



A STUDY ON SOURCES OF CONSUMER AWARENESS TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS AND ITS IMPACT ON PURCHASING DECISION IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

Johnsi Gloria¹, Dr. U. Rajan² and Dr. S. Suresh³

¹Part Time Research Scholar, AVVM. Sri Pushpam College (Autonomous), Poondi, [Affiliated to Bharahidasan University], Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

²Associate Professor, AVVM. Sri Pushpam College (Autonomous) Poondi [Affiliated to Bharahidasan University], Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

³Assistant Professor, AVVM. Sri. Pushpam College (Autonomous) Poondi [Affiliated to Bharahidasan University], Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

Green advertising is one of the hottest topic today. This paper examines that the sources of consumer awareness of the Green products. Consumer awareness is the important guidance of the green consumer purchasing behavior. This study makes about green product awareness among the consumers in Trichirappalli district. The main objective of the study to identify the sources of consumer awareness to buy the green products. The data have been collected from 400 respondents. Secondary data was collected from the literature review. The core idea of this paper towards know the consumers awareness about green products as well as by means of consumers would be helping the environment assuming that they switch over to green products. Majority of the respondents are aware green products. The present study also explain that green products awareness as the critical factor, that significantly influenced consumers green purchasing decision.

Key words: Green products, Purchase decision, Sources of awareness, Impact on purchase.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The green marketing concept is already stimulated all over the world. Green awareness has restored the role of consumers to determine their accountability to save the world before buying activities (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Invasion of the pandemic has increased the customer's concern on organic products. Green consumers are aware around environmental pollution; then, they confirm impacts of exhausting product to environmental pollution along with shot to maintain it at zero level (Tiwari *et al.*, 2011). Till consumers grant attention of environmental products to save the environment, the consumers then change their concern through buying actions and purchasing the eco-friendly products (Moser, 2015; Young *et al.*, 2010; Usharani & Gopinath, 2020a). Green consumers are eager to pay premium amount as they notice that this added payment will transfer green benefits for themselves and society.

The purpose of the study is to find out the awareness level of consumers' towards green products in Trichirappalli District. Environment friendly, eco-friendly, nature-friendly, and green marketing terms referring to goods and services, laws, guidelines and policies that expose reduced, minimal, or no damage upon ecosystems or the environment. Green marketing (Offering Green products) concept consume a wide range of activities for implementing the consumer rights, saving the environment and meeting the consumer demand or needs and preferences. In the present world, consumers are more aware of their safety of life and want everything would be environment-friendly products and creating the green world (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020b). Green marketing conflict with fraudulent practices, grey marketing, food contamination and protect consumers from impudence businessman.

The movement for green is realized to be improved at a radical speed all over the world. Consumers are more showing right activities and responsive behaviour regarding environmental change. As a result of the changes in consumer behaviour being environmental awareness and goals to make better for ecology, more and more eco-friendly products are launching to market (Shruti, 2014).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to American Marketing Association (2017) have defined green marketing based on impact of marketing activities on pollutions, energy resources and non-energy resource consumption where relationship is presented in terms of positivity and negativity of those factors. Polonsky (1994) stated that environmental marketing includes a broader array of organizational actions such as product adjustment, variations to the construct measure, delivery variation and further to satisfy human needs or wants, all activities consist green or environmental marketing (Unnamalai & Gopinath, 2020). And it is designed to make and facilitate an interchange expected remarkable that the fulfilment of these needs and wants will happen with last harmful reaction on the nature. Environmental sustainability is defined as a green marketing access that involves promoting strategies that save the environment in balance along with profits for the company. It is an important but difficult social target, and many companies are taking at least some actions to save and preserve the environment (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). People believe that natural resources are supportive and less damaging to the environment (Schlegemich *et al.*, 1996; Gopinath, 2019a).

A green product is indicate as naturally produce, bio-degeneratable non-toxic, non-experimental on living thing, pollution free, nominally packed with natural and permitted factors (Ottman, 1993). Environmentally friendly activities deal, for instance, with better pollution controls, energy-efficient operations, and recycled materials (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). People who are concerns about environmental safety, follow green buying behaviour and consume green product are considered as green consumer (Yazdanifard & Yan, 2014).

Consumers whose buying behaviour is influenced by environmental concerns will be considered as green consumers (Shrum *et al.*, 1995). Purchasing green products, isolating home with new materials, purchasing environment-friendly and energy-efficient cars are green buying behaviours (Shabani *et al.*, 2013). Consumers who concern more about the environmental issues have the more possibility to purchase green products (Yeonshin & Sejung, 2005). Consumers green buying process refers to the self-regulating relationship between consumption of green product deriving from needs, wants and choices.

The study by Hari Sundar G. Ram *et al.* (2011) identified that the decision-making styles as Perfection/high quality-conscious consumer, Brand Consciousness, Novelty, Shopping Consciousness, Price Consciousness, Impulsiveness, Choice and Brand loyalty.

Mostafa (2007), green purchase behavior refers to the consumption of products that are benevolent or beneficial to the environment, recyclable or conservable and sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns. A study conducted by D'Souza *et al.*, (2006) contrary reported that generally, perception of green products is negatively associated with customer's intention to purchase them if they are of higher prices and low quality in comparison to traditional products (Gopinath, 2019 b). The author Hemantha (2009), discussed in her study on Green marketing – An exploratory research on consumers in Trichirappalli city", has evaluated the consumer attitude towards green marketing and green branding. The primary data have been collected from 400 consumers in Trichirappalli city through questionnaire survey method using random sampling technique. The consumers are well aware of green environment aspects. A further, similar study concludes on Perception of Internet Banking users Service Quality (Kavitha & Gopinath, 2020).

Demographic profile is the key concern of researchers to investigate through their study in environmental marketing field. But factors such as reference group, knowledge, social media, marketing elements, promotional activities etc. can be influential on green products (Gopinath & Kalpana, 2019). Again a significant literature gap has flowed in Trichirappalli perspective by not evaluating any prognostic relationships that may be aware toward green products. The past researchers have not high lightened the predictive relationship reference group, knowledge, social media,, marketing elements, promotional activities on eco-friendly products with green products awareness in Trichirappalli context. The research purpose is to examine the sources of consumer's awareness of green products and its impact on purchasing decision in Trichirappalli. Therefore the study will measure green products awareness creation regarding reference group, knowledge, social media, marketing elements, promotional activities on eco-friendly products.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

According to Solomon (2006), the reference group can be defined as those people whose attitudes or principles are followed by others and therefore sometimes it influences on other purchasing behaviour and Employer Branding (Gopinath & Meenakshi, 2019). People prefer to follow their reference group's values, norms, attitudes or beliefs and try to adopt those on their own as a guide for awareness and behaviour (Mowen & Minor, 2000). Reference groups can enforce several kinds of influence on people: their behaviour and attitude can be transformed to its followers, through customs of reference group followers need may generate etc. (Mowen & Minor, 2000). Influence of reference group is also identified to discuss attitude-behaviour in ecological consumerism using social dilemma theory to find variance between green and non-green buyers (Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Thus, it is expected that:

H1: *There is a significant relationship between Reference group and green products awareness.*

Awareness and knowledge play effective role in different types of consumer behaviour (McEachern & Warnaby, 2008; Hartlieb & Jones, 2009; Donoghue & De Klerk, 2009; Chartrand 2005 and Dommeyer & Gross, 2003). Hartlieb & Jones (2009) explains the significance of moral labelling for civilising green products awareness role. Eco-packaging helps to build positive image and judgement of consumers. Thus it creates awareness about green products by enhancing knowledge of different critical aspects and also influences consumers' decisions or behaviours. Knowledge can be related to awareness and effect consumer purchasing choices or movements (McEachern & Warnaby, 2008). According to McEachern & Warnaby (2008), knowledge can be segmented into system knowledge, action-related knowledge, and useful knowledge and all of them provide guidelines for buying decision-making. Thus, it is expected that:

H2: *There is a significant relationship between knowledge and green products awareness.*

Mayfield (2008) explains that social media is online or electronic media which opportunities involvement, openness, preservation, community, and connectedness amongst online users. It can be considered as a means for customers to become familiar with the green products, and thus it will develop awareness concerning green product (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). Mohammadian & Mohammadreza (2012) have found strong relationship between social media and generation of green consciousness. Thus, it is expected that:

H3: *There is a significant relationship between social media and green products awareness.*

Consumer prefers those green products that are associated with the marketing elements. Some studies have indicated that assessment of marketing concern are made by product features, the exactness of green product promise to perform, place, package information on the products and its facilities (Forkink, 2010; Gopinath & Irismargaret, 2019; Luchs *et al.*, 2010). Consumers are worried about the marketing which arises from their interest in ecological balance and problem reducing the tendency of consumers. Thus, it is expected that:

H4: *There is a significant relationship between marketing elements and green products awareness.*

Green advertising communicates benefits of using green products such as less resource and energy for manufacturing products, sustainable sources, less harmful for environment and society etc. (Chang, 2011; Gopinath, 2011). Those messages impact on consumers' awareness and motivate to buy green products. Ginsberg & Bloom (2004) have observed that advertisement and package provide information such as environmental safety, recyclability etc. affect positive intentions to purchase green products in America. Thus, it is expected that:

H5: *There is a significant relationship between promotional activities on green products and green products awareness.*

Green products awareness refers to the ability of consumer to identify the product with green recognition and recall. Green products awareness can benefit businesses to launch the new green product and progress sales of current products (Markwick & Fill, 1997). Unfamiliarity with the green product may cause less interested to purchase an eco-friendly product (Glegg *et al.*, 2005). Firms which can generate awareness and give more attentive on the green product will affect purchasing decisions of their consumers. People pay attentions for those companies who can aware environmental benefits of their green products. Consumer Protection (Gopinath, 2019 c) and Consumer Perception (Gopinath, 2019 d;) changes of buying behaviours are also occurred because of green product awareness (Ottman, 1993). Thus, it is expected that:

H6: *There is a significant relationship between green products awareness and green purchase decision.*

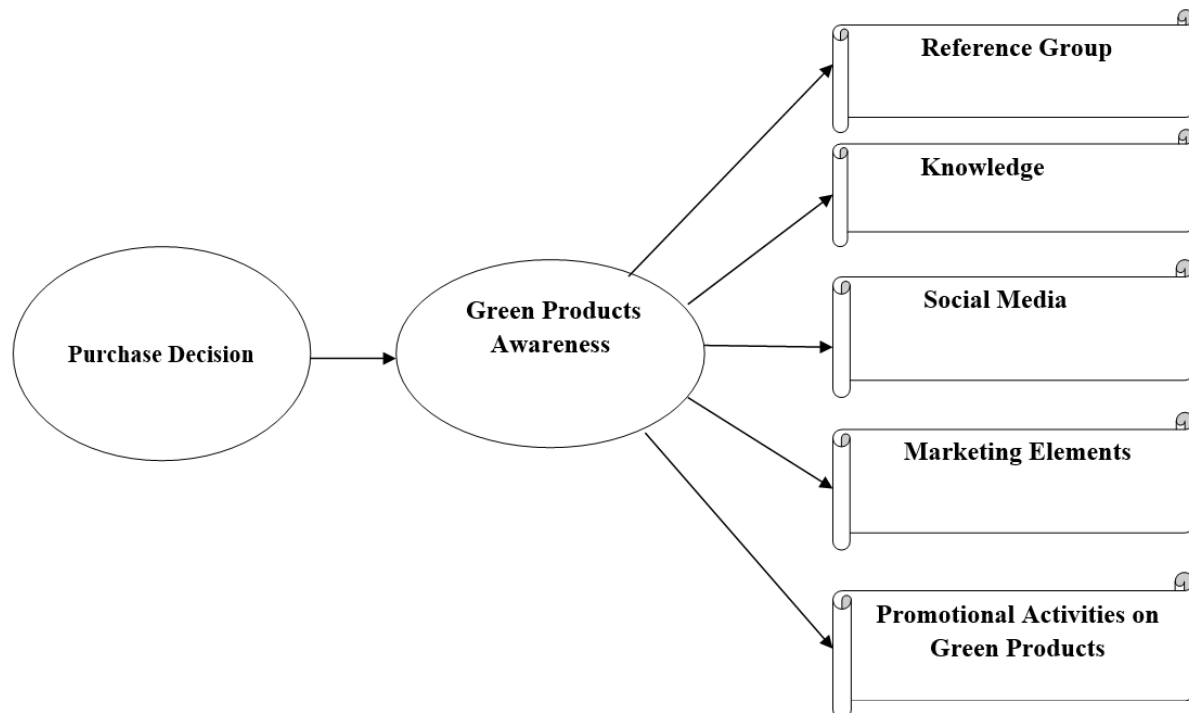


Figure 1 Proposed Research Model.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present paper consists of both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by an survey method with a disciplined questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to know the consumers' awareness level towards green products in Trichirappalli district. The consumers were selected through convenience sampling technique and the sample size considered for the study is 400 respondents. The secondary data were taken from various books, published journals, magazines and other relevant academic resources. This study was conducted for a period of four months. The collected data were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS).

3.1. Objectives

- To create awareness about the green products.
- To educate the customers by promoting the green products.
- To identify the sources of consumer awareness to buy the green products.
- To study the buying behavior about eco friendly products.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. The Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the different frequency and percentages of the demographic profile of respondents. Most of the respondents are females (68.75%) while males are (31.25%). It is observed that respondents are mostly in the age groups 19–30 years old (43%), known as young. Besides, young generation are highly concern about anything new to the society and react to different situation faster than any other age class. So this study considers maximum number of

participants from this group. The second highest of respondents are in the age categories 31-40 years (30.5%). The third highest of respondents are in the age categories 41-50 years (16.25%), and minority of respondents are in the age categories 50 years above (10.25%). These young people tend to have been more concerned about the green environment and influenced a purchasing decision. Also about employment status, the majority of respondents are self-employed (28%), the second highest of respondents are government employees (27.5%), and the third highest of the respondents are professionals (23.25%). Lastly, the fourth highest of respondents are homemakers (21.25%). It presented that respondents are the majority in the income level below Rs.10,000 (36%), the second highest of respondents are income level Rs.10,000-20,000 (31.75%), the third highest of respondents are income level Rs.20,000-30,000 (21.25%) and a minority of respondents are income level Rs.30,000 above (11%).

Table 1 The demographic profile of respondents

Type	Number of Respondents	(%)
Gender		
Male	125	31.25
Female	275	68.75
Age		
19 -30 years	172	43
31 -40 years	122	30.5
41 -50 years	65	16.25
Above 50 years	41	10.25
Employment		
Home maker	85	21.25
Self employed	112	28
Professional	93	23.25
Government	110	27.5
Monthly Income		
Below Rs.10,000	144	36
Rs.10,000- Rs.20,000	127	31.75
Rs.20,000- Rs.30,000	85	21.25
Above Rs.30,000	44	11

4.2. Sources of Consumers Awareness

Table 2 reveals a total picture of different sources of consumer awareness towards green products by communicate respondents' opinion on various issues related to creating awareness. Majority of respondents have agreed social media (33%) has become the most significant factors in sources of consumers green products awareness. Marketing elements (32.5%) is the second essential factors in sources of consumer's green products awareness. Knowledge (31.75%) has become the third significant factors. Promotional activities (31%) are the fourth significant factors. Reference groups (28%) are the fifth significant factors in sources of consumer's green products awareness.

Table 2 Sources of Consumers Awareness

Type	Number of Respondents	(%)
Reference Group		
Television	112	28
Newspaper &Magazines	78	19.5
Friends &Relatives	67	16.75
School/Institutions	58	14.5
Social networks	85	21.25
Knowledge		
Advertisement	127	31.75
Company image	92	23
Brand image	78	19.5
Price	60	15
Word of mouth	43	10.75
Social media		
Television, Radio, Newspaper	132	33
Friends & Relatives	85	21.25
Internet	93	23.25
Awareness programme by Govt.	50	12.5
Seminars & Conference	40	10
Marketing elements		
Product	118	29.5
Package	130	32.5
Place	95	23.75
Promotion	57	14.25
Promotional activities		
Enhance a quality of life	124	31
Environmental protection responsibility	115	28.75
Potential increase in product value	73	18.25
Getting high level of satisfaction	88	22

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study has been conducted with an objective to examine the sources of consumers' awareness towards green products and its impact on purchasing decision. Different green products source is important tools to instruct the consumers' green products awareness. This research survey the reference group, knowledge, social media, marketing elements, promotional activities to influence consumers to green products awareness and its impact on their purchasing decision. From the results of Majority of respondents have comply social media has become the most important factors in sources of consumers green products awareness. This study express that Advertisement is the most influencing factor to purchasing of green products by the taking decision to consumers. The result of the study presented that main reason that makes Promotional activities are willing to pay more for green product awareness. As the consumers are getting more awareness about green products, it influences purchasing decision. This study explain that green products awareness as the crucial factor, which significantly affects their green purchase decision. Thus, there is a significant relation between green products awareness and green purchase decision. The outcomes of the study interpret that consumers green products awareness are influenced their green purchase decision (Suki, 2013).

6. LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The study is restricted in Trichirappalli only, and the result may not apply to other places. This data may not be the real representative of overall Trichirappalli consumers' view because of sample size. Further research is instructed to develop the unreliability of the sampling by approaching the sample size. The study is found few influences. So there may be some other volatile which may influence green products awareness. Those factors are hard to left for imminent research.

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