

CHAPTER 1

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOR AND GREEN POLICY BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE COMPARISON OF AZERBAIJAN, KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research attempts to increase the potential of the trade in green goods segment in the markets of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey as well as finding the factors affecting purchasing intention of consumers towards green products. The green marketing concept proposed that such factors as green product price, green product quality, green advertisement, eco-labeling and packaging, environmental concern and green awareness affect the willingness of consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products. The research has been conducted in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 25 participants from the three mentioned countries, identifying main factors affecting green purchase intention and comparing them with those found in the literature. The findings have been categorized separately for each country and the comparison of the countries with the similarities and differences across each factor was performed. Results of the analysis revealed that each of the factors had an influence on green purchase intention of consumers across three countries. Moreover, challenges and recommendations shared across the countries with regard to popularizing green market have been presented. In this way, besides contributing to the literature, it will assist policymakers in formulating and employing strategies to persuade eco-friendly purchasing, and it will give an opportunity for marketers to generate proper marketing strategies for drawing in clients and guaranteeing ideal sales.

Keywords: Green product, Green policy, Green purchase intention

Jel Classification: F18, M31, Q56

1. Introduction

The topic of environmental sustainability has gained widespread attention across the globe and is still vital as United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27) demonstrated and many researchers and analysts attempted to uncover the impact green marketing has on green attitude, green purchase intentions and green purchase intention (consumer buying intention) of individuals across years, nations, and countries.

However, despite the increased interest of the businesses and populations towards environmental sustainability, limited research exists on this topic in countries like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey. There is a relevant need to carry out research on the influence of various green marketing measures on purchase intention of individuals living in the mentioned countries.

This research will encourage trade organizations and institutions operating in the three countries as well as outside to potentially adjust and modify their marketing strategies in order to promote environmentally sustainable intention and behavior among consumers. This may result in potential increase in green consumerism and shift in the lifestyle of population towards a more pro-environmental or pro-green state.

Moreover, the empirical analysis carried out by this research will allow marketers to better understand the current state of green consciousness and factors affecting green purchase intentions and ultimately green purchase behavior or the population of their respective countries.

2. Objective of the Research

To increase the potential of the trade in green goods segment in the markets of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey as well as finding what are the main factors that influence consumers' intention towards buying them in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey:

- To study the conceptual framework of consumer buying intention and attitude towards green (environmentally friendly) products and environment.
- To analyze the consumers awareness towards green marketing and its impact on purchase intention of green products.
- To study the relevant factors which influence purchasing intention towards green products.
- To analyze the role of green marketing on green purchase intention of consumers.
- To discuss possible ways and recommendations of increasing awareness and purchase intention of consumers towards green products.

3. Literature Review

Nowadays, environmental interests and awareness of consumers have come to increase; as a result, more and more consumers have started to demand environmentally friendly products and services from businesses that are known as green products.

Green products are defined as energy efficient, durable and often have low maintenance requirements, free of ozone-depleting chemicals, toxic compounds and don't produce toxic by-products. They are often made of recycled materials or content or from renewable and sustainable sources (Poongodi & Gowri, 2017).

Businesses that emphasize environmental issues and which notice the environmental demands and preferences of consumers have tended to develop and implement green marketing strategies (Agrawal & Das, 2013).

Green marketing is defined as “the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the requirements of customers and society in a profitable and sustainable way” (El Dief & Font, 2010). Green marketing is one of the types of sustainable marketing that represents an integrative approach that emphasizes environmental (green marketing), social value (social marketing) and economic/financial issues in the development of marketing strategies (Bridges & Wilhelm, 2008).

To increase the demand for green products, the majority of the researchers tried to find the factors that affect their green buying intention and the influence of green marketing tools such as the eco-label, eco-brand and environmental advertisement and others (Delafröoz, Taleghani & Nouri, 2014; Aysel & Boztepe, 2012; Agyeman, 2014; Kirgiz, 2016; Dagher & Itani, 2014; Khan & Mohsin, 2017 and others).

The main factors that are highlighted in most cited research studies and are supported by the hypothesis in the literature and will be taken into consideration in the current research are presented next.

3.1. Price

The purchase of green products is discovered to be highly influenced by their functional value (price) and some consumers are willing to pay premium prices for environment-friendly products (Khan & Mohsin, 2017). Price premiums, the excess prices paid over and above the “fair” price that is justified by the “true” value of the product, may be indicators of consumer willingness to pay. (Rao & Bergen, 1992). Majeed, Ahmed & Rasheed (2021), Khan & Mohsin (2017) and many other researchers identified a strong significant (positive) relationship

between the price with green product consumer choice intention. However, Vlonsky, Ozanne, & Fontenot (1999) proposed in their research that marketers must carefully set prices for green products because of consumers' sensitivity to the cost, despite the fact that consumers are willing to pay more for green products.

3.2. Quality

The quality of the free product is one of the most important criteria for consumers to buy green products. Rao & Bergen (1992) states that one reason for which consumers are willing to overpay a premium is to ensure the good quality of the product. The certification of green goods by an independent party proves the green quality of the product and allows them to buy products that do not harm the environment at the same time (Vlonsky, Ozanne, & Fontenot (1999). Aertsens et al. (2011) also state that quality is the precise characteristic that influences the demand and consumption of eco-friendly food. Some research revealed that such product attributes, for example, price and product quality, were more significant than green packaging. The regions of Europe, the USA, Australia, and Canada pay more attention to quality and health parameters of green products than Asian countries; thus, quality and health-related factors are found frequently in their studies, for example, health consciousness, nutritional values, product quality, more than the price of the green products.

3.3. Green advertisement

Green advertisement is an essential part of green marketing, which explores the organization's connections toward greenness in products, services, practice a process. A message that is "eco-friendly" places a premium on ecological, environmental, or nature-friendly themes in order to appeal to environmentally concerned consumers (Banerjee et al., 1995; Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995). They want to learn about the product's features, costs, and overall worth. They also convey where and when things are available, as well as how simple it is to obtain information about them (Kumar, 2014; Leonidou et al., 2013; Karna et al., 2003).

According to Davis (1994), the companies a corporate environmental advertisement generally includes three features. The First provides general information about the company's concern towards the environment; Second, the advertisement details the initiatives are undertaken by the corporation to demonstrate its care for and dedication to environmental improvement. Third, the commercial explains particular environmentally related actions in which the company is involved and/or the outcomes for which the corporate is accountable.

According to Chan (2004) who defines green advertising as statements that the promoted product's or connected industrial processes and the qualities which contributed to the environmental protection or had other valuable outcomes on the environment.

Chan (2004) developed a model in order to evaluate the Chinese consumers' responses to green advertising based on six dimensions: how respondents felt about the advertisement and how they felt about the advertised product, how respondents felt about the advertisement and how they thought the advertisement helped them make a decision about buying the advertised product. The green advertisement was conceptualized as a one-dimensional variable for the sake of this study based on Chan's (2004) work. That's why this study used the term "influencing customer behavior." It means encouraging people to buy environmentally friendly things and highlighting the positive effects of their purchases.

3.4. Eco-labeling

Eco-labeling is a tool for consumers to make environmentally friendly choices and affect how things are manufactured Rex & Baumann (2006). Eco-labels are an important marketing tool because they help sellers and buyers of environmentally friendly products share more information (Sammer & Wustenhagen (2006). According to Sonderskov & Daugbjerg (2011), an eco-label is a product claim that provides customers with reliable and easily accessible information about a product's environmental features. Tang et al. (2004) define eco-label as a type of information tool that often uses a logo to tell consumers about the environmental consequences of purchasing a product. Organic food is a symbol of trustworthiness (Janssen & Hamm, 2011, p. 32). Because of the procedure by which they were made, such things have specific worth for the customer, even if this does not leave materially visible traces in the end result (Albersmeier et al., 2010; Darby & Karni, 1973). Consumers can be certain that products have been manufactured in an environmentally responsible manner by using eco-labels. Much empirical study has previously been done on eco-labeling.

If you buy something, you may not show your environmental concerns, norms, or values, according to Thgersen (2000). He demonstrates buying eco-labeled products is linked to the notion that it contributes to the solution of environmental problems. In a similar line, a number of studies argue that the consumption of eco-labeled products is influenced by the values associated with each label. According to Grankvist & Biel (2001); Hughner et al. (2007); Lea & Worsley (2005); Yiridoe et al. (2005), consumers who think eco-labeled items are healthier, taste better and are more environmentally friendly are more likely to buy them. Research developed a conceptualized model on purchasing behavior in Penang, Malaysia has been examined on the effects of eco-label and eco-brand and environmental advertisement.

Trust is another important factor in eco-labels which is emphasized in the literature. According to Thogersen (2000), the consumer makes a purchase with the label which the trust

only. Based on a manager interview in the 1990s by Wong et al., it was stated that the green marketing involvement movement in the early 1990s was not clear and was confusing, which turned to blackening the creditability of the products. The arguments supported by many other researchers show that consumers are suspicious regarding the claims of green goods. For instant American and British consumers believe that the claims the companies for towards green products are just an excuse to put a higher price on the products. (Peattie, 1995; Eden, 1994; Mohr et al., 1998).

The uncertainty of environmental issues is due to misguided marketing strategies (Peattie, 2001). Based on Eden (1994); MacKenzie (1991); Sønderskov & Daugbjerg (2011), indeed, it's true for many businesses, eco-labeling provides limited trust among consumers where the schemes labeled perform by the state has significant positive in this regard.

According to Ek & Sonderholm (2008) and Salmela & Varho (2006), the level of trust people has in labels affects how much green food they buy. Customer trust in the labeling of organic food makes people buy more organic food, say Padel & Foster (2005); Janssen & Hamm (2012); Daugbjerg & Snderskov (2012); Janssen & Hamm (2012). These studies use people's statements about organic purchases from group interviews, choice experiments, and surveys as their main sources of information rather than keeping track of how many organic products people buy. Consumer trust is an important part of eco-labeling, but few studies have looked at how this affects how many people buy green products.

3.5. Environmental concern

Kim & Choi (2005) provided the following definition for environmental concern – it is a person's intrinsic and personal concern about the environment and its issues and problems. An environmental concern of an individual may be observed in many different ways, it can be “intangible” like a belief or it can be more “tangible”, meaning resulting in real actions and behaviors like buying green, eco-friendly goods or recycling. Many researchers have attempted to analyze the link between environmental concern and consumer purchase intention as well as actual purchase behavior. Results of the study by Kim & Choi (2005) revealed that there is a significant link between environmental concern and green purchase behavior. Another study by Hanson (2013) on the Canadian market revealed that environmental concerns directly affected green purchase behavior and recycling among consumers.

Moreover, Maichum (2016), who analyzed the market of Thailand, has demonstrated that there is a direct link between environmental concern and green purchase intention.

However, not all the researchers unanimously agreed that environmental concern has a strong positive effect on the purchase intentions of consumers for green products. For example, research done by Joshi & Rahman (2019) on the Indian market demonstrated that environmental concern is not a very efficient determinant of the green purchase behavior of consumers. Research studies conducted by Bamberg (2003), as well as Alwitt & Pitts (1996), revealed that environmental concern doesn't have a direct influence on green purchase intention. They stated that environmental concern might affect some other belief-related variables, which will in turn influence green purchase intention and behavior.

To better understand the meaning behind environmental concern and green awareness and the possible influence these two concepts may have on the green purchase intention of consumers, it is also important to explore the notions of green consciousness and green knowledge.

3.6. Green Consciousness

Dunlap & Jones (2002) provide the definition for green consciousness and state that it has relation to the extent to which customers are really concerned about the environment – its problems and issues. Moreover, it is related to the extent of the willingness of consumers to adopt various measures and actions to resolve these environment-related issues. There is an abundance of literature that analyzes the role green consciousness plays in forming the green purchase intentions of individuals. As an example, the results of the study conducted by Hu et al. (2010) state that consumers deemed as more green-conscious have a higher probability of developing positive green purchase intentions. Moreover, Kumar & Ghodeswar (2015) postulate that increased green consciousness positively affects the green purchase behavior of consumers, meaning that an increase in environment-related concerns of individuals pushes them to purchase green products more. Research studies conducted by Michaud & Llerena (2011), as well as Paul et al. (2017), reveal that green consciousness is increasing in Asian and European countries – an issue directly linked with the rise in environmental concern. Jang et al. (2015) reveal that consumers who have been identified as highly green-conscious and hence more environmentally concerned have a higher probability of being loyal in relation to green goods.

3.7. Green knowledge

Green knowledge is another crucial factor to be considered in the context of formulation of consumer buying intentions towards green products. It may be defined as the possession of information on consumers' green buying behavior as well as how ecology affects society (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Green knowledge may be concrete or abstract (Schahn & Holzer

(1990). Concrete means the knowledge about the usage of green goods, which is objective in its nature, while the abstract is related to subjective understanding based on self-perception. Lin & Niu (2018) state that environmental concern leads to green consciousness, which itself increases the green knowledge of consumers and these consumers who have an increased level of green knowledge have a higher intention when it comes to buying and using green products. Rashid (2009) argues that environmental knowledge has a major defining role in shaping the preferences of consumers towards purchasing environmentally friendly products; their interests in buying green products rise because their consumption patterns are heavily impacted by the rise in environmental knowledge. Safari et al. (2018) state that environmental knowledge to the concept of customers being aware and knowing about ecological problems and issues and the ways to resolve them.

3.8. Green Awareness

Suki et al. (2016) and Mourad et al. (2012) argue that environmental or green knowledge directly influences the green awareness of consumers regarding green goods and green awareness is argued to be affecting consumer purchasing intentions and behavior. Consumers who are environmentally or green aware are inclined to alter their whole lifestyle to the benefit of the environment. Suki et al. (2016) state that green awareness is tightly linked with the concept of environmental knowledge as well as the general performance of green goods from an ecological perspective. Research by Paul & Rana (2012) who analyzed the concepts of green behavior and green purchase intentions for organic products demonstrated that green knowledge results in increased green awareness which itself results in increased green purchase intention. Two more research studies by Liu et al. (2012), first on sustainable consumption and the second one on sustainable supply-chain management and green marketing, expressed their belief that being environmentally aware and responsible positively influences intentions towards purchasing particular types of products on the market.

The study will try to identify the factors that influence consumers buying intention with respect to green goods or services in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, whether they are the same as in the literature found or some additional ones.

However, there are very few studies on green marketing and its impact on consumers buying behavior in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Therefore, the current research will target the consumer audience of these countries and identify whether there is a trend in purchasing green products and services in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and what are the factors (whether they are the same as Price, Eco-labeling, Eco-Brand, Green advertising and Green Aware-

ness as mentioned in the most cited research and papers) that influence consumers' behavior towards buying them.

4. Method and Design

4.1. Geographical Scope of the Study:

The research was limited to major urbanized cities from each country and thus covered the urban the population of Azerbaijan (Baku and Nakhichevan) and Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan and Almaty), respectively.

4.2. Demographic information

The total number of the participants for this research are 25, which are 9 participants from Azerbaijan and 8 participants from Kazakhstan, 8 participants from Turkey.

As average 48 % of the participant are male and 52 % participants are female between average age of 25 to 45.

The level of income participants is divided for 32 % with high 48% medium level of income, and 20 % with low level of income

The education level of the participants is 32 % with Bachelor degree 36 % Master Degree and 32 % with the Ph.D. level.

The marital status of the participants is 68% single, 4% are married with no children and 28% are married and having children.

Age of the respondents are mostly more than 25 years. The reasoning behind this decision is that individuals with age over 25 are more independent in their choices of the items to be purchased – their decisions are empowered by their preferences and believes, thus suggesting that those individuals who are more concerned about the environment will be able to make potential choice towards green products. (Elham & Wahid, 2011).

4.3. Data collection procedure, coding and analysis

The collection of data was conducted by qualitative technic - in-depth interview with semi-structured questionnaire. The database selected from the green store was used as a basis for the sample. The reasoning behind this decision was to form a sample of individuals with awareness of green goods. The data collection was conducted through zoom application to record and describe the data for subsequent analysis. The collection of the data was stopped once the repeated answers from respondents were received.

The data was analyzed using DelveTool – a comprehensive online software. All the interview answers were recorded and subsequently coded. For the purposes of the coding, major themes have been identified based on main research questions. Then, for each theme, a set of sub-categories was defined which eventually served as main codes for the analysis.

Limitations of the study included: sample size; demographic and geographical scopes.

5. Results (12 pt.)

Results of the carried qualitative analysis are presented in the following table; keywords are highlighted in bold.

Factors	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Turkey	Challenges	Policy Recommendations
1. Knowledge and Awareness	<p>“Ecologically friendly products, are products which are made of natural ingredients, don’t contain chemical alterations and undesirable materials and substances which may negatively impact human organism” [M.M].</p> <p>“Green goods are those which are comprised of natural materials and their packaging and delivery is all done so that it doesn’t hurt our environment, even their packaging and recycling” [A.Z].</p>	<p>“The goods that are produced with no or little damage to the environment.” [D.S.]</p> <p>“Only minority like 10-20% of the population” of Kazakhstan is aware about the green goods and services [B.O].</p> <p>“Mostly the urbanized population who live in big cities like Astana and Almaty, and well educated people are aware” [M.K].</p> <p>“with high income level” [A.T.]</p> <p>“people who lived in foreign countries with higher levels of concern about the environment; self-conscious people.” [B.O].</p>	<p>“Organic goods, and goods which are not harmful for human being, not harmful for environment, manufactured in sustainable way” [M.O].</p> <p>“Environment friendly products” [O.K.], “Logistics of green goods should consider green deal requirements and lessen its carbon footprint. Green services should consider the limited resources of earth and use less to enable sustainability of the environment” [E.D.].</p> <p>“Probably 20-30% of Turkish population only aware about green goods” [O.K.].</p> <p>“They are sustainable, they are good with the environment, they are eco-friendly and they can be reusable” [L.Y.].</p> <p>“...didn’t use many chemical ingredients and resorted to organic and natural materials” [I.Y.].</p>	<p>“...lack of eco-culture and education” [B.O.].</p> <p>“... lack of government’s leadership, such as green procurements, and weak awareness raising to educate consumers” [M.T.]</p> <p>“even if people aware about the environment problems, they still do not sort the garbage, and continue use plastic staff.” [M.K.].</p> <p>“Education in Turkey doesn’t teach anything about the environment at all” [L.Y.].</p> <p>“...people in Turkey mostly live in the present and are trying to survive day by day to sustain themselves and their families” [E.O.].</p>	<p>“Government should launch different policies ranging from informational campaigns for children to business conferences with potential investors about the ways to increase the accessibility of green goods for ordinary people in the regions.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“Government could ... cultivate the eco-habits in the society.” [M.K.]</p> <p>R.G.:”There should be a proper education system to teach others on the exact reasons and purposes of buying green products with real examples.”</p> <p>[M.M.]: “Children should be taught from early years. In elementary schools, there should be a separate subject on this topic.”.</p> <p>“First, it should be within the initiative of the companies/factories to raise awareness about green goods and services offered. Factories should allocate money for education of the consumers (through social media, instagram, youtube, workshops) to increase the green product awareness.</p> <p>Secondly, government is responsible for the regulation of the companies’ sustainable production processes, developing sustainable agriculture”.. [M.O.]</p>

2. Purchasing Intensions					
2.1. Price of green goods	<p>“I think prices are quite high. That said, I can understand to a certain extent the need to put higher prices on them because the cost of their production is probably higher because now the company has to account for a lot of conditions and limitations and cannot “cut corners” let’s say.”[E.R.]</p> <p>“I think the price is unreasonably high, but if I buy and feel like the quality is exceptional, I may decide to buy this product more. But generally speaking, the price is too high for me a lot of times”[A.Z.]</p> <p>“...the price of clean products is comparatively higher than regular goods.”[F.G.]</p>	<p>“Unfortunately, the prices of green goods are high compared to traditional goods, which brings concerns to the availability and accessibility of those goods to ordinary people.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“...recycle goods should be priced cheaper than ordinary one since they are recycled.”[D.I.]</p> <p>“...would not prefer to overpay for green products if they have the same level of effectiveness and efficiency as ordinary products.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“Usually at least 20% and sometimes 3-4 times more expensive” [B.O.]</p> <p>“Prices on green goods are significantly higher than the ones on ordinary goods” [A.T.]</p>	<p>“In Turkey the prices for green goods are quite high, probably due to their not traditional way of production”[O.K.]</p> <p>“Green goods are expensive in Turkey, minority can afford them”[M.O.]</p> <p>“For Turkey, green products prices are quite high”. [E.D.]</p> <p>“Green goods are most definitely overpriced” [L.Y.]</p> <p>“...the price is too expensive. Unreasonably high” [A.Z.]</p> <p>“...the price difference is huge” [E.O.]</p> <p>“I understand that the process of their production may be more expensive and that’s why the price is higher, but I don’t understand why the difference is so huge. it should not be that way” [L.Y.]</p>	<p>“I feel negative because green recycled goods should be priced cheaper than ordinary one.”[D.I.]</p> <p>“Low level of income makes me to think about short-term goals, rather than about the long-term future and the environment in the end. You start to think about the environment when you stop thinking about how to feed and clothe your family.” [A.T.]</p> <p>“I would not prefer to overpay for green products if they have the same level of effectiveness and efficiency as ordinary products. If they share the same benefit and the same price, I would prefer to buy a green one.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“Sustainability does not directly affect the price, however, many companies sell environmentally friendly products under this slogan at very high price, times.” [A.T.]</p> <p>“However, the deficit of domestic production of these goods compared to ordinary ones and the following increase of its prices puts a serious obstacle on their equal competitiveness.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“I don’t think that green goods should be priced higher than ordinary one because it will not make people to switch to green goods. The inflation rate in Turkey is very high and high price for green goods is not logical.” [O.K.]</p> <p>“But sometimes some companies use the green trend and green labels to get more money, even if their products are not Green.”[M.O.]</p> <p>“...companies are scamming people because they don’t change the process of production and just stick the eco-label to try to fool people into thinking that their products are green when in fact they are absolutely not” [E.O.]</p>	<p>“To increase the accessibility of green goods and services to the general public the prices of those goods should be set lower than for ordinary ones. To stimulate the supply side, the government should provide financial assistance via subsidization and loan grants.” [T.N.]</p> <p>“It’s browner products that probably need to be taxed more to make green ones more competitive.” [M.T.]</p> <p>“The price should be less, so everyone can buy.”[E.D.]</p> <p>“Government must engage, this is critical. New modern technologies must be installed and used to make the production of green products less costly thus, making the price more attractive as it is the critical decision factor” [A.Z.]</p>

<p>2.2. <i>Quality of the green goods</i></p>	<p>"...in my personal experience, the products which were stated to be environmentally clean have lower quality compared to regular products. Like those eco-straws in the restaurant, they were really bad." [R.G.] "For me the most important criterion is the quality of any product." [K.S.] "But I usually pay attention to quality of the product. For me the quality and price are the most important factors." "... if I buy and feel like the quality is exceptional, I may decide to buy this product more." [A.Z.] "... I think people are not easily trusting these brands. There were real examples before when companies were producing popular products and quickly gaining market share in Azerbaijan, then these same companies were noticeably dropping the quality of their product." [F.G.]</p>	<p>"Even Tesla is an well known expensive electric car, however its is difficult to maintain them." [A.K.] "Some green goods are not so perfect as described and therefore cannot compete with ordinary one." [D.L.] "If it is not a good quality but made from recycle, I will not buy it. Even it is recycled it might have a negative effect. However, if the good is produced well, then it should match the quality." [D.I.] "I feel that the biggest concern for me here is that there is no trusted source of certification for green or eco-products." [B.O.] "The product that I mentioned -H&M- it is good." [D.S.]</p>	<p>"I can tell that the green product statement matches with the quality. I had no regret buying such products so far." [E.D.] "Both green and non-green goods, for example textile products, are the same in terms of quality. I haven't had any allergy or negative experience." [M.O.] "I know some green products which have better quality, some which are on the same level and many which are inferior" [L.Y.] "...when it comes to clothing for example, the products made from 100% organic materials have better quality and are significantly more durable" [I.Y.]</p>	<p>"There might be the case when green goods producers could hide behind the green production and economize on output by decreasing the overall quality of goods. As the price by decreasing production costs is more likely to decline, it increases the general competitiveness of green goods with more qualitative ordinary goods. As a result, reinforced by the eco-friendliness trend, people have to purchase inferior green goods instead of decent quality ordinary products." [T.N.] "... sometimes depending on the type of product, you may need to wait a little longer to observe the expected effect of a green product compared to the regular option due to the nature of their composition which may require more time to trigger the expected outcome" [L.Y.]</p>	<p>"...regulate green producers" [A.K.] "environmental standards need to be strengthened and better enforced" [M.T.] "Companies must show their interest and real investment into preservation of the nature and this may convince and influence people to follow their example and buy green products. Unfortunately, this is not happening right now in my country" [E.O.]</p>
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<p>2.3. <i>Availability of green goods and services</i></p>	<p>“They are available but in a limited amount” or [F.G.]: “there is shortage of supply of clean products on the market and people are not really seeing them so often on the shelves”. “... Mainly from cheap clothing which are made of recycled materials like polyethylene – we use them often at work from reused and recycled materials. But generally, very limited.” [A.Z.]</p>	<p>“Unfortunately only few shops sell green goods or services, I don’t know them” [D.I.]. “Honestly, there are not so many options, especially locally produced. Most of them are imported.” [M.K.] “Kazakhstan suffers from the lack of green labelling, especially national green labelling schemes, so there’s little choice of products with low environmental impact that can be trusted (not counting greenwashed products)” [M.T.].</p>	<p>“Compared with 5 years ago, now there are more options of the green products in the Turkish market, such as organic markets/bazaars, organik sections in the supermarkets (Migros), green textile sections and lines.” [M.O.] “Some cosmetics and some cleaning stuff like detergents assume that they are green. Nothing else I noticed as green product in my neighborhood. But in other places like Macrocenter and Metro, where the variety is vast, I can find some food products like flour, wheat, oatmeal, teas, coffee, that they also state they are green or organic. [E.D.] “E-government is a good green service example in Turkey, because it reduces huge paper waste.” [O.K.] “... toothbrushes which are stated to be made of recyclable materials” [L.Y]. “... I think we are really behind Europe in this regard. We don’t produce green products in the same quantity as Europe or the west in general” [I.Y]. “I don’t think there is enough in terms of both quantity and variety” [E.Ö.].</p>	<p>“... the gap in terms of availability of such products in comparison to other developing and developed nations around the world is still perceivable and large. Our market cannot supply solar panels and electric cars to the extent that they are supplied, for instance, in European markets. The second issue is that these products are predominantly imported from abroad.” [T.N.] “Green goods are not available in all of the shops, mostly in a fancier shops like Migros” [L.Y]. “In certain international districts of my city there are local stores, bazaars, in the places where foreigners tend to gather more, but unfortunately, green goods are not easily found in other places far from the very center of the cities” [I.Y].</p>	<p>“Overall, I would say, we have the room for growth – to provide people an access to more recycled goods of any type ranging from pens to computers.” [T.N.]</p>
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<p>2.4. <i>Environmental concern</i></p>	<p>"I mean I am not really interested in the fact that a product may be green."[E.R.] "I don't really concern myself with thinking about the environment that much to be honest."[R.G.] "I never pay attention to this."[T.H.] "If less people will buy regular products which are damaging environment at any stage of their lifecycle, then factories and manufacturers will decrease their supply and it will improve the environment as less waste will be released into the air."[K.S.] "I think every person's impact is really minimal, almost negligible. It is up to the manufacturers and government to have significant impact. I believe it should all start on the governmental level. It is government's responsibility to change the way things are done to improve the situation."[R.G.]</p>	<p>"For example, the cars that we buy and use every day, is the main environment polluter."[M.K.] "I live in Almaty, the biggest city of the country and other Industrial cities and we have a great air pollution problem from burning coal to heat the houses."[A.K.] "Our daily consumption generates wastes needed to be recycled. In Kazakhstan, with poor recycling facilities, these wastes are thrown in local dumps causing a significant detrimental impact on the environment all over the country." [T.N.] "When we buy products from non-eco friendly companies, we directly support their methods."[B.O.] "our every day purchase habits affect the environment, because it increases global warming, air pollution, increase melting in Arctica, reduce population of the animals."[D.S.]</p>	<p>"Surely, annual garbage volume produced by people is enormous and it negatively affect the environment. Even daily consumption of coffee contributes to that. Starbucks for example, changed plastik tubes for paper one." [K.O.] "I have impact on the environment with my every action. I use electricity, water, heating, transportation, food, etc. That is a lot of energy spending... I am trying to reuse some stuff at home to reduce the amount of waste I produce."[E.D.] "Sure, I using ordinary petrol car, and wish to have electric car like Tesla to reduce carbon emission."[M.O.] I believe people are not really supporting these initiatives because it seems they are not interested that much in eco-products. [I.Y.] "People don't think about the outside world that much. They are very selfish during shopping and that is fine considering that Turkey economy is not in a very strong position right now" [E.O.].</p>	<p>"Lack of waste management system and underdeveloped local recycling industry" [B.O.] "Local population's old mindset and irresponsibility for future generation, and passive government participation makes it difficult to switch local consumer to green consumption" [K.O.] "Lack of factories and government support in rising green products awareness". [M.O.] "It seems that government is not that interested in green products and environment that much I think. Istanbul used to be more green, there were more trees and less buildings but nowadays there are so many buildings here and less and less green outside" [E.O.] "Even if before people in my country may have been slightly more concerned about the environment, nowadays that's not the case due to economic situation" [I.Y.]</p>	<p>Information on green product package should pinpoint the direct benefit of the green producer to be done to the preservation of the environment."[T.N] "In the city it would be great to have public electric transportation." [M.K.] "In Europe all plastic bags are paid or you can use your own bag."[A.K.] "if we reduce usage of plastic we could save the planet. If we switch to eco cars or replace the burning coal while heating the houses, probably we will reduce the air pollution."[A.K.] "Mass media can easily reach out people and convince them to become responsible consumers and switch to green consumption."[K.O.] "Educational system must change to teach people be more future minded, think in the long-term perspective and thus become more responsible" [E.O.] "Some educational cartoons or movies because people here like to watch movies, series [L.Y.]</p>
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<p>2.5. <i>Awareness, green marketing and labeling</i></p>	<p>"...They are attracting my attention, I can easily notice them in the midst of all other products. They are placed separately, their coloring and design is a bit different that makes them stand out." [A.Z.] "From marketing perspective, I believe companies should focus on informing people about negative consequences of being irresponsible to the environment." [A.Z.] "...I haven't noticed anything particular. Maybe only the color is green, and cleanliness related. I think regular products have better design and overall packaging." [F.G.]</p>	<p>"The lack of creativity in advertising those goods undermines the huge potential of those goods to be bought by the customer given the overall trend for eco-friendliness." [T.N.] "Eco-friendly product always has a very clear information on their labels. Usually their packages are attractive." [D.S.]</p>	<p>"I almost always read labels. Provided information is not sufficient. Sometimes, it is very complicated to understand all ingredients. Also, I don't know anything about the product journey from those labels. I should be able to see all processes a product goes through." [E.D.] "Sometimes organic food producers write the origin of the product on the labels, but that's all. I don't find enough information on packages about the processes and materials used during the manufacturing, whether the Company produced them in sustainable way and supports the environment in general." [M.O.] "... Definitely the information is lacking. They should write more real data that proves their claims" [E.O.].</p>	<p>"... the willingness to read the green label depends on the education and financial stability of the consumer. If you want to know what are you paying for, you will read packages carefully." [M.O.] "Green products here are known as hippie stuff even though it is not, so when people use it, they think that it is only for rich people who don't worry about money, they have a steady income" [L.Y.] "...people don't go to the market and check the ingredients in great detail, they just read the package a little and buy what is more affordable. It is all due to economic situation" [L.Y.] "Local firms tend to choose the easiest way to make a product and don't care if it is eco-friendly or not" [L.Y.].</p>	<p>"Government, NGO, celebrities should do propaganda an awareness campaigns." [D.I.] "Put them everywhere. Make them visible." [E.D.] "Visual advertisements is a good way to attract people's attention to green goods, especially specifying the harmfulness for the future generation" [K.O.] "...more advertising like for example guerilla marketing. Using unconventional techniques and strategies to maybe indirectly push people to be more interested in green products" [A.Z.] "The companies must be very clear, sincere and transparent with their customers and that may make people trust them and purchase. Also the companies must make marketing more engaging and entertaining." [E.O.].</p>
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6. Discussion

6.1. Green Awareness

The general level of awareness of green products in the three countries is low. Majority of people who are aware of green products and green market in general are educated with high level of income and have experience living abroad with relatively higher levels of environmental concern. Therefore, the demand for green goods is not high.

6.2. Green Product Availability

There is limited availability and variety of green products across Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Most of the available green products are imported from abroad. Domestic green products are available but in small quantities and people are often not aware of their existence. However, Turkey as a leading textile and agriculture producer provide a relatively wide range of locally produced green goods (organic food and green textile as an example) in the market. Moreover, it should be noted that green and eco-friendly goods were stated to be available mostly in higher quality stores and markets as well as mostly closer to the centers of major cities with higher concentration of foreign population and international visitors.

6.3. Green Product Price

Green products are priced higher compared to regular products. However, current prices are unreasonably high. People cannot afford to buy them on a regular basis which affects their purchase intention. Majority is not willing to pay extra for a green product. People are able to consider paying extra 5-10% on average if the product offers higher quality as ordinary products. Overall, majority of respondents across the three countries agreed that green products can be priced slightly higher due to additional costs and limitations associated with their manufacturing and production process – this shows that some consumers are willing to pay premium prices for environment friendly products. Respondents from Turkey were more upset with the high price of green goods as these products were stated to be sometimes 4 to 5 times more expensive compared to regular offerings. Moreover, none of the respondents was able to find any justification for the significant price difference and considered it to be highly unreasonable.

6.4. Green Product Quality

Similarities between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey are that consumers were split in their views on the quality of green products. Half of respondents were satisfied with the quality based on their previous experience, but half were not. High product quality may contribute to increased client acceptability as well as retailer and wholesaler satisfaction. As a result, their intention to buy green goods or services decreased as the quality is the precise characteristic that influences the demand and consumption of eco-friendly products. Based on the responses from Turkish sample, it can be implied that population of Turkey is relatively more skeptical when it comes to believing the authenticity of the green products they observe on the shelves during shopping. Majority of respondents indicated that don't easily trust the statements of companies regarding the quality of their green offering and require higher degree of factual prove and evidence to make a decision to purchase a green option.

6.5. Environmental Concern

All respondents in Kazakhstan agreed with the fact that their daily consumption habits impact local environment and might be a factor but not priority in purchasing green goods, however overall population across the three countries is not concerned about environmental issues. All the respondents, no matter the age, gender or level of education or income stated not to think about environment when doing regular shopping activities. Around 50% of the respondents in Azerbaijan understood the correlation between buying a green product and preserving the environment while 50% failed to understand the cause and effect between

these two concepts. The main reason for this split is that the level of education of people regarding environmental preservation and ecological problems is very low in Azerbaijan. People are not exposed to the notions of environmental responsibility, sustainable development and green consumerism. Unless they deliberately searched for this information online due to the nature of their work or education, other respondents failed to understand the correlation between green purchase behavior and environmental preservation. Moreover, supposedly due to collectivistic nature of society prevalent in Azerbaijan and Turkey as in many other Asian countries, people don't seem to put much weight and responsibility into their own individual actions. For that reason, most respondents stated that government is ultimately responsible for enforcing green consumerism and environmentally friendly intention and as a result behavior among population.

6.6. Green Marketing and Branding

All respondents across the three countries agreed that there is a lack of advertisement of green goods on the local market, especially TV and social media advertisement is lacking. Majority of them do not know how to distinguish trusted and certified labels from greenwashed ones. At the same time, already existing advertisements are not transparent, not clear that proves the greenwashing problem. Majority of respondents mentioned that there is nothing special or distinct about the packaging of green products and hence, they don't notice them until they read the description. There is lack of the information about sustainability of the manufacturing process on the packages. Aside from product features and the authenticity of green product claims, consumers expressed environmental concerns depending on the information offered about products' benefits. However, majority stated to have other important priorities, they don't want to waste time reading description to find whether a product is green or not.

6.7. Challenges and Recommendations

Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan share similar **challenges** in developing and popularizing green product consumption which might be valuable for government bodies to consider in their green economy policies. Moreover, these challenges can represent opportunities and threats for local and foreign green companies to adapt their green marketing policies to introduce and popularize their green goods and services in these markets. The challenges are as follows:

1. Unreasonably high prices of the green goods and services; low average level of income in the country, poverty and poor economy;
2. Lack of verified and certified green goods and services, that prove their human safety and eco-origin and quality standard;

3. Lack of awareness, promotion and advertisement of green goods and services; presence of greenwashing issue and lack of knowledge of distinguishing credible labels from greenwashed;

4. Lack of environmental concern among the population;

5. Lack of government's interest and support of green goods and services;

6. Lack of waste management system and underdeveloped local recycling industry in local markets;

7. Insufficient local production capabilities and unavailability of green products.

Based on the study the following **recommendations** for both government and green companies were proposed to attract customers to switch to green goods purchase:

1. Reduce the price of green goods. Government could propose green programs on subsidizing or tax exempt of local green producers; attract more foreign or institutional investments on green projects; regulate the price gap between brown and green products and services; restrictions and regulations on manufacturers are needed.

2. Firms and producing factories (especially in Turkey) could organize educational advertisements about the production processes of their offered goods and services, sustainable materials used and their contribution to the environment.

3. Raise awareness about environmental concerns and green goods targeting all ages and all levels (public and private) by using school programs, digital technologies, celebrities and social media; trends should be set because public tends to follow them.

4. Organize campaign, advertisement and develop creative marketing for green goods, improve their design; more advertisement with focus on negative consequences to environment, including detailed information about sustainable ingredients and way of production, certificates. Set up the strict control and regulation on certifications to eliminate greenwashing.

5. Ensure high quality of the green goods by supporting with certificates and keep the trust of the customers.

6. Develop local production of the recycled goods by developing local waste management system and recycling industry, renewable energy production.

7. Strengthen and enforce the environmental standards.

7. Conclusion (12 pt.)

Through a broad literature review, various elements influencing customer green purchasing intention towards green goods and services were recognized. As revealed by most research, product price, product quality, product availability, awareness, advertisement and promotion and environmental concern were considered the major positive drivers of green purchasing intention. All these variables were found to either encourage or discourage the purchasing of eco-friendly items.

Based on the results of the study, it is found that there are many similarities between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan which might be explained by the similarity in the cultural and economic conditions of the countries. Both countries share similar factors such as high green product prices, green product quality and lack of availability, low level of green product awareness, limited advertisement and promotion and environmental concerns that all influence the green purchase intentions of consumers.

Moreover, similar challenges were determined, which are lack of government support, advertisement, concern and awareness among the population. As a result of the study, general recommendations have been identified for government bodies and green companies of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, such as the need for governmental intervention, the need for raising awareness of the general population, the need for strong and effective advertisement and promotion, need for the development of waste management system and recycling industry.

The findings might increase the potential of the trade in the green goods segment in the markets of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan based on analyzed factors affecting purchasing intention of consumers towards green products in both countries.

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