



SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Malsha Jayalath

Green Household Products in Sri Lanka

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Thesis abstract

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Author: Malsha Mayumi Jayalath Arachchige

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In the modern world, customers are more aware of green products due to environmental concerns. However, there is a lack of research regarding the growing issue. Therefore, the study aims to investigate green household products in Sri Lanka because it is an environmentally friendly nation. Consequently, the study considers a qualitative research strategy aligned with the inductive research approach and constructivist paradigm. Employing an open-ended questionnaire, primary data were collected from two managers and one executive in a leading supermarket in Sri Lanka. Microsoft Forms was used to assemble the data, which was analyzed thematically using Microsoft Office.

Empirical findings illustrate that green household products create value, minimizing environmental harm throughout their lifecycle. They are non-toxic, recyclable, reusable, non-waste, responsibly produced, resource-efficient, and have a low carbon footprint. The categories include green cleaner products, homeware, kitchenware, garden, outdoor, personal, and hygiene items. The best-selling products are green detergent, LED bulbs, and biodegradable polythene bags. In Sri Lanka, products are available online and offline, but only in urban areas, and pricing differs from standard to high. Generally, green household consumers are educated, aged between 25 and 45, and moderate-income earners—primarily men with health concerns and the younger generation. Moreover, the study identifies that the Sri Lankan market is growing for green household products since social environmental awareness is growing according to social cognitive theory.

The study suggests that the company should now expand its green products to rural markets, considering different categories and pricing due to market growth. The government should also introduce various legislations and initiatives to promote green purchasing, society's environmental commitment, and quality of life in Sri Lanka.

¹ Keywords: green household products, cognitive theory, and recycling

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Terms and Abbreviations

NMI	Natural Marketing Institute
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research overview. First, the study background and research gaps are illuminated based on earlier studies. Consequently, the research question and objectives are developed. Afterward, the research scope, key concepts, and study structure are exemplified.

1.1 Background

Historically, humanity's development has resulted in environmental destruction. Despite being aware of the devastating impacts, previous generations favored immediate development above sustainability, leaving a legacy of environmental issues. Countless studies have proven that the Earth is undergoing rapid environmental changes because of human actions (Tilman & Lehman, 2001). However, there are many research insights regarding environmental issues and human participation. It is evident that the younger generations, such as the Y Generation, who were born between 1981 and 1996, and the Z Generation, who were born between 1997 and 2013, are genuinely more concerned about environmental issues than other generations (Djamasbi et al., 2011; Tirocchi, 2024). Recent studies confirm that Generation Y and Generation Z mainly engage with the issue of climate change. Over half of Generation Y believe in climate change and that it is caused by human activity. Therefore, this demographic shift is toward environmentally responsible purchasing of products (Poortinga et al., 2023).

Bank of America predicts that Generation Z is the most disruptive generation ever (Petro, 2022). They become the decisive consumer purchasing group in the economy. Sethuraman et al. (2023) explained that compared with older adults, they are talking more about the need for action on climate change; among social media users, they are seeing more climate change content online, and they are doing more to get involved with the issue through activities such as volunteering and attending rallies and protests. Consumers investigate product quality, health, and sustainability before buying. Generation Z and Generation Y use social media, especially Facebook and YouTube, to influence the attitudes of their peers and the community around them towards consuming eco-friendly products. Today, many young individuals believe living in harmony with the environment is their responsibility; their lives have intentionally evolved into green lifestyles. Their everyday choices create a green lifestyle. As social media champions, the young generation employs informative influence through social media to motivate others to embrace a green lifestyle.

Given the prominence of social media as a leading tool for promoting and communicating, the ecological messaging shared by young people holds substantial power over mass audiences, fostering greater awareness and adoption of sustainable practices. A Pennsylvania university named the Wharton School conducted a study by its Baker Retailing Centre with the assistance of First Insight on American consumers' attitudes toward shopping for eco-friendly products, pointing to the growing momentum for green product choices, with Generation Z encouraging other generations toward green alternatives. That research revealed that 62 percent of the Generation Z community is willing to purchase sustainably rather than branded products. Moreover, Generation Z and Y are the most likely to make purchase decisions based on personal, social, and environmental values (Borah et al., 2024). The following table illustrates how different generations rate the importance of sustainability compared to the product's brand name.

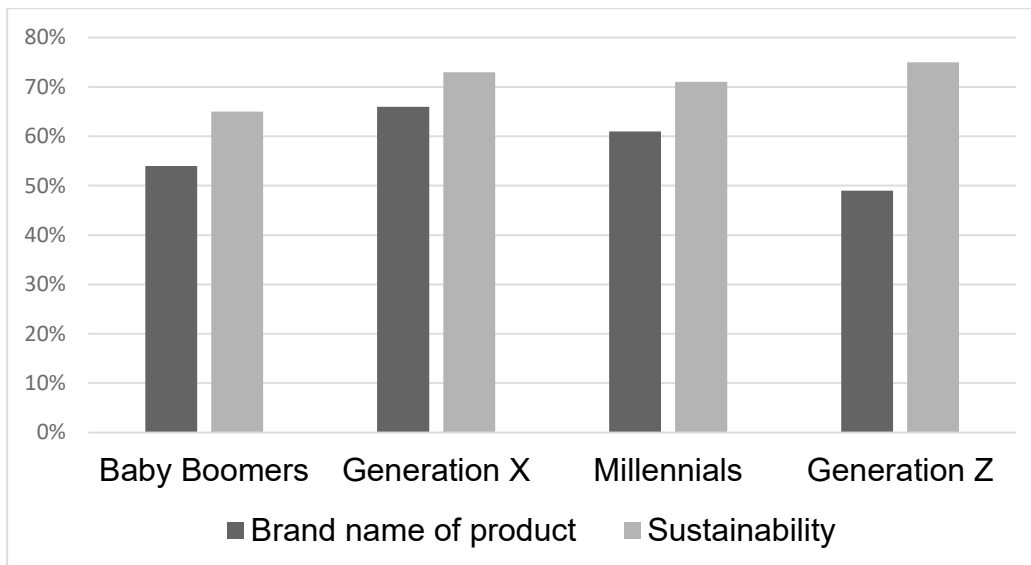


Figure 1. Sustainable purchasing intention (Carufel, 2021).

In this highly competitive business environment today, green branding has emerged as a prominent and increasingly popular strategy among the various strategies adopted by organizations. Green products have become an important part of the consumer market. Eco-labels are important green marketing tools and significantly impact customers' perceptions of a brand. Marketers utilize environmental labels to promote the recognition of green products, which is increasing daily (Mallick et al., 2024). Consumers are progressively transitioning from conventional purchases to the acquisition of green products. It is a well-known fact that green products are more costly. Comparing prices of green products and conventional products demonstrates that the prices of green products are notably higher, for example, for a pen (2.25\$: 0.0056\$), a dishwasher liquid (12\$:6\$), and a bag (45\$:14\$).

These price differences are not justified solely by differences in production costs (Ki & Kim, 2022). A recent study suggests that increasing environmental awareness fosters a consumer's readiness to pay higher prices for green products. Perceived green benefits negatively influence young Generation Z's willingness to pay more for green products (Gomes et al., 2023). The chart illustrated in Appendix 2 provides evidence of a consistent increase in green purchasing preferences across all generational groups within the economy despite its high cost. Some green consumers have modified their purchasing habits significantly, while others have shifted their lifestyles to be more environmentally conscious. In the world, sustainability is considered a key factor when making purchasing choices. The community, governments, and organizations actively promote green products. Day by day, more laws, regulations, and certificates are enacted to promote eco-friendly products, companies, and programs. Meanwhile, authorities are discouraging the use and production of ecologically unfriendly products. For instance, the Slow Food International Organization operates in 160 member countries, encouraging transparent, fair, and healthy foods. Sustainable development goals, SDGs, have been specified by the United Nations for completion by 2030. Also, the Environmentally Friendly Production Act in South Korea aims to expand the eco-product market across the country.

Although green demand is expanding rapidly, is there an adequate supply of green products? Therefore, the demand for green products in the market is expected to increase significantly. Suppliers in many sectors are not supplying at the rate needed. In a public speech, a group leader of the Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders spoke about the supply of green products. He stated in his speech that the increasing demand for green products is exceeding its supply, and this shortage creates opportunities for agile businesses to catch the market share. In this decade, the development of a large-scale green market segment is fully realized. Even though the cost for early suppliers is higher, they will likely gain a market share and enormous profit (World Economic Forum, 2023). The compulsion for a greener industry frequently comes from downstream companies due to their commitments and alignment with long-term trends in consumer society. Meanwhile, quick actors in upstream segments of key trade categories in the market are already benefiting from premium prices for green products. Early downstream movers are finding consumers already paying more for sustainability, up to 7%, which is now growing (World Economic Forum, 2023). Small-scale companies quickly adopt this sustainability trend.

1.2 Research gaps and aim

As green products are a popular novel concept worldwide, research is being carried out rapidly. Countless studies have investigated the Sri Lankan community's intention, attitudes, and behaviour toward going green. Previous research, such as the study by Cooray et al. (2024), has analysed Sri Lankan consumers' perspectives on buying green products, especially the business executive professional consumers aged between 24 and 39. Green products, whether derived from synthetic or natural sources, are designed to be environmentally friendly. This study investigated the combined influence of environmental knowledge and green attitude toward green products. So, the study investigated only the highly educated and the Generation Z consumer segmentation. Moreover, the trade capital in Sri Lanka, Colombo, has been selected as the research geography area. Results indicate a clear relationship between specific customer characteristics and environmentally friendly intentions. Moreover, Sooriyaarachchi (2023) analysed data and information related to the awareness of green products, brands, customers' attitudes, and knowledge about green products. The analysis confirms that green purchasing intention is driven by consumers' trust in green products, their mindset about the green concept, and the value they put on green products. However, the study is also limited to Colombo, a city in Sri Lanka. As previously stated, many studies have explored consumer behaviour regarding green intention; relatively few studies have considered green products.

In addition, Jayasinghe (2022) illustrated the influence of green packaging and the consumer perception toward green behaviour. The study adds valuable insights into the behavior and attitude of Sri Lankans toward green products, especially for green packaging and its determinants. The analysis specially analysed the eco-label on green packaging and confirmed that consumers in Sri Lanka know green packaging from their practical knowledge. However, the study did not explore the availability and demand of green packaging or other products. So, the selected research context slightly explores green household products, including green packaging. As Sri Lanka is a country that prohibits disposable plastic and polythene, green packaging is a leading consumer good all over the country. Therefore, a minor part of the study is slightly studied by Jayasinghe (2022), but an exploration of the entire household product industry still needs to be done. Therefore, this research aids in filling the identified research constraints. However, the analysis of this study illustrates the significance of green household products in Sri Lanka from theoretical and practical perspectives.

According to Bhardwaj et al. (2020), the augmented concern for the environment among consumers, known as green consumerism, is instrumental in influencing firms to produce green products. Environmentally conscious consumers increasingly demand green products, creating innovative business opportunities for existing and new companies within the green product market. The study intends to provide the entrepreneurial insight necessary for these businesses. This study helps businesses and customers identify the most demanded green household products, and it assists in establishing the optimal correlation between the green household product market supply and consumers' green demand. Research indicates that consumers trust and remain loyal to businesses that offer green products to market (Servera-Francés & Piqueras-Tomás, 2019). Brands in the household products market could use this study's findings to modify and introduce suitable green items under their name. Another rationale for purchasing green products is that they have positively influenced consumers' lives, contributing to their well-being and health. After reviewing the above studies, the study identifies a lack of research on green household products. Therefore, the study aims to investigate green household products in Sri Lanka, which is influential in understanding the recent consumer trends related to green products.

1.3 Research question and objectives

The demand for green products has increased, and entrepreneurs and businesses are focusing more on the issue. Many suppliers worldwide have identified that the household products sector still has enormous business opportunities. Therefore, this research benefits companies in the green market and opens opportunities for the green household industry to better understand green household products in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the main question is: What are the green household products in Sri Lanka? The main objective is to explore green household products in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives are illustrated below.

- To understand green household products
- To identify the different types of green household products
- To identify the availability of green household products
- To understand the pricing of green household products
- To recognize the customer segmentation that consumes green household products in Sri Lanka

The research objectives are raised in theoretical and empirical contexts. Theoretically, this study considers social cognitive theory to answer the research objectives. Empirically, the study conducted an open-ended questionnaire with two managers and one executive from a leading household product company to understand better the existing green household products in the Sri Lankan market.

1.4 Scope of the study

There are many studies regarding how consumers recognize their responsibilities and capabilities to protect the environment and the psychology of purchasing green products (Ahmad et al., 2022; Duong, 2024). However, using green household products in Sri Lanka has been poorly studied. Therefore, this study aims to identify specific green household product preferences in great demand in Sri Lanka to uncover green business opportunities and strategies. Thus, the research's main objective is to determine the green household products in Sri Lanka. The study location is a leading supermarket in Sri Lanka. To gather comprehensive insights, the study gathered data from a leading hypermarket chain.

The study interviewed two managers and one executive from a leading supermarket in Sri Lanka, leveraging their expertise and experience to understand green products. The primary reason for selecting managers and executives for the survey is that they are the best target group, as they obtain expertise and experience about demand and supply for the green household market in Sri Lanka. An open-ended online survey questionnaire was shared using Microsoft Forms. This survey was completed when the target questions were answered. A qualitative research methodology was employed to analyse the data, incorporating thematic analysis to derive insights from the interview data.

1.5 Key concepts

The following table explains the terms mentioned in this thesis, such as green lifestyle, green products, sustainable development goals, downstream companies, and circular economy.

Table 1. Key concepts.

Term	Explanation
Green lifestyle	A green lifestyle is a way of life that prioritizes minimizing harm to the environment through sustainable practices (Li et al., 2024).
Green products	This innovative term, green product, is a broad term used to explain items intended to ensure and develop the quality of the environment during manufacturing, usage, or disposal by using the least resources and reducing the consumption of harmful compounds, pollution levels, and trash output. Hence, green products can potentially contribute to protecting the environment and human health (Verleye et al., 2023).
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The SDGs were published by the United Nations in 2015 as a global commitment to action to protect the world, eliminate poverty, and encourage world harmony and prosperity by 2030 (Traverso & Nangah Mankaa, 2023).
Downstream companies	Companies in the downstream sector provide the closest link to everyday users (Hayes, 2022).
Circular economy	This modern system extends the life of input materials and products through their production process and consumption by recycling, reusing, sharing, repairing, reducing, leasing, and refurbishing (Scarpellini et al., 2019).
Generation Y	Generation Y, another name for millennials, is the name given to the generation of people born between 1981 and 1996. Generation Y was born in an era of fast internet development and high-tech savvy, fostering globalization (Djamasbi et al., 2011). They have an age limit, for example, 28 years minimum.
Generation Z	The generation born between 1997 and 2012 is called Generation Z, commonly abbreviated as Gen Z for short (Tirocchi, 2024). They are now at an age limit, for example, 12 years minimum.

1.6 Structure of the study

This study comprises seven chapters, as illustrated below. The first chapter, the introduction, represents the background of the study needed to understand the thesis, the objective of the research, research questions, an explanation of the related background and key concepts, the scope of the study, the necessity of this study, and an explanation of the research structure. The second chapter emphasizes the theoretical context, theoretical direction, and previous findings. Accordingly, the theoretical direction is dedicated to discussing the social cognitive theory (SCT) and its contribution to clarifying the survey objective. Previous findings address the survey objectives, including answering the thesis questions by exploring previous surveys, statistics, reports, and explanations. The third chapter of the research provides empirical implementation details and information on the research methodology, including the process and approach. In this case, qualitative methods such as interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data and information about green products, prices, and purchasing methods.

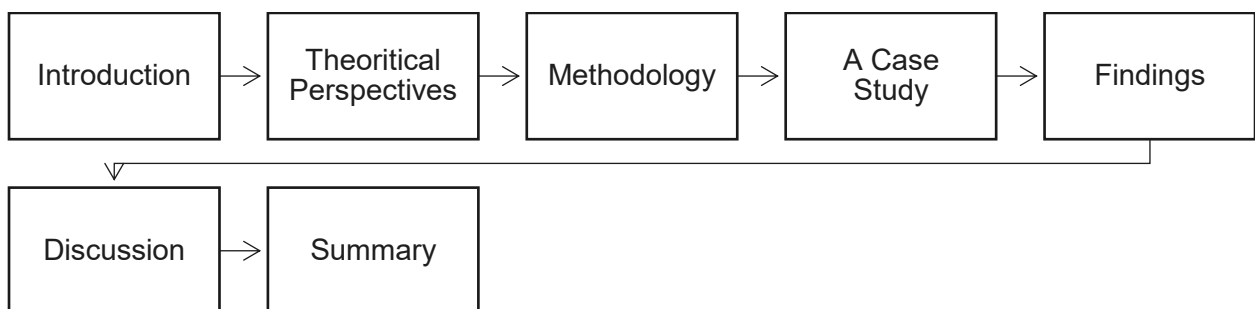


Figure 2. Research formation.

The fourth chapter illustrates the important background of the selected company, including the company overview and its demand across Sri Lanka. In the fifth chapter, the research results are illustrated and analyzed. This chapter analyzes the data and information acquired by interviewing executive employees in the hypermarket. The sixth chapter evaluates theoretical context and empirical findings regarding the main objective and sub-objectives. In this case, green household products are widely sold in the Sri Lankan market, the green customers' segment is identified, and the best pricing strategy and widely used selling methods are identified. The seventh and final chapter provides results, including policy implications, managerial implications, theoretical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future studies. Most importantly, a summary of the entire survey is drawn.

2 GREEN PRODUCTS IN SRI LANKA: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This section provides an overview of theoretical viewpoints identifying green product demand in Sri Lanka. It examines related theories and literature that describe green products in Sri Lanka in depth. It first explains social cognitive theory and then sub-objectives.

2.1 Social cognitive theory

This research is grounded in cognitive science, providing a multidisciplinary perspective on more accurately identifying consumer preferences toward green products. Adopting social cognitive theory (SCT) in this context is a psychological framework for analytical investigation. Bozack (2011) explains that social cognitive theory emphasizes learning within a social context. From this perspective, people act as influencers and followers because they can shape their environment and are shaped by their environment. The theory explains that people learn by watching others and that internal and external social factors influence their actions. Social cognitive theory is used to describe a variety of different human behaviors, including both negative and positive social behaviors, for example, anger, substance abuse, and mental health challenges. If the behavior brings positive reinforcements, people are likely to replicate it. If the behavior is rejected and punished, people are less likely to imitate it.

According to two scholars, Luszczynska and Schwarzer (2015), SCT points out that people are not simply shaped by their environment but are active participants. The father of the SCT, Albert Bandura, introduced the concept of reciprocal determinism, in which human behavior, personal factors, and environmental factors all play a role in shaping each other. Personal factors include emotions, attitudes, cognitive processes, and biological factors. Behavioral factors include individual actions and decisions, whereas environmental factors include physical and social surroundings or settings that influence the individual's ability to complete a behavior successfully. Social learning within the community involves learning information from observing each other's behavior. SCT suggests that individuals can also learn by observing and imitating the models they encounter in their environment, enabling them to acquire information more quickly (Dollard & Miller, 2013). The following figure illustrates the bidirectional social influence among social cognitive theory factors. Social cognitive theory is the process of understanding, imitating, and modeling behavior by observing how individuals and the environment behave.

It is specific because, with the advent of the social media revolution, economies are transforming from e-commerce to social commerce. Social cognitive theory is specific because, with the initiation of the social media revolution, economies are transforming from e-commerce to social commerce. Therefore, SCT can be used as a business strategy to boost sales. Based on social cognitive theory, learning occurs in a social context where a person's environment, actions, and thoughts interact dynamically and equitably (Bandura, 2002). Social learning constitutes the core aspect of social psychology underpinning social commerce, which is gaining information and experience from others one knows or trusts (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013).

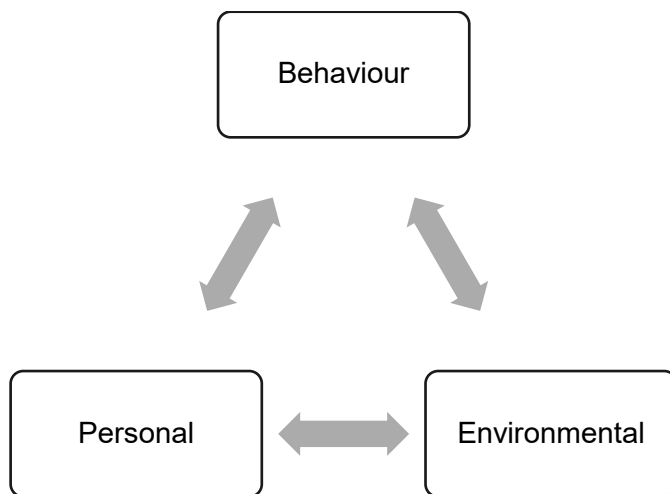


Figure 3. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (Nickerson, 2024).

According to SCT, People obtain social knowledge about their interests (Li, 2019). As a result, individuals influence others in society to adopt green practices. These green followers drive others' inclination to engage in green practices (Lin et al., 2017). Green awareness is a motivational variable learned from the environment (Munir & Ghani, 2024). The follower's perception of green practices appears to be a tool to bring positive outcomes from non-green individuals (Dumont et al., 2017). Van Tonder et al. (2023) suggest that green customers' online or offline purchasing actions influence fellow customers (e.g., friends, family members, colleagues, affiliative reference groups). Social commerce is a new business strategy that allows companies to interact with all value chain stakeholders cooperatively (Lin et al., 2017). It is based on social media influence, online marketing, and online business (Li, 2019). This concept emerged with the widespread use of social media, which is now used as a standard marketing tool to promote businesses and their products. Before purchasing, consumers use social media platforms to seek out products and gather social knowledge (Lin et al., 2017).

Due to the enhanced social interaction capability of a social commerce system with social media features, social interaction boosts the stickiness among consumers of social commerce (Gao et al., 2022). Green customers act as role models to non-green customers, and social media influence is a positive environmental factor. Samarakoon et al. (2021) illustrated that Sri Lankan people showed that the young generation leads the way by encouraging and influencing others to embrace eco-friendly alternatives. Seventy percent of respondents said they can play the role of awareness agents on climate change and influence those surrounding them. According to Rathnayaka and Gunawardana (2021), social influence significantly impacts the green purchasing intention of Sri Lankan consumers. Most survey respondents were aware of environmental issues and green products, and they shared their knowledge with others. They state that young and middle-aged consumers in Sri Lanka mostly like to buy green products, and it is possible to influence consumers through educational awareness programs and motivational programs. As young people extensively use social media, they can influence their audience. Accordingly, in terms of social cognitive theory, this data represents how positively green customers influence non-green customers to purchase eco-friendly products, representing a more comprehensive understanding of the direction of green demand, which in turn shows the environmental imitation toward green demand. According to SCT, social commerce refers to the influence of social factors on customers. It may include recommendations, referrals, forums, communities, ratings, and reviews, encouraging people to adopt eco-friendly behaviors and increase the demand for green products.

2.2 Green products

There has been a growing number of definitions and illustrations for Green Products. Accordingly, a green product (i.e., tangible or intangible) is a sustainable product designed to minimize its environmental impact (i.e., direct or indirect) during its whole life cycle and even after it is of no use (e.g., before use, use, and after use) (Sdrolia & Zarotiadis, 2019). Household products are items that are mainly supposed to be used by consumers either inside or outside, including kitchen, living room, garden, and camping products (Office of the Federal Register in the USA, 2018). So, the household products that contribute to environmental protection or preservation are considered green household products. Eco solutions, health obsession, and chemical versus natural trends are key household market trends, compelling customers to make eco-friendly purchases.

According to Peattie and Belz (2010) and Sdrolia and Zarotiadis (2019), green products are defined as those without toxic chemicals, produced in hygiene conditions, recycled, reused, biodegradable, eco-friendly packaging, using the least resources, eco-efficient, and have zero waste and a low carbon footprint. An analytical review of the Rathnayaka and Gunawardana (2021) survey illustrates that Sri Lankan citizens are now more likely to consider the hazard impact of their purchases and sometimes change their shopping behavior accordingly. Thilinka and Gunawardana (2021) investigated three main factors influencing young consumers in Sri Lanka to buy green products: environmental attitude, environmental knowledge, and social influence. Around one in three people on the globe use environmentally friendly products and services even if they cost more (Hietaniemi & Koh, 2019).

Green products may use natural, recycled, or renewable materials, such as furniture made from bamboo. Some manufacturing processes use less or renewable energy to produce products, such as solar panel power, in factories. Many green products, such as biodegradable cleaning products made from plant-based ingredients, are designed to break down naturally without harming the environment. Green products, such as electric vehicles, create less or zero pollution to the environment, and reusable plastic bags. Green products can be recycled, reused, or reduce waste, such as recycled plastic boxes. Green products, such as green paints, are non-toxic to human life and the environment.

The government of Sri Lanka banned the manufacturing, importing, and selling of single-use plastic and polythene household products, including plates, spoons, forks, cups, knives, trays, straws, and stirrers, effective from 2023 (*Newswire*, 2023). In 2017, the Sri Lankan government banned all the polyethylene products with a thickness of 20 microns or below (Liyanage, 2020). This trend increases the supply of green household products and their demand in Sri Lanka. As a result of these restrictions, the paper and recycled plastic household production market has been expanded. The innovation of alternative green solutions to replace banned products has significantly increased. In addition, packing is an important part of a household product. Green packaging is made from a wide range of materials like paper, wood, organic cloth, bamboo, biodegradable plastic, and polythene. Single-use polythene bags are banned in many countries as they pose a massive environmental hazard. Reusable bags and biodegradable polythene have arrived in the household market. Based on Boston Consulting Group's study, 67% of consumers find it important that their products are in recyclable packages, and 73% of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly packaging (Salovaara, 2023).

When identifying green products that can compete in the market. The reason is that customer demand can be identified differently: those buying green products are satisfied, customers who do not buy green products do not want to pay more, and those buying green products are dissatisfied if they do not meet their needs in terms of price, product, features, availability, and customer service. Research done by Salonen and scholars on sustainable consumption in Finland explains that environmentally friendly products are easy to get in Finland. Therefore, all the customer segments are moving toward sustainable preferences (Salonen et al., 2014).

2.3 Types of green household products

The previous research reports indicate that household product categories in the global market are cleaner products, personal care products, kitchenware and appliances, home appliances, home decor, and furnishing (Biggs & Williams, 2024; Maximize Market Research, 2024). Green cleaning products have various biodegradable ingredients such as natural disinfectants, chemical-free surface cleaners, and coconut husks. All types of detergents, house cleaning chemicals, and cleaning tools such as brushes, mops, sponges, and dustbins are included in this category. Personal care supports consumer's hygiene and self-care routine, and this category includes a comprehensive range of products such as skin care cream, toner, face wash, shampoo, hair mask, body wash, body oil, body scrub, toothpaste, toothbrush, mouthwash, hair oil, hand wash, soap, and shaving cream. The kitchenware and appliances category comprises pots, pans, rice cookers, cutlery, storage containers, small kitchen appliances like blenders, toasters, and so on, as well as kitchen accessories.

Another category, home appliances, consists of primary and small home appliances, mostly connected with modern technology to make consumers' everyday life easy and comfortable. Lastly, the home decor and furnishing category represents indoor and outdoor decoration and furnishings made from recycled plastic, glass, paper, wood, bamboo, nettle, hemp, wool, linen, and organic cloths. Sri Lanka home textile producers and design companies that offer innovative solutions to decorate homes in an eco-friendly way. Dain (2014) stated that green cleaner products are making remarkable progress in Sri Lanka. Companies such as Super Colloids Lanka Ltd produce and supply a range of green cleaning products, including general household cleaning items like handwash, baby accessories, multipurpose cleaner, sanitizer, fruit and vegetable cleaner, dishwash, and laundry detergent. Even the container and packaging of these products are made from recycled materials.

2.4 Green product availability (online/in-store) in Sri Lanka.

The distribution channels try to guarantee consumers convenient access to the green products. When customers have easy access, they derive more value and utility. As a result, companies can reach their target customers. Generally, there are two distribution channels nowadays: online and in-store.

2.4.1 Green products in-store market

On a global scale, in-store shopping is still the most common, while online shopping has rapidly grown. Most customers choose in-store shopping for many different reasons, including the need for a live experience, immediacy, avoiding shipping costs, to meet customer expectations (Wang et al., 2022). In Sri Lanka, individuals and companies sell green household products to customers through department stores, supermarkets, city malls, retail shops, retail outlets, and traditional markets. In-store selling is still the most prevalent form of household product selling in Sri Lanka, but online sales are gradually replacing it. Large-scale sellers such as supermarkets and city malls maintain in-store and online selling sites. In contrast, most small-scale businesses shift from in-store selling to online marketplaces. In Sri Lanka, green household products are primarily available in major cities because of the limited availability of supermarkets in remote areas (Dain, 2014). Regarding in-store selling, small retailers, traditional markets, and supermarkets like Keels Super Market, Cargills Super Market, and Arpico Super Centre are Sri Lanka's most widely used household product shopping chains.

Cargills Food City – Cargills supermarket is a publicly listed company in Sri Lanka. CT Holdings PLC, a leader of retail organizations in Sri Lanka, owns 71% of the company shares. This chain offers a diverse range of products, including household products. Cargills operates a network of supermarkets across Sri Lanka, including approximately 530 supermarkets. In addition, Keels Super Market is owned by John Keels Holdings PLC and is famous for its strong reputation for providing a wide range of food, beverages, clothing, electronics, and household products at a competitive price. They operate 135 supermarkets across Sri Lanka for daily shopping needs. Lastly, Arpico, with a hypermarket concept in Sri Lanka, offers daily needs such as furniture, groceries, food, beverages, cleaning products, personal care, household products, and green alternatives. The supermarket chain is owned by Richard Pieris & Company PLC (RPC). Their retail network comprises 25 Arpico Super Centers, 12 Showrooms, and 19 Arpico Daily Mini Supermarkets.

2.4.2 Green products online market

Online shopping is a popular way of purchasing products and services worldwide. Eurostat (2024) illustrates 2023 data, as e-commerce accounted for around 19 percent of retail sales worldwide. According to data from the International Trade Administration (2024) in Sri Lanka, 43% of the 11 million internet users have experienced online purchasing. Regarding geography, Western Province is the largest destination for the e-commerce market due to the availability of shopping options and infrastructure. Around 50% of all orders in Sri Lanka were generated in the Western Province. Most online consumers purchase products or services after seeing internet promotions. Research data illustrated by eCommerceDB (2024) explained the largest e-commerce market with an annual growth rate of 3.5% by 2025. The electronic appliances market is the largest online market in Sri Lanka, accounting for 23.8% of Sri Lanka's e-commerce revenue. Secondly, the hobby and leisure accounts for 19.6%, and thirdly, textile and fashion 18.6%, followed by furniture and homeware 11.9%, grocery 11.4%, care products 7.9%, and DIY products 6.9%. Clothing and electronics continue to be prominent product categories.

Moreover, the growing development of mobile and social commerce platforms enables consumers to reach the green household market quickly and conveniently. Individuals in their early years are the most likely to shop online compared to other age groups. While Amazon is among the leading online businesses in other countries, Sri Lankan consumers do not prefer it as much. Moreover, all the shopping chains discussed above operate complete, competitive online stores with convenient after-sales services. The International Trade Administration (2024) explained that the following platforms stand out as notable online shopping platforms offering green household products in Sri Lanka. kapruka.com is a popular online platform in Sri Lanka that allows the community to buy and sell many categories, including green household products. Many transactions on Kapruka involve fashion and accessories, books and stationery, sport and fitness, baby products, home and living products, and beauty and personal care, including conventional and green household products. Daraz.lk is another popular e-commerce platform that sells a wide range of general household products, including green ones. Also, take.lk sells products to the online retail market in Sri Lanka. Moreover, keellssuper.com is a Sri Lankan in-store and online supermarket chain that offers online purchasing for household products for local consumers.

2.5 Green household product price

In the global market, sustainability-marketed products remain pricier, with a 27.6% price premium compared to conventionally marketed goods (Langan et al., 2024). In 2015, a global organization named Nielsen surveyed over thirteen thousand consumers across sixty countries. This study revealed that 66% of survey participants would pay more for eco-friendly products. Notably, 73% of the young consumer segment is willing to do so. This figure is almost three-quarters of all respondents (*2015 Nielsen Global Sustainability Report*, 2015). Green products are pricier in Sri Lanka since they are premium products with high-quality ingredients and benefits (Dain, 2014). Niwarthana et al. (2020) found that young consumers in Sri Lanka are ready to pay a premium on green products because the high concern for the environment plays a significant role in purchasing green products over conventional products, despite their high price.

According to the global market price strategy for green products, the marked-up price of green products is 27% higher than similar conventional products (Langan et al., 2024). However, some manufacturers and distributors, such as Super Colloids Lanka Ltd, provide affordable green products despite their high manufacturing cost (Dain, 2014). Moreover, with the rapidly increasing technology and effective manufacturing process, green household products are achieving a low cost of production along with moderate prices. Comparing the green household products' price and the price of their conventional counterpart, Myrawana.lk, which is an online shopping platform in Sri Lanka, offers a wide range of green household products through their page as an example travel coffee cup made from rice husk is priced 8.39 USD, and the standard travel coffee cup made from stainless-steel price is 8.16 USD. The price comparison in the cleaning product market in Sri Lanka reveals that green cleaning products are slightly pricier. For example, the Eco clean VEXTA Matic 2 in one lavender detergent powder 1kg packet price is 1.74 USD, and the conventional product, like Sunlight detergent powder packet price, is 1.27 USD. So, price comparison in the real market illustrates that green household products are slightly more expensive than conventional products. However, it does not show a significant price gap.

2.6 Customer segment for green household products in Sri Lanka.

Researchers have been unable to agree on the specific qualities and categories of green consumers, so many parameters have been used. As a result, various recognized green consumer segments exist. Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) (2017) has introduced a popular segmentation for green product customers. NMI divides customers into five categories based on their ecological commitment, values, and demographic criteria. This methodology simplifies the process of categorizing clients. Unconcerned – They are the customer segment with the least concern regarding the environmental consequences of their shopping habits. They do not change their behavior to become eco-friendly. The group comprises men aged 45 to 49 with higher education levels and incomes. Conventional – They have somewhat higher environmental concerns and try to preserve the environment by implementing small actions. They included men around the 45 to 49 age group, with higher education levels and high earnings. This customer segment can be influenced by green purchasing behavior.

Drifters – Drifters are trend and fashion followers; therefore, they follow the green trend as a novel trend without environmental concern. They are primarily women with moderate income, low education, and the young consumer segment. They are easily influenced by buying green products. Naturalists prioritize personal health, influencing them to make green purchases. They are women in their mid-40s. They have low incomes and low education. They are the major customer segment in the green product market. They influence others to adopt green purchasing behavior. LOHAS is a green customer segment with assertive green purchase behavior. They consist of middle-aged women with high incomes and moderate education levels. They are very active and holistic. New research done by three researchers, Yan et al. (2021) shows that middle-class consumers are more likely to purchase green products than upper-class or lower-class consumers.

Salonen et al.'s (2014) research explains that the consumer segment that can be motivated to be greener has a small income (i.e., less than 30,000 euros a year). Studies about the categories of green consumer segments show different explanations. In 2002, two researchers, Ginsberg and Bloom (2024), published a green consumer segmentation model describing five consumer segments. Group number 1, True Blue Greens, comprises 9% of green consumers striving to improve through environmental initiatives and strong eco principles. They are 25% more likely to avoid non-environmental products than other consumers.

Group number 2, Greenback Greens, accounts for 6% of consumers and differs because they do not intend to be politically engaged. They are much more inclined to purchase green goods than ordinary consumers. Group number 3 – 31% Sprouts are the second largest green consumer segment, and they are encouraged to choose green goods only when they are suitable enough. However, their environmental sense is lower, so they are compelled to choose green goods if they are more expensive than their regular counterparts. Group number 4 – Grouzers, represents 19% of consumers who are cynical about the individual ability to make a difference and are less educated about environmental issues. They do not buy green products as they do not buy expensive products, and are not concerned with the quality of goods. Group number 5 – Basic Browns, the largest green consumer segment, represents 33% of the green consumer market, and they primarily consider environmental issues and their day-to-day choices. In summary, all the explanations indicate characteristics of green consumer segmentation such as environmental sensitivity, green product awareness, income within the middle-class level, and age of 30 to 40.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section begins the empirical part of the study. Research methodology comprises a structured framework of systematic methods that direct the research process and its implementation. It starts with the research philosophy and extends to sampling, research approach, research design, data analysis, and data collection. The methodology chapter closes by clarifying the research's ethical considerations, data reliability, and data validity.

3.1 Philosophy, approach, strategy, design, and sampling

The research philosophy constitutes the first layer, which guides the study strategy and methods. At this point, it is important to focus mainly on the link between applicable information and how it is applied. This term indicates that researchers must consider philosophy according to their objectives. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) state three main research philosophies: positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism. They have diverse conceptions of reality, means of producing acceptable insight, and the significance of ideas in study. As for this thesis, the constructivist paradigm intends to understand knowledge based on individual experiences, beliefs, and interpretations. It is well-suited for research that shows how individuals understand and make sense of the reality of the world around them rather than attempting to uncover universal truths. Moreover, Burney and Saleem (2008) indicated two research approaches: inductive and deductive. The main variation between the approaches lies in the deductive approach, which tests a generally established theory, whereas the inductive approach develops a new theory. Based on the essence of this inductive approach, a study approach requires collecting and analyzing data. Researchers use this approach to collect data on green household products, consumer characteristics, and pricing. Based on existing observations and information, specific objectives were developed regarding the product categories, demand, customer segment, market availability, and pricing. According to the constructivist paradigm and inductive research approach, the qualitative research strategy was deemed the most suitable for this study.

Tobi and Kampen (2018) state that research design is a framework encompassing collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research. It helps a researcher understand the necessary procedure and set of methods for collecting and analyzing data related to the research problem. Research design is the fundamental framework combining conceptual research objectives with the applicable empirical research findings. There are numerous research designs, and a case study research design was adopted for this study.

The case study method design is more appropriate for the selected study because it uses realistic and textual data. Crowe et al. (2011) explained the context of the case study research design, which focuses on recognizing the individual human experience in its unique context. A case study is used to gain a thorough, multifaceted awareness of a complicated subject in its real-world context. It is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in social science.

However, sampling involves choosing the desired number of participants to represent the target population. Sampling is carried out to choose study subjects representative of the study target population. A carefully selected sample typically includes most of the features of the target population. It is important to have a good relationship between the population and the sample (Stratton, 2023). The research was based on expert sampling, as survey members have a deep knowledge of green household products. Etikan (2016) applied a purposive sampling strategy in research to deliberately pick individuals with deep knowledge, specialized skills, or significant experience in a specific area. This sampling method is effective when the research takes considerable time before it generates conclusive results or when sufficient observational evidence has not yet been presented. This type of sampling intends to gather information and in-depth knowledge from individuals with extensive experience and knowledge in the subject. The expert sampling strategy was used in this study because of the need to collect data on green household products from knowledgeable individuals who can provide valuable insights, opinions, or perspectives on this research topic.

3.2 Primary data collection and thematic analysis

The researcher gathered data by interviewing and using an open-ended questionnaire to get information. The questionnaire was built using Microsoft Forms. The application saves data automatically and facilitates easy import into MS Excel for analysis. To begin with, the purpose of the research, the research topic, and its objectives were informed. Then, the study questionnaire was distributed among two managers and one executive of a leading hypermarket chain in Sri Lanka. The survey questionnaires were shared via email. A total of 3 respondents were targeted. Three forms were completed and identified as valid, with a 100% recovery rate. The participants have years of experience operating supermarkets in Sri Lanka. All the participants had high educational qualifications. All the open-ended survey questions were created to obtain detailed information and were open to expressing their experience and knowledge.

Each interview averages 30 minutes. Participants responded to the survey eagerly. The data were collected from April to May 2025. After collecting all the data, the data analysis was started. In agreement with the phenomenological approach of this study, the researcher developed a questionnaire and interviews to facilitate answers to the survey questions. Hycner (1985) explained the process of analyzing data, as the data analysis was initiated by identifying questions in questionnaires that were applied to each research objective. Answers were categorized under different themes by considering the research objectives. Then, the researcher categorized the answers collected from the survey participants based on their similarities. Several similar answers were identified across the participants' responses. Next, the researcher recorded similar answers that emerged from the data summary of each survey question. Direct quotes from the participants' responses supported the data summary.

Naeem et al. (2023) illustrated that qualitative data analysis provides five analytical methods: content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory, and thematic analysis. Considering the context of this study, the researcher employed thematic analysis to examine the data. Thematic analysis is an often-employed technique in qualitative data analysis, which involves familiarizing oneself with the data, selecting quotations, selecting keywords, coding, theme development, and developing a conceptual model analysis. It is an adaptable strategy that could be used with qualitative data, such as observational notes, survey responses, and interview transcripts. This method enables researchers to use their creative imagination and systematic process to develop a conceptual model.

3.3 Validity, reliability, and ethics

Reliability and validity are widely recognized concepts for assessing the quality of a research study. When reliability measures the level of trust in research outcomes, validity refers to the study's accuracy compared to reality (Karnia, 2024). The validity and reliability of the study determine its credibility. This study explores how consumer mindsets are influenced by social trends, variables, and so on, and they are likely to change over time. Because the data gathering for the study was completed recently, the validity of the research can be assured in terms of timing. In this study, only primary data were obtained and utilized through a questionnaire. Therefore, the reliability of the study might be impacted by the respondents' personality, knowledge limitations, and perception (Lopez et al., 2023).

It means that some issues, such as whether the participants understood the questions as it is, whether the respondents intentionally adopted a green lifestyle, and whether the answers of the participants were correct and from their actual point of view, can be deferred. The questionnaire was presented in English, which helped respondents understand and answer it. Moreover, most responses are considered adequate due to being trustworthy and honest, which is part of Sri Lankan society. Also, they are rich in ecological behavior. Participants were selected relatively and equitably. As Vanclay et al. (2013) explained, at the beginning of gathering data, all participants were provided with an informed consent form to verify that they understood the study's purpose. Respondents were free to withdraw from their voluntary involvement at any time without incurring any legal consequences. Unauthorized third parties were denied entry to documents meant for scholarly purposes. The authenticity of the study was ensured by adequately citing all sources derived from other works, thereby providing the necessary information to acknowledge and validate the original contributors.

4 THE CASE STUDY OF AZ COMPANY

This chapter describes the company as a case study. It includes the company overview relevant to the study, product description, and market position in Sri Lanka.

4.1 The case of the company and its products and services

AZ company is a Sri Lankan Supermarket chain owned by the ABC group. AZ was founded 180 years ago, during the British colonial era in Colombo Fort. AZ's business concept is to sell food, beverages, and various household products, including cleaning, home organizing, kitchen appliances, school supplies, toys, clothes, garden products, and pet care products. In 2025, the AZ company chain owned over 500 stores in all 25 districts in Sri Lanka. They offer both physical and online selling. The stores' products are divided into food, beverages, and household products. All the products are sold under different categories in the household section. Some of the key categories and examples of products within the household section are cleaning items such as disinfectants, bleach products, alcohol-based spray, wipes, detergents, (e.g., laundry, dishwashing, and general cleaning spray, powder, liquid, and bar), and green cleaners (i.e., all the cleaning products that are enddamages to the ecological systems).

Most importantly, kitchenware is used for food preparation and serving, such as kitchen tools, cookware, dishes, appliances, and utensils made from different materials (e.g., wood, aluminum, iron, plastic, and green materials). Also, the sports section provides various sports items and home organization. The decoration section consists of natural and synthetic products such as flowers, crafts, wall clocks, beds, chairs, tables, laundry baskets, cloth organizing boxes, and the personal and skincare section provides shampoo, soap, cream, and beauty products. The AZ store has extensively implemented the green purchasing idea, resulting in a significant increase in the display of green products across all the sections by emphasizing the company's dedication to encouraging green purchasing. These green products are displayed among conventional products. Moreover, the company complies with government rules and regulations by offering essential green products such as biodegradable polythene bags and reusable cloth bags to store purchased goods, eliminating the sale of one-time use plastic spoons, forks, cups, and plates, and instead introducing paper products. AZ is Sri Lanka's major retail chain, representing a total share of around 40% of Sri Lanka's food and retail industry. It is considered one of the biggest grocery stores in Sri Lanka, with approximately 11335 employees.

4.2 Market position

All the figures highlight the market position of the AZ company and its associated group as being firmly established and highly competitive within the industry. AZ Group maintains its reputation as Sri Lanka's most expanded retail seller in physical and online shops because, while other competitors heavily focus on urban areas, AZ Group expands into less-served areas. The company operates local sourcing as a strong strategy by building strong relationships with local suppliers. Regarding the green selling concept, the AZ hypermarket chain in Sri Lanka is a major responsible company and the most innovative in its industry. Their sustainability and eco-friendly practices include waste management, circular economy practices, energy-efficient stores, and green packaging.

The AZ company is nominated as one of Sri Lanka's most valuable retail brands. They earned this status due to their nationwide presence by operating more than 500 branches and strong consumer loyalty. As stated, it contributes approximately 25% of Sri Lanka's retail and grocery sector. The company operates diverse product portfolios under local and international brands. Further, it sells its private-labeled products under the AZ chain brand name, representing its strong marketing strategies and increasing its market visibility. The company constantly adapts new marketing strategies to align with ever-changing consumer preferences and remains a competitive leader in the market.

5 THE FINDINGS OF PRIMARY DATA

This section provides the data and information acquired through the study. The survey was conducted by AZ supermarket managers and executives using Microsoft Forms. Two managers and one executive of the selected company responded to the open-ended questionnaire. They provided comprehensive responses to each question and actively participated in the interview. Their answers have been included in the entire section to enhance awareness of the findings. The open-ended questionnaire has been utilized to collect versatile information on green household product types, demand, price, availability, and customer segments in Sri Lanka. The questionnaire has been constructed to boost the participants' capability to provide professional insight regarding green household products in Sri Lanka. The questionnaire addressed the primary objective, which followed the five sub-objectives.

Appendix 1 includes an open-ended questionnaire. The study presents findings in a narrative format, according to the sub-objectives of the research, which were assessed using thematic analysis. The questionnaire was set into five themes based on five sub-objectives in such a way that the first theme was to understand green household products, theme two categorized the types of green household products consumed in Sri Lanka, theme three deals with identifying the customers in Sri Lanka, theme four was set to identify the availability of green household products in Sri Lanka, and theme 5 seeks the pricing of green household products. Each theme aligned with the two research questions, and the interviewers were asked eleven questions.

5.1 The Green Household Products in Sri Lanka

The study's first sub-objective is to understand green household products. The first two questions of the questionnaire are linked to this research objective. The findings of the responses create a clear image of green household products. The two interview respondents comprehensively explained the term green household product: Two managers and one executive are considered H1, H2, and H3.

In this context, green household products are products produced responsibly from an environmental point of view and made from materials such as bamboo, organic cotton, recycled plastic, and plant-based substances.

In that case, I feel I am consuming less of the Earth's natural resources when choosing green household products. e.g., eco packaging. These products have a less or zero carbon footprint; in this case, you must look at the entire value chain from the raw materials until the product arrives on the store shelf. They are typically designed to be reusable. (H1 & H3)

Other respondents agreed with the definition by stating the primary environmentally friendly condition. Considering the responses from the second interview question, it has been found that several key characteristics of green household products, which interviewers state as recyclability, re-usability, recyclable package, and burden on the environment. The findings of the response are fully capable of creating an optimal idea about the term green household product, which is enough to create a clear picture of the layers, even for those new to the concept of green household products.

5.2 Results of different types of green household products

Regarding the second sub-objective, the interviewers were asked two questions about the types of green household products their company sells and the best-selling products. It is necessary to comprehend that the questionnaire was prepared for managers and executives of AZ company, which has extensive experience with the customer demand for green household products since the stated company is one of the three leading supermarket chains in Sri Lanka and sells all types of green household products that are currently on the Sri Lankan market. Surveying two managers and one executive of the AZ company, all the respondents provided similar lists of green household products, such as household cleaning products and tools, paper products, diapers, cosmetics, clothing, flowers, footwear, and personal hygiene products. Additionally, the second interviewer stated that,

Cleaning supplies like eco-friendly detergents, biodegradable cleaning wipes, personal care products e.g.- organic shampoo and conditioners, soaps, bamboo toothbrushes, reusable products like reusable shopping bags, water bottles, kitchenware products like eco-friendly food storage containers, compostable utensils, energy-efficient items like LED bulbs and energy saving appliances, garden products like organic fertilizers, bio-degradable plant pots. (H2)

According to the statement, the AZ company sells green products in all household departments. As a result, green household products in Sri Lanka can be classified as green cleaners, green kitchen wear, green home wear, green garden and outdoor items, and green personal and hygiene products.

Concerning the bestselling green household products, it was found that all respondents highlighted detergent and reusable polythene bags as the best-selling green household products. Moreover, Dain (2014) shows that the market for the manufacturing and supply of green cleaning detergent to the Sri Lankan market indicates that the supply of green detergent is rising among Sri Lankan consumers. The statement shows that detergents without chemicals have increased and are widely available at moderate prices. Previously, it was expensive. H2 respondents mentioned some different items, stating that LED bulbs and cleaning wipes are also in high demand for green household products.

5.3 Findings on green household product availability

Sri Lanka has many ways to find available green products and services as a green lifestyle priority society. For example, eco-friendly volunteers (ECO-V) promote sustainability in the community and help people choose more sustainable ways of living around urban areas. The research questions for respondents of the AZ company are as follows: Do you sell green household products online, and do you have competitors in the market selling green household products online or in-store in Sri Lanka? The sub-objective linked with this research question was identifying the availability of green household products in Sri Lanka. According to their answers, they have a typical online store and physical stores for conventional and green household products. Therefore, customers can buy green household products through all these products. As per the question about competitors, they have accepted that they have competitors in the green household product online and in-store market. Arpico would be the leading competitor. Apart from this information, the interviewee's judgment on the open-ended question supports the sub-objective. The interviewees mentioned that the green product concept is one of their competitive strategies, and they prioritize green products. Their words to explain this thought are as follows.

Green products are spreading widely throughout the market, and consumers are increasingly demanding. Many supermarkets, including our supermarket, also sell green products online through their website and in-store. Thuru.lk sells eco-friendly products. Daraz.lk sells green products widely. (H1, H2, & H3)

Green household products are readily available in many cities in Sri Lanka. The AZ company is one of the country's most widely distributed supermarket chains.

5.4 Replies regarding the pricing of green household products

Some green household products are slightly higher in price, but green perceived benefits are a great return on consumers' investment, particularly for Generation Z (Gomes et al., 2023). To examine the market price of green household products in Sri Lanka, company experts were asked what the difference in the pricing of green household products is compared to that of general products. Two respondents agreed that green household products are more expensive than conventional products. One respondent stated that the products were expensive earlier but have become moderate. The respondents explained this pricing strategy as follows.

Initially, these products were costly, and people could not afford them. However, it has become a normal price over time. So now anyone can buy it easily. (H1)

Green household products are at a higher price compared to general products. Because using high-quality, natural, or organic materials costs more than using other materials. Environmentally friendly manufacturing processes are more costly due to the need for specialized equipment and compliance with environmental regulations. (H2)

Another question related to pricing was asked: Do you get any feedback regarding the pricing of green household products? Interviewees stated that they do not get any feedback on pricing. This is how the H2 interviewer explains the answer further.

Many consumers are willing to pay a premium for green products. (H2)

5.5 Responses for the customer segment of green household products

As a component of recognizing the characteristics of the customer segment in the green household product industry, this sub-objective determines the customer segment for green household products. The customer segment refers to the entire customer group based on different characteristics, including gender, age, and education level. The two open-ended questions were: What types of customers buy the green household products in your store, and how do customers identify the green household products in your store? All the answers of the respondents in the open-ended questionnaire mainly highlighted the main characteristics of the customer segment, which are environmental responsibility awareness, health-consciousness, and quality-seeking customers because green products are high quality and durable.

Furthermore, one respondent added that the green customer segment comprises customers of moderate-income categories, males aged between 25 and 45. Respondents have given specific answers to how customers identify the green household products in your store.

The products can certainly be identified by TV programs, advertisements, eco labels, and certifications, by looking at the information on the package and checking the green products section/aisle. (H1, H2 & H3)

The easiest way to identify green products is to check the labels on the packaging or product that confirms whether a product is eco-friendly. Consumers can check different features on the label to identify green products. Many popular green labels, mainly the Recycling Triangle (i.e., Mobius loop), plastic resin identification code, Green SL label, and biodegradable symbol, are on the market. The biodegradable symbol typically illustrates that the product is green or eco-friendly. The triangle, a more common symbol with three arrows forming a loop, denotes that the item is made from recycled materials or is recyclable (Aston & James, 2023). The consumer segment of green products consists of customers with environmental sensitivity, green product awareness, health consciousness, quality searching, and moderate-income levels, males aged 25 to 45.

6 DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

This section illustrates an in-depth investigation of the study's contribution to its empirical findings. Responses to the main objective and sub-objectives are presented below. The research findings denote the social cognitive theory framework discussed in the theoretical contribution, manifesting its application in consumer society. Based on the study results, the bidirectional social influence among behavior, environment, and personal factors can be evident, aligning with social cognitive theory (SCT). According to the survey respondents, the hypermarket selected for the study and its competitors have made a significant effort to green the household product market through in-store and online selling. This shows a bidirectional social influence; on one side, the sellers promote the green household market throughout society. On the other side, the influence of the sellers shapes consumer behavior in society to purchase green household products, which increases the demand for green household products and motivates sellers to increase green sales.

Furthermore, social aspects within Sri Lankan society are influential motivators for promoting green concepts. During the open-ended questionnaire, the respondents stated that the green household customer segment comprises customers with environmental sensitivity and health and quality awareness. Consumers' environmental sensitivity (i.e., personal factors) strongly influences them to purchase green products (i.e., behavioral factors). Apart from environmental sensitivity, the increased conscious health and quality (i.e., personal factors) indicate that consumer society is influenced by the education curriculum (i.e., environmental factors). Consequently, the green household product consumer segment in Sri Lanka has spread to diverse consumers, showing its high social influence in Sri Lanka. This is evidenced by the survey respondents, who stated that customers with moderate income levels, the most significant income level group in Sri Lanka, buy green household products.

6.1 Explanation of green household products.

This sub-objective attempted to obtain in-depth knowledge regarding the overall characteristics of green household items and establish a clear explanation of the term green household products. The findings of this study present an integral illustration of green household products by aligning literary insights with empirical data. The analysis briefly indicates that green household products are used daily in households with designs that consider ecological sustainability, with reduced negative ecological processes along their lifecycle.

This analysis aligns with the definition by Sdrolia and Zarotiadis (2019), green household products encompass principles such as sustainability, minimizing their ecological hazard during their entire life cycle, and even after the product has reached the end of its use, preventing the use of toxic chemicals, recyclable, reusable, used the least resources, reduced or zero waste carbon footprint. Empirical data collected from AZ hypermarket managers and executives confirm these characteristics and further provide more details of this definition with practical experience. Green household products are made responsibly from an environmental point of view, consuming less of the earth's natural resources and having a smaller carbon footprint. Moreover, they pointed out the important features concerning the value chain, from the input materials until the product arrives on the store shelf.

Furthermore, research respondents explained specifications related to the product disposal stage, such as recyclability and reusability. Results indicated that the Sri Lanka community is very educated on environmental issues and, for this reason, is ready to make green choices when buying household products. Empirical results also indicate some problems that green household products face. While consumers recognize their environmental advantages, they base their purchase decisions on cost, performance, and availability. Green labeling might appear to some customers as a commercial positioning strategy instead of an environmentally oriented one, which can keep customers away. This is consistent with the earlier findings that indicate an overemphasis on green without addressing customer needs, which can affect the product's market acceptance. Altogether, the study determines that the concept of green household products is theoretically and practically well-defined. Research responses from professionals offer a clear, real-world perspective on what makes up a green household product. Backed by earlier research, this research implies an in-depth understanding of a green household product and its position in Sri Lanka.

6.2 Clarification of green household product types in Sri Lanka.

The second sub-objective of the research is to determine the categories of green household products found within Sri Lanka. Both theoretical and empirical studies have identified the main categories of green household products and determined the most in-demand green ones in Sri Lanka. As a top-listed green shopper in Asia, Sri Lanka reveals a distinct trend. A previous study conducted by Market Research (2024) classifies household products into five categories: green cleaner products, green personal care products, green kitchenware and appliances.

The rest two categories are green home appliances, and green home decor and green furnishing. Businesses categorize their green household product portfolios by analyzing consumers' behavior and purchase patterns, highlighting the demand for specific products. According to survey responses, green household products are classified as green cleaner products, green kitchenware, green home wear, green garden and outdoor items, and green personal and hygiene products. In addition, the research results demonstrate that the consumer market in Sri Lanka reveals an increasing demand for green products. Among the top-selling products are green detergent, biodegradable polythene bags, and LED bulbs. Chemical-free detergent has become the top-selling product (Duong, 2024). Companies increase the manufacturing volumes of green-labeled products to reach the ever-increasing consumer demand. On the other hand, children with households have also increased the demand for green household supplies and cleaning products due to their high quality, durability, and health consciousness.

6.3 Identifying the availability of green household products

This study intends to ensure a complete investigation of the retail environment by considering green household product availability in both online and in-store markets in Sri Lanka. According to the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) of Sri Lanka and the United Nations Conference, Sri Lanka had around 56.3% of internet users from the total population. Moreover, around 56% of these users purchased a product or service online (International Trade Administration, 2024). The findings from the empirical analysis contradict the results drawn in the theoretical study. Empirical analysis reveals that all the major supermarkets, hypermarkets, and department stores operate only in the city area, creating a barrier for customers in rural areas to access green household products. Retail chains, including hypermarkets, supermarkets, and convenience stores, extensively provide green household products through physical and online stores. Arpico, identified as a key competitor, and all other hypermarket chains, including the examined hypermarket chain, operate many physical and online stores, offering green household products widely across urban areas in Sri Lanka. These chains leverage green products as a strategic method to achieve market leadership over their competitors. Additionally, these retailers operate competitive online stores to assist customers. Besides that, some popular online stores in Sri Lanka sell green household products, such as Daraz, Thuru.lk, and Kapruka.

Accordingly, urban customers in Sri Lanka enjoy broad access to the green household market, whether online or in-store, depending on their preferences. However, while in-store purchases remain dominant, the shift to online purchasing is rapidly growing, driven by changing consumer behavior and the convenience of digital platforms. The dual availability of green household products through online platforms and physical stores ensures easy accessibility and broad availability to customers in the urban areas in Sri Lanka.

6.4 Interpretation of green household products' pricing

The pricing strategy of green household goods in Sri Lanka slightly differs from the global trend, where green products are priced at a premium compared to conventional products, with an average price increase of 27.6% (Langan et al., 2024). However, empirical data indicate that in Sri Lanka, the prices of green household products range from average to higher levels, making them relatively accessible and affordable to Sri Lankan consumers, though they somewhat fall within the highest price segment. Considering the customers' reaction to the higher price, despite the higher price, 66% of global customers purchase green products, with this figure rising to 76% among younger consumers (*2015 Nielsen Global Sustainability Report, 2015*). The trend is similar in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankans choose green products despite the price premium. This tendency is influential among the younger generation, who are more willing to invest in green alternatives.

Empirical analysis supports the theoretical findings, confirming that the price of green products in Sri Lanka ranges from average to high. The younger generation is leading this trend, consistently prioritizing green household products and is open to paying an additional price for sustainable household products. On one hand, while price is still an important factor in purchasing decisions, Sri Lankan consumers are increasingly buying green household products. Businesses in Sri Lanka balance the pressure of a competitive pricing strategy with the consumers' expectations and preferences toward green purchasing. Companies should prevent charging excessive prices for green products or designing them, especially for niche targeting wealthy consumers. The focus should be on aligning the price of green products with conventional alternatives.

6.5 Understanding the customer segments in Sri Lanka

This sub-objective aims to identify the customer segment for green household products in Sri Lanka. Identifying the characteristics of the consumer segment in the green household market has been an area of interest for scholars worldwide for decades. Results indicate two main characteristics of green household customers: environmental sensitivity and health consciousness. Besides that, respondents reported being male, between 25 and 45, in the moderate-income group, and quality-seeking customers. Remarkably, consumers of moderate-income levels in Sri Lanka chose to buy green household products despite their income. The moderate-income group represents most of the population in Sri Lanka, indicating a widespread adoption of green lifestyles across diverse socioeconomic groups. The literary explanation indicates similar and different characteristics of the green consumer segment.

The extraction of common characteristics of green consumers found in theoretical and empirical research reveals constant attributes such as environmental sensitivity and health consciousness. Empirical and earlier literature shows that green consumers are at the middle-class level. However, the green customer in the global market represents no gender-specific consumers, challenging this notion and suggesting that male consumers in Sri Lanka represent the green consumer segment. This study indicates that green household consumers possess a high level of education, enabling them to quickly identify them through labels, symbols, and brand names that are popular in green practices. Moreover, this segment consists mainly of men between the ages of 25 and 45 and the young generation.

7 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This last chapter first illustrates a complete research summary and then proceeds with theoretical, managerial, and policy implications. Furthermore, the study's limitations are illustrated, and valuable ideas for future studies are indicated.

7.1 Summary

Generation Z and Y are more concerned about environmental safety and human health than previous generations. This trend is evolving fast on a global scale. This trend has had a considerable effect on the consumer market in Sri Lanka as Sri Lankan consumers, known for their natural commitment to environmental sustainability, display a stronger inclination toward green practices than those in other nations. As a result, marketers must adapt by aligning the household market with green products to meet the growing green demand. Therefore, the primary target of the study is to analyze green household products in Sri Lanka. To achieve this, the research is structured into five sub-objectives to understand green household products, categorize the types of green household products consumed in Sri Lanka, identify the customers in Sri Lanka, identify the availability of green household products in Sri Lanka, and understand the pricing of green household products. The research evolved through the following process. The research utilized a qualitative approach to investigate green household products in Sri Lanka. Data was collected through an open-ended questionnaire survey.

An open-ended questionnaire was distributed to two managers and one executive from a major hypermarket chain in Sri Lanka, ensuring insights from industry professionals regarding green household products. The data was examined through a thematic analysis technique, which was used to examine the results and provide answers to the survey questionnaire. The result of the research illustrated that consumer society in urban areas in Sri Lanka demonstrates a more profound knowledge regarding green household products and a well-informed consumer base, which aligns with Sri Lanka's reputation as an environmentally conscious community worldwide. The study successfully achieved its primary objective along with the specific sub-objectives. The findings demonstrated a strong alignment between the theoretical framework and empirical data. Respondents provided clear and precise explanations of green household products, effectively illustrating a comprehensive understanding of the concept and its framework within the market.

Accordingly, the term green household products illustrates their defining characteristics of minimizing their ecological impact during their entire life-cycle and even after the product has reached the end of its use, without the use of toxic chemicals, can be recycled, reused, reduced or zero waste, produced responsibly from an environmental point of view, consuming less of the earth's natural resources, less carbon footprint, look at the entire value chain from the input materials until the item arrives on the store shelf. The fundamental categorization of green household products in the Sri Lanka market shows slight variations compared to globally recognized classifications. Based on empirical data, Sri Lanka's green household product market is segmented into the following categories: green cleaner products, green home wear, green kitchenware, green garden and outdoor items, and green personal and hygiene products. These categories are primarily shaped by consumer behavior patterns and purchasing preferences, reflecting the specific demands and priorities of the Sri Lankan market.

Further analysis reveals that Sri Lanka's most fundamental green household products are green detergent, LED bulbs, and biodegradable polythene bags. Regarding the availability of green household products across Sri Lanka, major supermarket and hypermarket chains such as Cargills, Arpico, Sampath, and Keels extensively offer these products only in urban areas through many physical and online platforms. Meanwhile, these hypermarkets and popular online retailers distribute green household products to customers' doorsteps. Global prices tend to be higher, considering the pricing strategy for green household products.

In contrast, in Sri Lanka, prices range from average to higher, making green household products more accessible and affordable to Sri Lankan customers. Notably, consumers aged between 25 and 45, especially younger customers, are much more influenced by buying green products than other generations and are inclined to pay a premium for these green household products. Considering the characteristics of the consumer market segment in Sri Lanka, this segment consists of high environmental sensitivity, health consciousness, quality-oriented, moderate-income levels, and educated individuals. The study results conclude that green household products are more prevalent among consumers in urban areas than in other areas.

7.2 Theoretical, managerial, and policy implications

This study's theoretical contribution is that social cognitive theory has been applied to identify the social and cognitive context of green household product consumers in Sri Lanka, which is considered highly sensitive to the environment. The findings reveal Sri Lanka as a booming society where a supportive society effectively promotes green purchasing behavior. This theory highlights the interplay of environmental, personal, and behavioral factors in shaping the shopping society. The characteristics of Sri Lankan customers, i.e., personal factors, such as naturally intensive environmental sensitivity and health consciousness, influence them to purchase green products. Collective purchasing behavior, i.e., behavioral factors, makes a significant demand, influencing shoppers to increase green product availability in the market, i.e., environmental factors.

On the other hand, environmental principles, including the wide availability of green products via preferred purchasing channels, green peers, green culture, and green education, influence customers to choose green products (i.e., behavioral factors). Also, collective green behavior (i.e., behavioral factors) makes green cultural norms (i.e., environmental factors) that influence individuals to adopt green behavior in their lives (i.e., personal factors). Notably, research results indicate that when the power of social factors increases, such as when individuals are higher in education level, and with a growing number of people in the income group, green purchasing also increases, indicating a strong positive influence between the social cognitive theory and the study illustration.

This study focused on analyzing green household products in Sri Lanka. Green household products in Sri Lanka were selected as a unique research context, influenced by the ongoing favorable situation in Sri Lanka. Much research has been conducted on green intention and consumer demand across several product categories (e.g., Sooriyaarachchi, 2023; Jayasinghe, 2022). However, studies regarding green household products in Sri Lanka are few. Therefore, this research contributes to previous research and increases knowledge about Sri Lankans' green household products context. Hence, it helps to fill the existing research gap in the context of green household products in Sri Lanka. The managerial implications of this thesis provide valuable insight to managers in the household product industry, especially in the context of green household products, which can guide strategic decision-making. Managers can use the insights from research about product portfolio optimization to identify the most demanded green household products.

Moreover, as the market for green household products is expanding, differentiation and innovation are essential. Managers should focus on introducing unique features and innovations in their product portfolio, as identified in the thesis. The study recommends an average to high pricing strategy aligned with the country's norms. Managers should follow the pricing strategy and reflect their premium quality and eco-friendly benefits while remaining competitive. The thesis highlights that the ideal customer segment comprises men with higher education across moderate income brackets, aged 25 and 45, health conscious, quality searching, and environmentally conscious. Managers should focus their marketing strategy on this customer segment to maximize sales. By analyzing competitors' marketing strategies outlined in the thesis, managers can craft a marketing strategy to enhance their competitive position in the market. Besides, a strong association was found between social cognitive theory and green household product demand, suggesting an opportunity for managers to utilize social commerce. By leveraging social media platforms, influencer partnerships, and campaigns, managers can drive demand for green household products.

Sri Lanka is widely considered a rising green society, offering valuable insight for policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders aiming to promote green concepts in different cultural and economic contexts. Policymakers can draw on eco-friendly practices in Sri Lanka by leveraging effective green initiatives and adopting those tailored to their needs. These could be beneficial in identifying optimal promotional strategies for different organizations and campaigns aimed at fostering sustainability. When adopting these practices, policymakers should carefully evaluate their existing socio-economic framework and adopt suitable practices from Sri Lanka's practices that align with their circumstances.

7.3 Research shortcomings

Some shortcomings were unavoidable during the study process. Notably, this research represents the whole of Sri Lanka. However, research of an entire country is a big project that is a significant investment of time and cost. For this report, the researcher selected one leading hypermarket chain to investigate information about the entire country. As the company's chain stores sell similar products across all locations, the research results can be generalized and applied to the entire country to some extent. There were limitations of primary data since those interviews were only seen from the seller's perspective, and customers' responses should also be examined. All the sub-objectives should be examined from the buyer's perspective.

Some sub-objectives, such as identifying green household products and categorizing green household customer segments, are customer-oriented objectives. These objectives tend to understand the product details from the customers' point of view. The quality of the questionnaire poses limitations in the research, raising confusion about whether the survey participants realized the questions thoroughly, whether their intended meaning for the questions was correctly communicated, and whether the respondents' feedback was their honest thoughts. These limitations were unavoidable.

7.4 Recommendations for future studies

The suggestions are given to researchers who want to study similar topics in the future. Three suggestions are provided. Exploring green product categories globally is a popular topic in recent research. However, there remains a considerable gap in studying this topic about Sri Lanka. Future research could benefit from focusing on green products in diverse categories that have yet to be studied. For example, green workplaces, green food, green energy, and sub-household product categories such as green carriers, green furniture, and green clothing. These categories provide unique perspectives on the broader exposure and opinions regarding green products in many fields. Secondly, understanding the psychological factors that influence Sri Lanka customers' intention to purchase green products over conventional alternatives and branded products is a promising area for future research. A comparative analysis of how Sri Lankan consumers perceive the value, quality, and desirability of green versus branded products could reveal the importance of branding in green product adoption. Such research would help better understand the link between environmental security and consumer behavior in a competitive marketplace.

The third and final suggestion emphasizes including more diverse research participants from varied backgrounds to examine green market trends. These could include age, gender, education level, number of household members, geographic area, green product awareness, and green consciousness. Expanding the demographic scope of participants would enrich the research context, providing a broader and more representative understanding of consumers' behaviors, attitudes, and preferences toward green products. Moreover, this helps to identify the green consumer segment precisely.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey questions for managers and executives in the AZ hypermarket

Appendix 2. Willing to spend at least 10% more on sustainable products

Appendix 1. Survey questions for managers and executives in the AZ hypermarket

- How do you describe green household products?
- What are the characteristics of green household products?
- What kind of green household products do you sell in your store?
- Which green household products are selling more in your store?
- What type of customers buy the green household products in your store?
- How do customers identify the green household products in your store?
- Do you have a plan to sell green household products online?
- Do you have competitors in the market who are selling green household products online or in-store in Sri Lanka?
- What is the difference in the pricing of green household products compared to general products?
- Do you get any feedback regarding the pricing of the green household products?
- Do you have more opinions regarding green household products in Sri Lanka?

Appendix 2. Willing to spend at least 10% more on sustainable products (Carufel, 2021).

