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CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, the environment has emerged as a hot issue for societies, governments in addition to business organizations. It is observed that different activities of business organizations like sourcing, manufacturing, logistics and marketing have a negative impact on the environment and also considered to be the source of most of the environmental problems. However, current environmental dreadful conditions are ever more menacing consumer health and wellbeing globally. Therefore, consumers are becoming more sensitive in their environmental attitudes, preferences and purchases. At present, customers are ever more aware of the seriousness of environmental degradation, resulting more ecologically consciousness and desire to purchase eco-friendly products and services, favouring businesses that prefer environmental practices. The data and information are collected from 200 consumers in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh through pre-tested, structured interview schedule by adopting random sampling technique. The foregoing analysis shows that about 68.00 per cent of the consumers are males while the rest of 32.00 per cent of the consumers are females. The results also show that about 43.50 of the consumers are employed in private sector followed by government (35.50 per cent) and business (21.00 per cent). The majority of consumers are middle aged and the majority of the consumers (37.00 per cent) are postgraduates and more than half of the consumers belong to the monthly income of Rs. 5001-10000. The factor analysis indicates that there are five independent groups were extracted which account for a total of 69.85 per cent of variations on the 14 purchase intention variables and they are grouped in to quality, accessibility, affordability, familiarity and information. The multiple regression model shows that quality, accessibility, affordability and familiarity are positively influencing the purchase value of green products at one per cent level of significance. This study also reveals that if businesses offer environmentally friendly products to consumers with affordable price and higher quality as compared to traditional products, along these consumers have positive intentions to purchase green products, green products purchase will be high. Thus, businesses must ensure competitive pricing strategies along with strong quality controls to attract the prospective green customers.

KEYWORDS

Factor Analysis, Green Products, Perception, Purchase Intention and Regression.

INTRODUCTION

 Our lifestyle has changed in this fast paced world as compared to few decades ago. Today, more and more people are caught up in an endless cycle of buying and throwing away, seeing consumption as a means of self-fulfilment. In recent times, the environment has emerged as a hot issue for societies, governments, in addition to business organizations. Its significance originates from escalating environmental degradation such as solid wastes, ozone depletion, global warming, and air pollution. It is observed that different activities of business organizations like sourcing, manufacturing, logistics, and marketing have a negative impact on the environment and also considered to be the source of most of the environmental problems (Eltayeb, *et.al.* 2010). Though, environmental destruction has always been part of the human story. All through time, people's health, both on the individual and the community level have been affected through environmental problems (Khwaja, 2008).

However, current environmental dreadful conditions are ever more menacing consumer health and wellbeing globally. Therefore, consumers are becoming more sensitive in their environmental attitudes, preferences, and purchases (Sarigollu, 2009). Over the past decades, environmental problems and issues have been extensively recognized and discussed. These days, a large number of respondents all over the world state that they are concerned or very concerned with environmental problems (Diekmann and Franzen, 1999; Dunlap and Mertig, 1995).

Concerns related to the environment are evident in the increasingly environmentally conscious market place. Over the years majority consumers have realized that their purchasing behaviour has a direct impact on many ecological problems. The growth of organic agriculture is seen as part of the emerging marketing trends where consumers demand to know what benefits a food could deliver before making a purchasing decision. Although the demand for organic food is still buoyant, there are signs that markets are maturing and growth rates over the last few years slowed to below 10 per cent. At present, customers are ever more aware of the seriousness of environmental degradation, resulting more ecologically consciousness and desire to purchase eco-friendly products and services, favoring businesses that prefer environmental practice (Laroche, *et. al.*, 2001; Roberts, 1996).

Over the years, people started demanding environmentally friendly products and services, and the organizations felt political and public pressure to go green. The necessity to increase consumers' awareness of corporate efforts to meet sustainable standards, the need to identify consumers' preferences for green products, the possibility of charging a premium price gave rise to a new trend in the marketing field, the so-called Green marketing. With this background, the present study was attempted to study the consumer's perception and purchase intentions towards Green products in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

Among the different districts in Andhra Pradesh, the Prakasam district has been purposively selected for the present study. The consumers have been selected by adopting random sampling technique through pre-tested, structured interview schedule through direct interview method. The data and information have been collected from 200 consumers and pertain to the year 2011-2012.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The frequency and percentage analyses were carried out to understand the socio-economic characteristics consumers. In order to examine the consumer's perception on green products, the ANOVA test has been applied. In order to identify the factors affecting the purchase intention of the green products, the factor analysis has been employed with principal component extraction with varimax rotation. The factor analysis can be expressed as:

$$Z_{ij} = a_1 f_{1j} + a_2 f_{2j} + \dots + a_m f_{mj} + e_{ij}$$

Where as,

Z^j = Purchase Intention Factors

a = Factor Loadings

f = Factor Score

e = Residual term accounting for Errors or other Source of Variation.

In order to assess the effect of purchase intentional factors which are obtained from the factor analysis, on purchase value of consumers of green products, the multiple linear regression analysis by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation has been applied for identified factors. The functional form of multiple liner regression model are given below:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_i X_i + e$$

Where,

Y = Purchase Value

X_i = Purchase Intentional Factors

i = 1 to 5

α = Intercept

β_i = Partial Regression Coefficients

e = Random Error or Stochastic Disturbance Term

The α and β_i are the coefficients which are to be calculated through Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation.

The Likert five point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was used to measure the variables of purchase intention of the consumers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSUMERS OF GREEN PRODUCTS

The socio-economic characteristics of consumers of green products were analyzed and the results are presented in **Table 1**. The results indicate that about 68.00 per cent of the consumers are males while the rest of 32.00 per cent of the consumers are females. The results also show that about 43.50 of the consumers are employed in private sector followed by government (35.50 per cent) and business (21.00 per cent). From the table, it is clear that about 28.50 per cent of the employees belong to the age group of 18-24 years followed by 31-40 years (22.50 per cent), 25-30 years (21.00 per cent), 41-45 years (14.50 per cent), 46-50 years (8.50 per cent) and more than 50 years (5.00 per cent).

The majority of the consumers (37.00 per cent) are postgraduates followed by graduates (22.00 per cent), secondary education (21.00 per cent), higher secondary education (16.50 per cent) and diploma (3.50 per cent). The results also show that about 55.00 per cent of the consumers belong to the monthly income of Rs. 5001-10000 followed by Rs.10001-15000(22.00 per cent), Rs. 15001-20000(16.00 per cent) and more than Rs. 20000(7.00 per cent) and about 64.00 per cent of the consumers are married while the rest of 36.00 per cent of the consumers are unmarried.

TABLE - 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSUMERS OF GREEN PRODUCTS

Variables	Respondents(N=200)		Variables	Respondents(N=200)	
	Number	Per Cent		Number	Per Cent
Gender			Educational Qualification		
Male	136	68.00	Secondary	42	21.00
Female	64	32.00	Higher Secondary	33	16.50
Occupation			Graduates	44	22.00
Business	42	21.00	Post Graduates	74	37.00
Government	71	35.50	Diploma	7	3.50
Private	87	43.50			
Age(Years)			Monthly Income(Rs.)		
18-24	57	28.50	5001-10000	110	55.00
25-30	42	21.00	10001-15000	44	22.00
31-40	45	22.50	15001-20000	32	16.00
41-45	29	14.50	>20000	14	7.00
46-50	17	8.50	Marital Status		
>50	10	5.00	Married	128	64.00
			Unmarried	72	36.00

CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION ON GREEN PRODUCTS

The consumer's perception on green products was analyzed and the results are presented in **Table 2**.

TABLE - 2: CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS

Perception	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	F-Value	Sig
Healthy	170 (85.00)	25 (12.50)	4 (2.00)	1 (0.50)	0 (0.00)	200 (100.00)	17.629	0.02
High nutritional value	130 (65.00)	60 (30.00)	10 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	200 (100.00)		
Products are grown in harmony with nature	82 (41.00)	69 (34.50)	33 (16.50)	12 (6.00)	4 (2.00)	200 (100.00)		
Free from chemical pesticides and fertilizers	44 (22.00)	85 (42.50)	41 (20.50)	22 (11.00)	8 (4.00)	200 (100.00)		
Products with environmentally /animal friendly techniques	68 (34.00)	92 (46.00)	30 (15.00)	6 (3.00)	4 (2.00)	200 (100.00)		
Free from Genetically Modified Organisms(GMO)	32 (16.00)	92 (46.00)	40 (20.00)	22 (11.00)	14 (7.00)	200 (100.00)		
All green products are properly checked and certified	59 (29.50)	91 (45.50)	38 (19.00)	10 (5.00)	2 (1.00)	200 (100.00)		

Note: The figures in the parentheses are per cent to total

The results show that about 85.00 per cent of the consumers are strongly agreed that the green products are healthy and about 65.00 per cent of the consumers are also strongly agreed that the green products have high nutritional value. The products are grown in harmony with nature is strongly agreed by 41.00 per cent of the consumers. The results further indicate that about 42.50 per cent of the consumers are agreed with green products are free from chemical pesticides and fertilizers and 46.00 per cent of the consumers are agreed that the green products are produced with environmentally/ animal friendly techniques and free from Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). It is apparent that about 45.50 per cent of the consumers are agreed with all green products are properly checked and certified. The F-value of 17.629 is statistically significant at five per cent level of significance indicating that there is a significant difference in perception about green products among the consumers.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS

In order to identify the factors affecting the purchase intention of green products, the factor analysis has been employed. The principal component method of factor analysis was carried out with Eigen value greater than one through varimax rotation and the results obtained through rotated component matrix are presented in **Table 3**.

There are five independent groups were extracted which account for a total of 69.85 per cent of variations on the 14 purchase intention variables. The each of five factors contributes 24.98 per cent, 12.82 per cent, 11.91 per cent, 10.16 per cent and 9.98 per cent respectively.

TABLE - 3: FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR PURCHASE INTENTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS

Purchase Intention	Rotated Factor Loadings on				
	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V
More cheap prices			.763		
More income			.690		
More accessibility in the market		.762			
More assortment availability					.791
Better appearance and taste		.838			
More time to look green products				.932	
More recognizable label and products				.577	
More trust to origin / production		.665			
More seasonal products	.753				
More products from my local region	.767				
Longer shelf life	.840				
Less packing material	.734				
More information					-.570
Better/ shorter cooking conditions			.763		
Eigen Value	3.37	2.25	1.37	1.08	1.01
% of Variance	24.98	12.82	11.91	10.16	9.98
Cumulative % of Variance	24.98	37.80	49.71	59.87	69.85
Cronbach's alpha	0.85				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Factor-I: From the table, it is inferred that out of 14 purchase intention variables, four variables have their high, relatively tightly grouped factor loadings on factor-I.

This factor consists of:

- More seasonal products (0.75)
- More products from my local region (0.77)
- Longer shelf life (0.84)
- Less packing material (0.73)

Hence, this factor is named as "QUALITY".

Factor-II: is formed with:

- More accessibility in the market (0.76)
- Better appearance and taste (0.84)
- More trust to origin / production (0.67)

These variables are named as "ACCESSABILITY".

Factor-III: This factor includes:

- More cheap prices (0.76)
- More income (0.69)

These three variables are named as "AFFORDABILITY".

Factor-IV: This factor is formed with:

- More time to look green products (0.93)
- More recognizable label and products (0.58)

This factor is named as "FAMILIARITY".

Factor-V: This factor includes:

- More assortment availability (0.79)
- More information (-0.57)

The factor is named as "INFORMATION".

The purchase intention variables are measured using a five point scale and the reliability coefficient of the (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale is 0.85 indicating that each measure demonstrates acceptable internal consistency.

EFFECT OF PURCHASE INTENTIONAL FACTORS ON PURCHASE VALUE OF GREEN PRODUCTS -MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In order to assess the effect of purchase intentional factors on purchase value of green products, the multiple linear regression by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation and the results are presented in **Table 4**. The results indicate that the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) is 0.64 indicating the regression model is moderately fit. The results show that quality, accessibility, affordability and familiarity are positively influencing the purchase value of green products at one per cent level of significance.

TABLE - 4: EFFECT OF PURCHASE INTENTIONAL FACTORS ON PURCHASE VALUE OF GREEN PRODUCTS-MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Purchase Intentional Factors	Regression Coefficients	t-value	Sig
Intercept	2.184**	6.114	.001
Quality(X ₁)	.292 [†]	3.458	.001
Accessibility(X ₂)	.267**	4.626	.001
Affordability(X ₃)	.251**	4.513	.001
Familiarity(X ₄)	.175**	2.207	.001
Information(X ₅)	.014	0.794	.694
R ²	0.64		
Adjusted R ²	0.57		
F	2.986		0.02
N	200		

Note: ** Significance at one per cent level

POTENTIAL FOR GREEN PRODUCTS PURCHASE

The potential for green products purchase by the consumers was analyzed and the results are presented in Table 5.

TABLE – 5: POTENTIAL FOR GREEN PRODUCTS PURCHASE

Product Group	Per Cent
Fresh Vegetables	90.50
Fresh Fruits	86.50
Meat and Meat Products	52.00
Milk and Milk Products	85.00
Cereals	42.00
Pulses	46.00
Baby Products	55.50
Dried Fruits and Nuts	56.00
Beverages	29.00
Cooking Oils	51.50
Sugar Products	34.00
Herbs and Species	45.00
Bread and Bakery Products	36.00

The results indicate that about 90.50 per cent of the consumers are willing to purchase green products of fresh vegetables followed by fresh fruits (86.50 per cent), milk and milk products (85.00 per cent), dried fruits and nuts (56.00 per cent), baby products (55.50 per cent), meat and meat products (52.00 per cent) and cooking oils (51.50 per cent) in future. The consumer's future purchases for the other green products are varying from 46.00 per cent for pulses to 29.00 per cent for beverages.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing analysis shows that about 68.00 per cent of the consumers are males while the rest of 32.00 per cent of the consumers are females. The results also show that about 43.50 of the consumers are employed in private sector followed by government (35.50 per cent) and business (21.00 per cent). The majority of consumers are middle aged and the majority of the consumers (37.00 per cent) are postgraduates and more than half of the consumers belong to the monthly income of Rs. 5001-10000.

The factor analysis indicates that there are five independent groups were extracted which account for a total of 69.85 per cent of variations on the 14 purchase intention variables and they are grouped in to quality, accessibility, affordability, familiarity and information. The multiple regression model shows that quality, accessibility, affordability and familiarity are positively influencing the purchase value of green products at one per cent level of significance.

The results also indicate that there is a great potential for green products of fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, milk and milk products and dried fruits and nuts. Hence, along with environmental aspects manufacturers should consider the prices and quality of green products to attract these consumers. This study also reveals that if businesses offer environmentally friendly products to consumers with affordable price and higher quality as compared to traditional products, along these consumers have positive intentions to purchase green products, green products purchase will be high. Thus, businesses must ensure competitive pricing strategies along with strong quality controls to attract the prospective green customers.

One more imperative facet that the marketers must consider is that the customers are often skeptical of the green claims; hence, organizations must guarantee that the offered environmentally friendly products perfectly meet the ecological values to define the customers' criticism. According to study findings that there are many customers who have positive and high intentions to purchase green products but due to higher prices and poorer quality as compare to non-green products, they do not buy them. Hence, along with environmental aspects manufacturers should consider the prices and quality of green products to attract these consumers.

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