

GREEN MARKETING - WHAT MAKES SOME CONSUMERS BUY GREEN PRODUCTS WHILE OTHERS DO NOT?



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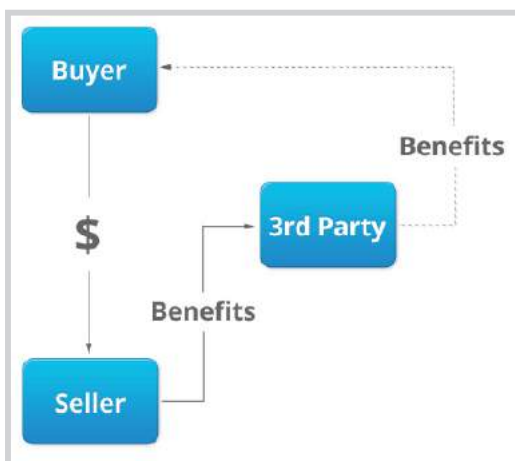


WHAT DETERMINES ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY BEHAVIORS?

Numerous studies have looked at the distinguishing features of people who perform environmentally-friendly behaviors, including buying green products. Early results showed that they tended to be female, older, more educated, and of higher income. However, these demographic variables accounted for only a small part of the variability in green behaviors and were not useful to practitioners. Later researchers studied attitude, perceived effectiveness, knowledge, affect, and other psychosocial variables with more success at explaining the variation of green behaviors. Attitudes and perceived effectiveness were shown repeatedly to be highly correlated with green behaviors.

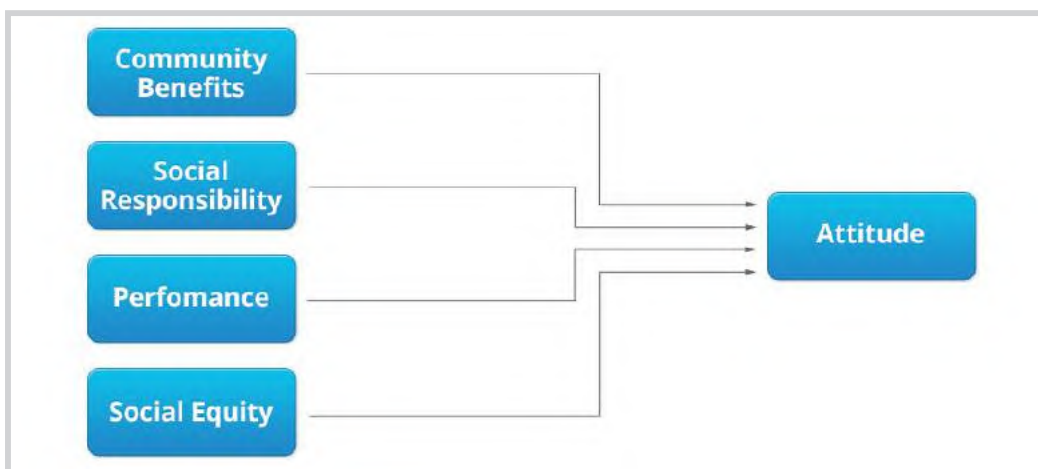
A flaw of most of these studies was not to use a strong theoretical basis for their variables. All were based on the typical exchange of a product with its benefits to the buyer for money. However, environmentally-friendly behaviors do not provide a direct benefit back to the person who performs those behaviors. Rather, they provide a benefit to a third party--the community, society, or the earth. Any benefit to the buyer or performer of the green behavior has to come indirectly, such as social rewards for the behavior provided by friends and family or feeling good about oneself. The Generalized Exchange Model better fits this type of behavior.

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The diagram at left shows how the benefits from the environmentally-friendly behavior, specifically buying a green product, go to a third party. The benefits that go back to the buyer are thought to be feelings of self-worth, social rewards, etc.

The Generalized Exchange Model hypothesizes that four variables play a role in determining attitudes or propensity to perform behaviors. Those variables are (1) feelings of social responsibility, (2) feelings of social equity, (3) perceived effectiveness of the behavior (performance), and (4) benefits to the community. The diagram below shows the model.

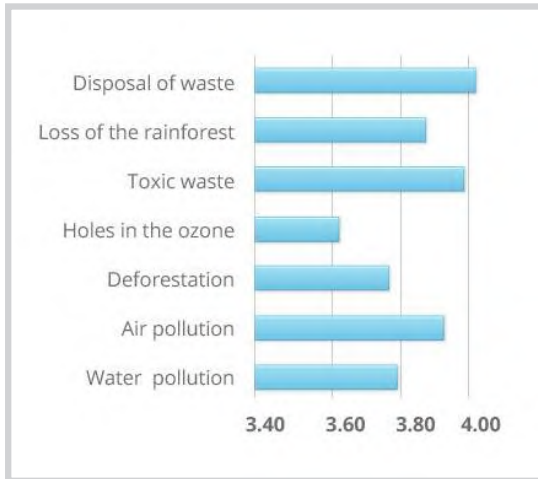


The Generalized Exchange Model has been used to explain and predict a number of behaviors or propensities, including volunteering for the military and voting for a millage increase. The current study tested whether the model could explain the performance of environmentally-friendly

behaviors. Scales were developed for each of the variables in the model shown at right plus social rewards and the behaviors themselves.

The scales tested as being very reliable and a factor analysis of all the items for all scales provided six factors. All the scales corresponded to separate factors except for social responsibility and community benefits. These two scales had a correlation of 0.796 and loaded on the same scale.

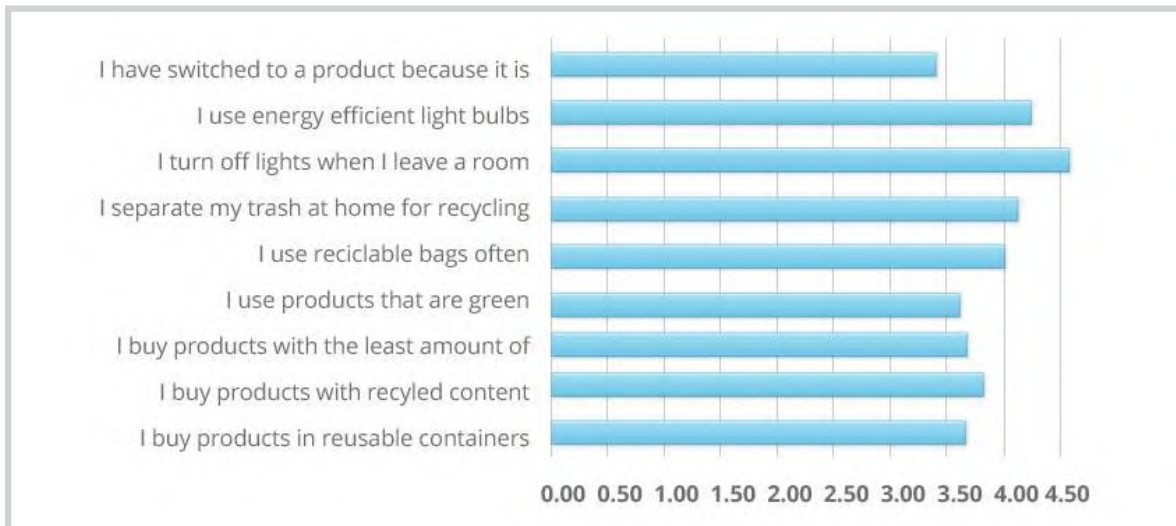
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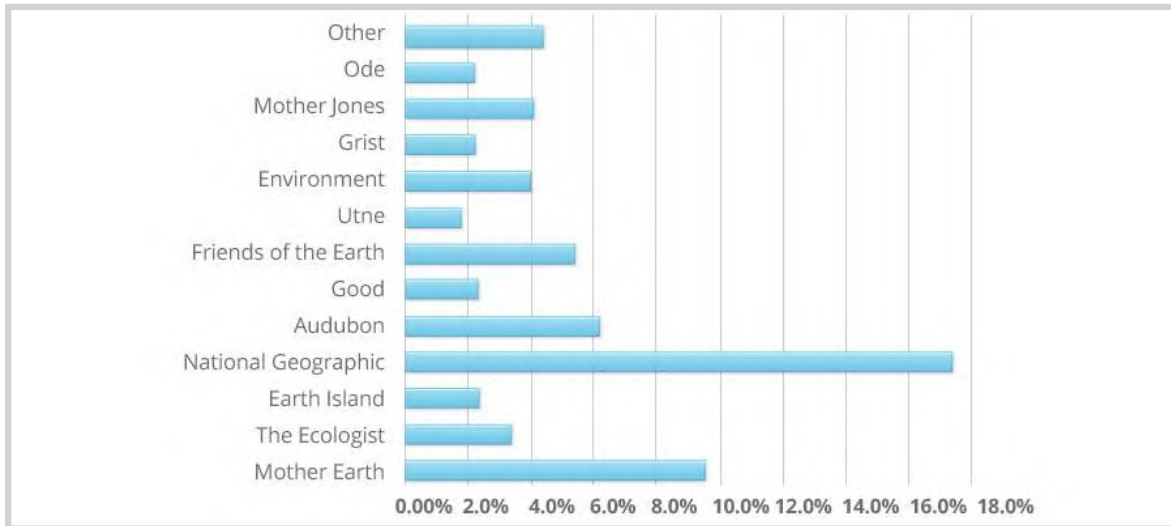
Of high interest are consumer attitudes towards different green behaviors and tendency to perform different green behaviors. The graph at left illustrates that, overall, consumers were most concerned about disposal of waste, toxic waste, air pollution and loss of the rainforest, in that order.

Green behaviors split into two categories of participation. Turning off lights when leaving a room, using energy-efficient light bulbs, separating trash for recycling, and using recyclable bags were the most practiced by consumers overall. The other behaviors were

less likely to be practiced. The responses to performance of these green behaviors are shown in the graph below.

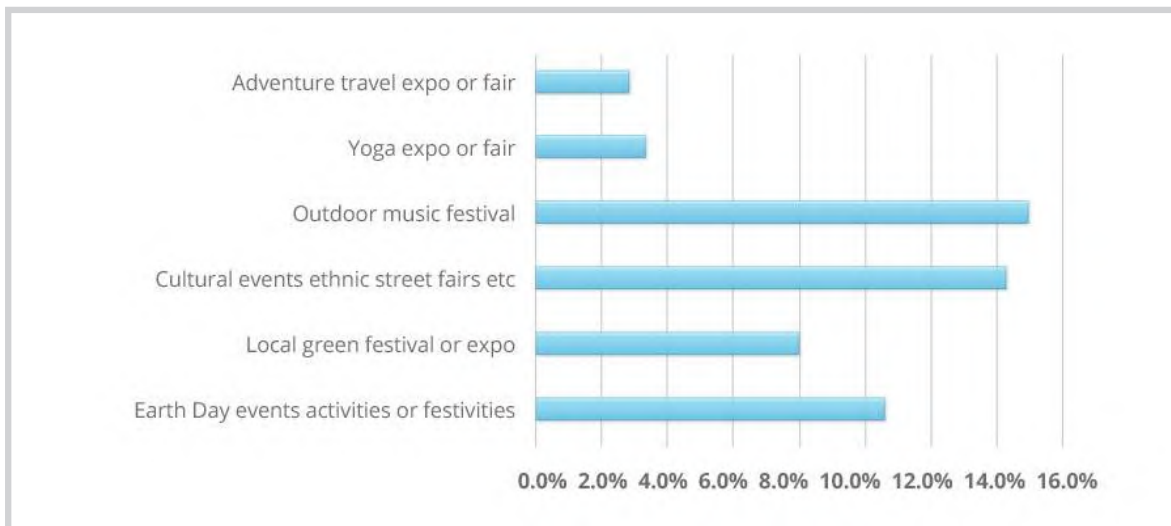


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The respondents participated in a variety of community activities, including green or Earth Day events.



Awareness of E Logos

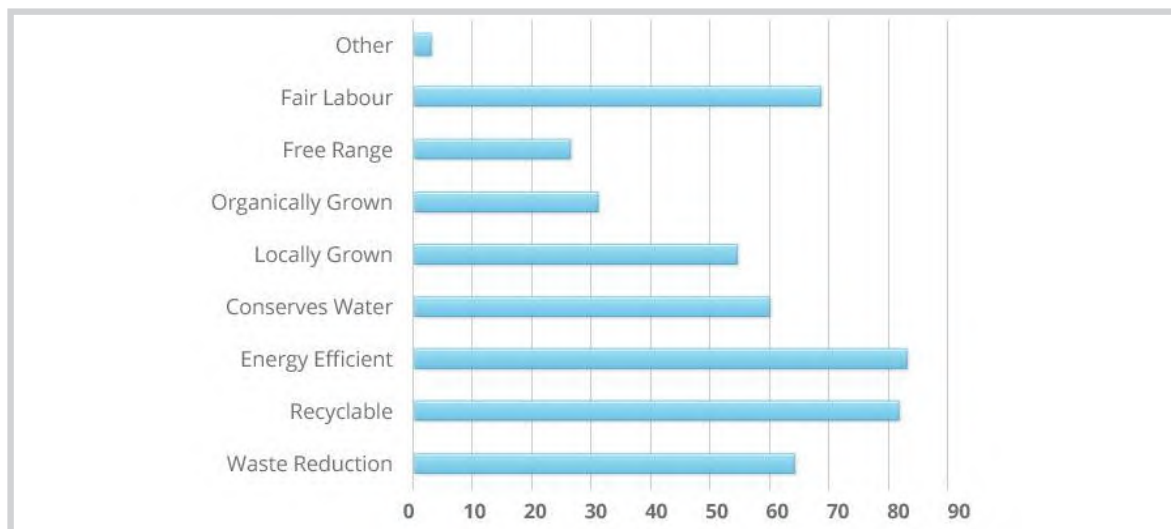
Logo	Percent aware
	84.3
	84.5
	5.4
	14.3
	8.3
	10.3
	3.8

Most of the respondents recognized the basic recycling logo used in the U.S. and the Energy Star logo found frequently on appliances. The other environmental logos were recognized by small percentages of the respondents.

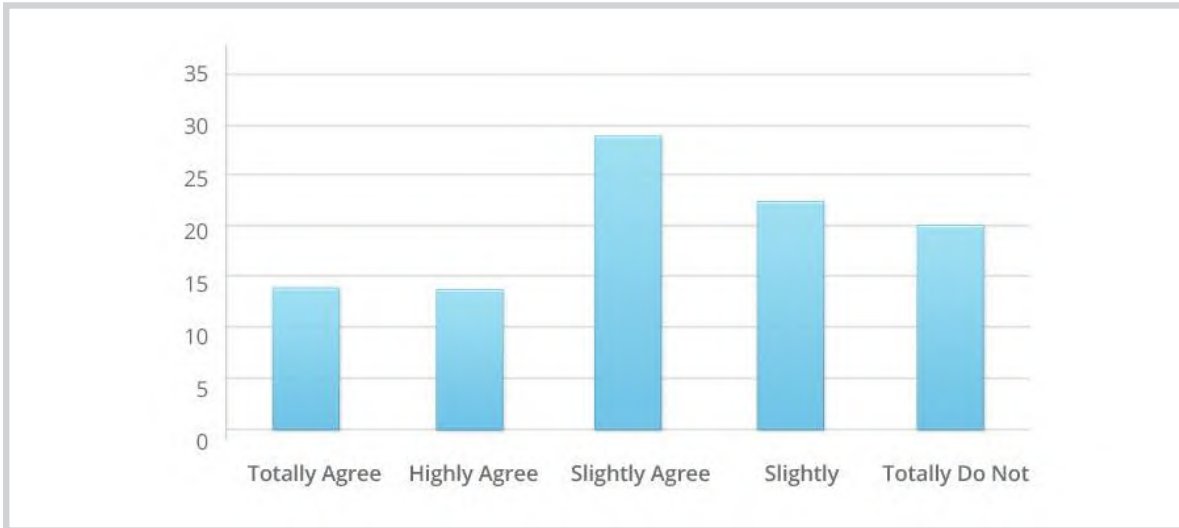
When asked how they identify environmentally-friendly products, the respondents mentioned green logos and package information most frequently.



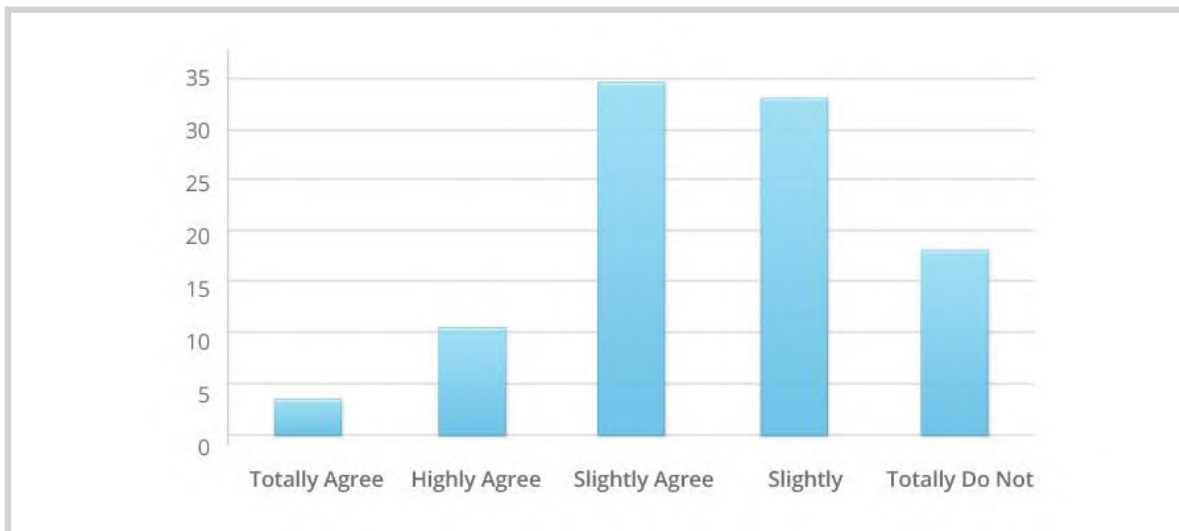
When asked what product features would encourage them to pay a premium price for products or services, energy efficiency, recyclability, fair labor practices, waste reduction, conserves water, and locally grown were selected by over half the respondents. Organically grown and free range did not appeal as much to these respondents.



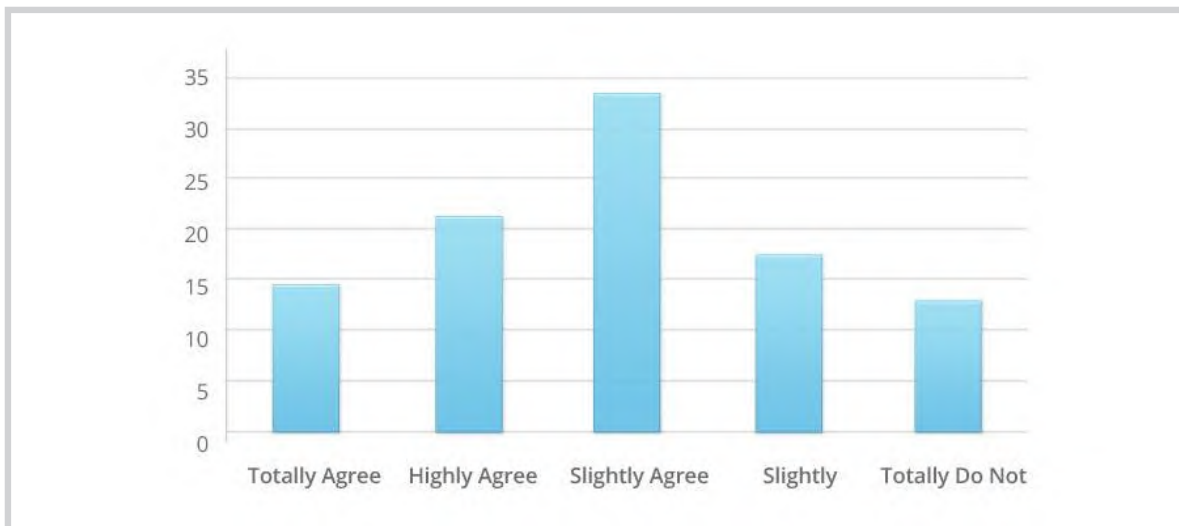
Overall, the majority of respondents had switched to a product because it is green. Less than 30 percent totally or highly agreed but almost another 30 percent slightly agreed. Slightly over 40 percent slightly disagreed or totally did not agree.



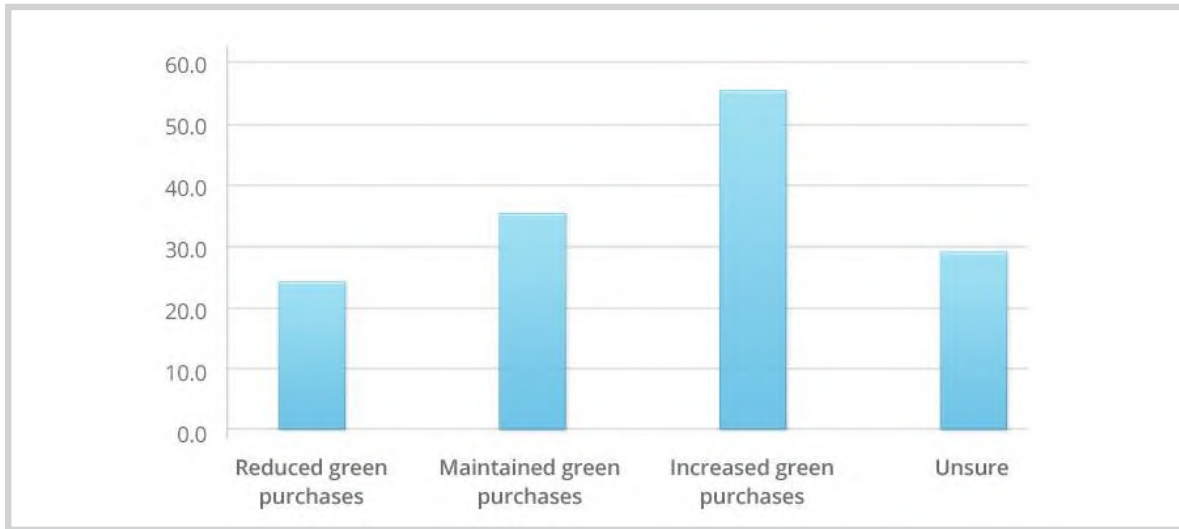
When asked if they considered themselves to be eco-conscious, the answers were mostly in the neutral area of slightly agree or slightly disagree. Less than 15 percent stated that they totally or highly agreed.



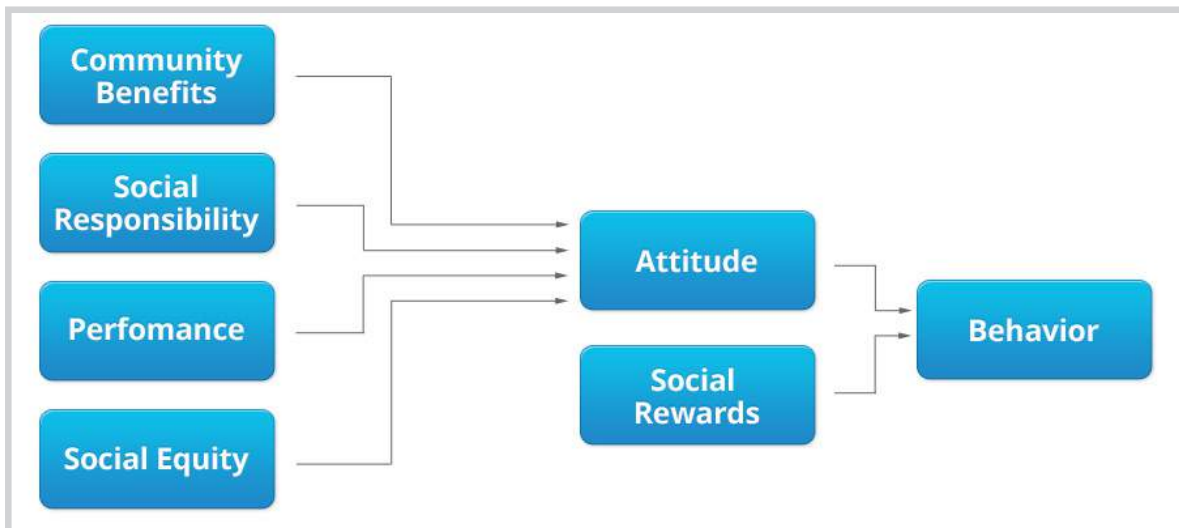
The majority of respondents had increased green purchasing over the past month even if greener products or services cost them more than conventional products or services. About 30 percent stated that they slightly disagreed or totally did not agree with the statement that they had increased green purchases.



Respondents were asked if they had reduced, maintained, or increased green purchasing given today's simultaneous economic and environmental challenges. Over 50 percent stated that they had maintained their level of green purchasing.



Three of the four scales from the Generalized Exchange Model were significantly correlated with attitudes towards green behaviors and loaded as factors in a stepwise regression model. The lone exception was social equity. Using structural equation modeling, the causal structure was supported. A full model that connects these four variables through attitudes to behavior, with the addition of social rewards, was also tested. It too stood up to structural equation modeling and proved to be a strong causal model.



What does this mean for the practitioner? It means that green behaviors can be influenced through a variety of variables: community benefits, social responsibility, performance effectiveness of the green behaviors, attitudes, and social rewards. All of these variables can be strengthened through promotion, especially advertising. Attitudes can be changed directly by using a spokesperson who is highly regarded by the target market. Perception of social rewards can be increased by showing people being praised by others for their environmentally-friendly behaviors. Perceived community benefits can be increased through informational advertising showing how the community gains from green behaviors. Perceived performance can be increased by providing information on how green products and services impact the environmental aspects people care about (see chart on page 2).



About qSample

qSample combines years of professional experience with the latest achievements in research and sampling technology. We specialize in online and offline data collection, using a suite of innovative custom software solutions in the form of web, mobile, ipad and idea generation technology to collect valuable insight from our respondents.

qSample specializes in developing and managing specialty research panels that cover a wide range of audiences – Gamers, Mobile, Building contractors, Home Owners, Likely Voters, College students, Boomers, AppDevelopers, Frequent travelers, Small business Owners, Wine enthusiasts, just to name a few. These specialty panels are developed, recruited and managed in-house, giving our clients access to more than 5 million respondents in over 42 countries who are pre-screened and double-opted in for participation in a wide range of research studies.