



Evaluating the influence of government initiatives and social platforms on green practices of Gen Z: The mediating role of environmental awareness and consciousness

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the impact of environmental sustainability government initiatives (ESGI), social platform influence (SPI), environment awareness (EA), and environment consciousness (EC) on green practices (GP). Data were collected using a self-administered survey targeting Gen Z consumers. A total of 354 responses were analyzed using the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that SPI, EA, and EC have a significant positive impact on GP, while ESGI does not affect GP. The study also examines the mediating role of EC and EA in the adoption/implementation of green practices. Further, the moderating influence of gender was also found in the model. The study highlights the importance of SPI and its effect on the green practices of Gen Z, which will guide businesses and marketers in promoting their green initiative.

1. Introduction

Globalization has accelerated the economic growth of nations, but at the same time, it has adversely affected the environment. The ever-increasing demand for goods and services has pushed the manufacturing industry to increase its capacity, which has resulted in the depletion of natural resources, posing a threat to the environment (Zhang et al., 2020). Additionally, the extensive use of non-biodegradable plastics is proving havoc on the planet (Stoica et al., 2020). Despite this, plastics managed to establish a global presence due to their low cost, easy availability, and long durability (Stoica et al., 2020). Similarly, increased technology is posing challenges related to electronic waste (Kalia et al., 2021b). As a result, sustainability has become a matter of concern for governments and mankind at large (Kalia et al., 2022a). There is an urgent need to adopt sustainable green practices, including environment-friendly raw materials, design, packaging, and supply, to save the environment from further deterioration. Industries must adopt strategies such as recycling, environmental

preservation, waste management and reduction, regulatory compliance, and pollution control throughout the manufacturing phase (Jabbour et al., 2015; Montabon et al., 2007). The governments of many countries have developed strategies, policies, and legal frameworks for environmental protection (Basloom et al., 2022; Kanda et al., 2016; Moffat and Auer, 2006), but the primary focus remains on the producer side. Consumption processes are the main culprits because consumers create demand and are the ultimate buyers of products and services. Research shows that nature's education can assist individuals in developing favorable actions toward the environment. Educating consumers on eco-label products reinforces positive environmental attitudes and leads to desired consumer behaviors (Taufique et al., 2016). Furthermore, it has the potential to surge environmental awareness and consciousness (Gadenne et al., 2009; Huang et al., 2014) and create a demand for sustainable products and services.

We searched for literature focusing on environmental sustainability government initiatives, social platform influence, green practices, environment awareness, and consciousness. There was no previous

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study including all these variables (specially government initiatives and social platform influence) hence we tried searching on the latter three concepts only. We noticed that majority of studies focusing on green practices, environment awareness, and consciousness are contextually centered around the hotel industry (Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016) or the studies were carried out in countries like the USA (Kim et al., 2017) or China (Jiang and Gao, 2019) (Table 1). Hence, we kept our study generic for greater generalizability and conducted the same in India. Conceptually, we designed our study differently, for example, none of the previous studies tested environmental sustainability government initiatives and social platform influence (as independent variables), environment awareness and consciousness (as mediators), and green practices (as dependent variable). Following the call for investigating a moderating variable to see the relationship between other variables and green practices (Kim et al., 2016, 2017), we included gender as a moderator in the current study. Considering this identified gap from the literature, our study focused on the acceptance of pro-environmental behavior by consumers, particularly Gen Z, to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Anyone who is born between 1997 and 2012 is referred to as Gen Z. We considered this generation because the eldest members of this generation are currently young adults in their early 20s who are maturing and starting careers. According to recent research, 98% of them are smartphone owners (Kastenholz, 2021) and 83% of them use

social media to shop (Martin, 2023).

The paper is organized into six sections. The first section comprises an introduction, followed by section 2, which provides the background of literature and hypothesis development. Section 3 entails research methodology and data analysis. In Section 4, the results are presented in detail. Section 5 includes a discussion, theoretical contribution, and managerial implications. At last, Section 6 concludes the study and talks about its limitations.

2. Theoretical underpinning, literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Theoretical underpinning

Theories and models such as the theory of reasoned action (Mishra et al., 2014) the institutional theory (Dao et al., 2011), the technology-organization-environment (Mata et al., 2021), the motivation-ability-opportunity framework (Ojo and Fauzi, 2020a), and the stimulus-organism-response framework (SOR) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) have established the elements of green practices, but only a few attempts are made to examine the effects of these activities on environmental parameters. According to the SOR framework, cues in the physical environment have a significant role in generating emotional

Table 1
Review of studies focusing on green practices, environment awareness and consciousness to present the research gap.

Authors and year	Independent variables	Mediators	Moderators	Outcome variables	Respondents (Sample size)	Country	Technique	Industry
Clemens (2006)	Green Performance		Green economic incentives (firm size and respondents' confidence in existing green standards as control variables)	Financial performance	Owners, operations managers, and green managers (72)	USA	Hierarchical regression	Steel
Kim et al. (2016)	Intensity of green practices and relative perceived quality Intensity of green practices, brand and chain			Satisfaction Relative perceived quality	217 hotel properties	North America	Regression	Hotel
Lee et al. (2016)				Hotel guests' perception to green practices	Reviews of top ten green hotels in the USA ranked by TripAdvisor	USA	Content analysis	Hotel
Kim et al. (2017)	Cleanliness, location, room, service, value, pet boarding, free Wi-Fi, multilingual staff, free self-parking, airport transportation, and green leaders			Overall customer rating, Revisit intention, Average daily rate, revenue per available room	Customers (128)	USA	Hierarchical multiple regression	Hotel
Jiang and Gao (2019)	Environmental concern and customers' attitude toward green practices	Customers' overall attitude toward green hotels	Green hotel experience	Customers' behavioural intention	Customers (258)	China	CB-SEM	Hotel
Al-Kumaim et al. (2021)	Environmental concern, green product awareness, government support, perceived ecological value, community, and green practice	Purchase intention		Green product purchase behavior	Consumers (300)	Malaysia	PLS-SEM	Not mentioned
Chang et al. (2022)	Source credibility, information value and message characteristics	Persuasiveness and communication effectiveness	Environment consciousness	Green Message Sharing Intention	Students and management professionals (1157)	Taiwan	One-way ANOVA and CB-SEM	Generic
This study	Environmental sustainability government initiatives and social platform influence	Environment awareness and environment consciousness	Gender	Green practices	Gen Z consumers (354)	India	PLS-SEM, MGA, Mediation analysis	Generic

Source. The authors

responses from participants, which in turn determine approach-related behavior. The environmental cues (ESGI, SPI, EA, and EC) in our model act as stimuli (S) that affect consumers (gender in our model) which are organisms/consumers (O) resulting in the adaptation of GP which is an external response (R). In today's world, social media campaigns have a huge impact on the purchasing decisions of today's generation. Making people more conscious of environmental issues through social media can help spread the word about the benefits of being green. Activities that impact our environment adversely should be regulated by the government. As a result of this research gap, we investigated the willingness of consumers, especially Gen Z, to engage in environmentally friendly practices to live more sustainably. We investigate how environmental consciousness and sensitivity are influenced by government programs and social media, and how this in turn affects green consumption habits. Additionally, we investigated whether gender play a moderating role across the board.

2.2. Green practices

Finding green markets, making green products, and involving stakeholders are all part of green practices (Narula and Desore, 2016). To improve their long-term viability, many businesses are investing in cutting-edge green technology and using green HRM, green supply chain, green innovation, and green marketing strategies (Alraja et al., 2022). While "green practices" have garnered a lot of attention from businesses and other groups, consumers have paid less attention to them. Recent increases in media coverage and activism about global warming, climate change, and sustainability indicate a growing realization of the significance of green practices not only in developed economies but also in emerging ones. When selecting and managing investment portfolios, green enterprises not only consider the economic/profit element, but also the people, planet, and profit or social, environmental, and financial factors. Past research has also shown that some consumers support the introduction of taxes on polluters who cause environmental pollution (Gadenne et al., 2011; Peattie, 2010); and the enforcement of monetary penalties for the use of inefficient technologies (Gadenne et al., 2011). However, implementation of such policies can be extremely difficult due to potential opposition from businesses and customers. Consequently, the effect of government policies on consumers' green practices remains uncertain (Sharma and Gadenne, 2014).

2.3. Environment sustainability government initiatives (ESGI)

Environmental sustainability is one of the global issues of the twenty-first century (Watson et al., 2010). The deterioration of the environment is taking place at such a fast pace that it is becoming a serious threat to society. Humans are using environmental resources not just to fulfill their needs but also the greed to monetize. The over-utilization of natural resources contributes to worsening the situation. The governments of many countries have started adopting environmental management practices to monitor and control the impact of the corporate sector on the natural environment. They have even provided subsidies to firms to make eco-friendly products and use environmental technologies (Kanda et al., 2015, 2016; Wu and Hu, 2020). But due to limited resources, it cannot promote all the new technologies or ideas (Jaffe et al., 2005). Many organizations are using eco-friendly products as a promotional strategy. They are trying to gain an edge in the green market by labeling their products as green products and highlighting the implementation of green practices in their organization (Uzun and Keles, 2012). However, some firms are reluctant to adopt green practices as they believe that they will adversely affect their profits (Montabon et al., 2007). The government is taking initiatives from time to time to encourage sustainable development. Past research shows that the government supports corporate sustainability leadership (Moffat and Auer, 2006), exporting environmental technologies (Kanda et al., 2016),

pro-environmental behavior (Mohanty et al., 2021), and many others.

The ultimate answers for an environmentally sustainable society are economic growth and green innovation (Abid et al., 2022; Harts, 1995). Understanding green consumption's effect on consumer behavior is crucial as more businesses focus on goods and processes designed to limit environmental damage (Finisterra do Paço and Raposo, 2010; Haws et al., 2014). Educating consumers on eco-label products reinforces the formation of positive environmental attitudes and, consequently, leads to desired consumer behaviors (Taufique et al., 2016). Environmental education will assist individuals to develop positive attitudes and actions toward the environment and increase environmental awareness. So, overall government programs, and social platform campaigns are contributing to the creation of environmental awareness and consciousness (Uzun and Keles, 2012), which ultimately affect the adoption of green practices. Based on the literature on environmental sustainability, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1. ESGIs have a significant positive effect on EA (H1a), GP (H1b), and EC (H1c).

2.4. Social platform influence (SPI)

Online social platforms have gained popularity in the past few years. They provide a virtual environment for users to communicate and connect with others (Shao and Pan, 2019). It has become one of the key information sources for electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Mladenović et al., 2020). The user-generated content on social media platforms has the power to influence the public by building trust and generating interest in buying products and services (Gil-Soto et al., 2019). However, it's not easy to evaluate which environmental or social factor is most important for a given purchase. In addition, a lack of knowledge and time constraints to conduct the necessary research, interpret the information, and search for products to make environmentally responsible purchases is a challenge (Young et al., 2010). Social influence and platform pressure affect the adoption of green innovation practices. Further, promotional activities and incentives on social media and e-commerce platforms can create awareness about green practices and develop environmental consciousness (Zhang et al., 2020). Having said this, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2. SPI has a significant positive effect on EA (H2a), GP (H2b), and EC (H2c).

2.5. Environmental awareness (EA) and its roles as a mediator

Environmental awareness is one of the green triggers which is related to environmental concerns and comprehension (Chan et al., 2014; Rustam et al., 2020). When humans realize the value of the environment and the harm, they are doing to it, they may turn their actions to protect the surroundings. The increased awareness of environmental problems may result in the incorporation of green practices into everyday lives. People may buy organic products and contribute to recycling activities (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Companies are also taking the initiative to raise consumer awareness of the sustainability practices used in the production and distribution of products (Uzun and Keles, 2012). Based on research evidence in the literature (Qu et al., 2015), we propose that environmental awareness positively affects green practices and may also act as a mediator between ESGI-GP and SPI-GP. Thus, we hypothesized the direct and indirect influence of EA on GP.

H3. EA has a significant positive effect on GP.

H4. EA positively mediates between ESGI-GP (H4a) and SPI-GP (H4b) relationships.

2.6. Environmental consciousness (EC) and its roles as a mediator

Environmental consciousness is founded on the concept that the

ecosystem confronts a variety of environmental problems as a result of human activities, particularly in the manufacturing, hospitality, and tourism industries (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2018; Tze San et al., 2022). Different consumer groups exhibit varying degrees of environmental awareness. Research in the hospitality sector found that consumers' desire to share positive e-WOM and pay a premium for ecologically certified hotels increases proportionally with their environmental consciousness (Huang et al., 2014; Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2018). Previous studies suggest that environmental commitment enhances sustainable consumption behavior (Mishra et al., 2021, 2022). Literature suggests that EC can significantly influence purchase intentions (Müller et al., 2021) and can also mediate the relationship between ESGI and GP. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses.

- H5. EC has a significant positive effect on GP.
- H6. EC positively mediates between ESGI-GP (H6a) and SPI-GP (H6b) relationships.

2.7. Gender and its role as a moderator

One of the purposes of this research is to determine the moderating effect of gender on the model. This study will provide a thorough understanding of how ESGI, SPI, EA, EC, and GP differ in the case of male and female Gen Z consumers. Past research shows that females are likely to be caring and dependent, while males are expected to be aggressive, competitive, and dominating (Ahmad et al., 2021). In terms of environmental sustainability and green behavior, it is expected that females care more about the environment compared to males (Gallego-Álvarez and Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Hwang and Choi, 2018). However, to date, no clear evidence has been found in the literature regarding the moderating effect of gender on Gen Z consumers. Thus, we believe it is important to examine the moderating influence of gender in this context on all the eight relationships established in the proposed model. Consequently, we provide the following hypothesis.

- H7. Significant differences exist between males and females for the proposed paths in the structural model.

After reading a lot of research and finding a gap in the research, the following conceptual model (see Fig. 1) is proposed.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research paradigm

A paradigm is an approach to conducting research. It consists of three basic questions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. A combination of research philosophy (ontology and epistemology) and research methodology form a research paradigm. In this research, we seek to understand the green practices of Gen Z. For this purpose, we attempt to check the relationship between several variables (EC, EA, ESGI, and SPI) and green practices based on positivism. Since positivism posits the presence of a single reality, we determine the direct and indirect (moderating and mediating) relationship between the variables. We employed a quantitative research methodology, and the data was collected through questionnaires.

3.2. Research context

The purpose of this research was to determine the significance of GP for Gen Z. To that end, ESGI, SPI, EA, and EC were taken into consideration as factors influencing GP adoption. Generally, consumers do not make their choice of product or service based on environmental factors (Al-Kumaim et al., 2021). Through campaigns and advertising, the government, organizations, and the media have the chance to attempt and increase public awareness and consciousness of the advantages of green products. Government actions are essential for the adoption of GP, and earlier research has shown that individuals will only show interest if the government takes the lead by offering benefits to consumers (Fauzi et al., 2018). Additionally, the lack of economies of scale, makes the production of environmentally friendly items an expensive task. For example, in comparison to diesel or gasoline vehicles, hybrid or electric vehicles generate less environmental waste and are therefore seen as more environmentally friendly vehicles. In this regard, it is evident that hybrid and electric vehicles are quite expensive, and most buyers do not choose them because of their high costs. Therefore, governments offer a variety of rewards to both consumers and producers to support the environment and promote GP. Social influence has a profound impact on individual and group behavior (Kalia et al., 2022b) and similar influences were observed in the past related to the adoption of GP (Guo et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2022). Because Gen Z users spend so much time on the internet using different devices (Zia, 2020a), they are greatly

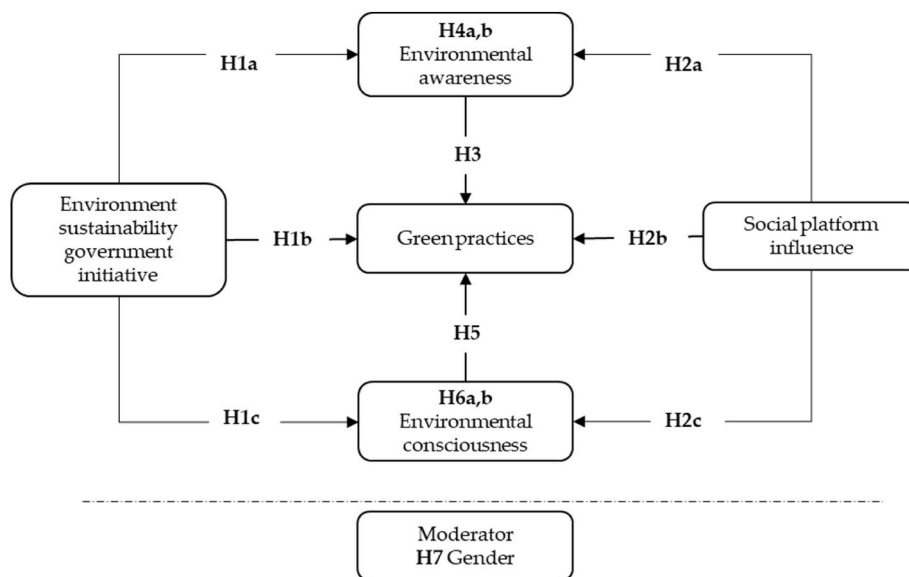


Fig. 1. Conceptual model. Source. Authors

influenced by friends' and other users' suggestions on social media in general. SPI develops awareness and the consumers' consciousness regarding the GP (Rafiq et al., 2022).

3.3. Data collection and sample response rate

A structured questionnaire was distributed to college students of the western states of India (Gujrat and Rajasthan) for data collection. Based on the number of students in the universities, we selected six universities to collect the data. The data were gathered in English using a convenience sampling approach in June 2022. A response rate of 81.3% was obtained from a total of 435 students who were contacted to gather data, and 354 of those students were finally included in the study for further analysis. The instrument was made available by email, social media, and a google form. A survey and a consent form were distributed to students who indicated their willingness to participate. According to the consent form, it was a voluntary participation in which the responses would be kept confidential, and individuals might revoke their consent at any time. According to the descriptive analysis, there are more males (70.90%) than females (29.09%) in the sample.

3.4. Variables and measurement scales

The questionnaire was developed using established factors and statements related to ESGI, SPI, EA, EC, and GP. Participants were asked to mark their responses to the statements, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree" on a five-point Likert scale. The six ESGI items were taken directly from research related to the scale development of government initiatives for environmental sustainability (Mohanty et al., 2021). Five SPI items were adapted from a study on social media and Gen Z (Thøgersen, 2006). Five items related to EA were adapted from Ham et al. (2016); six items of EC from a study on the linkage between the green purchase decisions and the EC (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996), and six items of GP from a study on Gen z and purchase behavior (Ugulu et al., 2013). In this study, the model comprises ESGI, EA, EC, and SPI as the first-order reflective constructs.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

The hypotheses were tested and relationships between the variables were established using the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method using SmartPLS4. Compared to the more widely used covariance-based SEM approaches, it also requires fewer assumptions about the distribution of the data. To confirm the absence of common method bias (CMB), Harman's single-factor test (HSFT) was carried out. As per HSFT, there was no CMB because the single component did not account for more than half of the variation and the highest variance that could be explained by one component using a principal component analysis (PCA) was 28.8% (Aguirre-Urreta and Hu, 2019; Endara et al., 2019; Kalia et al., 2021a; Kock, 2015). As a result, the data used for the analysis was free of bias. The measurement model comprises the evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2011, 2014). The parameters like Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used for internal consistency and reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) and loadings were used to evaluate the convergent validity. To ensure the acceptability of factor loadings, one item (ESGI1) was deleted as its value was below the acceptable level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019b). The values for AVE, CR, and Cronbach alpha were found to be above the thresholds of 0.50, 0.70, and 0.70, respectively (Babin et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2019b). The AVE was larger than 0.5 and the composite outer loadings for each indicator were all within the acceptable range of 0.6, demonstrating that variables have a high level of convergent validity. The structures and their items, as well as the loadings in the model, were found to have satisfactory

individual item reliability. The Cronbach's alpha was between 0.864 and 0.991, the CR was between 0.869 and 0.983 and the AVE was from 0.694 to 0.949 (Table 2). The HTMT values were observed to test the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2018; Zia, 2020b), and it was found that all of the HTMT values were smaller than 0.85, indicating that the model had discriminant validity (Table 3).

4.2. Structural model

The path coefficient values show how well the independent variables impact the dependent variable (Table 4 and Fig. 2). The results show that SPI ($\beta = 0.159, p = .004$), EA ($\beta = 0.219, p = .000$) and EC ($\beta = 0.449, p = .000$) have a significant positive impact, whereas ESGI ($\beta = 0.033, p = .581$) has insignificant impact on GP. Further, SPI ($\beta = 0.100, p = .000$) has a significant positive impact, whereas ESGI ($\beta = 0.012, p = .860$) has an insignificant impact on EA. Similarly, when the impact of ESGI and SPI on EC was evaluated, it was found that ESGI ($\beta = 0.027, p = .603$) and SPI ($\beta = -0.097, p = .148$) have an insignificant impact. This shows that there is a significant effect of SPI, EA, and EC on GP. Further, the significant influence of SPI on EA was observed. The obtained R^2 value for GP was 0.302. Which suggests that only 30.2% of the variance is explained by the said variables.

4.3. Mediation

In this model, the mediating effects of EA and EC for the ESGI-GP and SPI-GP relationships were calculated (Table 5). We found no significant mediation of EC and EA on any paths of the proposed model except partial mediation of EA ($t = 2.966, p < .01$) between the SPI-GP relationship.

Table 2
Results of the measurement model.

Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
EA1	0.972	0.984	0.984	0.939
EA2	0.968			
EA3	0.962			
EA4	0.972			
EA5	0.97			
EC1	0.931	0.965	0.967	0.851
EC2	0.926			
EC3	0.913			
EC4	0.905			
EC5	0.916			
EC6	0.944			
ESGI2	0.797			
ESGI3	0.82	0.991	0.991	0.956
ESGI4	0.83			
ESGI5	0.913			
ESGI6	0.928			
ESGI7	0.907			
GP1	0.983			
GP2	0.979			
GP3	0.965			
GP4	0.96			
GP5	0.988			
GP6	0.991			
SPI1	0.757			
SPI2	0.833			
SPI3	0.839			
SPI4	0.78			
SPI5	0.759			

Note. Environment sustainability government initiatives (ESGI), Environmental awareness (EA), Environmental consciousness (EC), Social platform influence (SPI), Green practices (GP); Cronbach's alpha (CA), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted.

Source. Authors' calculations

Table 3

Discriminant validity: The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) criterion.

Variables	EA	EC	ESGI	GP	SPI
EA					
EC	0.17				
ESGI	0.017	0.063			
GP	0.314	0.48	0.035		
SPI	0.096	0.106	0.052	0.114	

Source. Authors' calculations

Table 4

Results of structural model (direct).

Hyp.	Path	Path coeff.	St.dev	t-value	p-value	Result
H1a	ESGI → EA	0.012	0.07	0.177	0.86	NS
H1b	ESGI → GP	0.033	0.059	0.553	0.581	NS
H1c	ESGI → EC	0.027	0.051	0.52	0.603	NS
H2a	SPI → EA	0.1	0.031	3.213	0.001**	S
H2b	SPI → GP	0.159	0.056	2.843	0.004**	S
H2c	SPI → EC	-0.097	0.067	1.448	0.148	NS
H3	EA → GP	0.219	0.049	4.443	0**	S
H5	EC → GP	0.449	0.052	8.675	0**	S

Note. S=Supported, NS=Not supported; ** significant at 1%, * significant at 5%.

Source. Authors' findings

4.4. Multigroup analysis

Numerous researchers have chosen to use demographic variables in their moderation analyses (Robina-Ramírez et al., 2020; Taylor and Strutton, 2010). With this motivation, we performed the PLS-MGA test with gender as a moderator. This test is based on the observed bootstrap distribution and can manage small and different sample sizes, its application is very practical and straightforward (Aguirre-Urreta and Hu, 2019; Hair et al., 2019b). It was found that the impact of EA for the male group ($t = 4.22, p < .05$) and female group ($t = 2.518, p < .05$) as well as EC for the male group ($t = 8.648, p < .05$) and female group ($t = 3.604, p < .05$) are positively significant on GP. Similarly, when the impact of ESGI on GP was evaluated, it was found that it is insignificant

for the male group ($t = .954, p > .05$) whereas it is significant for the female group ($t = 2.764, p < .05$). The impact of SPI on EA ($t = 2.576, p < .05$) and GP ($t = 2.655, p < .05$) for the male group are significant whereas it is insignificant on EA ($t = .914, p > .05$) and GP ($t = 0.782, p > .05$) for the female group. Regarding gender, it has been found that EA and EC have a positive, significant impact on GP for both the male and female groups. In addition, both for male and female groups, the effects of ESGI on EC and EA, as well as SPI on EC, were negligible (Table 6).

5. Discussions

This research explores the relationships between ESGI, SPI, and GP with EA and ES as mediators and gender as a moderator. The findings reveal interesting contradictions to the existing research on Gen Z adoption of GP. Based on the literature, we hypothesized that ESGI has a significant positive influence on EA (H1a), GP (H1b), and EC (H1c). We found that ESGI has no significant relationship with EA, GP, and EC. These results are surprising as in the past, studies have established a moderate to significant positive association of ESGI with EA, GP, and EC (Al-Kumaim et al., 2021; Fauzi et al., 2018; Mohanty et al., 2021). Likely, Gen Z is less affected by the ESGI since governments aren't doing enough to affect the EA, GP, and EC. Another possibility could be that Gen Z does not take environmental concerns seriously and the data was

Table 5

Results of structural model (mediation analysis).

Hyp.	Path	Path coeff.	St. dev	t-value	p-value	Result
H4a	ESGI → EC → GP	0.012	0.023	0.522	0.601	NS
H4b	SPI → EC → GP	-0.043	0.031	1.406	0.16	NS
H6a	ESGI → EA → GP	0.003	0.016	0.173	0.863	NS
H6b	SPI → EA → GP	0.022	0.007	2.966	0.003**	Partial mediation

Source. Authors' findings.

Note. S=Supported, NS=Not supported; ** significant at 1%, * significant at 5%.

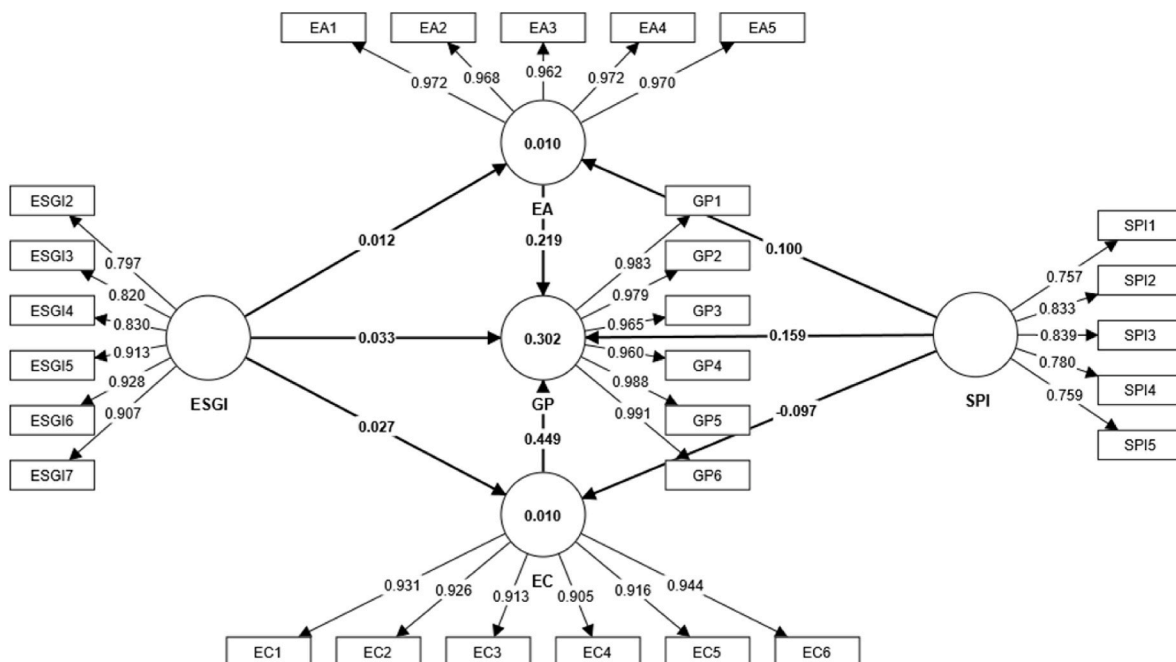


Fig. 2. Structural model after analysis.

Source. Authors' calculations

Table 6
Multi-group analysis (MGA) for gender (H7).

Path	t-value		p-value	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
EA → GP	2.518	4.22	0.012**	0**
EC → GP	3.604	8.648	0**	0**
ESGI → EA	0.223	0.096	0.824	0.923
ESGI → EC	0.959	0.185	0.338	0.853
ESGI → GP	2.764	0.954	0.006**	0.34
SPI → EA	0.914	2.576	0.361	0.01**
SPI → EC	0.487	1.338	0.626	0.181
SPI → GP	0.782	2.655	0.434	0.008**

Source. Authors' findings.

Note. S=Supported, NS=Not supported; ** significant at 1%, * significant at 5%.

gathered from college students (Walker, 2021). This study corroborates with past studies where it was found that Gen Z is less sensitive to environmental effects and does not care for future generations (Ferrari et al., 2021).

Further, we hypothesized that SPI has a positive impact on EA (H2a), GP (H2b), and EC (H2c). The initial two hypothesis shows a significant positive relationship and it corroborates with the past studies on social media impact on Gen Z (Al-Kumaim et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2020; Mohanty et al., 2021; Schlegelmilch et al., 1996), but an insignificant relationship was found between SPI and EC which contradicts with the previous studies which have established a positive relationship of SPI and EC (Vizcaya-Moreno and Pérez-Cañaveras, 2020). Researchers argue that consumers of newer generations focus more on self-promotion through social media than environmentally friendly actions (Zahari and Esa, 2016).

Further, we hypothesized that the EA (H3) and EC (H4) have a significant positive impact on Gen Z's GP. In this study, we have found similar results and our hypotheses were accepted. These results corroborate the past findings where studies have established a positive impact of EA (Gadenne et al., 2009; Ojo and Fauzi, 2020b). It is obvious that if Gen Z is aware and conscious of environmental issues, they are likely to adopt GP in their consumption behavior (Zia et al., 2022; Zia and Alzahrani, 2022). A high level of EC has been observed for global warming issues among Gen Z (Gallego-Álvarez and Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Taufique et al., 2016) which results in an inclination towards eco-friendly products. Similar to this, EA also derives GP intentions from the fact that customers tend to consume less if they are aware of the negative effects of environmental pollutants and waste (Zameer and Yasmeen, 2022).

One of the significant contributions of this study relates to the mediation effect of EA for the SPI-GP relationship (H6b). In our study, a significant partial mediation is observed which is in line with the past studies on environment and sustainability where a significant mediation of EA was observed (Ojo and Fauzi, 2020b; Zameer and Yasmeen, 2022). Additionally, there was no evidence of EC (H4a) and EA (H6a) mediating for the ESGI-GP. These results contradict the previous studies where they have observed a partial to significant mediation of EC and EC for the ESGI-GP relationship (Guo et al., 2020; Mohanty et al., 2021; Ugulu et al., 2013). It might be due to insufficient government efforts to advance EC and EA, which eventually affect GP. Additionally, because this study was carried out in India, a developing nation, the government might not have the resources necessary to promote the EA and EC projects. Similarly, EC (H4b) didn't mediate between the SPI-GP relationship which contradicts previous findings (Ahmad et al., 2021; Shao and Pan, 2019; Vizcaya-Moreno and Pérez-Cañaveras, 2020). A possible reason for this could be that young generations are more comfortable with self-promotion and getting more feeds through social media and are apathetic towards environmental practices and society (Severo et al., 2018). Another contribution of this research is to figure out the moderating role of gender (H7) on the entire model, comprising eight unique relationships. According to the MGA, it was found that the ESGI

→ GP relationship is significant for females. We may infer that women take government programs seriously and exhibit GP behaviors. This result corroborates similar studies on Gen Z for environmental concerns and found that female students are more sensitive toward environmental sustainability issues than male students (Ugulu et al., 2013). On the other hand, SPI → EA and SPI → GP relationships were found to be significant for males. This indicates that males are more influenced by social media platforms. These results contradict the results of Tran et al. (2022), who reported that both genders primarily gain knowledge about eco-friendly fashion through social media platforms.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The study has made a significant contribution by providing an understanding of how Gen Z GP are influenced by ESGI and SPI. First, the model attempted to present a comprehensive view of GP and the effects of ESGI and SPI. We confirmed that SPI is more effective in creating GP than ESGI. Secondly, it was found that EC ($\beta = .449, p = .000$) has the most significant positive impact on GP, followed by EA ($\beta = 0.219, p = .000$) and SPI ($\beta = 0.159, p = .004$). This demonstrates the importance of EC and how it influences GP behavior in the Gen Z population. Thirdly, the model also explored how EA and EC mediate between ESGI → GP and SPI → GP relationships and confirmed that only EA mediates partially between the SPI → GP link. Fourthly, the moderation results established that males are more influenced by social media platforms for EA and GP.

5.2. Managerial implications

Several managerial implications for marketers emerged based on the primary findings. The SPI (H2a) is discovered to have a significant, profound influence on EA. To positively influence it, we advise managers to organization's presence on social platforms (SP). Some factors and actions that harm our environment can be reported on by SPs, and people can learn more about them. The EA is necessary for the adoption of GPs, managers should strive to create an innate willingness and feeling to adopt GPs. It is observed that SPI has a significant positive impact on GP (H2b). Therefore, it is advised that marketers enhance their social media presence to increase SPI and ultimately increase GP. To do this, marketers might advertise their goods and services by saying they are concerned about the environment and work to reduce pollution during the product's production and disposal processes. Due to social media's significant impact on how we live our daily lives, we must comprehend certain issues. It has been proven that social media communications are much more powerful than traditional forms of communication at sorting across information and shaping particular human behaviors (Carpenter et al., 2016). It has been found that the adoption of GPs in real life is hindered by a lack of awareness. Since we found that EA has a considerable favorable impact on GP (H3). Therefore, we advise social media to play a role in influencing GP adoption directly as well as improving EA to influence GP indirectly. We found that the EC also has a significant positive impact on GP (H5). Hence, we recommend marketers make consumers aware of environmental issues related to a specific product/service use. If consumers have higher EC regarding specific issues, there will be a higher propensity for GP. We found that ESGI has no significant relationship with EA (H1a), GP (H1b), and EC (H1c). However, our results also indicate that SP is an effective medium to promote EA. We recommend marketers (specially the government) use SPs to enhance EA and EC for developing a positive attitude toward the usage of eco-friendly products. Overall, it can be said that generally, consumers don't tend to purchase environment-friendly products. The government, businesses, and the media have an opportunity to use this situation to try to raise public awareness of the benefits of green practices through SPs.

6. Conclusion and limitations

In summary, the purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of ESGI and SPI on Gen Z EA, EC, and GP. Further, the moderating role of gender and mediating role of EA and EC was also checked using the primary data collected through convenience sampling. The data was analyzed using the PLS-SEM method on SmartPLS4 and the results reveal that except ESGI, all the other variables (SPI, EA, and EC) significantly impact GP. EA partially mediates the relationship between SPI and GP, while EC has no mediation effect in this relationship. According to the MGA, it was found that the ESGI → GP relationship is significant for females. We may infer that women take government programs seriously and exhibit GP behaviors. On the other hand, SPI → EA and SPI → GP relationships were found to be significant for males. This indicates that males are more influenced by social media platforms for EA and GPs.

There are several limitations in the present study. First, data were collected from the western states of India, and researchers might extend the research by collecting data from other states to look for changes if any. Second, the data was gathered at a time when the world just begin to recover from COVID-19, which may be connected to certain unusual consumer behaviors. Future, data can be collected possibly within a period unaffected by any external factors, such as COVID-19. Thirdly, this study can be extended across nations for a cross-cultural perspective. Fourth, to explore a comprehensive picture of GP, more variables can be added. Fifth, most Gen Z consumers, are studying in colleges and universities. Therefore, we used purposive sampling to select the universities based on student enrolment. Further, convenience sampling was used to get the questionnaire filled from the Gen Z sample. Hence, we are concerned about the generalizability of the results and acknowledge the same as one of the limitations of the study. Sixth, the low r-square value found in this study is also one of the limitations (Hair et al., 2019a).

Declaration of competing interest

The author(s) declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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