Environmental Awareness and Green Consumer Buying Intention: 
Some Insights from Jammu & Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing is a trend that many businesses have chosen to adopt, while for others it is also a way of doing business. The global strain on our planet and environment, coupled with a consumer desire to choose eco-friendly products like organic food products for healthier living, creates opportunities for businesses to market themselves as environmentally conscious. This was an exploratory study that brings out the environmental awareness among consumers in relation with purchasing intention towards green products. The primary data was collected from two capital cities of Jammu & Kashmir through structured questionnaire using multistage random sampling. It was found that environmental awareness is significantly associated with green consumer intention. Hence this is an order of the day to make consumers aware about various environmental issues the world is facing in order to enhance the purchasing of green products to save this world for forthcoming generations.

Key Words: Environmental awareness, Green marketing, Green Consumer Buying Intention, Green product and Jammu & Kashmir

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “Green Marketing” has emerged from the factors such as population growth, global warming, threatening the future of human beings; exhaustion of natural resources develops (Sevil, 2011). The last 1980s was said to be the mark of the first stage of green marketing. In this stage, the industry was first introduced to the concept of “Green Marketing” (Peattie and Crane, 2005). The 1990s decade, which was the second stage, began with very high and hopeful forecasts about the emergence of a "green tide" of consumers and new products (Vandermerwe and Oliff, 1990). The third stage of green marketing has started since 2000. More advanced technology has been implemented, deceptive claims are taking at stricter enforcement, new regulations from the government and a thorough and detailed inspection from various environmental organizations and the media, consumer’s confident has been greatly improved and many high quality green products has been made during this period. In addition to the global concern of environmental quality that is steadily rising, green marketing now has picked up its momentum again like back in the 1990s (Lee, 2008). The force of “going green” is now extending to the Asian region, where environmental threats are alarming local governments and citizens (Lee, 2008). The fast-growing economy in Asia has led to a vigorous rise of financially empowered consumers across Asia who is willing to spend more than previous generations (Li and Su, 2007).

A progressive degradation of nature, air and water pollution, and ineffectiveness of technical solution to cope with environmental problems are often more severe in developing countries. It is found that 30-40% of natural degradation has been caused by the consumption activities of private households (Chan, 2001). India is one of the example facing environmental degradation and Jammu
and Kashmir particularly face various environmental threats and recent devastating floods in Jammu & Kashmir have proved the changing climatic threats and it is a call for local governments and national and international agencies to stand for protection of environment.

GREEN MARKETING

Majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like Phosphate Free, Recyclable, Refillable, and Ozone friendly and environmental friendly are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms are green marketing claims, in general green marketing is a broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods and industrial goods and services (Polonsky, 1994). According to the American Marketing Association green or ecological marketing refers to the “the study of the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities on pollution, energy depletion and non-energy resource depletion” According to Herbig et al (1993) green marketing refers “to products and packages that have one or more of the following characteristics; they are less toxic; are more durable; contain reusable materials and/or are made of recyclable materials”. These two definitions are narrow in scope as they focus on a narrow range of environmental issues. So, green marketing need to be broadly defined. Polonsky (1994) defines green marketing as “consisting of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment”. This definition is much broader and incorporates much of the traditional components of the conventional marketing definition and also includes the protection of natural environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & GREEN CONSUMER BUYING INTENTION

A consumer with environmental awareness can be defined as “an ecologist who had grasped his/her self-efficacy against environmental pollution and how has a sense of responsibility with respect to future generations and the whole humanity in his/her use of resources. Conscious consumers with environmental awareness can assess the presence of environmental resources, their cost of use as well as the impact of this use to the environment and to themselves (Babaoğul and Ozgun, 2008).

Ng and Paladino (2009) defined behavioral intentions as a measure of a person's relative strength of purpose to execute certain behavior. Nik (2009) defined green purchase intention as the probability and willingness of an individual to give preference to green product over conventional products in their purchase considerations. However, Ramayah et al (2010) referred green purchase intention as a determination to act in a certain way. Meanwhile, Han et al (2009) defined green purchase intention as the likelihood of the hotel consumers of visiting a green hotel, engage in a positive word-of-mouth behavior, and willingness to pay more for the green hotel. Han et al (2009) has developed a conceptual model to investigate the relationship between attitude toward green behaviors, overall image and green behavioral attention among general hotel consumers in the U.S who were age range 18 years old and above. There were three dimensions involved in their study such as visit intention, word-of-mouth intention, and willingness to pay more.

Chan and Lau (2000) has also developed a conceptualized model consisted of environmental concern, environmental knowledge, green purchase intention, actual purchase behavior and man nature orientation. Their study suggests that actual purchase behavior was highly dependent on a person's green purchase intention and the model was aligned with Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior by Azjen and Fishbein (1980). The dependent variable – green purchase intention in Chan and Lau (2000) study has been measure by using as a single dimension with four statements.

Next, Qader and Zainuddin (2011) have done a study with intention to identify the influence of media exposure on purchase intention of lead-free electronic products (green electronics) amongst 170 lecturers in University Sains Malaysia. Researchers conceptualized green purchase intention as an individual’s plan to involve in some action within a specific time and the probability that individual will perform an eco-behavior.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the environmental awareness in relation with green buying intention of the consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aman et al (2012) investigated the influence of environmental knowledge and concern on green purchase intention among consumers and simultaneously examining the effect of attitude as a mediator. The Theory of Reasoned Action was used to gauge consumer’s green purchase intention. This study investigated on green products in general with no focus on specific types of green product. Data collection through questionnaires was obtained from 384 consumers and this was done by way of convenience sampling approach. The findings of this study signify that environmental knowledge and environmental concern significantly influenced green purchase intention among consumers. More important, attitude is found to have a partial mediation effect on the relationship between environmental concern and green purchase intention.

Ronnie and Dahlia (2012) observed the factors that influenced green purchasing behavior among universities students in Jakarta. The researcher used the convenience sampling to collect the data from 200 university students. The findings of the study showed the main factors that effected green purchasing behavior were environmental concern, perceived seriousness of environmental problems, and perceived environmental responsibility.

Arminda et al (2013) this study aimed to explore the link between environmental values, attitudes and behaviors, as well as to develop and test a model that could be valid and applicable to a set of consumers living in different countries. The research examines the perceptions of a sample of 1175 consumers from England, Germany, Portugal and Spain. A model was developed to test the relationships between concepts such as man–nature orientation, generativity, environmental concern, conserving behavior and environmentally friendly buying behavior. The results obtained confirm the relationship between attitudes and behaviors as the construct conserving behavior appears to influence buying behavior, and suggests some measures which may be implemented in simultaneously testing education concepts across audiences in different countries.

Ishaswini and Saroj, 2011, main objectives of the study was to determine the consumers’ pro-environmental concerns, knowledge of environmental issues, awareness of eco-friendly products, and “Green Buying” behaviour in Indian context. Data for this study was collected from a highly educated sample of 200 respondents using a structured questionnaire by convenience sampling method. Research suggests that consumers who are highly involved and concerned with the environmental issues prefer to buy eco-friendly products and are willing to pay a higher price for such products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An exploratory research was conducted to get insights about environmental awareness and green consumer buying intentions among the respondents in Jammu & Kashmir. Both primary and secondary data was used for this study. The researcher conducts a survey method to collect the primary data from respondents using structured questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected from various sources like journal, books, websites, reports etc. The environmental awareness of the respondents was measured using scale given by Paço and Raposo (2010) green consumer buying intention was measured by using scale given by Chong et al (2013) and respondents are asked to reveal their agreeableness and disagreeableness for the statements as 1= strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. The internal reliability Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient (α) of environment awareness was 0.742 and for green consumer buying intention was 0.853. As the alpha coefficient ranges from 0.6 to 0.8, they are considered to be moderate strong. Malhotra (2002). The sample size for the study was 533 and multistage random sampling was used to collect the data from respondents. The researcher collected data from two capital cities i.e. summer capital (Srinagar) and winter capital (Jammu) of Jammu & Kashmir. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 17.0 was used to perform data analysis. Chi-square test was used to analyze the data and
confirm the association between environmental awareness and green consumer buying intention among the respondents in Jammu & Kashmir.

Table no. 1 showing the association of environmental awareness of consumers with green buying intention of the respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Environmental Awareness</th>
<th>Green Buying Intention</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$P$ value</th>
<th>NS/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data NS –Not significant S –significant

Null hypothesis ($H_0$): There is no significant association between environmental awareness of consumers and green consumer buying intention

Alternate hypothesis ($H_a$): There is significant association between environmental awareness of consumers and green consumer buying intention

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The associations between environmental awareness of consumers and consumer intention buying towards green products have been studied. The environmental awareness of consumers and green consumer buying intention scored into three levels of variation as low, medium and high shown in the table no. 1.

It is revealed from the table no.1 that the percentage of high level of green buying intention is highest (63.2%) when environmental awareness of consumers is high and the same is lowest (3.2%) when environmental awareness of consumers is low. The percentage of medium level of green buying intention is highest (45.2%) when environmental awareness of consumers is medium and the same is lowest (14.1%) when environmental awareness of consumers is low. On the other hand, the percentage of low level of green buying intention is highest (50.6%) when environmental awareness of consumers low and the same is lowest (5.7%) when environmental awareness of consumers is high.

In order to find the relationship between environmental awareness of consumers and the green buying intention, a Chi-Square test is applied and the results are shown in the above table no. 1. It has been found that the chi-square test of association for value is 1.943 with degrees of freedom at 4 and the ‘$P$’ value for the level of significance is .000. As the ‘$P$’ value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected.

The result clearly shows the variation in green buying intention based on environmental awareness of consumers and there is significant association between environmental awareness of consumers and green consumer buying intention. The study reveals that most of the consumers show higher to medium level of green consumer buying intention when environmental awareness of consumers is high to medium and show low green consumer buying intention when environmental awareness of consumers is low. Hence it may be concluded that majority of the consumers have high environmental awareness and prefer green products and show high to medium level of purchasing intention towards green products. And findings are in agreement with the study of Christopher et al, (2008) which empirically examined the factors impacting consumers’ purchasing intention toward
green products in New Zealand. The research findings revealed that consumers who are environmentally conscious are more likely to purchase green products.

**IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY**

As Environmental awareness of consumers has a positive association with buying intention of consumer towards green products so Government and Marketers should focus on creating the awareness among consumers that green purchase is a right choice for them and create more and more campaigns to educate them that will influence the consumer perception toward green purchases and increase the buying of green products.

**CONCLUSION**

Green marketing is a buzzword these days. Even the best of the companies are focusing on products which are environment friendly. This study was undertaken with an objective to evaluate the environmental awareness of consumers in relation buying intention towards green products. This study had made it clear that there is significant relation between environmental awareness and green buying intention. As the environmental awareness of consumers increase their intention towards purchasing of green products also increases. Thus Government, Environmental agencies, NGO’s and marketers should stand as a unit to make consumers aware about environmental issues the world is facing today so as to increase the purchasing of green products to make this planet safe for future generation.

**REFERENCES**


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