

Analysis of environmental Antecedents of Green Consumer Behavior in India

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ABSTRACT

Consumer actions strongly affect the environment, it is important to know the underlying factors of consumer behaviour in green purchasing. Present study throws the light on those environmental factors that effect the purchasing behaviour of green consumer. Environmental antecedents of green consumer behaviour like psycho-graphical, personality traits, cultural values, environmental knowledge, consumer awareness and other environmental antecedents were listed below to study them in deep. This paper identifies and tries to understand the purchase behavior of green products of urban consumers. Data were collected from the four directions of Udaipur city. Descriptive statistics, Reliability and Validity were applied to study the factors effecting the green consumer behaviour.

Key words: *Green consumer, Consumer behaviour, Sustainability, Environmental Antecedents, Green Behaviour, Environmental knowledge.*

Introduction

In the last several decades, the environment has become an increasingly noticeable concern for socially responsible behaviour, and issues in the environmental domain have been gaining the attention of researches in marketing. Green consumer behaviour varies in different cultures. Consumers are likely to seek others opinions to reduce their search and effort for buying new products. Researchers have stressed the need for studies in the context of protecting the environment and consumer behaviour. Environmental factors include Retail Environment, Marketing, Shelf Space, Product Availability, Brand, Packaging and Labeling, Social values / Subjective Norm, Social Influences/ Peer, Demographic factors (gender, age education), Government Initiative and Legislation. Therefore, it is important to understand

the different factors affecting green consumer behaviour.

Review of literature

Rapid economic growth and resulting overconsumption have accelerated environmental deterioration worldwide, prompting escalated consumption-related environmental concerns. The world has a fixed amount of natural resources, some of which are already depleted or ruined. The risks to human health are great. Therefore, the need of the hour is that every consumer is made to think green. There are multiple lines of thinking as far as Environment and Green Consumer Behaviour is concerned. It depends on environmental attitude, environmental concern, lifestyles, generational approach; various demographic variables, motivators so on and so forth. Several researchers have studied and tried to

understand the environmental factors affecting green consumer behaviour. Which are listed below:
Retail Environment : In the past, retailers used to enter smaller, prosperous markets as well as large ones but usually doing what other big brands were doing once dominated big box retailers has now opened up to a great variety of specialty retailers (Sharma, 2017). International retailers are also focusing on tackling the individual challenges of markets, which require different strategies for success.

Marketing : Furthermore, Bukhari (2011) proposed that this type of marketing allows companies to access new markets as well as giving businesses a competitive edge. The green marketing mix encompasses product development and the implementation of pricing, promotional, and distribution strategies specifically designed to promote and preserve environmental welfare.

Shelf Space : After so many years the emphasis of shelf space and product assortment models has been shifted towards an integrated category management optimization model. Ramaseshan *et al.* (2009) stated that now retailers have to make number of decisions like what kind of products need to stock on the shelf (assortment decisions), the number of facings to allocate to each product (shelf space allocation decision), the level of ordering and the frequency of assortment evaluation or review.

Product Availability: Mostafa (2007) observed that companies are generally selling the green products under the premium tag. This premium tag leads to the premium cost and hence, hampers the availability spectrum of the product because small retailers avoid storing the costly products. The more sales can be generated if companies make sure the easy and wide availability the green product.

Brand : A brand which can be a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of all of them which is anticipated to identify the goods and services of seller, to one seller, or group of sellers and to differentiate them those of competitors' (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Furthermore, Jiménez, (2010) stated out that the country of origin is an essential cue for consumers to evaluate unknown products. Prior studies suggested that country of origin affects consumers' product evaluation and quality perceptions (Lee *et al.*, 2011). Parts of consumers' brand knowledge are derived from the countries where the products were manufactured, design or other brand-related characteristics.

Packaging and Labeling : Draskovic *et al.* (2009) anticipated that packaging is a communication tool between businesses and consumers and it is capable of attracting consumers' attention. Packaging, shape, size, colour, materials, and labelled information is the overall perception a consumer look after the product. It is important to investigate how consumers perceive packaging and understand how packaging communicates and affects consumers buying behaviour.

Social values / Subjective Norm : Subjective/social norms can influence behaviour as they may exert pressure on an individual to act in a certain way (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). However, two studies reported a negative relationship between reference groups and individual green purchase behaviour (Connell, 2010).

Social Influences/ Peer : Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) explored that researchers and marketers are interested to work on normative reference groups and comparative reference groups, parents, co-workers, teachers, and peers who provide the individual with norms, values, and attitudes through direct interaction which are parts of normative reference groups. Comparative reference groups have been defined as sports heroes and entertainment figures that provide standards.

Demographic factors (gender, age education) : Demographics which generally refers to consumer's personal attributes such as age, income and education level. Sinnappan *et al.* (2011) resulted that consumers buying behaviour towards green products has no impact with the race group. Generally, green consumer behaviour has always been perceived to have a positive relation with the income due to the generic assumption that most of the environmental products comes with the higher prices than the conventional one (Awad, 2011).

Government Initiative and Legislation : Legislation and Government Initiative is the role model to all people in the country. Tan and Lau (2010) indicated that Malaysian government has implemented various strategies for sustainable consumption and development. Malaysia government initiated policies such as, providing incentives, increasing green product production and manufacturing, encouraging green behaviour, car-pooling or green products purchasing etc in order to enhance environmental sustainability.

The review on environmental factors affecting

green consumer behaviour indicates that a large number of researches to study on the green consumer behaviour have been done; the review also indicates that the environmental factors are varying widely due to region, time and other reasons. Many researchers have done on green marketing, branding, labeling and demographical and subjective norms, legislatives etc, which states that going green is very important in the present scenario.

Methodology

To meet the objectives of the study, the subjects were contacted from the four directions of Udaipur city. Data collection was done by the investigator personally. Data regarding respondents' family background and green consumer behavior was collected, using the tools developed for the purpose. The data on background information, green consumer behaviour was put to suitable analysis, to be precise, frequency and percentages, t-test and correlation analysis to draw results.

Results and Discussion

Framing of items under the above mentioned sections were done through extensive research on literature during scale development to refine wording and content. To assure face or content validity,

items were generated from different sources including consultation with experts in the field, proposed respondents and review of associated literature. In addition, a key strategy at this stage was that the researcher focused on re-examining the research questions frequently and to ensure that items reflect what is intended and relevant so that no item remains irrelevant. Keeping all these things in mind, an initial list of total 236 items were framed, 94 environmental antecedents was made. List of the Environmental Antecedents effects on the Green Consumer Behaviour:

The items were converted into the form of statements which shows environmental factors such as Retail Environment, Marketing, Shelf Space, Product Availability, Brand, Packaging and Labeling, Social values / Subjective Norm, Social Influences/ Peer, Demographic factors (gender, age education), Government Initiative and Legislation etc. The items with higher 't'-values (more than 1.75) were retained and rests were dropped. Finally, a total of 30 items for environmental section were retained for scale construction. Reliability and Validity score of environmental section it came to be 0.822042 and 0.906666. Thus to conclude environmental factors does have impact on the purchasing behaviour of the consumer.



Fig. 1. Environmental antecedents

Conclusion

Knowing the factors that consciously or unconsciously affect the decision to purchase green products can have positive effects on the consumption with better products as well as protecting the environment. So in an effort to study all these factors combinely, the present work was on development of antecedents of green consumer behaviour scale to assess green or pro-environmental behaviour was to protect the environment and support sustainable living in developing country.

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