

## **GREEN CONSUMERISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As environmentally friendly products continue to gain prominence in the market, it is crucial for marketers to understand the consumer behavior of those who purchase these items. College students are a focus of attention for many marketers of green products, as research shows that the majority is concerned about personal and corporate environmental responsibility. The objective of this project is to research the green attitudes and behaviors of college students, in an attempt to find ways that green marketers can target this consumer group more effectively.

To determine the green consumer behavior of college students, secondary, qualitative, and quantitative research was conducted. Secondary research was conducted to determine the history of the green consumer movement, the types of green products available, and current trends in the green product market. Next, in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 college students, in which they were asked about their green attitudes and purchasing decisions. Lastly, quantitative research was conducted by administering a survey to a convenience sample of 205 college students.

The results of this research indicate that the rise of green marketing and green consumer behavior is rooted in the increase in influence of environmental interest groups in the 1970s and 1980s. The majority of students purchase green consumer products on a regular basis, with over half of the respondents purchasing at least one within the previous three months. Of those who did purchase green products during this time, over half did so because of the products' environmental benefits. The most frequently purchased green products among students were housekeeping and personal care

items. Most students are at least somewhat concerned about the environment and believe that green products are somewhat helpful in reducing a user's impact on the environment. There seems to be a link between green attitudes and purchasing behavior. Those who are concerned about the environment and their personal impact on it, as well as those who participate in energy conserving activities, are more likely to purchase green products.

Based on these findings, marketers must build awareness of green products through marketing communications tailored to the wants and needs of student consumers. In addition, green products should be promoted heavily in discount stores, as the majority of students shop at these stores on a regular basis. Lastly, the market should be segmented by psychographic variables, due to the influence of values and lifestyles on green purchasing intentions and behavior.

To further understand the green consumer behavior of college students and develop effective marketing strategies to target them, additional research utilizing random samples from a greater number of schools in both urban and rural areas should be conducted. This will enable researchers to generalize the results to the entire student population and provide a more accurate description of students' green consumer behavior. Also, further research should aim to clearly define the psychographic variables that contribute to green consumer behavior, enabling marketers to more effectively segment the market.

**References Available on Request**