play an active role in driving positive environmental change through their purchasing decisions.

12. CONCLUSION

This study delves into the growing consumer awareness and demand for eco-friendly products in response to increasing environmental concerns. With society's heightened awareness of environmental issues, consumers are now more inclined to consider a product's environmental footprint when making purchasing decisions. Businesses are recognizing the competitive advantage of offering eco-friendly options and are motivated to innovate in this direction. Through a review of literature and analysis of consumer behaviors, the study identifies key factors influencing consumer attitudes and actions towards eco-friendly products. The research highlights the importance of factors such as product quality, social responsibility, health benefits, and prestigious branding in shaping consumer preferences. Demographic factors also play a significant role in determining consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products. Based on the findings, several suggestions and recommendations are offered for businesses, policymakers, and marketers to promote eco-friendly products effectively. Looking ahead, the future scope of research in this area holds promise for exploring deeper psychological and socio-economic factors influencing consumer behavior. Additionally, investigating emerging trends in eco-friendly product innovation and assessing the effectiveness of policy interventions and corporate sustainability initiatives can further advance environmental conservation efforts. Overall, the implications of this study extend to businesses, policymakers, environmental organizations, and consumers alike. By understanding and leveraging consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products, stakeholders can collectively contribute to fostering a culture of sustainability and driving positive environmental change.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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