

**Research Article****EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ITS IMPACT ON PURCHASING BEHAVIOR  
AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS IN KUWAIT**<sup>1,\*</sup>Amr Samir Aly, <sup>2</sup>Anita Gustine and <sup>2</sup>Kubra Otkur<sup>1</sup>American College of the Middle East (ACM), Faculty of Business administration, Eqaila Block 6 250 street Road 103 Kuwait<sup>2</sup>American University of the Middle East (AUM), Faculty of Business administration, Eqaila Block 6 250 street Road 103 Kuwait**Received** 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024; **Accepted** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024; **Published online** 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

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**Abstract**

This research aims to investigate the level of environmental awareness and green values among young consumers in Kuwait, as well as their impact on purchasing behavior. An empirical study using a mono-quantitative method was conducted through a questionnaire administered to 150 young consumers. The collected data were statistically analyzed to examine the relationships between the research variables and to test the research hypotheses. The correlation analysis results indicate that there are statistically significant relationships between environmental awareness, green values, and consumer purchasing behavior among the selected sample in the Kuwaiti market, with correlation coefficients ranging from  $r = .284, p < 0.05$  to  $r = .423, p < .005$ . Additionally, the multiple regression analysis results reveal that the independent variables of the research explain approximately 10.2 percent of the variance in consumer purchasing behavior (adjusted  $R^2 = .102$ ). The results also indicate a noticeable difference among genders in their response to green products, with females showing a greater preference for these products compared to males.

**Keywords:** Environmental awareness, Green values, Consumer behavior, Sustainability.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Green products are one of the most important issues that have a positive impact on nurturing positive consumer habits. Various studies indicate that awareness of the environment leads to favorable perception towards green products and also assists green consumers to develop positive feelings of attitude and perceived control when engaging in green consumption (García-Salirrosas *et al.*, 2024). Organizations also learn that consumers who have a sense of environmental conservation can have a positive attitude towards purchasing green products. It then goes a step further to mean that individuals are willing to pay a higher price for goods and services that are environmentally friendly as they believe in the positive outcomes of such decisions (Mahmoud *et al.*, 2022). Recent studies further reveal that the so-called green products are expected to have increased appeal with the young generation in each and every corner of the world. Other researchers have also found that perceived environmental values and attitudes have the most influence to address the purchase intentions of green products among young consumers (Soomro *et al.*, 2020). A good understanding of environmental awareness by these young consumers in Kuwait is one of the avenues towards changing this culture and reducing the tendency of the country to more pollution. In Kuwait, an acceptance towards green marketing was evident, and the studies have indicated that businesses have a chance to advance the green products and spread awareness about the advantages of the green marketing (Al-Rifai & Hashem, 2012).

**Importance of the Study**

There are key environmental challenges in the GCC region such as high ecological footprint due to intensive large-scale

energy consumption which has been stimulated by high economic growth and urbanization. GCC countries heavily use oil, petrochemicals and other fossil fuels for economic activities and hence contribute to environmental degradation. Thus, GCC countries should supply incentives for adoption of renewable energy; they should also increase the level of awareness and knowledge regarding environment; and GCC countries should engage in implementation of effective and corresponding environmental management systems and policies (Cui *et al.*, 2023). Some of these studies are quite persuasive in showing the need to call for conscious, knowledgeable consumers if sustainable practices are to become a reality. They also demonstrate that young consumers bear the responsibility for shaping sustainable consumption to promote a better environment, and for making and maintaining a safer environment (Kardos *et al.*, 2019).

**Objectives of the Study**

To enhance the knowledge about the level of environmental concern and its effects on young consumers in Kuwait, this present research paper seeks to examine the degree of how environmental awareness on it affects consumers' buying behavior. Using the results of this study, the researchers aim to provide valuable insights to businesses, policymakers, and marketers seeking to engage with this segment of environmentally conscious consumers. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on sustainable consumption practices in Kuwait by conducting a thorough review of existing literature, analyzing survey data collected from Kuwaiti young consumers, and discussing key findings. Young consumers in Kuwait could be better understood by shedding light on their motivations, preferences, and challenges at the intersection of environmental awareness and purchasing behavior. The main objectives of the research can be summarized as the following:

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- To examine the level of environmental awareness among young consumers in Kuwait.
- To investigate the existence of green values among young consumers in Kuwait.
- To understand what factors could persuade young consumers in Kuwait to buy green products.
- To recognize the purchasing behavior of young consumers in Kuwait market when buying green products.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The unsustainable practices accompanied by the huge amount of emissions to the atmosphere and the pollution, waste, and disposal created during production operations lead to a crucial threat to the environment and well-being of human and non-human living species. It became clear that human activities create more and more unsustainable production and consumption. Consequently, the planet will not be able to fulfill human needs in the long term. As a result, the term sustainability has emerged to encourage economic growth and social and environmental welfare (Nawroz, 2014).

### Consumer behavior

According to Martin and Schouten (2014), consumer behavior includes people's activities and experiences related to buying, utilizing, and disposing of products and services. Consumer behavior is driven by social or psychological needs and an array of internal and external factors alike. The degradation of the environment has made environmentalism a crucial issue in the last decade. As a result of that, consumers paid more attention to the restoration of ecological balance by demanding green all over the world. Marketers have a vital role in changing customers' behaviors to become more sustainable. In addition to the role of marketers, another significant effort should be conducted by stakeholders and also the consumers who are unenthusiastic to change their behaviors when they feel that their lifestyles will be negatively affected (Heck & Yidan, 2013).

### Green consumption

Green consumption is the process of avoiding products that have a harmful impact on consumers' health, significantly harm the environment in manufacturing, utilize, or disposal, utilize excessive amounts of resources in the manufacturing process, utilizing components derived from endangered environments or species, involve brutality to animals; and unfavorably influence other countries, predominantly developing countries (Elkington & Hailes, 1989). Consumers who engage in green consumption opt for products and services that support public health and pay much attention to reducing and recycling waste generated during consumption; this led consumers to change their consumption patterns and behaviors to greener ones, maintain a sustainable consumption pattern by protecting the environment and conserving natural resources (Geng, Sarkis, & Bleischwitz, 2019).

### Environmental awareness

Environmental awareness reflects a person's knowledge about the environment and the effects of one's actions on the environment, this may result in changing the way in which consumers interpret and evaluate available offers (Kaadoor,

2020). Meanwhile, environmental awareness is the knowledge and concerns of the influence of peoples' behaviors on the surrounding environment (Safari, Salehzadeh, Panahi, & Abolghasemian, 2018). According to Kaufmann, Panni, & Orphanidou (2012), environmental awareness refers to the overall knowledge of facts, concepts, and relationships regarding environmental preservation. They argued that environmental knowledge involves anything consumers may realize regarding the environment, for instance, determining the environmental system's capabilities; and all the required responsibilities for sustainable development.

### Environmental awareness and consumer behavior

The extent to which a person is environmentally conscious has been commonly used as an index of the environmentally responsible behavior (Adrita, & Mohiuddin, 2020). Several researchers have explored heightened environmental consciousness of the consumer and its impact on purchasing attitude. Khare (2014), in his research about Indian consumers, stated that the knowledge and awareness lack about green alternatives would impact the behaviors of individual consumers and peer groups and henceforth restrict environmentally consumer behavior. Shaikh and Rahman (2011) referred to a positive correlation among consumers' environmental awareness and their behavior towards purchasing green products. They have reported that increasing the environmental knowledge and awareness about environmental issues positively affect the consumers' preference regarding green products. Whereas, Rahbar and Abdul Wahid (2011) discovered that a low level of environmental awareness restricts consumers from buying green products. Thus, Mostafa (2006) highlighted the role of environmental knowledge to form a green purchase intention. In addition to that, Keller (1993) also argued that environmental knowledge and awareness are needed to create a favorable attitude toward purchasing green products, and that the lack of this awareness would lead to unfavorable consumer attitudes.

Thus, based on the findings presented in the above-stated studies, it is possible to state that environmental knowledge and awareness are said to be postulated as highly significant and positively associated with environmental consumers' attitudes and behavior. This triggers the need for further research in this area to introduce more clear insights into such relationships. Therefore, the first hypothesis to be formulated is:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant correlation between young consumers environmental awareness and green purchasing behavior in Kuwait market.

### Green values and consumer behavior

Green values can be simply defined as an individual's level of responsibility towards the environment, thereby, readiness of an individual to embrace environmentally sensitive practices (Elshaer *et al.*, 2023). Consumer values associated with the use of green consumerism are the foundation that directs consumers towards acquiring sustainable products as opposed to those that have a negative impact on the natural conditions. These are the fundamental units that are believed to account for the formation of numerous constructs that determine attitude towards purchasing green products and consequently

the actual purchase of green products (Maria Wallnoefer *et al.*, 2021). To analyze the impact of green values on consumer behavior among young consumers, several studies provide valuable insights: According to Kautish and Sharma (2019), terminal and instrumental values have an influence on young consumers' green attitude and also their green behavioral intentions. This research underscores the fact that functional value is not enough to explain green purchase behavior; signaling the need to incorporate both types of values for understanding the changes in consumers' attitudes towards green products.

Sun and Xing (2022) revealed that consumers' intention to purchase green products is significantly influenced by Influencer factors, where green attitude and perceived behavioral control (subjective norms) acted as the moderators. Specific pre-purchase factors such as concern for environment and high quality of visual content have a positive influence on Generation Z's green purchase intentions that depicts the influence of influencers on young consumers. As per the study conducted by Varshneya *et al.* (2017), in relation to the organic clothing consumption, green purchase values were considered partially as the mediator between attitude and purchasing intention while the social influence had no significant moderating effect on these variables for young Indian consumers.

Based on the previous review, the second hypothesis to be formulated is:

- H2: There is a significant correlation between young consumers green values and green purchasing behavior in Kuwait market. To examine the role of gender as a moderating variable, the study suggests the third hypothesis to be formulated as:
- H3: Gender moderates the relationship between young consumers awareness and green values and green purchasing behavior in Kuwait market.

### The status of Kuwait

In view of the significance of sustainable development, Kuwait's government has assertively endorsed programs which are aligned with the global and national trends of sustainability. The driving force behind Kuwait's sustainability is the New Kuwait vision of 2035 that aims at emphasizing on infrastructural development, environmental sustainability, economic diversification and sustainable banking. The government of Kuwait intends to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship as well as attracting businesses that comply with sustainable business practices. This includes sustainable banking as one of Kuwait's eco-friendly growth strategy and the financial institutions that contribute to sponsor projects that maintain the environment. Through sustainable banking practices, Kuwait aims to align between the growth of the economy, the conservation of the resources, and the change of the climate. It encourages the transition to greener and more sustainable energy sources through investing in projects such as renewing the energy (Tamanna, 2023). In relevance to environmental sustainability, Kuwait is keen to protecting the environment and promoting eco-friendly practices by lowering the emission of carbon, protecting the natural resources, encouraging the use of renewable energy and stressing on green building techniques. In addition, Kuwait is trying to preserve natural resources and enhance garbage management.

Kuwait expects to build a greener future by utilizing renewable energy sources. The country aims to diminish its carbon footprint and participate in global efforts to fight climate change by using solar and wind power. Therefore, the vision of New Kuwait 2035 emphasizes on how crucial responsible resource management is and the preservation of the country's environment and natural resources depends on how much Kuwait is committed to sustainability (Kuwait Vision, 2023).

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

In the current research, a mono quantitative method has been used; the study has mainly conducted a questionnaire to collect quantitative data that can be statistically analyzed to examine the impact of environmental awareness and on purchasing behavior of young consumers in Kuwait. The questionnaire was designed to suit the objectives of the study, the questionnaire included fifteen questions focusing on examining the level of environmental awareness and green values of young consumers in Kuwait and analyzing their purchasing behavior. A convenience sample of 150 students has been taken from a private university in Kuwait. The sample was diverse and included students from different majors and academic levels.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

### Reliability

Questionnaire reliability testing is a process used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire; this is done by measuring the ability of the questionnaire to provide the same results or measurements when it is re-applied to the same sample or a similar sample at different times, this helps in verifying that the results obtained from the questionnaire stable and reliable, and statistically the test value must exceed 70% for the study tool to be considered stable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), the following table shows this:

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for the study variables

Field		Number of paragraphs	Value of ( $\alpha$ )
Independent Variables	Environmental awareness	5	0.83
	Green value between students	5	0.87
Dependent Variables	Consumer buying behavior	5	0.79
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>0.82</b>

From the previous table that the lowest value of the reliability coefficient was 0.83 for the variable (Environmental awareness), while the highest value of the reliability coefficient was 0.87 for the variable (Green value between students), while the total reliability coefficient for all items was 0.82, and this shows all axes of the resolution have reached a stability coefficient higher than 70%.

### Normal Distribution

According to Field (2018), when extracting the values of the (K-S) test, the Sig values must be greater than 0.05, as the data are considered normally distributed. As for the Skewness test, which measures the degree of distance from symmetry, its value must be between -1 and +1 in order for the data to be

normally distributed. As for the Kurtosis test, it is to measure the degree of height of the peak of the distribution or the degree of flatness. Here, the test values must be between -1.96 and +1.96, and the following table explains this.

**Table 2. Results of the Normal Distribution Test for the Data**

Variable	K-S	Sig	Skewness	Kurtosis
Environmental awareness	0.127	0.110	-0.067	-0.890
Green value between students	0.132	0.180	0.195	0.781
Consumer buying behavior	0.084	0.090	-0.260	-0.598

From the previous table it's clear that all the values of the axes of the questionnaire items, with the Sig value of the (K-S) test, exceeded 0.05. As for the skewness test, all values were limited to between -1 and +1, and finally, with the kurtosis test, all values were limited to between -1.96 and +1.96, and based on this it can be asserted that the data are normally distributed.

### Multicollinearity

Testing to determine whether the problem of multicollinearity (high correlation) exists is of interest, as multicollinearity refers to the extent to which the independent variables in a multiple regression analysis are related to each other (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

**Table 3. Correlations**

		Environmental awareness	Green value between students	Consumer buying behavior
Environmental awareness	Correlation	1	0.315	0.284
	Sig		0.006	0.004
	N	150	150	150
Green value between students	Correlation	0.315	1	0.423
	Sig	0.006		0.001
	N	150	150	150
Consumer buying behavior	Correlation	0.284	0.423	1
	Sig	0.004	0.001	
	N	150	150	150

The extent of the correlation between the independent variables we was found that the correlation values were moderate and positive, and none of these values exceeded 80%, which means that there is no problem of high correlation between the variables.

Tests for the problem of high correlation are not limited to calculating the Pearson matrix. Rather, it is necessary to use the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test. If the values are less than 5, then it can be said that there is no problem of high correlation between the variables. When the VIF values are divided by one, it appears, we have the values of Tolerance, which must be limited to between 0.2 and one to ensure that there is no linear duplication (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013), and the following table shows this:

**Table 4. VIF and Tolerance**

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
Environmental awareness	1.263	0.775
Green value between students	1.428	0.715
Consumer buying behavior	1.472	0.6762

It is clear from the previous table that there is no problem of high correlation between the variables, as all VIF values appear to be less than 5, and Tolerance values are limited to between 0.2 and one.

### Descriptive Statistics

The following table shows the descriptive statistics (Mean, Std. Deviation) for each paragraph's in the questioner for males and females answers:

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics**

#	Statement	Male (N= 75)		Female (N=75)	
		Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.
<b>Environmental awareness</b>					
1	I have the awareness and understanding of green marketing.	4.44	0.82	4.67	0.98
2	I share information with my friends about the importance and benefits of green products consumption.	4.62	0.60	4.89	0.76
3	I am aware that many companies are adopting green marketing practices recently.	4.34	0.96	4.43	0.84
4	I support green marketing practices and sustainable development strategies as they are crucial issues in the society now.	4.20	0.89	4.61	0.67
5	It's very important raising green awareness among university students.	4.74	0.93	4.92	0.89
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>0.93</b>
<b>Green value between students</b>					
6	Green products consumption issues are of my interest.	4.98	0.99	4.76	0.81
7	Green products consumption is a waste of money and resources.	4.02	0.88	4.80	0.62
8	It's essential to promote green living concept in Kuwait.	3.96	0.92	4.42	0.72
9	Using green products as a step to change consumer behavior is one of my major concern.	4.48	0.54	4.95	1.02
10	I am involved in environmental protection issues in Kuwait.	3.32	0.45	4.12	0.98
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.15</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>0.87</b>
<b>Consumer buying behavior</b>					
11	I prefer to buy green products from physical stores rather than buy them online.	4.22	0.80	4.72	0.78
12	I feel satisfied and happy when buying green products.	4.25	0.82	4.92	0.67
13	When I decide to purchase green products, the most important factor that influences my decision is: (Brand, Price, Special offer or promotion, Product attributes (Ingredients, quality, etc.)	4.32	0.70	4.57	0.90
14	The most effective promotional method that affect my decision when buying green products is: (TV advertisements, Online marketing/social media, In-store ads, Referral by friends and family)	4.43	0.87	4.48	1.04
15	I think I will be a frequent consumer for green products in the nearest future or at any other point of time	4.55	0.93	4.92	0.81
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.35</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>4.72</b>	<b>0.84</b>

The table shows differences between the means of answers for males and females, as the overall mean for the variable (Environmental awareness) for males reached (4.46) and for females (0.98), then for variable (Green value between students) for males (4.15) and for females(4.61), finally for variable (Consumer buying behavior) (4.35) for males and (4.72) for females.

### Testing of the Hypotheses

After ensuring that the distribution of the data is correct, and that it falls within the normal distribution, and after ensuring

that it is stable and correlated, and that it is free of problems of high correlation, and after reviewing the descriptive analysis of the data, including arithmetic averages and standard deviations, and to achieve the objectives of the study, it is necessary to test the sub-hypotheses and the main hypothesis, and the following table explains this:

**Table 6. Multiple regression (main and sub hypothesis)**

R	0.326		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.106		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.102		
F-value	87.144		
Sig.	0.002		
DF	146		
	<b>Standardized Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Environmental awareness	0.402	7.436	0.014
Green value between students	0.312	4.623	0.019

It is clear from the previous table that the values of R<sup>2</sup> reached 0.102, which means that the independents variable (Environmental awareness and Green value among students) affects in percent 10.2% on the dependent variable (Consumer purchasing behavior), and looking at the level of significance, we find that it has reached 0.002, It is less than 0.05 which means that there is a statistically significant effect between the variables. To calculate the statistical differences between the two groups, a t-test was used, and the following table shows this:

**Table 7. T- Test**

Mean	STD	T- Value	Sig.
4.50	0.87	84.295	0.031

It is clear from the previous table that the sig values are less than 0.05, which means that there is a difference between the answers of the male and female sample members, which means that there are statistically significant differences between the purchasing behavior between males and females among Kuwaiti university students.

#### Descriptive statistics for (Factors could influence students to buy green products)

#	Statement	Male (N= 75)		Female (N=75)	
		Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.
1	Green product is expensive in Kuwait.	3.41	0.87	4.82	0.82
2	Non-availability of green product everywhere creates a consumption barrier.	4.52	0.82	4.33	0.74
3	The lack of promotion of green products may lead to less consumption because consumers are not aware enough about its attributes.	4.17	0.85	4.89	0.89
4	Brand image could persuade to buy green products.	3.92	0.89	4.78	0.83
5	Green products and green services need high income.	4.76	0.66	4.88	0.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>0.73</b>

It is clear from the previous table that females have an orientation towards factors that affect the purchase of green products, and this is evident from the mean for the female sample that reached (4.74), while for males it reached (4.15).

#### Conclusion

- The results indicate that there is a noticeable difference among genders in their response to green products, with females showing a greater preference for these products compared to males.

- This difference could be due to different environmental concerns between the sexes, as females may be more sensitive to environmental and sustainability issues.
- This difference is quite understandable based on the cultural and social factors that may prevail within a society or country so that an individual attitude towards green products may be hinged on the value systems he or she possesses, probably due to gender difference.
- The differences might be due to the fact that females are more into the environmental and health aspects of the product which makes them prefer products that are environmentally friendly.

#### Recommendations

- Developing female-oriented marketing strategies: The results of this investigation can be beneficial for companies and organizations who wish to market their products effectively to females within Kuwaiti universities. Therefore, advertising and marketing campaigns should be developed, that will keep attracting the attention of the female consumer and focus on the positive aspects of green products especially in the areas of environmental consciousness and health.
- Educating males about environmental issues and sustainability: If awareness and educational campaigns are targeted toward males in Kuwaiti universities, there will be great prospects to raise the consciousness of the significance of environmental saving. This could include organized lectures, workshops, environmental enhancement exercises or chores that can be done in the community where men are motivated to support conservation.
- Providing a variety of green products: Companies and organizations should increase the provision of green products that meet market requirements in Kuwait, which can encourage increased demand for these products by females and males alike.
- Integrating environmental elements into education curricula: Environmental education must also be promoted into the Kuwaiti universities, adding more elements of environment into the education curriculum of the students. These and many more environmental conservation issues can be integrated into teachings and research assignments with an aim of ensuring an environmental consciousness and interest in taking action towards the protection of the environment.

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