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GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE ROLE OF CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNGER ADULTS IN PERU

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Purpose: The study identifies the relationship between ecological identity, the influence of the social environment, gender and the level of education and to determine their influence in the ecological purchasing behavior of young adult consumers in the district of La Molina, Lima Province, Peru.

Method/design/approach: The data were collected through surveys conducted with 381 younger adult residents of La Molina district using normality test measurements (K-S), followed by exploratory factor analysis and principal component analysis.

Results and conclusion: The GPB in younger adults in La Molina is related to green identity ($p < 0.05$), the influence of the social context ($p < 0.05$), and gender ($p < 0.05$). Further, gender is related to the influence of social context ($p < 0.05$), and educational level is related to the influence of social context ($p < 0.05$).

Research implications: The results highlight the relationship between the demographic variables of gender and educational level and the factors of green identity, influence of the social context, and GPB.

Originality/value: The variables affecting the GPB of younger adults in La Molina district are green identity, influence of the social context, and gender; further, gender is related to the influence of the social context and educational level is related to the influence of the social context.

Keywords: green purchasing behavior, theory of planned behavior, green product, green consumer, eco-friendly

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COMPORTAMENTO DE COMPRA VERDE NO PAPEL DO CONSUMO CONSCIENTE ENTRE ADULTOS JOVENS NO PERU

Objetivo: O estudo identifica a relação entre identidade ecológica, a influência do meio social, gênero e nível de educação e determinar sua influência no comportamento de compra ecológica de consumidores jovens adultos no distrito de La Molina, província de Lima, Peru.

Referencial teórico: o estudo é baseado na Teoria do Comportamento Planejado e no Comportamento de Compra Verde.

Método: Os dados foram coletados por meio de pesquisas realizadas com 381 adultos jovens residentes no distrito de La Molina usando medidas de teste de normalidade (K-S), seguidas de análise fatorial exploratória e análise de componentes principais.

Resultados e conclusão: CCV em adultos mais jovens em La Molina está relacionado com a identidade verde ($p < 0,05$), a influência do contexto social ($p < 0,05$) e gênero ($p < 0,05$). Além disso, o gênero está relacionado à influência do contexto social ($p < 0,05$), e o nível educacional está relacionado à influência do contexto social ($p < 0,05$).

Implicações da pesquisa: Os resultados destacam a relação entre as variáveis demográficas de gênero e escolaridade e os fatores de identidade verde, influência do contexto social e CCV.

Originalidade/valor: As variáveis que afetam o CCV de adultos jovens no distrito de La Molina são identidade verde, influência do contexto social e gênero; além disso, o gênero está relacionado à influência do contexto social e o nível educacional está relacionado à influência do contexto social.

Palavras-chave: comportamento de compra verde, teoria do comportamento planejado, produto verde, consumidor verde, ecologicamente correto

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing social concern about climate change and the different environmental regulations motivate the world's consumers to look for ecological alternatives. Likewise, these consumers prefer companies that consider responsible measures to address environmental problems. In recent years, the number of consumers who have never purchased or consumed organic products fell to less than half of a total of 9,000 respondents in Canada, Spain, Germany, Japan, Italy, United States, because more and more people are becoming interested in environmental protection and sustainable development (Zhang and Dong, 2020).

Considering this situation, Peru is among the highest levels of environmental pollution in Latin America (Gestión, 2020). Likewise, according to the Ministry of the Environment (2020), Peru does not have an efficient plan for the disposal of large amounts of solid waste. However, there is a great affinity towards sustainable products, as indicated by the 23% of consumers in Metropolitan Lima who buy green products frequently (IOP, 2009).

Schultz and Zelezny (1998) carried out a study of behavior with environmental awareness, to a group of university students in each country, Spain, Peru, Nicaragua, Mexico and the United States, where Peru had a considerable score with respect to ecological behavior, as well as a high score in ecosystem conservation and self-improvement, demonstrating that the country could manifest a positive eco-friendly purchasing behavior.

Moreover, younger adult consumers—also called millennials—have greater ecological awareness compared to past generations; 72% of millenials prefer buying from brands that offer responsible products (IPSOS, 2018). Therefore, this study focuses on green purchasing behavior (GPB) and assesses its relation with green identity, the influence of the social context, gender, and level of education. According to literature review, these main factors influence the way in which consumers fulfill their needs regarding the brands and products they want to purchase.

The sample comprised by 381 younger adult residents of La Molina district. La Molina was chosen for being one of the most ecological districts of the capital of Lima, carrying out sustainable activities, ecological practices and its responsibility with cultural heritage, promoting ecological attitudes from the residents. (Munimolina, 2020). On the other hand, the most popular organic markets and fairs in Lima, such as the Healthy Market and El Huerto Fair, located in the same district, encourage the trade of organic products, attracting consumer from different ages, being more than half of these residents of the area (Descosur, 2017).

Therefore, the following research question is formulated: What are the main factors related to the behavior of ecological purchase in young adults from the district of La Molina?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

This theory proves its adequacy through the variables of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intention, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It is significant to identify the behaviors, perceptions, and preferences of consumers (Ajzen, 2012). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is part of an extension of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which only included 4 of these variables: attitude, subjective norm, intention and behavior. TRA was proposed in 1975, but it was adapted over time due to its limitations to treat behavioral aspects such as the incomplete volitional control of people (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Both theories maintain a basic aspect, which is the intention of a person to carry out a certain behavior. However, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) differs from the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by incorporating the control variable of perceived behavior.

Further, the TPB is an important model for the discovery of ecological behavior (Gatersleben et al., 2012). The TPB has been applied to understand the aspects that influence ecologically responsible purchasing behavior in different circumstances (Kautish et al., 2019). Chan and Lau (2002) posited that TPB supports their research on GPB, which they applied in the U.S. and China for in-depth investigations in those cultural settings. Arvola et al. (2008) explain that TPB has been applied in many research works to better analyze the aspects that have the highest influence on environmentally responsible behavior, such as the level of purchase acceptance of green products or new sustainable offerings to be launched in the market. This model is applied to special fields such as marketing, advertising, and PR, as well as organic, ecological, or healthy products.

2.2 Green purchasing behavior

GPB helps reduce carbon footprint through the use and consumption of green products, involving manufacturing processes that have low environmental impact, that avoid the use of toxic substances; and that have low consumption of energy and water (Aldamiz-Echevarría & Vicente-Molina, 2003). Similarly, Mostafa (2007) defined pro-environmental purchase consumption as an environmentally friendly behavior. Such consumers' attitudes favor the ecosystem through the consumption of recyclable, reusable, conservable products and with sensitivity to the implications of climate change. Chan (2001) explained how people exhibiting GPB express interest in the care of natural resources. Rashid (2009) notes that GPB is a trend of people using products with characteristics sensitive to environmental impact. Dagher and Itani (2014) determined that environmentally conscious consumers not only aim at reducing their carbon footprint but also consume green products for immediate benefit. Kotler and Keller (2012) argue that these consumers take corporate social responsibility into account as a factor that influences their choice and purchase of eco-friendly products of a specific brand. Therefore, packaging that generates less solid waste

and considers the use of environmental factors in marketing strategies (e.g., green packaging, product design and labeling, and green advertising) reflect that GPBs help conserve and protect the environment, which indicates ethical consumption by buyers or consumers (Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). Goh and Wahid (2014) mention the difficulty in developing a specific definition of green consumption despite the growing evidence from research conducted globally. However, they suggest that GPB is influenced by cultural aspects; values; attitudes; information seeking; environmental concern; and demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income level. For example, Fraj and Martinez (2002) indicate that GPB-related attitudes are reflected in the habits of Spanish consumers, making them more likely to purchase green products that are environmentally friendly. These consumers tend to consider production stages such as organic agriculture and that the product comes from entities that have environmental conservation as a corporate value.

2.3 Theory of Planned Behavior and Green Purchasing Behavior

Studies on eco-friendly purchasing have found that consumers' pro-environmental attitudes, ecological awareness, and GPB are related to psychographic, social, and environmental aspects. Thus, several researchers have adapted the TPB to the GPB, together with the influence of the social context and personal norms. Kalafatis et al. (1999) demonstrates the effectiveness of developing market research with respect to GPB, in addition to using this model to perceive the likelihood of purchasing green products, analyzing personal and social norms, beliefs on environmental impact, outcome beliefs, and perceived behavioral control in consumers in England and Greece. Ahn et al. (2012) applied TPB to analyze the environmentally conscious behaviors of Korean consumers. Moreover, they assessed the relation of variables such as self-perception and identity, social influences, and environmental awareness to GPB. Chan and Lau (2002) used TPB to identify the influence of environmental awareness on consumers in China and the U.S., adapting the variables of social acceptance, perception of behavioral control, personal valuation norms, green purchasing initiative and socially imposed norms, attitudes and beliefs, resource savings, and price perception, which were related to GPB. TCP has been applied in various contexts to understand the aspects that influence ecologically responsible purchasing behavior in different circumstances. (Kautish et al., 2019).

Khare (2015) argued that the variables of ecological identity, past ecological attitudes, and personal and social beliefs of TPB in Indian consumers were adapted to TPB to analyze GPB using the demographic variables of gender, age, income, and education, demonstrating their influence, which was proven by the results. Afshar and Jia (2018) argue that the purchasing behavior of consumers of eco-friendly products has received considerable importance during recent years. Specifically, the ecological purchase, based from the general knowledge of the client and the environmental consideration of a given product during the purchase process of products with eco-friendly packaging, which includes reusable or recyclable materials, limit use of energy, organic sustenance or simply counts with features that do not pollute the environment. They surveyed 247 clients in Bangladesh and 132 clients in Peru, during 2017 and 2018. Maichum et al. (2016) argued that awareness and interest in sustainable consumption influences consumers' purchasing decisions. Therefore, sustainable consumption has received more attention in the decision-making of marketing representatives in companies and corporations, as well as the mandatory application of environmental regulations and the increasing pressure from interested parties in the conservation focused on the environment. This study aimed to investigate the purchase intention of green products by applying the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to Thai consumers over 18 years from high school. A quantitative research method of surveying 483 in Thailand was used. Liobikienè et al. (2017) argued that consumption in European countries is one of the highest in the world, so it is necessary to reduce the ecological footprint by promoting alternatives and eco-friendly consumption policies, through products with low environmental impact during the life cycle of

production, use and waste disposal. Data collection was carried out through surveys from men and women with different age ranges and education levels. The samples were divided into 868 respondents for Lithuania and 857 for Austria. Lee (2009) comments that the consumption of organic products has increased in recent times, with Asia being one of the continents with great economic growth, where young generations are more willing to spend on eco-friendly products than past generations. Data collection was conducted through a random sample survey of 6,010 individuals among 2,930 male and 3,035 female adolescents in different secondary schools in Hong Kong. Muralidharan et al. (2016) argued that the market of young adult consumers are more sensitive to green marketing. 36% of this group would be willing to buy organic products and demand more organic offers. On the other hand, young adult consumers in India identify as an environmentally conscious culture despite it being a recent and growing activity. Data collection was conducted through surveys of young adult consumers in India and the United States. These data were processed through an exploratory factorial analysis and Varimax Rotation.

Therefore, this research demonstrates that the application of TPB is important to identify pro-environmental aspects, using the variables of ecological identity and the influence of the social context, and its influence with respect to GPB to understand the attitudes and perceptions of consumers in La Molina, Lima.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a quantitative research based on deductive logic. It presents a non-experimental research design; the researcher does not exercise control over the variables, which will be observed but not manipulated (Hernández et al., 2014). It is also a transversal study because of the simultaneous collection of data, considering the use of a questionnaire on GPB and its factors, which constitute the basis for this research. The time variable is not involved in the study because it is a delimiter (Hernández et al., 2014).

Explanatory, descriptive correlational research was conducted to describe the dependent variable of GPB and the group of independent variables (Hernández et al., 2014). It is descriptive because it aims at measuring the variables to be able to list them—that is, they are defined to specify who will perform the search for information to describe the GPB trends. (Hernández et al., 2014). This justifies the relationship between GPB and the independent variables of ecological identity, influence of the social context, gender, and level of education applied to younger adults in La Molina district.

Probabilistic sampling was used through a simple random method (Otzen and Manterola, 2017). The sampling frame was younger adults—men and women aged 21–40 years with different levels of education living in La Molina district for more than one year. The total sample size was 381 respondents, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

This sample is representative since young adult consumers are the group most likely to purchase or consume eco-friendly products, specifically recognizing their need to care for the environment (Joshi and Rahman, 2016). In addition, 72% of them prefer to buy brands that offer responsible products (IPSOS, 2018). Given this, at the Lima level, the Municipality of La Molina is in charge of managing one of the eco-friendly districts of the capital, which demonstrates its commitment by demanding environmental conservation and sustainable development from the business sector in its activities (Munimolina, 2020a). For this reason, this municipality leads an eco-efficiency ranking, organized by the Ministry of Environment, for the implementation of policies and institutional activities for the efficient use of resources, as well as the improvement of public services (Munimolina, 2020b). Respondents had to reside in La Molina district, which was chosen for being recognized by the World Quality Council as the first municipality to maintain its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals by implementing 39 indicators of quality

management systems (ISO 18091:2019), which has sustainability and responsibility to the environment among its requirements (Munimolina [Mayor's Office of Molina], 2020b).

For data collection, a structured questionnaire previously validated by experts was used. The internal consistency of the dimensions was confirmed, and each of the subscales of the independent and dependent variables of GPB were validated. Subsequently, a descriptive statistical analysis of percentages and frequencies was performed to find the relation between dependent and independent variables. The surveys were applied to the required sample using a 5-point Likert scale, to measure their level of disagreement and agreement, which helps us to obtain results on the behaviors and preferences of this group of young adults, where 1 indicates *totally disagree* and 5 indicates *totally agree* (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014). The questions presented in the questionnaire were segmented according to the variables ecological identity, influence of the social context, and GPB and the demographic aspects of gender and educational level.

The Kolgomorov–Smirnov normality test was used to confirm uniformity in the distribution of the answers provided by the sample. The items of the instrument present a significance level of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the questions do not have a normal distribution; thus, parametric tests were used for hypothesis testing.

Further, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the validity of the construct of this research, which represents and measures theoretical concepts or dimensions, using the Spearman' Rho test for hypothesis testing.

To specify the test statistics, they were analyzed based on the asymptotic significance level of the Kruskal–Wallis and Mann–Whitney U tests (Hair Jr. et al., 2014).

Table 1. Hypothesis of the study

Questions	Hypothesis	Variables
Q1: How does the ecological identity with the GPB in younger adults?	H1: Ecological identity is related to GPB in younger adults.	Ecological identity → GPB
Q2: How does the influence of the social environment with the GPB in younger adults?	H2: The influence of social context is related to GPB in younger adults.	Influence of social context → GPB
Q3: ¿How to relate to the gender with the ecological identity in younger adults?	H3: Gender is related to ecological identity in younger adults.	Gender → Ecological identity
Q4: How does one relate to the gender with the influence of the social context in younger adults?	H4: Gender is related to the influence of social context in younger adults.	Gender → Influence of social context
Q5: ¿How to relate to the gender with the GPB in younger adults?	H5: Gender is related to GPB in younger adults.	Gender → GPB

Q6: How do you relate to the educational level with the ecological identity in younger adults?	H6: Educational level is related to ecological identity in younger adults.	Educational level	→	Ecological identity
Q7: How do you relate to the level of instruction with the influence of the social context in younger adults?	H7: Educational level is related to the influence of social context in younger adults.	Educational level	→	Influence of social context
Q8: ¿How to relate to the degree of instruction with the GPB in younger adults?	H8: Educational level is related to GPB in younger adults.	Educational level	→	GPB

Source: Authors elaboration.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett's test for the GPB was 0.638, with an approximate chi-square of 243.04 and a significance of .000. Also, four factors were identified that contributed to the total variance of 80.755%. The four factors correspond to the following indicators: Preferences (percentage variance = 33.171%), Intention (percentage variance = 20.792%), Frequency (percentage variance = 14.460%), and Conscious purchase attitudes (percentage variance = 12.332%).

Table 2. Rotated component matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q3. In general, I prefer to buy reusable products.	0.842			
Q1. When I go shopping, I avoid using paper and/or plastic bags.	0.756			
Q6. I always buy biodegradable products that are disposable.		0.900		
Q2. I avoid buying disposable products.		0.639		
Q4. If I have to buy batteries, I always buy mercury-free or rechargeable batteries.			0.927	
Q5. I try to buy products with little or no impact on the environment, even if these products are more expensive.				0.929
Extraction method: Main component analysis.				
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.				

a. The rotation has converged in six iterations.

The KMO and Barlett's test for ecological identity was 0.558, with an approximate chi-square of 23.170 and a significance of 0.000. Likewise, three factors were identified that contributed to the total variance of 100%. The 3 factors correspond to the following indicators: Responsibility (percentage variance = 43.007%), Ecological awareness (percentage variance = 29.925%), and Self-perception (percentage variance = 27.067%).

Table 3. Rotated component matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
Q7. Supporting environmental protection makes me feel that I am an environmentally responsible person.	0.996		
Q8. I am proud to be an ecological person.		0.995	
Q9. Supporting environmental protection makes me feel like an important person.			0.994
Extraction method: principal component analysis			
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization			

a. Rotation has converged in four iterations.

The KMO and Barlett's test for the influence of the social context was 0.695, with an approximate chi-square of 140.733 and a significance of 0.000. The five factors correspond to the following indicators: Knowledge (percentage variance = 36.988%), Learning (percentage variance = 18.708%), Suggestions (percentage variance = 16.529%), Recommendation (percentage variance = 14.277%), and Influence of eco-friendly attitudes (percentage variance = 13.498%).

Table 4. Rotated component matrix[a]

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q13. My friends often buy eco-friendly products with me.	0.988				
Q11. My friends and I often discuss issues or products with a smaller carbon footprint.		0.985			
Q12. My friends often recommend products with a smaller environmental footprint.			0.977		
Q14. My friends often share their experiences and knowledge of eco-friendly products with me.				0.976	
Q10. I have learned a lot about environmental issues because of my friends.					0.977
Extraction method: principal component analysis					
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization					

a. The rotation has converged in five iterations.

Hypotheses testing

H1 is accepted: Ecological identity is related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.000.

Table 5. Correlations

			Ecological Identity	Green Purchasing Behavior (GPB)
Spearman's Rho	Ecological Identity	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.365**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	0.000
		N	381	381
	GPB	Correlation coefficient	0.365**	1.000
		Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	.
		N	381	381

**. Correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

H2 is accepted: The influence of the social context is related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.000.

Table 6. Correlations

			Social context influence	GPB
Spearman's Rho	Social context influence	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.479**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	0.000
		N	381	381
	GPB	Correlation coefficient	0.479**	1.000
		Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	.
		N	381	381

**. Correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

H3 is rejected: Gender is not related to ecological identity in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.765.
H4 is accepted: Gender is related to the influence of the social context in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.004.

Table 7. Test statistics[a]

	Social Context Influence	GPB
Mann–Whitney's U	15108.500	14931.000
Wilcoxon's W	33636.500	33459.000
Z	−2.884	−3.052
Asymptotic sign (bilateral)	0.004	0.002

a. Grouping variable: Gender

H5: The hypothesis that gender is related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina is accepted, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.002.
H6 is rejected: Educational level is not related to ecological identity in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.084.
H7 is accepted: Educational level is related to the influence of the social context in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.000.

Table 8. Test statistics[a,b]

	Social Context Influence
Kruskal–Wallis' H	30.956
Gl	8
Asymptotic sign	0.000

a. Kruskal–Wallis test
b. Grouping variable: Educational level

H8 is rejected: Educational level is not related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina, with a significance level (asymptotic sig.) of 0.097.

Gender and Educational Level

The surveys showed that 63.5% of those surveyed agreed that when they go shopping, they avoid using paper and/or plastic bags. In this situation, women are more likely to use paper and/or plastic bags. Further, 11% of people with higher university education level said that they were indifferent compared to people with other levels of education.

58.8% agree that they try to buy products with little or no environmental impact, even if they are more expensive. 96.4% of men agree or totally agree with this scenario. Thus, it can be interpreted with a strong perception that price is not an important determinant in GPB. Also, more than 90% of people of all educational levels accept this situation.

Of the total number of respondents, 51.7% agree that they always buy biodegradable products that are disposable. 97.9% of men agree and totally agree with this scenario. Therefore, it can be understood from the overall result that the use of biodegradable products that are disposable is still a growing attitude in the context under research.

Ecological identity explains consumers' considerations and perceptions of themselves that influence their pro-environmental behavior, as well as their consumption habits (Devine-Wright, 2009).

Regarding the results obtained, 60.6% of the participants agreed that supporting environmental protection makes them feel like environmentally responsible persons. Therefore, both genders show similarity in this trend. Moreover, 25% of those with incomplete secondary education and 30% with incomplete higher technical education expressed that they were not indifferent.

Further, 53% agree that they feel proud of being an ecological person. 95.3% agree or totally agree with a slight difference compared to women. This may reflect that both maintain a high level of ecological identity but with a minimal difference. This result matches previous research in the literature indicating that men have greater significance with ecological identity and environmental conservation (Lee, 2009). It also shows that 12.5% of people with incomplete secondary school studies expressed they neither agree nor disagree with this aspect.

Furthermore, 63.5% agree and 30.4% totally agree that they have learned a lot about environmental issues thanks to their friends. Here, 96.3% women and 91.7% men express agreement or total agreement.

Of the participants, 56.7% agree that they often discuss issues or products with a smaller carbon footprint with their friends. Women show an advantage in this situation, and 95.8% agree or totally agree. Also, 18.8% of people with incomplete secondary school studies and 14.3% of people with complete secondary school studies are indifferent to this statement.

Of the participants, 65.4% agree that their friends usually recommend products with a smaller carbon footprint. Women have a higher positive response between agreeing and strongly agreeing (98.5%) compared to 92.6% of men; 49.9% agree that their friends usually buy eco-friendly products with them. Further, females agree or strongly agree at 95.2%, showing a slight advantage over males. In addition, 25% of people with incomplete secondary school studies were indifferent.

4.2 Discussion

The aim of this research work was to determine whether ecological identity, the influence of the social context, gender, and the level of education are related to GPB in younger adult consumers in the district of La Molina. It should also be noted that there were limitations, such as the national background on the variables studied and specifically GPB, plus the impossibility of conducting the sampling for the collection of information in person because of the COVID 19 pandemic. In order to analyze the results, contingency tables with percentages were used, which allowed us to identify the ecological considerations of younger adult consumers in La Molina, regarding gender and level of education.

Green Purchasing Behavior

Mostafa (2007) defined pro-environmental purchase consumption as a behavior that respects the environment. He also mentions that this behavior implies that the consumer has attitudes that favor the ecosystem, such as the consumption of recyclable, reusable, longer-lasting products, with interest and sensitivity toward the implications of climate change. Rashid (2009) states it is the willingness and intention of people to use products with environmentally friendly features instead of choosing traditional products. And 11% of people with a university degree said they were indifferent, compared to people with other levels of education. Moreover, 63.8% agree that they generally prefer to buy reusable products, and more than 90% of all educational levels accept this situation. 58.8% agree that they try to buy products with little or no impact on the environment, even if these products are more expensive. This can be interpreted as a strong perception that price is not an important determinant of GPB. Of all respondents, 51.7% agree that they always buy biodegradable products that are disposable. Therefore, it can be understood that, from the total result, the use of biodegradable products that are disposable is still a growing attitude in the investigated framework. Afshar and Jia (2018) highlight the role played by the need for uniqueness as a main driver of green behavior among customers. Moreover, self-expressive benefits represent another component for buying green products, in both Peru and Bangladesh.

Ecological Identity

The ecological identity explains consumers' evaluations and perceptions of themselves, which influence their pro-environmental behavior and consumption habits. 53% agree that they are proud to be an ecological person. This may be reflected in both maintaining a high level of ecological identity, but with a minimal difference. This result is consistent with previous research in the literature indicating that men have greater significance with ecological identity and environmental conservation (Lee, 2009).

Influence of the Social Context

Lee (2010) stated that members of a given social context can influence risky behaviors as well as positive characteristics. Minton and Rose (1997) revealed that the influence of social groups in Western adults is the main factor for green consumption. 56.7% agree that they often discuss with their friends about issues or products with a smaller carbon footprint. 65.4% agree that their friends usually recommend products with a smaller carbon footprint. 49.9% agree that their friends usually buy eco-friendly products with them, where females agree and strongly agree by 95.2%, showing a slight advantage over males. In addition, 25% of people with incomplete secondary school were indifferent. Liobikienė et al. (2016) identified that the green purchase behaviour and the environmentally friendly behavior are related. Moreover, the environmentally friendly social norms and the gender presented a significant impact on both, green purchase and environmentally friendly behaviour.

Hypothesis Discussion:

The result showed that the correlation measure is significant only for some independent variables such as ecological identity, the influence of the social context and gender. Therefore, there is a relationship between GPB and the factors presented. This confirms that ecological identity influences consumers' GPB, as it allows them to show their commitment and positive attitudes toward the environment. Therefore, it is consistent with previous studies indicating that the influence of the social context is explained as the consideration of the information provided by someone else as a reality, which implies GPB, showing their concern toward society (Liobikienė et al., 2016).

This result differs from previous research evidencing that there is a relationship between gender and ecological identity (Lee, 2009). The influence of the social context impacts the GPB of younger consumers, thus showing a relationship between the variables as it implies attitudes that differ according to gender. This supports the theory that demographic factors such as gender play a role in the sustainable consumption of organic products (Salgado-Beltrán and Beltrán-Morales, 2011). There are very few studies supporting this variable. However, there is a relationship between demographic variables and variables influencing the GPB.

Therefore, it is concluded that demographic aspects influence attitudes and behaviors on organic consumption. This would support studies indicating that the level of education is related to the influence of the social context in younger consumers (Joshi and Rahman, 2016). This differs from the study on the influence of the level of education of educated younger people, which found that consumers with a high education level are related to the GPB.

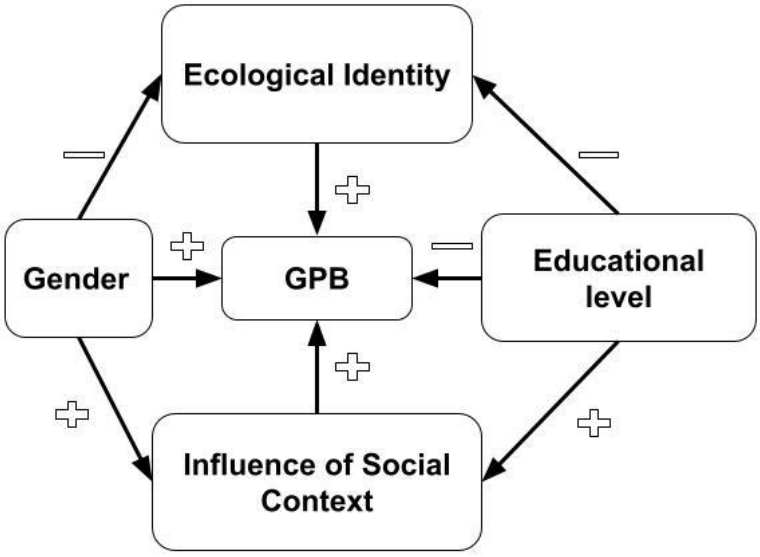


Figure 1. Factors influencing GPB, hypothesis results
Source: Authors elaboration

Limitations

This research allows us to know the behavior of the millennial or young adult ecological consumer. However, there are few sources of information on eco-friendly consumption for this group of people in the Peruvian market (ESAN, 2013), or that are focused on Lima, at the district level, or with information that contributes to the reduction of the ecological footprint, which makes the work to be carried out by this study difficult. In addition, this study has not focused on brands specifically, since it only analyzes the factors that lead to an ecological purchasing attitude. This study will be carried out in the district of La Molina, this being one of the ecological districts of Metropolitan Lima, which complies with environmental regulations that promote sustainable behavior through different neighborhood and institutional activities (El Peruano, 2020). Likewise, the global health crisis due to COVID-19 (WHO, 2020) is taken into account, which limits the application of all surveys at the face-to-face level, so online communication tools will be used to obtain the fully required information.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Recommendations and implications

The results obtained can be of great support to understand the attitudes or motivations of consumers toward GPB, and what aspects are considered to take into account a brand or product that meets the expectations of environmental care and preservation. Furthermore, engagement strategies in the accounts of brand pages or ecological products aimed at this public will cause the members within their community to show satisfaction and recommend the products to people within the social context to which they belong. On the other hand, government entities, with the participation of the community, continue to promote eco-market activities, with greater outreach for the communities, where small entrepreneurs, suppliers, among other agents that offer sustainable products are made known. Also, any upcoming studies can focus on specific brands or on a field within ecology or they can be conducted in other districts of different characteristics justifying their attitudes and motivations for eco-friendly consumption. Younger adult consumers are the generation with the highest willingness to buy environmentally responsible products, so it would be recommended to investigate the income variable by referring to their purchasing power and whether this is related to GPB.

The information obtained through this research could be used by companies and advertising agencies to design new communication and ecological marketing strategies for young adults, the creation and administration of businesses that target this growing market. Moreover, it could be of interest for government entities and eco-friendly organizations, which will be able to use this research to create advertising campaigns on environmental awareness and issues of preservation and conservation of the planet that begin to have an impact on people's consumption habits, making it a topic discussed by government entities, organizations, governments and consumers (Finisterra do Paço and Raposo, 2010).

5.2 Conclusions

According to the results obtained in the surveys on the factors related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina, it was determined as follows: The main conclusion of this research is that factors such as gender, ecological identity and the influence of the social context are indeed related to GPB in younger adults in the district of La Molina.

With the statistical methods applied, it is confirmed that the variable with the smallest influence on GPB is found in the demographic factors at the educational level. This indicates that the purchase of

environmentally friendly products is not directly related to consumers with high levels of education, therefore, though in some cases people with lower levels of education do not present trends and attitudes related to environmental awareness in their purchases, these are not sufficient so as to produce a greater impact on GPB. On the other hand, the relation between gender and ecological identity is negative, which indicates that there is no difference between men and women regarding the perspective of oneself as an ecological person, but both have a perception of the importance of contributing to the environment, with the satisfaction of fulfilling their ideals and ethical values. An influence of the social context is found in relation to gender, since men are more influenced by their circle of friends regarding knowledge of eco-friendly products, unlike women who show favorable attitudes toward the environment, but their context does not have a major effect on learning. That is to say, their ecological knowledge is not mostly acquired through their social context but through other sources of information.

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