

## **A Study on Consumer Behavior towards Green Products and Barriers in Consumer Purchase Decision**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Eco-friendly products are also known as green products and environment friendly products as they are bio-degradable, leaving minimal carbon foot-print and causing minimal harm to people and the environment. Production of eco-friendly and green products has increased over past few years. Yet, the consumption of these products remains very low compared to the conventional, non eco-friendly and non-green products of the same category. This paper proposes to expose the extent to which the attitude of the consumer is favorable towards purchasing of green products and eco-friendly products thereby, to place on record the proposals to promote the need for the use of these products. It also accesses the barriers in society that act as detriments in the use of green products.

A quantitative analysis was used for the research. The survey was conducted in the state of Kerala among people 18-65 years old who are social media users. The questionnaire method was used for this paper which was circulated online. The paper contains an assessed sample of 252 respondents, male and female, which was distributed online and the samples and responses were collected. Stratified Random Sampling was used for the study.

**Keywords:** Green products, Eco-friendly products, Consumer behavior, Barriers, Carbon footprint

### **INTRODUCTION**

Green products are “products that do not harm the environment whether in their production, use or disposal”. In another word, the environment is less polluted during the use of these products. It is possible to produce environment-friendly items from scratch or recycled materials. Environmentally friendly products also known as Eco-friendly products or green products which cause the least amount of damage to people and the environment. Green products help save energy, reduce carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions, and are low in toxicity and pollution. A green product is a renewable product that is designed to reduce its environmental impact during its life cycle and even after it is no longer in use. Usually, green goods are defined by having two simple objectives: reducing waste and optimizing the productivity of energy. These goods are harmful, less environmentally friendly, and less recyclable, less energy-efficient, less green, and less biodegradable (Ursil Majid Makhdoomi&Ulfat Nazir,2016).

Consumers can identify these brands by looking for logos such as Energy Star for appliances and devices, USDA Organic Seal for truly organic cosmetics and foods, Green Seal for environmentally friendly cleaning products, and Forest Stewardship Council logo for paper and wood products. Eco-friendly products have some advantages over other products, including reduced costs, environmental sustainability, healthier living, the better quality of life, recycled, reusable, lower maintenance, and energy bill savings. The ability to save the world is the primary advantage. The

ecosystem and biodiversity will be preserved and protected if the appropriate eco-friendly items are used.

Consumer purchase behavior refers to “the actions taken by consumers before buying a product or service”. This may include using search engines, responding to social media messages, or taking a variety of other actions. Understanding this mechanism is beneficial to companies because it allows them to better adapt their marketing strategies to previous marketing campaigns that have effectively inspired customers to purchase.

Consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by four factors. They are cultural characteristics that are not always determined by one's nationality. It can be characterized by their associations, religious beliefs, or even their geographical location. Social influences, or a person's surroundings, affect how they perceive products. Personal factors, such as a person's age, marital status, budget, personal beliefs, values, and morals, as well as psychological factors, such as a person's state of mind when presented with a product, will also determine how they feel about not only the item but the brand as a whole.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Afzaal Ali & Israr Ahmad (2012), their study identified the factors that Influence the Green Purchase Intentions of Pakistani Consumers. They discovered the results of a survey conducted in two major Pakistani cities and concluded that they provide fair evidence for the validity of the proposed model. According to their results, respondents have a positive outlook about green products and are willing to purchase them more often, but they are worried about product price and quality. Green products must compete in the same way as conventional products do. This research also looks at how the current findings could aid the Pakistani government and green marketers in fine-tuning their environmental initiatives.

Jacob Cherian & Jolly Jacob (2012) stated that the Study of Consumers' Attitude towards Environment-Friendly Products. The current study explores the idea of green marketing and discusses the various ways in which different customer attributes are linked to it. The current thesis is a methodological investigation into green marketing. As a result, the researcher used a qualitative analysis approach. Since a qualitative approach is not experimental, there are no independent or dependent variables in qualitative analysis. According to the report, it is important to examine previous research on the same subject matter when conducting conceptual research. A qualitative approach allows for an adaptable procedure, allowing for improvements to be made and integrated into the study. Since this analysis includes a dependent variable, the present study uses a purely qualitative approach.

Lay Peng Tan & Micael-Lee Johnstone (2016) evaluated the role of consumers' green perceptions in preventing green consumer behavior. The aim of this research is to look into the idea of consumers' green perceptions (CGPs), which includes people's current views on green goods, green consumers, green consumption habits, and green marketing communications. A two-stage methodology was used in this research. Stage one involved a qualitative investigation of CGPs, followed by quantitative analysis to confirm the results from Stage one. Following that, each stage's procedure and findings are discussed. The idea that CGPs might have an impact on their consumption habits and how ready they are to go green. The definition of CGPs was investigated through focus groups. Two surveys were conducted in Australia and New Zealand in the second stage to test and confirm the themes found in the exploratory research.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to examine consumer buying behavior and the barriers to purchasing eco-friendly products. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach. Quantitative analysis involves gathering and reviewing non-numerical data in order to gain a better understanding of ideas, views, or experiences. It can be used to gain in-depth understanding of an issue or to generate new research ideas. This quantitative study is used to learn more about how people perceive the environment. The technique used to collect data is by directly approaching the respondents with questionnaire. Respondents were given a list of questions and stratified random sampling is used for collecting samples in this study and it is completely based on gender, age, income, and attitude.

### Research Questions

1. How is the consumer attitude/perception towards green products?
2. What are the barriers/factors in society against the use of green products?

### Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the consumer attitude/perception towards green products
2. To identify the barrier in society against the use of green products

### Hypothesis

1. Consumers are highly satisfied with the use of eco-friendly products and they are aware about the environmental impact
2. Price initially appears to the greatest barrier to green products adoption and availability of eco-friendly products is the another barrier in society against the use of green products

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### 1. Demographic Variables

**Table 1: Demographic variables (Gender, Age, Educational Qualification and Employment status), counts and Percentage**

Row	Demographic Variables	Levels	Count	Percentage
1	Gender	Female	151	59.9%
		Male	101	40.1%
2	Age	18-25 years old	236	93.7%
		26-32 years old	10	4.0%
		33-41 years old	1	0.4%
		42-48 years old	4	1.6%
		49-56 years old	1	0.4%
3	Educational Qualification	10th-12th	22	8.7%
		Below 10	1	0.4%
		Graduate	119	47.2%
		Postgraduate	30	11.9%
		Undergraduate	80	31.7%
4	Employment status	Homemaker	6	2.4%

		In service	51	20.2%
		Own Business	17	6.7%
		Student	178	70.6%

Table 1 shows that 59.9% out of the total 252 are females and the remaining 40.1% are males. The age group is also one demographic variable which is above mentioned in the table. 93.7% of the respondents in the survey is between the age group of 18-25 years old, 4.0% are between the age group of 26-32 old, 0.4% are between the age group of 33-41old, 1.6% are between the age group of 42-48 old and the remaining 0.4% is between 49-56 years old.

Educational Qualification is also one of the demographic variable in the table. 8.7% of the respondents in the survey with educational qualification are below 10<sup>th</sup>, 47.2% are graduates, 11.9% are postgraduates and 31.7% are Undergraduates. Another demographic variable in the survey is Employment status, 2.4% are homemakers, 20.2% are In service persons, 6.7% have own business and 70.6% are students.

## CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS

**Table 2.1. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the medium of awareness about the eco-friendly products**

How you are aware of eco-friendly products				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Social Media	128	50.8	50.8
	Advertisements	26	10.3	10.3
	Television	7	2.8	2.8
	Others	91	36.1	36.1
	Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 2.1 refers to the frequency tabulation of respondents and their medium of awareness about the eco-friendly products. The research result is started with the medium of awareness among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey. From those data n(128) 50% of respondents prefer social media and agreed that their only medium of awareness about eco-friendly products is through social media. And around n(26) 10.3% prefer advertisement as their medium of awareness about the eco-friendly products.

Out of the total 252 respondents, 128 respondents are aware about the green product through social media. More shared news and information about green products are spread through social media platforms which make then think more about the problems that environment face.

**Table 2.2. Frequency tabulation of respondents describing about the environmental impact while purchasing general day-to-day products**

While purchasing general day-to-day products would you consider its environmental impact as a consumer				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Maybe	119	47.2	47.2
	No	23	9.1	9.1

Yes	110	43.7	43.7
Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 2.2 refers to the frequency tabulation of the respondents and their environmental impact while purchasing general day-to-day products. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey, n(110) 43.7% of respondents prefer "Yes" that they consider environmental impact while purchasing any eco-friendly products in general day to day life and n(23) 9.1% prefer "No" in this sample survey.

The consumers are always concern about the environment but due to some barriers in the purchasing decision they cannot always opt for green products in their general day-to-day life. Consumers consider the product's environmental effects in addition to its price and quality. Consumers growing awareness about how the products are packaged and people paying attention to not being a global crisis.

**Table 2.3. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the Level of satisfaction while using eco-friendly products**

What is your level of satisfaction while using eco-friendly products				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Dissatisfied	2	.8	.8
	Highly dissatisfied	1	.4	.4
	Highly satisfied	62	24.6	24.6
	Neutral	43	17.1	17.1
	Satisfied	144	57.1	57.1
	Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 2.3 refers to the frequency tabulation and their level of satisfaction with eco-friendly products. A gender-based sample of n(252) respondents in the survey found that n(144) 57.1 % were satisfied by using eco-friendly products. Around n(62) 24.6 % are extremely satisfied with their decision to use eco-friendly products.

Satisfaction level while using a product is an important factor for every customer. 114 respondents are satisfied by using green products because of the Quality and Branding.

**Table 2.4. Frequency tabulation of the respondents about eco-friendly products that are beneficial to the environment**

Do you think eco-friendly products are beneficial to the environment				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	120	47.6	47.6
	Disagree	4	1.6	1.6
	Strongly agree	116	46.0	46.0
	Strongly disagree	2	.8	.8
	Undecided	10	4.0	4.0

Total	252	100.0	100.0
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Table 2.4 refers to the the frequency tabulation of the respondents and environmentally products are beneficial to the environment. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in the survey, n(120) 47.6% of respondents Agree that green products are beneficial to the environment and n(116) 46.0% strongly agree that eco-friendly products are beneficial to the environment.

Eco-friendly products help to save the world by avoiding the use of hazardous materials. From production, they aim to avoid pollution right from the beginning. It is beneficial in several ways like saving environment, improving health etc.

According to the study, consumers are satisfied with use and also they are concerned about the environment. Also, consumers of true green products have shown a favorable attitude toward green products. There is always a connection between consumer attitudes and purchase behavior. Consumers get the awareness about these products through social media, advertisement, television, magazine, class lectures, friends/colleagues, these factors can also influence a buying behavior.

### **BARRIERS IN SOCIETY AGAINST THE USE OF GREEN PRODUCTS**

**Table 3.1. Frequency tabulation of respondents on Buying Eco-friendly products**

<b>From where do you buy eco-friendly products</b>			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Local Shops	105	41.7	41.7
Retail Mall	63	25.0	25.0
Valid Specialized	63	25.0	25.0
Teleshopping	21	8.3	8.3
Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 3.1 refers to the frequency tabulation of the respondents and their preference in buying eco-friendly products in shops. It is clear from the table that people prefer Local shops to purchase green products. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in the survey, n(105) 41.7% of respondents prefer to buy from Local shops and n(63) 25.0% responses prefer Retail Malls and Specialized shops/units to purchase eco-friendly products.

From the above box 105 respondents prefer local shops for buying eco-friendly products. And the survey resulted consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products if they are easily available.

**Table 3.2. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the price of an eco-friendly products is the first thing I look into before deciding to purchase that Product**

<b>The price of an eco-friendly product is the first thing I look Into before deciding to purchase that product</b>			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Agree	101	40.1	40.1
Disagree	38	15.1	15.1

Strongly agree	17	6.7	6.7
Strongly disagree	12	4.8	4.8
Undecided	84	33.3	33.3
Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 3.2 refers to the the frequency tabulation of the respondents and their thought about the price will be the first thing before deciding to purchasing the product. From the table it id clear that among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in the survey, n(101) 40.1% of respondents prefer Agree and n(38) 15.1% disagree that they don't look at the price of an eco-friendly products before purchasing that products.

Price is one of the barriers of the purchasing decision of a green product. Two major components of green purchasing behavior emerged: the consumer's environmental interest and the product's attribute. And, as a result of the high price, it harms green buying intention and behavior.

**Table 3.3. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the comparison about the price of traditional products with eco-friendly products**

<b>Before buying eco-friendly products I compare its price with traditional products</b>			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	128	50.8
	Disagree	42	16.7
	Strongly agree	12	4.8
	Strongly disagree	12	4.8
	Undecided	58	23.0
	Total	252	100.0

Table 3.3 refers to the frequency tabulation of respondents about the consumer respondents about the comparison with price of traditional products with the eco-friendly products. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey, n(128) 50.8% of respondents prefer "Agree" that they compare the price of traditional products with the eco-friendly products. And n(42) 16.7% disagree that they don't compare the price of traditional products with the eco-friendly products.

Price of traditional product and eco-friendly product has a huge difference. Environmentally safe product are usually seen high priced in markets due to the demand, which is lower for eco-friendly products than traditional products.

**Table 3.4. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the behaviour of consumer if they purchase eco-friendly products regularly if they are easily available**

<b>Would you purchase eco-friendly products regularly if they are easily available</b>			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	150	59.5
	Disagree	4	1.6
	Strongly agree	65	25.8

Strongly disagree	2	.8	.8
Undecided	31	12.3	12.3
Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 3.4 refers to the frequency tabulation of responses and the behaviour of consumer if they purchase eco-friendly products regularly and if they are easily available. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey, n(150) 59.5% of respondents agree that they will purchase eco-friendly products regularly if they are easily available. And n(65) strongly agree in this survey.

150 respondents agree that they will regularly purchase green products if they are easily available nearby. Accessibility is an issue that consumers face while purchasing green products.

**Table 3.5. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the barriers/ factors influencing the customers purchase decisions of an eco-friendly product**

What are the barriers/ factors influencing the customers purchase decisions of an eco-friendly product				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Price	10	4.0	4.0
	Lack of availability	7	2.8	2.8
Valid	Accessibility/ Shops	3	1.2	1.2
	Availability			
	Others	232	92.0	92.0
	Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 3.5 refers to the frequency tabulation of responses and the behavior of consumer about the barriers/factors influencing the customers' purchase decisions of an eco-friendly product. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey, top 3 frequencies are listed in the table n(10) 4.0 of respondents prefer that price is the only barrier that they face while purchasing an eco-friendly product and n(7) 2.8% face the problem of lack of availability to purchase eco-friendly products.

Price is one of the main barrier against the purchase decision of an eco-friendly product. Consumers are concern about the environment at the same time they are concerned about the price too because when compared to traditional products, eco-friendly products are more expensive.

**Table 3.6. Frequency tabulation of respondents about the Problems that they are facing while purchasing eco-friendly products**

What are the problems you are facing while purchasing eco-friendly products				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	High price relatively	86	34.1	34.1
Valid	Lack of awareness	34	13.5	13.5
	Lack of eco-friendly packaging	14	5.6	5.6



Lack of green product shops	75	29.8	29.8
Reliability on Quality	43	17.1	17.1
Total	252	100.0	100.0

Table 3.6 refers to the frequency tabulation of responses and the problems that they are facing while purchasing eco-friendly products. Among n(252) respondents as a gender based sample in survey, n(86) 34.1% respondents prefer high price, relatively is the problem that the consumer face while purchasing eco-friendly products and n(75) 29.8% respondents prefer lack of green product shops is the problem while purchasing the eco-friendly products.

86 respondents agree that high price is the problem that the consumers are facing while purchasing eco-friendly products and another problem that they are facing is lack of green products shops

Barriers in society against the use of green products are mainly price, consumers who are environmentally aware and willing to switch their preferences from traditional mainstream products to green products. Not only price and availability, there are several other factors like consumer awareness about green products, social influence, product attributes, quality, brand popularity.

## DISCUSSION

This paper has tried to explore the consumer's attitude towards green products or eco-friendly products and also find the barrier they face while purchasing an eco-friendly product. Research result started with responses of respondents: Responses from 252 respondents are collected. From those data, 57.1% are satisfied with using green products and 43.7% are concerned about the environmental impact while purchasing general day-to-day products. The result suggests that that product price, accessibility, and lack of availability have the highest impetus on the obstacles that consumers face when purchasing an eco-friendly product.

The factors that are taken into consideration while buying an eco-friendly product are price, product attribute, and brand equity(Ursil Majid Makhdoomi&UlfatNazir, 2016). The reason that some customers can purchase green products and others are not able to, is that they care for the world as well as their own health.(Sze MunChu&Assc. Prof. Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard, 2013). From the comparison of the study, we got the same result like the price is one of the factors that have a negative impact on customer purchasing behaviour and the economy and are always concern about the environmental impacts.

Many customers consider price as a barrier to buying sustainable goods and services. More than half of the responses agree that environmentally friendly products are beyond their affordability. If it's an energy-saving light bulb or environmentally friendly cleaning products, these products are often more expensive than the most common market versions. The majority of customers are either unable to afford these products due to their high cost.

The most successful way to deal with the price premium is to find ways to lower the price. Reducing the sustainable price premium is a crucial factor in getting a higher percentage of average customers to buy more environmentally friendly products. Consumers' green buying behavior is negatively influenced by their high price sensitivity. And it is clear from the survey that high prices have a negative impact on green purchasing and behaviour and intention.

Customer green buying intention and behavior are negatively influenced by product availability and accessibility. Brand availability, on the other hand, was found to have a positive relationship with green buying intention and behavior, according to the study. Most of the consumers have difficulties

in accessing green products even if they have the desire to buy the products. On the other hand, the easy availability of green products had a positive effect on green buying behavior. Consumers do not want to spend time searching for environmentally friendly goods; instead, they choose products that are easy to find.

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases, mostly carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere as a result of human activity. A carbon footprint is a large measure or attribute that can be attributed to an individual's behavior, a family, an event, an organization, or even a nation's overall behavior. Tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gases, such as methane, nitrous oxide, and other greenhouse gases, are normally measured in tones of CO<sub>2</sub> released per year, which can be substituted with tones of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gases. Taking public transportation, using energy-efficient equipment, insulating your home to reduce the cost of heating and air conditioning, eating food that does not need as much transportation, and eating less meat, which has a higher carbon footprint than fruits and vegetables, are all ways to reduce your carbon footprint. Individuals and companies can also purchase carbon credits to offset some of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with the proceeds going toward initiatives like planting trees or investing in renewable energy.

Several key areas of our lifestyle in which we can understand what carbon footprint is like our household's energy use and waste generation. This includes things like how much electricity, natural gas, and other sources one uses and where they come from, as well as whether you compost or send your garbage to a landfill or incinerator is a personal choice. The way you travel is another case and your carbon footprint is determined by whether or not you own a vehicle or motorcycle, as well as how much you use it. Similarly, using public transportation helps. Any flights taken must also be factored in since they have a huge effect. The eating habits, the foods eaten, and where can that be obtained can have a big impact on your total carbon footprint. The more energy-intensive food is to process and transport, the worse it is for the environment. And the purchasing patterns how often buy new electronics, kitchen goods, and clothes. The longevity of the products, as well as, where and how they're manufactured, can all have an impact on the carbon footprint.

## CONCLUSION

We discuss and interpret the meaning of the study findings in this section of the thesis. We also determine and analyze whether we have answered our research questions and met the study's objectives. Finally, after this chapter of the thesis, I will discuss our study's contribution.

The primary goal of this research is to identify the most significant barriers and factors affecting consumers' decisions to buy an environmentally friendly product. I have selected several elements for the study to better understand the role of these factors in eco-friendly product purchasing behavior, including Eco-knowledge, gender, peer influence, green product shops, accessibility, and price.

This study focused the consumer perceptions of green products and the barriers/factors in society against the use of green products. The study was carried out using quantitative analyzing method. The survey was conducted in the state of Kerala among people of age 18-65 who are social media users and questionnaires were circulated online for the study.

Almost 252 samples were taken for the study. After the survey and analysis, the study concluded that pricing is one of the reasons that these samples do not buy eco-friendly products despite being aware of. From the result of the data analyzed we arrived at a conclusion based on the both objectives. The consumer knows the environmental impact while purchasing day to day products for their general needs and as well as they know benefit of using eco-friendly products. This finding directly corresponds to the findings of the first objective, that consumers don't buy them due to the high cost of eco-friendly products. Majority of the responses convey that price is barrier/factors influencing the customers purchase decisions of an eco-friendly product and lack of eco-friendly

product shop and availability is also one of the problem that the consumers facing while purchasing eco-friendly products.

The hypothesis of the first objective is proved, as the consumers have a basic understanding of eco-friendly goods and are highly satisfied with their use. They understand the environmental effects and advantages of using environmentally friendly goods.

The hypothesis of the second objective is proven that price appears as the barrier to buy green products and the availability of the product is one of the another barrier in society against the use of Green products

### Limitations of the study

The significance of the research is to learn about the barriers/factors influencing the customer's purchase decisions of an eco-friendly product. The study was conducted by choosing the population of Kerala with 252 responses. The study could not cover all the area related to consumer green behaviour hopefully this paper will help other researchers and they may conduct further study. Further research can be made on different aspects of this study which is excluded or missed in this paper like they can include environmental knowledge of consumers. They can conduct the survey through another method or can conduct interview according to their preference. Data collection was difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The study was confined to a small group of respondents due to the difficulties.

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