

Green Product Buying Behaviour and Factors Influencing the Consumer Buying Decisions- A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – To study the various factors which influence the consumer buying behaviour of Green Products. To understand how the social, economic and demographic profile and concern for environment impacts the Green product purchasing decisions of consumers.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The is an Exploratory study which is conducted involving sample respondents of Green product buying customers.

Findings – The findings of the study indicate that awareness level amongst consumers about Green Products is high. The buying behaviour of Green Products are influenced by the variables such as the geographical region, age, education and income of the respondents.

Practical implication –The results of the study may help marketers of Green product to develop marketing strategy of Green products specifically based on the understanding the consumers buying behaviours. This study will help the Marketers to device appropriate and unique Green product promotional strategies based on the consumer buying behaviours.

Originality/value – The study identifies the fact that consumers prefer Green Product for its Quality and for its eco-friendly nature

Keywords

Green Marketing, Eco friendly products, Green Environment, Green Marketing Strategy, Green Product buying behavior.

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Introduction

The concern for the Environment and allied issues is drawing utmost attention of the Business world in general and customers in specific. The consumption of the Green products once considered as a fashion has now become a norm and there is a drastic change in the buying behaviors of the consumers of Green products. The blend of activities related to the “Go Green” initiatives includes at both the consumption level and manufacturing level clubbed with the importance attached to the recycling and reuse of raw materials, check and control on the pollution, and on the whole protection of environment. On one side the control of the human population is being focused at and on the other side conscious and cautious efforts to safeguard the environment and natural resources for the future generation is being attributed utmost importance. Be it tier one or tier two cities the common sentiments of the consumer prefer products which are environmental friendly against the products which are cost economic but is sure to cause destruction to the environment.

During the 90's the research focused on the Green Marketing was more concentrated towards the benefits that the corporates could derive out of such initiatives. The trend has slowly shifted from the turn of the century (from the early 2000 onwards). The research works undertaken from then, have started depicting on the environmental friendly behavioral perspective of the consumer. The action research results started depicting on how the consumers have become more prone to buy eco-friendly products as a result of their cognizance and understanding of the ever changing and aggregated problems pertaining to sustainability.

The Buying behavior and the process of making purchase decisions of the Green products depends on multiple factors which are based on the consumers level of awareness and

knowledge about the Green Products (Mostafa 2006), the reputation of the company in terms of their concern to environmental issue(Cornwell and Schwegker), the perception on the quality of the Green product and its price(D'Scouza et al, 2007) and more importantly the promotional initiatives specifically the advertisement efforts taken by the company marketing the Green products(Thogersen J,2000)

The product demand for the Green products has indicated irregular demand across various segments (Peattie & Ottoman 1992).Therefore the Organizations which are attempting to popularize and promote their products should accordingly plan their specific promotional strategies which will sink with the customers of that particular segment and not a general marketing strategy across the segments(Bohlen et al ,1993).On top of all the promotional efforts made by the organizations marketing these Green Products, there is always a visible gap that exists between the Attitude and Behavior, wherein 30% plus consumers who have very strong concern for the environmental issues but this positive attitude towards the environment is not getting translated into purchase of Green products(Oates, Hwang, Young and Caroline,2010). Innumerable factors are responsible for widening of this gap, the study has been focused towards understanding deeply on how these factors are influencing in the buying behavior of the Green product customers.

There is a great significance of the terms Green Marketing, Green Consumer buying, Green or Environmental products to the world of Business. These products are attributed to as the products that aims at conserving energy, disregards the usage of toxic agents, checks on the pollutants and waste to ensure natural and safe environmental wellbeing (J Ottman,1977). Though there is synergy in terms of perceiving Green Marketing and Holistic Marketing, the latter considers marketing of the Green products in a much

wider from and right from the point of production to the point of disposing in a more refined eco-friendly way. The real purpose of marketing is to ensure the best of the products with utmost perfection in terms of quality, value at an affordable cost and availability. The Green Marketing perspective intends to offer the products without being harmful to the environment and with all the attributes of marketing mentioned above. (Rakshita 2011, Sharma and Mishra, 2010).

The level of awareness of the consumers on the Green Products and its marketing has been steadily growing. However, when it comes to the buying and using of these products there is still some concerns in terms of the awareness and intends culminating into purchase of the Green Products. Though consumers acknowledge the fact that these products may really be able to create environmental concerns in their minds, the un denied fact is there is a wide gap between the consumer attitude towards Green products and their buying behavior. There are innumerable factors that are truly responsible for buying Green products, may be the quality, price, features, color, or even the packaging but it requires an in-depth probing to understand the prime factors that are affecting the buying behavior of the Green Products by the consumers.

Literature Review

Research on consumer behavior of green products conducted in Bangladesh indicates that variables like demographic, environmental awareness, consciousness on the activities of human on the safety of the natural environment. (Yianna et al 2010)

Several researches held in this area of consumer buying behavior of products sold in the Green market indicates that the factors such as Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE), personal norms and values, perceived behavioral control, knowledge on product, belief and trust on the product. Study by Tan et.al., (2019) aims to investigate the various factors which possibly effect customer purchase intention among young consumer. Further the findings of the research done in this area reveals that the situational factors such as quality of the products, product attributes, product pricing, product Branding and eco- friendly labelling have a very strong impact on the Green product buying behavior of consumers. (Collins Marfo Agyeman, 2014). Though consumers who are conscious about the environmental safety and protection intend very much to buy the Green product are experiencing the high price of these products as a stumbling block in terms of buying these products.

The Organizations involved in the business of Green products consider the younger generation as the target customers who exhibit paramount and supreme importance to these Green products. The research on the youth buying behavior of products indicates that they have much more concern and conscious of the Eco-friendly products and predominantly the Green products. Their buying behavior is also influenced by their standard of living they intend to maintain, the social class they belong to, their friends and well-wishers around them. (Venter and Aanvar, 2014).

The research on Green Marketing (Jolly and Cherian 2012) also insists the need for the major shift that has to happen in

the behavior and attitudes of the customers. The concern of the Environment, and real dearth in terms of realizing the importance of safe environment may also culminate in the non-adoption or not preferring and buying of the Green Products. There is a strong need for the upgradation of the Marketing of the Green Products in terms of Marketing strategy, promotions by the Corporates. The corporates promoting these products should also incorporate the suggestions made by the Green Product consumers and also seek assistance and involvement of all the stakeholders including the Governmental support. The research study Tantawi et al(2009) conducted in Egypt adds a specific observation of the importance of the Governments profound role in promoting the market for the Green Product.

The influence of Green purchasing is very much prevalent among the University students states the research done by Ching & Lasun (2014). The research established a strong relationship between the consumers buying concern and their buying behavior. A Study by Khare, A. (2015), examines the influence of previous environmental attitude and green self-identity on young Indian green consumers. A study by Suki, N. M. (2016) analyzes the moderating effect between knowledge of green brand among the consumers and also examine the relationship between green product positioning and green product consumer purchase intention.

Table 1: The consolidation of the related literature reviews of various studies highlighting the factors influencing the Green product buying behavior is presented below:

Name of the study	Environmental Attitude	Government Role	Social Influence	Environmental concern	Product Quality	Green Consumption	Economic Factor	Green Advertisement	Demographic Factors	Green Marketing /Promotion
Tantawi et al (2009)	Yes	Yes								
Lacina and Ching (2015)			Yes	Yes				Yes		
Ahiz, Yasin (2017)	Yes				Yes				Yes	
Awan (2011)			Yes	Yes					Yes	
Lin, Chen(2016)			Yes			Yes				Yes
Xiong, Huang (2010)			Yes		Yes			Yes		
Munisha Anwar & Marika Venter (2014)	Yes		Yes				Yes		Yes	
Jacob Cherian & Jolly Jacob(2012)		Yes		Yes			Yes			Yes
Collins Marfo Agyeman(2014)				Yes	Yes		Yes			
Hecam Zaid Hecam & Pariza Youssef (2017)	Yes			Yes		Yes		Yes		
Sanjay Kumar, Radha Gang & Anita Mahapatra (2012)	Yes			Yes				Yes		
D.P. Chandrasekar (2014)	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes	
Hans Hendiger et al (2014)	yes			Yes						
Shella homini			Yes		Yes		Yes			
Yatish Joshi (2015)	yes				Yes					

Name of the study	Environmental Attitude	Government Role	Social Influence	Environmental concern	Product Quality	Green Consumption	Economic Factor	Green Advertisement	Demographic Factors	Green Marketing /Promotion
Samarasinghe (2012)		Yes	Yes						Yes	
Young et. al. (2009)			Yes			Yes				
Batool & Iqbal (2016)	Yes								Yes	
Tan Kue Lu (2014)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes				
Kamathij Muthum, Sarathit	Yes			Yes		Yes			Yes	
Parichatnon, and Ke-Chung Peng (2017)										
Genoveva (2016)	Yes	Yes			Yes			Yes		
M. Yazeen Khan (2014)				Yes	yes	Yes				
Sanjay Kumar, (2011)	yes				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
D. Gertha, D. Annie		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Ashwani K. Gupta,	yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Ms. T. Vasumathi,	yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes

Research Objectives

- To study the factors that influences the buying behavior of Green Product
- To study the effectiveness of market promotional efforts taken by the Organizations in terms of advertisements and Green products packaging initiatives to impact the customer buying decisions.

Hypotheses of the Study:

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H1: There is significant influence of age on the buying behavior of Green products

H2: There is significant influence of gender on the buying behavior of Green products

H3: There is significant influence of income on the buying behavior of Green products

H4: There is significant influence of concern for environment on the buying behavior of Green products

H5: There is significant influence of Green product market promotional efforts taken by the Organizations on the buying behavior of Green products

H6: There is significant influence of multiple factors like age, gender, income levels, concern for environment and Green product market promotional efforts of Organizations happens simultaneously on the buying behavior of Green Products.

Research Methodology

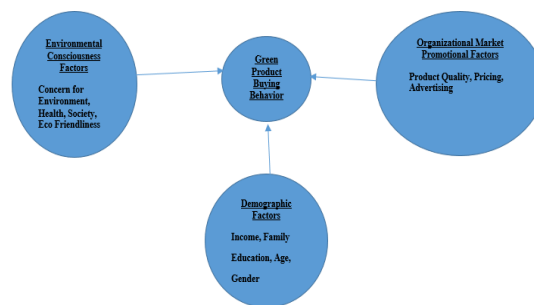
The is an Exploratory study which is conducted involving sample respondents of Green product buying customers.

Framework on factors influencing the Green Product Buying Behavior:

The previous research studies indicate demographics play a very important role as a variable affecting the purchase of the Green Products (Miller& samli,1992), specifically educated women have shown high inclination towards Eco friendly products (Roberts ,1996). The overall awareness and importance of Green products and environmental sensitization is prevailing more with the men than women (Mostafa, Mohamed 2007). This has indicated the importance of the **Variable-1. Demographic** as a very strong variable, specifically the gender, income, and the education plays a very important role in impacting the consumer buying behavior of the green products. The intention to purchase the Green products is due to the profound positive attitude of the consumers towards protection of environment, for the fair trade practices and preference to the local products (Kas & C Tanner 2007) also impacts the response towards the Green product marketers' promotional initiatives. (Andre et al.,2008). Plus, the social factors are also considered to be the prime influencer of green product buying behavior of the customers. The abstract of the earlier research draws the importance of the **Variable-2. The concern for the Environment, consciousness towards environmental issue**, and the Green product buying behavior. The major role that the Organizations marketing and promoting the Green products has been attributed by the researchers' stating that the firms' efforts to offer the Green Products at affordable prices, best of Quality and attractive packaging substantially influences the consumer buying behavior of Green Products (D'Souza et al,2006). Based on the above research it is evident the **Variable-3 related to the Green product market promotional efforts made by the organization** of the Green Products such as environmental friendly packaging, right kind of pricing and best of quality products positively impacts the buying behavior of the Green product buyers.

The quantitative research method was performed with the help of carefully formulated Questionnaire. Applying the conclusive approach, the data from the secondary sources was drawn specifically from journal and other print and on-line Articles. With the help of the Causal Research technique (Briks 2007) the testing of the cause and

relationship that exists between the variables was done. Application of the cross –sectional design was utilized for the descriptive research.



Data Collection and Sampling Procedure:

Survey method was used in this study to collect the primary data. The hard and soft copies of the Questionnaires were distributed among the 200 respondents selected across India. The respondents varying in terms of their demographics, specifically age, educational and economic profiles were selected based on convenient sampling procedure. The data collected from the respondents were kept confidential. The Questionnaire had two parts, the questions pertaining to the demographic profile of the respondents wide their gender, income, age, education, and family details were presented in the first part. In the second part of the questionnaire the questions to probe on the respondent's concern towards environment, the effectiveness of market promotional efforts taken by the Organizations in terms of advertisements and Green products packaging initiatives that influenced the purchasing behavior of Green products were framed. Seven point and five point Likert scales were used to rate the response of the green product buyers.

Secondary Data:

In addition to the primary data, in order to identify the research gap and also to establish the hypothesis literature review was done in a widespread manner. The pertinent articles were reviewed with the assistance of Google scholar, plus using Wits library data sources. The review of literature was collected from articles which were published in Wiley, Emerald, Science Direct, EbscoHost and JSTOR. In additions to the Journal articles, literature from working papers and dissertations were also widely used in the study.

Measuring Instrument

The Questions were developed referring to various research literature and scales developed earlier, and the modification and adaption was done on the scales so as to align with the objectives of this research. The scales which was developed to study the influence of concern for environment was adapted from Subjective Norms Scale of Han et al.s (2010) and Bush et al(2001). In order to study the awareness of the respondents on the subjects related to the environmental issues the scales on the Perceived Knowledge of Mostafa (2007) was utilized and adapted appropriately. In order to understand the efforts made by the marketers to promote the Green product and the understanding of the respondents on those initiatives of the Marketers, the Market Knowledge Scale developed by Bush et al (2001) was used. The access

the attitude of the respondents towards Green products, the scales developed by Oliver et al (2011) on the Belief's and attitude was utilized with certain degree of adaptation. Laroche et al's (2001) purchase behavior scale also was also very handy and useful for developing the scales to examine the Green product buying behavior.

The pilot study was performed with 30 sample respondents, the reliability and validity test using the Cronbach alpha was done to validate the instrument used in the research.

5.1.1 Sample

Questionnaires were circulated among the 200 respondents selected across India. The respondents varying in terms of their demographic, social, educational and economic profiles were selected based on convenient sampling procedure.

5.1.2 Data collection

Survey method was used in this study to collect data. The hard and soft copies of the Questionnaires were distributed among the respondents.

5.1.3. Data Analysis:

The data which was collected using structured questionnaires was analyzed through SPSS statistical tool particularly multiple regression analysis used to study the factors which influences the preferences of Green products and the buying behavior of the respondents. In order to measure the consistency of the result the reliability testing was done, which also ensured that the items are error free.

Cronbach's Alpha Test:

The Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted to check on the instrument's reliability and validity. The computed value of the Test which is 0.871 clearly shows that the instrument chosen for the study is highly reliable and the adequacy of the sample chosen for the study. The test value of 0.871 is well above the standard value 0.70, proposed by Nunnally (1978).

Table No- 2 Cronbach's Alpha Test Results

Reliability Statistics	Number of Items
Cronbach's Alpha	
0.871	30

Table No.-3 Demographic Profile Of The Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	132	66
	Female	68	34

Age in Years	21 to 25	22	11
	26 to 30	34	17
	31 to 35	38	19
	36 to 40	36	18
	41 to 50	28	14
	51 to 55	18	9
	56 to 60	14	7
	60 and Above	10	5
Level of Education	Up to 10th (High School)	14	7
	Up to 12th (Higher Secondary)	16	8
	Diploma and Degree	88	44
	Post-Graduation	72	36
	Above Post-Graduation	10	5
Occupation	Students	16	8
	Employee-Private	102	51
	Employee-Government	44	22
	Own Business	28	14
	Others	10	5
Monthly Income (Rs)	Less than 25,000	16	8
	25,001-50,000	34	17
	50,001-75,000	108	54
	75,001-1,00,000	36	18
	Above	4	2

	1,00,000		
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Regression Analysis:

Regression analysis was performed as the number of independent variables considered in the study are six variables.

The Linear regression equation is given as follows:

$$Y = 5.398 + 0.291 X_1 + 0.252 X_2 + 0.658 X_3 + e$$

Where: Y = Green Product Buying Behavior

X1 = Concern for Environment

X2 = Green product Market promotional efforts of the Organization

X3 = Income level

X4 = Age

X5 = Gender

Table No -4 Regression Analysis

Variables	Co-efficient (Unstandardized)		Co-efficient (standardized)	t-Value	Significance
	B Value	Standard Error	Beta Value		
(Constant)	5.398	3.289		1.623	0.103
Concern for Environment	0.291	0.58	0.311	4.641	0
Market Promotional Efforts	0.252	0.68	0.242	3.539	0
Income Level	0.658	0.124	0.335	5.298	0
Gender	-0.003	0.063	-0.002	-0.071	0.938
Age	0.026	0.52	0.022	0.548	0.571

It is evident from the table that the independent variables like the concern for environment, market promotional efforts of the Organizations, Income levels and the Age of the respondents have positive influence of the buying behavior of the Green Products. It is obvious that the independent variable gender has negative effect on the customer buying behavior of Green products.

The T-test analysis indicates the whether the independent variable has a significant influence (partially or fully) on the dependent variable or not. As per the analysis it is clear that the independent variables such as the concern for environment(X1), market promotional efforts of the Organizations(X2), Income levels(X3) have significant influence in the Green Product buying of the customers and the value of the significance is less than 0.05. However, the other two independent variable wide Gender(X4) and Age(X5) indicates that they do not have significant influence on the buying behavior of customer of Green products. The computed value of these variables (t=0938 and t=0571) is higher than the 0.05.

Table No -5 F- Test

Model	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Significance
Regression	23239.391	5	4647.872		
Residual	9624.389	195	49.355	94.172	0
Total	32863.78	200			

A. Independent Variables, Predictors and are constant (concern for environment, market promotional efforts of the Organizations, Income levels and Age)

B. Green Product buying behaviour of customers (Dependent Variable)

The F- Test value 94.172 which is higher than the F Table value indicates that there is significant influence of multiple factors like age, gender, income levels, concern for environment and Green product market promotional efforts of Organizations happens simultaneously on the buying behavior of Green Products.

Table No -6 Co-Efficient Correlation Analysis (Summary of the Model)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.83	0.717	0.714	5.41798

(Independent Variables, Predictors and are constant (concern for environment, market promotional efforts of the Organizations, Income levels and Age)

From the R- Value it is evident that 71.4 percentages of the variation which is seen in the Green product buying behavior is explained by the constant variables (Independent variables- concern for environment, market promotional efforts of the Organizations, Income levels and Age). The balance of 28.6 percentages of the variables remains beyond the scope of the research which has a profound influence on the green product buying behavior of the customers.

Discussion And Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is evident that the Younger aged respondents are more prone towards buying the Green products and are more attracted by the Green packaging and promotional initiatives of the marketers of these products. Economic status also has some say on the preferences and purchase of these Green products as these are little costly and are still not affordable to the consumers who are cost conscious. The preference and the buying behavior is specific and varies from region to region which gives an indication to the marketers of the green product to device different promotional strategies for different markets.

Implication of the Research:

The findings of the current research also support the results of the earlier research regarding the strong concern of the customers towards environment. The awareness of the customers about the environmental issues and their concern for them is an indication to the marketers to create a new segment of such buyers and develop Green product market promotional strategy to influence this set of buyers. In depth understanding of the profile of these customers with environmental concern will help the marketers to develop special and visible environmental packaging in specific and green marketing mix approach in all their efforts to

influence the buying behavior of customers of green products.

Limitation Of The Study And Future Research

Within the available time limits, this study has considered several independent variables which has strong influence on the buying behavior of the customers of green products, however the list of independent variables identified in the study are not exhaustive. Further, one cannot underestimate the influence of the other factors influencing the buying behavior of green products which has not been included in this study. Though the study has been attempted to include the respondents across the Country(India) to understand green product buying behavior, there is still scope to enhance the sample size and coverage across all the states of the country in future to get more meaningful response from the enhanced sample size and diversity. This would help the marketers of green product to understand the customers' buying behavior better and will help them in devising the marketing strategy of the green products much more effectively.

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