Impact of Green influences on Purchase intentions of Pakistani Consumers: Mediating role of Environmental Knowledge

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Abstract

Purpose - This research investigates the impact of green influences on purchase intentions of Pakistani Consumers with the mediating effect of environmental knowledge. In the developing countries like Pakistan where per capita income, literacy rate and the disposable income is far low than the developed countries here the concept of green marketing is not that much popular as compared to the developed countries. This research explores and reveals the general information about green marketing and the causes that urged the researcher to consider this point and exploration of inquiries in additionally laid out.

Design /Methodology / Approach – A structured questionnaire has been developed for the study in the light of the existing literature. Data collected from 310 respondents by self-administered questionnaire by using convenience and snowball sampling. SPSS 19 is used for data analysis.

Findings – All the seven hypotheses are accepted. In specific, marketing mix strategies, environmental knowledge and subjective norms obviously showed their impacts on Pakistani consumer purchase intentions and it is also proved that environmental knowledge plays a mediating role between marketing mix strategies, environmental concern, subjective norms and purchase intention.

Practical Implication - In Pakistan where the concept of Green Marketing is in the infancy stages.
Number of the factors other than the marketing strategies should be considered to promote this novel concept in Pakistan.

Originality Value – Several researches have tried to explore the relationship of marketing strategies and purchase intentions but this study magnifies the considerable influence of EC and SN and Environmental Knowledge on purchase intentions of consumers as well.

Key words Environmental concerns, Environmental knowledge, Green Purchase intentions, Green marketing mix.

Research type Research Paper

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the Kwakye in 2012 clearly depicted that, human beings as the consumers are in the constant need of purchasing, using and disposing of goods and services even when the resources are rare. Since about thirty years the issues pertaining to the environmental concerns, the climatic changes and the rising temperature of the earth have been the popular issues. Due to their crucial significance the resource depletion problem is also getting importance with the passage of time. Since according to the estimate presented by OECD in 2050, these issues will become more intense, chronologically. A substantial quantitative overview made in 2007 presented by Vizu Study, demonstrated that 74% of the citizens of USA felt that a worldwide temperature alteration is vital and more than the half of them (51.9%) believe that is critical .An eco-friendly product should decrease the effect of its utilization on the earth on account of its making-procedures, parts and reusing strategies which are causing less damage for the indigenous habitat than those of routine items. As indicated by a review by the Gallup in 2009, more and more Europeans are converting to eco-friendly products consumers and more than 458 items are introduced into the market that are ecologically sound. Another case in the United States demonstrated that "somewhere between 2005 and 2009 green customers grew by 200 percent. The business sector of green items is more expanding. Another late study made on a sample of more than 1,000 USA citizens in February 2012 uncovers that just 44% target people believe the ecological case of firms and 42% are ready to purchase natural items on the grounds that they imagine that the cost is better than that of traditional items. Customers purchase the items and their points are to verify the commitment is supporting maintainable (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012). Green marketing is pursued by organizations to demonstrate that individuals agonized over deteriorated nature and the organizations should do something to comprehend a percentage of the issues (Cherian, 2012). As of late, customers are additional willing to buy items from an organization that is socially and ecologically capable (Kalafatis, 1999). Customers now review and desire organizations to add more extensive social objectives (Choi & Ng, 2011). Developing green marketing strategies may aid the organizations to gain the competitive advantage (Cronin, 2011).

The research motivation is to investigate the green marketing in the customer perspective states of mind towards purchase of green items. This subject is centered on the purchase intentions of green products (Kwakye, 2012).The aim of conducting the research is to identify the

strategies made by firms (marketing mix elements) and from consumer's side the subjective norms and ecological concerns to influence them to purchase eco-friendly products. Green marketing has got consideration because of the ecological circumstances and it turns into a worldwide issue (Kumar, 2014). The following objectives are to be accomplished:

1. To understand the impact of marketing mix strategies on green purchase intentions of consumers.
2. To understand the impact of ecological concerns and subjective norms on green purchase intentions.
3. To understand the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intentions of Pakistani consumers.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

American Marketing Association defines green marketing as "the promotion of the products that are ventured as safe for the earth". In this regard the green marketing consolidates various exercises, including alterations in the production procedure, handling changes, and also changing promotion. "Green or Environmental Marketing is the marketing process that encompasses all activities that are streamlined to satisfy human needs in a way that is having insignificant impeding effect on the regular habitat" (Polonsky,2012).In the more extensive sense green consumption is the procedure of maintaining a strategic distance from items, which are liable to jeopardize the wellbeing of buyers, fundamentally harm the earth underway, utilization or transfer, expend excessively a lot of assets amid creation, cause superfluous waste through over bundling, overabundance item includes or an unduly short life compass (Husted, 2014).

Organizations ought to receive creative techniques for the maintainable improvement in the aggressive environment through utilizing the green products (Masum, 2012). Sustainable development is catering the needs of the present customers without harming or depleting the resources for the future customers. The basic theme is to align the economic activity of the organization with the eco concerning attitude. Organizations should be socially responsible and conserve the earth resources by providing less harm to the earth. There may be several means of doing that e.g. energy efficient fuel car, environmental friendly organizations e.g. free from air pollution water pollution and utilization of neutralizing plants to save the earth from further depletion. Recycling the products and packaging even saves the costs and green products even are safe for the human health as well. Global warming theory has led the people to become

environmentally conscious since theory and experiments lend more knowledge as compared to the subjective information (Lejano, 2013).

Customers should be educated in terms of eco-literacy. Organizations must be there to educate and equip the customers about the harmful effects of ordinary items and the merits of the greener products in contrast. Now the businesses are competing on these grounds. Green marketing mix strategies like use of green items, advertisement of these items and the willingness of the people to spend the money to buy them, green packaging that is even reversible and green distribution where these items are available are getting acceptance now a days in United States of America (Yazdanifard & Mercy, 2011).

Seeing the disastrous natural contamination of mechanical assembling exercises on the planet, customers progressively see ecological issues (Chen, 2010). Bamberg & Möser in 2007 highlight the significance of information in the mind of the customer to become eco literate. Female customers are more conscious towards green products (Mostafa, 2007). That's why pro environmental concerns should be developed (Kumar Datta, 2011). There are the positive green purchse attitudes as highlighted by (Ozaki & Sevastyanova 2011). Accordingly organizations are more eager to take environment safety as their social duty.

There are certain explanations behind organizations to pursue green marketing:

(1) Improving organizational image.

(2) Consistence to natural patterns.

(3) Exploiting eco related opportunities.

(4) Getting upper hand.

(5) Expanding item esteem (Chen, 2008) (Chen & Chang, 2013)

Green marketing helps to develop the sustainable corporate image (Ko & Hwang 2013).Therefore through green image customership may be increased.(Matthes, Wonneberger & Schmuck, 2014).

Customers should be educated in terms of eco-literacy by marketing mix strategies like use and knowledge of green items, advertisement of items and the willingness of the people to spend the money to buy them, green packaging that is even reversible and green distribution where these items are available are getting acceptance now a days in United States of America (Yazdanifard & Mercy, 2011).

Since there are certain studies that basically focused on to the ways how companies can improve their intangible asset that is their goodwill and the reputation one of the contemporary ways is to introduce the concept of green marketing. Strong brands with undoubtedly greener position have more chances of survival nowadays. Even though in the past number of the studies have been made to clarify the different issues of the corporate and brand image , customer satisfaction, brand equity but no one explored the ecologically confronted problems therefore Chen in 2008 conducted a study to fill the gap.

Sustainable development is a concept that "to meet the present needs of the customers without trading off the capacity of future generations to address their own problems pertaining to resources depletion. It significantly affected famous ideologies of supportability today. In including all parts of our reality, maintainability is surrounded by considering numerous measurements (e.g., ecological, financial, and social areas, which are supposed to be the triple primary concern (Yazdanifard & Mercy, 2011). According to the Pickett-Baker & Ozaki in 2008 green marketing infuences customers to purchase green products.

Country culture also plays an important part in green purchases (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). This is the era more organizations around the globe have shifted towards consideration for ecological administration .With expanding worries pertaining to the earth and biological problems encompassing the eco safe purchases since the mid-1990s in growing nations, eco-friendly items have grown rapidly Ecological information can be characterized as one's capacity to distinguish various images, ideas and conduct designs identified with natural security (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

Since the information and knowledge about environmental issues are not that much familiar to different people and so is the customer base is ecologically illiterate. Natural learning or eco literacy or the environmental knowledge is knowledge about the preservation, conservation and depletion of the earth resources and the ideas, beliefs and concerns about them. Customers' ecological concerns are identified with the hobby of taking into consideration what the purchase decision have to do with the purchasers and society as a whole .The ecological concern has prompted purchasers' interest for naturally amicable items. For instance, purchasers who are exceptionally worried about climate have the predisposition to buy green products than those purchasers who are least concerned about natural issues (Umar et al 2013). Learning energizes ecological conduct (Vicente-Molina et al., 2013). Customer mentalities play

an important role for the psychological grooming for the green items (Zsóka et all 2013). Customers who purchase green products show dedication towards environment and streamline their further purchases accordingly (Larsson, 2011). Natural learning goes for huge effect on the customers' goal to buy green products (Kaufmann, 2012)**.** Environmental Knowledge helps to purchase green items (Robelia & Murphy, 2012). Green awareness counts in green purchases (Suki 2013). Green purchases are safe for health as well (Vermeir & Verbeke 2008). Eco literacy drives the consumer to purchase green products (Yaacob & Zakaria, 2014).

Subjective standard recommends that conduct is affected by person's belongings to go about as essential nearby referents. The person is expected to act as expected by the other societal members and the kinships. On the other hand, subjective standards are the apparent significant weight or the importance individuals feel when taking the important decisions in life. Subjective standard is as an immediate predictor of behavioral expectation in theory of reasoned action behavior. In the model of theory of planned behavior, subjective standard is hypothesized as a second predictor of behavioral expectation. What I ought to do what not and for that some closer orbit people are my inspirations .Subjective standard mirrors one's apparent social weight to perform a sure conduct (Han, 2010).

Endeavors have been made in the advertising and buyer conduct writing to recognize how people's environmental states of mind fortify environmental purchasing exercises also, to inspect the effect of individual capacities on ecological friendly utilization (Han, 2010). Ecological state of mind is identified with the singulars worth judgment of natural insurance .Intention is identified with one's relative quality of reason keeping in mind the end goal to perform certain conduct (Han, 2010). The quantity of shoppers who routinely buy natural nourishment is less. (Al-shaaban & Nguyen, 2014). However green branding promotes green products (Huang & Wang, 2012).

Customer conduct alludes to why people make up their mind for the choices and even on purchases they have the capacity to spend valuable resources even on utilization related things especially how they select, purchase , use , or dispose of items, managements, notions , or confrontation to get needs accommodated , desiring for more , and the cravings even. (Azizan & Suki, 2014). However green marketing strategies have their impact on consumers (Juwaheer & Noyaux, 2012).The young generation also is more exited towards green products (Kanchanapibul 2014).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

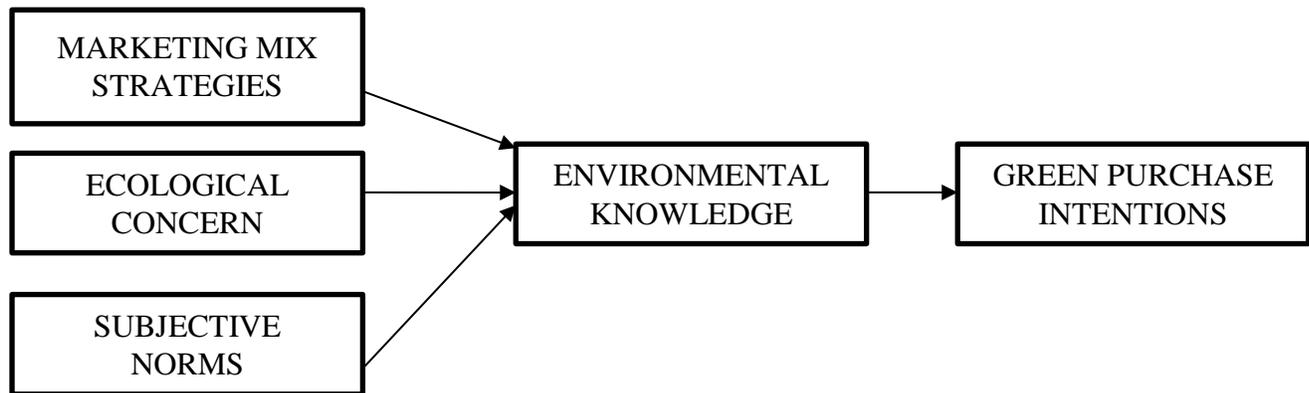Based upon the review of literature and identification of gaps, the following model is suggested for the study:

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┌─────────────────┐
│ MARKETING MIX   │──────┐
│ STRATEGIES      │      │
└─────────────────┘      ↓
┌─────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ ECOLOGICAL      │──→│ ENVIRONMENTAL    │──→│ GREEN PURCHASE   │
│ CONCERN         │   │ KNOWLEDGE        │   │ INTENTIONS       │
└─────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐      ↑
│ SUBJECTIVE      │──────┘
│ NORMS           │
└─────────────────┘
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Fig 1. Framework for Study

HYPOTHESIS TO BE TESTED:

1. Marketing mix strategies have the significant positive effect on environmental knowledge.
2. Ecological concerns have the significant positive effect on environmental knowledge.
3. Subjective norms have the significant positive effect on environmental knowledge.
4. Environmental knowledge has the significant positive effect on green purchase intentions.
5. Environmental knowledge acts as a mediator between marketing mix strategies and green purchase intentions
6. Environmental knowledge acts as a mediator between ecological concerns and green purchase intentions
7. Environmental knowledge acts as a mediator between subjective norms and green purchase.

This research is formal since the research query has been fully formalized and here we are provided with the hypothesis to be tested. Self-administered questionnaire transmitted electronically or questionnaires sent through mail or getting them filled personally. This research is a cross sectional where data is collected merely once. Deductive quantitative research approach is used when the hypothesis is to be tested with the reference of the theory. This study depended on checking on previous theories and the theoretical frame works. As results, seven Hypotheses were produced.

Questionnaires were distributed not only manually but sent through emails as well to the target respondents. There are certain Control variables as well like demographic factors like the characteristics of the population like gender, income and age no doubt they may be having the impact on consumer purchase intentions but they are out aside as the confounding variables, according to the old research studies.

This is a research where the convenience and the snowball sampling technique is used at the same time to increase the number of respondents. This research is conducted in Punjab Pakistan. The target population is literate and educated and particularly the young adults by distributing the questionnaires in them. Due to this strategy the researcher had ample data by even saving the costs and time. The data collection in the form of questionnaire distribution process lasted 20 days. 310 responses that were considered to be fruitful and valuable for the research were collected and recorded and prepared for data analysis.

For the preparation of data file and its screening and testing of hypothesis the SPSS version 19 is used. As per requirement preliminary data screening, missing value analysis, aberrant value analysis, normality analysis and Bivariate correlation were performed by using SPSS. The researcher firstly checked the missing values in data set because missing values lead towards incorrect results (Hair, 2010). For replacing values the researcher applied the Mean substitution procedure.

4.0 ANALYSIS

For the purpose of data screening, firstly missing value analysis is performed, because presence of any missing value set can cause problems or disturbance by providing few types of mistaken or incomplete results (Hair, 2010). In case, of missing values Mean Substitution Method is used (Hair, 2010). In this study, by applying the same we got no missing value. Thus, data file is suitable to perform further analysis.

Moreover, estimated mean and standard deviation of all variables are also the part of descriptive statistics. The results show that means of all variables is above 3 that is the midpoint of the study. As marketing mix (M=3.914), ecological concerns (M=3.627), subjective norms (M=3.864), environmental knowledge (M=3.957) and green purchase intentions (M=3.737) have the highest means above 3, showing that these constructs are rated high and have a positive

relationship among each other. Similarly, standard deviation also shows highest values confirming the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Reliability of all scales was measured by Cronbach's alpha to assess the reliability of the overall data set. Alpha values of marketing mix strategies, ecological concerns, subjective norms, environmental knowledge and green purchase intentions are 0.865, 0.830, 0.911, 0.776 and 0.883 respectively. Since the threshold value is 0.7 and all the values are above it.

Table 1. Multivariate Regression Analysis

Hypothesis		P	R Square	Adjusted R²	Standardized Coefficient B	T
H1: MM ⟶	EK	0.000	0.359	0.357	0.599	15.866
H2: EC ⟶	EK	0.000	0.371	0.368	0.236	2.900
H3: SN ⟶	EK	0.004	0.864	0.863	0.874	40.389
H4: EK ⟶	GPI	0.000	0.183	0.181	0.288	6.382

From the above table it is evident that a significant positive relationship exists between marketing mix & environmental knowledge (R²=0.359, p < .001). In this case, the coefficient of determination for impact of marketing mix on environmental knowledge (Adjusted R² = 0.357) implies that 35.7 % variance in the environmental knowledge can be explained by the variation in the marketing mix. That predominantly favors hypothesis 1.

A significant positive relationship exists between ecological concerns and environmental knowledge (R²=0.371, p > .001).The coefficient of determination for impact of ecological concerns on environmental knowledge (Adjusted R² = 0.368) implies t 36.8 % variance in the environmental knowledge can be explained by the variation in the ecological concern. It also supports hypothesis 2.

Similarly, a positive relationship is found between subjective norms and environmental knowledge (R²=0.864, p < .001). In this case, the coefficient of determination for impact of

subjective norms on environmental knowledge (Adjusted R^2 = 0.863) implies that 86.3% variance in the environmental knowledge can be explained by the variation in the subjective norms. This is supporting hypothesis 3.

Moreover, A significant positive relationship exists between environmental knowledge and green purchase intentions (R^2=0.183, p > .001). In this case, the coefficient of determination for impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intentions (Adjusted R^2 = 0.181) implies that 18.1 % variance in the green purchase intentions can be explained by the variation in the environmental knowledge. This also supports hypothesis 4.

The overall results of regression analysis showed that all independent variables i.e. marketing mix, ecological concerns and subjective norms have positive impact on environmental knowledge that is mediator. Similarly, environmental knowledge has positive impact on green purchase intentions that is dependent variable. This shows that the more marketing mix, ecological concerns and subjective norms lead towards more environmental knowledge. Moreover, more environmental knowledge leads towards more green purchase intentions.

Mediation Analysis through Regression

Environmental Knowledge serves as a mediator between predictors marketing mix, ecological concerns subjective norms and dependent variable green purchase intentions .To examine the impact of predictor constructs on criterion constructs and the mediating effect of environmental knowledge regression analysis was performed. There are four conditions firstly there should be a relation of independent and mediating variable with each other. Secondly, there is significant positive relationship between predictor and criterion. Thirdly in the presence of mediating variable the relationship between predictor and criterion must be weakened. For this purpose three step regression analyses is performed in SPSS to prove the mediation effect. Since beta of independent and dependent variable is reducing in third step so it is proved that environmental knowledge is acting as a mediator between independent variables i.e marketing mix, ecological concerns subjective norms and dependent variable i.e. green purchase intentions.

Table 2. Mediation Analysis through Regression

Step	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Standardized Regression coefficients (β)	F	T	Sig.	Adjusted R²
1	Environmental Knowledge	Marketing Mix	0.783	178.72	26.696	.000	.612
2	Green Purchase Intentions	Marketing Mix	0.599	251.74	15.866	.000	.357
3	Green Purchase Intentions	Environmental Knowledge	0.697	370.28	16.813	.061	.399
		Marketing Mix	0.467	112.68	14.044	.000	.141

Table 2 shows Adjusted R² is 0.612 which is showing variation in environmental knowledge is explained up to 61.2% through variation in independent variable i-e marketing mix in the first step of mediation. Standard regression coefficient between marketing mix and environmental knowledge is significant (β =.783, *p* =.000) with significant T value (26.696, p=.000) and F value (178.72, p=.000). The next step of mediation analysis adjusted R² is .357 indicating that the variation in green purchase intentions is explained up to 35.7% through variation in independent variable that is marketing mix. Standard regression coefficient between green purchase intentions and marketing mix is significant (β =.599, *p* =.000) with significant T value (15.866, p=.000) and F value (251.74, p=.000). In step three of mediation analysis, environmental knowledge is added as a mediator.

The results indicate that standard regression coefficients in case of environmental knowledge has been declined in magnitude and become non-significant (β =399, *p* =.061). Same is the case, the standard regression coefficient between environmental knowledge and green purchase intentions is positive and significant (β =0.697, *p* =.000). Hence, it is proved that environmental knowledge mediates the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Thus, hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Table 3. Mediation Analysis through Regression

Step	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Standardized Regression coefficients (β)	F	T	Sig.	Adjusted R²
1	Environmental Knowledge	Ecological Concerns	0.468	125.87	11.219	.000	.217
2	Green Purchase Intentions	Ecological Concerns	0.482	135.85	11.655	.000	.230
3	Green Purchase Intentions	Environmental Knowledge	0.321	105.16	7.201	.085	.102
		Ecological Concerns	0.467	69.716	1.728	.000	.234

Table 3 shows Adjusted R² is 0.217 showing that variation in environmental knowledge is explained up to 21.7% through variation in independent variable that is ecological concerns in the first step of mediation. Standard regression coefficient between ecological concerns and environmental knowledge is significant (β =.468, p =.000) with significant T value (11.219, p=.000) and F value (125.87, p=.000).

In the second step of mediation analysis, Adjusted R² is .230 indicating that the variation in green purchase intentions is explained up to 23% through variation in independent variable that is ecological concerns. Standard regression coefficient between green purchase intentions and ecological concerns is significant (β =.482, p =.000) with significant T value (11.655, p=.000) and F value (135.85, p=.000).

In the third step of mediation analysis in SPSS, environmental knowledge is added as a mediator. The results indicate that standard regression coefficients in case of environmental knowledge has been decreased in magnitude and become non-significant (β =102, p =.085). Same is the case, the standard regression coefficient between environmental knowledge and green purchase intentions is positive and significant (β =0.467, p =.000).

Hence, it proves that environmental knowledge mediates the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Thus, hypothesis 6 is accepted.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis through Regression

Step	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Standardized Regression coefficients (β)	F	T	Sig.	Adjusted R²
1	Environmental Knowledge	Subjective Norms	0.307	46.749	6.837	.000	.194
2	Green Purchase Intentions	Subjective Norms	0.920	249.87	49.936	.000	.847
3	Green Purchase Intentions	Environmental Knowledge	0.285	124.36	16.813	.744	.121
		Subjective Norms	0.442	132.90	.327	.000	.622

Table 4 shows Adjusted R² is 0.194 which is showing that variation in environmental knowledge is explained up to 19.4% through variation in independent variable that is marketing mix in the first step of mediation. Standard regression coefficient between subjective norms and environmental knowledge is significant (β=.307, p =.000) with significant T value (6.837, p=.000) and F value (46.749, p=.000). In the second step of mediation analysis, Adjusted R² is .847 indicating that the variation in green purchase intentions is explained up to 84.7% through variation in independent variable that is subjective norms.

Standard regression coefficient between green purchase intentions and subjective norms is significant (β=.920, p =.000) with significant T value (49.936, p=.000) and F value (249.87, p=.000). In the third step of mediation analysis in SPSS, environmental knowledge is added as a mediator. The results indicate that standard regression coefficients in case of environmental knowledge has been decreased in magnitude and become non-significant (β=121, p =.744). Same is the case, the standard regression coefficient between environmental knowledge and

green purchase intentions is positive and significant (β =0.285, *p* =.000).Therefore it is proved that environmental knowledge serve as the mediator between the green influences and purchase intentions of Pakistani consumers. Thus, hypothesis 7 is accepted. Simple correlation can also provide the evidence of this mediating role.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The conclusion withdrawn is simply based on the realities found by the researcher that even though these types of the researches are conducted by the researchers in the countries other than Pakistan like Bangladesh ,England ,America , China , Malaysia etc. . Pakistan is included in the list of developing rather under developed countries where the literacy rate is 46.6 percent only and the Disposable income to spend is more than less in the countries other than Pakistan. Here the green marketing concept is in the infancy stage where the requisite knowledge is below standard. Green Marketing is in its inception stage in Pakistan due to its infancy its understanding is rarer in Pakistan. Multinational corporations have added the concept of green marketing in Pakistani organizational production literature. The green products are of low involvement product to high involvement product continuum.

What the organizations are doing in this scenario they are launching their green marketing strategies particularly to make the people know about their existence. People are less aware in Pakistan about the green advertisement strategies. Although the green products that are added in Pakistani market are ranging from fast moving consumer goods to luxurious cars.

Subjective norms are those practices that are subjective due to the fear of the society, family and surroundings when ecological or environmental knowledge is imparted they influence the consumer to make actual purchase intentions. Since social norms and subjective norms are the important factors that determine the consumer purchase intentions therefore it is evident that in the country like Pakistan where the cultural practices are adhered as well they play an important role to influence the purchaser.

Ecological concerns are the predisposition and sensitivity to save the environment all around you. If it is the organization then the ecological cognizant organizations invest in their long term benefit by pursuing the environmental friendly practices and if it is the consumer then

concerns represents how much conscious you are towards your environment. Here in this research results show that the ecological concerns when backed by the eco literacy may convince the consumer to purchase eco-friendly products.

On the basis of the results one can judge that the marketing mix strategies, ecological concerns and the subjective norms have the effect on the consumer purchase intentions of Pakistani consumers in the presence of the eco-literacy or the environmental knowledge. Further research in this area can be done by taking the green purchase behaviors as the dependent variable.

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