



Effect of Consumers' Environmental Consciousness and Environmental Friendliness on Brand Preference

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ABSTRACT

Background: There has been growing interest among consumer regarding the environment. The modern consumer is increasingly concerned toward the environment and tend to acquire product that are environmentally friendly. It is important for the brand to determine which of the factors stimulate the consumer toward acquisition of environmentally friendly products.

Aim: The aim of the current paper is to analyse the influence of consumer environmental consciousness and the environmental friendliness over the brand preference.

Method: In order to attain the research aim, the paper has utilised quantitative and deductive approach. The data was collected through primary sources i.e., survey. The survey was conducted on 100 consumer through convenience sampling. The data was analysed through correlation, regression, descriptive and demographic analysis.

Findings: The findings of the study revealed that there exists significant correlation between environmental friendliness and consciousness with brand preference. While, the regression analysis revealed that there exist significant influence of environmental consciousness and environmental friendliness over the preference of the brand.



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INTRODUCTION

Since the past few decades, it has been noticed that the buying behaviour of consumer directly influences the environmental issues. It is considered as one of the significant criteria which consumers consider while shopping. The study of Razack et al. (2017) claimed that the environmental behaviour largely involves the effort for refusing the product having inappropriate packaging. The research further asserted that the consumer tends to feel a large sense of responsibility toward the issues of environment and also try to participate in this. Similarly, the research of Law et al. (2017) claimed that in the past few decades, the globe has witnessed an increase in the marketing program which aimed at preventing destruction of the

environment through environmentally friendly group. It has been further found by the above-mentioned research that the modern consumer is thereby increasingly concerned about the environment issues. For this purpose, they are largely demanding product that are environment friendly. Therefore, certain program has been developed for the conservation of the environment and influence the behaviour and attitude of the consumer. Such that, the companies or the brand which are environmentally friendly tend to spend huge amount over the product marketing. The study by Teoh and Gaur (2018) displays that the consumer today is more concerned about the changes in the environment and has changed their behaviour toward purchasing due to this regard. There is certain concern for the environment in the consumer shopping pattern which prefer product that are environmentally friendly. The study by Rahnama and Rajabpour (2017) indicated that it is increasingly significant for the brands to know what factors tend to stimulate the consumer for buying and acquiring environmentally friendly products. Consumer and the companies are facing severe issues around the world. The study by Kumar, Manrai, and Manrai, (2017) claimed that natural resources has been depleted because of the increased economic expansion that has led the brand toward environmental issues. Hence, there has been a significant rise in the economic activities alongside with the natural resource consumption as environment is getting damaged.

The research further asserted that from the past few decades, the consumption rate of the consumer has been increased across the world. This has caused numerous environmental issues such as global warming, depletion of stratospheric and the utilisation of natural resources. Law et al. (2017) claimed that the realisation of these issues has developed global interest to improve and protect the environment. This global interest has thereby protected the environment to buy more environment friendly and recycled products. These all has thereby influenced the organisation and brand to implement strategies and changes for sustaining the environment. Thus, Karatu and Mat, (2015) asserted that because of the increased environmental concern the businesses who has apply green environment strategies has attained competitive advantage. For this purpose, the aim of the current paper is to analyse the impact of consumer environmental consciousness and environmentally friendly over the brand preference.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental consciousness and environmental friendliness are considered as the multi-dimensional construction which thereby display the mental state of the individual. It has been further found by the research of Antonides (2017) that the environmental consciousness consumer is different from the antecedent and the linked behaviours. These all thereby vary from low level toward high product-specific level. It has been thereby found that the consumer is more concerned regarding the environmental issues and are also more demanding regarding the environmentally sound product. As asserted by Gong et al. (2020) the modern consumer are perceived to be more proactive and conscious related to the decision which they might undertake. These consumers are also ready to pay more for the product that are environmentally friendly. Another study by Wu et al. (2018) further added that the consumer largely expect information and action from the industry of packaging. The reason behind this is that consumer are conscious regarding the decision which they undertake and involve high expectation. Such that most of the consumer are concern and conscious regarding the choices of product they make in order to have environmentally friendly product (Li et al. 2021).

Influence of Consumer Environmental Consciousness over the Brand Preference

The modern consumer is increasingly conscious about the environment and make product choices accordingly. Such that the study conducted by Law et al. (2017) indicated that because of the environmental consciousness consumer has become more committed and loyal toward the environment and utilise green product. These consumers are more conscious and are thereby willing for acquiring green product. Another study by Martínez García de Leaniz et al. (2018), claimed that the eco-label also influences the behaviour of consumer and their preferences toward the brand. These labels introduce green as the attribute and allow the consumer to compare the shop on the basis of green. The study of Kautish and Sharma (2018), asserted that the eco-label is utilised widely as the tool of policy for offering consumer with insight on the sustainability characteristic of the product. Thus, from the management perspective, the eco-label can be thereby utilised for the strategic ends. It can be widely utilised for differentiating the product, gaining access toward the green procurement policies and assuaging the regulatory pressure.

The research conducted by Wu et al. (2018), indicated altruism as effective and motivational factor which thereby motivate the consumer for buying product that are socially sustainable and has no influence over the environment. Li et al. (2021), further claimed that the altruism encompasses positive influence over the green purchase intention. Whereas, the research of Law et al. (2017) claimed that altruism also encompasses significant influence for undertaking decision-making regarding the environmentally friendly product. These all predict that the behaviour encompasses positive influence over the purchase intention of the consumer and the altruistic values has influence over the consumer behaviour in order to acquire green product (Martínez García de Leaniz et al. 2018). The study of Li et al. (2021), further declare that the consumer is experiencing distinct environmental issues and because of this complication they are becoming conscious regarding the environment. In such cases, environment play significant role therefore consumer prefer largely to acquire products which are eco-friendly. The study of Gong et al. (2020) further asserted that environmental consciousness largely refers toward the decision of the consumer pertinent to the environmental product and their likeness and dislike toward the issue of environment. In the previous studies it has been found that the concern of the environment has been studied based on the product consumption by consumer. These studies revealed that the consumers which encompasses larger awareness regarding environment are more conscious about the product utilisation. These consumers likely to have more positive attitude toward the environmental product consumption (Li et al. 2021; Martínez García de Leaniz et al. 2018). The study conducted by Abd'Razack et al. (2017) further claimed that the environmental consciousness largely assists the consumer in development of beneficial behaviour. This behaviour encompasses notable influence over the environment. The study also revealed that the environmental consciousness individual is more committed and loyal toward the utilisation of green product and environment.

Impact of Consumer Environmental Friendliness over Brand Preference

Consumer environmental friendliness has great influence over the preference of the brand. As asserted by the study of Martins (2021) it has been claimed that alongside with quality and price it has been found by the above-mentioned report that about 72% of the consumer reported that they are buying environmentally friendly product actively. The study also further claimed that the environmentally friendly consumer tends to consider that the sustainable practices involve waste reduction, reducing of carbon footprint and being more committed toward the ethical practices. Another research conducted by Kautish and Sharma

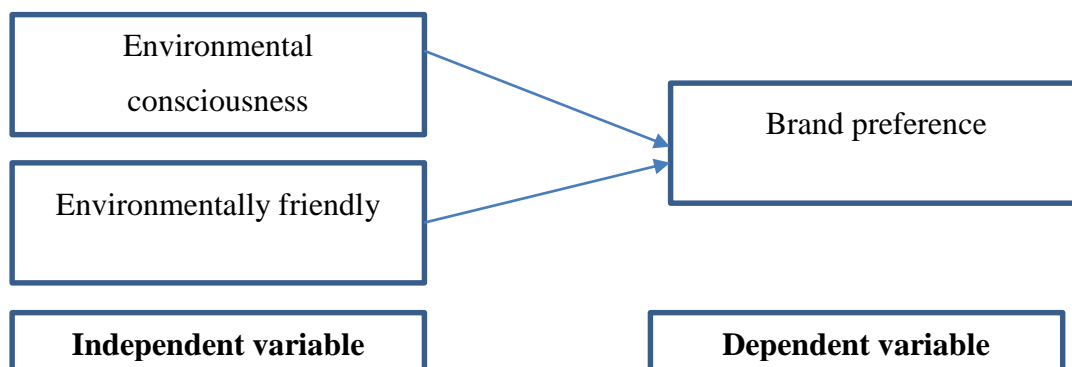
(2018), claimed that the environmentally-friendly and eco-friendly notion is becoming increasingly significant. It is due to the fact that the eco-friendly product tends to promote green living and also assist in conserving more energy. As asserted by Yenipazarli (2019), environmentally friendly also assist in preventing water, air and the noise pollution. The study also displays that the attitude of consumer toward the environment friendly recyclable material utilisation might lead toward environment friendly behaviour. Wu et al. (2018) conduct research to determine the degree to which consumer notice the insight label over the packaging recyclability and addressing the environmental-friendly behaviour. The outcome displays that despite of the good consumer intention, the awareness pertinent to the labelling and the packaging material are often poor. Gong et al. (2020) consider the influence of packaging waste for the environment. The research thereby reviewed different materials which comprises packaging and studied the life cycle of each material. The findings of the above research concluded that the lifetime of glass, aluminum and cardboard packaging is considered as highest to lowest. Thus, it can be stated that the packaging which encompasses high expectancy and the less environmental damage must be thereby designed for being reused and recycled. Ramesh et al. (2019), claimed that the consumer like to modify the packaging of plastic with recyclable cardboard and glass. Hence, it can be said that the packaging reusability tend to attract the satisfaction of consumer.

Theoretical Framework

The theory which is most relevant toward the current research is the theory of planned behaviour. These planned behaviours include subjective norms, attitude and the belief. These all influence the intention of the consumer toward the brand. This in turn influence the green purchasing behaviour at large scale (Yadav and Pathak, 2017). On the contradictory, there are certain studies that have extended the planned behaviour theory for understanding the consumer behaviour indicator. For example, the research of Wu et al. (2018), alongside with the research of Yenipazarli (2019) asserted that the personal norms are largely linked with the self-concept of the consumer. These encompasses feeling of moral obligation pertinent to environmentally consciousness consumer in order to patronise green brand. The study of Teoh and Gaur (2018) also asserted that the theory of planned behaviour can be used to indicate that the green consumer behaviour is influence not only by the behavioural intention of the consumer toward the brand but also influence their decision regarding their personal choices.

Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual framework developed for the current paper is following:



From the above model, the independent and the dependent variable can be identified. It can be examined from the above model that the environmentally consciousness and environmentally friendly aspect among consumer are undertaken as independent variable. On the other hand, the brand preferences have been undertaken as dependent variable. The reason behind this is that the paper aimed to examine influence of environmental consciousness and environmentally friendly over brand preferences.

Research Methodology

The aim of the current paper is to determine the influence of consumer environmentally consciousness and the environmentally friendliness over the brand preference. As the study has been aimed toward determining the impact therefore, quantitative design of research has been used. The reason behind utilisation of quantitative design is that it largely assists in quantifying the findings (Grbich, 2012). Thus, this design has been used in order to determine the extent to which these two variables i.e., consumer environmental consciousness and the consumer environmental friendliness has influenced their preferences toward brand. Moreover, it has been found by the research of Guest et al. (2013) that the quantitative design is more reliable whereas the qualitative design is largely time consuming and can include bias as well. The approach which has been utilised with this regard is deductive approach. The potential reason behind utilising deductive approach is that it is increasingly relevant and most favourable toward quantitative design (Pandey, 2019). There exist two potential methods for the collection of data.

It has been asserted by the study of Abdulla et al. (2014) that the collection of data is perceived as significant element as none of the research can be undertaken without proper accumulation of the data. The data collection technique is thereby divided into two aspects i.e., primary and secondary. The primary data is generally referred as first-hand data which is collected through interviews, observation, experiment and survey. On the other hand, the secondary data refers to the data that is collected through secondary sources that is peer-reviewed articles, journals, magazine and website etc (Paradis, 2016). The data in the current paper has been collected through primary sources i.e., survey. In the current paper, survey questionnaire was developed where the survey was conducted from about 100 participants. These samples were further recruited through convenience sampling. According to Sedgwick (2013), convenience sampling is used to recruit the participant which are close to the hand. The survey questionnaire has been designed through Likert scale where the respondent was asked to express their opinion on a scale that range from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The analysis of data is considered as significant aspect in the research as it refers toward process to apply statistical and logical method.

These tools are utilised commonly for examining, expounding and illustrating the data. Smith and Firth (2011) indicated that the technique of data collection varies greatly based on the quantitative and qualitative design of the research. As the present research paper was aimed to use quantitative design of research therefore the test which has been applied toward the result are descriptive, correlation, demographic and the regression analysis. Demographic test has been applied to determine the characteristic of the participant. While, the correlation analysis has been performed to determine the association between dependent and the independent variable. Thus, the correlation analysis has assisted in determining the extent to which consumer environmental friendliness or consumer environmental consciousness is correlated with the brand preference. Nevertheless, the regression analysis has been utilised in order to determine the impact of independent variable over the dependent ones. This analysis has assisted in analysing how the independent variable i.e., consumer environmental friendliness

and the consumer environmental consciousness influence the dependent variable i.e., brand preference. According to Sharif (2019), ethical consideration is perceived as one of the significant elements of the study. The current research paper has largely adhered toward the ethical consideration by sustaining the confidentiality of the participant. Moreover, no participant was harmed during the course of the research. The participant was largely informed about the aim of the survey.

RESULTS

Demographics Analysis

This section of the research contains demographic characteristics from the analysis of the respondents who participated in the recent research. The following descriptive statistics has been performed aimed at comprehending the characteristics of the 100 consumers who prefer brand over its environmental friendly and environmental conscious attributes and participated in the recent study.

Table 1: Gender Demographics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Male	76	76.0	76.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The aforementioned table represents the gender of the population of the study. It can viewed in the table above majority of the respondents who participated in the recent study were male i.e. 76.0% however the females respondents of the current research were 24.0%. It was made sure to include respondents from both genders to mitigate bias in results and analyse true behaviour of consumers towards environment.

Table 2: Age Demographics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29 years	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	30-39 years	50	50.0	50.0	57.0
	40-49 years	43	43.0	43.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

In the table above, it can be viewed that majority of the respondents who participated in the recent study were from the age group of 30-39 years old i.e. 50.0%. On the other hand,

respondents who belonged to the age group of 40-49 years were 43.0%. In addition, the respondents who were aged between 20 and 29 years old were only 7.0%.

Table 3: *For how many years are you environmental conscious towards brand preference?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 to 4 years	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	5-7 years	48	48.0	48.0	55.0
	8-10 years	40	40.0	40.0	95.0
	10+ years	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The respondents of the study were asked that for how many years they are buying products being environmental conscious to make sure their responses are valuable towards the research. It was observed that majority of the respondents i.e. 48.0% have been considerate towards environmental friendliness of the products for about 5 to 7 years. On the other hand, 40.0% of the respondents have been doing this for about 8 to 10 years. In addition, 7.0% respondents were using such brands and products for about 2-4 years and only 5.0% have been doing this for 10+ years.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 8: *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
The aspects of eco-certification and eco-labelling inform consumers about whether they should buy a product or not.	100	0	4	1.25	.989	
Eco-conscious behaviour is categorized with major effects of resource conservation, environmental preservation and recycling consciousness.	100	0	4	1.78	1.040	

The relationship between environmental consciousness and green purchase intention is affected by Altruism.	100	0	4	1.73	1.024
Environmental awareness is vital for environmental consciousness considering that environmental issues affect green purchase attention.	100	0	3	1.24	1.016
Environmental friendly consumers consider that the most sustainable practices include reducing carbon footprint, waste reduction, and committing to ethical practices.	100	0	4	1.46	1.019
Environmental friendly consumers are more influenced by the recycling and reusability of products.	100	0	4	1.40	1.064
Environmental friendly consumers are more responsible towards environment by contributing towards reduced greenhouse gas emissions.	100	0	3	.04	.315
Products being environmentally safe and planet friendly are the choice of environmental friendly consumers.	100	0	4	1.34	1.183
There is a significant impact of environmental consciousness on brand preference.	100	0	3	1.34	.987
Consumer consciousness towards brand has a positive impact on reusability and recyclability of product packaging	100	0	4	1.25	.978

There is a significant impact of environmental friendliness on brand preference.	100	0	4	1.25	1.086
Brand preference is presumed to be environmentally safe in terms of production processes, packaging and marketing.	100	0	4	1.46	1.019
Valid N (listwise)	100				

The table above represent results for descriptive analysis which denoted the dispersion of data in terms of mean value and also observed values of standards deviation for each of the statement from the questionnaire to identify how much the value are spread out from the mean value by the application of outliers. Lower rate of standard deviation depicts whether the data is more spread out over the mean whereas higher rate of standard deviation highlights how much data is spread out. The responses of the study were observed through Likert scale such that '0' denoted strong agree whereas '4' denoted strongly disagree. It was noted that in all the statements except one i.e. "Environmental friendly consumers are more responsible towards environment by contributing towards reduced greenhouse gas emissions", the mean value is in between the range 1.2 and 1.8 which denoted that majority of the participants responded 'Agreed' to the given statements. Consequently, the value of standard deviation of all these statements is in between the range 0.9 to 1.2. Thereby, it suggests that these values are deviated towards 'Agree'.

Correlation Analysis

In the words of Ong and Puteh (2017), correlation analysis is referred as a statistical measure which is referred as Pearson Correlation since the value of Pearson coefficient matters in determining the association between dependent and independent variables of the study. The value range between 0.1 and 0.3 denotes that the association between the two variables is weak, however, the values of Pearson coefficient in between 0.3 to 0.7 depict that the correlation between the two variables is moderate, in contrast, the value range between 0.7 and 1.0 denotes that the association between the two variables is strong. Consequently, sig value below 0.05 reflects upon the fact whether the defined variables has significant association with the other variable or not (Raeva, Mihova and Nikolaev, 2019). The results determined from correlation analysis for the recent research are shown in the table below.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Correlations		Environmental consciousness	Environmental friendliness	Brand Preference
Environmental consciousness	Pearson Correlation	1	.955**	.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Environmental Friendliness	Pearson Correlation	.955**	1	.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100
Brand Preference	Pearson Correlation	.825**	.725**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the aforementioned table, it can be identified that there are two independent variables of the study including environmental consciousness and environmental friendliness and their association or correlation with dependent variables brand preference has been determined. It can be viewed that Pearson coefficient between environmental consciousness and brand preference is determined as 0.825 which lies within the range of 0.7 and 1.0 depicting that the correlation between the variables is strong. In the same manner, in the relationship between environmental friendliness and brand preference, the value for correlation has been appeared as 0.725. It depicts that the association between dependent and variable i.e. environmental friendliness and independent variables i.e. brand preference is strong. Also, for both the cases, the sig (p-value) has appeared lesser than 0.05 thereby suggesting the association between the variables is significant.

Regression Analysis

As explained in the study by Kafle (2019), regression analysis is viewed as a substantial and useful tool for determining the impact of one variable over another to present quality results by reflecting upon the parameters effects of various study factors. The purpose of correlation is to determine the strength between the factors where how dependent variable is affected by independent variables is calculated via linear regression to examine hidden patterns revealed from the quantitative data (Kumari and Yadav, 2018). The purpose of linear regression is to determine whether the facts have been analysed matching the model accuracy in three key

aspects including Model Summary, ANOVA and Table of Coefficients as shown the tables below.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.853 ^a	.727	.721	.3668
a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Friendliness, Environmental Consciousness				

In the table above, the results of model summary are shown in which two important variables are analysed including R and R-Square. According to Kumari and Yadav (2018), the value of R denoted whether the developed model for regression is fit for analysis. In the recent study, R-value has been calculated as 0.853 i.e. 85.6% which presented that the model of regression developed for analysis is adequate and fit. In addition, R-square is the statistical indicator which explains the extent to which the association between independent variables and dependent variables has been determined (Kafle, 2019). It was observed that for the current study, the value of R-square was calculated as 0.727 which suggested that 72.7% independent variables predicted the effect on dependent variable i.e. brand preference.

Table 6: ANOVA Table

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.725	2	17.362	129.011	.000 ^b
	Residual	13.054	97	.135		
	Total	47.779	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Preference

b. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Friendliness, Environmental Consciousness

The table above extend the above analysis denoting the results examining the sig value which is referred as the threshold value that represents whether the developed regression model is significant or insignificant. The threshold value is 0.05 for this purpose (Kafle, 2019). For this purpose, ANOVA table also named as Analysis of Variation specifies that the sig value for the regression model developed in the recent study is 0.000 which denoted that the formulated regression model is fit further analysis and to study how independent factors affect dependent factor.

Table 7: Table of Coefficients

Coefficients^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	-.105	.081		-1.302
	Environmental Consciousness	1.357	.160	1.511	8.459
	Environmental Friendliness	-.615	.153	-.718	-4.019

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Preference

The above table represents the impact of all the independent variables on dependent variables. The sig value denoted the impact of influence of the two independent variables on brand preference as shown in the table above however the positive and negative sign highlighted whether the relation between two variables is direct or indirect. For the current study, it can be viewed in the table above that environmental consciousness has a substantial and positive effect on brand preferences since the sig value calculated as 0.000. However, for the variable environmental friendliness the sig value determined was 0.000 which showed that the influence of environmental friendliness is significant on brand preference but B-value showed that the impact is negative.

DISCUSSION

As per the study findings denoted by Yadav and Pathak (2016)'s research, altruism has a significant influence on decision-making when it comes to environmentally friendly products. However, all of these predict that the behaviour has a positive impact on the consumer's purchase intention, and that altruistic values have an impact on consumer behaviour in order to acquire green products (Teng et al., 2015). In such circumstances, the environment plays a crucial role, and consumers choose to buy items that are environmentally friendly. As a result, Kumar and Ghodeswar (2015) asserted that environmental consciousness primarily refers to a consumer's decision regarding an environmental product, as well as their likeness and dislike for environmental issues. Similarly, the results of a recent study revealed that there is a strong link between environmental consciousness and brand preference. In the same way, there is a substantial link between environmental friendliness and brand liking. Consumer environmental friendliness has a significant impact on brand selection. According to the study of Martins (2021), in addition to quality and price, it was found that about 72% of consumers actively purchase environmentally friendly products. According to the survey, environmentally conscious consumers are more likely to consider sustainable activities such as waste reduction, carbon reduction, and being more devoted to ethical practises. Environmental consciousness has a significant and beneficial influence on brand choices, as observed in the current study. The effect of environmental friendliness on brand preference is substantial for the variable environmental friendliness; however, the B-value revealed that the relationship between the

two variables is inverse. As a result, it can be asserted that for supporting environmental friendliness, packaging that has a long lifespan and causes minimal environmental degradation must be created to be reused and recycled to create an impact on consumer brand preferences (Rundh, 2013). In addition, according to the current research, consumers are becoming more conscious and proactive about the decisions they make. These customers are also willing to pay a higher price for ecologically friendly products. Furthermore, the majority of consumers are concerned and attentive about the product choices they make in order to have environmentally friendly products.

CONCLUSION

It has been found that the modern consumer has become increasingly aware regarding the environment and are more concern with the product that are environmentally friendly. For this purpose, the aim of the current research paper was to determine the influence of consumer environmental consciousness and the consumer environmental friendliness over the brand preference. The findings of the literature review concluded that there has been growing concern among consumer regarding the environmental. The modern concern prefers goods that are environmentally friendly and which are recyclable. For this purpose, the variable that were chosen for testing was independent variable i.e., consumer environmentally consciousness and consumer environmentally friendliness. While, the dependent variable of the study was brand preference. Survey was conducted from about 100 consumer that were recruited through convenience sampling. The findings of the study revealed that that the relationship of these two independent variables with the dependent variable is significant. The Pearson correlation value for both of these independent variables i.e., environmental consciousness and environmental friendliness were .825 and .725 respectively, Thus, it can be effectively concluded that environmental consciousness and the friendliness both encompasses significant association with the consumer preferences toward brand.

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