CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON AND ADOPTION OF GREEN INITIATIVES: A STUDY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO GREEN MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

Environmental issues have become a concern for the consumers and companies across the globe that led to the manufacturing of green products. Customer's attitudes are changing towards the environment to encourage innovation for conservation and the benefits from this source of innovation are certain to outlive our current generation. In this context, it is imperative to study the consumer perception towards various green initiatives. The success rate of the green initiatives depends on how consumers are perceived towards it. The present study will help in finding out shortcoming from the side of marketers as well as government by which consumers can be motivated towards various green initiatives.

Key words: Environmental issues, green products, green initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, climate change is one of the most complicated and serious issues. The increasing environmental hazards like pollution, climatic changes, ozone layer depletion, global meltdown and at the same time limited resource availability and increasing as well as unlimited needs of humans have all forced the business houses to utilize the resources judiciously without harming the environment. The green initiatives by the community, government, and the companies, financial institutions, today represents the world attitude towards nature

Green Marketing is considered as an effective marketing philosophy for the preservation and conservation of our limited natural resources. By adopting green marketing strategies and introducing eco-friendly products, companies can enjoy the advantage of reduced wastage in packaging and increased energy efficiency in production. Eco-friendly marketing enables the manufacturers to gain a significant level of environmental improvement by reducing the use of toxic elements in production, recycling of products and minimising environmental influence of their products.

In the recent years many of the banks have started taking initiatives to protect the environment. Green Banking itself suggests environmental friendly banking practices and reducing carbon footprint in banking activities. Banks at present create awareness among customers about environment protection along with creating environment friendly banking products for the betterment of the society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Customers are changing their perceptions towards the products, preferring environment friendly products because there is a growing awareness to protect the environment. Promotion and adoption of green products and technologies are necessary for the conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. In the long run, success of the green initiatives is very much dependent on the perception of consumers to it. Green initiatives are undertaken in various sectors now. Hence it is imperative to identify and analyse the perception of various groups of consumers regarding the various green initiatives put forward by business enterprises and other organisations including service organisations. The problem is thus stated as understanding and analysing the perception of customers regarding green initiatives with particular reference to green marketing and green banking.

OBJECTIVES

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:
- To find out the consumer awareness and perception towards green initiatives.
- To know the buying behaviour of customers towards green products.
- To understand the satisfaction level of customers regarding green products.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no association between the awareness level about green products and gender of the respondents.
2. There is no association with the frequency of purchase of green products and monthly income of respondents.
3. There is no significant difference in the category of green products mostly purchased by consumers.
4. There is no education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.
5. There is no association between the occupation of the respondents and the level of satisfaction from the green products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted a descriptive and exploratory research design. The present study incorporates the collection of both primary and secondary data for an in depth analysis.

Primary source of data was collected through self-constructed questionnaire. A sample of 130 respondents from different socio- economic characteristics was selected from Kottayam town area for the study. The questionnaire was advocated to the respondents as Google form document. The secondary data used for the study is collected from professional journals and magazines, reports of projects and online sources.

Primary data was analysed using statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, Mean and standard deviation. For testing of Hypotheses, Chi-square, Friedman test, and Kruskal-Wallis H test have been used. The data has been analysed with the help of SPSS Software.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Munjal (2019) published a research paper on scale validation of consumer purchase decision behavior for green products. This paper attempts to find the variables that influence the consumers to purchase green products. This study reveals that price of the green products and opinion of the peer and friends influence mostly the consumers to buy green products.

Saleena and Ahammed (2019) conducted a study on awareness and perception of college teachers towards green products. This paper tries to explore the awareness and perception of respondent regarding the concept of different attributes of green products. The purposive sampling method is used for the study. The sample size is 200 teachers who are selected from college in the Malappuram district. The data are collected by using structured questionnaire. Findings of the study reveal that majority of respondents are aware and satisfied with performance of green products.

Thapa (2019) made a study on Consumers' Perception towards Green Products in Nepal. He collected data from a total of 192 respondents in Kathmandu through well-structured questionnaire. This study reveals that consumers have adequate knowledge about green products features, majority of them view green products as healthy and safe. He also finds that consumers prefer to believe that green products are offering high quality over conventional products.

Fouziya and Gracious (2018) conducted an exploratory study on Awareness of Green Marketing and Its Influence on Consumer Perception. This study is an attempt to analyze the influence of consumer's awareness of green and environment friendly marketing on their buying behavior. The data collected from 100 consumers of personal care

products and cosmetics. Convenient sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. A structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data from the sample respondents. The findings of the study indicate that the awareness of consumers on green marketing has a significant impact on consumer's buying behavior.

Hameed and Waris (2018) conducted research study to explore the relationship between eco labels and eco conscious consumer behavior for green products. The results of the study depict a significant direct impact of eco labels on consumer's eco-conscious behavior, green trust and environmental concern.

ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY DATA

Table 1 - Awareness level about Green Products

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage
High	34	26.2
Moderate	65	50
Low	31	23.8
Total	**130**	**100**

Source: Primary data

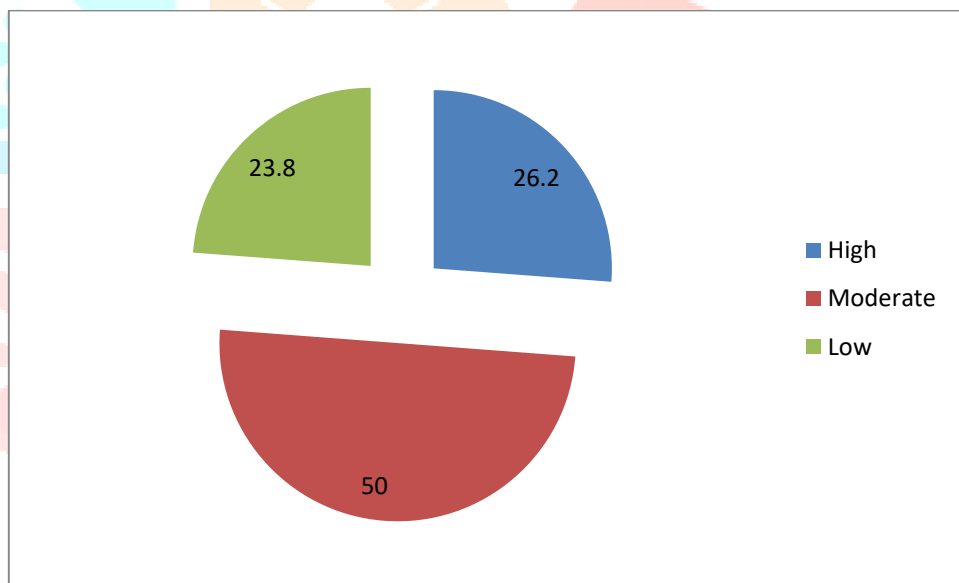Table 1 points out that half of the respondents are moderately aware about the various categories of green products.

Figure 1 - Awareness level about Green Products

Table 2 - Frequency of Purchase of Green Products

Frequency of Purchase	Frequency	Percentage
Often	33	25.4
Occasionally	58	44.6
Rarely	39	30.0
Total	**130**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data

It is evident from Table 2 that 58 respondents purchase green products occasionally, 39 respondents purchase rarely the green products and 33 respondents purchase green products frequently.

Table 3 - Category of Green Products Mostly Purchased

Category	N	Mean	Rank
Food	130	2.1077	1
Health care/ cosmetic products	130	2.7000	2
Clothes	130	3.4231	4
Cleaning products	130	3.4462	5
Electronic appliances	130	3.3538	3

Source: Primary data

Table 3 shows the category of green products mostly purchased by consumers. The mean scores indicate that food is the mostly purchased category of green products. However, cleaning products is the least preferred category of green products.

Figure 2 - Category of Green Products Mostly Purchased

Table 4 Attitude of Consumers towards Green Products

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I appreciate the packaging of green products	130	4.0615	.96251
I am willing to pay high price for green products	130	3.4846	.97436
I pay attention to advertisements of green products	130	3.8077	.90730
Sufficient information is provided on Eco – labels	130	3.6769	.93357
Eco – friendly packaging is easily recyclable	130	3.8923	.99803
I understand the information on eco – friendly packaging	130	3.7231	1.01931
I am happy to purchase green products	130	4.0231	.86683
I recommend green products to my family and colleagues	130	4.1462	.82698
Attitude	**130**	**3.8519**	**.66122**

Source: Primary data

Table 4 deals with the attitude of consumers towards green products. Most of the respondents recommend green products to their family members and colleagues. Respondents do agree on the statements that they appreciate the packaging of green products and they are happy to purchase green products. Thus, consumers are very much willing to purchase green products which are evident from the high mean score.

Table 5 - Satisfaction level with Green Products

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of satisfaction with the green products	130	4.0077	.69879

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 deals with the satisfaction level of respondents with the green banking services offered by the banks. The high mean score indicates that most of the respondents are satisfied with the green banking products.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis is put to test:

1. H_0: There is no association between the awareness level about green products and gender of the respondents.
   H_1: There is association between the awareness level about green products and gender of the respondents.

Table 6.A Gender of the Respondents and Awareness Level about Green Products
Cross tabulation

		Gender of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Level of awareness about green products	Low	13	18	31
	Moderate	33	32	65
	High	19	15	34
Total		65	65	130

Table 6.B Chi –Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
Pearson Chi - Square	1.292	2	.524

(Computed)

Since the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level of significance and 2 degree of freedom is 0.05 (0.524>0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no association between the gender of respondents and the awareness level on green products.

2. H_0: There is no association with the frequency of purchase of green products and monthly income of respondents.
   H_1: There is association with the frequency of purchase of green products and monthly income of respondents.

Table 7.A - Monthly income and Frequency of Purchase of Green Products
Cross tabulation

		Monthly income of the Respondents				Total
		Less than 10000	10000-20000	30000-50000	Above 50000	
Frequency of purchase of green products	Often	6	11	10	6	33
	Occasionally	15	23	18	2	58
	Rarely	21	14	3	1	38
Total		42	48	31	9	130

Source: Primary data

Table 7.B Chi – Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2 sided)
Pearson Chi - Square	23.923	9	.004

(Computed)

As the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level and at a degree of freedom of 9 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is association with the frequency of purchase of green products and monthly income of respondents.

3. H_o: There is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.
   H_1: There is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.

Table 8.A - Ranks

	Mean Rank
Food	2.10
Health care/ cosmetic products	2.69
Clothes	3.42
Cleaning products	3.44
Electronic appliances	3.35

Source: Primary data

Table 8.B - Friedman Test

N	Chi - Square	Df	Asymp.Sig.
130	72.051	4	.000

(Computed)

As the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level of significance and at a degree of freedom of 4 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.

4. H_0: There is no education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.

   H_1: There is education wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.

Table 9.A - Ranks

	Education	N	Mean Rank
Attitude	SSLC	9	49.00
	Plus two	22	41.36
	Graduate	56	73.12
	Postgraduate	27	70.33
	Professional	16	73.16
Total		**130**	

Source: Primary data

Table 9.B - Kruskal Wallis Test

	Attitude
Chi – Square	14.219
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.007

(Computed)

Since the p value obtained at a level of significance of 5 per cent and at a degree of freedom of 4 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.

5. There is no association between the occupation of the respondents and the level of satisfaction with the green products.
   H1: There is association between the occupation of the respondents and the level of satisfaction with the green products.

Table 10.A - Occupation of the Respondents and Level of Satisfaction

		Level of satisfaction			Total
		Neutral	**Satisfied**	**Highly satisfied**	
Occupation of the Respondents	Business	3	5	4	**12**
	Govt. employee	2	17	8	**27**
	Private employee	12	16	9	**37**
	Student	8	17	3	**28**
	Housewife	4	6	2	**12**
	Professional	1	2	5	**8**
	Farmer	1	4	1	**6**
Total		**31**	**67**	**32**	**130**

Source: Primary data

Table 10.B - Chi – Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2 – sided)
Pearson Chi – Square	16.687	12	.162

(Computed)

As the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level of significance and at a degree of freedom of 12 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no association between the occupation of the respondents and the level of satisfaction with the green products.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
- Majority of the respondents are moderately aware about the various categories of green products.
- Most of the respondents occasionally purchase green products.
- Most of the respondents are having a monthly income between 10000 and 20000. Only 7 percent of respondents are having monthly income above 50000.
- It is found that food is the mostly purchased category of green products by respondents and cleaning products is the least preferred category of green products.
- Majority of the respondents are graduates.
- Most of the respondents recommend green products to their family members and colleagues. They are very much willing to purchase green products.

- Most of the respondents are satisfied with the green products.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

- It is revealed that there is no association between the gender of respondents and the awareness level on green products.
- There is association with the frequency of purchase of green products and monthly income of respondents.
- There is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.
- There is education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.
- There is no association between the occupation of the respondents and the level of satisfaction from the green products.

CONCLUSION

Human beings have now understood and to adopt the environmentally friendly products. The present study was an attempt to establish the relationship between the consumer's awareness, perception, and adoption of various green initiatives with particular reference to green marketing and green banking.. From the study, it is also found that consumers are of the viewpoint that efforts and policies of the government are helpful in promoting green initiatives. Thus green initiatives are really a good way for people to get more awareness about global warming. Each businessman will contribute a lot to the environment and make this earth a better place to live.

SUGGESTIONS

- Expand consumer awareness about green products by creating effective green marketing campaigns or environment related activities.
- Companies may create ads that are more focused on green, eco – friendly image that will influence their customer's purchase decision.
- It is the responsibility of the government to monitor the credibility of the green marketing campaigns and inform the citizens about the new green products in the market.
- Seminars and workshops may organized and public meetings are to be arranged by the banks to make green banking practices familiar among customers.
- Users should become more conscious while using green banking services. They should strictly follow the guidelines given by the banks.

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