



A Study on Influence of Demographic Profile on Green Purchase Intention of Consumers in Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have been conducted about consumers' green purchase behavior (GPB) in Europe and North America. This research paper examines Indian consumers' intention to buy environmentally friendly products. The primary focus of this research paper was to examine and investigate the hypothesized relationship between predictor and criterion variable green purchase intention (GPI). The target population for this study consisted of respondents from National Capital Delhi. The sample consisted of 200 participants and convenience random sampling was used. The results from this study showed that there is a difference in green purchase intention of respondents as per their demographic profile i.e. age, gender and education.

Furthermore, this study would also help businesses/ green marketers to fine-tune their environmental program.

KEYWORDS : Demographic profile, Green purchase intension

Introduction

Concerns related to the environment are evident in the increasingly environmentally conscious marketplace. Over the years, a majority of consumers have realized that their purchasing behavior had a direct impact on many ecological problems. Customers adapted to this new threatening situation by considering environmental issues when shopping (e.g. checking if the product is wrapped in recycled material) and by purchasing only ecologically compatible products (e.g. biodegradable paint, CFC-free hairspray or unbleached coffee filters). Perhaps the most convincing evidence supporting the growth of ecologically favorable consumer behavior is the increasing number of individuals who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. Despite a large concern being generated for environmentally responsive consumption, little research has been done in the Indian context to understand the profile of consumers who would pay more for environmentally responsive products.

In 1989, 67 percent of Americans stated that they were willing to pay 5-10 percent more for ecologically compatible products (Coddington, 1990). By 1991, environmentally conscious individuals were willing to pay between 15-20 percent more for green products (Suchard and Polonsky, 1991). By 1993, Myburgh-Louw and O'Shaughnessy (1994) conducted a mail survey of female consumers in the UK to examine their perceptions of environmental claims on the packaging of clothes detergents. They found that 79 percent of their sample agreed to pay up to 40 percent more for a product which was identical in every respect to their own brand and which had been proven to be green.

An important challenge facing marketers is to identify the demographic profile of the consumers who are have intension to purchase green product and are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. It is apparent that an enhanced knowledge of the profile of this segment of consumers would be extremely useful. The closer we move to an understanding of what causes individuals to pay more for green products, the better marketers will be able to develop strategies specifically targeted at these consumers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This aim of research is:

- (1) To study the impact of demographic profile on environmental friendly purchase behavior.
- (2) To identify the segment of consumers who are likely to pay more for environmental friendly products

Literature review

Following an exhaustive review of the relevant literature, several factors that may influence consumers' willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly products have been identified. These major factors can be classified into five categories: demographics, knowledge, values, attitudes and behavior.

Consumers' demographic characteristics

Efforts to identify environmentally friendly consumers can be traced back to the early 1970s. Berkowitz and Lutterman (1968), as well as Anderson and Cunningham (1972), were pioneers in studying the profile of socially responsible consumers. Overall, their combined results portray a highly socially conscious person as female, pre-middle aged, with a high level of education (finished high school) and above average socioeconomic status.

In the past two decades, the results of Berkowitz and Lutterman (1968) and Anderson and Cunningham (1972) were sometimes supported, but often not. For example, recent studies found that females tend to be more ecologically conscious than men (McIntyre *et al.*, 1993; Banerjee and McKeage, 1994). However, Reizenstein *et al.* (1974) found that only men were willing to pay more for control of air pollution, and Balderjahn (1988) reported that the relationship between environmentally conscious attitudes and the use of non-polluting products was more intensive among men than among women.

Ecologically compatible manner

Following Berkowitz and Lutterman's (1968) study, Henion (1972) also thought that consumers with medium or high incomes would be more likely to act in an ecologically compatible manner due to their higher levels of education and therefore to their increased sensitivity to social problems. However, the results did not support his hypothesis: environmentally friendly behavior was consistent across income groups. Moreover, Sandahl and Robertson (1989) found that the environmentally conscious consumer is less educated and has a lower income than the average American. This brought them to conclude that income and education are not good predictors of environmental concern or purchase behavior.

Early research identified the green consumer as being younger than average (Berkowitz and Lutterman, 1968; Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981). Surprisingly, this trend has been reversed in the last decade and several recent studies identified the green consumer as being older than average (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Roberts, 1996).

Although most findings about the impact of consumers' demographic characteristics on their environmentally conscious behavior are contradictory (Roberts, 1996), it is clear that they exert a significant influence. However, most authors agree that demographics are less important than knowledge, values and/or attitude in explaining ecologically friendly behavior (Webster, 1975; Brooker, 1976; Banerjee and McKeage, 1994; Chan, 1999).

The environmentally conscious customer

Webster (1975) found that the environmentally conscious customer feels strongly that he/she can do something about pollution and tries to consider the social impact of his/her buying behavior. According to Wiener and Sukhdial (1990), one of the main reasons that stops individ-

uals from engaging in ecologically favorable actions is their perceived level of self-involvement toward the protection of the environment. As the authors point out, many individuals may have high ecological concern, but feel that the preservation of the environment is the responsibility of the government and/or big corporations. We might expect this attitude to impact the willingness of consumers to spend more for environmentally friendly products.

Suchard and Polonski (1991) stipulate that ecologically conscious consumers will try to protect the environment in different ways (e.g. recycling, checking that a package is made of recycled material, purchasing only green products). However, it is not clear how consumers' willingness to spend more for green product will be correlated with other ecologically favorable behaviors. Pickett *et al.* (1993) state that marketers must exercise caution when attempting to extend environmental initiatives from one ecologically conscious behavior to another. For example, those consumers who recycle paper may not be the same consumers who purchase recycled handwriting paper.

Green Purchase Intention (GPI)

Green purchase intention is conceptualized as the probability and willingness of a person to give preference to products having eco-friendly features over other traditional products in their purchase considerations. According to Beckford *et al.*, (2010) and Chan (2001) research studies, green purchase intention is a significant predictor of green purchase behavior, which means that purchase intention is positively affecting the probability of a customer decision that he will buy green products. Chan and Lau (2002) conducted a cross-cultural research study in China and America, wherein consumers in Shanghai and Los Angeles were surveyed, concluded that the asymmetric influence of green purchasing intention on green purchasing behavior warrants further attention.

Demographic profile of the consumers

Berkowitz and Lutterman (1968) and Anderson and Cunningham (1972), were pioneers in studying the profile of green consumers. Anderson and Cunningham (1972) characterized them as individuals that not only intend to satisfy their personal needs, but also are concerned about the welfare of society and the environment, belonging to a socio-economic class above the average and professional occupations of recognition and status. They profiled the typical green consumer as female, 40 years old, with a high level of education and socio-economic status above average.

Other studies have also shown that women tend to be more environmentally conscious than men (Banerjee and McKeage, 1994). However, Reizenstein *et al.* (1974) found that only men were more willing to pay more to control air pollution and Balderjahn (1998) stated that the relation between attitudes and use of environmentally conscious products was more intense in men than in women.

For the present study the following socio-demographic variables will be taken into the analysis: **sex, age, income, literacy.**

Age. This variable was investigated by many authors and many of them argue that young people are likely to be more sensitive to green marketing issues. Nevertheless, over the last two decades, several studies identified the green consumer as being older than average (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Roberts, 1996; D'Souza *et al.*, 2007).

The relation between age and other variables were also explored by other authors. However, results are contradictory. Some found non-significant relations between age and green behaviour (McEvoy, 1972; Kinneer *et al.*, 1974; Straughan and Roberts, 1999) while others have found significant and positive relations (Sandahl and Robertson, 1989).

Gender. Several authors investigated the impact of gender on green consumer behaviour (McEvoy, 1972; Brooker, 1976; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981; Sandahl and Robertson, 1989; Stern *et al.*, 1993; MacDonald and Hara, 1994; Roberts, 1995, 1996; Roberts and Bacon, 1997; Straughan and Roberts, 1999). Despite the fact that many of these researchers argue that women are more likely to act in a more environmentally aware manner than men in terms of green consumption, final results are not conclusive.

Education. The vast majority of studies that include literacy level have

found a positive relationship with green consumer behaviour (McEvoy, 1972; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981; Aaker and Bagozzi, 1982; Schwartz and Miller, 1991; Roberts, 1996; Zimmer *et al.*, 1994). Consumers with higher education are more sensitive to the cause and tend to act in accordance. On the other hand, Sandahl and Robertson (1989) and Straughan and Roberts (1999) observed that education did not have a positive relation with green consumer behaviour.

Whenever there is a purchase decision, there is the potential that the final resolution can contribute to a more or less sustainable pattern of consumption. All purchasing actions have ethical, resource, waste and community impact consequences. According to Young *et al.* (2010), when consumers choose to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, their decision-making process becomes increasingly complex. Akehurst mentions that there is an "attitude-behaviour gap" or "values-action gap", because although 30 per cent of consumers report that they are very concerned about environmental issues, it is not necessarily translated to their purchase habits.

This incongruence between environmental concern and purchase behaviour was also explored by several authors and has become a barrier to green consumption as well as to marketers (Mintel, 1995; Wong *et al.*, 1996; Crane, 2000). According to Follows and Jobber (2000) and Moisanter (2007) the decision to acquire an alternative to a particular product (green or not) requires a deliberate and conscious knowledge of its consequences. In other words, the purchase intention results from an evaluation of the exchange between the individual and environmental consequences. These authors argued that the intention to purchase green products is the result of a trade-off between the environmental issues and the individual consequences of a particular purchase. Therefore, a strong weight of individual consequences may explain why some consumers with high environmental concern do not purchase accordingly.

Schlegelmilch *et al.* (1996) state that green consumers are individuals that understand the consequences of their actions and their environmental knowledge can explain their green buying behaviour. Straughan and Roberts (1999) argue that consumer behaviour will vary depending on the individual level of environmental knowledge. These are the ones who avoid using plastic bags and prefer to use an eco-bag when they go shopping, who buy natural detergents, who purchase goods with biodegradable packaging and who refuse to buy products from certain brands that harm the environment, among others (Schwartz and Miller, 1991; Minton and Rose, 1997). In general, while some studies demonstrated that there is a significant relation between green purchase intention and behaviour (Chan and Yam, 1995), others show that the gap persists (Wong *et al.*, 1996; Crane, 2000; Chan, 2001).

Juwaheer and Pudaruth (2012), provide some interesting clues regarding customers' perceptions on environmental concerns and green products. He suggests that most consumers have expressed a great interest in the protection of the environment and they are strongly concerned about the environment and its degradation. Hence, business executives should host workshops and seminars so as to educate customers on environmental protection and environmental-friendly products. Results also indicated an overall positive correlation between effective green marketing strategies and customers' purchasing patterns for green products. Therefore, there is a powerful urge for companies to promote green branding, eco-labelling and green packaging strategies in order to encourage a greener pattern of consumption among consumers in Mauritius.

Akehurst *et al.* (2012), explained that, psychographic variables, with emphasis on perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) and altruism, are more relevant than socio-demographics in explaining environmentally conscious consumer behavior (ECCB). He states that consumers with higher ECCB have shown higher green purchase intention (GPI) and that ECCB has a positive impact on Green purchase behavior, higher than GPI, which in turn mediates that relationship.

Younger consumers particularly, the females are demonstrating high scoring on the SRCB (socially responsive consumer behavior) scale. Analyzing according to income-level revealed urban consumers are more socially responsive than their rural counterparts (Singh, 2012)

Some scholars have opined that psychographic measures are most

suitable over socio-demographic measures for profiling the ESC consumer (e.g., Diamantopoulos et al, 2003). Some have argued in favour of demographic measures as being suitable as starting point and for providing initial insight into the ESC consumer (e.g., Laroche et al, 2001). Some authors have posited pro-environmental purchase decision approach, arguing that both socio-demographic measures and psychological measures offer limited utility in profiling the ESC consumer (e.g., Schlegelmilch et al, 1996).

According to Cheah (2011), the three antecedents of ecoliteracy, interpersonal influence and value orientation have strong correlations with attitudes towards environmentally friendly products. Consumers with favourable attitudes towards environmentally friendly products are more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products. Perceived product necessity moderates the relationship between attitudes toward environmentally friendly products and the willingness to purchase environmentally friendly products.

Acc to Paco et.al(2009), there are consumers who buy green products and that certain environmental and demographic variables are significant for differentiating between the “greener” segment and the other segments. Yet, generally speaking, despite the support for policies designed to improve the environment in Portugal, the inhabitants do not translate their concerns into actions

But Shahnaei(2012), believes that only educational Level has significant effect on green purchasing among Malaysian consumers. Cross analysis of results revealed that more educated consumers perceive environmental issues better and are more sensitive to them(Banyate et.al,2010). Moreover, the female consumers who are inclined to contribute to environmental conservation and who are sensitive to ecological problems tend to pay more for eco-friendly products. Acc to Paco et.al(2010), certain environmental and demographic variables are significant in differentiating between the ‘greener’ consumer group and the other segments.

Acc to Abeliotis et.al (2010), socio demographic characteristics (in particular) age and income are the most influential factors that determine this engagement. In addition, his study reveals that four out of five Greek consumers identify global climate change as the most important issue of their time. However, only one in five of the respondents are willing to change their lifestyle in order to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of our everyday activities; compared with men, women are more willing to do so. One in two consumers report that eco-friendly products are more expensive than standard ones. However, when questioned as to whether they would pay a higher price for products with less environmental impact, almost four out of five responded favorably

D’Souza(2007) showed that some of the demographic variables were significant, which is largely consistent with earlier findings by other researchers in this area. Label dissatisfaction was higher in the older and middle age respondents. However, some respondents disagreed that labels were accurate while commenting that labels were easy to understand.

Based on the literature review following hypothesis were developed

H01: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different genders or Gender does not influence the customer’s intention to purchase green product.

H02: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different educational background or Education does not influences the customer’s intention to purchase green product

H03: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different age groups or Age does not influence the customer’s intention to purchase green product

METHODOLOGY
Research design

The research is descriptive in nature. It involved data collection through a questionnaire. Being environmental friendly is the need of the hour and India is far behind in the eco friendly consumption. Studies in the Indian context on a large scale are not known. Based on the review of

literature hypothesis were developed.

Population and Sample

The population targeted for this study consisted of subjects residing in a large Indian city – Delhi which is the national capital of the country.

Procedure of data collection

The data collection was done through simple random sampling taking the representation of population of Delhi.

Tools & techniques - Questionnaire

A structured non-disguised questionnaire was designed to gather the data required for this research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. First section comprised of questions related to demographic profile of the respondents and the second section consisted of 12 descriptive statements on a five point likert scale of agreement. Respondents were asked to read statements and specify on a five-point Likert scale whether they agreed or disagreed with each one.

One way analysis of variance was used with Intension to purchase as dependent variable and each of the demographic profile(age, gender and education) as independent variable.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Measures of Constructs

Twelve questions measuring the degree of Green purchase intention of the survey respondents’ were used. Each question of all scales was measured on five-point Likert scale with response options ranging from **Strongly Disagree** to **Strongly Agree**.

Sample profile

Source: field data	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	092	46
Female	108	54
Education		
Higher Secondary	006	3
Matriculation	003	1.5
Graduate	063	31.5
Post Graduate	128	64
Age		
15- 24 yrs	066	33
25—34 yrs	127	63.5
35 - 44 yrs	007	3.5

Table: 4.1

Analysis of Variance between Gender and Green purchase intention and Descriptive Mean Scores of Green purchase intention

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GPI	M	92	43.88	5.086	.530
	F	108	42.46	5.712	.550

Table 4.2

Independent Samples Test

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
GPI	Equal variances assumed	1.515	.220	1.839	198	.067
	Equal variances not assumed			1.856	197.599	.065

Table 4.3

Analysis of Variance between education and Green purchase intention and Descriptive Mean Scores of Green purchase intention

**Descriptives
GPI**

	N	Mean
HS	6	47.83
M	3	45.33
G	63	44.70
PG	128	42.06
Total	200	43.12

**Table 4.4
ANOVA
GPI**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	448.085	3	149.362	5.326	.002
Within Groups	5496.270	196	28.042		
Total	5944.355	199			

Table 4.5

**Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable: GPI (Tukey HSD)**

(I) education	(J) education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
HS	M	2.500	3.744	.909
	G	3.135	2.262	.510
	PG	5.771(*)	2.212	.048
M	HS	-2.500	3.744	.909
	G	.635	3.129	.997
	PG	3.271	3.093	.716
G	HS	-3.135	2.262	.510
	M	-.635	3.129	.997
	PG	2.636(*)	.815	.008
PG	HS	-5.771(*)	2.212	.048
	M	-3.271	3.093	.716
	G	-2.636(*)	.815	.008

Table 4.6

*** The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.**

Analysis of Variance between age and Green purchase intention and Descriptive Mean Scores of Green purchase intention

**Descriptives
GPI**

	N	Mean
15- 24 yrs	66	44.91
25—34 yrs	127	41.94
35 - 44 yrs	7	47.43
Total	200	43.12

Table 4.7

**ANOVA
GPI**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	516.572	2	258.286	9.374	.000
Within Groups	5427.783	197	27.552		
Total	5944.355	199			

Table 4.8

**Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable: GPI (Tukey HSD)**

(I) age	(J) age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
15- 24 yrs	25—34 yrs	2.964(*)	.796	.001	1.08	4.85
	35 - 44 yrs	-2.519	2.087	.450	-7.45	2.41
25—34 yrs	15- 24 yrs	-2.964(*)	.796	.001	-4.85	-1.08
	35 - 44 yrs	-5.484(*)	2.038	.021	-10.30	-.67
35 - 44 yrs	15- 24 yrs	2.519	2.087	.450	-2.41	7.45
	25—34 yrs	5.484(*)	2.038	.021	.67	10.30

Table 4.9

*** The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.**

Hypothesis 1:

H01: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different genders or Gender does not influence the customer's intention to purchase green product.

Table 4.2 clearly shows that since $p > 0.05$, we accept the null hypothesis. It means that gender does not influence the customer's intention to purchase green products.

Hypothesis 2:

H02: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different educational background or Education does not influences the customer's intention to purchase green product

Table 4.5 clearly shows that since $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. It means that educational background does influence the customer's intention to purchase green products. It is evident from table 4.4 that respondents with highest qualification as higher secondary are more intended to purchase green products. Also respondents with matriculation as their qualification show similar behavior. Then a post hoc analysis was done using Tukey test to find out equality in mean. It was found that post graduates and graduates show significant difference in their intention to purchase green product. Also post graduates are significantly different from respondents with higher secondary as their highest qualification in their intention to purchase green products

Hypothesis 3:

H03: There is no significant difference in green purchase intention of consumers among different age groups or Age does not influence the customer's intention to purchase green product

Table 4.8 clearly shows that since $p < 0.05$, we accept the null hypothesis. It means that age does not influence the customer's intention to purchase green products.

Table 4.7 clearly shows that since $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. It means that age does influence the customer's intention to purchase green products. It is evident from table 4.9 that respondents with age between 35-44 years are more intended to purchase green products. Also respondents with age between 15-24 years show similar behavior.

Then a post hoc analysis was done using Tukey test to find out equality in mean. It was found that respondents between age group of 15-24 years and 25-34 years show significant difference in their intention to purchase green product. Also respondents between age group of 25-34 years are significantly different from respondents with 35-44 years of in their intention to purchase green products

Conclusion and Managerial Implications

Based on the above empirical findings, it is evident that in Delhi, consumer's educational background and age are significant demographic variables for green segments. It is also concluded respondents with highest qualification as higher secondary and aged between 35-44 years are more intended to purchase green product in Delhi region. It is also evident that gender does not influence green purchase intention. With reference to the managerial perspective, environmental issues have been shaped new business opportunities to be responsive. Thus, companies which are producing higher quality green products with a

premium price can be targeted emerging green consumers. For price sensitive consumers, companies can be offered comparable product quality standards at competitive prices through technology advancement to create lower cost based production processes. Further, companies need to be used proper marketing information (i.e., green labels, green advertising, and better word of mouth about green products) to change beliefs of the nature and society to convert consumers into environmentally green consumer segments. This study has only limited to demographic variables (gender, age and educational background) of green segments and therefore, future studies should explore how antecedents and outcomes of consumers' environmentally friendly beliefs and behaviour affect in developing context like India. It is also possible to empirically investigate all the segmentation variables such as psychographic criteria and behavioural criteria affecting green consumer behaviour intention in Indian context in future research.

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