

Perception of Millennials towards Eco-Friendly Products in Kathmandu Valley

Pratigya Sedhai*¹
Sohan Babu Khatri²

*Correspondence author

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the effect of various influencing factors on the perception of millennials towards eco-friendly products in Kathmandu Valley. The study is quantitative and descriptive and conducted using primary sources of data. It has adopted the mono-method, whereby survey and statement type questions have been used to analyse quantitative data. A non-probabilistic sampling technique has been used in this research with a sample size of 384. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA test, correlation analysis, reliability testing, and regression analysis. The influencing variables considered are interest in the protection of the environment, reusability, consumer Greendex/ green attitude, concern for health, subjective norms and social influence, trust in green product, perceived quality of green product and environmental advertising. The results show that there is a positive correlation between all the influencing factors and millennials' perception towards eco-friendly products. Environmental advertising has created the highest impact on the millennials' perception by analysing the beta coefficient. Overall, the finding suggests that the concerned authorities, policymakers, producers/manufacturers and marketers of eco-friendly products should focus more on promoting the products using environmental claims, attributes, structures, rules, and tactics so that millennials' perception towards green purchase can be positively influenced.

¹Ms. Sedhai is an MBA graduate from the Ace Institute of Management. She can be reached at pratigya1sedhai@gmail.com

²Mr. Khatri is faculty member at Ace Institute of Management. His email ID is sohan.khatri@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Modern consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental degradation and the negative impact that their consumption of products and services can have on nature. They prioritise the safeguarding of the environment. The concern may be a response to noticeable changes in climate, the persistent challenge of global warming, and the mounting issues related to air and water pollution. Bray et al. (2011) found in their research that despite environmental concerns and a generally positive customer attitude towards sustainability and green products, only 1 to 3% of the entire market (China) was influenced by the market share of green products. Schmeltz (2012) found that environmental issues are better known by millennials and are more concerned about saving the planet. Kanchanapibul (2014) depicted that millennials and the world of ecology have a good relationship.

UN (2014) reported that the youth demographic constitutes 52.9% of the population in Kathmandu Valley. Consequently, the actions of millennials can significantly impact the overall environment, given their substantial representation in the population. Fischer et al. (2017) identified that there is a greater propensity for millennials to engage in sustainable buying than other generations. Bonera et al. (2020) found that the sustainable environmental problem was at its maximum expansion level precisely at the time of the birth of

the millennial generation, which led to increased pro-sustainability propaganda from infancy resulting in millennials being more likely to possess a green conscience.

COP 26 (2021) detailed that the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP26) was held in Glasgow, UK, bringing together leaders from around the world to address crucial global warming issues. The Kathmandu Post (2022) reported that 20.8% of Nepal's populace is aged between 16 and 25, with an additional 40.68 % falling into the 16-40 age range as per Nepal's National Youth Policy. This shows that the majority of people in Nepal are millennials having the highest proportion of the youth population in the Kathmandu district. Though the concern for environmental protection is rising globally, the consumption of green products in Nepal has not been satisfactory. Sharma (2023) reported the significant transition of Nepali households from cultivating and consuming healthy, organic foods to the prevalent trend of consuming convenient ready-to-eat meals, a shift that commenced in the 20th century and has intensified in the 21st century. Millennials' interest in fast food products and less costly items has been increasing rather than in green products in Nepal. This research has been conducted to evaluate the factors that influence the buying behaviour of millennials in Kathmandu Valley so that the findings could be used to assist practitioners, policy makers, producers/manufacturers, academic researchers

and marketers of eco-friendly products in determining what influences consumer perception regarding eco-friendly products. Moreover, the dynamic landscape of technology and fierce competition in virtually every business sector are compelling companies to bolster their marketing efforts. This is crucial for fostering and sustaining customer relationships through the development and promotion of eco-friendly products and services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following relevant literature studies were reviewed while designing the conceptual framework and research methodology.

Interest in the Protection of the Environment and Nature

According to Berger (2010), the success of manufacturing is influenced by consumers' concern for environmental protection and nature. Manufacturers aligning themselves with environmental causes recovered more rapidly from the recession compared to traditional producers who did not. Choi (2012) indicated that 90% of American consumers, influenced by heightened global interest, consider the environmental impact of their purchases and are willing to alter their buying behaviour to safeguard the environment. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H1 : There is a significant relationship between interest in the protection of the environment and millennials' perception.

Reusability

Sheik (2015) found that electronic waste generated by U.S. consumers exceeded 3.19 million tons, including devices like televisions, phones, video cameras, and computers. A mere 13.6%, equivalent to 430,000 tons, had been appropriately discarded and recycled within the US. The massive amount of improperly disposed e-waste has increased the toxicity in the air to dangerous levels, prompting researchers to investigate methods for mitigating its adverse effects. Lavanya (2019) reported that Indian consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of eco-friendly and sustainable practices. Energy-saving products at 86% followed by the use of recyclable products at 44%, have been found in the survey of Indian purchasers in terms of ecological and sustainability aspects. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H2 : There is a significant relationship between reusability and millennials' perception.

Consumer Greendex/Green Attitude

Cherian and Jacob (2012) reported that consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle have changed. People are currently making conscious efforts to reduce their impact on nature. Coskun (2017) defined the consumer Greendex as the attitude of consumers towards the environment, and the attitude towards pro-environmental behaviour. Lavanya (2019) illustrated the green attitude of consumers, identified as the "Consumer Greendex" by the National Geographic Society and Globescan in 2017. The research revealed that India, Brazil,

and China ranked highest in terms of consumer green attitudes. Countries with advanced industrialisation, including the USA and Russia, exhibited poor attitudes in that study. Ghimire (2020) found that individuals with a positive attitude toward environmental protection tend to show a positive correlation with Green Purchase Intention (GPI). Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H3 : There is a significant relationship between consumer Greendex/ green attitude and millennials perception.

Concern for Health

Sehrawat and Rana (2014) found that 84% of consumers buy environmentally friendly products from time to time, driving the widespread market interest in clothing made from organically grown fibres, as well as organically produced foods. This trend extends to cold-water and ultra-concentrated detergents, personal care items, and pet care products, natural cleaning products, air and water filtration devices, portable bottled water containers, low-VOC paints, biological pesticides and fertilisers. Carfora et al. (2019) reported that more and more consumers are increasing their consumption of organic products for the sake of their health. Rajagopalan (2016) reported that consumers are more concerned about food safety and health-conscious habits, and many customers are ready to pay higher price for eco-friendly products. Zhang and Dong (2020) found that the products that are relatively polluting to the environment or harmful to human health are abandoned

by many companies and replaced to environmental protection products. Xu et al. (2020) reported that health consciousness has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward green furniture in the survey of 460 respondents in China. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H4 : There is a significant relationship between concern for health and millennials' perception.

Subjective Norms/ Social Influence

Anam (2014) found that attitude is significantly impacted by social influence. The study highlights that the social influence shapes the purchase intention for Android smartphones. Ham et al. (2015) reported that subjective norms emerge by the perceived social pressure from other people for a person to act in a certain manner and their initiation to comply with those people's opinions. Gass (2015) defined social influence as it includes the changing of another person's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour through intentional and unintentional efforts. The study conducted by Joshi and Rahman (2015) indicates a positive association between consumer green purchase behaviour and subjective or social norms, along with reference groups. Similarly, the research by Kian et al. (2017) establishes a noteworthy positive impact of social influence on the intention to purchase from social media websites. Antari and Pangaribuan (2021) demonstrated a significant correlation between the variables of environmental knowledge, personal beliefs, and social influence and the customer's attitudes

toward purchasing reusable shopping bags in Bali. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H5 : There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and social influence and millennials' perception.

Trust in green product

Ganesan (1994) found that the degree of confidence was specified as a will, based on the trustworthiness given. Chen and Chang (2013) reported that consumers' inclination to rely on branded products or services stems from their faith in environmental integrity, benevolence, ability, and green beliefs. Additionally, Cheung et al. (2015) demonstrated a connection between green perceived value and the intention to make environmentally friendly purchases, with green trust serving as a mediator in predicting green purchasing behaviour. The study findings suggested that green product adoption is driven by factors such as the green perceived value, perceived quality, and green trust. Tang et al. (2022) reported that trust is a means of accepting the susceptibility of others' actions and intentions to the affirmative conclusion. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H6 : There is a significant relationship between trust in green products and millennials' perception.

Perceived Quality of Green Product

Rajaratnam et al. (2014) found that customer satisfaction has been positively affected by the perceived green quality in the hospitality and

tourism literature. Vuong and Nguyen (2018) well established a direct correlation between perceived quality and millennials' behavioral intention in their study conducted in Vietnam. Thapa (2019) reported that green products are believed as high quality over conventional products by the consumers, but no precise opinions were given about the green products' excessive prices. Ahn and Kwon (2020) found that there is higher revisit intention of green consumers due to higher perceived green quality. Wasaya et al. (2021) have affirmed that the effectiveness of green perceived quality stimulates positive responses from customers and enhances purchase intentions through a survey involving 306 respondents evaluating energy-saving products in southern Punjab, Pakistan. Riva et al. (2022) discovered that the likelihood of restaurant customers revisiting is influenced by green consumerism and green perceived value. The impact of these factors is further moderated by green perceived quality. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H7 : There is a significant relationship between the perceived quality of green products and millennials' perception.

Environmental Advertising

Anggraeni and Islamy (2021) showed the green advertising variables' impact on purchase intentions of green family businesses in Indonesia. A marketing approach which promotes the benefits of the environment based upon consumer outlook is called green advertising. Claim

believability, relevance, advertisement information, and attitudes toward commercials are the elements of green advertising and which are thought to influence purchase intention of green product. There is a significant effect of all the factors on purchase intention of green family businesses in Indonesia. According to the study, the promotional content should be organised by green family businesses for sustaining and strengthening the credibility of the promises. Thus, the hypothesis statement states that:

H8 : There is a significant relationship between environmental advertising of green products and millennials' perception.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is quantitative and descriptive and has been conducted using the primary sources of data collected through survey via structured questionnaire and convenient sampling method among 384

respondents within Kathmandu Valley, who fall into the category of millennials (born after 1981 AD). The respondents were asked to rate their scale of agreement/ disagreement on the Likert scale of 1-5 for collecting the data of the variables in which 1 denoted 'strongly disagree', 2 denoted 'disagree', 3 denoted 'neutral', 4 denoted 'agree' and 5 denoted 'strongly agree.' SPSS was used to arrange and analyse the data followed by data processing using different statistical and mathematical tools including descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA test, reliability testing, Pearson correlation matrix, and linear regression. Regression analysis was done using the following formula:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8$$

Where,

Y = Millennials' perception toward eco-friendly product

X1 = Interest in the protection of environment

X2 = Reusability

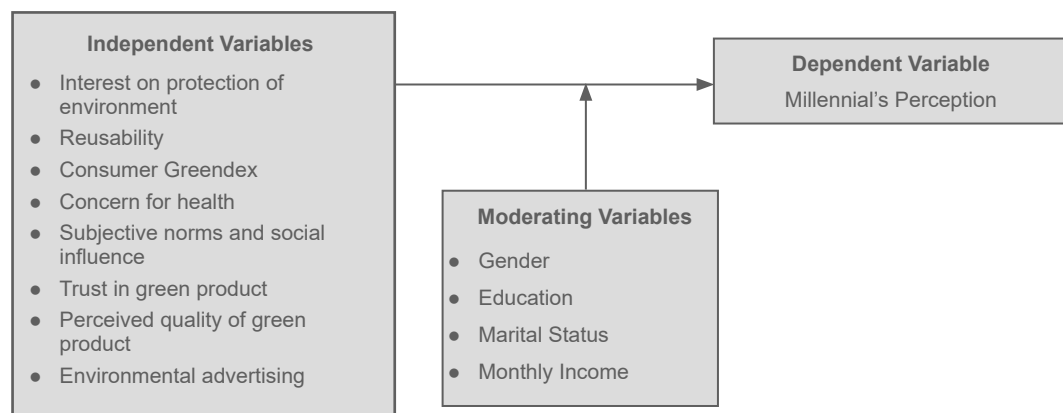


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Table 1
Coefficient of Cronbach’s Alpha

Variables	Cronbach’s alpha	Remarks
Interest in the protection of environment and nature	0.839	Reliable
Reusability	0.729	Reliable
Consumer Greedex/Green Attitude	0.762	Reliable
Concern for health	0.782	Reliable
Subjective norms and social influence	0.831	Reliable
Trust in green product	0.796	Reliable
Perceived quality on green product	0.854	Reliable
Environmental advertising	0.853	Reliable
Overall perception	0.899	Reliable

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

X3 = Consumer Greendex/ Green Attitude

X4 = Concern for health

X5 = Subjective norms and social influence

X6 = Trust in green product

X7 = Perceived quality on green product

X8 = Environmental advertising

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework which depicts the relationship between various influencing factors (independent variables) and millennials’ perception towards eco-friendly products (dependent variable).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach alphas were determined to check the reliability and validity of each item under the variables which have been shown in Table 1. The test showed

that all the variables are reliable and valid as all of them have a greater value of Cronbach’s alphas than 0.6.

Respondent Profile

Table 2 shows the respondents’ profile that reveals the general characteristics of respondents based on different personal characteristics such as gender, income level, occupation, marital status etc. Among the respondents, 47.4% were male and 52.6% were female. Similarly, most respondents were job holders with 27.9% and the participants of businessmen are comparatively lower with 20.8%. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents belonged to millennials earning per month between NPR 20,000 - NPR 35,000 with 29.4% followed by earning less than NPR 20,000 with 26.8%. The participants earning per month above NPR 50,000 were comparatively lower with 20.7%. As per their marital status, 50.8% were single and 49.2% were married.

Table 2
Respondent Profile

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	182	47.4
Female	202	52.6
Occupation		
Student	103	26.8
Businessman	80	20.8
Job holder	107	27.9
Housewife	94	24.5
Monthly income		
Less than 20000	103	26.8
20000-35000	113	29.4
35000-50000	91	23.7
Above 50000	77	20.7
Marital Status		
Single	195	50.8
Married	189	49.2
Total	384	100

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 depicts the average score (mean) for all the variables that are more than 3, which shows that most of the respondents buy eco-friendly products.

Analysis of Millennials' Perception Based on Gender and Marital Status

Table 4 shows that males have higher positive perception than females towards eco-friendly products. Independent sample t-test ($\alpha = 0.05$) was performed to compare the mean between males and females. It was found that there is no significant difference in overall millennials' perception among male and female respondents

of Kathmandu Valley. Table 5 illustrates that married perceives higher positive perceptions than single towards eco-friendly products. Independent sample t-test ($\alpha = 0.05$) was performed to compare the mean between single and married millennials. The result concluded that there is a significant difference in overall millennials' perception among single and married millennials of Kathmandu Valley.

Analysis of Millennials' Perception Based on Occupation and Income Level

Table 6 depicts the average value of millennials perception towards eco-friendly products among

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis All Independent and Dependent Variables

Particulars	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Interest in the protection of the environment	2.33	5	4.2891	0.60032
Reusability	3	5	4.2083	0.55819
Consumer Greendex	2.67	5	3.9887	0.61046
Concern for health	3	5	4.2700	0.56673
Subjective norms and social influence	2.67	5	4.1146	0.71630
Trust in green product	2.33	5	3.8099	0.78573
Perceived quality of green product	2.33	4.67	3.8472	0.76539
Environmental advertising	2.33	4.67	3.8220	0.71609
Overall Perception	2.5	5	4.0990	0.65385

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 4
Analysis of Overall Perception Based on Gender

Dependent variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Overall millennials' perception	Male	182	4.1291	0.63601	0.858	0.392
	Female	202	4.0718	0.66993		

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 5
Analysis of Overall Perception Based on Marital Status

Dependent variable	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Overall millennials' perception	Single	195	3.9410	0.73243	4.953	0.000
	Married	189	4.2619	0.51460		

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

students, businessmen, job holders and housewives. The mean value of millennials perception with standard deviation depicts that the

millennials' perception towards eco-friendly product is high for housewives

and businessmen than job holders and students. Similarly, the corresponding F-value and p-value are 20.317 and 0.000 respectively. The result shows that there is a significant difference between the occupation and millennials' perception towards eco-friendly products (p-value < 0.05)

Table 6
One-Way ANOVA Test between Occupation and Millennials Perception

Statement	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	Sig.
Millennials' perception	Student	103	3.6990	0.82349	20.317	0.000
	Businessman	80	4.2563	0.31816		
	Job holder	107	4.2196	0.43534		
	Housewife	94	4.2660	0.68667		
	Total	384	4.0990	0.65385		

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 7
One-Way ANOVA Test of Income Level and Millennials Perception

Income level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	P-value
Less than 20000	103	3.6990	0.82349	20.254	0.000
20000-35000	113	4.2301	0.65817		
35000-50000	91	4.2473	0.41749		
Above 50000	77	4.2662	0.32020		
Total	384	4.0990	0.65385		

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 8
Regression Analysis of Variables

	Beta	t-value	p-value	VIF
(Constant)	-0.397	-2.758	0.006	
Interest on protection of nature	-0.103	-2.825	0.005	3.130
Reusability	0.043	1.138	0.256	2.916
Consumer Greendex	0.314	13.293	0.000	1.374
Concern for health	-0.193	-6.901	0.000	1.661
Subjective norms & social influence	0.228	10.051	0.000	1.744
Trust in green product	0.116	5.617	0.000	1.749
Perceived quality of green product	0.134	6.128	0.000	1.861
Environmental advertising	0.635	25.943	0.000	2.025
R Square	0.867			
F-value	305.535			
P-value	0.000			

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 9
Correlation Analysis of Dependent and Independent Variables

Correlations	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9
X1	1	.786**	.265**	0.058	.270**	-.189**	.297**	0.057	0.129*
		0.000	0.000	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.269	0.12
X2		1	.339**	0.178**	.320**	-.102**	.276**	0.175**	.263**
			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.46	0.000	0.001	0.000
X3			1	.359**	0.059	-0.009	-0.042	0.084	.286**
				0.000	0.251	0.856	0.417	0.099	0.000
X4				1	.222**	.239**	.209*	.511**	.416**
					0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
X5					1	.184**	0.153**	.551**	.649**
						0.000	0.03	0.000	0.000
X6						1	.485**	.182*	.360**
							0.000	0.000	0.000
X7							1	.255**	.376**
								0.000	0.000
X8								1	.839**
									0.000
X9									1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Table 7 reveals that the millennials perception toward eco-friendly products is high for higher income earners than lower income earners. Likewise, the corresponding F- value and p-value are 20.254 and 0.000 respectively. The result depicts that there is a significant difference between income level and millennials perception toward eco-friendly products (p-value < 0.05).

Regression Analysis

Table 8 illustrates the impact of all the independent variables on millennials' perception. The finding revealed that Coefficient of Determination (R²) was 0.867, which means 86.7% changes in

the dependent variable are influenced by independent variables. Likewise, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of each independent variable was less than 10 which suggests that there is no high multi-collinearity among the independent variables. Based on research findings, following regression model has been developed:

$$\hat{Y} = -0.397 - 0.103X_1 + 0.043X_2 + 0.314X_3 - 0.193X_4 + 0.228X_5 + 0.116X_6 + 0.134X_7 + 0.635X_8$$

While evaluating the overall beta of the independent variables, the highest impact was found by environmental advertising

with 0.635 followed by the lowest positive impact of reusability with 0.043. Alongside, the negative impact was found by the interest in the protection of nature and environment and concern for health. The result shows that consumer Greendex, health concern, subjective norms and social influence, trust in green product and environmental advertising have significant impact on consumer perception towards eco-friendly products (p -value < 0.05). Similarly, the Interest in the protection of the environment & nature and reusability have no significant impact on the millennials' perception towards eco-friendly products (p -value > 0.05).

Correlation Analysis

Table 9 depicts the correlation matrix between dependent and independent variables. The results show that there is a positive correlation between all the influencing factors (X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7 and X8) and millennials perception (X9) with coefficient of correlation (r) as 0.129, 0.263, 0.286, 0.416, 0.649, 0.360, 0.376 and 0.839 respectively. Further, the result also depicts that there is a significant relationship between the influencing factors (p -value < 0.05) except Interest in the protection of the environment & nature (p -value > 0.05) and the millennials' perception toward eco-friendly products.

Table 10
Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	P-value	Remarks
H2: There is a significant relationship between reusability and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H3: There is a significant relationship between consumer Greendex/ green attitude and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H4: There is a significant relationship between concern for health and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H5: There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and social influence and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H6: There is a significant relationship between Trust in green product and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H7: There is a significant relationship between perceived quality of green product and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H8: There is a significant relationship between environmental advertising of green product and millennials perception.	0.000	Supported
H9: There is a significant relationship between income level and millennials perception toward eco-friendly products.	0.000	Supported
H10: There is a significant relationship between occupation and millennials perception toward eco-friendly products.	0.000	Supported

Note. Data from survey conducted in 2023

Summary of Hypothesis

The summary of hypothesis testing has been shown by Table 10 based on correlation coefficient.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It can be inferred from the study that consumer Greendex/green attitude, concern for health, subjective norms and social influence, trust in green product and environmental advertising have a significant impact on millennials' perception towards eco-friendly products whereas interest in the protection of the environment & nature and reusability have no significant impact on the millennials' perception towards eco-friendly products. Environmental advertising has the highest impact on millennials' perception by analysing the beta coefficient. The result also reports that the millennials of Kathmandu Valley have very little interest in the protection of environment and are less influenced by reusability.

Ghimire (2020) concluded that people in Nepal who exhibit a positive stance on environmental protection show a positive association with the intention to make green purchases. . The results also depict the same findings and significant impact in terms of green attitude as of Ghimire (2020). Thus, raising awareness about diverse environmental issues could alter consumer lifestyles and a shift in pro-environmental behaviour might positively affect millennials' perception, prompting them to embrace a greener way of life. Likewise, previous research

articles explained in the literature review also reflect similarity in study results in terms of concern for health, subjective norms and social influence, trust in green products and environmental advertising which have a positive relation and significant impact on millennials' perception. The concerned authorities and green marketers should focus on safety and health-conscious manner and reduce the production of products that are harmful for human health and pollute the environment. Similarly, marketers and business managers need to convey to consumers or the societal reference group about the environmental and social consequences associated with the usage of their products. Businesses or organisations should maintain the millennials' trust, belief, and quality about the green product so that they could positively affect the green purchase perception of millennials. The result shows that the environmental advertising has the most significant impact in comparison to other influencing factors, hence it is recommended that concerned authorities and marketers should focus more on promoting the products using environmental claims, attributes, structures, rules, and tactics so that millennials' perception towards green purchase can be positively influenced.

There is a contrasting result in terms of interest in the protection of the environment on millennial's perception comparing with the previous study as of Berger (2010) and Choi (2012). Berger (2010) reported that interest on protection of nature and environment had a significant effect on the success

of manufacturing. Similarly, Choi (2012) showed that American consumers' purchase behaviour was affected by the interest on the protection of environment. However, employing the eco-friendly approach in the organisation's product or service offerings not only provides an opportunity to fulfil consumer expectations and address their environmental concerns but also leads to a competitive

advantage and a strong consumer base. Since there are not much specific policies and provisions regarding green products and practices, it is recommended to the concerned authority or government that these types of policies should be formulated so that green practices could be promoted, and environmental deterioration and exploitation of natural resources could be reduced.

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