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CONSUMERS INVOLVEMENT IN BUYING GREEN PRODUCTS: A STUDY IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumers' decisions. Product involvement may reflect a persons' view about the product. The study of the consumer decision realizes the challenges faced by marketers in comprehending the consumer mind. Information about consumer involvement on purchase decision of green products will be used to predict their actions in the market. The main objective of this study is to find out the relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and their involvement on green products purchase. This paper also has an objective to identify the relationship between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their purchase behaviour. For the purpose of analysis, data was collected from a sample of 229 respondents from Coimbatore city. The data so collected were tabulated and analyzed by using SPSS 23.0. The analysis results revealed that there was the relationship between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their purchase decision and the respondents' green purchase decision differ in case of involvement in green products.

KEYWORDS

consumer purchase decision, purchase behaviour, consumer involvement, green products and market.

INTRODUCTION

Today's consumers are becoming more and more conscious about the environment and are also becoming socially responsible. Green products play a vital role in our everyday life. It is necessary to understand the environmental consciousness in worldwide because nowadays consumer wants are unlimited and purchase behavior also different from earlier days. In India there is a progressive increase in environmental consciousness towards green products. According to Tahir Albayrakl et.al (2012), Consumers' environmentally sensitive purchase behaviour was assumed to be influenced positively by their environmental concerns, but negatively by their skepticisms. As stated by Aysel Boztepel (2012), people are now willing to pay more for environment-friendly product against environmental pollution that threatens the world together with developing technology and industrialization. Gonzalo and Asuncion's (2005), mentioned as recycling behaviour as the product on offer in a discriminate fashion depending on the role to be promoted among the population. The effects are being made to minimize the global warming and increasing consciousness towards the protection of environment. So the consumers developed a sense of buying with environmental conscious leading to favoring of eco-friendly products.

Involvement refers to consumers' perceptions of importance or personal relevance for an object (Herbert E. Krugman, 1967). Cognitively, involvement includes means end knowledge about important consequences produced by using the product and also includes product evaluations. If product involvement is high, consumers may experience stronger affective responses. Marketers treat consumers' product involvement as either high or low and it vary from low level to very high levels. Involvement is a motivational state that energizes and directs consumers' behaviour as they make decisions (Joel B. Cohen, 1982).

Marketers clearly identify the focus of consumers' involvement and they are mostly interested in consumers' involvement with products. The level of product involvement during decision making of consumer is always different.

This article aims to identify relationship between the green products involvement in buying decision and demographic profile of the respondents by taking out the outcomes of the literature review.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years due to rising evidence of environmental problems in the world wide, the focuses of the marketers are being shifted towards green products. Previous empirical evidence emphasised that environmental concern is a major factor in the consumer decision making (Zimmer et al., 1994; Wagner, 1997; Ottman, 1998). Consumers are aware about the benefits of green products and importance of recycling and disposal of the products, Rajiparameshwaranpillai (2012). In recent years, consumers are moving from non-green consumer to a green consumer. It has been proved the extent of available review of research studies.

Consumer has different levels of product knowledge, which can use to interpret new information and make purchase choices. On the basis of consumer knowledge, to make separate purchase decisions at each level. Sometimes consumers' involvement highly motivated to seek information about products and it is a key concept for understanding consumer behaviour.

This paper explores the measurement of consumer involvement in buying decision on green products and it aims to examine demographic profile that influencing consumers' purchase behaviour on green products.

GREEN MARKETING AND GREEN PRODUCTS

Polonsky (1994) defines green marketing refers to as all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment. Green marketing is also about leveraging the green benefits of any product to appeal to the conscientious consumers.

Elkington (1994) defines Green consumer as one who avoids products that are likely to endanger the health of the consumer or others, cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal, consume a disproportionate amount of energy, cause unnecessary waste, use material derived from threatened species or environments, involve unnecessary use of, or cruelty to animals, adversely affect other countries.

The products manufactured through green technology, and cause no environmental hazards are called green products. Green products define by certain measures: Products those are originally grown, products those are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable and products with natural ingredients.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Feick et.al (2003) the level of product involvement varies between different age group. Consumer purchase the green products with high involvement may represent innovation of products (Zanolo & Naspetti, 2002). If the consumers purchase green products with low involvement represent a barrier to buy the product (Kleiser & Wagner 1999). In addition to that involvement is a general concept in marketing and it is a general level of interest without considering particular

condition (Lin & Chen, 2006). Chung & Zhao, 2003, suggested that involvement has a significant influence on the decision for the product purchase. Level of purchase involvement is measured by their interest (Warnick & Bojanic, 2010).

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and their involvement on green products purchase.
2. To identify the relationship between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their purchase behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and their involvement on green products purchase and their purchase behaviour of green products, 229 consumers were chosen as a sample out of 330 respondents for valid data analysis process. Data was collected by using well-structured pretested interview schedule A purposive sampling technique was adopted. The data so collected were tabulated and analyzed by using SPSS 23.0. The relationship was tested by using statistical tools such as percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

HYPOTHESES

- H1: Purchase decision of green products will vary depending on the degree of involvement
 H2: There is a significant relationship between socio-economic profile and purchase behaviour of green products.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

CONSUMERS INVOLVEMENT IN BUYING GREEN PRODUCTS

In order to achieve the research objective, the percentage analysis was taken to assess the green product involvement with socio-economic profile of the respondents. To measure the level of purchase behaviour towards green products, the selected nine statements were analyzed, which are buy green products for household consumption, they switched brands for ecological reason, read and compare package labels for environmentally safe ingredients, green products alternative if one of the similar price is available, suggest to their family and friends about green products, willing to change their habits to have a positive impact on the environment, buy products made with or packaged in recycled materials and buy products from companies who have a reputation for being environmentally responsible. The statements were used with five point Likert scale, if a respondent strongly agreed a statement, a score of five was allotted likewise four for agreed, 3 for neutral, two for disagreed and a score of one was allotted for strongly disagreed respectively. The score assigned to a respondent for all the nine statements would be maximum 45 and minimum 9. The respondents who secured equal to and above 27 were classified as having 'high level of involvement' and those who secured below 27 were classified as having 'low level of involvement' to buy the green products. The following tables exhibit the effect of involvement of green products with purchase behaviour of the respondents based on their socio-economic background. The respondents socio-economic profile, such as gender, age, marital status, family nature, education, occupation and monthly income have been included in this study.

The respondents' involvement to buy green products was analyzed based on their Socio-economic profile has been shows in the following tables.

TABLE 1: GENDER AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Gender	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Male	45	63.4	26	36.6	71	100
Female	76	48.1	82	51.9	158	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 1 reveals that out of these 229 respondents, 63.4 per cent of male respondents and 48.1 per cent of female respondents have high involvement to buy the green products.

It is inferred that majority of male respondents have high involvement to buy the green products purchase.

TABLE 2: AGE AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Age	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Upto 30 years	35	58.3	25	41.7	60	100
Between 31-50	58	47.9	63	52.1	121	100
Above 50	28	58.3	20	41.7	48	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 2 reveals that out of these 229 respondents, 58.3 per cent of the sample respondents belong to the age group upto 30 years, 47.9 per cent of the sample respondents belong to the age group of between 31-50 years and 58.3 per cent of the sample respondents belong to the age group above 50 years have high involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that the respondents belong to upto 30 years of age and respondents belong above 50 years of age have high involvement to buy green products.

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Marital status	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Married	102	54.5	85	45.5	187	100
Single	19	45.2	23	54.8	42	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 3 exhibits that 54.5 per cent of married respondents and 45.2 per cent of respondents who were unmarried have involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that majority of the respondents are married and have high involvement to buy green products.

TABLE 4: FAMILY NATURE AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Family Nature	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Nuclear	70	51.1	67	48.9	137	100
Joint family	51	55.4	41	44.6	92	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 4 advocates that 55.4 percent of respondents belongs to Joint family and 51.1 percent of respondents belong to Nuclear family have high involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that majority of the respondents belong to nuclear family and have high involvement to buy green products.

TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Educational Qualification	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
School Level	38	55.9	30	44.1	68	100
Graduate Level	31	55.4	25	44.6	56	100
PG Level	52	49.5	53	50.5	105	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 5 clears that 55.9 per cent of the sample respondents belongs to school level education, 55.4 per cent of the sample respondents belongs to graduates and 49.5 percent of the sample respondents belongs to post graduate have high involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that the respondents belongs to educational qualification of school level and have high involvement to buy green products.

TABLE 6: OCCUPATION AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Occupation	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Business/Profession	50	51.5	47	48.5	97	100
Homemaker	29	46.8	33	53.2	62	100
Employee	42	60.0	28	40.0	70	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

It is apparent from Table 6 that 60 per cent of the respondents belong to Employee group, 51.5 per cent of the sample respondents belong to Business/Profession group and 46.8 per cent of the respondents belong to homemaker have high involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that the respondents belong to employee and have high involvement to buy green products.

TABLE 7: MONTHLY INCOME AND INVOLVEMENT TO BUY THE GREEN PRODUCTS

Variable	Involvement to Buy Green Products				Total	
	High		Low			
Monthly Income	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%	No of respondents	%
Upto Rs.25,000	52	53.1	46	46.9	98	100
Rs.25,001-Rs.50,000	44	57.1	33	42.9	77	100
Above Rs.50,000	25	46.3	29	53.7	54	100
Total	121	52.8	108	47.2	229	100

Table 7 exhibits that out of 229 respondents, 57.1 per cent of the sample respondents belong to the monthly income group of Rs. 25,001-50,000, 53.1 per cent of the sample respondents belong to monthly income between Rs. 25,000-Rs. 50,000 and 46.3 per cent of the sample respondents belong to monthly income group of above Rs.50,000 have high involvement to buy green products.

It is inferred that the respondents belong to the income group of upto Rs. 25,000 and have high involvement to buy green products.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

In order to analyze the relationship between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their purchase behaviour, the analysis of variance was employed. To identify purchase behaviour towards green products with socio-economic profile, the selected nine statements were analyzed, the respondents socio-economic profile, such as gender, age, marital status, family nature, education, occupation and monthly income have been used in this analysis. The following table shows that the mean score of the respondents and analysis of variance based on the socio-economic profile of the respondents on their purchase behaviour.

TABLE 8: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

Variables	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Gender					
Male	71	32.65	4.40	2.432	.120
Female	158	31.59	4.86		
Age					
Upto 30 years	60	32.63	4.62	1.679	.189
Between 31-50	121	31.95	4.10		
Above 50	48	30.96	6.15		
Marital status					
Married	187	32.01	4.80	.319	.573
Single	42	31.55	4.50		
Family Nature					
Nuclear	137	32.20	4.58	1.154	.284
Joint family	92	31.51	4.97		
Educational Qualification					
School Level	68	32.88	4.49	2.781	.064
Graduate Level	56	32.14	5.22		
PG Level	105	31.18	4.54		
Occupation					
Business/Profession	97	30.90	5.14	7.335	.001*
Housewife	62	31.60	4.58		
Employee	70	33.63	3.81		
Monthly Income					
Upto 25000	98	31.57	4.56	1.590	.206
25001-50000	77	32.70	4.67		
Above 50000	54	31.44	5.10		

*Significant @ 1% level

The test of hypothesis revealed that the purchase of green products was found significant with respect to only one socio-economic variable 'the occupation of the respondents' (.001) at one percent level of significance.

The other variables such as gender (.120), age (.189), marital status (.573), family nature (.284), educational qualification (.064) and monthly income (.206) have resulted insignificant and hence there is no significant difference exists in the involvement shown by the respondents based on these criteria towards purchase of green products.

CONCLUSION

Green consumer decision making is about the sequence of steps involved in the process and also distinguishes it in terms of low-involvement and high involvement products. So the decision making of the green consumer is helpful for the marketer to focus on a specific stage of the process. Purchase involvement of consumer may indirectly be reflected by the responsiveness of consumers interact with information related to the reality and word-of-mouth and it may spread product benefits among the consumers will influence the green product purchase decision.

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