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# Impact of green product positioning, attitudes, and knowledge on green product purchase intention among consumers in Colombo city limit in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

This study aims to assess the impact of green brand positioning, consumers' attitudes toward green brands, and green brand knowledge on green product purchase intention among people in Colombo City Limit in Sri Lanka. A standard questionnaire was used to gather the data from 200 consumers, and the purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. The survey was carried out in reputed supermarket chain in Sri Lanka. Three hypotheses were developed for this research, and all hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and descriptive statistics. The coefficient values of green product positioning, attitude, and knowledge positively correlate to consumers' purchase intention, which means that independent variables such as green product positioning, green brand attitude, and green brand knowledge are the strongest predictors of determining green product purchase intention among consumers. Thus, based on our findings, we recommend that green brand positioning be used as a marketing strategy to improve green brand knowledge and attitudes, encourage consumers to demand more goods, and increase business sales and revenue. Moreover, it can be used to differentiate their products from the available competitors by giving the influence that their products are unique. In addition, the government can encourage businesses to invest in environmentally friendly products by granting financial or non-financial benefits.

**Keywords:** Brand attitudes, Brand knowledge, Brand positioning, Consumers, Green product, Purchase intention.

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## Introduction

A green product is a product that has been designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. This can include products that are made from recycled materials, products that are designed to be reused or recycled, and products that are made from renewable resources. The environmental deterioration caused by the over-consumption and utilization of natural resources result in numerous ecological issues such as global warming, the greenhouse effect, pollution, and climate change aggressively impacting humans. Lack of proper methods to minimize pollution & recycling, fewer amounts of eco-friendly products and increased consumption of polythene and plastic are major environmental issues in Sri Lanka.

Increasing customer satisfaction and building a long-term profitable customer base are the main objectives of firms. With an increase in social and political pressures, many firms are involved in green product manufacturing. Also, businesses use environmental issues to differentiate their product from competitors in the market. For example, Dell focuses on producing green IT products under their strategy called “Go Green with Dell”. It also comes in eco-friendly packaging with a system recycling kit bundled. According to the study done by Nielsen Company, millennials are willing to pay more for environment- friendly products even with high unemployment and low wage rates. Moreover 50% of baby boomers are willing to pay extra for environmental-friendly products. As a percentage of people who are willing to pay more for products and services from companies committed to positive environmental and social change increased from 55% in 2014 to 72% in 2015. This rapid expansion in green-conscious customers persuades the business to invest more in eco-friendly practices (grocerybusiness.com). Consumers have channelled their growing concern for the environment through the demand for eco-friendly products and this movement of “going green” has expanded worldwide due to intensified awareness of living healthier (Soyez, 2012; Thøgersen et al., 2015).

Green brand positioning involves “an active communication and differentiation of the brand from its competitors through its environmentally sound attributes” (Hartmann, 2005). According to Suki (2016), green brand knowledge is how a company provides knowledge or information about its product’s uniqueness through its features. Green brand attitude is the preference of consumers to purchase a green product. It is about the likes or dislikes of the consumer. Mostafa (2007) explained that, a green brand’s attitude toward the product depends on the environmental attitude of the consumer. According to Oliver and Lee (2010), green product purchase intention is the desire of a consumer to purchase a green product. Schiffman and Wisenblit (2014) found that a positive image and a feeling toward a green brand might be the main reason for a consumer to purchase the green product. Thus, this study aims to assess the impact of green brand positioning, consumers’ attitude toward green brands, and green brand knowledge on green product purchase intention among people in Colombo City Limit in Sri Lanka and identify the strongest predictor to the consumers’ purchase intention on green products. Though environmental problems increasingly influence every part of the lives of people and businesses in Sri Lanka, studies have yet to discuss green issues in Sri Lanka. More specifically, limited studies were conducted on the impact of green brands, brand attitudes, and brand knowledge on purchase intention among Sri Lankan consumers.

This study contributes to the literature in different ways. First, this study will help to identify the impact of green product positioning strategies on consumers' attitudes and customers' intentions

to purchase green products. The study's outcome will help firms identify consumers' attitudes toward green products in the market and develop their products to meet customer requirements. Green product positioning can be used by businesses to develop a better market for their products, improve consumers' green product knowledge and attitude toward green brands, and improve green brand purchase intentions. Marketers can use successful green product positioning to differentiate their products from the available competitors by giving the impression that their products are unique. Also, this study will help to plan their product development, advertising, and product design. In addition, this information will help the government develop policies for protecting the environment and improving green product consumption to achieve sustainable development.

## **Literature Review**

### **Green Products**

Numerous studies have been made to differentiate between green products and conventional products (Braga & Silvia, 2013; Luchs, 2010; Manuela, 2013). Green products cause less environmental and human health damage in their packaging and content (Jacobi, 2006). However, green products can be considered conventional products with similar functions and fewer adverse environmental effects during their life cycle (Sergio, 2015). With increasing retail involvement in the economy, businesses in the retail sector are looking to work with environmentally friendly products. Major retailers are offering product promotions with a distinctive design, a larger volume, or less packaging to serve a green and sustainable appeal. To distinguish conventional products from green products, it is important to know that green products are products that are not considered harmful to the environment and human health in their content and packaging (Jacobi, 2006). Thus, green products fulfill the same functions as conventional products. It can be noticed that consumers not only choose green products for their green appeal but also consider the benefits they receive from green products (Morh & Webb, 2005). Therefore, "green product" is used for products that protect the environment and conserve energy and natural resources.

However, green products may be overpriced compared to comparable products but may have lower lifecycle costs (Steen, 2005). Peattie and Crane (2005) warned that green products should be developed through unaffected ecological innovation by adequately demonstrating green benefits and value intentions to final customers. People who were more concerned about environmental issues habitually organized petitions, boycotted manufacturers, and actively promoted earth conservation (Fergus, 1991). According to Ottman (1992), consumers accepted green products when their basic needs for performance, quality, convenience, and affordability were met and when they knew how a green product could help to solve environmental problems.

The market for green products is growing, but at the same time, organizations are seeing this as a marketing opportunity to make more profits. As a result, many organizations have been observed placing a high price tag on green products. Organizations often point to high prices due to the high cost of production. This may cause consumers to feel unjust. Furthermore, the problem indicates that the so-called green product has yet to be incorporated with true green qualities and sold with just green labels with premium prices (Lee, 2008). As a result, many consumers are unwilling to purchase green goods due to their risk.

## Green Product Positioning

A brand is "a name, term, logo, symbol, plan, or combination intended to identify the goods and services of one seller, or group of sellers and distinguish them from those of competitors" (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Brands are business assets that give legal protection to the product and are shielded from duplication. They are valuable, rare, non-substitutable, and provide sustainable competitive advantages to the company. Organizations distinguish their products through branding. A business must develop the product through branding to ensure products succeed in the marketplace (Aaker, 2007). If the product has a higher brand awareness, it will help increase the company's market share and profit. *Brand positioning* is a concept that has been used for centuries to differentiate a product from another (Keller, 2008). This helps companies to communicate and deliver messages to their customers. A brand's name can increase strategic and economic value for shareholders (Gil et al., 2007). Due to its advantages, a strong brand has become a priority for many organizations in the competitive market (Yasin et al., 2007). A strong brand establishes an identity in the marketplace (Aaker, 1996), reduces vulnerability, and provides the potential for larger margins, greater intermediary cooperation, and brand extension opportunities (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

Studies of green brand positioning have focused on the impact of different kinds of green positioning strategies on consumers. They categorized the positioning based on different levels of concepts such as concrete attributes, abstract attributes, direct benefits, indirect benefits, and substitute positioning. They suggested that the different types of brand positioning affect the success of a company's brand. Hartmann (2005) has described green brand positioning approaches as functional or emotional. Functional brand attributes intend to build brand relations by delivering information on environmentally sound product characteristics, such as production processes, product use, and product elimination. Functional positioning states the functions of brand attributes as a mediator to convey environmentally-related messages to consumers.

Furthermore, they address conceptually different types of emotional brand benefits as another strategy for green positioning, such as a feeling of well-being associated with acting selflessly, auto-expression benefits through the socially visible consumption of green brands, and nature-related benefits stopping feelings. Emotional positioning is important to transfer the affective contents of brand attributes to gain consumers' emotional responses (Edell & Burke, 1987).

According to Suki (2016), green brand positioning is the most critical factor that might influence consumers' intention to buy green brands such as personal care and cosmetics products. However, he has not found any strong relationship between green brand positioning and attitude toward green brands. Moreover, he explained that companies need to focus on building their brands' positioning on consumers' minds using combined and focused marketing communication strategy. For example, body soap needs to convey environmentally related messages to the targeted consumers in ways that would interest consumers about the brand's green efforts and more information about the product. Green brand positioning is among the most critical factors impacting consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, firms should directly position and promote their green products via traditional and electronic media. This may improve the green brand knowledge and attitudes among consumers. This is an essential method because consumers are likely to purchase brands that are familiar with them (Norazah, 2013). Green products must have

a high environmental impact and be able to meet consumers' ecological expectations. This will help consumers identify eco-friendly products and trust their environmental practices.

However, green-labeled products also contain potential risks and disadvantages, especially when producers over-claim ecological products. (Cary et al., 2004). Some authors further suggest that consumers considered the information given on product labels inaccurate and confusing. Thus, they do not rely on these labels to make purchase decisions toward green products (D'Souza, 2006; Glegg et al., 2005). Moreover, some consumers consider the information on product labeling wrong, and people need to consider the labels when deciding to purchase green products. Also, D' Souza (2006) said that green labels do not influence consumers to purchase green brands. Some researchers believe that a company's green positioning represents their image and, most likely, the public image that is apparent to society (Saha & Darnton, 2007). Those mentioned above are "a mix of quality, profits, and ecological values that affects the green clients' depend on green items" (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006).

However, a study on green product purchase intention: impact of green brands, attitude, and knowledge (Suki, 2016) found a positive and significant relationship between green brand positioning and purchase intention. His result is similar to that of previous research. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002), D'Souza (2007), Hartmann and Ibanez (2006), Huang (2014), Lin and Chang (2012), Mostafa (2009) explained the positive relationship between green brand positioning and purchase intention. Khan and Razzaque (2015) suggested that people are more inclined to purchase a product if the brand or product has a high image in their minds.

### **Green Brand Attitude**

That is used to resolve conflicts or make decisions. (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Attitudes have been perceived as powerful determinants of behaviors, and marketers consider that an individual with a positive attitude toward a product is likelier to buy the product (Vantomme, 2005). The ABC model of attitudes is a multidimensional perspective. It states that attitudes are jointly defined by affect, behavior, and cognition (Solomon, 2010). This model says that there is an interrelationship between A, B, and C and that consumers' lives will change according to how they think, feel, or act to keep their maintain. This is called the principle of uniformity. It comes from the mental dissonance theory, which says that individuals have an internal need to keep attitudes and beliefs in harmony. This theory explains that conflicting thoughts create an internal discomfort for the individuals, which motivates their behavior to restore balance (Baca-Mote, 2013).

Most green marketing studies have also shown that consumers' attitudes toward environment-friendly products influence their intention to purchase green products (Aman, 2012; Barber, 2009; Flamm, 2009). Allport (1935) defined *attitude* as "A mental and neural state of willingness, which exerts a directing influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". According to Schultz and Zelezny (2000), "attitudes of environmental concern are rooted in a person's concept of self and the degree to which an individual perceives him or herself to be an integral part of the natural environment." Blackwell (2006) defined *attitude* as representing what consumers like and dislike. According to Irland (1993) and Schwepker and Cornwell (1991), consumers' product purchasing decisions are often based on their environmental attitudes. Attitudes are the most reliable illustrative factor in forecasting

consumers' willingness to pay for green products. (Chyong 2006). This definition explains that price is not the main factor preventing consumers from purchasing green products. Consumers' apparent level of self-involvement toward protecting the environment may encourage them to engage in environmentally friendly activities. (Wiener & Sukhdial, 1990). Tanner and Kast (2003), Consumers positive attitudes towards the environment directly influenced green food purchase decisions Lee (2008). defined attitude toward green brands as a concept developed from consumers' evaluation process and rational judgment toward the green brand. Companies' 33 efforts to convey environmentally friendly attributes will help consumers to decide between brand alternatives (Rio, 2006).

According to Paul (2016), the attitude of Indian consumers significantly forecasts their purchase intention of a green product. A study by Mostafa (2009) presented that consumers with positive attitudes toward green products have a significant tendency to purchase green products. If we further research consumer attitudes toward brands, Teng (2009) stated that consumers with positive attitudes toward brands have strong intentions to buy the brand. Therefore, several studies indicate a positive relationship between brand attitude and brand purchasing intention, and many studies recommended that green purchase attitudes affect green purchase intentions. Fraj and Martinez exhibited that environmental attitudes positively influence ecological behaviors and green buying behavior. Increased environmental knowledge also provides positive attitudes towards green brands Arcury (1990). Many types of research identified that students who followed the environmental courses are more aware of environmental issues and possess favorable environmental attitudes after participating in the course. Also, they are willing to pay a premium price for green products (Laroche, 2001).

However, Balderjahn (1998) found that the attitudinal factor is one of the aspects that affect the purchasing power of ecologically concerned consumers, and there are other factors that can affect consumers' purchase decisions. In their research, Derksen and Gartrell (1993) concluded that environmental attitudes only affect recycling behavior. Kim and Choi conclude that social norms play an essential role in the purchase decision-making process, and collectivism positively impacts consumers' green buying behavior in China. Some other researchers, like Kraft and Haggerr, also pointed out consumers' confidence in completing a behavior. According to previous researchers, confidence depended on the perception of their ability. It positively impacts perceived behavior control and intentions when buying green products. Attitudes toward green brands developed from consumers' evaluation process, rational judgment toward the green brand, and companies' efforts to bring environmentally friendly attributes to consumers (Rios, 2006).

Some researchers found that consumers' attitudes depend on product knowledge. Most analyses of an attitude's strength distinguish it from knowledge, contributing to a high level of consumer attitude. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) suggested that solid attitudes are often thought to be raised in a broad, well-organized knowledge context that provides an informational source for responses toward an issue or product. Besides, increased knowledge and attitudes are assumed to influence the environmental behavior of consumers (Arcury, 1990). In a study by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), the relationship between environmental knowledge, environmental attitudes, and behavior using general consumer products have significant correlations between participant's attitudes and knowledge.

Firms should use numerous strategies to increase consumer attitudes toward green brands, such as creative product packaging with attractive eco-labeling. Furthermore, firms can use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp. These efforts would help to promote green product quality, product ingredients, and competitive prices to increase consumer awareness and encourage repeated purchasing and satisfaction (Suki, 2016).

### **Green Brand Knowledge**

The concept of brand knowledge is mainly related to the cognitive dimension of a brand in consumers' minds (Peter & Olson, 2001). Thus, *brand knowledge* can be defined as the personal sense about a brand positioned in consumers' memory, including all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information" (Keller, 2003). According to Keller (1993), brand knowledge improves the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing and the productivity of a business. Brand knowledge is the result of a company's previous marketing actions. It shows the level of knowledge consumers have about the brand in their minds. Keller divides brand knowledge into two components. They are brand awareness and brand image. Verbal knowledge about the product or transmission of information from customer to customer are some methods of making the brand name of a product. Block and Atkin (1983) explained that there is a greater force of attraction from the advertisement to the consumer to know a brand and a product. It is directly linked to the recall of a consumer's memory. Therefore, customers can quickly know which product to select based on the brand knowledge and image. Brand recognition and recall are two important components for customers when selecting a specific brand among many other brands.

A company with an environmentally friendly brand in its portfolio should conduct green marketing to raise awareness about the brand (Chen & Chang, 2012). To raise brand awareness, the company can provide information about the green brand's environmental concerns (Martin & Simintiras, 1995). Green brand knowledge is green brand image, defined as "a collection of perceptions about a brand in the minds of consumers which related to the brand's commitment to protecting the environment" (Chen, 2008). Green brand knowledge is "a green brand node in the consumers' memory (Seitz, 2010). Keller (1993) explained that dynamic communication campaigns provide more positive perceptions of the green brand to consumers and enhance the green brand knowledge of the consumers.

Furthermore, green brand knowledge provides information about a product's unique brand attributes and benefits to the environment. Increased knowledge regarding a particular product may increase the green product positioning. It is directly connected to the value of green products and services. This value is based on the environmentally friendly attributes of a product (Aaker, 2002; Rios, 2006).

The problem is the difficulty in measuring green brand knowledge and translating this knowledge into consumer behavior. Consumers think that when they know more about the environment, they are more likely to buy green products than those who know about environmental issues. This indifference to extensiveness results in a lack of understanding of how different knowledge forms work together to promote consumer behavior. According to the research findings (Braimah, 2015), consumers' brand knowledge of green products influenced their purchasing intention. His study has supposed that brand knowledge acted as the top-down approach and perceived quality acted as the bottom-up approach. These two approaches were likely

complements that influenced consumers' evaluation of green products. Specifically, the influence of the brand would be significant only when the perceived quality appears to have positive effects on purchasing intention. Suki (2016) explained that green brand knowledge strongly affects green product purchase intention. His study reported that green brand knowledge affects consumers' attitudes toward green brands.

### **Green Product Purchase Intention**

The purchase decision is a part of the consumer decision-making process. It is essential to recognize that there are two prior stages, which are information search and evaluation of alternatives, that consumers consider when reaching the purchase decision. First, the consumer moves to the information stage to determine price, quality, country of origin, brand, and related issues according to their motivation. It can be conducted as an internal search through their direct or indirect experience with the product and an external search through marketing and social groups. According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2007), brand demand depends on internal and external search for information. The desire of a consumer to buy a product of a particular brand in the market can be defined as the consumer's purchase intention. The intention to purchase goods is a customer's choice. It is a concept like considering something, purchasing a brand, and anticipating purchasing a brand, which helps space the intention of purchasing (Porter, 1974). Bachler (2004) explained that loyal consumers are insensitive to evaluating and showing their brand loyalty by signifying positive recommendations towards businesses to invest money in their brand. Porter (1974) explained that customers purchasing behavior depends on the level of competition within the industry.

According to the research, there is a developing trend among customers to buy eco-friendly products that have less environmental effect. Also, they are ready to pay more for such products. This interest in purchasing green products is called green purchase intention. Companies should conduct different marketing activities to influence consumers' attitudes and intentions to buy green brands by changing the customers' valuation. It can be done by targeting normative beliefs and by adding new beliefs. (Laroche et al., 2001) People like to solve environmental problems to become role models (Hallin, 1995), and they can help preserve the environment (McCarty & Shrum, 2001). However, most research studies still need to identify which motivational factor leads to consumers' green purchase behavior. Laroche (2002) recognized that consumers' positive attitudes toward environmental problems do not lead to environmentally friendly purchasing behavior. Yam-Tang and Chan (1998) found that most consumers do not purchase products based on environmental concerns.

Since the 1970s, much research has been conducted on consumer behavior on green products. The research findings identified several variables that affect the purchase of environmentally friendly products. They are values, knowledge, needs, motivations, attitudes, and demographics (Bui & Loyola, 2005). Balderjahn (1988) found that an individual's attitude towards environmental issues positively affects environmentally conscious living. This indicates that individuals sincerely concerned about environmental problems will likely take measures to prevent further environmental worsening. Furthermore, Balderjahn noticed that positive attitudes toward the environment tend to purchase environmentally friendly products. According to Polls (2006), most consumers are environmentally conscious and willing to purchase green products to solve the environmental problem of being environmentally friendly.

Although the term 'green products' attracts more attention, the fundamental factors affecting green purchasing decisions in the Sri Lankan context have yet to be discovered. Green issues are severe problems as consumers are more concerned with maximizing the individual benefits of products. However, environmental effects have been a significant weak factor in green buying behavior in Sri Lanka. Researchers suggest that rather than knowledge, the emotional aspect of Sri Lankan consumers can affect purchase intention towards environmentally friendly product purchase decisions (Samarasinghe, 2012). Further, research evidence suggests that unmarried consumers have a stronger intention to buy green products than married. This may be due to unmarried consumers being more independent in their buying decisions and having more disposable income to buy even expensive green products. In parallel, it is also exposed that female consumers have more green purchase intention than males because of their emotional feelings and sensitivity towards the natural environment. Also, researchers found the possibility of exploring other unique factors, such as social class (e.g., the new emerging middle class of Sri Lanka (Liyanage, 2003)) affecting green purchase intention, compared to other factors.

## Research Model and Hypotheses

According to past researchers, green brand positioning significantly affects green product purchase intention (Huang et al., 2014; Mostafa, 2009). Suki (2016) found that green brand positioning is the second most important construct that impacts the intention of consumers to purchase green products. Furthermore, firms should directly position, promote, and advertise their green products via electronic media to enhance green brand positioning, knowledge, and attitude as well as environmental awareness in the consumers' minds. This is essential as consumers are more likely to buy green products if they are familiar with the brand (Norazah, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***(H<sub>1</sub>) - Green product Positioning has a significant effect on green product purchase intention.***

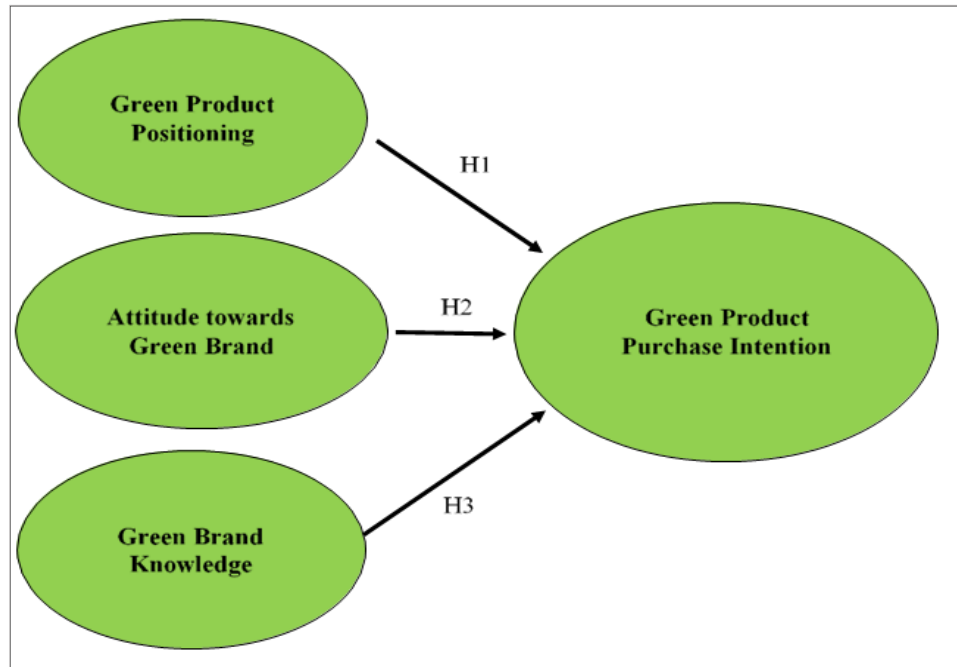
Teng (2009) found that the positive attitude of a consumer towards a green brand is strongly related to the purchase intention of a green product. Previous green marketing studies identified that consumers' attitude regarding eco-friendly behavior significantly influences their environmental knowledge and green product purchase intention. A study by Mostafa (2009) showed that consumers with positive attitudes toward green products are more interested in purchasing green products. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***(H<sub>2</sub>) - Green brand attitudes of consumers have a significant effect on green product purchase intention.***

Many studies have reported that purchase intention can be influenced by environmental knowledge (Chen & Chang, 2012; Mostafa, 2009; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Based on the findings of Suki (2016) green brand knowledge is the most critical factor that could sway consumers' intention to purchase green products. Consumers who know organic or green food would directly purchase organic products. Further, Connell (2010) found that consumers who have less information about a green brand product would refrain from buying the green product. Successfully explaining the eco-friendly qualities of a product would help to better contribute towards the green products (Rios, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***(H<sub>3</sub>) - Green brand knowledge of consumers has a significant effect on green product purchase intention***

The following figure shows the relationships between green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brands, and green product purchase intention.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

### Sampling and Population

A quantitative method was applied through the distribution of a structured self-administered questionnaire to 200 members. Target respondents are consumers in Colombo city limit from 18 to above 55 years old who are purchasing consumer goods and services. The survey was carried out in reputed supermarket chains in Sri Lanka which are in 1- 15 areas in the Colombo city region. Because these areas will be gathered by a consumer who wants to buy their necessities, especially their daily food consumption.

### Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section of the questionnaire includes five questions to collect the general demographic factors such as job category, gender, age, educational level, and monthly income. Second section questions regarding the respondents' experience with green product purchases such as frequency and type of green products purchased, sources that have motivated them to buy green products, the amount of money spent on green product purchases for a month, and the type of green products that they purchased from the market. The last part of the questionnaire included Likert-type questions to measure the main variables of the research such as green product positioning, green brand attitude, green brand knowledge, and green purchase intention among consumers. Those four main variables are measured by 17 Likert-type questions. The questionnaire is shown in Annexure one.

## Analytical Procedure

Multiple regression was used in this study to find out the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The coefficient values of green product positioning, attitude, and knowledge have positive correlations to consumers' purchase intention means that independent variables such as green product positioning, green brand attitude, and green brand knowledge are the strongest predictors of determining the green product purchase intention among consumers.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Of the total 200 respondents of the sample group, there are 85.5% (171) of the respondents are employed. According to the education level, 156 respondents are advanced-level undergraduates. 41 respondents are graduates and postgraduates. The age group that carries the highest percentage range from (46%) 25 to 34 years old. From the gender perspective, out of 200 respondents, 42% percent were male and 58% percent were female. Most of the respondents' income level is between LKR 15000-45000, which consists of 91 respondents and 45.5%. Of the respondents, 94 respondents (47%), purchase green products once a week or more often. Among them, 62.5% of respondents are motivated by their family members to buy green products. Out of the four types of green product purchases listed in the questionnaire, more than half of the respondents (70 %) stated that organic vegetables and fruits were their preferred green product purchase, while 43 % preferred purchasing healthcare and cosmetics. Regarding money spent on green product purchases, 33.5% spent less than LKR 2501- LKR 5000 on green product purchases in the past three months.

### Reliability Test

The following table shows that all of the variables (green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brands, and green product purchase intention) are reliable with Cronbach Alpha > 0.7.

**Table 1:** Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Green Product Positioning	<b>0.706</b>
Attitude towards green brands	<b>0.723</b>
Green brand knowledge	<b>0.705</b>
Green Product Purchase Intention	<b>0.758</b>

Prior to testing our hypotheses, we tested the correlation coefficients and the results are shown the Table 2.

**Table 2:** Inter-item correlation coefficients

	Variable	Green product purchase intention
1	Green Product	.440**
2	Attitude	.572**
3	Knowledge	.626**

## Hypothesis testing

Multiple regression is a method used to predict the dependent variable from the independent variables. This analysis is used to determine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable.

**Table 3:** Summary of Multiple Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.695 <sup>a</sup>	.484	.476	1.32718

R - value is 0.695 and this value represents the simple correlation between green product positioning, green brand attitude, and green brand knowledge on consumers' green product purchase intention. 'R square' is a measure of percentage of the response variable variation in the outcome accounted for the predictors. Statistical measures, indicate how close the data are fitted in the regression line. The value for the R-square is between 0% and the 100% and higher the R-squared, the better the model fits the data (Frost, 2013). According to the Table, the value of the R Square is 0.484. This shows that about 48.4% of the dependent variable (consumers' purchase intention) can be described by the variances in all independent variables. (Green brand positioning, green brand attitude, and green brand knowledge) From the analysis, the value of the R square of these independent variables represents 48.4% of the variant from the purchase of green brands. 51.6% of the factors that affect the purchase of green brands cannot be explained by these independent variables. Therefore, there must be other variables that affect the purchase of green products.

The p- value in the ANOVA table is less than 0.05 means R square is significant in regression. Therefore, the overall regression model is significant. It is shown in the following formula.  $F(3,196)=61.186, p<0.000 R= 48.4$ ).

**Table 4:** Summary of Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Product	.149	.052	.165	2.841	.005
Attitude	.200	.049	.266	4.090	.000
Green. Knowledge	.319	.049	.413	6.538	.000

The Following shows the relationship between green brand purchase intention and three factors that affect the purchase of greenbrands. If the *B* coefficient is positive, then the relationship of these variables with the dependent variable is positive. If the *B* coefficient is negative, then the

relationship is negative. Hence, the above values in the table indicate that positive relationship between green product positioning (0.149), Green brand attitude (0.2), and green brand knowledge (0.319) on consumers' purchase intention. The p-values for the coefficients indicate whether these relationships are statistically significant. Green product positioning, attitude and knowledge have positive correlations to consumers' purchase intention because p-values are less than 0.05, which are 0.005, 0.000 and 0.000 respectively. Based on the values of the above table, there is a statistical significance of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

**Table 5:** Summary of Hypothesis and Results

Hypotheses	Results	Supported
<b>H1:</b> Green product positioning has a significant effect on green product purchase intention.	P= 0.005	<b>Yes</b>
<b>H 2:</b> Green brands attitude of consumers have a significant effect on green product purchase intention	P= 0.000	<b>Yes</b>
<b>H3:</b> Green brand knowledge of consumers has a significant effect on green product purchase intention.	P= 0.000	<b>Yes</b>

## Discussion

This study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between green brand positioning and green product purchase intention. Therefore, the first hypothesis is achieved and the H1 is supported. There is an impact of green product positioning on green product purchase intention. Green product positioning has a positive and significant impact on green product purchase intention ( $P=0.005$ ). Therefore, green product positioning is one of the strongest aspects to determine the green product purchase intention among consumers in the Colombo city limit. This has been proved by the previous research as well. For example, A study on green product purchase intention: impact of green brands, attitude, and knowledge (Suki, 2016) found that a positive and significant relationship between the green brand positioning and purchase intention ( $r = 0.423, p=0.01$ ). Moreover, he explained that previous literature of researchers such as (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002; D'Souza, 2007; Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006; Huang, 2014; Lin & Chang, 2012; Mostafa, 2009) explained the positive relationship between green product positioning and purchase intention. Therefore, the positive effect of green product positioning on green product purchase intention can be used by businesses to promote their products among consumers. Marketers can differentiate their products from available competitors, giving the impression of being distinguishable, whilst creating more demand and increasing consumers' intention to purchase greener product.

The second research objective is to examine the relationship between green brand attitude and green products purchase intention. The result shows that this objective is achieved and H2 is supported. This result is similar to the research conducted by Suki (2016) among Malaysian consumers. Based on his research findings from this quantitative research proves that consumers' attitude toward green brands have a significant positive relationship with green product purchase intention ( $\beta_2=0.103, t\text{-value}=2.177, >0.05$ ). In other words, when consumers' attitude toward green brands becomes more positive, the level of green product purchase intention amongst consumers would also increase. Furthermore, he explained that purchasing green products reflects that the consumer feels responsible for the environment. This result is in line

with the findings in Western countries by previous researchers such as Chen and Peng (2012), Felix and Braunsberger (2016), Fotopoulos and Krystallis (2002); Honkanen and Young (2015); Lee (2010). Their findings support that consumers with positive attitudes toward green brands are motivated to encourage more positive behaviour and have a higher intention to buy green products.

The result of the research indicates a strong positive significant relationship between green brand knowledge and purchase intention among consumers ( $P= 0.000$ ). This has been proved by Suki (2016) based on his findings. Suki explained green brand knowledge had a strong significant effect on green product purchase intention. Other than that, his study reported that green brand knowledge significantly affected consumers' attitudes toward green brands. These results are similar to some research literature such as (e.g., Chen & Chang, 2012; Eze & Ndubisi, 2013; Mostafa, 2009; Norazah, 2013, Pagiaslis & Krontalis, 2014; Peattie, 2010; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). However, Suki explained that the impact of green brand positioning on green product purchase intention does not vary significantly across green brand knowledge. Eco-label and eco-brand products aid as a guide to consumers' green brand knowledge during the decision-making process in buying the products (Chen & Peng, 2012; Norazah, 2013). Additionally, the descriptive findings of his study revealed that family members and friends with better knowledge of green brands are the most important motivation sources for consumers to purchase green products. They may encourage more people to use green products and it will be beneficial for marketers to increase their investment in the long term. Furthermore, the spread of positive word-of-mouth to others, increases demand for green products toward fulfilling a healthier lifestyle (Peattie, 2010).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This research aims to investigate green product positioning, green brand attitude, and green brand knowledge on consumers' purchase intention toward green products. The results and findings of this research have provided several insights and knowledge about consumers' purchase intention on green products. Business organizations and related players in the green product sector need to take these findings as guidelines in programs and operations to increase consumers' intention on green products. Increasing retail participation in the economy and increasing environmental concerns have been influenced in all economic sectors in Sri Lanka. Firms should show consumers they play an imperative role in a green business environment. A positive impression of eco-friendly brands would help improve consumers' knowledge and help them evaluate green products better. So, firms need to build an outstanding green brand identity to strengthen the brand knowledge of customers and differentiate the benefits of consuming green brands from other brands. Offering quality green products at reasonable prices is the most important factor for green businesses to compete with conventional products while increasing consumers' awareness and knowledge of green products.

Furthermore, when consumers know the advantages of green products, their awareness, interest, and demand will increase. Marketers should motivate consumers to purchase green products by posting relevant environmental awareness advertisements to stimulate human ethics. For example, posters that display positive consequences on the environment could increase consumer knowledge and motivate them to purchase green products.

Consumers could consider purchasing products when they have more information regarding green products, such as how they are produced, promoted, and packaged. Therefore, firms should directly position, promote, and advertise green products through traditional and electronic media such as newspapers, television, online advertising, or social media to enhance green brand knowledge, as well as the attitude of consumers. Creative product packaging through convincing eco-labelling and advertising on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp will boost consumer attitudes towards green products. Also, this will increase the image of companies to the public and enable them to compete with other rivals in the market. Furthermore, firms can increase their sales revenue, profit, and market share, which can be used for more research and development to develop more environmentally friendly products for their customers. These efforts would help spread green marketing message content such as superior green product quality, product ingredients, and competitive prices, which would increase consumer awareness and encourage repeated purchasing and satisfaction. Firms can encourage green purchases among young, educated consumers because the behavior of youngsters can be easily changed by using creative marketing strategies and motivating them to purchase green products as they are interested in moving from traditional products to new products. Also, the young generation is more aware of environmental issues, and it is easy to pass the message of the importance of buying green products through social media.

Furthermore, this will help to encourage their family members to buy green products. According to the survey results, most consumers in the Colombo city region are motivated by their family members to buy green products. Other than that, educational organizations such as universities and schools can provide valuable services to promote green products among consumers. The government can provide positive and practical information to the public through different projects to advance their sense of the duty of environmental protection. Once the consumers have good thoughts on the government's contribution to environmental protection, they will be motivated to buy green products. Also, the government can offer subsidies to green food producers to reduce costs and increase the production of green products.

Some limitations could be improved in future studies. First, the respondents were taken only from the city limit of Colombo in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the study result can be representative of all consumers in Sri Lanka. Also, the result can be different from rural to urban cities. So, future researchers should be focused on extending the sample size to include more cities in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, this study only focused on the three factors (green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, and green brand attitude) that influence green product purchase intention. However, other factors can influence the purchase of green products. Future researchers could investigate other contributing factors such as environmental attitude, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and product-related variables such as price, features, availability of green products, inconvenience in purchasing the product, brand image, and green advertising.

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