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## A BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY: MODELLING THE INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR GAP IN PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines consumer behaviour toward eco-friendly products with particular emphasis on the gap between purchase intention and actual buying behaviour. The research also investigates the influence of product visibility and eco-label awareness on consumer trust and purchase decisions. A combination of descriptive and analytical research designs was adopted. Primary data were collected from 100 respondents in Kozhikode district using a structured questionnaire, and analysed using SPSS. Statistical tools including paired sample t-test, multiple regression, and Spearman correlation were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal a significant gap between consumers' intention to purchase eco-friendly products and their actual buying behaviour, indicating that positive attitudes do not always translate into action. The regression results show that product visibility, in terms of availability and display, does not significantly influence purchase behaviour. However, eco-label awareness is found to have a significant positive relationship with consumer trust and purchase decisions, highlighting the importance of credible and transparent labelling. The study concludes that trust plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable consumption. It suggests that policymakers and marketers should focus on enhancing consumer awareness and strengthening trust mechanisms to bridge the intention-behaviour gap and encourage environmentally responsible purchasing practices.

**KEYWORDS:** Eco-friendly products, Sustainable consumption, Eco-label awareness, Green consumerism



## **INTRODUCTION**

Climate change and environmental degradation have become major global challenges in recent years, influencing both consumer behaviour and government policies. Consumption patterns have gradually changed as a result of increasing awareness regarding issues including pollution, resource depletion, and ecological imbalance. Products that are ethical, sustainable, and safe for the environment are gaining popularity. These products, which are commonly known as "green products" or "sustainable products," are developed to have a minimum negative impact on the environment throughout their lifecycle. In this context, the concept of sustainable consumption has become very important in the field of social sciences, especially when it comes to understanding how individual choices shape broader environmental outcomes. Consumer behaviour is influenced by attitudes, values, awareness, and social influence in addition to economic factors. When it comes to sustainability, consumers often show concern for the environment and prefer eco-friendly items. However, actual purchase behaviour is not always linked with this concern. Although many consumers claim they prefer sustainable products, they continue to buy conventional alternatives due to factors like cost, availability, convenience, and lack of trust in environmental claims. In studies on sustainable consumption, this difference between intention and actual behaviour has emerged as an important topic of study [1], [2]. Previous studies show that customer attitudes toward green products are strongly influenced by environmental awareness. Customers who are knowledgeable about environmental issues and the advantages of sustainable products are more likely to develop positive attitudes, which might influence their intentions to make purchases. However, intention alone is not sufficient, various psychological and external factors also play a role in actual buying behaviour, [1]. The complex nature of consumer decision-making is also shown by study indicate that even environmentally conscious consumers may continue to use non-sustainable items due to habitual behaviour or lack of convenience [3].

Eco-labels and certifications also play a major role in promoting sustainable consumption. Eco-labels are meant to assure customers about a product's environmental friendliness and help them in making informed decisions. According to studies, credible and clear eco-labels can increase customer confidence and positively impact purchasing decisions. But these labels may be less effective if customers are unaware of them or doubt their authenticity [4]. Therefore, promoting sustainable products in the market requires transparency and effective communication.

Accessibility and cost are important factors that influence how consumers behave when it comes to green products. Many people refrain from buying eco-friendly products by the common perception that they are more expensive. However, some research suggests that factors including product quality, brand image, and availability may have a greater impact on demand than price [5]. This indicates that a single factor is unable to fully convey the complex nature of customer decision-making.



Additionally, social and cultural factors are essential in determining sustainable consumption behaviours. Purchase decisions and behaviour can be greatly influenced by traditions, peer pressure, and social expectations. For example, people who belong to community groups that care about the environment, are more likely to adopt green consumption habits. Younger consumers are generally more aware about environmental issues and more likely to adopt sustainable lifestyles than older generations [6], [7].

The shift towards environmentally responsible consumption remains slow despite the growing interest in sustainable products, mainly due the gap between consumers' expressed preferences and their actual behaviour. Environmental issues are becoming more widely recognized, yet this awareness does not always result in actual purchases. The difference highlights the need for a more thorough understanding of the factors that influence consumer behaviour toward sustainable products, especially in developing countries like India where price sensitivity, diverse consumer preferences, and environmental concerns exist. In such context, this study aims to analyse consumer behaviour toward sustainable products by focusing on key factors like awareness, eco-labels, price perception, and social influence [8]. It also looks at the gap between consumers' intentions to buy green products and their actual purchasing behaviour. The study aims to provide valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and policymakers to promote environmentally responsible consumption patterns by combining social scientific perspectives with environmental concerns.

### **RESEARCH METHDOLOGY & ANALYSIS**

The study combines descriptive and analytical research designs. The degree of consumer awareness, preferences, attitudes, and purchasing behaviour with regard to sustainable products are methodically presented and explained using the descriptive study design, providing a clear picture of current consumer perceptions and practices. Additionally, the analytical study approach is used to assess how customer's decisions to buy sustainable products are influenced by important influencing factors including income, educational attainment, and environmental consciousness. The study's sample of 100 respondents was chosen from the Kozhikode (Calicut) district using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that makes it simple and quick to gather data from respondents who are easily accessible, though it may limit how broadly the results can be applied. While secondary data is gathered from a variety of reliable sources, including academic journals, websites, and published reports, to support and strengthen the research, primary data for the study is gathered through structured questionnaires intended to capture pertinent and trustworthy responses from participants. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software is used to examine the gathered data, guaranteeing accurate and methodical processing. The reliability, validity, and general significance of the study's conclusions are improved by using statistical techniques like correlation, regression, and

chi-square tests to look at relationships, test hypotheses, and detect important patterns in the data.

**OUTCOMES**

**Table 1: Paired Sample Statistics for Intention and Actual Purchase Behaviour**

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	intention	3.96	100	.887	.089
	actual_purchase_behaviour	3.35	100	.821	.082

**Table 2: Paired Sample Correlation between Intention and Actual Purchase Behaviour**

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	intention & actual_purchase_behaviour	100	.394	.000

**Table 3: Paired Sample t-test Results for Intention and Actual Purchase Behaviour**

**Paired Samples Test**

**Paired Differences**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower
Pair 1	intention - actual_purchase_behaviour	-.610	.942	.094	.423

**Paired Samples Test**

Paired Differences	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
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		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Upper			
Pair 1	intention actual_purchase_behaviour	- .797	6.478	99	.000

**Hypothesis 1**

A paired sample t-test was used to compare consumers’ intention to purchase eco-friendly products with their actual buying behaviour. The results showed that intention (M = 3.96, SD = 0.887) was higher than actual behaviour (M = 3.35, SD = 0.821). This difference was statistically significant,  $t(99) = 6.48, p < .001$ . The mean gap between the two was 0.61, with a 95% confidence interval between 0.423 and 0.797. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that even though consumers intend to buy eco-friendly products, their actions do not always match their intentions.

**Table 4: Model Summary for Regression Analysis of Product Visibility and Purchase Behaviour**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.034 <sup>a</sup>	.001	-.019	.829

a. Predictors: (Constant), display, availability

**Table 5: ANOVA Results for Regression Model**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.076	2	.038	.055	.946 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	66.674	97	.687		
	Total	66.750	99			

a. Dependent Variable: actual\_purchase\_behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), display, availability

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients for Product Availability and Display**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.357	.520		6.459	.000
	availability	-.030	.101	-.030	-.291	.771
	display	.022	.116	.020	.191	.849

a. Dependent Variable: actual\_purchase\_behaviour

**Hypothesis 2**

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether product visibility, measured through display and availability, significantly influences consumers’ actual purchase behaviour of eco-friendly products. The overall model was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 97) = 0.055$ ,  $p = .946$ , indicating that the predictors did not meaningfully explain variations in purchase behaviour. The model accounted for only 0.1% of the variance in actual purchasing behaviour ( $R^2 = .001$ ). Furthermore, neither availability ( $\beta = -.030$ ,  $p = .771$ ) nor display ( $\beta = .020$ ,  $p = .849$ ) showed a significant individual effect on purchase behaviour. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that product visibility in stores or online does not have a significant impact on consumers’ purchase decisions of eco-friendly products.

**Table 7: Spearman Correlation Analysis for Label Checking, Trust, and Purchase Decision Correlations**

			label_check	trust
Spearman's rho	label_check	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.337**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	100	100
	trust	Correlation Coefficient	.337**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	100	100
	purchase_decision	Correlation Coefficient	.277**	.514**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000
		N	100	100

**Correlations**

		purchase_decision	
Spearman's rho	label_check	Correlation Coefficient	.277**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
		N	100
	trust	Correlation Coefficient	.514**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	100
	purchase_decision	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Hypothesis 3**

A Spearman’s rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between green label awareness, consumer trust, and purchase decisions and it showed a significant positive relationship. Label checking was positively correlated with both consumer trust ( $\rho = .337, p = .001$ ) and purchase decisions ( $\rho = .277, p = .005$ ), while consumer trust had a stronger correlation with purchase decisions ( $\rho = .514, p < .001$ ). These results suggest that increased attention to green labels enhances trust and purchase behaviour. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that green labels significantly influence consumer trust and purchase decisions.

**CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to understand consumer behaviour toward eco-friendly products by examining the gap between intention and actual purchase, the effect of product visibility, and the role of green labels in influencing trust and buying decisions. The findings highlight a noticeable gap between what consumers intend to do and what they actually do. Although many respondents expressed a strong willingness to purchase eco-friendly products, this intention was not consistently reflected in their real purchasing behaviour. This indicates that positive attitudes and awareness alone do not necessarily lead to action, suggesting the presence of certain obstacles that prevent consumers from following through on their intentions. The study also examined whether product visibility, such as how products are displayed or their availability, affects purchase decisions. The results showed no significant relationship, implying that increased visibility alone may not be enough to encourage consumers to buy eco-friendly products. It appears that other considerations, including cost, perceived usefulness, and individual preferences, may have a stronger influence on decision-making. On the other hand, green labels were found to play an important role in shaping consumer behaviour. The analysis



revealed that consumers who pay attention to eco-labels tend to have higher levels of trust, which positively affects their purchase decisions. This demonstrates that reliable and easily understandable labels can be effective in promoting environmentally responsible choices. To conclude, the study suggests that while consumers are generally inclined toward eco-friendly products, their actual behaviour is influenced more by trust and credibility than by product visibility. Reducing the gap between intention and action requires efforts to strengthen consumer confidence through trustworthy labelling and to address the practical factors that limit real purchasing behaviour. These findings provide useful insights for businesses and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumption.

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