

GREEN MARKETING: CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI CITY

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Abstract: Consumers' 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. Environmental deterioration has led to businesses changing the way in which they conduct themselves, leading to the emergence of green marketing. The aim of this paper is to examine, the influence of green marketing on the buying behavior of green products in Tiruchirappalli city consumers. The results indicate that Tiruchirappalli city consumers have high knowledge levels on the issues facing the environment. Elements of the green marketing mix, specifically, green promotion, were found to raise awareness and encourage positive change in consumption behavior. A large proportion of respondents preferred to patronize socially responsible retailers. Furthermore, respondents preferred green products over standard alternatives. However, they were price sensitive which affected their buying decisions. It is emerged that there was no significant difference between lower and higher qualified respondents in terms of knowledge and awareness of environmental degradation and green marketing.

Keywords: green marketing, consumer awareness, consumer buying decisions, etc.,

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental and environmental problems are the main reason for the emergence of green marketing. In recent years, global warming, climate change and pollution are some of the concerns that have been raised internationally and have resulted in more consumers becoming aware of environment challenges provoking them. These environmental challenges have gained prominence in the business environment, as well as in the public domain. Thus, these critical environmental issues combined with the demand why consumer groups for green products have led to the emergence of green marketing. Green marketing relates to business practice which advocates sustainable development. It comprises the marketing of goods and services that are eco-friendly and promoting the preservation of the environment in a sustainable way. Green marketing, more especially, in recent years, has begun to influence consumer and business activity.

Today, the need for green marketing has heightened, as environmental issues facing the world have become more pronounced. Past research on green marketing and consumer buying behavior has been conducted mainly in developed countries. There is a noticeable absence of research in this area in Tiruchirappalli city. The aim of the study, therefore, is to examine, at an exploratory level, the influence of green marketing on the buying behavior of Tiruchirappalli city consumers. This study is important because it is an attempt to address the dearth of research on the attitudes, perceptions and behavior of Tiruchirappalli city consumers on green marketing. The study will be beneficial to marketers, as it will ascertain the factors that influence consumer buying decisions for green products, thus, helping organizations to design an appropriate green marketing mix.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kilbourne, W.E. (2011) discussed the failure of green marketing to move beyond the limitations of the prevailing paradigm. The author identified areas that must be examined for their effect in the marketing/environment relationship, namely economic, political and technological dimensions of the cultural frame of reference.

Prothero, A. (2012) introduced several papers discussed in the July 1998 issue of 'Journal of Marketing Management' focusing on green marketing. This included a citation of the need to review existing literature on green marketing, an empirical study of United States and Australian marketing managers, a description of what a green alliance look like in practice in Great Britain, ecotourism and definitions of green marketing.

Prothero, A. & Fitchett, J.A. (2013) argued that greater ecological enlightenment can be secured through capitalism by using the characteristics of commodity culture to further progress environmental goals. Marketing not only has the potential to contribute to the establishment of more sustainable forms of society but, as a principle agent in the operation and proliferation of commodity discourse, also has a considerable responsibility to do so.

Oyewole, P. (2014) in his paper presented a conceptual link among green marketing, environmental justice, and industrial ecology. It argues for greater awareness of environmental justice in the practice for green marketing. A research agenda is finally suggested to determine consumer's awareness of environmental justice, and their willingness to bear the costs associated with it.

Karna, J., Hansen, E. & Juslin, H. (2015) interpreted that proactive marketers are the most genuine group in implementing environmental marketing voluntarily and seeking competitive advantage through environmental friendliness. The results also give

evidence that green values, environmental marketing strategies, structures and functions are logically connected to each other as hypothesized according to the model of environmental marketing used to guide this study.

Rayapura (2016) in support, cites a Nielsen global study which showed that 55% of global online consumers across sixty countries surveyed expressed willingness to pay more for products and services from companies that area dedicated to positive social and environmental impact.

III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the personal profile of the consumers using green products
2. To categorize the impact of consumer beliefs and attitudes towards green products
3. To identify the consumer awareness on the availability of environmentally friendly products

IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

For this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H01: There is a significant relationship between the gender of respondents and awareness of green products.

H02: There is a significant correlation between the age of respondents and motivation to change their consumption behavior.

H03: There is a significant correlation between the age of respondents and the price of green products affecting their buying decision.

V. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is mainly based on the Primary data and was collected using a structured questionnaire from 100 respondents and it was decided that respondents chosen were over 18 years of age. The research constituted an exploratory study. Non-Probability Random Sampling were adopted for this study. The pilot study was conducted initially by administering the questionnaire with a sample of 20 respondents. A few minor changes were effected to the questionnaire before final administration. The data were analyzed using SPSS (23.0)

VI. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Table1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic factors	Categories	Male	Female	Total(%)
Gender		50	50	100
Age	18-24	11	12	23
	25-34	18	12	40
	35-44	8	11	19
	45-54	5	3	8
	Over 54	7	3	10
Education level	PG	37	34	71
	UG	12	16	28
	Upto HSC	1	0	1
Occupation	Private Employee	49	48	97
	Govt. Employee	0	2	2
	Business	1	0	1
Monthly income (Rs.)	0-5000	1	10	11
	5001-10000	9	14	23
	10001-20000	20	17	37
	20001-30000	10	3	13
	30001-40001	7	5	12
	More than 40001	3	1	4

Table 1 reflects the demographic characteristics of respondents. From the selected sample of 100, the percentage of male and female respondents was 50% for each gender category. This indicates a 1:1 ratio of male to female respondents. The dominant age category was 25-34 years. A comparison of the education levels shows that many respondents have a high education level as 71% indicated that they hold a post graduate qualification. The occupational status of respondents indicates that the clear majority (97%) were private employees. Most respondents (37%) earned a monthly income of between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000.

Table2. Gender and awareness of green products

			Awareness		Total
			Yes	No	
Gender	Male	Count	46	3	49
		% within gender	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	48	1	49
		% within gender	98.0%	2.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	94	4	98
		% within gender	95.9%	4.1%	100.0%

Table 2 presents an analysis about the awareness of male and female respondents of green products. The clear majority (93.9% of males and 98% females) indicated that they were aware of green products while 4% of the participants did not have knowledge of green products. There were two non-responses.

Table3. Chi-Square Test-gender and awareness of green marketing

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance(2-sided)
Pearson's Chi-Square	1.043	1	.307

A Chi-Square test was conducted to test the relationship between the gender of respondents and awareness of green products. It was found that there between these two variables ($p > 0.05$), as reflected in Table 3. The null hypothesis is accepted. It can, therefore, be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the gender of respondents and awareness of green product.

Table 4. Correlation between age and motivation to change consumption behavior

		Age	Green marketing motivates to change my consumption behavior
Age	Pearson's correlation		-.109
	Sig.-(2-tailed)		.282
	N	100	100
Green marketing motivates me to change my consumption behavior	Pearson's correlation	-.109	
	Sig.-(2-tailed)	.282	
	Pearson's correlation	100	100

As indicated in Table 4, there is a very weak, negative correlation between age of respondents and motivation to change consumption behavior. This correlation is not significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is accepted, leading to the conclusion that there is no significant correlation between the age of respondent and green marketing motivating them to change their consumption behavior.

Table 5. Respondent perceptions of green products

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
Green products are healthy	0%	0%	8%	43%	49%	4.41
Green products are good for the environment	0%	0%	2%	37%	61%	4.59
Green products are of good quality	0%	4%	18%	40%	38%	4.12
Green products are better than standard products	3%	7%	23%	36%	31%	3.85
Green products are reasonable priced	17%	57%	14%	9%	3%	2.24
Green products are easily accessible in stores	13%	21%	25%	31%	10%	3.04
Green products are well promoted	13%	23%	22%	35%	7%	3.00
The price of green products affects my buying decision	2%	10%	13%	45%	30%	3.91

Table 5 depicts aspects of respondents' perceptions of green products. It emerged that 92% of respondents perceived green products as being healthy. The mean value of 4.41 suggests that there was strong agreement that green products are healthy, while 8% of respondents were neutral in this regard. 98% of respondents agree that green products are good for the environment. The mean value of 4.59 implies that respondents concur to a large degree with this. 78% of respondents perceive green products to be of good quality. The mean value of 4.12 confirms that respondents, to a large extent, believe that green products are of good quality. 67% of respondents consider green products to be better than standard products, with 23% being neutral in this regard. The mean value of 3.85 suggests that overall respondents are in fair agreement that green products are better than standard products. As far as pricing was concerned, 74% of the respondents disagreed that green products are reasonably priced. This is affirmed by a relatively low mean value of 2.24, indicating the extent of disagreement in this regard.

Table 6. Correlation between the age of respondents and the price of green products affecting their buying decision

	Age	The price of green products affects consumers buying decision
Age	Pearson's correlation	-.109
	Sig.-(2-tailed)	.282
	N	100
The price of green products affects my buying decision	Pearson's correlation	-.109
	Sig.-(2-tailed)	.282
	Pearson's correlation	100

As indicated in Table 6, there is a very weak, negative correlation between age of respondents and the price of green products affects consumer buying decision. This correlation is not significant ($p>0.05$). The null hypothesis is accepted, leading to the conclusion that there is no significant correlation between the age of respondent and the price of green products affects consumer buying decision.

Table 7. Green promotion

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
Advertisements for green products are effective in creating awareness of problems facing the environment	7%	5%	10%	40%	38%	3.97
Advertisements for green products motivate me to support the environment through buying green products	1%	7%	16%	46%	30%	3.97
I often read product labeling/packaging before making a buying	6%	17%	10%	34%	33%	3.71
Information on product packaging helps me make an informed decision about what I am consuming	2%	12%	8%	44%	34%	3.96

Table 7 reflects respondent attitudes towards the promotion of green products. The majority (78%) of the respondents believe that advertisements for green products are effective in creating awareness of problems facing the environment. 76% agree that advertisements for green products motivate them to support the environment through buying green products.

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

- 71 percent of the respondents have a high education level in using green products.
- Both the male and female respondents are aware of green products.
- The results of correlation indicate that there is no significant correlation between age and green marketing motivating consumers to change their consumption behavior.
- There is no significant correlation between the age of respondent and the price of green products affects consumer buying decision.
- Marketing plays a pivotal role in bringing consumer awareness. As the response show consumers would be more likely to choose environmentally friendly brands and were unable to recall green products. This expresses about the gap in marketing effort put by the green marketers in bringing consumer awareness.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

Consumer needs to be made more aware about the merits of Green products. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental threats. Green Marketing campaign and green advertising is good step toward it. Consumers must be motivated to switch brands or even pay a premium for the greener alternative. Make sure that consumer feel that they can make a difference. This is called empowerment and due to this main reason consumers will buy greener products. Further steps should be taken to control false promise and claim by the marketer to maintain legitimacy and trustworthiness of green products. For effective and efficient implementation of this concept of Green Marketing the factor that plays a major role is the Government. Unless the government creates specific and stringent laws and utilizes its authority to implement them, the concept cannot be conceptualized. If the Consumer Organization and the Government work in unity towards the common goal of minimizing the detrimental environmental impact of their activities, then they can surely save this environment and make this world a better place to live in. It is not enough for a company to green its products, consumers expect the products that they purchase pocket friendly and to help reduce the environmental impact in their own lives too. Green marketing is very low on the agenda of most businesses and therefore it's still an under-leveraged USP (Unique Selling Proposition). Therefore, effective green marketing targeted at the right audience will make a difference.

IX. CONCLUSION

Given India's rapid GDP growth rate and the highly negative environmental impact, demand for eco-labeled products may create the necessary consumer pressure to ensure a cleaner environment.

This study confirms the existence of an environmental value action, a gap between the consumers' beliefs and behavior over being green. This paper highlighted has various aspects of consumer buying behavior and shown that consumers favorite for greener goods could be influenced by marketing. Products given greater exposure will be more likely to sell in greater number. Eco-friendly environment are more likely to result in consumer behavior values, beliefs and attitudes with the green action that aligns with consumers' interest and products. Respondents were influenced by promotion for green products and felt that packaging, labeling and products information strongly influenced their buying decisions. There was strong support for retailers who were socially responsible. Implications for marketers have been presented, as well as direction for future research. The study is significant in that there has been very limited investigation into green marketing in Tiruchirappalli city, a developing economy. It hopes to serve as a stimulus for further research into green marketing, an area that has been receiving considerable attention, internationally, in recent years.

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