

DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMERS' GREEN BUYING BEHAVIOR

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Business and consumers today confront one of the biggest challenges to protect and preserve earth's resources and environment. They have become more concerned with the natural environment and are realizing that their consumption purchasing behavior will have direct impact on the environment. Therefore, what prompts the consumers to purchase green products is a matter of concern for protection of environment. In the present study an attempt has been made to know the factors effecting consumer purchasing behavior of green products. The data has been collected with the help of survey- questionnaire from 200 respondents. The data, thus, generated was analyzed with the help of Factor Analysis. The findings of the study reveal that multi-utility, green purchase intention, skepticism, recyclable nature, and eco responsiveness are the determinants which affect the consumer purchasing behavior towards green products. With a better understanding of consumers purchasing behavior towards green products the marketers will be able to create markets for green products/services and frame marketing strategies accordingly.

Introduction

Consumer behavior is declared as the behavior that consumer exhibit in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services and ideas that they suppose will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behavior is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and how they buy it, and how often they buy it. Therefore, marketers can study real consumer purchases to uncover what they buy, where, and how much. But learning about 'why' of consumer buying behavior is not so easy--the answers are often locked deep within the consumer's head.

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During the last three decades environmental information, environmental concern, attitudes, and behaviors have undergone considerable changes (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). In recent times, there are a lot of encouraging indications which demonstrate that the demand for green products is escalating quickly. Nature consideration has been a central factor for consumers which they integrate in their purchasing decisions, increasing realization that environmental protection is not just a task to be performed by government institutions or organizations, but is each citizen's responsibility (Fraj & Martinez, 2006).

In today's scenario one of the biggest challenges that business and consumer confront is to save and preserve the earth's resources and environment. Increasing awareness on the various environmental problems has led a shift in the way consumers go about their lives. There has been a change in consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle. The idea of green environment is a very important concept to marketers (Barua, 2011).

Purchasing and consuming products that are good for environment is called green buying (Mainieri et al., 2001). Consumers who worry more for the environmental issues are more likely to purchase ecological products. Therefore, consumers who are aware of and interested in environmental issues are called green consumers (Soonthosmai, 2007). These green consumers usually organize petition, boycott manufacturers & retailers and actively promote the preservation of the planet (Fergus, 1991). Consumers accept green products when their primary need for performance, quality convenience, and affordability are met, and when they understand how a green product can help to solve environmental problems. The knowledge gap on the uses and values of green products prevents consumers in committing themselves to any purchase decisions (Ottman, 1992).

In general, green product is known as an ecological product or environmental friendly product. Shamdasami et al. (1993) defined green product as the product that will not pollute the earth or deplore natural resources, and can be recycled and conserved. It is a product that has more environmentally sound content or packaging in reducing the environmental impact (Elkington & Makower, 1988 and Wasik, 1996). Consumers are becoming more concerned about their everyday habits and impact on the environment (Krause, 1993). The outcome of this is that some of the consumers translated their environmental concern into actively purchasing green products commitment (Martin & Simintiras, 1995).

Literature Review

A number of researches have been conducted on green purchasing intentions. Several studies state the relationship between demographic variables and attitudes of ecologically awareness consumers. According to Diamantolopoulos et al. (2003) demographic variables are found not enough to determine green consumer profile rather women are found to be more related with the environment. Further, Gough (1994) also observed that females tend to have a better ability to take control and take the responsibility for alleviating problems in the world and also they are the ones who have a stronger sense of ethics. Married couples are found to have pro environmental behavior. Age has negative correlation with pro environment attitude whereas there is positive correlation between education, information and attitudes, and behavior. Tilikidou & Delistavrou (2008) reported that highly educated people frequently adopt pro-environmental non-purchasing behaviors. According to Elham & Nabsiah (2011) demand and attitudes for environment friendly products varies across different market segments and cultures.

Business consumers today confront one the biggest challenges- to protect and preserve the earth's resources and the environment. They have become more concerned with the natural environment and are realizing that their production and consumption purchasing behavior will have direct impact on the environment (Laroche et al., 2001). People engaged in environmental behavior as a result of their desire to solve environmental problem, to become role models and their belief that they can help to preserve the environment (Hallin, 1995). However, the consumers' indications of positive attitude towards environmental issues do not necessarily lead to actual environmentally friendly purchasing behavior (Laroche et.al, 2002).

But environmental concerns have a straight and positive influence on the customer buying intention of green products. Therefore, consumers may be interested in consumption of products which reflect that concern (Kim & Choi, 2005). It is noticed (in Portugal) that consumers understand the environmental challenges, support policies to improve the environment, but their concerns do not transform into action (Paco & Raposo, 2009). The reason for non-reflection of environmental concerns into buying behavior is the lack of awareness about the greening concept in newly industrialized countries as those in developed countries (Yam-Tang & Chan, 1998). Therefore, still there is a need that organization and government together take

initiatives to educate and persuade people for green purchase decision. Otherwise those organizations that do not adopt actions to face the environmental issue by offering green products, will possibly lose reliability in the eyes of their customers (Fraj et al., 2009).

Environmental concerns are not the only reasons for the customers to purchase environment friendly products, but also they do not agree to trade off other product as attributes for a better environment. This reverse that the characteristics of traditional product such as the brand name, its price and quantity are still the most important ones that are considered by consumers while making purchasing decision (Gan et al., 2008). Green purchase intention is also a significant predictor of green purchase behavior, which means that purchase intention is positively affecting the probability of a customer decision that he will buy green products (Beckford et al., 2010).

According to Ali et al. (2011) and Ali & Ahamad (2012) customers are ready to purchase environment friendly products more often, but as far as the products' price and quality are concerned, environment friendly products must execute competitively just like the traditional products. Likewise, Diamantopoulos et al. (2003) observed that many consumers are unwilling to give up essential product benefits during their buying decision. So, green products must also perform competitively not only according to environmental aspects, but also based on others important product features e.g. price, quality, convenience and durability. Johri & Sahasakmontri (1998) are also of the opinion that consumers do not take their buying decision only on the basis of environment concern alone. Product attributes such as convenience, availability, price, and quality participate a more significant part in the consumers' purchasing decision process. In this light Anderson and Hansen (2004) advocated that price is the most important attribute in (American) consumers purchase decisions (for wood furniture). Moreover, typical respondent is willing to sacrifice environmental certification for the sake of a lower price. According to Grailresearch (2010) price is the main concern for choosing green products because consumers perceive that green products are too expensive. Sometimes consumers are ready to pay a premium price for products believed to be more "environmentally friendly", but only "a bit more", pointing at the price as the main barrier when buying organic food (Mintel, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

At present world is facing the environmental sustainability problems and environmental issues influencing and altering the patterns of human life and behavior. As we step into the era of green revolution, people are being more conscious towards the usage of eco-friendly products. As a result there is a rapid change in the consumer behavior resulting from the green movement towards the sustainability of the environment; the green power products are replacing the traditional power products in view of the environmental benefits. Consumers are increasingly better informed and becoming aware of the environmental impact of consumer products and are, thus, demanding that industry should improve the environmental performance of its products.

Numerous of researches have been conducted in this direction. Many researchers reported the factors of consumers' green buying behavior, though most of them have been conducted in industrialized countries (Bleda & Valente, 2008 and Chatterjee, 2009), but the findings often contradict each other (Elham & Nabsiah, 2011). According to Johri & Sahasakmontri (1998) consumers do not take their buying decision only on the basis of environment concern alone. Product attributes such as convenience, availability, price, and quality contribute a more significant part in the consumers' purchasing decision process. Further, customers are willing to buy environment friendly products more often, but as far as the products' price and quality are concerned, environment friendly products must execute competitively just like the traditional products (Ali et al. 2011). An investigation made by Paco & Raposo (2009) revealed that consumers recognize the environmental challenges & support policies to improve the environment, but their concerns do not transform into action. Still there is a need that organization and government together take initiatives to educate and persuade people for green purchase decision. Therefore, what exactly influences the consumers to buy green products is a matter of great concern. Thus, in the light of the importance of green buying and paucity of research in this area there is a need to understand the determinants which affect consumers to purchase green products.

Objective

To study the determinants of consumers' green buying behavior.

Methodology

In the present study a sample of 200 respondents from Kurukshetra (70), Panipat (65) and Yamunanagar (65) districts of Haryana has been taken into consideration, using convenience sampling method. The sample consists of male and female, respondents of different age groups, engaged in different occupation, etc (Table 1). The data has been collected through survey-questionnaire, finalized after pilot study of 30 respondents. The final questionnaire consists of 17 items (Table-2). The responses on these items were obtained on five point interval-scale i.e. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. The data, thus generated was analyzed with the help of Factor Analysis.

Table 1: Sample Profile

Sr. No.		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 25	159	79.5%
	Above 25	41	20.5%
Gender	Male	87	43.5%
	Female	113	56.5%
Education	Graduation	73	36.5%
	Post Graduation	87	43.5%
	Professional	40	20%
Marital Status	Married	52	26%
	Unmarried	148	74%
Occupation	Working	58	29%
	Student	142	71%
Residential Status	Rural	51	25.5%
	Urban	149	74.5%

Table 2: Items of questionnaire

1.	To reduce energy bill
2.	Going green is beneficial investment in the long run
3.	To save water
4.	Reduce the impact on environment
5.	Good for health.
6.	Others are purchasing green products
7.	My earlier experience is good
8.	It is easy to use
9.	Green products are long lasting
10.	No/ least side effects
11.	Green products are of multiple use
12.	Re-useable
13.	Green products are overpriced
14.	Green products are not easily available
15.	Green products are of less demand
16.	You check energy rating before buying electronic products
17.	There should be strong campaign to make people aware about green products

Results

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.71
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	630.11
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Inspection of the Table-3 reveals that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the sample is 0.71 which is greater than 0.5, suggesting thereby that the data is adequate for Factor Analysis. The Bartlette's Test of Sphericity has also been conducted with the aim to test the null hypothesis (H_0) that the population

correlation matrix of the variables is an identity matrix. The chi-square statistic is 630.31 and p-value is 0.000 which indicates that there is a correlation of variables to each other. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that variables are correlated to each other. Thus, it can be inferred that the Factor Analysis as a Model of data analysis can be accepted.

Table 4: Eigen values with cumulative percentage of variance

Components	Eigen Value	% of variance	Cumulative % of variance
1	2.52	14.831	14.831
2	2.02	11.917	26.748
3	1.95	11.511	38.259
4	1.57	9.252	47.512
5	1.28	7.571	55.083

Table 5: Rotated component matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	h ²
To reduce energy bill	0.12	0.02	0.21	0.63	0.22	0.51
Going green is beneficial investment in the long run	0.38	0.41	-0.24	0.15	0.11	0.41
To save water	0.39	0.19	-0.06	0.23	0.46	0.47
Reduce the impact on environment	0.01	0.73	-0.13	-0.01	-0.05	0.55
Good for health	0.20	0.74	0.14	-0.10	-0.05	0.63
Others are purchasing green products	0.63	-0.03	-0.08	-0.22	0.01	0.45
My earlier experience is good	0.59	0.36	0.18	0.06	0.02	0.52
It is easy to use	0.75	0.14	0.12	0.03	-0.08	0.61
Green products are long lasting	0.70	0.04	-0.20	0.10	0.18	0.58
No/ least side effects	-0.14	0.48	-0.02	0.47	0.14	0.50
Green products are of multiple use	0.50	0.10	-0.18	0.46	0.05	0.51
Re-usable	-0.05	-0.13	0.01	0.70	-0.31	0.61
Green products are overpriced	-0.04	-0.04	0.75	-0.07	0.05	0.57

Green products are not easily available	-0.009	0.04	0.65	0.26	-0.14	0.52
Green products are of less demand	-0.06	0.08	0.79	0.007	-0.02	0.64
You check energy rating before buying electronic products	-0.01	-0.03	-0.05	-0.06	0.87	0.78
There should be strong campaign to make people aware about green products	0.24	0.53	0.21	0.05	0.19	0.43

Here Principal Component Method of Factor Analysis has been applied. Factor extraction was stopped when Eigen values came to 1.00, thereby extracting 5 factors. The factor loading of 0.30 or more is significant and retained for further analysis. These factors account for 55.08 of total variance (Table 4). The communalities (h^2) range from 0.41 to 0.78 (Table 5). Each of the factors extracted so far represents the determinants of consumers' green buying behavior (Table 6). Following is the detailed examination of all these factors/determinants:

Table 6: Details of the extracted factors

Sr. No.	Variables	Factor loadings
Factor 1	Multi utility of green products	
1.	It is easy to use	0.75
2.	Green products are long lasting	0.70
3.	Others are purchasing green products	0.63
4.	My earlier experience is good	0.59
5.	Green products are of multiple use	0.50
Factor 2	Green purchase intentions	
1.	Good for health	0.74
2.	Reduce the impact on environment	0.73
3.	There should be strong campaign to make people aware about green products	0.53
4.	No/least side effects	0.48
5.	Going green is beneficial investment in long run	0.41
Factor 3	Skepticism	
1.	Green products are of less demand	0.79
2.	Green products are overpriced	0.75
3.	Green products are not easily available	0.65

Factor 4 Recyclable/conservable

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 1. | Re-usable | 0.70 |
| 2. | To reduce your energy bill | 0.63 |

Factor 5 Eco responsiveness

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | You check energy rating before buying green products | 0.87 |
| 2. | To save Water | 0.46 |

Factor 1 Multi utility of green products

Perceived utility of green products is important factors in determining consumers' willingness to purchase green products. The basic structure of this factor suggests that consumers perceive green products of multiple uses. Others are also purchasing green products because of its multiple uses. They are of the view that because of its multi utility, green products are easy to use. Their experiences in the past have been good and consider that green products are long lasting. Thus, it can be concluded that it is the multi-utility of green products that prompt the consumers to purchase green products.

Factor 2 Green purchase intentions

All the variables loaded on this factor have positive loadings indicating thereby that what consumers think about purchasing the green products. Green purchase intention is conceptualized as the probability and willingness of a person to give preference to products having eco-friendly features over other traditional products in their purchase considerations. Consumers believe that purchasing green products is a long run investment. It reduces the impact on environment and is safe for health. Moreover, consumers have intentions to purchase green products because green products are having no/least side effects. Thus, it can be inferred that consumers have strong intentions to purchase green products and want that green products should be popularized. Therefore, a strong campaign to make people aware about green products must be initiated.

Factor 3 Skepticism

Factor-3 highlights that consumers have skeptical viewpoints towards green products. According to consumers, green products are very costly and overpriced. Consumers who never bought green products are deterred from purchasing them because these are

perceived to be too expensive. Price is the main reason due to which consumers choose not to buy green products. Further they think that green products are not easily available because of its less demand and overpriced. Thus, consumers are increasingly turned off because of skepticism, and confusion that surround green products. Therefore, skepticism should be overcome as soon as possible so that consumers can be attracted towards green products.

Factor 4 Recyclable/conservable

Consumers are of the views that green products are those that minimize the impact on the environment (e.g. energy-efficient, recyclable, natural or organic). Therefore, consumers purchase green products because they assume that green products consume less energy and can be re-used or conserved. They are also aware of the importance of recycling of these products in protecting the environment. Keeping in mind the nature of variables loaded on this factor, it is named as Recyclable/conservable.

Factor 5 Eco responsiveness

Consumer attitudes towards green products, how they make their purchasing decision with respect to environmental impact, and when and from where they buy green products and services are the focus of green consumers. Variables loaded on this factors states that according to consumers green products are eco friendly. As a result, consumers show eco responsiveness as they believe that they should save the water and energy. For purchasing home appliances they are very particular in checking energy rating before actual purchasing. Thus, this is the nature of green products that makes consumers more eco responsive and influences them to purchase these products.

Discussion

A perusal of the results in the present investigation makes it amply clear that there are five important determinants of consumers' green buying behavior. If these are being taken care of by marketers while finalizing marketing strategies, a big market can be created for green products. Findings reveal that consumers perceive green products of multi utility. They are of the view that green products are long lasting and easy to use. Study further revealed that there is strong intention of consumers behind purchasing green products. According to consumers green products purchasing is a long run investment, having no/least side effects and safe for health. Because of their strong

intentions to purchase green products consumers are expecting that there should be a strong campaign to make people aware about green products. These findings got the support from Beckford et al. (2010) who reported that green purchase intention is significant predictor of green purchase behavior.

Consumers have also skeptical viewpoint towards green products. They perceive green products in suspicious way as green products are very costly and overpriced. These results strongly support the findings of Grailresearch (2010) who states that price is the main concern for consumers while choosing green products. Present findings are also in consistent with the findings of Anderson & Hanson (2004) who also advocated that price is the most important attribute for green purchase behavior. Mintel (2009) also pinpoints the price as the main barriers in green purchase. Consumers also have the perception that green products are not easily available. They are increasingly turned off because of the price, skepticism, and confusion that surround green products. Therefore, strong initiatives are required to overcome this skepticism; otherwise it will ruin the prospects of green products.

Findings of the present investigation also highlight that there is an influence of environment concern behind purchasing green products. Consumers think that impact of green products on the environment is minimum (e.g. energy-efficient, recyclable, natural or organic). Thus, consumers purchase green products because they assume that green products consume less energy and can be re-used or conserved. They are also aware of the importance of recycling in protecting the environment. Shamdasami et al. (1993) are also of the same opinion that green products can be recycled and conserved. Eco responsiveness is another factor affecting consumers' green buying behavior. Today consumers are eco responsive as they believe that they should save the water and energy. These findings are in conformity with the findings of Fraj et al. (2009) who found that customers are more concerned about environmental problems, and those organizations that do not adopt actions to face the environmental issue by offering green products, will possibly lose reliability in the eyes of their customers. The findings of Dunlop & Jones (2002) and Kim & Choi (2005) also support these findings of environment concern and green purchase behavior in their respective studies. But the present results contradict the findings of Simmons market research bureau's (SMRB) study and Schlossberg (1992) which states that there is low association between consumers' environmental concern and the willingness to buy environmentally friendly products.

Conclusion

Consumers' preferences are changing over time. People nowadays are more aware of the environmental issues, though some might have unpleasant perception towards environmentally friendly products and less readiness to pay more for such products. An important challenge that marketers are facing now is thorough understanding of consumers' behavior towards green purchasing. Multi utility of green products, green purchase intention, recyclable and eco responsiveness are the major factors which influences consumers' green buying behavior. But on the same time consumers have skeptical view points towards green products which may hinder the bright future of green products. So need of an hour for marketers is to understand what motivates consumers to make environmentally conscious purchases (i.e. to buy green) and what discourages them from doing so is the first step in promoting green buying. The present study helps to narrow the gap by studying the factors that influence consumers' green purchasing behaviors and the weight of these factors.

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