

# An Insight into Predictors of Green Purchase Behaviour among GenZ

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**Abstract:** Students is becoming more aware of environmentally conscious and desirous of purchasing eco friendly products i.e. green products. The present study is an attempt to investigate purchase intention & awareness towards green products among students in Delhi-NCR.

**Research design & Methodology:** College students were surveyed at a private college in Delhi to determine if they considered green marketing when they made purchases. Of the 75 students surveyed, 56 gave valid responsive questionnaires out of which 48 were aware of green marketing and 8 students were not at all aware of the same.

**Findings:** The findings of the study reveal that approximately 40 percent became aware of green marketing by internet and social media sites. However, around 29 percent learned about it through print media, i.e. newspapers and magazines. The study also revealed that 72 percent respondents perceive green products as environment friendly products while 12 percent respondents take it as recyclable products. Male respondents are more aware about green products and but females consider it more while making shopping in comparison to male respondents. Majority of the respondents are ready to pay 1-20% percent more prices than the prices of non-green products.

**Value of Paper:** Thus, we conclude that the students does not have environment concern only, but also have positive and high intentions to buy green products. Statistical tests showed that there was no correlation between gender, income and major fields of study and extent of green marketing awareness. The study brings out interesting insight that, though consumer were environmentally concerned and ready to pay high yet they were not aware as to what constitutes environmentally friendly products. Hence, marketers need to consider efforts that are required to convert the environment concern into environmental consumption behavior. It also implies a bright future for green marketing.

**Limitations:** Due to time constraints, this study is limited to students learning in private college in Delhi region. The views received from the respondents cannot be fully generalized to represent all the students in Delhi. It should be noted that the awareness level of students belonging to higher level may differ from the participants of this research.

**Keywords:** Green Marketing, Perception, Gen Z, Customer Satisfaction, Demographic variables, Delhi.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have gained importance in business as well as in public life throughout the world. The term green marketing refers to the strategies to promote products by employing environmental claims either about their attributes or about the systems, policies and processes of the firms that manufacture or sell them (A. Prakash, 2002). Clearly, green marketing is part and parcel of the overall corporate strategy (Menon and Menon, 1997). Along with manipulating the traditional marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion), it requires an understanding of public policy processes. Green marketing also ties closely with issues of industrial ecology and environmental sustainability such as extended producers 'liability, life-cycle analysis, material use and resource flows, and eco-efficiency (A. Prakash, 2002). Thus, the subject of green marketing is vast, having important implications for business strategy and public policy.

A new sense of urgency about Indian environmental degradation has compelled a number of ordinary individuals to make eco-conscious life style changes (Jain & Kaur, 2004). The environment has become a mainstream issue and consequentially consumers are becoming more concerned about their habits and the effect that these have on the environment (Krause, 1993).

Hence, the impact of environmental problems now more clearly visible to one and is resulting into desire to do something in one form or the other. With a tidal wave of interest focusing on ways to reduce energy consumption and at the same time to be ecologically and environmentally, Green marketing has fast emerged as a worldwide phenomenon which interests both the marketing practitioners as well as the consumers.

In order to make this dream of a "Green Prosperous India" come true, country will have to rely on its most valuable asset, its youth. Global issues are not solved within the four walls of a scientist's laboratory. They need to be brought to the knowledge of an average individual. And informing youth is the best way to begin. Many of the best ideas come from young minds; the Indian youth is, and must be, the builder of a new society.

In this paper focus is on the young Indian students of Delhi because they often have better access to information about the environment than do their elders. The main aim of this paper is to understand the behavior of Indian students when the term green marketing or green products come up every time. In the present study an attempt has been made to analyse the student's awareness and perception regarding the purchase decision of green products in India.

#### **Objectives:**

To study student's purchasing intention towards eco-friendly product by these following objectives:

- 1) To find the extent of awareness level of students towards green products.
- 2) To investigate the perception of students towards eco-friendly products.
- 3) To study predictors towards purchase intention of green products.

This study would help in judging the awareness among people towards eco-friendly products. This study would help in understanding various expectations that a customer wants from eco-friendly goods.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to American Marketing Association "Green marketing is the marketing of product that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Green marketing includes the developing and marketing such product & services that satisfy the customer requirement for quality, reliable price and easy availability of the product without having a harmful impact on the environment (Mishra and Sharma, 2010; Polonsky, 1994 and Rakshita, 2011). In business, the terms —Green product and Environmental product are used commonly to describe those that strive to protect or enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and/or resources and reducing or eliminating use of toxic agents, pollution, and waste (J. Ottman,1997). It is also referred as a product that is environmentally preferable relative to comparable products. Thus, green marketing approach is largely used as a tool by the gigantic corporate houses in order to make a difference in the consumer's point of view when it comes to making market decisions.

Marketing fulfills business and human purpose by providing benefits to customers through products such as the food people eat, the clothes they wear, the houses where they live and the cars they drive. Thus, the decisions on what products to make and how to offer them are part of the marketing function. Decisions on what products to make also relate to what to take (e.g. the resources required to make and market those products) and both the making and taking processes, and eventually the wasting process (e.g. whatever wastes are left after the making and taking processes) have ecological costs in the form of waste, pollution and damage to ecosystems (Fuller, 1999). Determining the attributes of products and the specific systems through which they are made available to the markets also determines resource/energy use and waste generation patterns, the antecedents of pollution and ecosystems degradation (Fuller, 1999). The challenge for marketing is to reinvent product systems to achieve "zero-waste, zero discharge" outcomes while still giving the same benefits to customers.

Toward this end, marketers coined the term ecological marketing, green marketing, environmental marketing, eco-marketing and sustainable marketing (Codington, 1993, Fuller, 1998 and Ottman, 1998). For consistency, this study will adopt the term green marketing.

Elkington (1994: 93) defines green consumer as one who avoids products that are likely to endanger the health of the consumer or others; cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy; cause unnecessary waste; use materials derived from threatened species or environments; involve unnecessary use of, or cruelty to animals; adversely affect other countries.

Studies showed that consumers tend to be greener in direct proportion to their income and education, and that female consumers are greener than their male counterparts (Codington, 1993). When shopping, women were more likely to exhibit green behavior in their purchases. Further, women were more likely to recycle products. Income, education, age, gender and place of residence were positively related to the consumer's level of environmental commitment (Marneiri, Barnett, Valdero, Unipan & Oskamp, 1997).

Kotler and Armstrong state that a simple model of the consumer decision-making process involves three major components: inputs, process and output (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). According to them, the input component of the consumer decision-process has external and internal influences. The external influences are the marketing mix activities involving product, promotion, price and place while the internal influences are the socio-cultural environment (family, informal sources, other noncommercial sources, social class and subculture and culture, knowledge, etc.). The process component involves the psychological field such as motivation, perception, learning, personality and attitudes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive cum exploratory in nature and is based on primary data. This study is an empirical research. The data has been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire was pilot tested on sample of 10 respondents and thereafter revisions were made on the basis of suggested changes. The population comprised of students belonging to age group of 16-25 studying in GGSIPU.

Since, the population was heterogeneous and time constraints; convenience sampling was used to conduct the study.

The questionnaire comprised of 16 questions including both close ended and open ended questions. The closed-ended questions were measured on five-point Likert-type scales. The scale comprised of 5 measures ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. It is widely believed that attitudes are measured by multiple measures and the general trend in measuring environmental issues is via several items instead of single-item questions (Gill et al., 1986).

The sample was collected from colleges in Delhi. In all, 75 respondents were contacted, out of which 56 questionnaires had had all the questions fulfilled completely. Rest questionnaires did not meet the expected standards as wither they were not completely filled or had missing values. A sample consisting of 56 respondents was finalized for further analysis. Firstly, 56 questionnaires were analyzed to assess the awareness of green products. Out of 56 responses, only 48 questionnaires were analyzed, since 8 respondents were not at all aware of green products and green marketing. These 8 respondents were not considered a significant part of the research. Descriptive statistical techniques were utilized to analyze the data with the help of SPSS tool. The major statistical techniques used in this study are central tendency (Specially Mean), percentage analysis and ANOVA. Secondary data was collected through online library, newspapers, reputed journals pertaining to green marketing.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Many firms and customers are beginning to realize that they are members of the wider community and therefore must behave in an environmentally responsible fashion. This translates into firms that believe they must achieve environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives. This results in environmental issues being integrated into the firm's corporate culture. All most all in the sample generally want to do the right thing, so the challenge and opportunity for the green marketer is to make it easy for people to do so.

**Socio-economic profile of the respondents:**

Understanding the demographic and psychographic background and their perception towards green products become essential because there is significant association among the awareness of consumers towards green products and age, geographical area, educational level and income (Teng et al., 2011).

The table 1 presents a demographic profile of respondent. There were 30 male students and 18 female students in the study. In the table the age has been grouped in to three categories in 16-18 (as student has just entered in college), 18-20 (first year students), 20-22 (Second year students) and 20-22 (Third year students). The Income groups were classified in to four categories and income here means monthly family income.

**Table 1: Socio-economic profile of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	30	62.5%
	Female	18	37.5%
	Total	48	100.0%
<b>Age</b>	16-18	13	27.1%
	18-20	26	54.2%
	20-22	8	16.7%
	22-25	1	2.1%
	Total	48	100.0%
<b>Income Level of family (in Rs.)</b>	Less than 50,000	9	18.8%
	50,000-1,00,000	15	31.3%
	1,00,000-5,00,000	18	37.5%
	5,00,000 above	6	12.5%
	Total	48	100.0%

As per the table, sample majority of respondents were in the age group of 18-20 years with an aggregate of 54.2%. In case of income were in category of Rs.1, 00,000 – 5, 00,000 per month with an aggregate of 37.5%.

**Awareness and Perception about Green Products among Respondents:**

To get the deeper insight about the perception regarding green products it is essential to know consumer awareness of green products and what they understood by green products.

**Table 2: Awareness of Green marketing**

Question		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Are you aware of “green products” or Eco-friendly products?</b>	Yes	37	77.08%
	No	8	16.66%
	A little	11	22.9%
	Total	56	100.0%

It depicts the awareness level of green marketing among the respondents. Out of 56 valid questionnaires, 77.08% respondents were aware of the term whereas 16.66% were not at all aware of green marketing. However, 22.9% respondents were little bit aware of the same so further analysis is required to clearly understand the mindset of the respondents.

Those 16.66% students who were not at aware of the term green marketing so, were not analyzed further for the perception and purchase intention of green products. Thus, our sample size for effective analysis reduced to 48.

**Gender & Extent of awareness:**

**Table 3: Gender and Extent of awareness of Green marketing**

		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
What according to you are eco-friendly products?	Not Aware	2	3.5%	6	10.7%
	Aware but not buying environment friendly products	27	48.21%	15	26.7%
	Buying environment friendly products all the time.	3	5.3%	3	5.3%

Although females have medium awareness compared to high awareness among males, Table 3 shows that the mean difference between males and females in terms of extent of awareness of green marketing is not significant. This implies that there is no correlation between gender and extent of green marketing awareness.

**Income and Extent of Awareness:**

**Table 4 Income and Extent of Awareness of Green marketing**

		Income Level of family (in Rs.)							
		Less than 50,000		50,000-1,00,000		1,00,000-5,00,000		5,00,000 above	
		Frequency	Row %	Frequency	Row %	Frequency	Row %	Frequency	Row %
What according to you are eco-friendly products?	Aware but not buying environment friendly products	9	21.4%	13	31.0%	14	33.3%	6	14.3%
	Buying environment friendly products all the time.	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	4	66.7%	0	0.0%

It depicts that the lowest income group (below Rs. 50,000) and highest Income group( above Rs. 5,00,000) had low awareness of green marketing while the two medium income groups (Rs. 50,000-1,00,000 and Rs. 1,00,000- 5,00,000) had medium awareness of green marketing. The statistical tests showed that the mean difference across income groups and the extent of awareness of green marketing was not statistically significant. This implies that there is no correlation between income and extent of awareness of green marketing.

**Respondent’s source of awareness to Green marketing:**

**Table 5: Respondent’s source of awareness to Green marketing**

Question	Options	Frequency	Percentage
How did you become aware of “green products” or Eco-friendly products?	Traditional Media (TV, Radio)	6	12.5%
	Print Media (Newspaper, Magazine)	14	29.16%
	New Media (Internet, social networking sites)	19	39.58%
	Social circle (parents teachers, friends, etc)	9	18.75%
	Others	0	0.0%
	Total	48	100.0%

It shows that the respondents became aware of green marketing through the following:

Traditional media which included television, radio, etc (12.5%), Print media which includes newspapers and magazines (29.16%), New media consisting of internet and various social media sites (39.58%) and their social circles comprising of their parents, class teachers and friends (18.75%). Today, the impact of internet and various social media sites is overpowering the traditional and print media on the youngsters.

The parents and class teachers have least role to play in spreading the awareness of green products to the youngsters.

**Understanding the Meaning of Green products:**

**Table 6: Understanding the Meaning of Green products**

Question	Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
What comes to your mind on hearing the term, "Green products"?	Environment friendly	35	72.9%
	Bio-degradable	3	6.25%
	Recyclable	7	14.58%
	Energy saving	3	6.25%
	Green in color	0	0.0%
	Total	48	100.0%

It analyses that 72.9 percent of respondents were aware of as to what makes green product. Only 6.25 percent respondent thinks green products as energy saver, whereas 14.58 percent respondents meant them to be recyclable products. However, there was none of the student who was not at all clear of the meaning of green products as to none of them green products are the products which are green in color.

**Consideration Regarding Green Products while Making Shopping:**

**Table 7: Consideration Regarding Green Products while Making Shopping**

		Gender					Total
		Male			Female		
		Frequency	Column %	Frequency	Column %	Frequency	Percentage
Do you consider green products while shopping?	Yes	20	66.7%	13	72.2%	33	68.75%
	No	10	33.3%	5	27.8%	15	31.25%

It presents that 68.75 percent of the respondents take in consideration of green products while making shopping and 31.25 percent respondents never considered the same. So, it reveals that though awareness level is quiet high yet its conversion in to purchase intention is low.

While discriminating the respondents among male and female, male respondents (66.7 percent) and female (72.2 percent) take into consideration green products while making purchase decision, meaning thereby that although male respondents were more aware of green products as compared to females but, females are more considerate in terms of purchasing toward green products and environmentally friendliness, probably due to the fact that females are generally more outgoing and hence more exposed to environmental concern than males in this age group.

**Green Products Purchased by Respondents:**

**Table 8: Green Products Purchased by Respondents**

What kind of green products have you purchased?	Frequency	Percentage
1. CFL tube	Not Selected	27
	Selected	21
2. Recyclable paper	Not Selected	29
	Selected	19
3. Stationery	Not Selected	26
	Selected	22
4. Energy saving electronics	Not Selected	35
	Selected	13
5. Disposable glasses	Not Selected	35
	Selected	13
6. Green tea	Not Selected	43
	Selected	5

Few respondents gave superfluous answers as if they are not aware what green products constitute. So, a deeper analysis tells that those who claim to be environment friendly are in fact superfluously considerate about green products. CFL tubes are the most preferable green products among respondents. Around 39% respondents claimed to buy recyclable products and approximately 45% respondents preferred to buy stationery as their green products. Apart from that there is lot of misconception among respondents regarding green products.

**Relation between Perception regarding green products across Demographic variables:**

**Table 9: Relation between Perception regarding green products across Demographic variables**

What is the main reason that makes you/makes you not willing to pay more for the “green” products?	Overall Mean	Std. Deviation	Gender		Age Group		Income Level	
			F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.
I think green product will help me to protect the environment. -	4.54	.683	.105	.747	2.754	<b>.054</b>	2.462	<b>.075</b>
I think it is of better quality than non-green products -	3.90	.857	.091	.764	1.160	.336	1.000	.402
I think green products make no difference than non-green products.	1.69	.903	1.447	.235	.230	.875	.548	.652
I think green products are too expensive as increased price doesn't add any benefit in it.	2.27	1.125	.001	.974	2.585	<b>.065</b>	.958	.421
I think the promotions of green products by the companies are superfluous.	2.96	1.010	.263	.611	.901	.448	.726	.542

The table shows that majority of respondents do believed that green products help them to protect the environment as they considered green product as environmentally friendly products and they also support that green products are of better quality than non-green products. But the respondents are neutral on the fact that promotion of green products by companies is just a publicity stunt. Moreover, respondent also have a misconception that green products are too expensive and it make no difference in comparison of non-green products.

Moreover, the F test across different demographic variable showed significant relationship between perception of respondent with age and income only meaning thereby that there is no difference in perception regarding green products were observed across different demographic variable except in case of income and age regarding price and environment protection respectively.

**Respondent’s ranking of factors considered in their purchases:**

**Table 10: Respondent’s ranking of factors considered in their purchases**

What factors do you consider while purchasing a product?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Rank
Price	.58	.498	.248	1
Product	.46	.504	.254	2
Promotion/Advertisement	.08	.279	.078	4
Product availability	.06	.245	.060	5
Personal Budget	.31	.468	.219	3

The data depicts that respondents ranked product availability as the fifth factor that they considered in their purchases. This implies that product need, price, personal preference and budget are considered before green marketing. Green marketers should make their products affordable to attract this segment. Being environment-friendly should not make the product more expensive versus other products in order to sell.

The Mann-Whitney U test also showed that there were no significant differences in the mean rank of factors considered in purchases between male and female respondents.

**Perception Regarding Green Product Prices as Compared to Non-Green Products:**

**Table 11: Perception Regarding Green Product Prices as Compared to Non-Green Products**

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>What do you think of prices of green products as compared to Non green products?</b>	<b>Higher</b>	27	56.3%
	<b>Lower</b>	6	12.5%
	<b>Same/Average</b>	12	25.0%
	<b>Don't Know</b>	3	6.3%

The data depicts that 56.3 percent respondents perceived the prices of green products as higher in comparison to other products and another nearly 6.3 percent respondents were unaware about price differentiation and surprisingly 12.5 percent respondent believed low price of green products in comparison of its benefits. But at the same time, only 25 percent respondents think that on an average price of green products and non-green products is almost same.

**Purchase of Green Products in Case of Same Price of Non Green Products:**

**Table 12: Purchase of Green Products in Case of Same Price of Non Green Products**

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Will you purchase green products if they have same price as compared to non-green products?</b>	<b>Always</b>	31	64.6%
	<b>Often</b>	16	33.3%
	<b>Seldom</b>	1	2.1%
	<b>Never</b>	0	0.0%

**Table 13: People’s Readiness to Pay More Prices for Green Products**

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>How much more price can you pay for Green products?</b>	1-20%	35	72.9%
	20-50%	11	22.9%
	50-70%	2	4.2%
	More than 70%	0	0.0%

The data presents that majority respondents, (64.6 percent always and 33.3 percent often), were ready to purchase green products if the prices were same. None of the respondents respond that they would never purchase the green products whether prices are same or different. Not only this, sizable no. of respondents were ready to pay higher prices. The careful reading table reveals that the respondents have the intention and desire to contribute towards safeguarding environment but they lack awareness as to how. So, if the students are willing to save the earth and contribute towards a greener world, this calls upon the role of marketers the spread the word of awareness. The results of the study consistent with the finding of Joshi (2011) that in green marketing consumers is willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries like India. Thus, there is a need to pressurize consumers, manufacturers and suppliers to minimize the negative effects on environment through green products.

**Green Product Purchase Intentions of Respondents and ANOVA Test across Demographic profiles:**

**Table 14: Green Product Purchase Intentions of Respondents and ANOVA Test across Demographic profiles**

<b>Why will you purchase green products?</b>	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age Groups</b>		<b>Income Level</b>	
				<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
I would like to buy environmentally friendly products because they are less polluting.	4.10	.857	.124	.002	.966	1.815	.158	.187	.904
I would like to buy them because these products are healthier, of better quality and safer than non-green products.	4.25	.812	.117	.299	.587	1.116	.353	.631	.599



I would like to buy green products even if they are more expensive than the non-green ones.	2.75	1.229	.177	.363	.550	.366	.778	.207	.891
I would like to green product as it gives me the pleasure of being environment friendly.	3.88	.703	.102	.011	.917	.412	.745	1.145	.342
I would like to buy green products as it gives me a positive attitude towards environment.	3.96	.967	.140	.006	.940	4.451	.008	2.093	.115

It presents the finding regarding purchase intention and their readiness to buy green products for various reasons. Majority respondents across all demographic categories are willing green products but not on a high price feel that buying green products is less polluting and healthier (4.25) and make them feel a sense of contribution towards environment protection (4.10 and 2.75). The results of one way ANOVA test did not confirm any difference regarding green products being healthier and less polluting, their willingness to buy even at a higher price and a feeling of contribution they get from buying green products across all demographic variables, gender, age and Income.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that though majority respondents claim to be aware of green products, but the awareness seems superficial and over-claimed. The deeper analysis reveals clearly that majority respondents, who claimed to be aware of green products, actually did not know as to what green products constitutes. When further questioned about the green products, CFL tubes are the most preferable green products among respondents. Around 39% respondents claimed to buy recyclable products and approximately 45% respondents preferred to buy green stationery products. Moreover, the respondents did not understand that buying green products also contributes towards environment protection.

The mean difference between males and females in terms of extent of awareness of green marketing is not significant. This implies that there is no correlation between gender and extent of green marketing awareness. Also, the statistical tests showed that the mean difference across income groups and the extent of awareness of green marketing was not statistically significant. This indicates that there is no correlation between income and extent of awareness of green marketing.

Respondents became aware of traditional media which included television, radio, etc (12.5%), Print media which includes newspapers and magazines (29.16%), new media consisting of internet and various social media sites (39.58%) and their social circles comprising of their parents, class teachers and friends (18.75%). Today, the impact of internet and various social media sites is overpowering the traditional and print media on the youngsters.

The F test across different demographic variable showed significant relationship between perception of respondent with age and income only and there was no significant difference in the perception regarding green products between male and female students.

Respondents ranked price as the first factor that they considered in their purchases. This implies to the marketer that being environment-friendly should not make the product more expensive versus other products in order to be competitive in the marketplace. Also, 56.3 percent respondents perceived the prices of green products as higher in comparison to other products and another nearly 6.3 percent respondents were unaware about price differentiation. Majority respondents across all demographic categories are willing green products but not on a high price feel that buying green products is less polluting and healthier and make them feel a sense of contribution towards environment protection.

The study also shows that people in general have lot of concern and strong desire to do something towards environment but they did not know how they can contribute. Hence marketers and Government cannot be individually held responsible but environmental protection agencies, media, must create awareness about green products as a mean to save the environment. Marketer should take initiative keeping in the mind that consumer are concerned and willing to do their bit towards environment protection. Marketers by satisfying this urge and desire of consumer towards environment through effective promotional strategies to educate them about green products, their usage and resultant impact on the environment protection will in long run help enhance their goodwill and building strong brand image in the eyes of consumers. Similarly the study points towards the need for an active role on the part of government and various

stakeholders in educating the consumers towards being a green consumer. The study's results imply that there is a bright future for green marketing.

## 6. LIMITATIONS

Due to time constraints, this study is limited to students learning in private college in Delhi region. The views received from the respondents cannot be fully generalized to represent all the students in Delhi. It should be noted that the awareness level of students belonging to higher level may differ from the participants of this research. Future studies investigate other public and private universities in various provinces of Delhi NCR to draw robust findings about the purchase intentions of students regarding the green products.

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