



The Role of Environmental Education in Increasing Potential Green Consumers

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Abstract

Purpose – The prior literature indicated that green consumerism encouragements and programs have led to strict standards against environmental issues, thus reducing emissions from motors and engines and improving clean-burning energy options. The present study seeks to elaborate on the responsibility of ecological education in amplifying potential green consumers.

Research design, Data, and methodology –The justification of the qualitative literature method used in this research is essential because, through the extensive explanation, justification and description of the methods used, researchers can enhance the trustworthiness of the research to a particular or designated audience.

Result – Environmental education helps customers worldwide recognize the barriers to purchasing green products at every purchase level. Prior studies pointed out that after environmental education, consumers are much more willing to go greener in their consumption and safeguard the environment. Customers want to act green; however, they anticipate companies to lead the way.

Conclusion – This research suggests that reusing prevailing resources creatively implies that fewer dollars are spent buying novel stock to generate green products. Although establishing a green company is expensive, it saves a lot of cash over time. Greening procedures can lead to efficiency gains by minimizing energy costs, permitting companies to acquire green tax credits.

Keywords: Environmental Education, Eco-Friendly Behavior, Green Consumer

JEL Classification Code: K32, M31, I12

1. Introduction

Environmental education refers to a procedure that permits people to discover environmental matters, participate in problem-solving and take proper activities to enhance the environment. As a consequence of this education, people develop an unfathomable consideration of eco-friendly challenges and develop the skills to make responsible and informed choices. The elements of environmental education include: first, consciousness and sensitivity to the atmosphere and ecological issues. Environmental education allows people to be aware of their environment and challenges, thus maneuvering ways to counter environmental challenges (Ardoin et al., 2020). Secondly, knowledge and understanding of the environment and ecological matters. Environmental education equips individuals with appropriate knowledge concerning environmental challenges and methods to navigate these problems.

Third, involvement in activities that result in the resolution of environmental issues. Environmental education makes people think critically and develop appropriate environmental resolution techniques. Lastly, environmental education equips individuals with the skills necessary for solving environmental challenges (Jorgenson et al., 2019). Environmental literacy does not seek a specific course of action or viewpoint. Instead, environmental education equips people with appropriate knowledge and understanding of how to evaluate several sides of a challenge via critical thinking, improving their decision-making and problem-solving skills. Environmental education links us to the world surrounding us and educates us about built and natural environments. Environmental education raises consciousness of matters impacting the environment upon which we rely; also, the actions we implement to enhance and sustain it (Ramadhan et al., 2019).

A green consumer is a consumer who purchases commodities, including ecological, energy-saving, or organic commodities, and thus consumes fewer natural resources. Green consumption is a method of consumption that is well-matched with protecting the environment for the present and future generations. A green consumer refers to someone who has a positive attitude towards preserving the environment. A green consumer always supports environmental causes and desires green goods (Ramadhan et al., 2019). Green consumerism can be defined as a state in which customers prefer goods and services that have gone through eco-friendly manufacturing procedures or one that includes recycling and protecting the planet's resources. Alternatively, green consumerism involves industrial, encouraging, and enlightening the consumption of goods and services grounded on their pro-environment profits. Apart from environmental education, social, economic, and cultural factors have set the basis for green consumerism. It is the social attitude in the present era, particularly aimed at inspiring individuals to be extra aware of the industry's manufacturing procedures and only purchase or use products and services that do not cause danger to the environment. For this reason, green consumerism has generated a balance between the purchasers' conduct and the companies' profit objectives, as it is mostly grounded on the justifiable and pro-environmental conduct of the consumers.

Green consumers often lead to reduced waste in packaging. Green consumers develop social attitudes, including a preference to buy loose commodities such as fruits and vegetables rather than pre-packaged commodities. Additionally, green consumers encourage the reuse of plastic and paper packaging bags and tins that frequently lead to environmental degradation, safeguarding the environment. During production and transportation processes, emissions and pollutants are greatly released that pose danger to the environment. Green consumers have greatly led to a reduction in these emissions as they prefer a green environment. Furthermore, green consumerism encouragements and programs have led to strict standards against emissions, thus reducing emissions from motors and engines and improving clean-burning energy options (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). This paper seeks to elaborate on the responsibility of ecological education in amplifying potential green consumers.

2. Literature Review

The matter of environmental apprehension and sustainability has become critical for companies. It is now indispensable to comprehend the customers' green consumption procedures and their several enablers. Therefore, this study purposes to carry out a methodical literature review to recognize the responsibility of ecological education in increasing potential green consumers. In the previous 2 eras, with the augmenting environmental apprehension, practitioners and researchers have witnessed customers accepting sustainable green consumption. This has been realized courtesy of environmental education by various environmental conservative groups. The amplifying sustainability issues have placed green consumption of social significance. Witnessing this, various consumers comprehended that their consumption behaviors harm the ecological environment (Boca & Saraçlı, 2019). Therefore, this has led them to begin making alterations in their lives and the technique they conduct their corporate. Accountable consumers comprehend how their buying behaviors affect the environment (Wang et al., 2018). Environmental

education brought to light the effects of their consumption habit on the environment. These things have resulted in amplified green consumption among consumers.

Additionally, stringent environmental guidelines and growing shareholders' pressure to protect environmental influences have also drawn consideration from company decision-makers toward green consumption (Rustam et al., 2020). Green consumerism refers to consumers' choice to buy or not to buy, at least partly by considering its effects on the environment. Therefore, green consumption can be said to be a method of consumption that is appropriate for preserving the normal atmosphere for both the current and future cohorts. Therefore, conferring to a research study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2018), green consumption is comprehended as buying and consumption habits by a person who is linked to ecological and source issues and is encouraged by not only a wish to fulfill a person's wants but also a concern for the well-being of community in general (Liao & Li, 2019). Moreover, this idea gives significance to the buyer's accountability towards ecological problems and how they discourse them by assuming ecologically receptive habits, for instance, using ecologically welcoming green commodities.

Additionally, it can be discussed how much customers take care of the effect their personal habit has on the setting while positioning of or buying a commodity, sideways with stressing reducing the adverse effects on the atmosphere. In this, the buyer not only reasons about their advantage but also attempt to take care of their surrounding and environment (Yue et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Haller, in his research study in 2020, 6 customers out of 10 demonstrated a readiness to alter their consumption behaviors after undergoing environmental education to reduce negative effects on the environment. On the other hand, eight out of ten consumers noted that preserving sustainability is enormously significant for them, and out of those eight customers, 70 percent demonstrated a preparedness to recompense best for ecologically accountable products (Kaiser et al., 2020).

After environmental education, it has been observed that in the previous eras, customers' consumption behaviors have transformed swiftly; they have transitioned from policymaking grounded on product or worth to preference for justifiable commodities. Subsequently, various research studies have also discovered an enormous disparity in consumers' green commodities acceptance. However, there is still a gap between customer action and intention, which is a great challenge to a maintainable environment (Cole, 2019). This challenge can be resolved by partnerships among customers and organizations to co-generate the green-worth scheme. Thus, comprehending customers' green publicizing assumption of green consumption is becoming progressively essential. For instance, various researchers have examined the responsibility of consumption value, subjective norms, attitude, supposed behavioral control, and demographic factors in green consumption.

Several perspectives and methodologies have been executed to comprehend the consumption procedure, demonstrating different results from quantitative and qualitative viewpoints. As there is a large diversity in comprehension of the green consumption procedure, it is imperative first to comprehend the essential enablers of consumer green advertising assumption (Liobikiienė & Poškus, 2019). Secondly, how should they be comprehended for better comprehension of the green consumption assumption procedures and assist experts and policymakers in understanding exactly where to target.

Environmental education is an indispensable element of biodiversity preservation interventions. Environmental education offers awareness and understanding concerning environmental problems, amplifies knowledge, and assists in achieving optimistic attitudes toward environmental threats. Education plays a crucial responsibility in explaining high-level environmental habits and concerns (Nguyen et al., 2018). Highly educated people are extra motivated to improve the environment since education offers awareness concerning the probable damage to the environment. Environmental education offers a high level of understanding and awareness concerning ecological difficulties and their resolution, which leads to sustainable and pro-environmental habits. According to a research study, human conduct currently has damaging effects on the environment, and the younger generation will be affected more by the present environmental issues, which will progress to become worse in the future if not appropriately addressed (Dhir et al., 2021). Thus, it is important to comprehend and enhance the ecological habits of people.

Knowledge and understanding of the environment provide probable skills benefiting the environment. Environmental education enhances awareness and responsibility, positively impacting attitudes and habits toward a green ecological lifestyle. Environmental education is considered an important element of biodiversity conservation interventions. Therefore, augmenting knowledge and pro-environmental conduct is one of literature's most discussed results of ecological education. Environmental education plays a crucial responsibility in countering environmental issues, and the striving aim is to safeguard and protect the resources of the Earth for a healthy and prosperous life. Most research studies found an optimistic association between ecological education and potential green consumers; however, some studies recommended that a high level of environmental education will not lead to environmentally friendly habits. For instance, Ek and Soderholm (2008) found that the relationship between a high level of environmental education and the decision to use green electricity was insignificant. Furthermore, according to research conducted by Ayalon discovered no evidence of environmental education's impact on recycling habits.

However, a research study by Grafton discovered a positive relationship between water conservation and environmental education. Various research studies discovered that environmental education generally empowers people's comprehension of the environment and encourages them to carry out pro-environmental habits in various contexts. For instance, the existing literature demonstrates that environmental education promotes recycling habits (Nekmahmud et al., 2020). Moreover, other research studies discovered that environmental education altered the food decisions of individuals choosing to consume an environmentally friendly choice. For instance, an environmentally educated individual normally prefers eco-friendly shopping. A research study by Berl et al. (Year?) discovered that highly environmentally educated people demonstrate water-saving habits.

In addition, other research studies prove that energy-saving habits are also present among environmentally educated individuals. For example, a research study by Rowlands discovered that people with great awareness of green electricity would stress and raise their voices for the great manufacture of eco-friendly electricity (Berger, 2019). Moreover, environmental apprehensions are higher among those people who are well-informed about environmental education. Lastly, informal education via electronic, print, and social media contributes towards an eco-friendly environment along with official environmental education in colleges.

Table 1: The Summary of Literature Review

Previous Resources	Themes
Boca and Saraçlı (2019), Rustam et al. (2020), Nguyen et al. (2018), Liao and Li (2019), Yue et al. (2020), Kaiser et al. (2020), Cole (2019), Liobikienė and Poškus (2019), Nguyen et al. (2018), Dhir et al. (2021), Ek and Soderholm (2008), Berger (2019)	Carrying out a methodical literature review to recognize the responsibility of ecological education in increasing potential green consumers. In the previous 2 eras, with the augmenting environmental apprehension, practitioners and researchers have witnessed customers accepting sustainable green consumption.

3. Research Design

The current researcher could be able to justify using interpretivist and positivist dimensions as a source of knowledge or information in research. Consequently, the researcher identified that qualitative research should be considered when there's a need for objective data. It's imperative to note that qualitative analysis offers insight into various topics as it can accommodate information sources such as the participants' preferences, views, beliefs, attitudes and opinions. The justification of the methods used in research is essential because, through the extensive explanation, justification and description of the methods used, researchers can enhance the trustworthiness of the research to a particular or designated audience. For instance, using content analysis, as previously mentioned, allows the researcher to identify and delve deep into the relevant themes acquired from the literature review process. The themes identified can be used in future research to address gaps in practice while being implemented in business environments to enhance eco-friendly solutions. Qualitative research was used in the study to offer solutions to business leaders. Therefore, researchers can use validity to prove their study's adequacy and appropriateness. Consequently, an additional analysis based on an extensive documentary can supplement or prove the adequacy of their research (Nguyen et al., 2022; Kim & Kang, 2022).

The primary method used in the research was content analysis (CA). Content analysis offers an opportunity through which the contributions of qualitative content analysis are not ignored but rather utilized as per the directions of communication science. Content analysis is also a diverse instrument or procedure that can be integrated into speeches, letters and articles. It amplifies the latent and manifest contents of the textual evidence. Notably, latent textual evidence is indirect or hidden within the text, while manifest textual evidence is countable and visible. An example of the difference is when an environmental poster or advertisement is indirectly focused on eco-friendly or climate change solutions for the next half a century as the latent textual evidence, while the visible or observable poster or advert may contain glaciers, high global temperatures, and forest fires as the manifest textual evidence (Woo & Kang, 2020; Lee, 2021)

The analysis and disintegration of the differences between latent and manifest text are essential in content analysis. However, the intensity of interpretation and clarification is different because of the variation in abstraction and comprehension levels of individuals. The current research aimed to identify and characterize sustainable environmental solutions for business leaders. Consequently, manifest and latent themes within each data fragment were analyzed to initiate expected changes in organizations. Given the purpose and direction of the study, the primary aim was to elaborate on predictive and comprehensive results. The presentation of predictive results is consistent with clarity on the impacts or outcomes of the analyzed subject, while descriptive results are consistent with clarity on the attributes, quality or aspects of the subject being analyzed. An example is when product recalls are affected by advertising printing, as identified in the content analysis (Riahard & Kang, 2018; Hong, 2021).

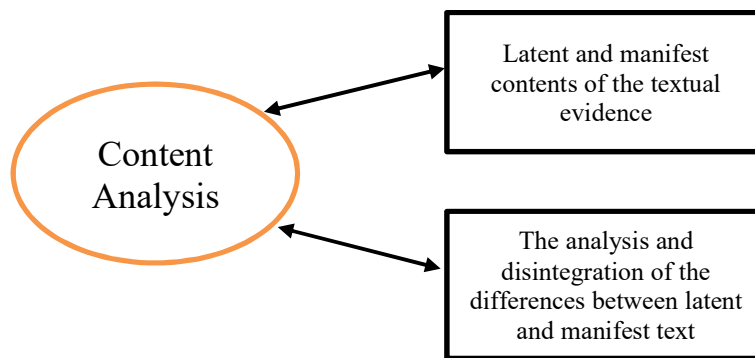


Figure 1: The Key Evidence of Content Approach

4. Results

The desire to go green is spreading quicker than morning glory. Industries of all kinds are initiating green drives. This has been enabled by environmental education. The customers, too, are getting interested in the knowledge of being greener. In almost all research studies, customers say they are worried about climate variation. Consumers are worried about lengthening droughts, shrinking animal habitats, rising seas, and recent brewing diseases. In a study conducted in 2019, 87% of customers were worried about the ecological and social effects of the commodities they purchase (Mohiuddin et al., 2018). However, when it comes to essentially purchasing green products by consumers, words and actions frequently part ways. A survey shows that only 33% of consumers are ready to purchase green products. Before environmental education, customers in the United States and other advanced nations had done little to lighten their carbon tracks (Lin et al., 2018). This happened because industries had not educated their customers concerning the advantages of green commodities that meet their needs.

However, after environmental education, consumers are much more willing to go greener in their consumption and safeguard the environment. Customers want to act green; however, they anticipate companies to lead the way. According to a research study, approximately 60 percent of consumers suggest that production industries should handle climate change (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). To attain this, companies require to manufacture more and better Earth-friendly goods. Although some companies are already producing green products, they are not adequately marketing them to customers. According to a research study, approximately two-thirds of Americans cannot list some of the green products on the market. Many consumers say that they desire to do transactions with environmentally accountable organizations, although it is challenging to find green products and services (Panda et al., 2020). By going green, companies can gain numerous profits. They can minimize their energy consumption, reduce their perils, meet competitive coercions, improve their products, and amplify their profits. Environmental education has helped consumers and businesses comprehend the latent of the green market.

Environmental education helps customers worldwide recognize the barriers to purchasing green products at every purchase level. First, consumers must comprehend a commodity's existence before purchasing it (Usharani & Gopinath, 2021). Many consumers are not aware of the green substitutes in various merchandise categories. Next, consumers should trust that green products will perform efficiently just as other products. Various consumers believe green goods are of inferior excellence to their modern counterparts. Finally, consumers must be sure that the green

products are worth the cost and effort required to buy them. However, several consumers frequently trust that the costs of green products are extra high and experience difficulty finding them anyway (Chin et al., 2018). There exist barriers that hinder consumers from going greener. Therefore, knowing these barricades is the step to rising green customers.

4.1. Lack of Awareness

Many consumers possess knowledge concerning climate change, and they also know that minimizing their greenhouse gas emissions will aid fight climate change. However, research studies also demonstrate that customers do not comprehend how to act on greener urges. More than two-thirds of the customers plotted say they would like to participate in safeguarding the environment but do not know what to do (Ichsan et al., 2020). Consumers are correspondingly confused about purchasing green products. Several trials to tag green commodities are worthless at best and baffling at nastiest. However, calculating the carbon footprints of various products requires some complex math that only a few people understand. Therefore, this indicates the importance of environmental education. If many consumers could be educated, we would have an amplified number of green consumers.

4.2. Low Availability

Although many people desire to consume green products, these products are rarely available in the markets. Many consumers encounter a great challenge in searching for these products. For instance, consumers using biofuels must frequently drive out of their way to fill up their selected fuel. In addition, numerous workers do not know where they can buy green building resources (Liu et al., 2020). The main reason why these green products cannot be easily found is that many firms are not stocking them in their stores. Therefore, business owners must be adequately advised to green stock products so that consumers can easily purchase them conveniently. Business owners also require environmental education to understand the implication of stocking eco-friendly products for the environment (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018).

4.3. Breaking Down Barricades

Understanding what halts customers from purchasing green commodities is a very important step. The next step is understanding how to break down the barriers. First, consumers must be educated about the available green alternatives in the market. Environmental education should also be extended to the huge matters of contamination, overfishing, climate change, and other ecological issues (Kautish & Sharma, 2020). If the general public is well-educated about the available green products, this can increase green consumers. Secondly, building better green products can increase green consumerism. For consumers to enhance their views of green commodities, industries must generate products that are equivalent to or better than conventional substitutes. Most customers still value reliability, performance, and durability more than a good's eco-friendly reliability (Nguyen et al., 2019). Therefore, green products must frequently outperform their counterparts to overcome consumer image.

Thirdly, companies selling green products should offer more. To augment sales of green goods, industries must maintain that customers comprehend their investment returns, both environmentally and financially. When consumers discover that it is easy to account for their savings by using a particular product, they will desire to attempt novel green products (Fu et al., 2020). Consumers feel more self-assured about their eco-friendly acquisitions when they comprehend how commodities assist the environment. Lastly, green goods should be made available to consumers. Industries cannot vend their commodities if customers cannot find them. Several green products are unavailable in the present-day markets (Al-Quran et al., 2020). Thus, to increase the consumption of green products, they should be easily accessible to consumers.

4.4. How to Become a Green Consumer

Consuming green products helps safeguard the environment. In this stage, environmental education plays a great responsibility (Witek & Kuźniar, 2020). First, consumers need to change their mindset. Although it is difficult to compel individuals to consume green products or use services that avert the depletion of natural resources and that lead to habitat loss or environmental deprivation. Therefore, environmental education helps people change their mindset concerning green conservation and understand the dangers of environmental degradation (do Paço et al., 2019).

Secondly, an individual can become a green consumer by recycling and utilizing eco-friendly products. One can easily become a greener consumer by choosing to recycle products or using green products. For instance, one can carry a water bottle around rather than buy bottled water. Generally, achieving this should also encompass buying eco-friendly products (ElHaffar et al., 2020). Lastly, purchasing locally grown and organic foods may become a green consumer. Generally, purchasing locally grown and organic foods suggestively contribute to reducing the impacts of carbon emissions during transportation and the impact of fertilizer and artificial pesticide use on the environment (Lin & Niu, 2018).

5. Implications for Managers in the Organizations

Environmental education has been proven to increase potential green consumers. This implies that soon, many people will prefer consuming green goods that are eco-friendly to the environment over traditional goods that lead to environmental degradation. This has great implications for companies and industries manufacturing consumable products. For companies to make huge sales, it means that they must manufacture green products in large quantities since many consumers are already consuming these products. Running an environmentally friendly company assists one reduce effects on the environment and safeguards natural resources. Therefore, many companies must switch to green manufacturing. Going green has lots of benefits for the company.

First, green companies lead to employee motivation. Job seekers are more attracted to industries that manufacture eco-friendly products or those companies that care for the environment. The workers of companies that encourage eco-friendly production are probably to trust that their employer will also care for them, thus becoming more satisfied with their jobs. Such industries generate a higher sense of personal and organizational purpose that makes work meaningful. Going green also leads to positive feelings for employees. Workers feel safer working in a green company.

Next, green business increases efficiency, which in turn saves money. Reusing prevailing resources creatively implies that fewer dollars are spent buying novel stock to generate green products. Although establishing a green company is expensive, it saves a lot of cash over time. Greening procedures can lead to efficiency gains by minimizing energy costs, permitting companies to acquire green tax credits, enhancing operational efficiency, and embedding circular economy principles internally.

Lastly, going green results in a competitive advantage for a company. Going green has immediate payoffs for firms. First, green companies gain a quick competitive advantage. In addition, green companies improve their reputation, thereby appealing to and retailing all these green believers. Therefore, those businesses yet to go green will soon cease to matter. Presently, the world is experiencing an imminent environmental calamity, with polluted oceans and carbon dioxide emissions. Therefore, a company taking a role in safeguarding the environment is highly preferred by consumers. Moreover, green promoters prefer to buy green products from organizations assuming active steps toward change and demonstrating that they hold the same environmental values. As a result, these companies will realize that many consumers are turning to their products and forgetting about unsustainable firms.

6. Limitations

Environmental education has faced major setbacks from the general public. Although environmental education aims to increase potential green consumers, most people still engage in activities that lead to environmental degradation. This acts as a major challenge to this study. Instead of changing to green consumption, humans have mistreated and contaminated the environment that sustains them. However, the major concern for the environment can be so devastating that individuals do not know what to do or where to begin making a difference by consuming green products. Environmental education is conducted to change as many consumers as green consumers. However, the actions of these consumers do not portray what they have learned from environmental education (Al-Ghussain, 2019). For instance, actions leading to climate change and global warming, water pollution, ocean acidification, and loss of biodiversity reveal otherwise concerning environmental education.

Climate Change and Global Warming: human actions have made climate change and global warming a worldwide menace. The increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have increased mean global temperatures, dangerous weather events, increasing sea levels, and other adverse changes (Müller et al., 2018). Therefore, humans should heed the knowledge gained from environmental education and thus evade all activities that lead to climate change and global warming.

Water Pollution and Ocean Acidification: water pollution is caused by human activities such as plastic pollution, inappropriate sewage disposal, and speedy urban growth. All these human activities hinder the potential increase in green consumers as they impact the environment negatively, resulting in environmental degradation (Ukaogo et al., 2020). Loss of biodiversity: biodiversity assist upholds the balance of the ecosystem and offers biological resources essential for our existence. Climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, and secondary extinction are a few ways in which humans are causing chaos on the biodiversity of this planet. In general, environmental education play an essential role in increasing potential green consumers; however, these efforts are eroded by human activities, which lead to climate change, pollution, global warming, and biodiversity.

To conclude, the role of environmental education in increasing potential green consumers has been fully discussed. It has been demonstrated that environmental education plays a vital role in increasing green consumers. Environmental education permits people to discover environmental problems, get encompassed in problem-solving, and take appropriate actions to enhance the environment. Through environmental education, people develop a profound comprehension of ecological matters and possess skills to make well-versed and accountable choices (Varela-Candamio et al., 2018). Ecological education includes the following elements; skills, participation, awareness and sensitivity, attitudes, and knowledge and understanding. Environmental education teaches people how to weigh several sides of a problem via critical thinking, and it improves their decision-making and problem-solving techniques.

Environmental education helps people comprehend how their choices and activities affect the environment and build skills and knowledge appropriate to address multifaceted environmental issues and methods to maintain our environment healthy and sustainable for the future. Furthermore, environmental education empowers people, institutions, and groups to appropriately discover environmental problems along with thoughts and actions for environmental sustainability (Varela-Candamio et al., 2018). Ecological education has a noteworthy influence on ecological awareness and consumer behavior. For this reason, environmental education is crucial in increasing potential green consumers.

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