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Impact of Environmental Knowledge on Green Purchase Intention: Examining the Mediating Effect of Young Business Executives' Attitudes Towards Green Products in Developing Country Context

W. H. H. Cooray
Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
himayacooray98@gmail.com

S. S. J. Patabendige
Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
sugeeth@kln.ac.lk

U. J. Mirando
Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
mirandou@kln.ac.lk

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ABSTRACT

Green purchasing behavior, characterized by acquiring and consuming environmentally friendly products, has gained significant attention in recent years. However, scholars posit that transitioning to "going green" necessitates a fundamental shift in consumer behavior patterns. This study aims to enhance the understanding of green purchasing behaviour among young business executives (aged 24-39) in Sri Lanka's Western Province. It investigated the combined influence of environmental knowledge (both subjective and objective) and attitudes towards green products on green purchase intention. Specifically, the study examined the direct relationship between subjective and objective environmental knowledge with green purchase intention and the potential mediating effect of attitudes toward green products on this relationship. Employing a survey-based methodology, questionnaires were distributed through a convenient sampling technique to the target population within the Western Province. Data analysis utilized correlation and regression techniques via SPSS 26 software. The findings reveal that objective environmental knowledge exerts a greater influence on green purchasing decisions than subjective environmental knowledge. It is also found that more than environmental knowledge directly translating into green purchasing intention, it is the attitudes of the decision-makers toward the environment that act as a conduit. These

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findings, therefore, yielded valuable insights for marketers and others interested in promoting green consumption, empowering them to make informed decisions and develop effective strategies.

Keywords: *Environmental Knowledge, Subjective and Objective Environmental Knowledge, Attitude Towards Green Products, Green Purchase Intention*

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour studies constitute a critical component of understanding consumer decision-making, particularly when considering purchase intentions (Fatima, Akram, Abbas & Raza, 2022). Traditional consumer behaviour tends to prioritize individual expenses and benefits. In contrast, green consumer behaviour is more likely to emphasize long-term outcomes, such as a cleaner environment, which often benefits society as a whole (Chen & Hansen, 2019). Green consumer behaviour research highlights the distinct nature of its motivational landscape compared to traditional consumer behaviour. Whereas traditional consumer behavior focuses on individual gain, green consumer behavior prioritizes long-term, societal benefits (Chen & Hansen, 2019). The pursuit of environmental sustainability necessitates a fundamental shift in consumer behaviour patterns. This shift is often referred to as pro-environmental behaviour, environmental consciousness, or environmentally significant behaviour (Stults & Cody, 2023). These terms encompass consumer actions aligning with their environmental values, beliefs, and attitudes, as identified through various typologies. When compared to conventional consumer behaviour, the motivating factors driving green conduct differ significantly (Fatima et al., 2022; Stults & Cody, 2023). Recent studies by Vermeir & Verhoef (2023) examined this distinction more deeply, suggesting that green consumers are particularly motivated by a sense of moral obligation and a desire to contribute to a sustainable future.

Modern corporations and consumers are exhibiting a heightened awareness of the imperative to preserve natural resources. They increasingly recognize the direct influence their consumption and production patterns exert on the environment's

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ecological equilibrium (Van der Linden et al., 2017). Environmental protection stands as the cornerstone of the triple-bottom-line business model. However, within a market characterized by burgeoning environmental awareness, knowledge concerning environmental protection assumes additional significance (Stults & Cody, 2023). Beyond possessing a comprehensive understanding of general environmental issues, successful implementation of conscious environmental actions necessitates a sophisticated ability to integrate various facets of knowledge. This process of synthesising diverse knowledge elements has been termed "knowledge convergence" by Bogner, Kaiser, Kibbe & Lieflander (2015). Further, more recent studies by Stults & Cody (2023) suggested that knowledge convergence can be further enhanced by fostering transdisciplinary collaboration, which breaks down silos between different scientific disciplines to create a more holistic understanding of environmental issues.

Cultivating environmental knowledge is a crucial mechanism for fostering conservation behaviours (Bogner et al., 2015). It supplements established moral norms surrounding conservation and bolsters motivational drivers such as positive environmental attitudes (Van der Linden et al., 2017). When strategically combined with appropriate environmental actions, environmental knowledge empowers individuals to effectively address real-world, day-to-day environmental challenges (Bogner et al., 2015; Moser, 2021). A growing interest in green products is emerging among Sri Lankan consumers, who are willing to pay a premium for them (Herath, 2018). Further, studies such as Randiwela & Wanninayake (2008) provide some insights, they often focus on specific product categories such as Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). This trend is evident in the importance placed on packaging, which consumers identify as a key factor influencing purchasing decisions. However, despite this growing market for eco-friendly products, there is a lack of awareness about the factors that truly drive green purchasing behaviour in Sri Lanka. At the same time, environmental issues such as pollution and climate change are increasingly impacting Sri Lankan lives, marketing practices have not fully capitalized on green concerns as a competitive advantage (Wijewardhana, Dharshana & Jayasinghe, 2020). The scarcity of studies on green consumerism in Sri Lanka is

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further highlighted by the limited focus on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Further, there is a need for more comprehensive research that explores the broader landscape of green consumer behaviour in Sri Lanka.

Behavioural literature suggests a positive correlation between knowledge and pro-environmental actions (Evans & Schäfer, 2023). Further, there is an established association between environmental awareness and green consumer behaviour (Bamberg & Möser, 2019; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton, 2023; Samarasinghe & Samarasinghe, 2013). Consumers with greater knowledge of environmental issues may be more biased to make eco-friendly purchases (Bamberg & Möser, 2019; McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton, 2023). Further, the evaluation of environmental knowledge necessitates a comprehensive approach that considers both subjective knowledge, encompassing personal beliefs and values regarding environmental issues, and objective knowledge, which refers to the factual understanding of environmental problems (Evans & Schäfer, 2023). While a fundamental understanding of environmental issues is essential, the degree of knowledge and the capacity for critical analysis of environmental attitudes are also significant factors (van der Linden et al., 2017). Furthermore, willingness to buy environmentally friendly products can influence both environmental knowledge and attitudes towards green products (Evans & Schäfer, 2023). A study conducted by Rahyuda, Suryanto, Rahardjo & Setiawan (2015) specifically investigated the mediating role of attitude. Their findings demonstrated that environmental knowledge positively influences both attitudes toward green products and purchase intentions. Furthermore, the study revealed that attitude partially mediates the influence of knowledge on purchase intention. These findings suggested that while knowledge plays a role, attitudes play a crucial intermediary role in translating environmental knowledge into green purchasing behaviour. Further, understanding the direct impact of environmental knowledge on green purchasing. While past studies have explored the relationships between knowledge, attitudes, and purchase intentions, they do not focus on the mediating role of attitudes in young populations (Joshi & Rahman, 2016; Rahyuda et al., 2015). Therefore, this study attempted to

investigate the impact of environmental knowledge (Both subjective environmental knowledge & objective environmental knowledge) on green purchase intention while examining the mediating effect of attitudes towards green products with special reference to young business executives in the western province, of Sri Lanka.

This study investigates the impact of environmental knowledge (Both subjective and objective knowledge) on green purchasing behaviour while mediating the role of attitude towards green products. The study employs a survey-based method, distributing questionnaires through a convenient sampling technique to young business executives in the Western Province. Both subjective knowledge and objective knowledge are assessed. The data is then analyzed using correlation and regression techniques with the aid of SPSS 26 software to determine the relationships between environmental knowledge, attitudes towards green products, and green purchase intention. The findings of the study suggested that objective environmental knowledge may exert a greater influence on green purchasing decisions compared to subjective environmental knowledge. The study's findings also reveal that environmental knowledge does not directly translate into green purchasing intention. Instead, it indirectly shapes green purchasing intention by influencing an individual's environmental attitudes. By understanding the role of environmental knowledge and positive attitudes in driving green purchasing behaviour, interested parties, including marketers, can develop targeted strategies to promote environmentally responsible consumption practices and thereby contribute to a more sustainable future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Environmental Knowledge

A general understanding of the facts, ideas, and connections relating to the natural environment and its main ecosystems is known as environmental knowledge. It includes basic relationships about environmental elements or impacts, admiration for the entire organism, and a shared concern for ecological growth (McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton, 2023). Furthermore, it comprises public awareness about the environment.

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The premise that consumers' environmental awareness or eco-literacy is a key predictor of eco-friendly behaviour is supported empirically by several studies (Karunarathna, Abeysekara & Verma, 2017). Environmental knowledge encompasses a person's understanding of the environment, important connections and influences, the identification of the capacities of environmental systems, and the communal duties required for sustainable development. There are two primary methodologies used to examine people's environmental knowledge: objective knowledge and subjective knowledge (Bamberg & Möser, 2019).

Subjective environmental knowledge (perceived knowledge) refers to an individual's self-perception of their environmental knowledge. It's about how much and what one believes they know about "green" phenomena (Alagas, Rashid & Yusoff, 2020). The latest research by Evans & Schäfer (2023) suggested that subjective environmental knowledge can be influenced not only by personal experiences with nature and exposure to environmental information but also by an individual's level of environmental concern. Objective environmental knowledge (Actual knowledge refers to a person's level of real knowledge about a certain product or environmental issue. This information is founded on empirical evidence or practical behavioural knowledge (Alagas et al., 2019; Bamberg & Möser, 2019). The most recent studies by Bamberg & Möser (2019) highlight the importance of objective environmental knowledge not just in communication strategies, but also in fostering effective environmental education programs.

Most scales for measuring (environmental) knowledge have historically been created based solely on subjective (self-rated) or objective (actual) knowledge (Vicente et al., 2013). However, the most recent research by McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton (2023) suggested that a more holistic approach that integrates both objective and subjective aspects of environmental knowledge alongside behavioural intention can provide the most accurate picture of individual understanding and potential for action.

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2.2. Green Purchase Intention

The concept of purchase intention can be seen as a predictor of purchase. "Purchase intention" refers to the possibility that a person will buy a specific product based on how their requirements, attitudes, and perceptions of the brand or product interact (Beneke, Mohr, Russell & Loske, 2016). Further studies by Park & Kim (2020) suggested that purchase intention can also be influenced by factors like emotional responses and brand trust. Additionally, purchase intention can be viewed as a consumer's desire to purchase a specific good (Ariffin et al., 2018).

The world economy has been recognized as a fast-expanding phenomenon in the twenty-first century, which has also aggravated environmental degradation globally due to a tremendous burden on natural resources and energy consumption (Chen & Chai, 2010). This has forced society and commercial organizations to reevaluate and plan their usual patterns of production and consumption while preserving ecological sustainability (Alagas et al., 2020; Nkamnebe, 2011). There is a pressing need to change current consumer habits in favor of sustainability. This can be done by promoting the use of green products, which would then push the industry into sustainable manufacturing and production (Amoako, Ayeh, Atwere & Brunsø, 2021).

2.3. Attitudes Toward the Green Products

A person's response to all associated items or situations is influenced by their attitude (Chen & Chai, 2010). According to Lee et al., (2010), attitude refers to how one views the effects of one's actions. While attitude is a strong predictor of behavioural intention (Chen, Chen & Tung, 2018; Kotchen & Reiling, 2000), recent studies suggested it was not the only factor. Additional considerations include perceived behavioural control (belief in one's ability to perform the behaviour) and subjective norms (perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour) (Ajzen, 1991).

An attitude encompasses the evaluation of an action, including whether it's considered good or bad and if the individual desires to engage in it (Bonacum et al., 2004; Chen, Li & Choi, 2021). In the context of green products and services, studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between environmental attitudes and purchase intention for these offerings (Huang, Liu & Ma, 2013). Consumers with a strong environmental consciousness are more likely to seek out and purchase environmentally friendly goods and services (Modi et al., 2016). Furthermore, recent studies by Chen et al., (2021) suggested that positive attitudes towards environmentally friendly products not only influence purchase intention but can also lead to positive word-of-mouth communication, further promoting sustainable consumption behaviors.

3. HYPOTHESES

3.1. Environmental Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention

Several studies have been conducted to determine the impact of environmental knowledge on the intention to make green purchases (Bamberg & Möser, 2019; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton, 2023). Further, environmental knowledge and the intention to make green purchases are positively correlated (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Although researchers did not specify the kind of green products, they observed a direct relationship between environmental knowledge and green purchase intention. The influence of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention, however, appears to be multifaceted. While some studies, such as the one by Filho et al. (2009), suggested it may have a weaker influence compared to other factors, others indicate a more significant impact. Recent research by Bamberg & Möser (2019) suggested that the depth and breadth of environmental knowledge can influence purchase intention. Furthermore, McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton (2023) proposed that integrating environmental knowledge with behavioural intention within a broader framework that considers factors such as perceived behavioural control can

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provide a more accurate picture of the relationship between knowledge and green purchasing behaviour. Based on the above findings, H1 is suggested as follows:

H1: There is a positive impact of environmental knowledge on intention to green purchase intention.

3.2. Subjective Environmental Knowledge, Objective Environmental Knowledge, and Green Purchase Intention

Recent studies suggested a more nuanced perspective. Further, studies by McKenzie-Mohr, & Harris (2015) advocated for a holistic approach that integrates both subjective and objective aspects of environmental knowledge. This approach can provide a more accurate picture of an individual's understanding. Furthermore, research by Evans & Schäfer (2023) suggested that subjective environmental knowledge can be influenced not only by personal experiences with nature and exposure to environmental information but also by an individual's level of environmental concern. The impact of both subjective and objective knowledge on pro-environmental behaviour is well-documented. A study by Vicente et al., (2013) found that consumers with strong pro-environmental attitudes and intentions exhibited higher levels of both subjective and objective environmental knowledge. Similarly, research by Chen, Chen & Tung (2018) suggested that objective knowledge positively influences consumers' intentions to purchase green products. Subjective knowledge also plays a significant role, with a strong correlation between subjective environmental knowledge and behaviors such as recycling, using public transportation, and making eco-friendly purchases (Alagas et al., 2020; Vicente et al., 2013). Based on the above findings, H1a and H1b are suggested as follows

H1a: There is an impact of subjective environmental knowledge on green purchase intention

H1b: There is an impact of objective environmental knowledge on green purchase intention

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3.3. Environmental Knowledge and Attitude Towards Green Products

Consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly items have been greatly influenced by environmental knowledge. Consumer knowledge of environmental issues has a significant impact on their attitudes toward adopting more environmentally friendly behaviours (Evans & Schäfer, 2023; Mostafa, 2007). Previous studies have revealed that attitude significantly affects consumers' intentions to make purchases (Chen & Chang, 2016). In the relationship between environmental knowledge and intentions to make green purchases, attitudes about green items have been successful in playing a mediating role. However, recent research suggested that there is a more complex interplay between these factors. While environmental knowledge is crucial, depth of knowledge and the ability to critically evaluate environmental information can also play a role (Van der Linden et al., 2017). Furthermore, environmental concerns can influence both environmental knowledge and attitudes towards green products (Evans & Schäfer, 2023). Based on the above findings, H2 is suggested as follows:

H2: There is an impact of environmental knowledge on attitude towards green products

3.4. Attitudes Towards Green Products and Green Purchase Intention

In the domain of green products, attitudes and behavioural intentions are positively correlated across different cultures (Mostafa, 2007; Vermeir & Verhoef, 2023). This positive correlation between environmental attitudes and purchase intention for green products and services remains consistent (Huang et al., 2013). Studies across various product categories support this relationship. For instance, consumers with a favourable attitude toward protecting the environment are more likely to choose eco-friendly beverage packaging (Barber et al., 2010; Birgelen, Sezen & Tatoglu, 2008; Evans & Schäfer, 2023). Similarly, studies on green hotels (Hana & Kim, 2010) and organic food (Dean, Ibanez & Lutzenberger, 2011) demonstrated the positive influence of environmental attitudes on purchase intention.

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Environmental attitude, defined as a collection of positive or negative sentiments towards various aspects of environmental preservation (Alagas et al., 2023) is a key factor influencing willingness to pay a premium for green products (Buncha, Nookeaw & Pianwong, 2006). This suggested that consumers with strong pro-environmental mindsets are less likely to view price as a significant barrier to purchasing green products. Ultimately, positive environmental attitudes that translate into green consumption behavior are crucial for reducing environmental degradation (Chen et al., 2018). Recent research by Vermeir & Verhoef (2023) suggested that alongside environmental attitudes, moral obligations and a desire to contribute to a sustainable future also play a significant role in driving green consumer behaviour. Based on the above findings, H3 is suggested as follows:

H3: There is a positive impact of attitude toward green products on green purchase intention.

3.5. Mediating Role of Attitudes Towards Green Products

Consumer attitudes toward green products are now significantly influenced by knowledge and awareness of environmental protection. According to the study conducted by Mostafa (2007), consumer awareness of environmental issues is a key component in influencing attitudes toward being more ecologically friendly. However, recent studies suggested that a more nuanced understanding. While awareness is important, the depth of environmental knowledge also plays a role. Studies by Van der Linden et al., (2017) suggested that exposure to extreme weather events and a deeper understanding of climate change can significantly influence environmental attitudes. According to earlier studies, attitudes significantly affect consumers' intentions to make purchases (Chang & Chen, 2016). This positive correlation between environmental attitudes and purchase intention remains robust (Huang et al., 2013). However, recent research by Vermeir & Verhoef (2023) suggested that alongside environmental attitudes, moral obligations and a desire to contribute to a sustainable future also play a significant role in driving green consumer behaviour. Based on the above findings, H4 is suggested as follows:

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H4: Attitude towards green products mediates the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention.

The conceptual framework developed in this study is presented below (Refer to Figure 1). Environmental knowledge serves as the independent variable (IV) in this model, with green purchase intention designated as the dependent variable (DV). The attitude towards green products acts as the mediating variable.

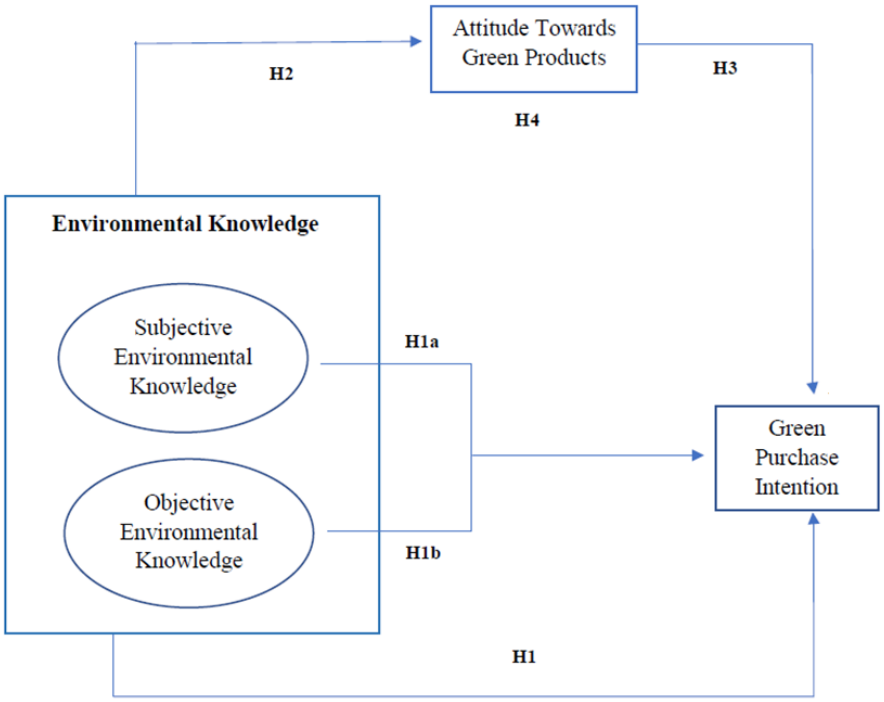

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

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4. METHODOLOGY

This study belonged to a positivist philosophy. Explanatory studies following the deductive research approach were fitted. Then, this study aims to examine the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention while mediating the impact of attitudes toward green products. Young business executives between the ages of 24 and 39 in the western province of Sri Lanka were the study population. In selecting a suitable sampling technique, there was no population framework because it was exclusive to find the exact list of young business executives between the ages of 24 and 39 in the western province of Sri Lanka. Consequently, a non-probability sampling technique was used. Based on that, the convenience sampling technique was adopted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Subsequently, considering the sample size, according to the Krejcie and Morgan table, when the population is unknown, the sample size would be 384 (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019; Krejcie and Morgan, 1970; Saunders et al., 2019).

The study employed an approach that utilized both primary and secondary data sources. However, the primary focus was on gathering primary data through a structured questionnaire. Demographic profiles, environmental knowledge (Both subjective knowledge and objective knowledge), green purchase intention, and attitude were the four sections of the structured questionnaire. The items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The unit of analysis of this study was young business executives between the ages of 24 and 39 in the western province of Sri Lanka. The questionnaire was distributed through an online method to identify individuals. After two weeks, a reminder was instituted for all senders who received the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was distributed within a specific period, this study belonged to a cross-sectional method. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software 26 version was used for analyzing the collected data.

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5. RESULTS

5.1. Sample Profile

The sample consists of 397 respondents and among them 42.2% of respondents were female and the rest 57.8% were male. Most of the respondents are unmarried, and it reported as 62.9% of the sample and 37.1% of the respondents are married. Regarding the income level of respondents, categories of less than Rs. 30,000 per month, from Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 70,000 per month, from Rs. 70,001 to Rs. 110,000 per month, from Rs. 110,001 to Rs. 150,000 per month, from Rs. 150,001 to Rs. 200,000 per month, higher than Rs. 201,000 were considered. All the respondents generally fall into the categories mentioned above equally on average. The study was conducted within Sri Lanka's Western Province, which encompasses the districts of Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara. Participation came from all three districts, with 39.1% from Colombo, 28.7% from Gampaha, and 32.2% from Kalutara. A summary of this information is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	168	42.2
Female	229	57.8
Marital Status		
Married	147	37.1
Unmarried	250	62.9
Income Level		
Less than Rs. 30,000	62	15.6
Rs. 30,001 - Rs. 70,000	64	16.1
Rs. 70,001 - Rs. 110,000	68	17.2
Rs. 110,001 - Rs. 150,000	66	16.5
Rs. 150,001 - Rs. 200,000	63	15.8
More than Rs. 200,001	74	18.8
Living District		
Colombo	155	39.1
Gampaha	114	28.7
Kalutara	128	32.2

Upon data collection, a rigorous data-cleaning process was undertaken. The initial stage commenced with a missing value analysis employing Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test. Subsequently, identified missing values were imputed using Expectation Maximization (EM) techniques. Thereafter, outlier detection was conducted utilizing box plots, and any outliers identified were excluded from the dataset. Following the implementation of these cleaning procedures, a total of 384 questionnaires were determined to be suitable for further analysis.

5.2. Hypotheses Testing

First, a normality test was undertaken to assess the dataset's suitability. Normality can be defined as the shape of the collected data distribution concerning a specific variable and the correspondence of that variable to the normal distribution (Hair et al., 2018). If measures of skewness and kurtosis lie between positive two and negative two, it indicates that distributions are normal (Field, 2015; Hair et al., 2018). Consequently, the normality of each variable was confirmed. The aforementioned values are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2
Skewness & Kurtosis Values for Study Variables

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Environmental knowledge	-0.452	0.795
Subjective environmental knowledge	-0.542	0.785
Objective environmental knowledge	-0.173	0.089
Green purchase intention	-0.289	0.878
Attitude toward green product	-0.507	-0.976

Next, reliability was explored. Reliability, in this context, refers to the degree to which a study's measures consistently capture the underlying constructs they are intended to represent (Hair et al., 2018). Values of Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.6 generally indicate acceptable consistency (Bougie & Sekaran, 2014). Subsequently, the reliability of all variables was satisfied. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of these values (Table 3).

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Table 3
Cronbach's Alpha Values for Study Variables

Variables	Cronbach's alpha
Environmental knowledge	0.821
Subjective environmental knowledge	0.857
Objective environmental knowledge	0.831
Green purchase intention	0.808
Attitude toward green product	0.840

Consequently, validity can be defined as the degree to which a measure or set of measures presents the study concept appropriately (Hair et al., 2018). The study ensured the validity by applying two tests: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Field, 2015). According to recommended benchmarks, an acceptable KMO value should exceed 0.5, while Bartlett's test of sphericity should yield a statistically significant result ($p < 0.05$), indicating a lack of sphericity (Hair et al., 2018). Table 4 demonstrates that the validity of each variable was fulfilled.

Table 4
Results of Validity for Study Variables

Variables	KMO Measures	Bartlett Measures
Environmental knowledge	0.789	0.000
Subjective environmental knowledge	0.728	0.000
Objective environmental knowledge	0.823	0.000
Green purchase intention	0.873	0.000
Attitude toward green product	0.863	0.000

Finaly, by using the multiple regression analysis, hypotheses were tested. Results of the hypotheses are presented within the tables of 5. Based on the aforementioned table, environmental knowledge impacts the intention to green purchase intention positively. Furthermore, subjective environmental knowledge and objective environmental knowledge impact green purchase intention as well. And attitude toward green products impacts green purchase intention positively.

Table 5
Results of the Hypotheses Testing on Direct Paths

Hypotheses	β	P	Result on Hypotheses
H1: There is a positive impact of environmental knowledge on intention to green purchase intention	0.57	0.000	Supported
H1a: There is an impact of subjective environmental knowledge on green purchase intention	0.44	0.000	Supported
H1b: There is an impact of objective environmental knowledge on green purchase intention	0.53	0.000	Supported
H2: There is an impact of environmental knowledge on attitude towards green products	0.64	0.000	Supported
H3: There is an positive impact of attitude toward green products on green purchase intention	0.84	0.000	Supported

The Andrew F. Hayes process method was used for testing mediation. Results are presented in Table 6. Then, the below-mentioned table indicates that attitude towards green products mediates the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention.

Table 6
Results of the Hypotheses Testing on Indirect Path

Hypotheses	Result on Mediation	Result on Hypotheses
H4: Attitude towards green products mediates the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention	Significant	Significant

6. DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION, & CONCLUSION

6.1. Discussion

Studies (e.g., Bamberg & Möser, 2019; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; McKenzie-Mohr & Lockton, 2023) have suggested that environmental knowledge impacts green purchase intention positively. While the findings of the present study largely confirm those of past studies, we find that both subjective environmental knowledge and objective environmental knowledge impact green purchase intention. Moreover, our findings suggest that objective environmental knowledge, such as knowledge of

particular products or environmental issues, can play a greater role in green purchase intention than subjective environmental knowledge. These findings thus suggest that green purchasing decisions are not only based on personal judgments but have more to do with objective verification based on available facts. Furthermore, past studies, including Chen & Chang (2016), Evans & Schäfer (2023), & Van der Linden et al. (2017), reveal that environmental knowledge impacts attitudes towards green products and that attitudes toward green products impact green purchase intention (Alagas et al., 2023; Evans & Schäfer, 2023; Huang et al., 2013; Vermeir, & Verhoef, 2023). Our findings confirm this mediating relationship between environmental knowledge, attitudes towards green products and green purchase intention. In other words, we find that environmental knowledge may not directly translate into green purchase intention. Instead, attitudes appear to play an intervening role, facilitating the association between environmental knowledge and green purchasing intention.

6.2. Contribution

The concept of sustainable consumption has gained momentum in recent times with a growing market for green products. Marketers are increasingly targeting consumers who actively seek environmentally friendly options. However, motivations for green purchasing behaviour vary considerably. While environmental awareness and responsibility are influential factors (Karunarathna et al., 2017), individual consumption patterns play a significant role. This study highlights the importance of environmental knowledge as a key driver of environmentally conscious behaviour. Knowledge empowers individuals to address real-world environmental challenges through informed actions. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for knowledge convergence, the ability to integrate various environmental knowledge aspects. This convergence is crucial for promoting effective environmental conservation practices. However, a concerning trend of limited environmental knowledge is observed, particularly among younger generations. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights for marketers and entrepreneurs wishing to understand consumer motivations behind green product purchases. This knowledge can be used to develop more

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effective marketing strategies and product offerings that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers. The study also helps in positioning green products more successfully and appealingly to target audiences. In developing marketing strategies and positioning green products, the prioritization of enhancing objective environmental knowledge over subjective knowledge is more important. This strategic focus stems from the understanding that a strong foundation in factual information is more likely to cultivate positive environmental attitudes, ultimately leading to increased green purchasing behaviour.

Empirically, the research confirms a positive and significant relationship between environmental knowledge and green product purchase intention. And, both subjective (personal perception) and objective (factual knowledge) environmental knowledge influence green purchase intention. Specially, this study demonstrates that both types of knowledge play a significant role. However objective environmental knowledge may exert a greater influence on green purchasing intention compared to subjective environmental knowledge. Furthermore, environmental knowledge appears to impact purchasing decisions not just directly, but also through shaping how positively these young executives view green products. In simpler terms, greater knowledge fuels more positive attitudes towards these products, and these positive attitudes, in turn, translate into a stronger intention to actually buy them.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Firstly, the study's geographic scope is confined to Sri Lanka's Western Province, the smallest region in the country. This restricts the sample population and may not accurately represent consumer behaviour across the entire nation. The results may deviate from those obtained in a nationwide study. Secondly, the research employs online surveys, a method susceptible to well-documented limitations. The accuracy of prior survey data, including demographics, remains a concern. Additionally, online surveys potentially limit the sample to individuals comfortable with internet platforms. Therefore, more qualitative aspects will be tested in the future. Thirdly, the sample size of 384 young business executives aged 24-39 residing in the Western

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Province is relatively small. This restricts the ability to capture the full spectrum of consumer behaviour. A larger sample size would facilitate a more normal distribution of data, enhancing the reliability of the results. Fourthly, the current study is limited in the exploration of these variables, which hinders comprehensive understanding. Fourthly, the study focuses solely on environmental knowledge and green consumer behaviour as its variables. This restricts the ability to draw definitive conclusions about Sri Lanka as a whole. Consequently, other controlling variables and their impact will be tested in the future.

6.4. Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchasing behaviour among young business executives in Sri Lanka's Western Province while mediating the role of attitude towards green products. The research found that objective environmental knowledge may influence green purchasing decisions more than subjective environmental knowledge. Moreover, environmental knowledge does not directly translate into green purchasing intention. Instead, it indirectly shapes green purchasing intention by influencing an individual's environmental attitudes. However, this suggests that environmental knowledge fosters positive perceptions of green products, which, in turn, strengthens the likelihood of choosing them. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, businesses, and environmental organisations. By recognising the importance of environmental knowledge and fostering positive attitudes towards green products, these stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to promote environmentally responsible consumption practices among young professionals, a demographic with significant buying power, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable future.

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