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IMPACT OF GREEN SCEPTICISM AND HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS ON GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The present-day markets are turning green; there is a growing tendency to shift to green products among consumers and marketers equally. This trend is widely studied across the globe. Green Marketing techniques are gaining a greater momentum in the modern market. Green marketing is widely taken up by today's marketers as it gives them a Green Image, which is considered as a competitive advantage for market penetration. This is also due to the increase in the level of Green Consciousness and Green Preferences among the consumers. There is, however, an element of scepticism among the consumers, on the green claims of the marketers. This study focuses on understanding the level of Green Scepticism among consumers and to identify its impact on their purchase intentions.

KEYWORDS

green product, green marketing, green image, green consciousness, green preference, green scepticism.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing tendency to go green. Consumers around the world have more trust in "green" product labels these days than they did a few decades back. They are more inclined towards the ecological benefits of products and a greater awareness of the consequences of the consumption and production of the ecology. This trend has brought in a lot of changes in the customer and manufacturer attitudes. There is, however, a lack of trust in many of the green claims of the manufacturers. This study focuses on the level of scepticism and its impact on the green purchase intentions of consumers. There is also a trend of a higher level of health consciousness among the youth. The study also intends to identify the level of health consciousness among consumers and the impact of health consciousness on green purchase intentions.

The significance of green marketing activities was increasing during the past few decades, however, there was also growing concern on the actual implication of the green claims of the marketers among the consumers. This phenomenon, in which customers doubt or disbelieve environmental claims made by the firms, is referred to as 'green scepticism'. There have been several pieces of evidence of the adverse effect of scepticism on the purchase intentions among the consumers. This study is conducted to identify the level of green scepticism and health consciousness among the teenagers in Ernakulam district and to understand the effect of these factors on the purchase intentions. The category of teenagers is specifically chosen as they form a major portion of the market and the consumption pattern of this segment would have serious implications for the marketers of tomorrow.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE**GREEN SCEPTICISM**

The cutthroat competition of the modern markets has compelled companies to demonstrate more and more that their products are of the highest quality. Unfortunately, there are some commercial advertising regulations that allow marketers to exaggerate their product's characteristics. The free market system increases the consumer's level of scepticism.

There is a general tendency among consumers to distrust the green claims of manufacturers. Scepticism is the overall tendency or inclination of an individual to distrust or doubt others (Obermiller, et al 1998). In business management, scepticism has been examined in the context of advertising, organic products, corporate social responsibility, environmental claims, and marketing.

Research reviews show that the majority of the consumers from different countries, such as the United States of America and the People's Republic of China are sceptical about companies' environmental claims (Chan et al, 2004). Studies also reveal that the consumers who are by nature sceptical about the environmental claims can only be persuaded if evidence that contradicts to their beliefs is demonstrated (Calfee et al 1988). The intersection of two firm behaviors: poor environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance, is referred to as greenwashing (Delmas et al. 2011)

HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS

Health consciousness assesses the readiness to undertake health actions (Becker et al., 1977). Health conscious persons are concerned about the safety of the food consumed and about their physical fitness. Such individuals tend to be aware of, and involved with, nutrition and physical fitness (Kraft, F.B. et al, 1993). Previous research has identified interest in health as a primary motive for the purchase of organic food (Grankvist, G. et al 2001; Lockie, S. et al., 2002).

PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase intention refers to the evaluation or attitude of consumers to the related products, with the stimulation of the external factors, constitutes a consumer's willingness to buy. While consumers are willing to buy some production, the higher purchase intention, the greater the probability of purchase (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991) The link between advertisement and purchase intention does not exist when consumers are sceptical about the advertisements (Obermiller et al. 2005)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present-day marketing provides a greater emphasis on green products and green methods of production and distribution. This can be attributed to the increasing level of green consciousness among the consumers. This green tendency has made the marketers to take up green marketing activities; this has led the marketers to think of green marketing as a technique of profit generation rather than a concept of sustainability. There happened to be many instances of false claims made by marketers about their green value. This has also created a sense of scepticism among consumers about the green claims of the marketers. There is a need for a better understanding of the level of green scepticism and the impact of green scepticism on purchase intention of consumers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study focuses on understanding the level of green scepticism and health consciousness among teenagers and to understand their individual effect on the green purchase intentions among teenagers in Ernakulam district, Kerala with regard to FMCG products.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the level of green scepticism among teenagers.
2. To understand the level of health consciousness among teenagers.
3. To understand the impact of green scepticism on purchase intentions.
4. To understand the impact of health consciousness on purchase intentions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is focused on identifying the level of green scepticism and health consciousness and to understand its impact on purchase intentions of customers in Ernakulam district, Kerala, with regard to FMCG products. The study is purely based on primary data. The population of the study includes the teenage group of consumers in Ernakulam. Data collection is done through a structured questionnaire. The technique of convenience sampling was used as the method of sample selection. The sample comprised of 60 respondents including 30 girls and 30 boys.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section consisted of demographic information such as gender, age, income, and education levels. This section was followed by questions related to green scepticism and green purchase intentions.

All constructs were measured using a multi-item scale adapted from the literature. Four items adopted from (Mohr, L. A. 1998) were used to measure green scepticism, Four items adopted from (Zaichkowsky, J. L. 1986), is used to measure green purchase intention. The dimension of health consciousness is measured using the (Ling-Yu, M.et al 2013) as a reference. The measurement scales for all the three constructs were anchored on endpoints '1' strongly disagree and '5' strongly agree.

The tools used for analyzing the data are correlation analysis; percentage analysis and a total of five items were used

TABLE 1: CONSTRUCTS USED

Constructs	Items
Green Scepticism	1. Most environmental claims made on package labels or in advertising are true. 2. Because environmental claims are exaggerated, consumers would be better off if such claims on package labels or in advertising were eliminated. 3. Most environmental claims on package labels or in advertising are intended to mislead rather than to inform consumers. 4. I do not believe most environmental claims made on package labels or in advertising.
Health consciousness	1. I pay attention to any changes in my body 2. I think to know how to eat healthily is a very important event. 3. I am very concerned about the quality and safety of food. 4. I eat a balanced diet. 5. I think I have the sense of health consciousness.
Purchase Intention	1. I am willing to buy green production. 2. I am willing to spend a little more money to buy green production 3. I will continue to buy green production. 4. I recommend the green production to others.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study intended to understand the level of green scepticism and health consciousness among teenagers and to understand its impact on their purchase intention. Four items adopted from (Mohr, E.et.al 1998) were used to measure green scepticism. The average level of green scepticism of girls measured on a Five Point Likert Scale is 2.70, with a standard deviation of 0.74. The green scepticism among the boys of the teenage group, measured on a Five Point Likert Scale is 3.00, with a standard deviation of 0.60.

The level of purchase intention is measured using four items adapted from (Zaichkowsky, J. L. 1986) on a Five Point Likert Scale. The level of purchase intention among the girls is 3.04, with a standard deviation of 0.70 and the level of purchase intention among boys is 2.95, with a standard deviation of 0.63. The level of green scepticism among girls are slightly higher than the level of green scepticism among boys of the study group, whereas the level of purchase intention is slightly higher in girls than that of boys. The following table 2. and table 3. shows the mean values of green scepticism, health consciousness and purchase intentions for girls and boys respectively. The table also shows the standard deviation of the observed values.

The level of health consciousness was measured using four items adapted from (Ling-Yu, M.et al 2013).the items were measured on a Five Point Likert Scale. The level of health consciousness among girls was 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.50 and the level of health consciousness among the boys was 2.57 with a standards deviation of 0.73.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTS FOR GIRLS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
Green Scepticism	2.70	0.74
Health Consciousness	3.72	0.50
Purchase intention	3.04	0.70

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTS FOR BOYS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
Green Scepticism	3.00	0.60
Health consciousness	2.57	0.73
Purchase intention	2.95	0.63

IMPACT OF GREEN SCEPTICISM ON PURCHASE INTENTION

The relation of the green scepticism on purchase intention was studied using correlation analysis, the value of the coefficient of correlation between green scepticism and purchase intention of the girls was 0.59 and the value of the coefficient of correlation between green consciousness and purchase intention for the boys was 0.35. There is a negative impact of green scepticism on the purchase intentions in both categories.

TABLE 4: CORRELATION BETWEEN GREEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Coefficient of correlation	Purchase intention of girls	Purchase intention of boys
Green scepticism of girls	0.35	
Green Consciousness of boys		0.33

IMPACT OF HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS ON PURCHASE INTENTION

The relation of health consciousness on purchase intention was studied using correlation analysis, the value of the coefficient of correlation between health consciousness and purchase intention of the girls was 0.59 and the value of the coefficient of correlation between green consciousness and purchase intention for the boys was 0.35. There is a positive correlation between the constructs health consciousness and purchase intentions in both the categories.

TABLE 5: CORRELATION BETWEEN HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Coefficient of correlation	Purchase intention of girls	Purchase intention of boys
Health consciousness of girls	0.35	
Health consciousness of boys		0.45

FINDINGS

The study was focused on understanding the level of green scepticism and health consciousness and to understand its impact on purchase intention among teenage boys and girls of Ernakulam, Kerala. It was observed that the level of green scepticism is above moderate level in boys and girls of the teenage group. The level of green scepticism among boys was slightly higher than that of the boys. There is a negative impact of green scepticism on Purchase Intentions.

The level of health consciousness among the girls is higher than the level of health consciousness. There is a positive relationship between health consciousness and green purchase intention among the girls and boys in the teenage group. The level of green purchase intention is observed to be slightly higher among the girls than the level of purchase intention among the boy.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The level of green scepticism among consumers is to be reduced by taking measures to better inform the consumers about the green features offered by the producers.
2. The availability of green products is to be further increased and expanded in such a way that green products are available in all sectors.
3. There is a need for strict measures from the side of the Government to reduce greenwashing practices adopted by producers in order to reap the benefits of green purchase intentions.
4. A greater emphasis on green marketing is suggested as it leads to a sustainable growth of the economy.

CONCLUSION

There is a growing concern about the harmful effects of production and consumption among the producers and consumers across the globe. This has led to a greater emphasis on the concept of green marketing. Green marketing practices were widely adopted by producers and the number of green consumers also began to increase. This opportunity was utilized by the marketers and there was a general trend of going green in the market. This study focused on the level of scepticism among the consumers of the teenage group and its impact on purchase intentions. The study also focused on the impact of health consciousness on purchase intentions. The study reveals that there is an inverse relation between the green scepticism and green purchase intentions among teenage boys and girls. The level of scepticism was slightly higher for the boys of this category. The study also implies that the level of health consciousness was higher among girls. There is a positive relationship between health consciousness and purchase intentions. There is a strong need to improve the information provided to the consumers about the green value of the products; this can create a greater trust in the green claims of the marketers.

LIMITATIONS

All possible measures were taken in order to ensure the reliability of the study, the study, however, has few limitations, which are;

1. The focuses only on the effect of green scepticism and health consciousness on purchase intentions and does not explore the existence of other mediating factors influencing purchase intentions.
2. The study is conducted on a limited sample of the population.
3. The study does not consider the significance of other factors such as availability and level of income, which can influence the purchase intention of customers.
4. The period of study was only four months hence there may be seasonal variation, which is not, reflected in this study.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a need for greater understanding of the causes of green scepticism among various categories of customers. The factors contributing to the green scepticism among consumers are to be studied in depth so as to reduce green scepticism and thereby promote a more sustainable model of marketing. The presence of mediating factors is also to be analyzed in the relation between green scepticism and purchase intention and in the relation between health consciousness and purchase intentions.

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