

Understanding Consumer Behaviour towards Green Apparel: A Study of Purchase Intention in Kathmandu

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Abstract

This study investigates the determinants of consumers' purchase intention and behaviour toward green apparel by extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The research model integrates attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control, the core TPB constructs alongside environmental concern and environmental knowledge. Data were collected from 269 respondents in Kathmandu, providing insights into urban consumers' attitudes toward sustainable clothing. The findings reveal that all five factors positively influence consumers' intention to purchase green apparel. Moreover, green purchase intention significantly mediates the relationship between these antecedents and actual purchase behaviour. The study suggests that marketers should work on improving consumer attitudes, raising awareness about the environment, and building a strong brand image focused on sustainability. Policymakers should encourage eco-friendly behaviour by offering educational programs and incentives for green apparel production. Although the study provides valuable insights, it also has limitations, such as focusing on general apparel and not specific products. Future research could explore different product types and other factors affecting green purchases. Overall, the findings offer practical ideas to promote sustainable fashion in urban Nepal.

Keywords: Purchase Intention, Green Apparel, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Sustainable Consumption, Environmental Concern.

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Introduction

Consumers may either purchase products based on immediate needs or make purchase decisions by evaluating factors such as personal needs, product features and expected performance. People regularly buy a wide range of products but with increasing awareness of environmental issues and diverse consumer needs, there is a growing demand for green alternatives (Charter & Polonsky, 2017). In Asia, green consumerism has just recently begun to spread (Gurau and Ranchhod, 2005). As environmental threats continue to worry local governments and citizens, the Asian region has embraced the power of "going-green" to take responsibility for the environment (Lee, 2008). Green products are more advantageous for society because they have less of an impact on the environment, ecosystem, and resources from the point of manufacture to the point of consumption. Depletion of the environment is a result of excessive use and exploitation of natural resources and various environmental problems have been connected to human consumption (T. B. Chen & Chai, 2010). Individuals are becoming more conscious of environmental issues, which has a direct impact on their attitude toward buying eco-friendly goods (Pagiaslis & Krontalis, 2014). There is increasing concern related to the organically produced products throughout the globe due to the concern of unusual agriculture related practices, human health consideration, environment concerns,

environment protection concerns and animal welfare concern (Wee et al., 2014). There have been changes in consumer preferences and behavior regarding green products as a result of growing environmental sustainability concerns and consumption (Mendleson & Polonsky, 1995).

Several studies in Nepal have explored consumer behaviour and awareness related to green products. Chhetri and Karki (2023) examined how consumer attitudes influence green product purchasing in Chitwan, revealing a growing interest in eco-friendly consumption. Ghimire (2019) also observed rising demand for organic products in urban centers like Kathmandu, Chitwan, and Pokhara. Despite these encouraging trends, research on green marketing in Nepal remains limited. Shrestha et al. (2023) investigated green marketing awareness among consumers in the Kathmandu Valley, highlighting a still-developing understanding of sustainable choices. Ghimire (2020) focused on Nepalese youth, analysing their attitudes and purchase intentions toward eco-friendly products and sustainability. However, these studies lack a specific focus on the apparel industry, leaving a research gap in understanding consumer behavior toward green clothing. Collectively, these studies suggest that while environmental awareness and eco-consumerism are on the rise in Nepal, further research is needed to explore specific product categories and the underlying drivers of green consumer behaviour. The present study tries to fill the research gap by using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2002) to comprehend the intention and purchase behaviour of the adult Nepali consumers of Kathmandu towards green and sustainable apparels. It provides a complete picture of the Nepalese urban consumers' green product preference and purchase behavior. The understanding of consumer attitude and behavioural intention concerning green and conscious purchases will help in the policy making and developing marketing strategies for the target group that are both appropriate and sustainable. The study examines the relationship of purchase intention five variables i.e attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, environmental concern and environmental knowledge which leads to purchase behaviour.

Literature Review

According to Elkington, Shamdasani, and Wasik (1996), green products are those that can be recycled or preserved and won't damage the environment or natural resources. Green products are recyclable, require less packaging, and are safer for the environment (T. B Chen & Chai, 2010). Accordingly, the terms "green," "environmentally friendly," and "ecologically conscious" are used (Vernekar & Wadhwa, 2011). Patra and Dhani (2011) studied that frequently consumers are mindful of green marketing and are ready to purchase green products.

Green apparel often known as eco-friendly or sustainable fashion, refers to clothing that has a low environmental impact and which often considers social responsibility during its lifecycle (Patwary et al., 2022). This definition endorses using organic materials, avoiding hazardous chemicals and maintaining ethical labour conditions during the production process (Montero, 2009). These programs attempt to upgrade the garment industry's less ecologically friendly production, processing processes and to the usage of renewable, recyclable or biodegradable materials (Li et al., 2024). Green clothing can be further defined as having an impact on the environment, society and economy and this can be done by understanding how consumers behave toward green clothing, which is essential for creating strategies that encourage sustainable consumption and encourage the industry as a whole to adopt eco-friendly production techniques (Balasubramanian & Sheykhmaleki, 2024).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a most popular and useful model for clarifying complex human behavior. It is used in sociology, psychology, social psychology alike and is an extended version of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Attitude toward the behavior, Subjective norm, and Perceived behavioral control (PBC) together forms behavioral intention which in turn influences the human behavior (Ajzen, 2002). In a variety of industries, TPB has proven to be highly effective in prediction consumer intention and behavior (Sheppard et al. 1988). TPB is regarded as a highly effective model for elucidating environmentally friendly behavior (Bamberg and Schimdt, 2003). An individual has an inclination to a favourable attitude if the consequences are positively evaluated and if there is probability to contribute in the detailed behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Han et al., 2010). Attitude toward behaviour describes if a person has a favourable or unfavourable valuation of the behaviour in the question (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective norm is defined as 'perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior' (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm are the principles of other important people that influence one's decisions (Hee, 2000). Subjective norms are the hypothetical social pressure for showing or not behaving (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms are the formed by family, colleagues, peers and close friends (Paul et al., 2016). Subjective norms are typically formed by education, media, consumers' perceptions about what is good and moral, popular culture and are and perception about what is desirable and what is not (Ertz, 2016).

Perceived Behavioural control is 'an individual awareness of how easy or difficult it is to achieve a particular behavior' and those people having a higher degree of control over themselves have solider purpose to attain a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). It is perception that people have regarding the prospects to complete a certain task using available means (Ajzen, 2005) In many studies, Perceived Behavioral control is positively related with intentions and behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor and Todd, 1995; Straughan and Roberts, 1999).

Environmental Concern is defined as a 'strong attitude for defending the environment' (Crosby et al., 1981). "Environmental concern is related to the consciousness of a person about environmental problems" (Suki, 2015, p. 3) and is very significant factor in customer decision making (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). Environmental concern is affected by experiences and the media (do Paço et al., 2008).

Chan and Lau (2000) define environmental knowledge as familiarity that an individual possesses about environmental issues. It is the knowledge people have about environment and the significant association leading to environmental impact and communal functions of people for sustainable development (Fryxell and Lo, 2003). It is the understanding about environmental attitude, environment changes and individual's consumption behaviour and how it is impacted by the knowledge of environmental (Scott and Vigar-Ellis, 2014). Environmental Knowledge about different environmental subjects leads to pro-environmental or eco-friendly behavior (Peattie, 2010). It also impacts how a customer builds intention of purchasing an eco-friendly product (Rokicka, 2002).

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2000), intentions are very significant and the best analyst of the behaviour. Intention of an individual is to show a specified behaviour is a considered as an important factor in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows;

- To examine the impact of consumers' attitudes on their intention to purchase green apparel.
- To assess the influence of subjective norms on consumers' intention to purchase green apparel.
- To evaluate the effect of perceived behavioural control on consumers' intention to purchase green apparel.
- To investigate the relationship between environmental concern and consumers' intention to purchase green apparel.
- To analyse the influence of environmental knowledge on consumers' intention to purchase green apparel.
- To determine the impact of purchase intention on consumers' actual green purchase behaviour.

Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses of the study are as follows;

H1: Consumers' attitude significantly impacts consumers' intention to purchase.

H2: Subjective Norm significantly impacts a consumers' intention to purchase.

H3: Perceived Behavioural Control significantly impacts a consumers' intention to purchase.

H4: Environmental concern significantly impacts a consumers' intention to purchase.

H5: Environmental knowledge significantly impacts a consumers' intention to purchase.

H6: Purchase intention significantly impacts a consumers' Green Purchase Behaviour

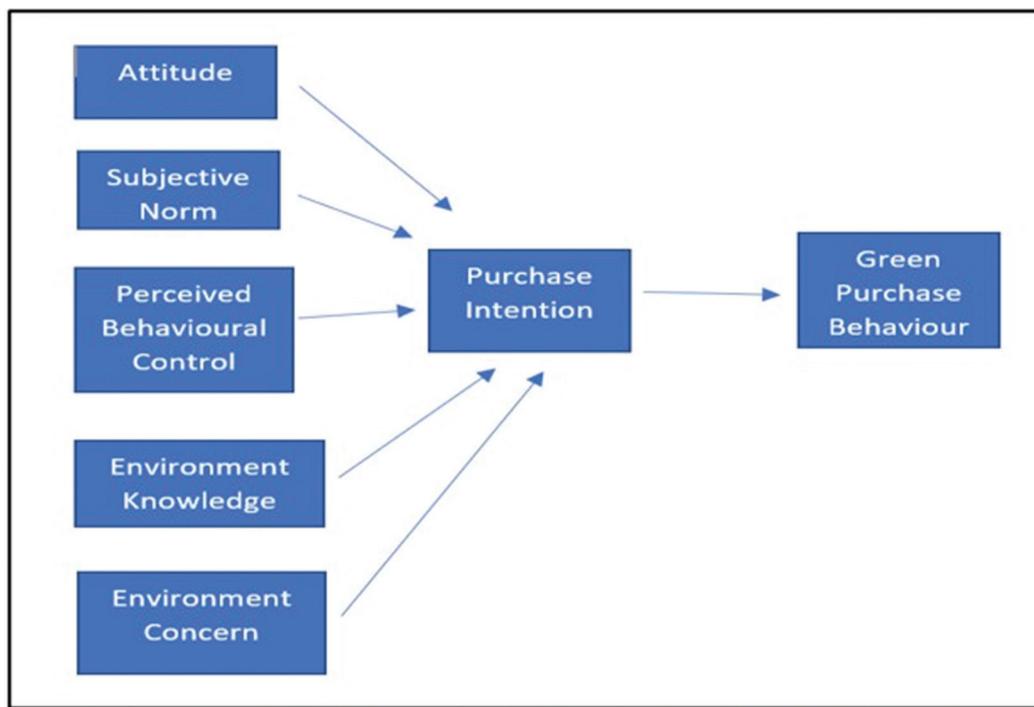


Figure 1 : Conceptual framework for the study.

Research Methods

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive and causal research design. The unit of analysis for this study is individual consumers in Kathmandu who have purchased green apparel products. The study is based on the response of 269 respondents using convenience sampling. Both primary and secondary data has been used for the study. For the primary data collection, structured questionnaire method is adopted to collect the data respondents above the age of 18. Information has also been gathered from secondary sources, such as books, journals, the internet, and other accessible sources.

For the study, instruments by Do Valle (2005), Vermier and Verbeke (2008), Kim and Han (2010), Mostafa (2009), Kim et al., (2013) and Schlegelmilch et al. (1996) for Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control, Environmental Concern, Purchase Intention and Green Purchase Behaviour were used respectively. The response of the respondents was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with a list of statements to which participants responded using a scale of possible answers. Always, very often, sometimes, seldom, never were used in the study to see the level of agreement of the respondent.

Demographic Status of Respondents

Table 1: Descriptive profile of respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	121	44.9
	Female	148	55.1
	Total	269	100
Highest Degree	Matriculation	11	4.1
	Intermediate	107	39.8
	Bachelors	86	32
	Masters	61	22.7
	Any Other	4	1.5
	Total	269	100

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–23	62	23.2
	24–28	94	34.8
	29–33	43	15.9
	34–38	62	23.2
	39–43	4	1.4
	Above 49	4	1.4
	Total	269	100
Monthly Income	10,000–30,000	50	18.6
	31,000–50,000	73	27.1
	51,000–70,000	75	27.9
	71,000–90,000	44	16.4
	Above 91,000	27	10
	Total	269	100
Caste	Brahman	86	31.9
	Chhetri	70	26.1
	Gurung	4	1.4
	Madeshi (Others)	8	2.9
	Madhesi (Brahmin/Chhetri)	12	4.5
	Magar	4	1.4
	Newar	66	24.5
	Others (Please Specify)	3	1.1
	Tamang	12	4.5
	Tharu	4	1.4
	Total	269	100

This study included 269 people. Out of them, 55.1% were female and 44.9% were male. Most participants (39.8%) had completed Intermediate-level education. About 32% had a Bachelor's degree, and 22.7% had a Master's degree. Only 4.1% had completed Matriculation, and 1.5% had some other qualification.

When looking at age, the largest group was between 24 to 28 years old (34.8%), followed by 18 to 23 years and 34 to 38 years (both 23.2%). People aged 29 to 33 made up 15.9%, while very few were in the 39 to 43 and above 49 age groups (1.4% each).

Regarding monthly income, 27.9% earned between NPR 51,000–70,000, and 27.1% earned between NPR 31,000–50,000. About 18.6% had income between NPR 10,000–30,000, while 16.4% earned between NPR 71,000–90,000. Only 10% of people earned more than NPR 91,000.

In terms of caste, 31.9% were Brahman, 26.1% were Chhetri, and 24.5% were Newar. Others included Madhesi (Brahmin/Chhetri) and Tamang (4.5% each), Madeshi (others) (2.9%), and Gurung, Magar, and Tharu (1.4% each). About 1.1% belonged to other castes.

Results and Analysis

The factors influencing the purchase of green apparel were assessed based on their mean scores. Environmental Knowledge emerged as the most significant factor, with a mean score of 10.56, indicating that greater awareness of environmental issues strongly motivates consumers to choose green apparels. Subjective Norms also play a crucial role, with a mean of 10.20, showing that social influences from family, friends and society impact individuals' buying decisions. Environmental Concern, with a mean score of 7.30, reflects consumers' growing awareness and worry about environmental problems, which encourages green product purchases. Perceived Behavioral Control, scoring 6.15 on average, suggests that individuals feel capable of making eco-friendly choices independently. Lastly, Attitude towards sustainability and environmental preservation, with a mean of 6.08, positively affects

consumers' decisions to purchase green apparel.

In this study, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The result showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.885, which confirms that the questionnaire items were consistent as value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Attitude	1						
2. Subjective Norm	.449**	1					
3. Perceived Behavioural Control	.308**	.273*	1				
4. Environment Knowledge	.386**	.359**	.443**	1			
5. Environment Concern	0.194	−0.063	0.134	0.079	1		
6. Purchase Intention	.460**	.411**	.332**	.373**	.503**	1	
7. Purchase Behaviour	0.116	0.194	0.173	.451**	.323**	.390**	1

Attitude showed a moderate positive correlation with Subjective Norm ($r = .449$, $p < 0.01$), Perceived Behaviour ($r = .308$, $p < 0.01$), Environmental Knowledge ($r = .386$, $p < 0.01$), and Purchase Intention ($r = .460$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that individuals with a positive attitude towards the environment are more likely to be influenced by social norms, feel in control of their behaviour, be environmentally informed, and intend to purchase green apparel. Subjective Norm was also significantly and positively correlated with Perceived Behaviour ($r = .273$, $p < 0.05$), Environmental Knowledge ($r = .359$, $p < 0.01$), and Purchase Intention ($r = .411$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that social pressure or support may influence a person's beliefs and intentions regarding green apparel. Perceived Behavioural Control had positive and significant correlations with Environmental Knowledge ($r = .443$, $p < 0.01$) and Purchase Intention ($r = .332$, $p < 0.01$), implying that individuals who feel more capable of taking green actions are also more informed and likely to intend to purchase eco-friendly clothing. Environmental Knowledge showed strong positive correlations with Purchase Behaviour ($r = .451$, $p < 0.01$) and Purchase Intention ($r = .373$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that awareness and knowledge about the environment play a critical role in translating intention into actual behaviour. Environmental Concern was moderately correlated with Purchase Intention ($r = .503$, $p < 0.01$) and Purchase Behaviour ($r = .323$, $p < 0.01$), showing that concern for environmental issues encourages both intention and action toward green purchases. Purchase Intention had a significant positive relationship with Purchase Behaviour ($r = .390$, $p < 0.01$), which supports the idea that intention is a strong predictor of actual buying behaviour.

Overall, the results indicate that Environmental Knowledge, Environmental Concern, and Attitude are particularly important in shaping both the intention and behaviour related to purchasing green apparel.

Table 3: Regression Model Summary for Green Apparel Purchase Factors

Model	R	R ² (Coefficient of Determination)	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
Attitude	0.46	0.211	0.199	1.6853
Subjective Norm	0.411	0.169	0.157	1.7295
Perceived Behavioural Control	0.332	0.11	0.097	1.7899
Environmental Knowledge	0.373	0.139	0.126	1.7609
Environmental Concern	0.503	0.253	0.242	1.6396
Purchase Intention	0.39	0.152	0.139	3.4779

Table 3 presents the model summary statistics for different predictors of purchase intention and purchase behaviour. The R values indicate moderate positive relationships between each predictor and the dependent variable. The R² values show that Environmental Concern explains the highest proportion of variance in purchase intention

(25.3%), followed by Attitude (21.1%) and Subjective Norm (16.9%).

Table 4: ANOVA of Independent Variables Affecting Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Predictor Variable	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares (Regression)	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Attitude	Purchase Intention	50.951	17.939	0.000
Subjective Norm	Purchase Intention	40.828	13.649	0.000
Perceived behavioural control	Purchase Intention	26.605	8.305	0.005
Environmental Knowledge	Purchase Intention	33.491	10.8	0.002
Environmental Concern	Purchase Intention	61.142	22.745	0.000
Purchase Intention	Purchase Behaviour	145.221	12.006	0.001

The results from Table 4 show that attitude significantly affects purchase intention, with a sum of squares of 50.95, an F-value of 17.94, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong influence. Subjective norm also significantly predicts purchase intention (sum of squares = 40.83, F = 13.65, p = 0.000). Environmental knowledge has a meaningful effect as well (sum of squares = 33.49, F = 10.80, p = 0.002). Environmental concern has the strongest impact on purchase intention with a sum of squares of 61.14, F-value of 22.75, and p = 0.000. Perceived behavioural control also significantly influences purchase intention (sum of squares = 26.61, F = 8.31, p = 0.005). Lastly, purchase intention strongly predicts actual purchase behaviour, with a sum of squares of 145.22, an F-value of 12.01, and p = 0.001. Overall, these values confirm that all these factors significantly shape consumers' intention to buy green apparel, which then leads to their actual purchase.

Discussion

This study examined the factors influencing consumers' purchase intention and actual purchase behavior toward green apparel. The study shows that people's attitudes toward green apparel have a strong influence on their intention to buy, explaining 21% of the variation with a correlation of 0.46. Subjective norm, also matters, accounting for 17% with a correlation of 0.41. How much control people feel they have over bought green clothes influence intention too, though a bit less, explaining 11% with a correlation of 0.33. Caring about the environment is the strongest factor, explaining 25% of the intention and showing a correlation of 0.50. Knowing about environmental issues is also important explaining 14% with a correlation of 0.37. Finally, the intention to buy green apparel leads to actual purchase behaviour, explaining 15% with a correlation of 0.39. Overall, these results tell us that attitudes, social influence, perceived control, environmental concern, and knowledge all play important roles in shaping buying intentions, which in turn influence real buying decisions.

The strong influence of attitude confirms that consumers' positive evaluations and feelings about green apparel play a crucial role in shaping their intention to buy. This aligns with previous studies that acknowledge attitude as a key determinant of purchase intentions (Emekci, 2019; Mostafa, 2007; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Similarly, the significant impact of subjective norm highlights the importance of social pressures and the influence of important others, suggesting that consumers are likely to consider the opinions and expectations of peers and family when deciding to purchase green products. This finding supports other studies done by Chen and Peng (2014) and Chen & Tung (2014). This study result shows that Perceived behavioural control significantly influences purchase intention. This result aligns with the study done by conducted by Palomino & Barcellos-Paula (2024). Environmental concern emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention indicating that consumers who are more worried about environmental issues are more motivated to buy green apparel. Heightened environmental awareness creates stronger green purchasing intention. The significant effect of environmental knowledge further supports this relationship, indicating that well-informed consumers appreciate the advantages of green products and increase purchase intentions. The same result is supported by other studies (Aman et al., 2012; Chan, 2001; Dhir et al. 2021; Emekci, 2019; Flamm, 2009; Siyal et al. 2021; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). This finding aligns with study by and that environmental knowledge has significant effect on influencing purchase intention.

The relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour is statistically significant reinforcing

the well-established notion that intention is a reliable predictor of behaviour. Previously conducted studies had found similar results that green purchase intention has a positive impact on green purchase behaviour (Astarini & Pratomo, 2022; Gleny & Bernardo 2023). Theory of Planned Behaviour includes attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. However, this study shows the importance of environmental concern and environmental knowledge in consumers' intention to purchase green products.

These findings highlight the complex nature of green apparel purchasing decisions, where psychological factors, environmental attitudes, social influence, consumer knowledge and prior behaviour collectively shape both intention and action. For marketers and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumption, efforts should focus on enhancing environmental awareness and knowledge, fostering positive attitudes toward green products, and leveraging social norms to encourage eco-conscious purchasing behaviour.

Conclusion and Implication

The study shows purchase behaviour of green apparel in Kathmandu. This study extended the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explore the determinants of consumers' green purchase intention and its subsequent influence on green purchase behaviour. The findings confirmed that all five variables; attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, environmental concern, and environmental knowledge positively influenced green purchase intention and green purchase intention further impacted green purchase behaviour.

The findings of this study provide evidence-based recommendations for both marketers and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumer behaviour in the context of green apparel. Environmental concern and knowledge should be reinforced through targeted messaging, public education and brand storytelling. Communicating the environmental impact of fast fashion and the benefits of sustainable apparel can significantly improve consumers' willingness to purchase green alternatives. Similarly, policy interventions such as subsidies, tax incentives and certification programs for sustainable clothing producers could further encourage both businesses and consumers to adopt environmentally responsible behaviour.

The integration of environmental concern and knowledge into the TPB framework offers valuable insights for theory and practice in promoting sustainable consumption. It can be argued that consumers still need to be educated about the benefits and distinctive value addition that green features offer. An eco-friendly lifestyle is a continuous process that must be implemented daily. A single purchase or association with an occasion doesn't make one sustainable.

While the findings of this study have important implications, it also has some limitations. The sample size considered for the study was 269 only and the study used convenience sampling. A cross-sectional design was used which limits causal inferences. Future work should consider longitudinal or experimental methods. The sample size can also be increased. In summary, this study confirms that a range of psychological, informational and perceptual factors contribute positively to green purchase intention and serve as the main driver of actual green apparel purchase behaviour. The study used convenience sampling and as the sample was taken from Kathmandu only, it limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, rather than representing the preferences of the larger community, the results might represent the views and perceptions of a particular location only. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer attitude related to green apparels, future research should consider more representative sampling techniques across various demographic variables.

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