



CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS AND PACKAGING

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Abstract: Human beings are excessively consuming natural resources which is leading towards depletion of resources on earth. They are using plastic products and packages in large amount and such materials are non-biodegradable. Moreover deforestation is also increasing because of excessive cutting down of trees for the use of wood in manufacturing of products, such practices are resulting in environmental concerns such as global warming, low air quality, excessive pollution and many more., such hazardous conditions are developing concerns in peoples mind. Consumers are changing their preferences towards environment friendly products and packaging due to increasing environment concerns and as a result awareness and demand for eco-friendly products and packages is also increasing. This research is now being conducted to examine perception of consumers and influencing factors regards to green products and packages, and how the present market is genuinely attempting to produce environmentally friendly preference and the quality of environmentally friendly products based on the existing occurrence. Green marketing is a strategy used by marketers in response to customers' growing environmental awareness. Moreover, pricing is the main factor which drives consumer behavior to purchase product and use package, this study will test consumer behavior based on willingness of consumers to pay more for green products and packages.

In this study, the data is collected from 102 respondents. Respondents are both male and female and consumers age ranging from 18 to 40 are tested as they are active shoppers. Random sampling is used to select respondents. A structured questionnaire is used to collect primary data from respondents.

Keywords –

Global warming, deforestation, Consumer perception, green marketing, green products and packages, consumer behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The study focuses on consumers perceptions on green products and packages, especially customer views and buying intentions for environmentally friendly products and their willingness to pay more than that of complementary products and packages. Consumer's perceptions and understanding about environmentally friendly items can be used to determine a product's suitability for purchase. The expertise on green products and packages has a favorable impact on purchasing and those consumers who are aware about environmental problems are more likely to show favorable behavior before buying a product, considering the environment. The Growing environmental consciousness has sparked the customers' worries regarding environmental preservation, a significant increase in demand for green products and packaging. The public's awareness for environmental concerns has steadily grown over the last decades as global warming and climate change has

intensified. Customers have begun to demand environmentally friendly items and have begun to place a greater emphasis on the environment, wealth, and health.

Businesses must continually evaluate the most appealing and recent marketing trends. By regularly investigating the shifts in customer behavior in the marketplace, marketing trends may be discovered. Businesses may adapt what they are selling to customers by recognizing changes in consumer behavior. Consumers are more worried nowadays about environmental degradation and the damaging effects of the products and services they use. Thus, employing green marketing gives businesses a chance to satisfy customers' needs and allay their environmental worries while simultaneously gaining a competitive edge and a loyal customer base.

Government and business levels are both making efforts to safeguard the environment. The Environment Protection Act was adopted in India in 1986, and the Environment Audit was conducted in 1992 in order to preserve the ecosystem. The capital of India, New Delhi, was one of the highly polluted cities till the Supreme Court of India intervened to switch to alternate energy. The Supreme Court ordered total use of CNG in all public transportation in 2002 to fight with increasing pollution. Over the time, a number of marketplaces for reducing greenhouse gases have a time frame that can spur initiatives with significant municipal, environmental, advantages to the economy and quality of life. The Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol (CDM) is a step taken in the direction of greenhouse gas reduction. whereas in order to reduce soil erosion brought on by the production of conventional bricks, industry and the building lobby are increasingly adopting fly ash bricks. Additionally, they use solar power panels to produce electricity for elevators and common hallway lights will cut back on traditional power use consumption. Through the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, green products also proved to be recession-proof. In the first half of 2009, there were approximately 500 new product releases of items that make environmental claims, according to a data monitor survey.

One of the most crucial components of a food or non-food product is its packaging, which may serve as a guarantee of consumer protection. The packaging type can attract customers as a means of communication between businesses and ultimate consumers. Consumers' focus However, due to the new environmental protection guidelines, it needs to be both ecologically friendly, safeguard the items and price consciousness. In today's culture, Essential product criteria and particular environmental goals must be met by packaging. Eco-packaging needs to benefit the customer, be safe and healthy for people and the environment throughout its life cycle, be competitively priced and marketable, be manufactured, transported, and recycled using renewable energy sources, and making the most of recyclable or renewable resources, using clean production methods, and best practices; may be made to efficiently utilize the resources and energy used; and retrieved and used during several production cycles.

1.1 NEED FOR THE STUDY

There are several research on consumer behavior in relation to the environment, but the majority of them are focused on one or two marketing-mix aspects and do not create a connection between the characteristics that firms employ to persuade customers to buy green products, use green packages and their opinions towards these items Furthermore, recent research on consumer sentiments Consumer attitudes regarding eco-friendly items are inconsistent, for example, some studies found that consumers think conventional products have high quality value as compared to eco-friendly ones but in the other studies results shows the opposite.

Customers were willing to pay extra for a sustainable brand in 2015, according to the Global Sustainability Report, up from 55% in 2014. In 73 percent of situations, millennials were willing to pay a premium for sustainability. Consumers are becoming increasingly informed about the environment, and this knowledge is reflected in their selections to purchase green products. Nowadays every consumer is well educated and aware about environmental issues happen due to use of products and services that harms environment. Consumers also supports (RRR) policy in recycling, reusing products and reducing complementary products and packaging. When consumers felt, their actions can help fix social or environmental concerns, or when they value collective objectives and sharing, they are more inclined to buy socially responsible items. Consumer also purchase eco-friendly products due to their quality, cost, durability etc., these positive factors attract consumers perception towards environment friendly products. This study is going to explain Perceptions of consumers from different demographic profiles towards 'Green products' and 'Green packaging'. This study will show different outlooks of consumers regarding eco-friendly products and packaging as compared to ordinary ones, how some factors influence consumer buying behavior? What influence them most to buy green products or ordinary products.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

About 14 billion pounds of waste enters our oceans each year, mostly plastic. Nine out of 10 seabird species have ingested plastic and are carrying it in their stomachs. A plastic bottle takes 450 to 500 years to decompose while the nearly non-biodegradable PET containers will never decompose. Green products and green packaging have been world-wide concern for past few years and now it is important to safeguard environment from harming products and packaging materials served by companies, therefore it is important to know the consumers perspective towards eco-friendly and complementary products and packaging. Consumers awareness play an important role in putting forward eco-friendly products and packages and hence it is highly significant to know consumers perception towards eco-friendly and complementary products and are they ready to pay more money for an environment friendly a product and a package.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are you aware about harmful effects of complementary products and packages on our environment?
- Are you willing to pay more for an Eco-friendly product and a carry bag?
- What is the main reason that drives you to pay more for an Eco-friendly product and a package?
- What (if anything) is the most likely reason you would be Off purchasing an Eco-friendly product? What makes you buy Green-products and use green packaging?

1.4 RESEARCH GAP

Several research on consumer behavior patterns in relation to the environment, are focused marketing-mix factors and they are not focused on product and packaging characteristics or factors that drive consumer behavior, such as pricing, an important factor which drives consumer behavior for every product, and it decides consumers' willingness to pay for particular product or package.

These findings prompted us to form our own perspective on the matter of customers' attitudes toward green products and buying behavior. Indeed, the goal of this study is to test the factors that drives the purchase of eco-friendly products and use of green packaging in relation to characteristics of green products and packages and willingness to pay more for green products and packages.

1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Consumers have a critical role in making environmentally responsible product purchases. They were prepared to adjust their shopping habits to help the environment. Sustainable companies have taking pace after increment of eco-friendly goods in the market and it also reflected to the conventional companies as consumers shifted to green products and green packaging. Over time, the number of companies that have prospered by inventing and marketing green and sustainable products has expanded. Market usage of plastic has made disposal problem after its use increased and use of wood also increased due to which common problems like deforestation has taken pace. Also, huge competition between companies, companies use environment harming products to decrease cost, save resources and try conventional methods to compete in market. Consumer behavior models found that quality was a favorable antecedent to purchase, quality had a great effect on purchase behavior of consumers. Hence fourth government is also put forwarding green policies and tags to spread awareness about eco-friendly products. Government also provides tax credits to eco supportive brands who use to follow sustainable business models.

1.6 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study consumers perception towards green products and packaging
- To study consumers' willingness to spend more money on green products and packaging
- To identify consumers buying decisions and factors that influences those decisions
- To give recommendation on consumers buying decisions

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

CONSUMER PREFERENCE

The term consumer preference is a way how consumer makes decision to buy a product and there are numerous factors on which consumer calculate to make purchase like price, quality, etc. passions regarding a product make a strong decision for purchase of product is called as consumer perception. A positive feeling leads to strong perception and negative passions lead to wrong image. In moment's period substantially every consumer is well educated and they also concentrate on social and moral values which define conservation of terrain.

GREEN PACKAGING

Green packaging, also known as sustainable packaging, uses accoutrements and manufacturing ways to reduce energy consumption and reduce the dangerous impact of packaging on the terrain. Environmentally friendly packaging results frequently include biodegradable and recyclable accoutrements .

GREEN PRODUCTS

A green product is one that's designed to have the least quantum of negative influence on the terrain over its entire life cycle, including when it's no longer in use. Green products are frequently defined by two primary objects waste reduction and resource effectiveness maximization. It's recyclable, applicable, and biodegradable in nature. It's packaged in an environmentally responsible manner and uses the smallest accoutrements possible. Is environmentally friendly, has a low or zero carbon footmark, and a low or zero plastic impact.

GREEN MARKETING

Green marketing is a distinct type of marketing that promotes particulars grounded on their environmental advantages. The term "green" refers to the fact that particulars are manufactured without harming the terrain, and that product constituents and packaging are likewise environmentally friendly.

1.8 VARIABLE FOR THE STUDY

- Consumer perception is dependent variable and prices of products and packages are independent variables.
- Consumers perception is dependant variable and characteristics of product are independent variable

1.9 HYPOTHESIS

- Hypothesis 1 : To test what influence consumers to buy green products and packages.
- Hypothesis 2 : To test consumers readiness to pay more money for green products and packaging.
- Hypothesis 3 : To test what influence consumers to pay more money for green products and packaging

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Modi and Patel (2013) in their research found that consumers have begun to change their purchasing patterns by preferring “environmentally friendly products” and “packaging”.

P N Vijayasree¹, Dr. Mahesh Pavan Sathavalli², Mr. C. Prakash³ found that in order to understand how consumers in the area feel about the consumption and usage pattern of green goods since the pandemic, the current research has taken into account three factors: awareness, purchasing behavior, and green product purchase. The association between consumers' purchases of environmentally friendly products and their degree of environmental consciousness can be attributed to these three factors.

ANJANAKRISHNA V.P.M indicated that Consumers of today are aware of green products. They recognize that green products can address environmental challenges as well as improving quality of life, and they hold this belief. However, they do not use green tags. If environmentally friendly items are priced similarly to conventional ones, The public is prepared to pay for it. Consequently, the government needs to adopt policies to encourage the use of eco-friendly products.

SUDHIR SACHDEV, Consumers increasing concern for environment and self-protection increases the demand for eco-friendly products and packaging. Consumers are key drivers of green marketing.

Anca Francisca Cruceru, Cristina Teodora Bălăceanu and Raluca-Giorgiana Chivu, their study informs decision-makers and marketing managers about the factors that influence sustainable consumer behaviour. Research shows that her two motivating factors, saving money through recycling and protecting the environment, can influence her purchasing decisions for green packaging.

Ms. M Padmaja Vani found in her study that consumers are influenced by different description of green products, which means people are ready to accept it but still entrepreneurs and govt need to increase the awareness.

Mayank Jain and Amit Bhatia, came at a conclusion that level of awareness for green products in consumers is high as well as they have shown positive attitude towards them but still not aware of green initiatives launched by different government and independent agencies, they are also concerned of price and market availability of green products.

Nguyen Hoai Anh in his study found that participants gave positive voting's towards function of ecological packaging in safeguarding product. Study also found factors that influence consumers attitudes in consideration of green packaging at the time of purchase of product, in addition consumer view pricing as a main factor that drives their behavior towards purchase decision.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are three methodologies to conduct exploration are quantitative, qualitative styles and mixed system. In qualitative exploration, one could explore stations, actions, and gests with the use of similar styles as interviews or concentrate groups The yield of qualitative exploration consists of in- depth opinions from the actors who generally number far smaller than in quantitative studies, but the contact with the former tends to last much longer. By discrepancy, in quantitative exploration, one can quantify stations and actions or measure variables. Unlike qualitative exploration, quantitative exploration uses measurable data that calculate, data, and patterns. The quantitative technique was best suited to this study because we intended to gain data from a large sample via questionnaires assessing consumer actions and comprehensions using numerical data. we also planned to use statistical means to quantify, measure, and dissect the data and express the results numerically.

3.1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In the current study, we have used quantitative design. Quantitative exploration designs fit two introductory types that are experimental and non-experimental designs. Nonexperimental-designs correspond of descriptive exploration and correlational studies, Descriptive exploration involved the gathering of data that describe events, and also the data collection association, tabulated, depicted. The alternate design, and the system used in this study is correlational exploration. We will have used descriptive design.

3.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND POPULATION

Sample size

A sample of 102 respondents collected both from male and female respondents.

Tools for sample analysis

Simple percentage analysis

Sampling technique

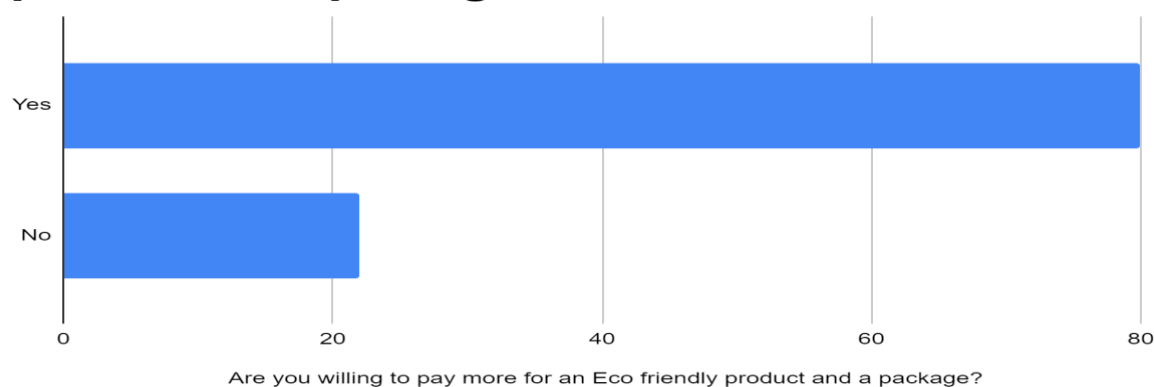
Non probability sampling technique is used for the analysis of responses that are randomly selected.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic profile		Number of Respondents	Percentage
AGE	0-20 years	35	34.3%
	21-30 years	60	58.8%
	31-40 years	5	4.9%
	41-50 years	2	2%
	TOTAL	102	100%
GENDER	Male	67	65.7%
	Female	35	34.3%
	TOTAL	102	100%
OCCUPATION	Student	87	85.3%
	Employee	15	14.7%
	TOTAL	102	100%

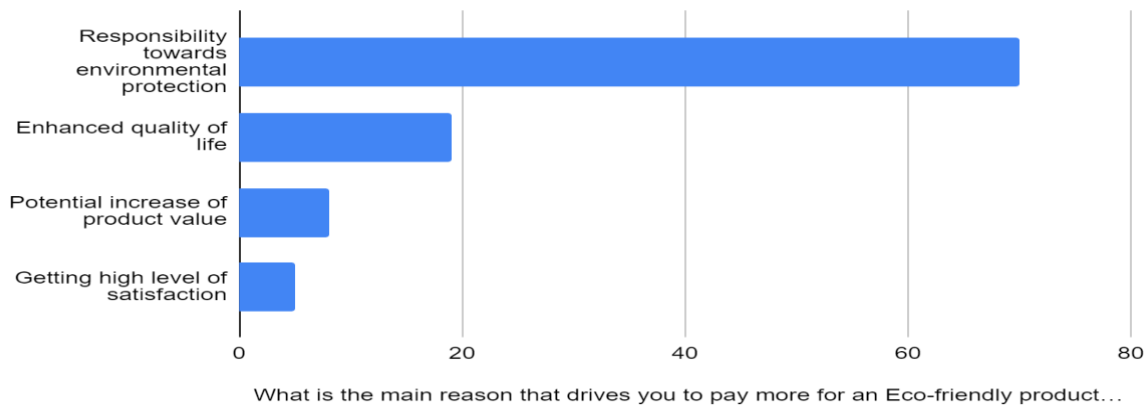
The demographic profile of study targets respondents as both gender male and female with different age strata ranging between 20 to 50 years. This research mostly targets students and employees as because they are active shoppers as well as they are well educated. Total there are 102 respondents with different age, gender and occupation.

Are you willing to pay more for an Eco friendly product and a package?



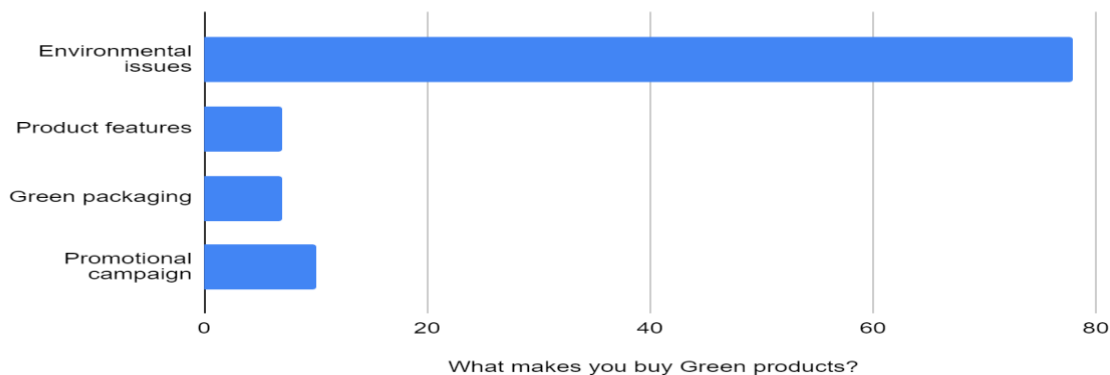
The above table shows that 78.4% respondents are willing to pay more money to buy green products and have a green package whereas 21.6% respondent still don't want pay more. This analysis proves that for large number of respondents environment is more important than the value of money. This clears that price of green products and packages should be made comparatively equal or slightly more than complementary products.

What is the main reason that drives you to pay more for an Eco-friendly product and a package?



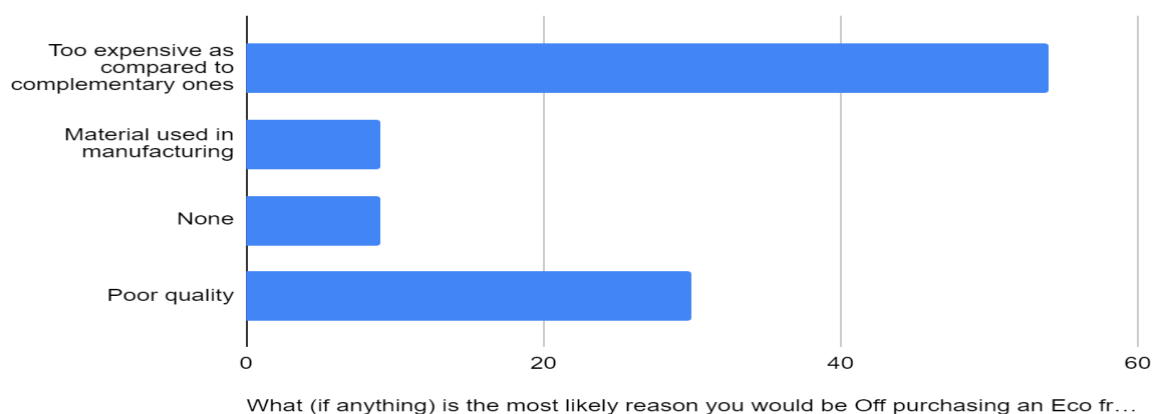
Above table indicates that 68.6% of respondents are ready to pay more for environmentally products as their responsibility towards environment. 18.6% respondents pay more money as they get enhanced quality of life, 7.8% get more product vale and 4.9% of respondents get high level of satisfaction. This statement signifies that most of the consumers purchase eco-friendly products even they are more priced than complementary products as consumers understand their responsibility towards environment and they are well aware about harmful effects of complementary products on environment.

What makes you buy Green products and use Green packaging?



This analysis depicts that 76.5% of respondents buys green products for environmental issues than 9.8% of respondents are influenced by promotional campaigns, 6.9% attracted towards product features and 6.9% respondents purchases because of green packaging. So, majority of respondents buys green products for safe guard environment from harmful effects of complementary products. This shows that consumers are well aware of environment issues occur due to use and dispose of complementary products and packaging.

What (if anything) is the most likely reason you would be Off purchasing an Eco friendly product?



As the above table indicates that 52.9% of respondents would not like to purchase eco-friendly products when they will be too costlier than complementary products whereas 29.4% of respondent will decline due to poor quality, 8.8% respondents will refuse due offsetting material used for manufacturing and 8.8% respondents have no issues with eco-friendly products. This signifies that companies producing green products should focus on price and make it cost effective so that they can be sold at competitive prices.

3.4 FINDINGS

Through the above analysis, it can be interpreted that environmental concerns are main reasons to drive buying behavior of consumers towards eco-friendly products and packages. Majority of consumers would like to pay more money to purchase eco-friendly products and packages as compared to ordinary ones. From consumers point of view, the environment and their health are more valuable than money and anything else. Consumers are well concerned about the environment and their health for what they are ready to spend extra money, but consumers will reject the green products and packages if they would be charged with too much high for those ones. So, marketers should fix a competitive pricing in comparison with ordinary products and packages so that consumers buying behavior should mostly move towards green products and packages. The overall analysis shows that each and every consumer is well perceived of green products and packages, but still there is need for awareness campaigns by government and marketers to motivate whole society to go for eco-friendly products and package.

3.5 LIMITATIONS

- Understanding consumers perceptions is vast and requires in depth research, and due to time constraints, time duration for study was limited.
- This research was carried out on few randomly selected respondents but understanding consumers as a whole was missed out.

4. CONCLUSION

This study, consumers preference towards green products and packaging concludes that almost each consumer participated in in research is well aware of green products and packaging and also consumers are well known of effects of complementary products on environment, though this study concludes that purchase behavior of consumers towards green products and packaging is positive. Consumers are concerned about environment extensively. Most consumers regularly recycle their product packages on a regular basis. Consumer education played a vital role in educating consumers regarding green products and packaging and harmful effects of complementary products and packages. According to research most of the consumers are confident that green marketing will be having a huge impact in future regards to making world more sustainable. Green marketing improved proper utilization of resources and also helped in protection of environment. Green marketing led in creation of demand for green products and packaging. Based on research consumers are desired for purchasing of green products and positive towards usage of green packages. As the analysis shows that most of the consumers are ready to pay more amount of money to buy green products and for green package for enhanced quality of life and to save environment from depletion. Price is the main concern which drives consumer buying behavior Consumers are well concerned about future state of environment and this signifies demand of green products and packages in near future. Though many consumers are still not confident that do companies are truthful in promoting their green products.

Marketers should come up with variety of green products and packages that should give equivalent or more satisfaction than complementary products and packages, and they should also focus on the pricing of the products as price is the main factor which leads to purchase behavior, pricing should be competitive with complementary products, this will motivate consumers to make their decisions mainly towards green products and packages. Marketers really have to be focused on green marketing extensively, which will create believe among consumers that companies are really truthful in promoting green products.

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