Impact of Green Marketing Mix on Customers' Green Purchasing Intention with Special Reference to Sri Lankan Supermarkets

A.K.P. Karunarathna
Department of Management and Finance, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

V.K. Bandara
Department of Management and Finance, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

A.S.T. Silva
Department of Management and Finance, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

W.D.H. De Mel[1]
Department of Management and Finance, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of green marketing mix on customers' green purchasing intention with special reference to supermarkets in Sri Lanka. A total of 173 responses were collected through a self-administered questionnaire based on the convenience sampling approach. The questionnaire was designed to study the impact of green product, green price, green place and green promotion on green purchase intention through customers' attitudes towards the environment. A conceptual model was derived and tested using Multiple Regression Analysis. Findings revealed that there is a significant impact on green product, green price and green promotion by green purchase intention. The study included mediation analysis to test the mediating impact of consumers' environmental attitude on the relationship between green marketing mix and green purchase intention. Green product and green price were proven to have a significant impact on green purchase intention because of customers' environmental attitudes. Based on these findings, the academic and practical implications are discussed in detail in the study.

Keywords:

Environmental Attitudes, Green Marketing Mix, Green Purchase Intention

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[1] Corresponding author: danishademel@kdu.ac.lk

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are becoming highly conscious about green concepts and thus increasingly prefer to deal with environment friendly organizations (Laroche et al., 2001). Customers are now familiar with terms such as ozone-friendly, eco-friendly, recycled materials and green products. Due to the perception of high value that consumers associate with green concepts, the trend towards green marketing has grown among companies that wish to stay competitive in their respective industries (Lu et al., 2013). Many organizations are making attempts to increase the environmental footprints of their business activities, and some organizations have achieved this by embedding environmentally friendly features into the products and services they offer. Moreover, green marketing is a philosophy that involves expanding promotional activities that draw attention to environmental-friendly products and services (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011). Hence, green marketing is a trending concept that is used to persuade consumers to buy the products by using their environmental sensibilities as key features/characteristics/incentive to purchase the product. Marketers have developed greater insights about gaining a competitive advantage by making their products more attractive to the customers. Marketers are lately focusing on the environmental protection strategy, which is a new marketing approach that offers better business opportunities by increasing sales (Pujari and Wright, 1995).

Where the supermarket industry is concerned, it has developed significantly over the past decade but is presently facing another challenge in catering to the modern need for products that are compliant with the requirements of the new green concept. In Sri Lanka, there are several large volume supermarket chains with more than 300 large supermarkets which are being operated by different companies. Some of the market leaders are Cargills (Food City), John Keells Holdings (Keells Super), and Richard Pieris (Arpico Supercenter). There are also many regional supermarket chains operating under the names of Magna, Laugfs, SunUp and Crystal (Gajanayake et al., 2011). Sri Lankan private supermarket chains are now expanding rapidly into urban and rural areas unlike earlier where they operated only within large cities.

A large number of supermarkets has been established due to the mass demand. Supermarket sales in Sri Lanka are expected to grow by 20% per year in the years ahead due to increased consumer purchasing capacity. The share of supermarket sales is 15% of the total retail market in the country and the

remaining 85% is handled by the general trade. Due to the modernized lifestyles of the urban population the supermarket concept has become firmly established and the trend is growing rapidly (Wanninayake and Randiwela, 2008). In a study carried out among the customers of some selected supermarkets in Colombo district, Fernando et al. (2017) declared that customers are unable to identify whether Sri Lankan supermarkets have implemented such green concepts.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to explore whether green marketing mix elements in a supermarket context will influence consumers' environmental attitudes and purchase intention. This study will provide an understanding about the influence of green marketing strategies on the green purchase intention of customers in the supermarket industry. This is an attempt to ascertain the gap between the empirical marketing literature on the tendency of supermarket customers to shift to green purchasing and the effective utilization of green marketing mix by the marketers. The research objectives of the study are two-fold: 1) to examine the influence of green marketing mix on customers' green purchasing intention, and 2) to investigate whether the customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green marketing mix and green purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green consumerism is on the rise and has contributed slowly to an even broader consumer theory known as ethical consumerism. Ethical consumerism refers to the existence of consumers challenging the interests of immoral and unjust global trading concerns. Green consumerism and ethical consumption are symbolic forms of consumption, as consumers follow social values, principles and philosophies (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). Moreover, Crane (2000) suggests that there is a link between ethics and green marketing because certain ethical issues can be addressed via proper communication to enhance customer awareness. Peattie and Crane (2005) described green marketing as a tactical tool for recognizing, anticipating and addressing consumers' and society's needs from a competitive and a sustainable perspective. Soonthonsmai (2007) adds to the definition by stating that sustainable products or services must be created by environmentally conscious companies to win the approval of consumers and society.

The environment has drawn so much attention in this decade that consumers have begun to look for environmental-friendly products rather than regular goods (Akehurst et al., 2012). A Green consumer is characterized as an eco-friendly person for purchasing green products in preference to other alternatives (Boztepe, 2012). Green consumer assesses the environmental cost of buying and consuming a product because of his or her concern about the preservation of the environment. Green consumers also refuse to buy products that they consider harmful to the health, destroy the environment during storage, use or disposal, consume a lot of energy, use excessive packaging or contain ingredients that are harmful to the environment and living beings. The ultimate goal is likely to be able to deliver a plus-minus numerical rating whenever a buying decision is made (Hailes, 2007). Consumers are becoming increasingly more environment conscious as well as socially responsible (Sawant, 2015). Each purchasing act has an implication in respect of ethics, community, waste and conservation of resources (Akehurst et al., 2012). Furthermore, Dagher and Itani (2014) strongly support this, by stating that most customers are conscious of their actual consumer actions that are likely to have adverse effects on the environment. Customers continuously engage in eco-friendly conduct and support the adoption of green strategies by corporations. However, Ansar (2013) found that even in their purchasing patterns, such as their interest in CFC-free products and reuse of goods, buyers' positive attitude towards the environment is clear.

Green Marketing Mix

Green purchasing behaviour is described as consumer connected actions and decisions made in order to preserve or promote the natural surroundings through energy conservation, resource management, and avoidance of waste and pollution (Danjelico and Pujari, 2010). Green products are biologically derived products that can support, in general, the long-term objective of securing and preserving our environment. Typically, neighborly products or natural concern products are identified as products designed to minimize the use of raw materials needed and to reduce adverse ecological impacts throughout the total life cycle of those goods. The product is the focal point of the marketing mix and the most important part of the entire strategy of green marketing. Anyway, what should be understood is that the greenness of the product is not restricted to the main object alone, but includes all things associated with the product, such as the raw materials utilized, the method of manufacturing, the product packaging, and etc. (Ansar, 2013).

Consumers identify green products as those that reduce environmental impacts by being energy-efficient, recyclable, and of organic and natural origin (Tseng and Hung, 2013). According to Kumar and Ghodeswar (2015), a green product is developed using healthy ingredients and environmentally friendly steps. Ecological development goals call for reduced energy usage, lower heat and pollutant emissions to maximize the sustainability of finite resources. Green products help to maintain and preserve the natural environment, conserve energy and resources, minimize or avoid the use of toxic materials in production, and cut down on emissions and waste (Ottman et al., 2006). Applying 5 principles to product development may be beneficial in this sense to improve the product's environmental impact after use. These 5 principles (5Rs) are: Reuse, Reconditioning, Repair, Remanufacture and Recycling (Peattie and Crane, 2005). When the toxic content of a product became one of the factors that could influence customer purchasing decisions, businesses started to produce green products and implement green product policies. Accordingly, the first hypothesis in its alternative form is developed as follows.

H1: Green product has an impact on green purchase intention.

Green price is the price associated with environmentally focused products. Due to their environmental-friendly qualities, such products may command a higher price compared to normal products. Some customers are willing to pay extra only if they think that the product is adding value (Hossain and Khan, 2018). Eco-products are generally more expensive when taking into consideration the product life cycle. Larashati et al. (2012) stated that the pricing of green products will be higher due to the cost of incorporating the environmental policy measures prescribed by the company's rules and guidelines or other programs in this regard. Green price is a major component of the green marketing mix. Many consumers might be willing to pay a premium if additional product trust is recognized. According to Hashem and Al-Rifai (2011), green pricing would also reflect the costs that the organization will have to incur in respect of environmental policies by being compelled and guided by rules or company instructions to remain environmentally friendly.

Lower prices will motivate customers to buy more green products. Price is an essential factor in maximizing revenue (Awan, 2011). Perception of a good price would help to retain customers who would remain loyal to the supermarket since they would pay less than at other rival stores to buy the products and services (Pappu and Quester, 2006). Behaviours such as recycling

and purchasing organic products does not mean that the customer is willing to pay more. A user may be in favour of repairing or recycling a durable product, but he may not be ready to pay more (Hansla et al., 2008). If the customer's social and environmental costs are reviewed when determining the price and consider whether the consumer is prepared to pay that price, producers will be motivated to design the product to be more environmental friendly. Businesses incurring these costs and passing them on to the consumer are always faced with two risks: misreading the customer preferences and charging higher price than the competitors. Green price should be reasonable to stay competitive (Soonthonsmai, 2007). Moreover, Boztepe (2012) pointed out that for some consumers, a higher price than that of the competitors might be seen as a sign of higher quality and greenness of the goods. That is because many consumers see the price as an index of quality (Bloom and Novelli, 1981). Hence, the following hypothesis can be advanced.

H2: Green price impacts on green purchase intention.

Green places can be popularized by adopting certain in-store practices like separating green products from regular products, by using eco-friendly materials and offering facilities for recycling materials at the organization's place (Achola and Were, 2018). The location where the goods or services are available will influence customers because most people do not want to go too far just to buy a green product, but would choose locally available alternatives. Marketers wanting to aggressively move their products therefore need to position themselves broadly in the marketplace. If green goods are easily accessible, customers will prefer them. The green place should ensure the ready availability of the product by having ample stocks distributed to the wholesalers and retailers. Prior studies focused mainly on eco-friendly areas so that most consumers tended to make their purchases in locations that had low pollution. In order to establish sustainability of businesses and become cost competitive, corporations must ensure that their distributors are mindful about the environment and establish a green distribution strategy (Boztepe, 2012).

There are both internal and external approaches to green distribution. In the internal approach, researchers consider the corporation's internal environment, which has to be a place where employees and managers are able to identify environmental issues in the corporation's internal procedures and the effectiveness of the internal space in handling the product. It attracts customers due to good employee conduct and friendly atmosphere. From an external point

of view, authors prefer the green places that can supply products and services that cause the minimal ecological damage (Vlosky et al., 1999). Product distribution should be based on appropriate marketing networks and located in an environmentally safe location where pollution is not present. Green distribution is a process that is highly sensitive to many factors. Moreover, a well-designed place could induce in customers a positive buying behaviour even when there is no particular intention to buy (Solomon et al., 2010). Therefore, the third hypothesis of the study is developed as follows.

H3: Green place impacts on green purchase intention.

Advanced green marketers should use sustainable methods and strategies for advertising and communication (Larashati et al., 2012). Green promotion involves setting up promotional strategies such as advertisements, marketing facilities, posters, white papers, forums, sales promotions, public relations, social media marketing and onsite promotions, as well as videos and presentations (Shil, 2012). Green promotion involves transmitting direct environmental information to interested customers on company's products. Therefore, the corporations' pledge to conserve natural resources will reach the target market (Shirsavar and Fashkhamy, 2013). According to Hashem and Al-Rifai (2011), green promotion offers factual data on the products in a manner that avoids shattering the sensibilities of the ethical consumer. The aim of green promotion is to influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers by persuading them to buy goods that do not pollute the environment (Shil, 2012). Green promotion makes use of environmentally friendly advertising methods to reduce the harmful consequences to the environment (Achola and Were, 2018). Critical promotional tools for green advertisements are required to convey messages that could prove useful to fulfil consumers' needs and desires.

Sustainable relationships call for great emphasis on establishing good communication with consumers and their aim is to instil awareness of the corporation's and its products' environmental and social relevance. This is usually done by disseminating company's marketing messages and by collaborating or working with social or environmental organizations. Advertisements cannot influence the behaviour of the green consumer without promoting the features of the green product. There are three kinds of green advertisements: advertising explaining the relationship between the product/ service and the environment; advertisements promoting a sustainable lifestyle by emphasizing the environmental aspects of a product or service, and

advertisements drawing attention to the company's environmental responsibility (Wong et al., 1996). Green advertising aims to influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers by convincing them to buy products that do not pollute the environment by informing them of the positive effects of their buying decisions for themselves and the world (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is developed.

H4: Green promotion impacts on green purchase intention.

Green purchase intention

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991), has dominated the research agenda on sustainable consumption practices by facilitating the examination of the antecedents to such sustainable consumption practices. TPB model states that purchase intention is affected by attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Intention to purchase can be defined as the likelihood that a customer will buy a product or service in the future (Arslan and Zaman, 2014). Intention represents the cognitive factors affecting consumers' green purchasing behaviour (Ramayah et al., 2010). Green purchasing behaviour reflects a mix of moral decision-making actions and is perceived to be a form of output that is socially responsible (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). The four Green purchasing intention variables for consumers are, perceived behavioural concerns, environmental knowledge, environmental concerns and green trust (Maichum et al., 2016). In consequence, the intention to buy has a favourable impact on the likelihood that a customer may decide to purchase eco-friendly goods. Whenever a purchasing decision is made, there is the possibility that a more or less sustainable consumption model may be provided by the end resolution. Stronger intention to buy denoted increasing the probability of buying. Researchers can use, 'the intention to buy' as a main indicator for predicting consumer behaviour. When customers have a positive purchase intention, there is a strong product engagement that induces consumers to embark on a real purchasing action (Wu et al., 2011).

Consumers' Environmental Attitudes and Purchase Intention

Attitude is defined as a person's positive or negative perception of a task that he is engaged in (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). According to Schultz and Zeleny (2000), environmental attitudes of a person are rooted within the self and the extent to which the individual wishes to be an integral part of the

environment. Consumer attitudes that affect the purchase intention have also been supported by TPB (Ajzen, 1991). This relationship has been further confirmed by later studies in multiple contexts (Shaw et al., 2000; Choo et al., 2004; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005). Michaelidou and Hassen (2008) stated that attitudes towards organic products will positively affect purchase intention. In line with these findings, researchers hypothesize that:

H5: Consumers' environmental attitudes impact on green purchase intention.

Mediating Role of Consumers' Environmental Attitudes

Prior studies confirm that the marketing mix has an impact on the attitudes of consumers (Bhal and Chandra, 2018; Jain and Kaur, 2006). Environmental concern reflects a positive attitude about environmental preservation. Environmental awareness has promoted green products that are environmentally friendly, unharmful to nature, avoid emission of harmful gases and designed to be recyclable (Ramayah et al., 2010). People with real concern for the environment are more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products than those with less concern for the environment (Maichum et al., 2016). Tanner and Kast (2003) found that green food products are strongly and positively affected by consumers' attitudes towards environmental protection. The increased desire to buy environmentally friendly products has indicated that there is an increasing sense of environmental responsibility in the world. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formed.

H6: Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the impact of green products on green purchase intention.

H7: Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the impact of green price on green purchase intention.

H8: Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the impact of green place on green purchase intention.

H9: Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the impact of green promotion on green purchase intention.

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework model was developed as depicted in Figure 1. Independent variables employed in the study were green product, green price, green place and green promotion. The study

included the consumer intention as the dependent variable and consumers' environmental attitudes as the mediating variable.
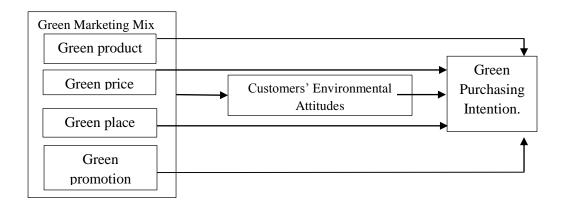

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors' own

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on the deductive approach as it acknowledges the need to investigate the relationship between variables. The current study selected the sample population from the customers of supermarkets in Sri Lanka. The scope of the study was narrowed down to the Western Province owing to it having a larger number of supermarket customers. The unit of analysis was the individual customer of the supermarket. This study employed the convenience sampling technique to select the sample. The difficulty in obtaining the demographic details of consumers who patronize the supermarkets has led to convenience sampling under the non-probability sampling technique for collecting data for the study. Etikan et al. (2016) described convenience sampling as a sampling technique in which samples are taken for the purposes of a research. This method is popular since it allows a large number of survey participants to be tested in a relatively short time period. Many similar studies have employed convenience sampling as the sampling technique (Michaelidou and Hassan, 2008; Wanninayake and Randiwela, 2008; Fernando et al., 2017). 240 questionnaires were distributed to customers and researchers received 195 completed questionnaires yielding a response rate of 81.25%. The questionnaires were then tested for outliers, as a result of which

22 questionnaires were removed. The final sample size was 173 and that was used for the data analysis.

Table 1: Operationalization of the concepts

Variables	Indicator	Reference
Product	Ingredients Green packaging Recyclable	Kumar and Ghodeswar (2015), Tseng and Hung (2013), Ottman et al. (2006)
Price	Quality Cost saving Benefits	Hossain and Khan (2018), Hashem and Alrifai (2011)
Place	Channel distribution Re-usable containers Widely available Energy saving Special supermarket	Achola and Were (2018), Onditi (2016), Vlosky et al. (1999)
Promotion	Communication of green products. Campaigns Incentives	Hashem and Alrifai (2011), Awan (2011)
Customer Attitude	Perceived behavioural control Environmental knowledge Environmental concern Green trust	Chen (2013), Fisher et al. (2012)
Purchase intention	Eco friendly Green benefits	Arslan and Zaman (2014)

Source: Authors' own

Measures

The conceptual framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 1. All the variables employed in the study were operationalized based on the indicators adapted from previous researches (Table 1). A five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was used to obtain consumer responses through the self-administered, structured questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis was carried out to examine the research objectives of the study. SPSS version 22.0 was used by the researchers for statistical analysis. Gathered data were initially scanned to test the accuracy. The box plot diagrams were used to detect the outliers and missing data. Accordingly, 22 questionnaires had to be eliminated and so the final sample consisted of 173 questionnaires. Pilot study consisting of 35 respondents was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the scientific validity of a research depends on the capacity of the dataset to address the scientific research questions that are raised. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test can be used to determine the validity and KMO value should generally be between 0 and 1. If the value of KMO is closer to 1, that indicates the data collected is appropriate. A KMO test value of 0.90 is outstanding, while 0.8 is described as excellent. Table 2 shows the values produced by using the sphericity test of KMO and Bartlett. The KMO test of both factors' dimensions gave a value above 0.8 ensuring the validity of the constructs.

Table 2: Validity Test

Dimension	KMO	Barlett's test of sphericity	Significance	DF*
Consumer Attitudes	0.848	306.714	0.000	10
Purchase Intention	0.839	294.869	0.000	1

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out to identify the unidimensionality of the measures. EFA was conducted using Principal Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation methods (Kinnear and Gray, 1997). The results of all items indicated factor loadings above 0.5, confirming satisfactorily the unidimensionality of the variables. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability. According to Hair et al. (2010), the lower Cronbach alpha limit is 0.70, although in exploratory work it may drop to 0.60. Nunnally (1994) stated that alpha values of Cronbach greater than 0.60 should be regarded as accurate. The Cronbach's alpha values of the independent variables were as follows: green product was 0.670, green price was 0.654, green place was 0.759, and green promotion was 0.757. The Cronbach's alpha values of the

dependent variable and the mediating variable were 0.793 and 0.770, respectively. Therefore, the reliability of the measures is acceptable. Further, as a prerequisite for regression analysis, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of the gathered data were tested.

Characteristics of the Sample

As summarized in Table 3, 65.89% of the sample represented females and the remaining 34.1% were male respondents. Further, 38.15% of the respondents belonged to the age category of 26–35 years while 12% of the respondents were in the 56–65 age category, which was the smallest group. 55 respondents belonged to the age category of 36–45 years while 32 respondents were in 46–55 age category.

Table 3: Characteristics of the Sample

		Frequency	**Percent**
Gender	Male	114	65.89%
	Female	59	34.1%
Age (years)	26-35	66	38.15%
	36-45	55	31.79%
	46-55	32	18.49%
	56-65	20	11.56%
Monthly Income	Less than 50,000	4	2.31%
Level (Rs.)	50,001 – 100,000	38	21.96%
	100,001 – 150,000	54	32.21%
	More than 150,001	77	44.5%
Highest Level of	Advanced Level	5	2.8%
Education	Diploma	14	8.09%
	Degree	113	65.23%
	Masters	38	21.97%
	PhD	3	2.8%

Source: Authors - based on survey results

When analyzing the monthly income of the respondents, 2.31% belonged to the lowest category of less than Rs.50,000. 44.5% of the respondents belonged to the income category of more than Rs.150,001. The second prominent category in terms of monthly income was of Rs.100,000 – Rs.150,000 that accounted for 31.21%. As for the educational level of the respondents, 65.32% possess degrees as the highest educational qualification. 21.97% have obtained their Masters qualification. 2.8% of the respondents have completed Advanced Levels as the highest level of education.

Descriptive Statistics

Based on the descriptive statistics (Table 4), the independent variable green product shows the highest mean of 3.97 with a standard deviation of 0.426. This implies that most of the responses are within 3.97 ± 0.426. Among the independent variables, green place has the lowest mean of 0.7 with the standard deviation of 0.596.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Green Product	3	5	3.97	0.426
Green Price	2	5	3.75	0.489
Green Place	2	5	3.70	0.596
Green Promotion	2	5	3.79	0.564
Customers' Environmental Attitudes	1	5	4.01	0.602
Purchase Intention	1	5	4.07	0.519

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables. Table 5 presents the correlation results. There is a moderately strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable as well as the mediating variable and the dependent variable. The results reveal a positive significant relationship at 5% significance level.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson's correlation	Significance
Green Product and Purchase Intention	0.490	0.000
Green Price and Purchase Intention	0.537	0.000
Green Place and Purchase Intention	0.418	0.000
Green Promotion and Purchase Intention	0.456	0.000
Customer Attitudes and Purchase Intention	0.654	0.000

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Table 6 illustrates the model summary, where the Adjusted R^2 value is 35.6. Therefore, 35.6% of the variation in consumers' green purchase intention is explained by the green marketing mix.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.609	0.361	0.356	0.416

Source: Authors - based on survey results

It is identified that the regression model of the study is valid, as the results of the ANOVA test are significant at 95% confidence level. Table 7 shows the results of the ANOVA test.

Table 7: ANOVA test

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	17.210	4	4.303	24.815	0.000[b]
Residual	29.129	168	0.173		
Total	46.339	172			

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Hypothesis Testing

The conceptual model was analyzed to determine whether customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green marketing mix and customers' green purchase intention. In analyzing the mediation effect, the steps suggested by Barron and Kenny (1986) were followed: (1) The total effect of the predictor variables (green product, green price, green promotion and green place) on the dependent variable (green purchase intention); (2) predictor variables significantly impact the mediator (customers' environmental attitudes); (3) the mediator significantly impacts the dependent variable; (4) the direct effect of predictor variables on the dependent variable. If the direct effect is non-significant there will be full mediation and if the direct effect is smaller than the total effect, it will result in partial mediation. Moreover, multiple linear regression was carried out in testing the paths.

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the total effect. Based on the regression results summarized in Table 8, following regression model can be presented by taking into consideration the beta coefficients of the

independent variables, which are green product (GPD), green price (GPR), green place (GPL), and green promotion (GPM).

Customers' green purchase intention = a + 0.217 (GPD) + 0.301 (GPR) + 0.039 (GPL) + 0.191 (GPM) + ε

Table 8: Regression results for the direct effect

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.029	0.319		3.2030	0.001
GPD	0.265	0.094	0.217	2.807	0.006
GPR	0.320	0.086	0.301	3.704	0.000
GPL	0.034	0.071	0.039	0.476	0.634
GPM	0.176	0.071	0.191	2.475	0.014

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Green product, green price and green promotion have significant positive impacts on green purchase intention. The relationships are significant at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). However, results reveal insignificant impact of green place on customer's green purchase intention, thereby causing the rejection of hypothesis H3.

Regression results of the second and third steps as per Baron and Kenny (1986) are summarized in Table 8. The second step of Baron and Kenny (1986) in mediation analysis is to test the impact of predictor variables on the mediator. Accordingly, green product and green price have significant positive impact on customers' environmental attitudes. The relationships are significant at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). Green promotion too has a significant positive impact on customers' environmental attitudes at a 10% significance level ($p < 0.10$). In the third step, results revealed a significant positive impact of the mediator (customers' environmental attitudes) on the dependent variable (green purchase intention). The relationship is significant at a 5% significance level.

As for the impact of green product on green purchase intention, it was reported to be insignificant. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), this will result in full mediation. This means customers' environmental attitudes fully mediate the relationship between green products and green purchase intention. Green price revealed a significant positive impact on green purchase intention as a direct effect. However, the coefficient of the direct effect is significantly

smaller than the total effect. Thus, customers' environmental attitudes partially mediate the relationship between green price and green purchase intention. Results revealed that customers' environmental attitudes do not mediate the relationship between green promotion and green purchase intention as their direct effect is not significantly smaller than their total effect. Table 9 provides a summary of the results.

Table 9: Results of the mediation analysis

Regression Path	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	0.366	0.362		1.011	0.313
GPD ➝ Attitudes	0.375	0.105	0.265	3.557	0.000
GPR ➝ Attitudes	0.444	0.094	0.361	4.737	0.000
GPM ➝ Attitudes	0.129	0.075	0.121	1.712	0.089
Direct Effect					
Attitude ➝ Intention	0.391	0.061	0.454	6.459	0.000
GPD ➝ Intention	0.126	0.086	0.103	1.462	0.146
GPR ➝ Intention	0.158	0.079	0.149	2.011	0.046
GPM ➝ Intention	0.137	0.060	0.149	2.293	0.023

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Sobel Test

The Sobel test was carried out in order to investigate the significance of the mediating impact of customers' environmental attitudes on the relationship between green marketing mix and customers' green purchase intention. Table 10 shows the Sobel test results. The predictor variables of green product and green price were analyzed for the mediating impact of green purchase intention. If the estimated value is lower than the critical value, the null hypothesis must be dismissed (Sobel, 1982). Accordingly, results revealed that customer attitudes play a significant role in mediating the relationship between green product and green purchase intention and also that customer attitudes significantly mediate the relationship between green price and customers' green purchase intention.

Table 10: Sobel Test Results

Variables	Sobel test	Sig. (Two tailed)
Green products, attitude, intention	3.4048433	0.00066202
Green price, attitude, intention	0.38534196	0.00001319

Source: Authors - based on survey results

Table 11 represents the summary of the tested hypotheses. Accordingly, it is revealed that H_1, H_2, H_4, H_5, H_6, and H_7 could not be rejected.

Table 11: Summary of the results

H	Predicted Effect	Decision
H_1	Green product impacts on green purchase intention	Accepted
H_2	Green price impacts on green purchase intention	Accepted
H_3	Green place impacts on green purchase intention	Rejected
H_4	Green promotion impacts on green purchase intention	Accepted
H_5	Customers' environmental attitudes impact on green purchase intention	Accepted
H_6	Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green product and green purchase intention	Accepted
H_7	Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green price and green purchase intention	Accepted
H_8	Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between place and green purchase intention	Rejected
H_9	Customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green promotion and green purchase intention	Rejected

Source: Authors - based on survey results

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The key objective of conducting this research was to identify the impact of the green marketing mix on customers' purchasing intention in the context of Sri Lankan supermarkets. In Sri Lanka, the major supermarket chains from time to time initiate various strategies towards being environmentally friendly. How the supermarkets' green marketing strategies affect the

customer's green purchase intention was studied. Extant researches claim that green products have a significant impact on the purchase intention of customers (Chen and Chai, 2010; Fernando et al., 2017). The findings of this study too are in line with the findings of previous studies. Making green products available to customers will positively impact on customers' green purchase intention. The study also revealed that customers' environmental attitudes mediate the relationship between green products and green purchase intention. Tanner and Kast (2003) stated that the purchase of green food by customers was strongly influenced by the positive attitudes of customers towards protecting the environment.

Price has been identified as one of the main obstacles in the path of green consumption (Gleim et al., 2013; Nasir and Karakaya, 2014). In contrast to this school of research, findings of the study indicate there is a significant impact of green price on green purchase intention. Current study further revealed that attitudes partially mediate the relationship between green price and green purchase intention. This is in line with the previous research findings of Weisstein et al. (2014). If consumers believe that the prices are reasonable, they will purchase green products. Moreover, prior studies have revealed that consumers are willing to pay more for green products. People with high environmental awareness are less sensitive to price and are willing to pay a premium (Laroche et al., 2001; Tanner and Kast, 2003; Cronin et al., 2011).

Wanninayake and Randiwela (2008) found that there is a significant relationship between consumer purchasing decisions and green place. The findings of this study appear to be inconsistent with the prior findings by failing to establish a significant relationship between green place and consumers' green purchase intention. Therefore, when designing any places to denote sustainability, it should be done in such a manner as to have an impact on the customer attitudes. Green place should have the capability to convince the customers of its greenness (Jeevandas et al., 2019).

Prior studies have suggested that the use of sharp/strategic advertising and promotional campaigns will convey an effective message on green attributes and will enhance the purchase intention of customers (Ansar, 2013; Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2009). Current study supports this with results showing that green promotion will have a significant positive impact on customers' green purchase intention. However, findings further revealed that customer attitudes do not mediate this relationship. Vigorous advertising and

promotional campaigns can be used in this regard to communicate to customers the responsibility of society to shift to green products. The 'Body Shop' largely uses environmental concerns to promote its brand by displaying items in its stores to inform the public regarding the environmental and social implications of their purchasing decisions (Menon et al., 1999). Accordingly, promotional activities themselves should be strong enough to change customer attitudes.

Implications to the Practice

The research findings presented in this paper contribute to knowledge on the impact of green marketing mix on green purchase intention through customers' environmental attitudes. The study employed the mediating variable of customers' environmental attitudes' and attempted to examine how effectively green marketing mix that included green product, green price, green place and green promotion, can impact on the green purchase intention.

This research presents some new suggestions for the professionals and practitioners. Therefore, the extent to which elements of green marketing have an impact on consumers' green purchase intention through customer attitudes were highlighted. Furthermore, if the green price can be set at a standard level most consumers will be able to afford the products. Also, if the availability of green places is increased to provide wider coverage, it will lead to much better distribution of products according to the consumers' requirements making it easier to attract the target customers. Mere use of green promotion will not be effective unless it is designed in such a way as to convey the message to customers so as to impact their attitudes and thereby influence their green purchase decisions.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of the study have to be considered in the light of several limitations as this would guide the researchers to make more helpful suggestions for future research. The fact that this study was limited to the Western Province of Sri Lanka may be considered as a limitation of the study. Future studies may best be carried out with a wider sample covering a larger geographical area. It is recommended that the findings of this study be cross validated by conducting surveys in other provinces or even other countries and carry out comparisons between different cultures to examine how consumer behaviour changes according to the setting/context. The study was based entirely on primary data gathered through questionnaires.

Further studies could incorporate qualitative techniques such as interviews and focus group discussions as well, for more precise analysis of consumers' green purchase intention. This study examined the impact of green marketing mix on consumers' green purchase intention. However, only 35.6% of the variance in green purchase intention is explained by the green marketing mix. Therefore, future researchers can incorporate other predictors of green purchase intention such as ethical self-identity (Michaelidou and Hassan, 2008) and environmental awareness (Fernando et al., 2017) in their studies.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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