

**THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF FILIPINO FRESHMAN STUDENTS TOWARDS
GREEN PRODUCTS**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

With the growing market in sustainable consumerism, it has become increasingly important for green enterprises to understand the rationale behind the motivations to purchase green products. As will be evident in the literature review, there is a gap in knowledge on green consumerism in the Philippines. Therefore, the current exploratory study intended to understand the most significant factors that affect the consumer behavior of freshman students towards green products. With the data collected through a focus group discussion and survey, six propositions regarding the rationales behind green consumer behavior were constructed. Based on the five most significant factors: environmental consciousness, value for money, cost of product, future orientation and brand value alignment, the researcher constructed several recommendations for green marketers to better reach the target consumer segment.

The significance of this research is justified by the importance of purchasing green products and conserving the environment in general. Green products are designed to reduce energy consumption, use less natural resources, raise the recycled materials, and reduce or eliminate toxic substances, which are harmful to both the environment and human health (Sdrolia & Zarotiadis, 2018). The purpose of the research is to better inform green marketers so they can encourage more consumers to purchase more consciously.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review will discuss the influence of three factors on green product purchasing, specifically a) environmental consciousness, b) frugality, and c) time orientation. Four hypotheses have been constructed for each of these factors.

Environment-Consciousness (EC)

As observed in recent economic, political and social discussion, there has been a global intensified interest in environmental matters. This increase in interest can be attributed to a growing awareness that environmental problems must be brought to the forefront in order to enhance social welfare (Nicolaisen, Dean & Hoeller, 1991). Formally, environmental consciousness can be considered to be “equivalent to the attitudinal (or psychological) dimension of pro-environmental behavior” (Jimenez-Sanchez, 2010). Consumers with environmental-consciousness can assess the presence of environmental resources, their cost of use as well as the impact of this use on the environment and to themselves (Babaoğul and Ozgun, 2008). Various studies have found that positive attitudes towards environmental conservation and environmental-consciousness are strongly linked with green consumer behavior, while rationales behind consumer’s reluctance to buy green products primarily stem from a lack of thereof (Boztope, 2012; Agyeman, 2014; Joshi, Rahman, 2015; Lim et al, 2013). Similarly, other intrinsic factors such as positive values, beliefs/knowledge, and attitudes have been shown to have a significant positive impact in millennial purchasing throughout the years (Bui 2005).

On the other hand, factors such as misunderstanding, apathy, and ignorance of green products contribute to the disappointing performance of green products in the marketplace (Lim et al, 2013). The researchers of a study conducted at Monash University suggested that if consumers were more aware of the environmental consequences of their actions, they would automatically opt to purchase green products (Lim et al, 2013). The current study plans to

investigate if this theory still holds true among a different sample size, young freshman students at the De La Salle University. Based on this, it is hypothesized that:

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between environmental-consciousness and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

Frugality

Reaching the frugal consumer has long caught the attention of marketing academics since the early 2000s (Todd & Lawson 2003). Despite limited attempts by academics to understand the concept of frugality, it seems that the most comprehensive definition of frugality is a consumer lifestyle trait characterized by consumers that are restrained in using economic resources to achieve long-term goals (Lastovicka et al, 1999). In relation to the current study, the majority of resources reviewed have found that frugality has a significant negative impact on green consumer behavior (Lim et al, 2013; Joshi, Rahman, 2015; Boztope, 2012). Rational factors such as practicality, price, quality, and convenience tend to outweigh environmentalism for many millennial consumers (Bui, 2005; Naderi & Steenburg, 2018). A study by Agyeman (2014) found that although study participants expressed an interest in purchasing green products, many would not be willing to pay a higher price for said green product. When asked the preference of how much the participant would be willing to pay for a green product, the results found that the majority of participants chose “cheap” or “very cheap”. Subjective language like this will be avoided in the current study and specific price points will be used instead. This will be done to avoid any possible confusion over how much subjective language like “cheap” or “very cheap” really mean. Joshi and Rahman (2015) argue that green products will continually have disappointing performance in the market unless they are made cheaper and more accessible in ordinary stores.

On the contrary, people with higher levels of income tend to have a greater intention to pay more for and will be more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products and engage in environmental conservation (Sabio, 2012; Bui, 2005). Yildirim (2014) found after surveying 481 university students that, generally, participants were willing to pay more for green products,

specifically within the range 15-20 % and 20+% more. The study also found that participants were willing to pay more for green products when an increase occurs at the frequency of purchase and use. Despite this, the study concluded that prices for green products must be kept acceptable and reasonable.

Previous studies were mostly based outside of the Philippines which is why the current study aims to uncover the relationship of frugality and green consumerism in the Philippine context. But based on the information investigated alongside the fact the Philippines is an economically-developing country, it is hypothesized that:

H2: There is a significant, negative relationship between frugality and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

Time Orientation

Time orientation is an “unconscious yet fundamental cognitive process that provides a framework for organizing personal experiences in temporal categories of past, present, and future, reflecting the relative emphasis given to these categories' ' (Lee, Liu & Hu, 2017). For instance, a future-oriented individual is likely to depend highly on expectations, set future goals and not be motivated by immediate gratification (Yaprakli, Absalan & Unalan (2017). Furthermore, individual time orientation is strongly influenced by one’s cultural beliefs and attitudes. Singapore and the United States can be classified as future-oriented countries because of the culture’s general optimism towards the future and positive attitudes towards proactive management—planning, doing and controlling (Lens & Seginer, 2015). On the other hand, past-oriented countries tend to be concerned with maintaining tradition, understanding the past, and returning to their country’s ‘former glory’. (Kosiu, Troncy & Gölzhäuser, 2003)

In relation to the current study, Naderi and Steenburg (2018) found a significant relationship between time orientation and consumer behavior. Furthermore, the results found that millennials were more often motivated by rational and self-oriented motives such as frugality and time-orientation rather than emotional and others-oriented motives such as selfless altruism and risk-aversion. Since the study took place in the United States, a future-oriented country, one

recommendation of the study was for marketers to communicate cost savings to millennial shoppers over time and how taking small steps today leads to significant outcomes tomorrow.

Contrary to the cultural context discussed in the previous study, the Filipino sense of time is mostly present-oriented (Ligo-Ralph, 1990). Therefore, Filipinos tend to focus on improving current situations, satisfying immediate gratification and disregarding long-term outcomes/goals.

According to cultural anthropologist, Dr. Fernando Zialcita, this view can be also observed in the “tingi” or “piecemeal” mentality—buying frequently and in small quantities. This makes Filipinos more susceptible to sachet marketing—a strategy characterized by immediate consumption by “redesigning, packaging, and selling a product or service in a smaller form, made available at a more affordable price” (Ang & Sy-Changco 2007). In 2005, nearly 90 percent of Filipinos bought products and avail of services in sachets and mini-sizes (Olarde and Chua 2005). Although it is more economical in the long-term to purchase in bulk over individual sachets, purchasing goods in sachets still remains a popular method of consumption for the economic underclass in the Philippines.

As discussed, previous studies have found a positive link between future orientation and the purchasing of green products; however, no study has investigated the same link in a past/present oriented country, like the Philippines. Based on the evidence investigated so far, it is hypothesized that:

H3: There is a significant, negative relationship between non-future time orientation and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

Conclusion

Although this literature review only investigated the relationships of three select factors because of their economic and socio-cultural significance to the setting of the current research, this method will leave room open for other factors that weren't mentioned in the literature review. There are still a multitude of other factors that have yet to be understood including (but not limited to) product features/benefits, product sustainability, product look, green labels, and brand value alignment. As follows, the method that is suitable for the current research must be

open-ended and flexible in order to adapt to any unforeseen outcomes that may be found during the data collection process. With that being said, the current research will investigate the following subproblems:

- How does environmental-consciousness affect green consumer behavior?
- How does frugality affect green consumer behavior?
- How does time-orientation affect green consumer behavior?
- What other unselected factors affect the consumer behavior of female freshman students?
- What marketing strategies can businesses use to reach this target audience?

To reiterate, the hypothesized constructed from this literature review are as follows:

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between environmental-consciousness and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

H2: There is a significant and negative relationship between frugality and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

H3: There is a significant and negative relationship between non-future time orientation and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

To explore the questions and hypotheses stated above, the current research intends to collect data through an exploratory method design, as explained in the section following.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Description Of Method Design

The purpose of this research study is to fulfill two objectives:

- To understand the rationales behind the consumer behavior of Filipino freshman students towards green products,
- To recommend strategies for green enterprises to better reach this target market

As mentioned in the literature review, because there is still a lack of substantive research in this specific area of inquiry in the Philippines, the current research used an exploratory-based method. Firstly, data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) in an attempt to understand the relationships of the three select factors: environmental consciousness, frugality, and time orientation as well as uncover other factors affecting green consumer behavior. Results from the discussions were then analyzed and used to create a survey. The purpose of the survey was to clarify and build upon some of the findings in the focus group discussion. From there, the survey was distributed online to freshman students from Philippine universities including: De La Salle University (DLSU), Ateneo University and University of the Philippines (UP). After collecting data from both the FGD and the surveys, results from both methods were compared and conclusions were drawn. These conclusions were then used to construct marketing strategies for green enterprises to better reach the target consumer segment. Through this method, I fulfilled my two research objectives.

Rationale

As mentioned in the literature review, the method that is most suitable for this research must be open-ended and flexible. Fortunately, adaptability is a strength of an exploratory method. Another advantage of an exploratory method is that it is a form of mixed-method, meaning that it combines qualitative and quantitative data. This specific study combines both data from focus groups (qualitative) as well as data from surveys (quantitative). An exploratory method was chosen over a survey method because of the ability to 1) discover factors and narrow down the scope of the research through FGDs and 2) clarify and elaborate on established findings through a survey. With a survey method alone, the answers provided must reflect all possible answers from respondents. As mentioned in the literature review, since green consumerism is a relatively unexplored area in the Philippines, it may be difficult to predict all possible outcomes,

considering the amount of research that has been done in this area of knowledge. By combining the two methods, the current design utilizes the strengths of both methods while minimizing their weaknesses as well.

Research Participants

The current research studied the responses of Filipino freshman students from De La Salle University, Ateneo University and University of the Philippines. Convenience sampling methods were used to recruit participants. All participants were between the ages of 17-19 years old, qualifying them as members of Generation Z. All FGD participants were female, Filipina, freshman students. The majors taken by the participants include accounting, legal management, international relations, speech communications, and history. When asked through an email, the focus group participants all identified with these three factors: environmental consciousness, frugality, and Filipino time orientation.

The participants of the survey were not required to possess these three qualities and only needed to identify with being a freshman student at one of the three Philippine universities. Of the people that answered the survey, 53.49% were female, 41.86% were male and 4.65% preferred not to specify their gender. All participants were between 17-19 years old. Participants mentioned that they would be willing to purchase a variety of green products, with daily products such as metal straws and reusable bags, clothes, shoes and accessories, and personal care products being the most popular choices.

Research Instruments

Focus Group Discussion

One FGD was conducted on January 11, 2019 at the Yardstick Coffee Shop in Makati, Metro Manila. Six participants were sent an email invitation to participate in a discussion and

share their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relating to green products. Five out of the six people invited attended the actual discussion. Participant 1 studied at UP, Participant 2 at Ateneo, and Participant 3,4 and 5 at DLSU. Before starting the discussion, all were required to sign a formal consent form that followed the research ethics guidelines of the University of Cambridge. It was also approved by the THINK Global School Ethical Review Board. The discussion was about 40 minutes in length with coffee and food provided to the participants. Participants were not given any other incentives for attending.

A script was used to guide the discussion, explain the purpose of the group, review the focus group rules, define necessary terms and reinforce the confidentiality of participants. It also included 14 main questions based on intended research goals, although additional questions were asked by the moderator to clarify points made by participants. The scripts were composed of mostly open-ended questions. The results of the entire discussion were recorded by the moderator.

The content of the questions was based on questions asked by Naderi and Steenburg (2018) on their study of the green consumer behavior of millennials. This specific research was chosen because of the current sample's close generational proximity to Millennials, the sample used in Naderi and Steenburg's study. The participants from this study were all born in the early 2000s, classifying them as Generation Z, the generation right after Millennials. The specific questions asked during the discussion can be found in the appendix.

The findings from the focus group were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The first step in this analysis involved playing back the recordings of each group while concurrently reviewing and enhancing the summary notes. Then, the key themes regarding each research question were summarized. Themes were selected if they came up in the conversation more than twice or if multiple people agreed to one participant's previous statement.

Survey

The sources of green consumer behavior have been analyzed by various means as outlined in the second chapter of this study. However, a survey method was the most common method used in many of the reviewed literature (Naderi & Steenburg, 2018); Yildirim, 2014; Lee, Liu, Hu, 2017; Sabio, 2012; Boztepe, 2012). Despite the fact that previous research studies were based solely on survey data results, an exploratory method was chosen. As mentioned before, since green consumerism is relatively under-researched in the Philippines, it was essential to first understand the general scope of the issue before constructing a survey.

A survey made through *SurveyMonkey* was distributed online to 75 freshman students attending Philippine universities. It was sent through a message on Facebook messenger because of the medium's convenience as well as time constraints. The message included an explanation of the research's purpose, a written acknowledgement assuring them of their privacy, and the link to the survey. Submitting the online survey constituted their consent to participate in the study. In total, 43 people gave their consent to participate and answered the study. Out of the 43 survey responses, only 29 were fully answered and useful for the study.

The survey was constructed based on the themes that were found in the FGD. The FGD results found nine main themes regarding the effects of environmental-consciousness, perceived value for money, bottom-line cost of product, future-thinking mindset, present-thinking mindset, product accessibility, social/economic accountability, brand value alignment, and product marketing. Ten survey questions were created based on the themes found in the FGD. The complete survey can be found in Appendix B. The survey used a rating system to determine the importance of the factors behind the target group's consumer behavior. In the rating system, the assigned value of 1 meant that the participant felt that the factor was "most influential" in their decision making. An assigned value of 9 meant that the participant felt that the factor was "least influential" in their decision making. The participants were asked to rate the importance of each factor in the case of 3 different outcomes: green products that they purchase regularly, green

products that they purchase occasionally, and green products that are thinking or purchasing but chose not to. This method was chosen to discover if there are any discrepancies between the factors that consumers consider with each outcome. The final analysis of results from both methods of data collection will be presented in the next chapter.

Limitations

One limitation of the method design is that the focus group participants are all people that were found through green-conscious groups which can lead to biased data. Additionally, all the focus group participants also knew each other either as former/current classmates. It is likely that, because of the established relationships between the focus group participants, individual responses could have been influenced by what another person had said. It is possible that one person might have agreed or disagreed on a topic, not because that was his/her personal opinion, but because he/she did not want to differ from what his/her friend mentioned earlier. This could negatively affect the reliability of the group data collected during the discussion. Another limitation of the research is the sample size. The focus group only contained six people and only 29 people fully answered the survey. Because of these factors, we cannot generalize the findings of this study to all Filipino freshman students.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

As stated in the method, the FDG found 9 main factors that influenced the target consumer's decision making. These were: environmental-consciousness (EC), perceived value for money (VALUE), bottom-line cost of product (COST), future-thinking mindset (FUTURE), present-thinking mindset (PRESENT), brand value alignment (BRAND), product accessibility (ACCESS), social/economic accountability (GUILT), and product marketing (MARKETING).

The survey questions asked participants to rank the importance of each factor in their decision making for three outcomes:

1. Outcome A: For green products they purchase *regularly*
2. Outcome B: For green products they purchase *occasionally*
3. Outcome C: For green products they are *thinking* or purchasing but chose not to

These results were compared to test consistency and gain a better perspective on the reasons why the target audience chooses to purchase or not purchase green products.

Quantitative Survey Results

The values in the table represent the percentage of participants that rated each factor from the most influential (1) to the least influential (9). For instance, the value of 28% in the second column and second row means that 28% of participants rated environmental-consciousness (EC) as 1, the most influential factor in their decision making. On the other hand, no one or 0% of people rated EC as 9, their least influential factor. The tables below represent the data collected for all three outcomes: purchase regularly, purchase occasionally, and thinking of purchasing but chose not to.

**Percentages of how participants rated each factor for green products
they purchased regularly**

Purchase Regularly (A)	Most Influential	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Least Influential
EC	28	13	18	15	8	5	10	2	0
VALUE	18	13	13	3	13	13	11	8	8
COST	10	15	13	20	5	18	5	10	5

ACCESS	5	13	3	13	13	15	15	13	13
GUILT	8	3	13	18	13	3	13	23	8
FUTURE	18	24	13	3	13	11	5	11	3
PRESENT	3	10	10	8	18	8	15	10	18
MARKETING	0	3	5	8	13	13	18	13	30
BRAND	5	8	13	15	8	13	10	10	18

**Percentages of how participants rated each factor for green products
they purchased occasionally**

Purchase Occasionally (B)	Most Influential	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Least Influential
EC	21	23	5	15	5	5	10	10	5
VALUE	20	18	15	10	15	10	3	8	3
COST	8	13	13	8	13	10	8	13	15
ACCESS	5	0	21	3	18	13	13	15	13
GUILT	10	18	8	13	8	5	15	8	15
FUTURE	13	10	20	13	13	8	10	8	8
PRESENT	5	11	10	18	8	23	5	5	15
MARKETING	10	3	8	10	8	10	13	20	20
BRAND	10	5	3	10	16	18	21	13	5

**Percentages of how participants rated each factor for green products they were thinking of
purchasing but chose not to**

Thinking of Purchasing (C)	Most Influential	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Least Influential
EC	19	5	5	3	3	19	22	16	8
VALUE	20	14	17	28	9	6	3	0	6

COST	17	31	11	3	14	3	6	8	8
ACCESS	8	14	11	8	16	11	11	16	5
GUILT	3	3	11	11	8	0	11	11	43
FUTURE	14	8	5	14	14	11	19	14	3
PRESENT	6	17	8	8	14	22	5	5	16
MARKETING	8	5	16	14	16	14	5	14	8
BRAND	11	6	17	14	6	17	17	11	0

The percentage values presented above are rounded off to the nearest one. The table below represents the **mean** of the rankings (on a scale of 1-9) that the participants answered per factor. For instance, in the second column and second row, the value of 3.31 means that, on average, EC was rated as 3.31 in importance for outcome A.

The means of each factors for the three purchasing outcomes

Factors	Purchased Regularly (A)	Purchased Occasionally (B)	Thinking of Purchasing (C)
(1) EC	3.31	3.9	5.41
(2) Value	4.34	4.03	3.48
(3) Cost	4.17	5.21	3.79
(4) Access	6.03	5.97	5.31
(5) Guilt	5.52	4.83	6.66
(6) Future	4.24	4.52	5.07
(7) Present	5.59	4.15	5.48
(8) Marketing	6.55	5.97	4.93
(9) Brand	5.24	5.45	4.86

Based on the averages of the factors for each outcome, the top three factors why participants bought green products *regularly* are 1) EC, 2) Cost of Product, 3) Future-Thinking Mindset. The top three factors why participants bought green products *occasionally* are 1) EC, 2) Value for Money, 3) Present-Thinking Mindset. The top three factors why participants were *thinking* of buying green products but chose not to are 1) Value For Money, 2) Cost of Product, 3) Brand Value Alignment.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The literature review identified five main research questions.

- How does environmental-consciousness affect green consumer behavior?
- How does frugality affect green consumer behavior?
- How does time-orientation affect green consumer behavior?
- What other unselected factors affect the consumer behavior of female freshman students?
- What marketing strategies can businesses use to reach this target audience?

This chapter will address all of these through six propositions that were constructed based on significant survey and FGD findings. Following the propositions is a section meant to detail marketing recommendations for green enterprises, based on the five most significant factors found.

Proposition 1: Environmentally-conscious (EC) freshman students are more motivated to buy green products.

All participants in the FDG had some sense of EC, as demonstrated by their concern and awareness of environmental issues. When asked what specific pro-environmental actions they have done, the participants listed examples such as minimizing the use of plastic straws, bags, and bottles and setting up a GoFundMe account for Australian koalas after the January wildfire. Additionally, four out of five participants had previously bought green products before. The green products mentioned during the discussion include metal straws, reusable utensils, reusable grocery bags, and zero-waste produce. All agreed that environmental-conscious positively affects their green purchasing behavior or their intention/interest to buy green products.

“Your environmentally-consciousness really pushes you to make sure that your decisions are made surrounding your ideology.” said Participant 1.

The survey found similar results as EC was the most important factor that participants considered when they bought green products regularly and occasionally. According to the survey, participants rated EC as 3.31 on average for regularly-purchased green products and 3.90 on average for occasionally-purchased green products. Additionally, 58.98% of participants rated

EC as one of the top three factors they considered in their decision making for regularly purchased green products. This is in line with the research reviewed in the second chapter of this study. Various studies have found environmental-consciousness to be strongly linked with green consumer behavior (Boztope, 2012; Agyeman, 2014; Joshi, Rahman, 2015; Lim et al, 2013). These findings reaffirm the first hypothesis: There is a significant and positive relationship between environmental-consciousness and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers.

Interestingly, when the frequency of purchasing the product decreased, the ranking percentages of EC as the most influential factor decreased significantly. For products that participants purchased regularly, EC was rated as the most influential factor by 28.21% of people.. This decreased to 20.51% for occasionally purchased products and 18.92% for products they were thinking of buying. According to this data, it is reasonable to infer that there are other factors which may outweigh EC in terms of overall importance, especially cost of product and value for money. This brings us to the next proposition.

Proposition 2: Environmental-consciousness can be a driving factor but only if the product provides value for money and has a reasonable cost.

In the FGD, initially participants agreed that environmental consciousness was very important in their decision making. But as the discussion continued, they revealed that EC is not the primary factor that drives their decisions. For most, many other factors such as value for money, sustainability, quality, direct benefits and product appeal outweighed environmental consciousness. This is in line with the literature reviewed in chapter two. Studies by Bui, Naderi and Steenburg found that rational factors such as practicality, price, quality, and convenience tend to outweigh environmentalism for many millennial consumers.

“The environmental impact is not the top priority when it comes to purchasing. It will still influence my decision but I’ll still prioritize quality, price and convenience,” said Participant 4.

As discussed in the previous proposition, there was a correlation between the decrease of the importance of EC and the decrease in frequency of buying the product. The results showed that some of the main reasons why participants chose not to buy a green product is because of the cost of the product and the value for money. It is reasonable to infer that these participants did not buy a particular green product because the cost was too high and they did not feel that they were getting the appropriate value for their money. This could mean that, even if they are environmentally conscious, they would not purchase a product if they did not recognize its value and if it was not reasonably-priced. In conclusion, the value that they place on green products are not environmentally-based alone; economic benefits still make up a large part of their decision to purchase.

Proposition 3: Freshman students are more motivated to buy green products if they feel like they are getting the best value for their money; however, they will not purchase green products if the price is too high.

When it comes to purchasing expensive green products, most participants in the FGD agreed that they would be willing to buy the green product if the price was not drastically different from the standard product. When asked what was the specific percentage of price difference that they would be willing to pay, most participants answered that it was hard to determine the specific price range. For them, it would depend on a number of other factors/benefits that would come with purchasing the product. If the product had a variety of benefits, both personal and environmental, then they would be willing to pay more. In short, it would depend on the *perceived value for money*.

“It’s hard to say how much more I would pay because it really depends on the type of products and the quality. It also depends on how big of an environmental impact it’s making. If the impact isn’t that big, then I would prefer the cheaper standard product. If the difference was significant, I think that I’d be willing to pay maybe 50% more than the standard product.” said Participant 3.

“I would pay 70% more. I know that I have the resources to purchase green products compared to others.”

Most participants agreed that the perceived value for money was the most important factor in their decision-making process towards green products. This result contradicts the findings found in Agyeman’s study where he found that participants would not be willing to purchase a green product unless the price was “cheap” or “very cheap”. Additionally, the majority of resources reviewed in the literature review found that frugality has a significant negative impact on green consumer behavior. This brings up the question of “What is more important to this specific target audience?”.

To better understand the relationship between frugality and green consumer behavior, the frugality theme was divided into two sub-themes: value for money and bottom-line price. Based on the results of the survey, participants thought that value for money was more important than the bottom-line cost of the product. For all three outcomes, value for money was rated as 3.95 on average, while cost of product was rated 4.39. This conclusion is consistent with what was observed in the FGD. This answers the frugality-related question posed in the literature review.

However, while value for money may be more slightly significant than cost of product, the target consumer will still greatly consider the bottom-line product of the product before making the final decision. One participant in the FDG mentioned that she does not purchase green products because the allowance that her parents give her is not sufficient enough to buy the products that she wants. However, the participant explained that she intends to invest more into green products once she becomes financially independent.

“If I imagined myself living on my own independently and earning my own money, I would have more control over what I spend and be more willing to explore products that relate to my ideologies.” said Participant 2.

Other participants in the FDG also agreed with Participant 2’s statement. This shows how the target consumers still prioritize cost because of their lack of financial resources, as freshman students.

Based on these results, it seems that the results on the frugality theme are split. The hypothesis on frugality in the second chapter was: there is a significant and negative relationship between frugality and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers. Since frugality was divided into two, there are two different correlational relationships that can be identified. When it comes to the bottom-line cost of the product, the hypothesis can be correct. If the cost is very high, it can have a negative effect on the consumer’s purchasing behavior. On the other hand, if consumers recognize a high value for money, then it can have a significant and positive relationship with their intention to purchase. The current results of this method have no way of truly proving a causal relationship between these factors. In reality, the results can only interpret the size or intensity of each relationship.

Proposition 4: Future-thinking freshman students are more motivated to buy green products when it concerns the future of the environment. However, they are less motivated when they think about saving for the future.

In the FGD, there was some internal inconsistency regarding the effects of Filipino time orientation as a past/present oriented culture. At the beginning of the discussion, some participants stated that sometimes they exhibit characteristics of past/present-orientation such as buying impulsively. One explained that shopping can be a way of temporarily relieving her stress, otherwise known as retail therapy. Another mentioned how sometimes she decides to

purchase a product that is “not worth the money” and doesn’t consider the long-term ramifications of spending.

“Because I’m an impulsive buyer, if you pitch it to me, I’ll likely buy it,” said Participant 1.

However, as the discussion progressed, it seemed that participants seemed to agree more with statements relating to consumer decisions that take future consequences into account. When asked to rank which factors affect their decision making the most, time-orientation was unanimously rated as the least influential in their decision making.

“I don’t think the time-orientation thing really applies to me. I care about the future and the environment. I usually think about how my actions will affect it.” said Participant 5.

The survey found similar results. For products that were purchased regularly, the future-thinking factor was rated one of the top 3 factors that participants first consider. It is reasonable to infer that participants think about the effect that their purchase may have on the future of the environment.

On the other hand, participants of the FDG mentioned that having a future-thinking mindset can also deter people from purchasing green products. Some argued that they would prefer to save money for the future, instead of buying a green product.

“I don’t like spending money on too many things. I would rather save it for the future, for when I actually need it for something,” said Participant 3.

All these findings contradict the data found on Filipino time orientation in the literature review. The FGD participants felt disassociated with past/present time-orientation; they felt that it had no significant effect on their purchasing behavior. This addresses the time-orientation

hypothesis posed in the second chapter which is: there is a significant and negative relationship between non-future time orientation and the purchasing decisions of young Filipino consumers. In response to this hypothesis, there is no effect of non-future time orientation on this target segment. Future-time orientation, on the other hand, did have an effect on their behavior.

One FGD participant explained her opinion on why the target consumers are more future time-oriented. At the end of the discussion, Participant 3 brought up the point that while the past/present time orientation does not apply to them, it may apply to the majority of the Filipino population. She argued that there is a small percentage of Filipino people that can afford to think about the future. On the other hand, most Filipino people can't afford to think long term because they can only satisfy their day-to-day needs. This translates to their consumer behavior, as said by Participant 3:

“As someone that’s of upper-middle-class, I have the option to buy a green product. But I can see why someone that’s lower class might not have that option and would buy the cheaper one. They’re part of the sachet market, like when you buy often and in cheaper, smaller sizes.”

Other participants expressed similar feelings. Following this statement, they went into a discussion regarding the social/economic accountability they felt to purchase green products. This will be further expounded in the next proposition.

Proposition 5: Freshman students (at the chosen schools) feel some sense of social/economic accountability to purchase green products.

Several participants expressed feelings of accountability or responsibility for taking care of the environment. Some mentioned how people in their “economic situation” should dedicate more effort and time into showing pro-environmental behavior.

“We’re actually lucky that we can afford to buy eco-friendly things. If we can help the environment because of the situation that we are in, why wouldn’t we?”

“We are a part of a much smaller middle/upper class but the majority of Filipinos can’t afford to think about the environment or have different choices. It’s sort of our obligation and responsibility.”

“If you have the ability like the money and the time, then we should do it. We can’t expect everyone to think the same because of their economic situation. At least make a difference, because we’re lucky to be in the sector that we can actually make one.”

In conclusion, the FGD participants felt socially accountable to purchase green products because of their economic standing compared to other Filipinos. However, when compared to other factors, the survey results found that the influence of social/economic accountability was not nearly as important as factors like EC, value for money and cost of product. Although not very significant, this factor should not be ignored. Social/Economic Accountability (GUILT) rated as the 5.52 in importance for green products that were regularly purchased and 4.83 for green products that were occasionally purchased.

Proposition 6: Freshman students are less motivated to purchase a green product if they feel that they can't trust the product's brand or values.

Brand value alignment also seemed to be another significant factor for several FDG participants. One argued that she tends to turn back to products that she's comfortable with because she worries that some brands might only advertise their products as eco-friendly to make more profit.

“When you're just starting to be environmentally-friendly, you just try and test the waters first before buying green products. In truth, you don't really know where to go because it's still business and people just want to make money. Sometimes, you don't know what to trust.”

Another concern was the possibility of green-washing. Green-washing is conveying a false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products are more environmentally sound than they actually are. One participant mentioned how she still wasn't aware of what products/brands are actually good for the environment or if they were just misleading.

“Lack of brand trust is my fear, usually. I think about how, even though I'm spending a lot of money for this, I'm not sure if the company is actually helping the environment. I would appreciate it if their marketing strategy would build on the trust that they have with their customers. They should include that they are really green and ethical.”

The survey found that, while brand value alignment was not a significant motivating factor for products participants bought regularly and occasionally, it was a significant factor why participants did not buy a green product. Brand value alignment was rated at 4.86 in importance

on average, making it the 3rd most influential factor why participants were thinking of buying a green product but chose not to. This reaffirms the observation found in the FGD.

Recommendations For Green Enterprises

The findings of this study have implications for green marketers. It is recommended for green enterprises that are targeting this consumer segment to consider the significant factors that affect their behavior; these are EC, value for money, cost of product, brand value alignment, and future-thinking mindset.

When marketing to this segment, it may be beneficial to communicate the positive environmental impacts of purchasing their green product, as well as pro-environmental production practices to maintain an ethical brand image. Regarding brand value alignment, brands should be transparent when it comes to their company operations. Green brands should also embed consistent feedback to build a strong relationship with existing customers.

As consumers look for tangible green benefits, economic rationality is still a significant player in this field. While some consumers may be willing to pay more for green products, their financial constraints could pose a challenge. Therefore, green brands will have to change their mindset towards products that have historically commanded a price premium. Although the value for money was shown to be slightly more significant than cost of product for the target consumers, green brands must keep their prices affordable. Further, because value for money was shown to influence this target consumer's behavior related to green products, marketers must demonstrate the complete value of the product or brand in order to win their favor.

Target consumers who consider their financial capabilities when making pro-environmental purchases must be made aware of the complete value of the product. However, as identified in the finding section, the value cannot be an environmental one alone. Rather than only communicating environmental or economic benefits, green marketers should combine these two

to enhance the product's perceived value. For example, marketing for a shampoo bar must include messages that communicate savings on purchasing one shampoo bar instead of three shampoo bottles, as well as the reduction of excess plastic waste. In this way, consumers will understand the financial benefits to themselves and the positive effects towards the environment, thus touching on the findings that frugality and EC do to motivate green consumption behavior.

It may also be beneficial for marketers to emphasize the future outcomes of acting environmentally friendly. This could be an effective strategy for promoting green consumption. Future-oriented consumers tend to set goals and make lists of things to do, resist temptations when there is work to be done, and consider specific means for reaching their goals. A natural implication for green marketers is to clearly communicate how taking small steps today leads to significant outcomes tomorrow.

Limitations

One limitation of the results is the limited sample size. As mentioned in the method section, only five people participated in the FGD and only twenty-nine surveys were complete and usable for the study. Therefore, the results are not representative of the entire Filipino freshman population at the three chosen universities. To improve the reliability of the propositions, another survey could have been sent to verify if they are true for a much larger population size. Another FGD could have also been held to identify even more factors that could be responsible for the purchasing decisions of the target consumer segment. Additionally, the chosen method for the survey was not sufficient enough to completely determine whether the relationship between certain factors and consumer behavior was positive or negative. The survey results were only able to determine the size or intensity of the relationship. To fill in the gap, FGD results were integrated to relate the direction of the relationships. To aid this study's limitations, suggestions for future studies are mentioned in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

In conclusion, the results of this study have found six propositions regarding the rationales behind green consumer behavior. Based on the five most significant factors: environmental consciousness, value for money, cost of product, future orientation and brand value alignment, the researcher constructed several concrete recommendations for green marketers. The main purpose of this research was to advise marketing strategies for green brands by understanding the factors that affect the green consumer behavior of the target consumers. However, since the small sample size is a major limitation of the current research, the findings are not statistically significant. Nevertheless, they can be considered directional and are, therefore, able to fulfill some part of the overall goal of investigating a gap in a previously under-researched area in the Philippines. Green brands are encouraged to use these suggestions to better reach freshman students and improve their current marketing strategies.

In response to contradictions of these results to other studies, it is possible that these findings could change depending on the consumer segment. Researchers could try segmenting participants not just demographically but also psychographically, which is another strategy used in market research. It would be interesting to see if the frugality findings hold true for a larger sample size and different consumer segments. This could help further the research question.

Future researchers should also attempt to determine the positive or negative direction of the relationships of several factors through qualitative analysis. One limitation of the current study was that the quantitative data could not determine if the relationship of the factors were positive or negative. This is a topic worth further investigation, especially for factors like future time-orientation which had a positive and negative relationship with green consumer behavior. Another topic worth a closer look at is the tangible effects that social/economic accountability has on green consumer behavior.

Lastly, the six propositions presented in the fourth chapter could be tested through another study. It might be beneficial to further build upon these findings through survey research to see if they apply to a larger population.

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APPENDIX A

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. Have you purchased green products in the past?
 - If yes, can you think back to who or what prompted you to buy that product?
 - If not, why did you choose not to?
2. Do you have any intention of purchasing green products in the future?
3. Do you think that you are environmentally-conscious?
4. What makes you think that you are environmentally-conscious?
5. How do you think environmental-consciousness affects your decision to purchase a green product?
6. Do you think that you have characteristics of the Filipino sense of time, being a past/present oriented culture? If so, do you have examples? If not, do you notice the characteristics of the Filipino sense of time in other people?
7. How do you think being a part of a past/present oriented culture affects your decision to purchase a green product?
8. Do you think that you are a frugal person?
9. How do you think frugality affects your decision to purchase a green product?
10. Let's say that the product is one that you use frequently (such as shampoo, soap, or deodorant), would that affect your decision to buy a higher-priced green product over a standard (lower-priced) product?
11. Out of all the factors discussed, can you rank each in terms of most to least influential in your decision making (1- most, 3- least)?
12. What are other factors that you consider before purchasing a green product (such as social media, marketing strategies, etc)?
13. What do you think is the best way to reach you as a consumer?
14. Lastly, out of all the things we discussed, which is the most important to you?

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions

Think about green products that you purchase REGULARLY. What factors influence your decision to buy those products? Please rank the factors below; 1 being the most influential factor and 10 being the least influential.

- Environmental Consciousness: you are concerned about your impact on the environment
- Value for Money (aka in Tagalog as "sulit"): you want the most for your money
- Cost of Product: the monetary cost to purchase product
- Accessibility to Product: how easy it is to get product in your area
- Social/Economic Accountability: you feel responsible for reducing your environmental footprint because of your social and/or economic standings
- Future-Thinking Mindset: you are concerned about what impact your purchase has on the future
- Present-Thinking Mindset: you are focused on your present day needs more than future impacts
- Product Marketing: you react to the packaging, advertisement efforts, and social media exposure
- Brand Trust: the company's values align with your values (e.g. a company's level of environmental responsibility and open reporting)

Think about green products that you purchase OCCASIONALLY. What factors influence your decision to buy those products? Please rank the factors below; 1 being the most influential factor and 10 being the least influential. If you do not occasionally purchase green products, please do not answer this question and move on to the next question.

- Environmental Consciousness: you are concerned about your impact on the environment

- Value for Money (aka in Tagalog as "sulit"): you want the most for your money
- Cost of Product: the monetary cost to purchase product
- Accessibility to Product: how easy it is to get product in your area
- Social/Economic Accountability: you feel responsible for reducing your environmental footprint because of your social and/or economic standings
- Future-Thinking Mindset: you are concerned about what impact your purchase has on the future
- Present-Thinking Mindset: you are focused on your present day needs more than future impacts
- Product Marketing: you react to the packaging, advertisement efforts, and social media exposure
- Brand Trust: the company's values align with your values (e.g. a company's level of environmental responsibility and open reporting)

If there are green products that you are THINKING OF PURCHASING BUT HAVE NOT, can you help me understand why? Please rank the factors below; 1 being the most influential factor and 10 being the least influential. If this question doesn't apply to you, please do not answer this question but move on to the next question.

- Environmental Consciousness: you are concerned about your impact on the environment
- Value for Money (aka in Tagalog as "sulit"): you want the most for your money
- Cost of Product: the monetary cost to purchase product
- Accessibility to Product: how easy it is to get product in your area
- Social/Economic Accountability: you feel responsible for reducing your environmental footprint because of your social and/or economic standings
- Future-Thinking Mindset: you are concerned about what impact your purchase has on the future
- Present-Thinking Mindset: you are focused on your present day needs more than future impacts

- Product Marketing: you react to the packaging, advertisement efforts, and social media exposure
- Brand Trust: the company's values align with your values (e.g. a company's level of environmental responsibility and open reporting)