

A Qualitative Study to Explore the Determinants of Consumer Green Purchase Behavior in an Emerging Economy

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Thematic Analysis

ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the factors that influence the green purchase behavior of customers in the context of an emerging economy. It focuses on the behavior of consumers towards environment-friendly products; green product interest in Pakistan has been increasing meaningfully due to the increased interest in green environment electronic products. Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews with 12 professionals from the education and healthcare industry, with at least half of the participants aged 42 and above. The transcripts were analyzed thematically through NVivo 14 with the coding process for generating main and sub-themes informed by TAM theory for interpretation. Four main themes emerged within the healthcare and educational institutes' narratives. They identified with (1) the eco-friendly products, (2) the sustainable environment, (3) green purchase, behavioral intentions, and (4) Social influence themes. This study shows that a narrative thematic analysis can be used to explore the factors that are influencing green consumer purchase intention. Further, the policy maker and strategist should plan green advertising for awareness among common users. This study is one of the first to focus on the impact of green purchase intentions towards eco-friendly products in Pakistan and best to our knowledge it is a novel contribution to qualitative research.

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, we observe the destruction of the environment brought on by resource extraction and rapid, unsustainable infrastructural development (Bebbington et al., 2018; Sreen et al., 2018). One of the main contributing factors to the environment's degrading condition is assumed to be consumer buying behavior (Bebbington et al., 2018). Green buying involves buying items that are

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environmentally friendly and avoiding dangerous ones (Cheng et al., 2020). Several businesses have begun selling green products in recent years, and consumers from all over the globe are gradually recognizing the attractiveness of green buying. Even though consumers' concern about implementing green purchasing behaviors has evolved, such zeal and desire have not yet translated into specific behavior (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). Determining the factors affecting customer perception of an eco-friendly product is essential for companies and policymakers because it offers insights into sustainable competitive strategies.

Prior studies have primarily concentrated on the demographics of green customers and the association between attitudes and actual behavior (Shahsavari et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). The effect of green purchasing intentions in the context of developing countries is increasing considerably and is considered to be an essential factor for purchase decisions; the idea is to contribute to both research streams. A previous study demonstrated that motivation or attitude may not adequately clarify ecologically friendly behavior, leading to the breach of purchase intention behavior (Bebbington et al., 2018; Geng et al., 2017). The psychological and environmental factors are suggested to be utilized to close the purchase intention behavior gap by altering customers' consumption habits or, more particularly, by enticing them to select green items to reduce their influence upon the surrounding environment (Chen et al., 2022; Joshi et al., 2021; Yadav & Pathak, 2017). Consequently, more research is required to recognize well what socio-psychological factors affect consumers' purchase intentions in the context of developing countries' environmentally friendly products.

The intention to buy green strongly influences consumers' purchases. These are considered the primary motivators in customer green purchasing and strongly influence how a product is perceived. Companies, through this complex process, can draw in new customers and then can be able to modify their services and goods according to their preferences and requirements or change consumers' purchase decisions regarding green buying. Hence, consumers frequently reduce their influence on the environment through their buying choices and contribute generously to improving the environment.

Many elements influence how customers make purchasing decisions. Many factors, including environmental awareness (Agyeman, 2014), supposed quality and product price (D'Souza et al., 2017), and reliability regarding environmental advertising (Sheng et al., 2019) are considered to have a substantial impact on this process. Understanding the elements influencing consumer desire to buy a product has become crucial. Therefore, the current research contributes to the area by investigating and determining the extent to which consumer purchasing behavior impacts the promotion of green products. Most prior investigations on green purchase behavior have concentrated on produce or customer aspects (such as healthy features). However, none have specifically addressed firm attributes such as e-service excellence (Abbasi-Moghaddam et al., 2019).

However, many scientists have emphasized that green buying remained unexplained due to conflicting findings and the absence of organized research (Liu et al., 2020). This investigation, therefore, urges more research on green purchase intentions to help close the gap by examining what prevents consumers from putting their intentions into action for buying. It is critical to research customers' purchasing behaviors to adapt to the growing green food industry, paying particular attention to purchase intention, which forms the basis of performed purchase behavior. Moreover, the current investigation also emphasizes the reliability of advertising and service quality regarding green purchases. Therefore, it is crucial for academics and marketers to fully comprehend what influences developing countries' consumers' decisions to buy green products.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Green Purchase Behavior

The concept of green, acknowledged as the marketing of products that are safe for the environment, was discussed in a seminar held by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in

1975. Creating goods and services with the minimum essential effect to a green marketing strategy is one that satisfies customers' requirements in the environment (Peattie, 2001). Moreover, green products are produced using technology that complies with environmental standards, meaning they have no adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, customers who buy environmentally friendly products due to their responsible behavior on the way to the environment are known as green-buying consumers (Thøgersen & Crompton, 2009).

In the short-term market, green marketing has become crucial. Green selling comprises all selling processes, including packing, product alteration, and industrial measures, which are accepted as purchasable in an environmentally friendly method and still satisfy customer needs (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Pagliacci et al. (2019) previously enlightened green selling as a method of introducing environmentally friendly products to the marketplace without damaging the environment. In essence, green marketing is a situation in which items are promoted in an eco-friendly way. Environmental awareness and product utility are the primary elements impacting customers' intentions to purchase green. Consumers' objectives to purchase ecologically friendly items are particular to these factors.

The literature on green purchasing has benefited from a lot of green marketing studies, although many of these do not test customers' perceptions of green buying (Gosselt et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2017; Nyilasy et al., 2012; Parguel et al., 2015; Rahman et al., 2015). However, they contribute to our comprehension of the circumstance. The most frequently referenced theoretical viewpoint is the attribution theory (Kelley & Michela, 1980) in which researchers contend that ethical attributions impact customers' affect, attitudes, and behaviors. Researchers contend that ethical attributions affect customers' effects, arrogance, and conduct, creating the most frequently referenced theoretical perspective. Organizations' environmental claims, for instance, Consumers will make more informed decisions when organizations make more specific and thorough environmental promises (as opposed to ambiguous ones), and they will attribute organizations' environmental efforts with noble intentions.

It should be remembered that marketing methods entirely depend on consumers' intentions. Customers' behavior buying aim is defined as the potential actions that contribute to a commitment or decision to buy a specific product from a market (Agyapong et al., 2018). Similarly, the behavioral purpose is "indications of how hard people are willing to try or how much of an effort they are planning to exert to perform the behavior" (Akbar et al., 2014). The environmental goals of consumers, for instance, the search for healthy products, ecological awareness, and sustainability, once more influence the kind of product they choose to purchase (Arli et al., 2018). Market trends determine consumer behavior changes (Surya & Hajamohideen, 2018).

2.2 Eco-friendly Products

Due to particular marketing behavior, consumers can effectively evaluate the quality, price, value, and availability of competing items (Ritter et al., 2015). It is essential to raise knowledge of green products and utilize them, which will encourage consumers to switch from conventional to green items to improve living a more environmentally friendly lifestyle (Amegbe & Owino, 2017). According to the literature, green products considerably impact customers' purpose of creating innocent buys (Kong et al., 2014).

Large numbers of consumers are similarly concerned about the value of green items. Green customers usually believe in these brands and are unwilling to compromise on product quality. Businesses need to increase the excellence of green products along with concentrating on the eco-friendly welfare of green purchases and cut these attributes with consumers to become recognized in the market, as customers expect all products offered to be environmentally safe without sacrificing excellence (Agyapong et al., 2018). The findings show that customers still attribute the most significance to traditional product attributes like brand name, price, and quality when purchasing.

A significant idea in the current marketing literature is the intention of the customer to buy. Past studies have presented that customers who suggest they have no intention of purchasing products are influenced by their social circle. Brown and Williams (2003) and sustained by Blackwell et al.

(2001), argue that buying objectives represent what customers do in advance buying. Also, a wish to be involved in that action is a close estimate of behavior toward a particular product (Malhotra & McCort, 2001). Consequently, a consumer's choice to buy green products is an additional perspective if it positively impacts his/her buying behavior. An alternative market plays a central role that depends on the distribution of effects over and done with numerous direct sales methods to large users (Suki & Azman, 2016). Factors that are consistent with modern production and sales systems, such as cleanness (He et al., 2016), flavors, and well-being advantages (Yang et al., 2015), are what influence purchasing decisions for green food (Schuitema & De Groot, 2015). However, it seems that, especially among buyers who use green products frequently, mature markets for organic food are susceptible to consumer dissatisfaction (Gershoff & Frels, 2015).

Several research investigations have found further approaches to understanding green customers and their green consumption practices. Research on motivational drivers, for instance, discovered elements like environmental effects (Chan, 2001; Solér, 1996). individual circumstances such as food intolerance, one's level of contribution, such as existing and working near to or presence in need of the accepted atmosphere (Solér, 1996), and responsive fellow feelings on the way to the environment all play a role (Kals et al., 1999). However, other research has shown that specific individuals use morals to associate themselves with a reason, such as by accepting green intake habits like reprocessing and buying eco-friendly goods.

2.3 TAM Theory

Many researchers have recognized motivational issues, ecological information, and assertiveness, which can also affect green buying behavior. While green customer conduct can be projected to an inadequate degree with demographics and psychographic profiles, these elements are not the individual ones that can impact it. For instance, several studies investigated consumers' refers to the level and their effects on environmentally friendly customers, ranging from value insights ((Lowe & Alpert, 2010; Shiv et al., 2005) to observations of quality, risk, and sales promotions (Eggert et al., 2006), as well as consumers' perceptions of the environment (Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Lowe & Barnes, 2012). The reasons customers do not embrace green ingesting behaviors have been the focus of extensive research in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe (Chu, 2020; Gleim & Lawson, 2014; Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Earlier studies have investigated green consumerism in the Asian marketplace (Boon et al., 2020; Chin et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2017; Munerah et al., 2020). Most of the investigations used quantitative techniques, typically through surveys, to relate concepts like the responsiveness of values, energy, and social standards to the desire to make green purchases. Most of the study's findings were similar to those of earlier research.

This investigation study aims to analyze the policy-making procedure of buying high-involvement products like eco-friendly products between Hong Kong and minorities by examining how they choose which green products to purchase and what elements biased this buying choice procedure. This is because the inconsistency among constructive attitudes in the direction of the atmosphere and acceptance of greener goods still needs to be clarified. Other explanations for the green purchase intention behavior breach in significant participation product marketplaces are required through this process.

3 Methodology

3.1 Nature of the Study

The current study is qualitative and exploratory and grounded on Interpretivism, a research strategy as the aim of this research is to search the factors influencing consumers' purchase behavior towards environment-friendly products in the context of a developing country like Pakistan. An interview method was employed to collect the data, and an open-ended protocol was shared with respondents. Furthermore, TAM theory was used to explore the data in our research; the recursive process was used to collect data, code, and analysis.

3.2 Research Sample

The respondents comprise people who live in different cities in Pakistan, like Lahore, Jhang, Faisalabad, and Sahiwal; most are professionals from public sector institutes and hospitals in Punjab.

Table 1

Participants' position and industries

Respondent Number	Position	Industry
1	Registrar Jinnah Hospital	Healthcare
2	Medical Specialist	Healthcare
3	Senior Doctor	Healthcare
4	Assistant Professor	Education
5	Assistant Professor	Education
6	PhD Scholar	Education
7	Lecturer	Education
8	Regional Sales Head	Pesticides Chemicals
9	Assistant Professor	Education
10	Zonal Manager	Fertilizers
11	Assistant Professor	Education
12	Regional Sales Manager	Pesticides Chemicals

Above table.1 summarizes the position and professional industry; 12 respondents were interviewed individually about green purchase intentions and eco-friendly products. The semi-structured interviews were conducted for approximately 20-30 minutes; the objective was to understand the effect of green marketing or green buying intentions about eco-friendly products. Respondents were briefed about the research topic and consented to the author recording his/her audio during an interview for transcribing the audio into text form.

3.2.1 Data Coding and Identification of Themes

The primary aim of the qualitative feature in the present study was to explore the different technological, social, and environmental factors influencing green purchase behavior toward energy-saving electronics in Pakistani organizations. After reading line-by-line transcribed textual data, themes were coded into parent nodes and classified as technology factors, price-oriented factors, eco-friendly factors, and sustainable factors.

Table 2

Data Coding and Making Tree Nodes

Nodes	Sources	References
Technology	6	7
Social media	8	11
Green environment	2	12
Awareness	5	7
Price oriented	4	5
Suggested products	3	3
Environment friendly	7	12
Word of mouth	7	10
Quality products	10	20

Green products	10	20
Energy saving	6	7
Sustainable	8	13
Sustainable shopping	5	7
Recycling products	6	8
Green purchase decisions	7	8
Efficient product	2	5

Table 2 stated sources and references against each theme, which evolved through the coding of textual interviews. Sources depicted the number of participants who discussed a particular theme, while references reflected the total number of people who coded a theme.

3.3 Analysis Method

It should be remembered that marketing methods entirely depend on consumers' intentions. Customers' buying behavior is defined as the potential actions that contribute to a commitment or decision to buy a specific product from a market (Agyapong et al., 2018). Similarly, the behavioral purpose is "indications of how hard people are willing to try or how much of an effort they are planning to exert to perform the behavior" (Akbar et al., 2014). The environmental goals of consumers, for instance, the search for healthy products, ecological awareness, and sustainability, once more influence the kind of product they choose to purchase (Arli et al., 2018). Market trends determine consumer behavior changes (Surya & Hajamohideen, 2018).

4 Results

Nvivo 14 software has been utilized for spreading diverse qualitative techniques, including different respondents' transcribing audio interviews, thematic investigation, coding of the data, word cloud, search query, hierarchical charts, and words, as well as frequency analysis. By code similarity, the cluster analysis means how much the researchers coded the node with different references. The themes that have similarities in coding are considered very close to one another, as the themes found to be dissimilar in coding are considered at space. As per Ozkan (2004), Nvivo is found to be very useful for the organization of data and its analysis, but it still depends on the effort of the researcher to form this data, its coding, and hence, the analysis.

Nvivo text analysis features help identify themes and explore language use in the new project that the researcher created with Nvivo 14 software. A text search query is utilized to test themes or discover how people talk about a specific concept. Various graphs that include a tree map have been utilized in this study to explain the conclusions and their explanation. Word frequency text metrics and search coding queries are utilized to find the key factors that impact the consumer purchasing green electric products that are environmentally friendly in developing countries like Pakistan. Figure 4.3 depicts the Word Tag Cloud, which we utilized to exhibit diverse themes of different sizes following their recurrence regularity. Word Tag Cloud is suitable for thematic analysis as we can identify new themes in our current investigation utilizing a cloud diagram. Figure 4.3 shows the word tag cloud diagram, which exhibits different themes like "Technology," "Green buying," "quality products," "eco-friendly," and "purchase decisions."

Figure 4.1

Word Tag Cloud



Figure 4.2

Search query eco-friendly

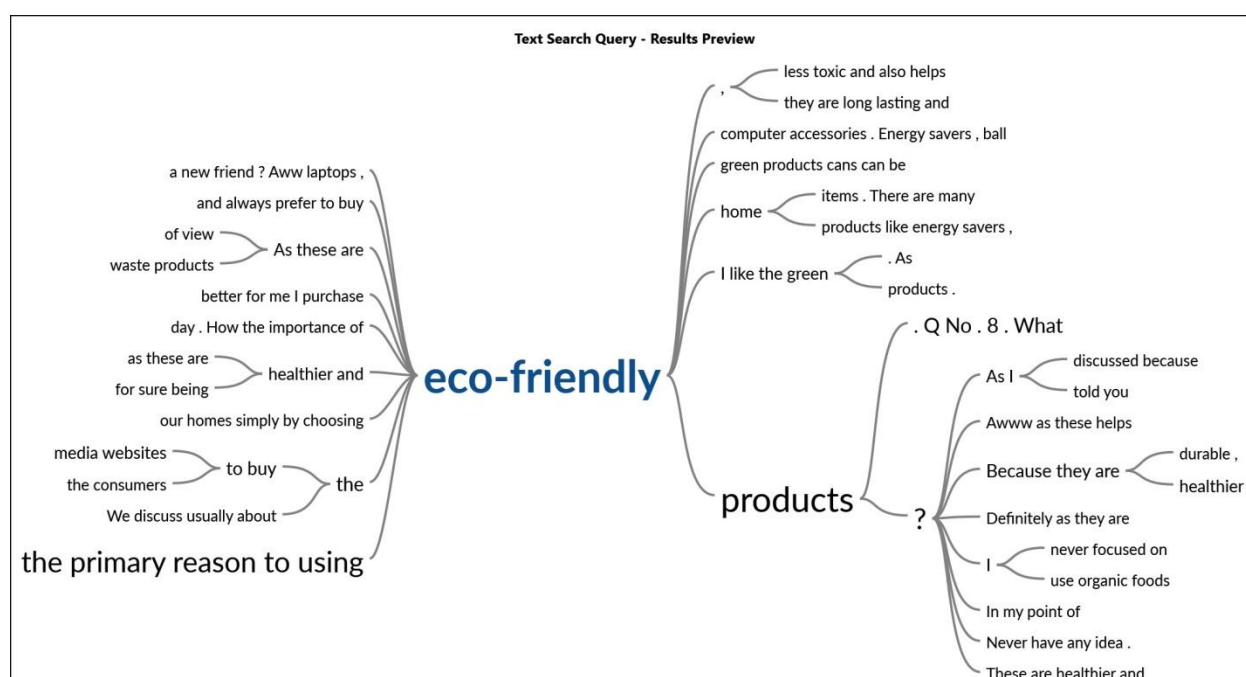


Figure 4.2 depicts the Word Tree Map, which depicts the connections of a dominant word with the diverse outline of talk.

Figure 4.3

Search query social media

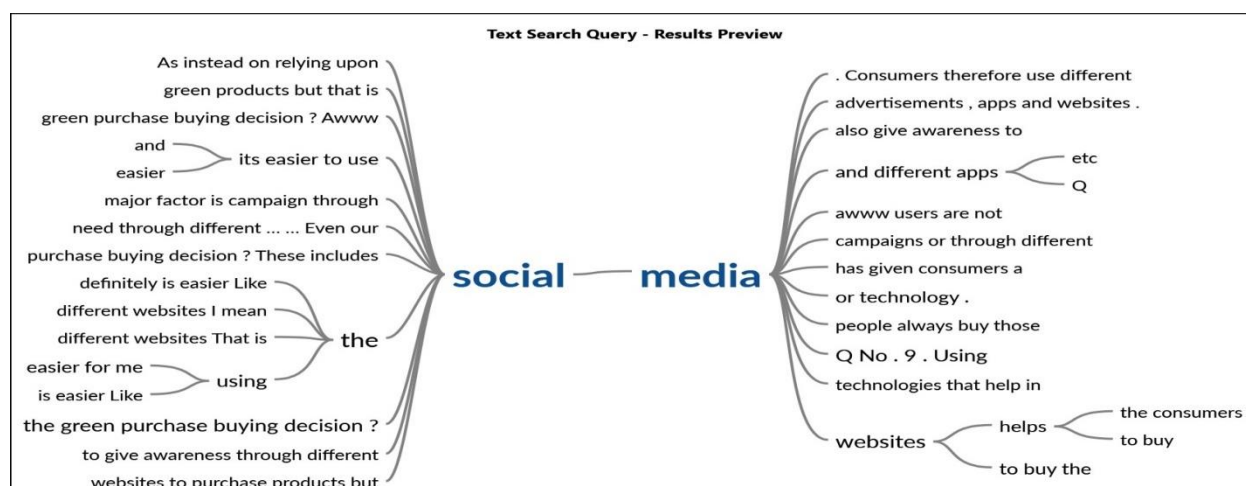


Figure 4.4

Cluster analysis

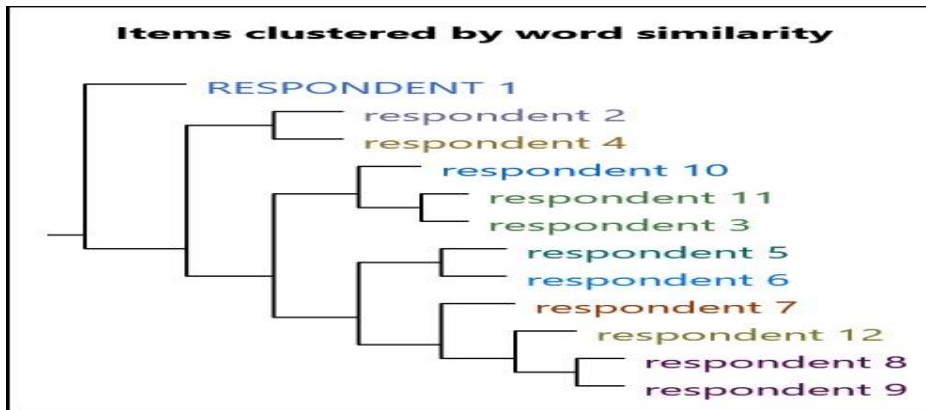
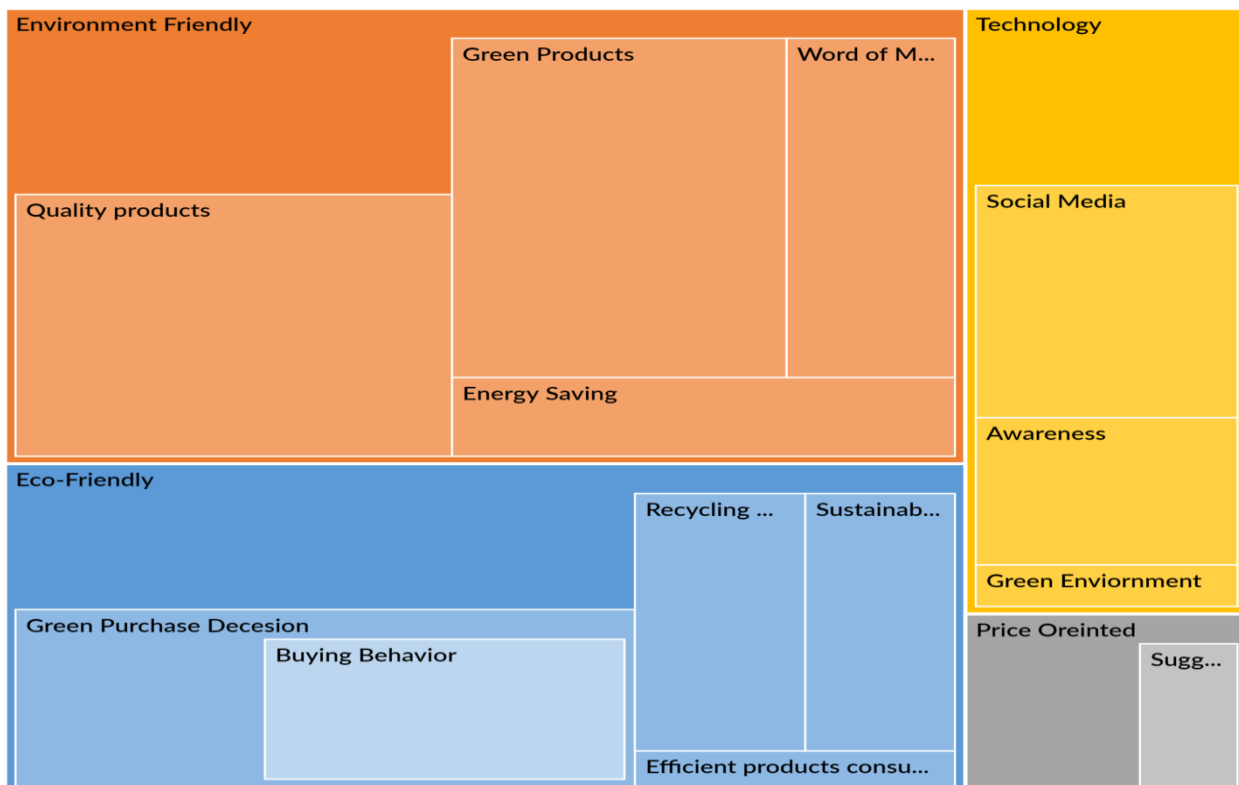


Figure 4.5 shows the size of the diverse factors affecting green purchase intention factors. The figure below shows that environment-friendly, quality products, green products, and green purchase decisions have more influence or impact on the consumer buying process as per the word tree map below because the number of references is higher than that of others. However, technology, social media, word of mouth, and sustainable shopping have less critical influence on consumer buying behavior.

Figure 4.5

Hierarchical Charts



5 Discussion

In the current study, we interviewed several professionals from the education and healthcare industry based on the hypothesis that these customers are most likely to be attentive to the significance of eco-friendly topics and have enough knowledge about green products. These consumers reflect them in their buying choices. Consequently, this study's results cannot be generalizable to consumers at other population levels. In addition, the gained response rate of 58 % advocates that those respondents may have been amongst their region's more environmentally apprehensive residents. Not

only did these respondents indicate generally positive environmental opinions, but the majority were also knowledgeable about green items and showed concern about their green shopping behavior. 65% of them claimed to have purchased any category of green items in the past due to their effects on the environment.

The tree map indicates that in this study impact of products on the environment strongly influences the consumers' buying behavior (e.g., eco-friendly products like energy savers, Tesla cars, recyclable packaging, green laptops that avoid damage to the environment). Customers were more likely to purchase products because of their ecological entitlements and consider the well-being of the environment more strongly when buying the products. Consumers' environmental concern (as measured here) generally predicts their propensity to make ecologically friendly purchases. This finding raises the possibility that consumers will become extra aware of how their buying affects the environment. Environmental supporters were found to be more likely to be women than men. This result is reliable, as evidenced by current studies that show women are typically more worried about environmental issues than men (Stern et al., 1993). Women were also more likely than men to consider environmental concerns when purchasing. Perhaps because they performed more grocery shopping, the women in our study were more conscious of the environmental implications of different products.

Overall, the middle-class urban respondents in this survey had higher-than-average pro-environment sentiments, lower-than-average perceptions about their environmental consumer responsibility, and the lowest reported levels of green purchasing behavior. While these general attitudes did not predict general environmental attitudes and some pro-environment behaviors, specific consumer views better predicted most behavioral measures. Other demographic factors, however, were not associated with any of the attitudes toward green-buying behaviors. Women were more pro-environment than men regarding particular principles, overall attitudes, and pro-environment behaviors.

The tree map also indicates that other factors, such as product quality, product quality, and price, impact consumers' green buying behavior. Buying green products has been demonstrated to be positively prejudiced by product features. Subsequently, consumers' lack of price sensitivity had a promising influence on decision-making when making green purchases (Aertsens et al., 2011). On the other hand, unnecessary price sensitivity harms customers' green purchase behavior (Wang et al., 2019). It concludes that high prices adversely influence consumers' intentions and behaviors when making green purchases.

6 Conclusion, Implication, Limitations, Future Research Agenda

6.1 Conclusion

This study emphasizes understanding global trends, dissimilarities, and similarities related to consumer behavior toward green purchasing and green products. Our investigations reveal that consumer interest in green marketing and products in Pakistan is increasing daily. The customers' behavior, awareness, and intent are perceived as signs of vigor in the path of green marketing. Increased awareness and knowledge have considerably influenced buying behavior decisions. Considering that these consumers were most likely to be aware of the significance of environmental concerns, have knowledge of green products, and consider them when making purchases, we conducted interviews with people in middle-class metropolitan communities for this study. Therefore, the results cannot be applied to people from different social classes or rural dwellers. Additionally, the 30% response rate indicates that individuals who responded may have been among the more environmentally conscious locals.

In addition, these respondents suggested generally positive environmental opinions, but most were also informed about environmentally friendly products and showed interest in their green purchasing decisions. 45% of them acknowledged having purchased green products in the recent past due to their effects on the environment. The tree map also indicates that other factors, such as the products' quality and price, impact the consumer's green buying behavior. Buying green products is positively influenced by their characteristics. Customers who buy organic food items have been

reported to appreciate taste, quality, and product healthiness (Cerjak et al., 2010). According to three types of research, customer green buy intention and behavior were highly influenced by product quality (Aertsens et al., 2011; Tsakiridou et al., 2008). With more connection and an accurate understanding of the demands of consumers, these individual and psychological components can be handled. The study that looked at green consumer behavior might need to be revised to offer a specific solution; more research is required. Despite the persistent disconnect between green consumers' attitudes and actual behavior, we must emphasize how substantial growth in green marketing is seen globally today. Therefore, excellent creation and valuable, ecological product qualities influence customers' green purchasing behavior. Contrarily, bad product characteristics and poorer excellence may cause a struggle among consumers' demands and feelings of social and environmental responsibility, worsening the discrepancy between attitudes and purchasing behavior. However, it was discovered that consumers' low-price sensitivity had a beneficial impact on their decision to buy green products (Aertsens et al., 2011). The map also demonstrates that the product's price has an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Lea & Worsley, 2008; Ndubisi, 2014). On the other hand, excessive price sensitivity has a detrimental impact on customers' green purchase behavior. It follows that high prices negatively influence consumers' intentions and actions while making green purchases.

6.2 Theoretical Implication of Current Research

Many researchers utilized qualitative research methodologies to explore the factors that affect the consumer's green purchase decisions and identify factors that make recommendations to purchase environmentally friendly products (Earl et al., 2018; Marin et al., 2014). Emerging research has found that policymakers or strategists should focus on advertising green products to increase awareness among everyday users in Pakistan (Egdell et al., 2020). Most respondents stated general knowledge and concern for the environment, consistent with recent media coverage of environmental issues and their growing importance in communities around them. The gap in eco-friendly knowledge is about, though, as it adversely influences customers' attitudes and intentions (Doran, 2009).

According to Wu et al. (2015), structural view and focus of control have been recognized as critical variables impacting green customers' behavior. All other influences, such as social influence, product information, and brand affection, are outdated by familiarities from previous purchases and satisfaction. Therefore, to increase their products and procedures, marketers must comprehend the gravity of former coincidences. Building sustainable trust will close the gap between attitudes and actual green purchasing behavior (Chen et al., 2022; Kang & Hur, 2012).

6.3 Practical Implication of Current Research

The professionals interviewed needed to be aware of green energy-saving products. Policymakers or companies should run an awareness campaign in Pakistan to raise awareness among all residents or communities. In this study, all participants' professionals highlighted health care and education as the positive attributes of green purchase behavior.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

There were a few limitations of the study due to time and resource constraints, as the study judged the particular regions rather than the entire country to be exceptional. It was impossible to describe the outcome for the entire country for further investigation; with different business groups, more research might be necessary. Pakistani consumers were used for the study's conclusion because the interview guidelines were written in English, and there was a chance that some of the respondents' statements would have been misinterpreted as necessary. As a result, they could unwittingly express the wrong reaction.

6.5 Future Recommendations

One of the restrictions concerns ordinary process bias; the specimen size was small, and we are collecting data from the Sahiwal and Faisalabad regions of Pakistan. Only future researchers will collect data from multiple diverse organizations, such as private and public franchises, telecom, and domestic brand users; therefore, we may only be able to simplify this specimen's consequences for a

part of the population. Even though the investigation has completed its aims, there were some mandatory boundaries. Sample composition, one of the main frequently cited intimidations to external validity, is not considered a limitation in this study. This is a study of reasoning processes, and such processes are usually not generalizable across populations within a culture.

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