Tourists' attitudes toward green product buying behaviours: the role of demographic variables

Atitudes dos turistas em relação aos comportamentos de compra de produtos verdes: o papel das variáveis demográficas

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Abstract

Green products do not harm the environment or natural resources and support recycling. Due to tourists having different demographic characteristics, their demands and needs differ, and therefore their thoughts on green products also vary. Therefore, this study focuses on tourists' green product buying behaviours. In this context, the research aims to determine whether tourists' green product buying behaviours differ concerning demographic variables. The survey form prepared for this purpose was applied to 418 tourists visiting Istanbul. As a result of the research, foreign tourists' demographic variables were determined to affect their green product buying behaviours, with factors other than marital status and income level not contributing to tourists' environmental product preferences or their environmental sensitivity. Research has found that single tourists are more sensitive to the environment than married tourists. In addition, economically strong individuals were determined to be willing to pay more money for green products if they had sufficient purchasing power.

Keywords: Green product, green buying, Consumer behaviour, pro-environmental attitudes.

Resumo

Produtos verdes não prejudicam o meio ambiente ou os recursos naturais e possibilitam a reciclagem. Dado que turistas com características demográficas diferentes têm necessidades diferentes, consequentemente também têm atitudes diferentes em relação aos produtos verdes. Este estudo centra-se no comportamento de compra de produtos verdes dos turistas. O presente estudo tem como objetivo determinar se os comportamentos de compra de produtos verdes pelos turistas diferem de acordo com as suas varáveis demográficas. Um questionário foi aplicado a 418 turistas que visitaram Istambul. Os resultados mostram que as variáveis demográficas estado civil e rendimento afetam os seus comportamentos de compra de produtos verdes, ao passo que outras variáveis demográficas não afetam as preferências de compra de produtos verdes nem a sua sensitividade ambiental. Os resultados demonstram que os turistas solteiros são mais sensíveis ao meio ambiente do que os turistas casados. Para além disso, os indivíduos com rendimentos mais elevados estavam dispostos a pagar mais por produtos verdes de acordo com o seu poder de compra.

Palavras-chave: Produtos verdes, compra de produtos verdes, comportamento do consumidor, atitudes pro-ambientais

1. Introduction

Rapid economic growth, technological advances, and overconsumption lead to environmental degradation by encouraging the exploitation of natural resources. As a result, health hazards threaten human life, such as global warming, environmental degradation, and ozone layer depletion (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Regarding this point, consumers' purchasing behaviours cause ecological problems (Çabuk et al., 2008). The ecological problems that occurred from traditional buying behaviours have resulted in people raising their environmental awareness and preferring environmentally friendly products when purchasing (Wu et al., 2013). People's awareness and more sensitive approach toward the environment have created pressure on producers and guided them to be more responsible toward consumers. Businesses in the service sector have started to use green products and observe environmentally friendly practices to both consider the consumers' preferences and contribute to the world's protection and sustainability. In this regard, businesses seek answers to consumers' purchasing behaviours related to environmentally friendly green products and the demographic features that shape their buying behaviours. Companies have headed to green marketing activities due to increased environmentally conscious and eco-friendly consumers and consumer preferences for environmentally friendly/green products. In this context, it is important to determine the dimensions of consumers' environmental awareness and the form their marketing activities take. Determining the characteristics and evaluating the behaviours of increasingly environmentally conscious consumers will make significant contributions to businesses in planning their environmental sensitivity and incorporating this effort into their product structures, production systems, and marketing management. When the subject is tourism consumption, the situation becomes more important. Tourism is a sector known for its many positive aspects, such as its economic contributions and sociological and cultural development opportunities, while also being a sector feared to cause irreversible damage to nature and the environment. In this context, developing green marketing activities concerning touristic consumption is essential for minimising the harms of tourism. Determining the tourists' attitudes toward green product buying and how their demographic characteristics differentiate their attitudes will guide businesses in developing their marketing activities.

Based on this information, the study aims to examine the attitudes of foreign tourists who have come to Istanbul with regard to buying green products within the context of demographic variables. The research is important in terms of determining tourists' thoughts on environmental problems and offering solutions about what can be done for a better future. Examining the participants' attitudes within the scope of demographic variables will contribute to determining what foreign customers expect from enterprises by identifying the environmentalist tourist profile.

2. Literature review

2.1 Concept of green products

Technological developments and rapid industrialisation have caused rapid deterioration and damage to the environment where we also carry on our lives. Because of these reasons, an increase in environmental awareness has occurred in recent years, which has also increased consumer demand for environmentally friendly products (Kwazo et al., 2014). Green products are a response to consumers' search for environmentally friendly products. Green products (also called eco-products or environmentally friendly products) refer to recyclable products that protect the environment, do not pollute the world, and do not destroy natural resources (Sdrolia & Zarotiadis, 2019). Green products use fewer resources when produced, have fewer environmental harmful impacts and risks, and prevent waste from being produced in the design stage (Fraccascia et al., 2018). Products that protect or improve the natural environment by reducing or removing toxic agents, pollution factors, and waste use by preserving energy and natural resources are also defined as green products (Dangelico, 2017).

2.2 Green (Environmental) practices in tourism businesses

As consumers started preferring green products, businesses also began to emphasise this subject and become willing to buy green products and produce environmentally friendly products (Alkaya et al., 2016). For these reasons, green (environmental) practices started being implemented in the food and beverage industry. Practices such as purchasing energy-efficient equipment, reducing and recycling waste, purchasing locally-sourced products, joining environmental protection programmes and offsetting a business' carbon emissions (compensating for greenhouse gas emissions with equivalent greenhouse gas savings) are defined as green practices (Santos et al., 2020; Schubert et al., 2010). Green practices include products that are produced without harming the environment as well as the actions taken to produce these products in an environmentally friendly way (DiPietro et al., 2013). Yenidogan et al. (2021) provide evidence that green practices can lead to increased profitability in the hotel industry. Efficient use of water resources, waste reduction, improved recycling routines, use of environmentally friendly construction materials and furniture, purchasing environmentally sustainable components, increasing energy use efficiency, selecting disposable products, and minimising the use of chemicals are some of the green practices in hotels and restaurants (Fernández-Gámez et al., 2020; Jeng & Yeh, 2016; Santos et al., 2020).

Because businesses are more aware of environmental pollution, waste management, and recycling, with an increasing tendency to use fewer resources or more consciously, consumers are more focused on environmentally friendly products and applications (Alamsyah et al., 2020; Ting et al., 2019). As a result, customer groups known as environmental (green) customers started to form.

2.3 Environmental customers

The increase in environmental awareness has made consumers behave environmentally friendly in their product choices, and businesses have given importance to this subject in their production methods and product designs (Khaleelia & Jawabri, 2021). People known as environmental customers have started to prefer these products. Environmental customers are defined as consumers who avoid products that threaten human health, significantly damage the environment during production, use, and after consumption, consume too much energy, cause unnecessary waste, and contain materials that endanger the environment (Puspitasari et al., 2018). Environmental customers are aware of and deal with environmental problems (Chen & Chai, 2010). They are also aware of how they contribute to protecting the environment by refusing to buy harmful products. Therefore, they avoid purchasing products perceived as risky for health and containing endangered habitats or species (Akehurst et al., 2012). Environmental customers show purchasing behaviours known as green product buying by choosing products that do not harm nature and preferring businesses that use environmentally sound practices (Schubert et al., 2010).

2.4 Green product buying behaviours

Green product buying means purchasing products that are less harmful to the environment and considered environmentally friendly (Wang, 2014). Green product buying primarily aims to reduce resource use's environmental impact and increase resource efficiency (Vazifehdoust et al., 2013). Green product buying behaviours involve buying recyclable, environmentally friendly and sustainable products that are beneficial to the environment and avoiding products that harm the environment and society (Jaiswal & Kant, 2018). Green product buying behaviours differ from traditional buying behaviours. While traditional buying behaviours only involve the consumer reviewing the benefits and costs of products, green product buying behaviours usually entail reviewing the product's benefit to society overall (Kaufmann et al., 2012). Green product buying behaviours are affected by individuals' social responsibility and the importance they attach to the environment (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). People's environmental sensitivity helps them have positive attitudes toward businesses' environmental practices (Jeong et al., 2014). While determining the traits of consumers who are sensitive to the environment and buy green products, demographics and personality traits along with attitudes are considered to be

identifying factors (Zeynalova & Namazova, 2022). Kumar & Ghodeswar (2015) found that women, individuals with high income, those who are married, and those over 45 to behave responsibly toward the environment and tend to prefer green products. Fisher et al. (2012) stated demographic variables affect green product buying behaviour. They revealed that demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, income status, and the number of children in the family affect these behaviours. In this regard, people's demographic features affect their buying behaviours regarding a product possessing specific criteria.

3. Methodology

3.1 Purpose of the research

Recent environmental disasters and natural resource depletions have caused the deterioration of ecological life, and countries have started to work to find a solution to this for a sustainable green future. Businesses have shown a tendency to produce "green products" to develop social responsibility projects, raise consumers' awareness, and respect their environmental sensitivity. This study aims to determine whether foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours differ concerning demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, education level and income status. In this way, the study will identify a consumer profile that shows green product buying behaviours, which is thought to contribute to the development of correct marketing strategies through producers' segmenting of the market according to consumers' requests and needs.

3.2 Research hypotheses

Leonidou et al. (2014) found age, gender and education level to cause a significant difference in tourists' environmentally friendly attitudes. Fisher et al. (2012) stated that demographic factors significantly impact environmental products and conscious product buying behaviours. Uddin and Khan (2016) stated the demographic variable of gender has a significant effect on the green product buying behaviours of young Indian consumers. Chekima et al. (2016) found individuals with higher education levels (i.e., university and college degrees) to be more inclined toward green product buying behaviours compared to consumers with lower education levels (i.e., high school or lower). Chen & Chai (2010) aimed to determine whether gender characteristics and environmental sensitivity play a significant role in the preference for green products. Their research concluded gender and environmental sensitivity are ineffective in buying green products, while social rules were effective in preferring green products. In this context, the hypotheses developed based on the literature for the objectives of the research along with the studies in the literature are listed as follows:

H1: The sub-dimensions of tourists' green product buying behaviours vary according to their demographic characteristics.

H1a: Tourists' environmental product preferences vary according to gender.

H1b: Tourists' individual environmental awareness varies according to gender.

H1c: Tourists' environmentally friendly product preferences vary according to age group.

H1d: Tourists' individual environmental awareness varies according to age group.

H1e: Tourists' environmentally friendly product preferences vary according to marital status.

H1f: Tourists' individual environmental awareness varies according to marital status.

H1g: Tourists' environmental product preferences vary according to education level.

H1h: Tourists' individual environmental awareness varies according to education level.

H1i: Tourists' environmentally friendly product preferences vary according to income levels.

H1j: Tourists' individual environmental awareness varies according to income levels.

3.3 Population and sample of the research

The population of the research consists of foreign tourists visiting Istanbul in 2019. According to data from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism (2019), by the end of November, 13,778,748 foreigners had visited Istanbul, growing to 14,906,663 by the end of December. Because the visiting population exceeds 10 million, the sample size was determined to be 384 people by considering the maximum variance ratio (p=0.50) using the infinite population formula (Ural & Kılıç, 2013). In this case, evaluating the surveys of 418 foreign tourists who participated in the research sufficiently meets the desired sample size.

3.4 Data collection method and analysis

The survey method was used as the data collection method. The survey form used in the study consists of two parts. The first part of the survey involves the participants' demographic characteristics, and the second part contains seven statements that determine their green product buying behaviours. These statements were organised to fit the purpose of the study by using the scale developed by Chen (2014).

The survey was performed by interviewing foreign tourists visiting Istanbul between November 2019 and December 2019. The questionnaire was used only in English. Of the 450 survey forms that were filled out, those that were filled out incorrectly or incompletely were excluded from the research, resulting in 418 survey forms being obtained. Analyses in the study were carried out over the 418 usable survey forms.

The reliability (internal consistency) test was applied to the scale to be used in the study, and Cronbach's alpha (α) was determined to be 0.706. This value indicates the scale's reliability is acceptable

(Kılıç, 2016). George & Mallery (2010) stated skewness and kurtosis values between ±2 and 2 to be valid for psychometric purposes. The normality test examined the kurtosis and skewness values of the data. As part of the study, a t-test for independent samples in bivariate groups and ANOVA testing for groups with more than two variables was conducted to determine whether tourists' green product buying behaviours differ with respect to demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, education level, and income status.

4. Quantitative research findings

4.1 Findings on demographic characteristics of participants

Table 1 shows the foreign tourists' demographic information based on the data collected from the research. Of those participants in the research, 55% are female, and 45% are male; 53.6% are married, and 46.4% are single; 12.2% are between the ages of 18-24, 21.5% are 25-34, 30.1% are 35-44, 19.6% are 45-54, and 16.5% are 55 or older. Of the foreign tourists, 32.1% have a primary or secondary school, 40.9% a high school, and 27.0% have an undergraduate education level; 27.5% are private-sector employees, 16.3% are students, 12.9% are shopkeepers, and 11.7% are retired. Also, 28.0% of the participants are seen to have no income, 8.4% a monthly income level of $1000 or less, 12.2% between $1001-$2000, 28.7% between $2001- $3000, 14.1% between $3001-$4000, and 8.6% of $4001 or higher.

Table 1 - Participants' Profiles

Gender	**n**	**%**
Female	230	55.0
Male	188	45.0
Marital Status	**n**	**%**
Married	224	53.6
Single	194	46.4
Age	**n**	**%**
18-24	51	12.2
25-34	90	21.5
35-44	126	30.1
45-54	82	19.6
55 and above	69	16.5
Educational Status	**n**	**%**
Primary-Secondary	134	32.1
High school	171	40.9
Undergraduate	113	27.0
Occupation	**n**	**%**
Agriculture	22	5.3
Retired	49	11.7
Civil Servant	39	9.3
Private Sector Employee	115	27.5
Housewife	30	7.2
Shopkeeper	54	12.9
Student	68	16.3
Unemployed	40	9.6
Engineer	1	0.2
Monthly Income Status	**n**	**%**
None	117	28.0
$1000 or less	35	8.4
$1001- $2000	51	12.2
$2001- $3000	120	28.7
$3001- $4000	59	14.1
$4001 or higher	36	8.6
Total	**418**	**100**

4.2 Findings Regarding the Factor Analysis

The scale used in the study was subjected to a factor analysis to determine the foreign tourists taking part in green product buying behaviours.

Factor analysis was applied to the seven created expressions in order to determine foreign tourists' attitudes toward buying green products, and a two-factor solution was obtained from the seven statements (see Table 2). The factors explained 67.618% of the total variance, with the KMO measure of sampling adequacy equaling 0.643, Bartlett's test of sphericity calculating a chi-square (X^2) = 1326.468, with 21 degrees of freedom (*df*) and a statistical significance of $p < 0.000$. The general reliability value of the scale is $\alpha = .706$. When examining Table 2, the factor loading values of the subjects in the first factor vary between .864 and .553 and between .883 and .787 for the factor loading values of the subjects in the second factor. Using explanatory factor analysis, five subjects were determined to be in the first factor and two subjects in the second factor. The first factor in the scale is the "-dimension of environmental product preference-" and the second factor is "-the dimension of individual environmental awareness-".

Table 2 - Factor Analysis of Green Product Buying Behaviour Scale

Green Product Buying Behaviour	Statements	Factor Loading	Co-origin	Eigenvalue	Explained variance (%)	Alpha
Dimension of Environmental Product Preference	Buying a green product is important for preserving natural resources.	.864	.783	2.851	40.725	.788
	Buying a green product is important for reducing pollution.	.815	.708			
	It is a good idea to buy green.	.790	.711			
	I have a positive attitude towards buying a green type of product.	.582	.567			
	I love the idea of buying green.	.553	.532			
The Dimension of Individual Environmental Awareness	Buying green products from the market is difficult and time-consuming.	.883	.808	1.882	26.892	.759
	It is not right to buy green products from the market.	.787	.624			

Note: Principal component analysis with varimax rotation - Explained total variance= 67.618% / KMO measure of sampling adequacy= 0.643 - Bartlett's test of sphericity: X^2: 1326.468 df= 21, p <0.000 / alpha for the overall scale= .706

4.3 Findings Related to the Research Hypotheses

The research examined whether the participants' answers differed concerning demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, marital status, and income.

Table 3 shows whether foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours differ with respect to gender in terms of the sub-dimensions. No significant result was found in the performed analyses, and thus hypotheses H_{1a} and H_{1b} have been rejected.

Table 3 - Comparing the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning gender (Test Results)

Dimensions	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Environmental Product Preference	Female	230	3.81	.595	-1.742	.082
	Male	188	3.71	.593		
Individual Environmental Awareness	Female	230	2.80	.808	-.285	.776
	Male	188	2.78	.922		

The study tested whether foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours differ concerning marital status, and the results are shown in Table 4. The foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours were seen to vary significantly concerning marital status in the sub-dimension of "-environmental product preference-" (p < 0.05), with the p-value being lower than the critical significance level. As a result of the analysis, single tourists' green product buying behaviours revealed an average score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83) for the sub-dimension of "-environmental product preference-", which is significantly higher than that of married tourists ($\bar{x}$ = 3.71). Therefore, hypothesis H_{1e} of the research has been accepted. However, the p-values for the sub-dimension of "-individual environmental sensitivity-" exceeded the critical significance level of 0.05. In other words, foreign tourists' individual environmental sensitivity is not statistically significant concerning marital status. In this context, the H_{1f} hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4 - comparing the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning marital status (Test Results)

Dimensions	*Marital status*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Environmental Product Preference	Married	224	3.71	.637	2.023	.044*
	Single	194	3.83	.538		
Individual Environmental Awareness	Married	224	2.77	.834	.537	.591
	Single	194	2.82	.890		

Note: *p < 0.05

Table 5 compares the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning age group to determine if a significant difference is present. When the calculated *p* values are analysed by looking at the results from the ANOVA test, all *p* values are seen to be greater than 0.05. In other words, foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours are not seen to differ according to age. Therefore, hypotheses H_{1c} and H_{1d} have been rejected in the study.

Table 5 - Comparing the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning age (ANOVA Test Results)

Dimensions	*Age*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Environmental Product Preference	18-24	51	3.95	.552	2.346	.054
	25-34	90	3.71	.669		
	35-44	126	3.79	.615		
	45-54	82	3.78	.577		
	55 +	69	3.63	.475		
Individual Environmental Awareness	18-24	51	2.84	1.060	.884	.474
	25-34	90	2.73	.865		
	35-44	126	2.82	.886		
	45-54	82	2.68	.811		
	55 +	69	2.79	.682		

Table 6 compares the sub-dimensions of the foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours intending to determine if a significant difference exists concerning education level. When analysing the calculated *p* values, all p values are seen to be higher than 0.05 for both dimensions. No difference was found regarding the answers foreign tourists gave to the statements investigating their different views with respect to education level. Based on this data, hypotheses H_{1g} and H_{1h} have been rejected in the study.

Table 6 - Comparing the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning education level (ANOVA Test Results)

Dimensions	Educational Level	n	M	SD	F	p
Environmental Product Preference	Primary – Secondary	134	3.75	.638	2.196	.113
	High School	171	3.71	.574		
	Undergraduate – Postgraduate	113	3.86	.569		
Individual Environmental Awareness	Primary – Secondary	134	2.72	.789	1.279	.279
	High School	171	2.87	.894		
	Undergraduate – Postgraduate	113	2.76	.886		

Table 7 provides the results from the ANOVA test regarding whether the foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours and sub-dimensions vary according to income status. As a result of the analysis, a statistically significant difference was determined regarding foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours with respect to income status (*F*= 4.476; *p*= 0.001). As a result of the Tukey test conducted to learn which groups differ from each other, significant differences were determined to exist between the tourists with no income and tourists with an income status of $3001-$4000, between the tourists with an income status of $1000 or less and tourists with an income status of $3001-$4000, and between the tourists with an income status of $1001-$2000 and tourists with an income status of $3001-$4000. According to this, the arithmetic mean of tourists with an income of $3001-$4000 ($\bar{x}$= 3.98) is statistically higher compared to tourists with no income ($\bar{x}$= 3.67), the arithmetic mean of tourists with an income of $3001-$4000 ($\bar{x}$= 3.98) is statistically higher than tourists with an income of $1000 or less ($\bar{x}$= 3.62), and the arithmetic mean of tourists with an income of $3001-$4000 ($\bar{x}$= 3.98) is statistically higher compared to tourists with an income of $1001-$2000 ($\bar{x}$= 3.58). As foreign tourists' income levels rise, differentiation occurs in their green product buying behaviours, with their tendency to prefer environmentally friendly products being able to be said to increase. In this context, hypothesis H_{1i} of the study has been accepted. No significant difference was determined to exist regarding foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours regarding their individual environmental sensitivity concerning their income status. The *p*-value regarding individual environmental sensitivity was also observed to be higher than the 0.05 cut-off in the study. No difference was determined to exist regarding foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours regarding their individual environmental sensitivity concerning their income status. Therefore, hypothesis H_{1j} of the study was rejected.

Table 7 - comparing the sub-dimensions of foreign tourists' green product buying behaviours concerning income status (ANOVA Test Results)

Dimensions	Monthly Income	n	M	SD	F	p	Variation
Environmental Product Preference	No income	117	3.67	.600	4.476	.001*	1-5 2-5 3-5
	$1000 or less	35	3.62	.423			
	$1001-$2000	51	3.58	.682			
	$2001-$3000	120	3.83	.562			
	$3001-$4000	59	3.98	.556			
	$4001 or higher	36	3.90	.596			
Individual Environmental Awareness	No income	117	2.88	.922	1.596	.160	
	$1000 or less	35	2.98	.950			
	$1001-$2000	51	2.93	.755			
	$2001-$3000	120	2.71	.824			
	$3001-$4000	59	2.63	.904			
	$4001 or higher	36	2.68	.688			

Note: *$p < 0.05$

5. Discussion

These days, the importance of green product buying behaviours, being environmentally friendly and protective of nature are gradually increasing around the globe. The environment has been negatively affected because of people's poor consumption habits. In order to reduce these negative effects, more ecologically conscious buying activities such as green product buying have started being preferred (Tan et al., 2019). Businesses have not remained indifferent to this change in society and now produce products to help people protect the environment (Kamel, 2020). In this context, foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours have been determined within the scope of their demographic characteristics, and suggestions have been made in consideration of the obtained results regarding what consumers, businesses, and countries can do to protect the ecological environment.

The study found no significant difference between gender and green product buying behaviours. Sreen et al. (2018) also stated no significant difference exists between gender and green product buying behaviours. Due to factors such as culture, belief, lifestyle and family life varying from person to person, these behaviours cannot differ by gender. Han et al. (2011) and Mainieri et al. (1997) stated individuals' environmentally sensitive attitudes are affected by gender, with women being more responsible and sensitive than men in the matter of environmental protection as well as showing more green product buying behaviours.

The study found a significant difference between foreign tourists' marital status and their green product buying behaviours. The research determined marital status affects people's green product buying behaviours, with single tourists being more environmentally sensitive than married tourists. Differences such as culture, family and social order can be considered factors in this situation. Marital status and income level can also be said to be important in preferring these products, with single individuals being more brave and willing to protect the environment as their income increases and married individuals being more passive in buying green products due to the increase in the number of people and expenses in the household. Witek and Kuźniar (2020); stated marital status affects green product buying behaviours, but for them, married individuals showed a more sensitive approach to the environment than single individuals; because of the desire of married individuals to continue their lives in a clean environment with the future concerns for themselves and their spouse.

The research found no significant difference between age group and green product buying behaviours. Age has been determined not to affect foreign tourists' views on green product buying behaviours. Han et al. (2009) and Wang et al. (2020) both argued age to significantly contributes to green product buying behaviours, with individuals becoming more responsible and acting more consciously about protecting the environment as their age increases. Cheung and To (2019) stated a significant difference exists for age groups with environmentally friendly attitudes and environmental product preferences. They also stated younger individuals tend to show green product buying behaviours more because of their openness to new ideas.

The study found income status affects green product buying behaviours, and a significant difference exists between income level and environmental product preference. Individuals' income levels are important in choosing a product or service. Individuals without sufficient purchasing power will have difficulty choosing a product and will be less courageous in taking steps to protect the environment. Therefore, individuals with good income and enough purchasing power can be said to prefer these products and to act to protect the environment. Connell (2010), Eze and Ndubisi (2013), Zhao et al. (2014) and Wijekoon and Sabri (2021), all stated income status to significantly affect green product buying behaviours. They found economically strong individuals to be willing to pay more for green products when they have sufficient purchasing power.

Individuals' positive attitudes and sensitivity toward the environment are thought to improve as their educational and cultural level increases (He et al., 2021). Most foreign tourists in the study have primary, secondary, or high school education levels. The study found no significant difference was found between education level and green product buying behaviours. The participants' lower education levels and insufficient awareness of green products are among the reasons for this result. Royne et al. (2016) stated that differences in education level do not significantly affect individuals' green product buying behaviours, similar to the current study's result. When examining other studies, education level can significantly affect green product buying behaviours (Sharma & Foropon, 2019). Also, Aertsens et al. (2011), Suki (2013), and Costa et al. (2021) stated education level, age and gender have powerful effects on people's environmental behaviours. Alcock et al. (2020) determined individuals with developed environmental awareness who show green product buying behaviours are mostly female, educated and earn a relatively high income. Katt and Meixner (2020) stated that many factors affect green product buying behaviours, with demographic variables contributing positively to green product buying behaviours. No significant difference was found between this study's green product buying behaviours and demographic variables except for marital and income status.

6. Conclusion and implications

These days, sensitivity to environmental issues has become increasingly important, and people, businesses, organisations and countries all have important responsibilities to protect and sustain nature. First, people's awareness should be raised about these topics, and countries should give these issues an important place in their education systems. Because businesses will have difficulties in terms of cost, they should be supported by the state, and workplaces should prefer product materials and furniture that do not harm nature. Governments should develop appropriate environmental policies for protecting nature and take the necessary steps to increase environmental practices in the tourism industry. Governments should support businesses that adopt practices to protect the environment by providing tax cuts. One should not forget that education is a significant factor in raising environmental awareness among tourists who come to the country, local people, employees and businesses. Accessibility to environmentally friendly products should be provided and sold at affordable prices so that consumers can easily prefer them. Countries should highlight the importance of a sustainable future for residents and tourists from abroad, work together to protect nature, and involve everyone in these practices. Also, the importance of a sustainable future should be emphasised by looking at the practices that will be applied from the viewpoints of businesses and the government. The sustainability of nature should be ensured for a livable future. The world and its natural resources should not be wasted, environmentally friendly products that do not harm the environment should be used, waste levels should be minimised, and a common environmental awareness should be raised for a better future worldwide.

Practical Implications

Based on the findings of this study, suggestions can be offered to researchers and practitioners who want to understand tourists' green product buying behaviours. From the point of view of practitioners, considering factors such as perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental awareness, and environmentally conscious consumer behaviour can be beneficial for businesses while segmenting the market concerning using their green strategies as a competitive strength and creating a successful marketing strategy. Efforts to increase awareness of green products throughout the country, make their marketing more effective, bring more green products to all markets, and reduce the costs of enterprises in green product production can contribute more to the sale of green products.

Theoretical implications

Due to the increase in environmental problems, most consumers want products to be less damaging to their living spaces and easily recycled. In this context, businesses and consumers should monitor their environmental attitudes. While businesses try to meet demands by producing more to meet the new needs that arise with the increasing population, they should pay attention to the recyclability of the waste that occurs in post-product usage. This approach to the environment should be seen as a responsibility by both producers and consumers. Consumers who are conscious of environmental pollution should also check their purchasing behaviours and prefer products that can cause the least harm to the environment (green products).

7. Limitations and future research directions

The research was applied only to foreign tourists, with no attempt to determine domestic tourists' green product buying attitudes. In the future, research can be applied to domestic and foreign tourists to determine the differences between them regarding green product buying behaviours.

In addition, the scope of the study can be expanded by including other important tourism centres in Turkey. In light of the general findings and results obtained from the research, the following suggestions can be made: In the framework of rapidly developing technology and the changing world, businesses have important duties to protect the environment and create environmentally friendly green products. Tourists should more clearly express their preferences and interests regarding environmentally friendly products. By keeping environmental problems on the agenda, an increase in environmental awareness can occur.

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