

Research Paper

Trusting Green, Believing in Impact: Factors Influencing Green Purchase Intention among Undergraduate Students of Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

The pattern of our consumption is placing tremendous pressure on our natural resources, ecosystems, and human well-being. The clothing industry has become one of the most polluting industries globally due to excessive water waste, carbon emissions, and overflowing landfills. Sustainable consumption in clothing involves buying less, choosing eco-friendly fabrics, using recycled materials, etc., which help reduce environmental harm. Thus, the present study focuses on the role of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Green Trust on Green Purchase intention for green clothing among men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata. 300 undergraduate students of Kolkata were selected through multistage stratified random sampling; among them, 166 were men and 134 were women. The Modified Kuppuswamy socioeconomic status scale, 2024 and The General Health Questionnaire-28 were used as screening tools. Standardized tools were used to measure Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention of the consumers along with a general information schedule. Descriptive statistics, independent sample *t*-test, Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple linear regression were calculated. Men are higher in Green Purchase Intention, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust than women as suggested by their mean scores. Results of an independent *t*-test revealed that men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata differ significantly in terms of Green Purchase Intention for green clothing. Also, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust were significantly associated with Green Purchase Intention for green clothing. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust were significant positive predictors for Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata. The findings can contribute to the development of sustainable marketing practices and help policymakers promote eco-friendly consumption.

Keywords: *Green, Sustainable, Eco-friendly, Green Products, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Trust, Purchase intention*

Due to rapid climate change and human-induced environmental problems, challenges imposed by global warming have led to increased efforts to take actions and promote sustainable practices (Aslam et al., 2020; Patwary et al., 2022).

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Sustainability is recognized as that bridge that balances global economic progress with the help of environmental conservation (Zhang et al., 2019a). Nguyen et al., (2019) defined those consumptions as green consumption, which are harmonious with environmental conservation and which are beneficial for present and future generations. The consumers who are labeled as 'green consumers' are basically those who participate in those behaviors that can enhance environmental and social impacts and simultaneously strengthen the well-being of the consumers. (White et al., 2019). Sustainability, 'eco-friendly,' and 'green' are the terms often used interchangeably. Eco-friendly products are those, that are manufactured ethically, made up of sustainable or recycled materials, such as organic, natural, plant-based ingredients, invested in carbon removal projects, biodegradable, etc. India is the very first country to include Mission 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment), which is a global mass movement that solely focuses on promoting eco-friendly practices and sustainable lifestyles (Kumar et al., 2024). Green consumption can be influenced by a number of important factors, because these products are evaluated by consumers, based on their performance, value, satisfaction, and how advantageous the products are, as well as the claims they make on their packaging labels (Nittala & Moturu, 2021). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, an individual's intention has been influenced by a few favorable notions, which can guide their feeling about an action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This theory was further extended by Ajzen, who developed the Theory of Planned Behavior which explains that if an individual has behavioral intention, that could lead to the actual behavior. Almost 10% of carbon emissions are contributed by the textile industry, which makes it one of the most polluting sectors globally. The reasons behind this are probably high water and energy consumption, extensive use of chemicals and pesticides that contaminate the soil, and also the excessive amount of discarded clothing waste. The rapid increase in overconsumption of clothing highlights the need for more sustainable consumption behavior that will reduce the negative impact on the environment (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). Sustainable fashions include all those clothes that are naturally colored and made of organic fibers, also, how the clothes are made, how they are consumed, and after use how they are disposed of, etc.—all these contribute to sustainable fashion (Tryphena R. and Arul Aram I. 2023). Thus, the present study highlights the importance of sustainable consumption, specifically green purchase intention and its predictors in the realm of the green clothing industry. Research says that Gen-Z is more inclined towards green consumption (Lopes et al., 2023). The present study considers undergraduate students who are Gen-Z as a sample because they are found to be more environmentally concerned. Also, the students represent our country's future and may bring about the essential reforms to benefit our environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

It refers to an individual's belief that their personal actions can contribute to solving environmental problems. (Berger & Corbin, 1992). When consumers are confident in their ability to achieve those outcomes that they personally value and have also set a goal, is called Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) (Kovacs and Keresztes ;2022). Basically, these consumers assume that their practices will stay viable to depict greater adherence with sustainable practices (Minh et al., 2024). Thus, those who have high Perceived Consumer Effectiveness believe that they can solve the environmental issues by their ability, which in turn strengthens their intention to engage in sustainable practices.

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Green Trust

Green Trust Chen (2010) defined green trust as the degree to which consumers are willing to depend on a brand, product, or service due to its trustworthy environmental performance. It is the belief system of a consumer on a particular product based on its environmental effectiveness (Chen & Chang, 2013). Past research showed that if consumers trust a product, it will significantly shape consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions towards that product, resulting in actual purchasing behavior (Harris & Goode, 2010). Thus, consumer trust has been identified as an important factor in purchase intention (Schlosser et al., 2006).

Green Purchase Intention

Green Purchase Intention When it comes to the topic of application, the Theory of Planned behavior has been used widely in different sectors of research areas like how individuals are intended to buy green products (Geiger et al., 2017) and also their sustainable behavior in the fashion segment (Uyen et al., 2021). Rashid (2009) defined green purchase intention as the degree of willingness, preference, and likelihood of the consumers to choose sustainable products. Further, it can be elaborated as the determination to act or behave in a particular way regarding sustainable consumption (Ramayah et al., 2010).

Gender

Several past researches have highlighted that gender-associated social stigma and norms play role in gender differences in green consumption (Mohai 1997; McCright & Sundström, 2013; Swim et al., 2020). However, most research showed that women tend to be more into green consumption than men, as they are generally more engaged in proenvironmental behavior, and they also have stronger concern for environmental issues. (Krauss, 1993; Zelezny et al., 2000; Vainio & Paloniemi, 2014). But contrasting evidences argued that men possess greater environmental knowledge and exhibit more positive environmental attitudes (Banerjee & McKeage, 1994; Mostafa, 2007; Ping & Linxiao, 2020). As Pickett Baker & Ozaki (2008) suggested, gender is a factor that cannot be overlooked in the context of green consumption, and thus this area still needs further scholarly attention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives:

1. To determine the role of gender (men and women) in Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata.
2. To determine the association between Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Green Trust, and Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata irrespective of their gender.
3. To find out whether or not Green Purchase Intention for green clothing can be predicted on the basis of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust among undergraduate students of Kolkata irrespective of their gender.

Hypotheses:

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference between men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata in terms of their Green Purchase Intention for green clothing.
- H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender.

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- H_03 : There is no significant relationship between Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender.
- H_04 : Green Purchase Intention for green clothing cannot be predicted on the basis of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender.

Variables under study:

- Independent variable
- Demographic Independent variable
-Gender (Men and Women)
- Psychological Independent Variable
-Perceived Consumer Effectiveness
-Green Trust
- Dependent Variable
-Green Purchase Intention

Sample and sampling criteria:

For the present study, 300 undergraduate students of Kolkata were selected from the different streams of study (B.A./B.Sc./B.Com.), where 166 were men and 134 were women. Multistage stratified random sampling was followed. For this, first, 4 zones of Kolkata City were selected (North, South, East, and Central). For each zone, a list of colleges was prepared. From each list, 5 colleges were randomly selected— $5 \times 4 = 20$ colleges. In the next step, from each list, 4 colleges were randomly selected. Thus, $4 \times 4 = 16$ colleges. After that, the data was collected from the students who volunteered for the present study based on their gender irrespective of their stream of study.

Inclusion criteria:

- Age: 19-21 years
- Nationality: Indian
- Education: undergraduate (must be enrolled in college)
- Residential area: urban and sub-urban- Residing in West Bengal
- Socio-economic status: middle socio-economic status on the basis of Modified Kuppaswamy socioeconomic status scale, 2024.
- Location: Co-ed colleges located in radius of south, north, central and east Kolkata
- Employment status: Unemployed
- Marital status: Unmarried.
- Language: Those who have studied English as language subject at least up to 12th grade.
- Those who have purchased green (ecofriendly) clothing in the past were included in the study.
- Environmental science: Those who have studied it as a subject in school or college.
- Participants with a low score (0-4) as assessed by General Health Questionnaire 28 were included in the study.

Tools:

- **Informed consent form.**
- **Information Schedule** was prepared to gather data on gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, nationality, residence type etc. and other demographic information.

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- **Modified Kuppaswamy scale for the year 2024** (Mandal I, and Hossain SR 2024) and **General Health Questionnaire-28** by Goldberg, D.P. and Hiller, V.F. (1979) were used as screening tools.
- **Perceived Consumer Effectiveness:** The scale is developed by Kim and Choi (2005). The scale consists of 5 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Item 4 was reversed scored. Cronbach alpha reliability 0.74. Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated for the present sample and was found to be .78.
- **Green Trust:** This scale was adopted by Chen, Y. and Chang, C. (2013) based on the original scale of Chen, Y (2010). The scale consists of 5 items measured on 5 – point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Cronbach alpha reliability 0.92 (Chen, Y. and Chang, C, 2013). Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated for the present sample and was found to be .82.
- **Green Purchase Intention** – The scale was adopted by Sharma, K. Aswal, C. (2017) based on the original scale of Mostafa's (2007) and (Lee 2008). The scale consists of 8 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach alpha = 0.90. Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated for the present sample and was found to be .88.

Ethical consideration:

All the participants gave their consent after being elaborated on the present study's purpose, risks, and benefits. Their privacy was protected, and the data were kept secure and anonymous. Their participation was voluntary; they had the option to withdraw at any time. Utmost care was taken to avoid harm, and all participants were treated with respect. The present research followed ethical guidelines, and results were reported honestly and accurately.

Statistical analyses:

Descriptive statistics were done. Independent sample *t*-test, Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis were calculated to verify the proposed hypotheses.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of Green Purchase Intention, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust

		<i>n</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
Green Purchase Intention	Men	166	31.25	4.43
	Women	134	27.83	4.41
	Overall	300	29.72	4.73
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	Men	166	21.56	2.29
	Women	134	15.75	2.15
	Overall	300	18.97	3.65
Green Trust	Men	166	16.10	3.88
	Women	134	15.36	3.45
	Overall	300	15.77	3.71

n=sample size

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Table 2: Skewness, Kurtosis and test of Normality for Green Purchase Intention, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust.

	n	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro-Wilk		
				Statistic	df	Sig. (p value)
Green Purchase Intention	300	-.01	-.004	.994	300	<i>p</i> =.248
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	300	-.01	.21	.993	300	<i>p</i> =.136
Green Trust	300	-.03	-.29	.991	300	<i>p</i> = .067

n=sample size

From the Table 1 and 2, it can be seen that the mean score of Green Purchase Intention, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) and Green Trust were 29.72, (*SD*= 4.73) 18.97 (*SD*= 3.65) and 15.77 (*SD*= 3.71) respectively. Again, it can be seen that men had higher mean scores than women in Green Purchase Intentions (*M* men 31.25, *M* women 27.83), Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (*M* men= 21.56, *M* women=15.75), and Green Trust (*M* men= 16.10, *M* women= 15.36). The Skewness and Kurtosis value for Green Purchase Intention were -.01 and -.004 respectively. For Perceived Consumer Effectiveness the values of Skewness and Kurtosis are -.01 and .21 and for Green Trust -.03 and -.29 respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of Green Purchase Intention, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust. The results indicated that all three variables are normally distributed; Green Purchase Intention, *W*= .994 *p*=.248, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, *W*=.993 *p*=.136, Green Trust, *W*= .991 *p*=.067.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test between men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata in terms of their Green Purchase Intention

	Group	n	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for equality of variance		t-test for Equality of Means		
					<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> value
Green Purchase Intention	Men	166	31.25	4.43	.14	.709	6.67	298	<i>p</i> <.001
	Women	134	27.83	4.41					

n=sample size

An Independent sample *t*-test was conducted to examine whether men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata differed significantly in their Green Purchase Intention. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, *F* (1,298) =.14, *p* =.709. The results indicated a significant difference between men (*n*=166 *M*=31.25 *SD*= 4.43) and women (*n*= 134, *M*= 27.83, *SD*= 4.41) *t* (298) = 6.67 *p*<.001.

Thus, *H*₀₁: There is no significant difference between men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata in terms of their Green Purchase Intention for green clothing is rejected.

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Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention

		Green Purchase Intention	Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	Green Trust
Green Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.41	.19
	<i>p value</i>		$p < .001$	$p = .001$
	<i>n</i>	300	300	300
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.41	1	.17
	<i>p value</i>	$p < .001$		$p = .004$
	<i>n</i>	300	300	300
Green Trust	Pearson Correlation	.19	.17	1
	<i>p value</i>	$p = .001$	$p = .004$	
	<i>n</i>	300	300	300

n=sample size

Pearson Product moment correlation was performed to examine the relationships between Green Purchase Intention with Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust. The results showed a significant positive correlation between Green Purchase Intention and Perceived Consumer Effectiveness $r(298) = .41, p < .001$, and Green Trust $r(298) = .19, p = .001$.

Thus, H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender, is rejected.

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender, is rejected.

Table 5 and Table 6: Multiple linear regression analysis predicting Green Purchase Intention on the basis of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust.

R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	df	p value
.43	.19	.18	34.12	2,297	$P < .001$

Table: 6

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p value
	b	Std. Error	Beta		
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	.51	.07	.39	7.40	$p < .001$
Green Trust	.16	.07	.13	2.38	$p = .018$

A multiple linear regression was performed to examine whether Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust significantly predicted Green Purchase Intention. The overall regression model was statistically significant $F(2, 297) = 34.12, p < .001$, with $R^2 = .19$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$, thus explained 19% of the variance in Green Purchase Intention can be

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explained by the combined effects of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust. Both Perceived Consumer Effectiveness ($b=.51$ SE $b=.07$, $\beta=.39$ $t=7.40$, $p<.001$), and Green Trust ($b=.16$, SE $b=.07$, $\beta=.13$ $t=2.38$ $p=.018$) were significant positive predictors.

Thus H₀₄: Green Purchase Intention for green clothing cannot be predicted on the basis of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Green Trust among undergraduate students of Kolkata, irrespective of their gender, is rejected.

DISCUSSION

It is clearly evident from the results of the present study that men and women undergraduate students of Kolkata differ significantly in their Green Purchase Intention, where mean scores of the men are comparatively higher than women. Previous researchers have explored the impact of demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status on green purchase intention, but the results across studies remain inconclusive. Several research studies revealed that women are more intent on buying green products; also, they are more likely to purchase green products compared to men (Banerjee & McKeage, 1994; Rahim et al., 2017). It has also been revealed that women are generally more into the purchase of green household products and demonstrate a higher receptiveness toward green advertisements compared to men (Loureiro et al., 2002; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Han et al., 2011; Yu, 2020). Also, adolescent girls are more peer influenced in their green behavior and showed a higher green purchase intention (Han et al., 2011). However, some researchers have argued that, compared to women, men may demonstrate a more positive attitude towards the environment and greater knowledge regarding environmental issues (Banerjee & McKeage, 1994; Mostafa, 2007; Ping & Linxiao, 2020), which is more aligned with the present study findings. Public pro-environmental behaviors such as community activism and environmental advocacy are demonstrated more by men, while women are more into private environmental behaviors such as recycling or buying green household items (Blocker & Eckberg, 1997; Tindall et al., 2003; Hunter et al., 2004; Mostafa, 2007; Xiao & Hong, 2010). These differences are due to gender traits promoted by society, which lead to the development of gender-specific personal values (Di Dio et al. 1996). Thus, green behaviors are often culturally associated with femininity, characterized by care and conservation. This concept of 'green feminine stereotype' has been found to demotivate some men from engaging in green consumption behavior in order to maintain their traditional masculine norms (Brough et al., 2016; Nanggong & Bandu, 2018; Swim et al., 2020). But Stewart (2016) challenged this stereotypical view and argued that this does not fit uniformly into all green product categories, especially in green clothing, where men and women showed equal engagement. This finding suggested that men may not avoid green consumption behavior in the context of eco-friendly clothing, aligning with the present study's findings. Tung et al. (2017) found that men and women tend to evaluate green products differently. Men emphasize functionality, utility, and personal responsibility towards nature, whereas women are more influenced by aesthetic appeal or the symbolic meaning of the eco-friendly products. Thus, it can be interpreted that men undergraduate students in the present study displayed higher green purchase intention in green clothing, possibly due to their rational evaluation of product performance and sustainability attributes.

From the correlation matrix, it is seen that there is a significant positive correlation between perceived consumer effectiveness and green purchase intention for green clothing among the undergraduate students of Kolkata. The present study's findings resonate with the past researches of Antonetti and Maklan (2014), Lee et al. (2014), and Kabadayi et al. (2015),

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who have revealed the relationship between perceived consumer effectiveness and green purchase intention among consumers. Zhao et al. (2014) suggested that perceived consumer effectiveness is significantly correlated with green purchase behavior through consumers' intention to buy green products. Similarly, Jaiswal and Kant (2018) suggested that consumers who have a high level of perceived consumer effectiveness are likely to engage in favorable behavior towards buying green products, which aligns with our present findings. Again, from the correlation matrix, it can be seen that green trust is significantly correlated with the green purchase intention of undergraduate students of Kolkata. The present findings are corroborated by the earlier research of Lu et al. (2010), which suggested that green purchase intention is positively associated with green trust. Consumers can trust those products that are credible for them and benevolent in nature, also those products that have the ability to contribute towards the environment (Chen, 2010). Several research studies showed that consumers' green trust is closely linked to their purchase intentions. (Kang & Hur, 2011; Chen & Chang 2013). In the same way, consumers' willingness to engage in green purchasing behavior is significantly reduced by a lack of trust and confidence in products' green claims (Gupta and Ogden 2009). Although it is found that the strength of the relationship between green trust and green purchase intention is low, it can be interpreted that demographic factors might influence the strength of the correlation, but the statistical significance corroborates several past researches that the significant positive relationship does exist between green trust and green purchase intentions.

From the regression analysis, it has been clearly evident that perceived consumer effectiveness and green trust significantly predict green purchase intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata. Several past researches—Chi et al. (2021), Kim and Oh (2020), Kovacs and Keresztes (2022), Lin et al. (2022), and Wang and Hsu (2019)—also identified that perceived consumer effectiveness significantly influences green purchase intention in the case of green clothing, which corroborates the present findings well. Those consumers who believed that green clothing can decrease the environmental problems are likely to form a strong purchase intention (Kautish and Sharma; 2020). Similar findings have been made by Roberts (1996) and Straughan and Roberts (1999) that for green purchase intention, perceived consumer effectiveness is one of the crucial predictors. If we are referring to collectivist cultures like India and China, similar findings also have been seen that perceived consumer effectiveness positively influences both purchase intention and purchase behaviors. (Yadav & Pathak, 2016; Zhao et al., 2014), which are in line with our present findings. Doszhanov and Ahmad (2015) revealed that consumers' green trust plays a significant role in consumers' intention of purchasing green clothing. The relationship between trust and purchasing intention is not only to enhance the consumers' perceived value but also to mitigate the risk, if any, associated with green consumption (Konuk et al. 2015; Tarabieh 2020). Researches by Schlosser et al. (2006) and van der Heijden et al. (2003) have explored how trust plays a crucial role that influences consumers' purchase intention. They suggested that past trust experiences of consumers significantly increase their future purchasing behavior. Consistent results were observed in the study by Lu et al. (2007), who found that green trust positively influences customers' green purchase intention, which in turn can impact actual green purchasing behavior. Aprianti and Gaffar (2021) revealed that green trust is a strong predictor of green purchase intention in the realm of green clothing, especially for those ethical consumers who give utmost priority to openness, responsibility, and authenticity in purchasing green fashion products. All these past researches significantly corroborate our present findings. It will help the brands and marketers to value consumers' trust in their green products.

CONCLUSION

The present study's findings confirm that there is a significant difference in green purchase intention for green clothing between men and women undergraduate students. Further, it reveals that perceived consumer effectiveness and green trust significantly correlated with green purchase intention. Also, it is seen that both perceived consumer effectiveness and green trust are positive predictors for green purchase intention for green clothing among undergraduate students of Kolkata. On the basis of these findings, it can be suggested that marketers and policymakers should design gender-sensitive green marketing strategies; also, they should give utmost importance to strengthening consumer belief and developing trust in green products, which can enhance sustainable consumption. Clear eco-labels and credible certification can enhance consumers' trust. Also, awareness regarding the impact of individual consumption can enhance perceived consumer effectiveness, which can directly influence green purchase intention. The present findings align with the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior, suggesting that attitudes and beliefs, such as green trust and perceived consumer effectiveness, are the key determinants of green purchase intentions among young consumers. The present study focuses on youths because they are the future agents of change who can mold sustainable consumption patterns in our society. Though the sample size is limited and based only on Kolkata city, the present study still offers a meaningful insight into the green purchase intention of youth in the realm of sustainable fashion. The findings of the present study can also help the government to formulate new policies on sustainable consumption, which will be beneficial for our environment. The generalizability of the present study's findings would be enhanced if future research were conducted with larger and more diverse samples across different regions.

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