



Published by: South Asian Academic Research Journals

ACADEMICIA:

An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

(A Double Blind Refereed & Reviewed International Journal)



IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PREFERENCES FOR GREEN PRODUCTS: A STUDY IN AND AROUND KOLKATA (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

Since the concept of environmental consciousness has become a necessity to save the mankind, promoting consumption of green products is the need of hour, owing the fact that green products are environment friendly or sustainable products and are organic in nature. It is evident that the feeling for the health of environment and consumers, the usage of green products is emerging at the cost of traditional or conventional products. However, the magnitude of usage of green products is much behind the ideal one to safeguard the consumers and environment at large. Thus stretching the incidence and depth of usage of green products is a must. In order to achieve the pious objective, it is necessary to know the factors which insisted the users to go for the green products so that the same can be ventilated to the masses for extending the consumer base for the green products. On this backdrop, this study has been undertaken to collect responses from the green product users in and around Kolkata to find out the significant factors, through factor analysis, which contribute for the popularity of the Green products. The study also tries to find out the impact of different psychographic variables with respect to popularity of green products. The findings so obtained will definitely help in augmenting the usage of green products and hence contribute to safeguard the health of consumers and environment at large.

KEYWORDS: Green Products, Factors, Kolkata, Factor Analysis, Psychographic Variables.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the last decade onwards people became more concerned about their health as a result of which they are using more of green products. Green products can be stated as having less of an impact on the environment and are less damaging to human health than traditional products. Hence they are also called as sustainable or environment friendly product. Green products are formed from recycled components, be manufactured in a more energy-conservative way, or be supplied to the market in more environmental friendly way [1]. Since people are becoming more aware about the concept of environmental consciousness, the usage of traditional or conventional products are getting reduced. Traditional products are those manufactured in the traditional way. They are not being produced keeping environmental considerations in mind. In today's competitive scenario green products are competing with the conventional or regular products (products produced by traditional methods). But, this usage pattern is not applicable to all parts of the society. Knowledge and awareness about the green products play a very vital role in enabling the customers to use them. But, this awareness and knowledge do not exist, thus restricting the usage of the green products. From the last decade onwards, we have started using the green products and it will take time before it penetrates to all parts of the society.

The concept of green products is becoming more popular with the aspect of food items. Since people are becoming more health conscious, they are giving more importance to the consumable products. People started using more green food products to minimize their health risk. But, here also like normal green products knowledge and awareness is not there in all parts of the society. So, these are more being used by the more educated parts of the society. Also, organizations and government are incapable of promoting the concept of "Green". But the best part is, the concept has started and it is penetrating to the society at a very fast pace. If all the factors which contribute to the popularity of green products, such as price of the product, its quality, customer's perception about the products, awareness about them, are being handled carefully by the government and the organizations, then they will become more popular in the society.

As we have been discussing, there are various factors which positively as well as negatively influence the popularity of green products, both in food and non-food sector. In this context, it is important to examine various psychographic factors which influence the usage of green products, specifically in cosmetics and food sector in Kolkata and around Kolkata in West Bengal, India. The various psychographic variables, such as Environmental Consciousness, Health Consciousness, Price Sensitivity, Product Involvement and Innovation are selected from a thorough literature review. The consumers' perception about each psychographic variable is being understood using specific items. This paper aims to provide a snapshot of consumers' belief about Green Products about Psychographic variables in India (Kolkata).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From the existing literature, psychographics is being defined as the study of personality, values, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles (Senise, 2007). This mainly focuses on interests, activities and opinions (IAO) of the customers. Hence psychographic variables can be interpreted as combinations of demographic and psychological variables which impact customer's attitude in an overall manner.

It was observed that there is a general perception about organic food products catering mainly for higher social classes (Harper and Makatouni, 2002). It is further stated in the same paper that people from those classes have an affordability as well as consciousness regarding organic products, thus resulting in green food product consumption. Few authors have also discussed about people's tendency towards safe and healthy organic products intake influencing positively the customers' intention to purchase them (Ahmed and Juhdi, 2010). Also, (Davies et al, 1995; Lea and Worsley 2005) in their paper referred that green consumers prefer buying organic food products for their health concern. So, health is an important factor driving the customers for green food product consumption. Contradictory results are also published in a paper by Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (Pickett-Baker and Ozaki, 2008), where authors fail to conclude any positive correlation between positive environmental beliefs and propensity of the customers to go for buying more green products.

Environmental knowledge and attitude play a significant role in customers' tendency for green food product purchasing as reported in several papers. Many authors stated that environmental consciousness generates more interest of the customers towards organic products (Schlegelmilch et al, 1996). Kaiser et al (1999) in their paper reported that environmental values and environmental knowledge are important factors which affect ecological behavior intention ultimately helping in building customer's attitude towards organic products. Also Ahmed and Juhdi (2010) referred that customers are positively inclined towards environment friendly farming because of their environmental consciousness and it leads to positive customer intention to buy organic products. Lockie et al , (2002), said that the consumers' familiarity with the green products, generate more interest to consume them. This is common to conventional consumer's behavior. They also stated that the mood of the consumers, i.e., to keep him relax is positively correlated with organic food consumption. The customers believe that consuming organic food items make customers stress-free.

Apart from health consciousness and environmental belief, several other psychographic variables are also tested in literature like customers belief towards information authenticity, political motivation, skepticism etc. Kozup et al (2003) said that more proper information from credible sources increase the consumption of organic food products because of customers' environmental belief and authenticity of the information provided. Similar observation was reported by Schlegelmilch et al (1996), by inferring that more knowledge, i.e., detail factual information about the organic products improve the chance of customers' buying them. Also , it was said that the customers' previous experience of using some environmental brands i.e., the brands which produce the products in environment- friendly way have an impact on their chances of selecting those brands only for repeated usage (Pickett-Baker and Ozaki, 2008). In another paper, it is being stated that recycling activities positively influences pro-environmental purchasing behavior for those customers who can dedicate more time and effort (Schlegelmilch et al, 1996). Same papers also stated that politically motivated activities act positively only for those customers who are environmentally conscious. In the paper by Chang (Chang , 2011), it is being discussed that perceived higher price, lower quality and skepticism negatively and perceived emotional benefits acting positively will create more ambivalence attitudes of the customers towards buying green products.

In addition to demographic and psychographic variables, the different product specific variables affect the customers' attitude towards green products. The various variables discussed in the literature are environmental brands, brand name, product type (Green vs. non-green), preferences for green attributes for the products, green technology, energy savings. Whereas, with respect to green food products, Heart healthy claim on food products, nutritional information about the food products, nutritional content of the alternative products, price, product types (fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, meat, milk and dairy products, cereals and cereal products) were discussed in the literature.

In the paper by Pickett-Baker and Ozaki(2008), the author stated that environmental brands, i.e., the brands which produces the products in environmental-friendly manner will positively influences customers green product purchase decision. In his paper, Mobley et al (1995) reported that only branded green products create positive impression in the minds of the customers. Lin and Chang, (2012) had said that green or non-green products affect the environmental conscious customers' usage amount for the products. Olson (2012) stated that using green technology consumers use more products with energy efficiency. He also stated that energy savings characteristics of the products positively influences customers attitude towards green products.

Kozup et al (2003) stated in their paper that heart healthy claim, nutritional information on the food products partially affect consumer's evaluation of the packaged food products. Also, nutritional content of the alternative food items negatively influences consumer's evaluation of packaged food items. In other papers the authors discussed about the negative effect of price towards organic food consumption. So, price is a significant barrier for customer's attitude formation towards green food products consumption (Lockie et al, 2002).

In addition to the demographic, psychographics and product specific variables, there are various external, i.e., environmental variables which leads to specific customer behavior. From the reviewed literature it was found that customer's attitude towards green food products s being affected by information people have about organic products, tasty, availability, expensive, food value, natural content, animal welfare, convenience, environmental protection, food production method, source of information, purchasing place(hypermarket, supermarket, organic stores, farms), purchasing difficulties(difficult to find, high prices, poor range of choice), word of mouth, marketing communications, information about green products, claim Type.

Ahmed and Juhdi (2010) had discussed that information people have about organic food products negatively influences customer's purchase intention towards the products. But in another paper, the authors had reported that more information people have about the products, the more customers will be interested to consume them(Chinnici et al, 2002).Again, Lin and Chang (2012) stated that only the positive information about the products influences positively user's perception of the effectivity of the green products. Also, Pickett-Baker and Ozaki(2008) stated that effective marketing communications, i.e., communicating all the desired information about the product influences positively consumers' green product purchase decision. He had also reported that word of mouth communication is the most effective tool to convince the customers about the positive aspects of green products. Chang (2011) had stated that the claims organizations make about the products have a positive impact towards ad believability only if they are from authorized sources. Lea and Worsley (2005) had reported that organic food

products tastes better than conventional products and availability and expense customers have to bear for these acts as barriers towards creating consumers belief about organic food items. Harper and Makatouni (2002) have concluded that more environmentally friendly food production method generates positive customers' perception about the products. Again more food value creates more positive belief about the products. More natural content for the organic food items, concern for animal welfare and environmental protection creates more customers' interest towards these products(Lockie et al, 2002). And the customers were buying more organic food items from hypermarket, organic stores and farms where they are more motivated towards buying them by the overall environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was based on quantitative data on consumers' perception about green products. Data was collected both in online and offline format. All the respondents were briefed about the project before they respond.

In case of the online format, the data was collected with the help of mail-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to many respondents selected randomly. A cover letter was also sent along with the questionnaire. A total of 100 respondents were selected randomly and the questionnaires were sent to them. To improve the success rate, the questionnaires were sent repeatedly to the prospective respondents. Approximately, 65 respondents sent back the filled questionnaires.

The survey was also carried on in the offline format. For that, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents selected randomly from the different parts of Kolkata, India using Green products. The respondents were both green products buyer and non-buyers. A total of 235 respondents were surveyed for their responses.

So, considering both the online and offline format, 300 respondents were surveyed for their responses.

The questionnaire was formulated from a review of literature based on the following literatures (e.g. Sanchez, 2010; Hofmester-Toth,2010 ; Grewal, 2000).The questionnaire's main objective is to study the impact of the various psychographic variables, such as involvement with the product, respondent's opinion leadership etc. on the respondents intention to purchase green products. The paper will be studying the responses on only two types of green products, namely cosmetics products and food items. The questionnaire is divided into eight parts. The first part is trying to measure the environmental consciousness of the respondents with respect to the scales used in the paper by Sanchez, 2010. The second part is measuring the price sensitivity of the respondent with respect to the scale used in a paper by Goldsmith, 1991. In the third, fourth and the fifth part, the respondent's opinion leadership, innovativeness and involvement in buying green products will be studied based on a paper by Grewal, 2000. In the sixth part, the respondent's health consciousness will be studied based on the concept from the literature by Hong1990.In the seventh part, the respondent's reaction to the different characteristics of the green cosmetics products are studied. The scales are based on the literatures by Ahmad,2010 ;Chang2011;Davies,1995;Bamberg,2006 and Lea2005. The eighth part is same as the seventh

part. The only difference is that the products considered here are green food products. The scales are based on the literatures by Ahmad,2010;Kozup,2003;Davies,1995;Bamberg, 2006; Lin,2012; Chang,2011 and Lea,2005.All the factors were measured on a seven point scale stating the following things(1 = Very Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree). The socio-demographic information of the respondents is collected in the ninth part.

Variables/Factors(used in the study) contributing for the popularity of Green products	
Environmental Consciousness	
Variable	Description
v1	I support different measures to improve water management leading to water conservation
v2	I am aware about the issues and problems related to the environment
v3	I would be willing to pay higher prices for water
v4	It is very difficult for a person like me to do anything about the environment
v5	I believe that using recyclable materials for daily use will improve the environment
Price Sensitivity	
v1	In general the price or cost of buying green products is important to me
v2	I know that a new kind of green product is likely to be more expensive than older ones , but that does not matter to me
v3	I am less willing to buy a green product if I think that it will be high in price
v4	I don't mind paying more to try out a new green product
v5	A really good green product is worth paying a lot of money
v6	I don't mind spending a lot of money to buy a green product
Innovativeness	
v1	I like to take a chance in buying new products
v2	I like to try new and different products
v3	I am the first in my circle of friends to buy a new product when it appears in the

	market
v4	I am the first in my circle of friends to experiment with the brands of latest products
Involvement	
v1	I select the green products very carefully
v2	Using branded green products helps me express my personality
v3	You can tell a lot about a person from whether he/she buys green products
v4	I believe different brands of green products would give different amounts of satisfaction
Health consciousness	
v1	I worry that there are chemicals in my food.
v2	I worry that there are chemicals in my cosmetic products
v3	I'm concerned about my drinking water quality.
v4	I avoid foods containing preservatives.
v5	I read more health-related articles than I did 3 years ago.
v6	I'm interested in information about my health.
v7	I'm concerned about my health all the time.
v8	Pollution in food and cosmetic products does not bother me.
General characteristics about green cosmetic products	
v1	Green cosmetic products are safer to use than non-green cosmetic products
v2	Green cosmetic products are of better quality than non-green cosmetic products
v3	Green cosmetic products are more effective than non-green cosmetic products
v4	Branded green cosmetic products are better than non-branded green cosmetic products
v5	Less knowledge about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them
v6	Less information about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them

v7	Less availability about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them
v8	Green cosmetic products are expensive than non-green cosmetic products
General characteristics about green food products	
v1	Green food products are safer than non- green food products
v2	Green food products are healthier than non-green food products
v3	Green food products have more nutritional value than non-green food products
v4	Green food products are tastier than non-green food products
v5	Less knowledge about green food products prevent people from buying them
v6	Less information about green food products prevent people from buying them
v7	Branded green products are better than non-branded green food products
v8	Green food products do not look good in appearance
v9	Less availability about green food products prevent people from buying them
v10	Green food products are expensive

The collected data for all the parts of the questionnaire is analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis to to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. The IBM SPSS (version 19) is used for the purpose.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component	
	1	2
v4	.692	
v5	.662	
v1		.761
v3		.792
v2		.771

Variable	Description	Components
v1	I support different measures to improve water management leading to water conservation	Environmental Sense(v1 , v2 and v3) Environmental Callousness (v4 and v5)
v2	I am aware about the issues and problems related to the environment	
v3	I would be willing to pay higher prices for water	
v4	It is very difficult for a person like me to do anything about the environment	
v5	I believe that using recyclable materials for daily use will improve the environment	

From the above table, the variables v1 , v2 ,v3 had more loadings on component 2, thus making it a Component which can be named as Environmental Sense. Likewise, variables v4 and v5 have more loadings on component 1 and making it a part of component named as Environmental Callousness

PRICE SENSITIVITY

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component		
	1	2	3
v4	.855		
v6	.823		
v2		.704	
v1		.650	
v5			.812
v3		.440	.667

Variable	Description	Components
v1	In general the price or cost of buying green products is important to me	Higher Price(v4 and v6) Price Sensitivity(v1 and v2) Price Barrier(v3 and v5)
v2	I know that a new kind of green product is likely to be more expensive than older ones , but that does not matter to me	
v3	I am less willing to buy a green product if I think that it will be high in price	
v4	I don't mind paying more to try out a new green product	
v5	A really good green product is worth paying a lot of money	
v6	I don't mind spending a lot of money to buy a green product	

From the above table, it can be stated that the variables v4 and v5 can be combined to be a part of component 1, named as Higher Price. The variables v1 and v2 can be combined to be part of component 2 named as Price Sensitivity. Likewise the variables v3 and v5 can be combined to form component 3 named as Price Barrier.

INNOVATIVENESS

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component	
	1	2
v1	.868	
v2	.803	
v3	.399	.386
v4		.935

Variable	Description	Components
v1	I like to take a chance in buying new products	New Product Initiative(v1 , v2 and v3) Experimental Attitude(v4)
v2	I like to try new and different products	
v3	I am the first in my circle of friends to buy a new product when it appears in the market	
v4	I am the first in my circle of friends to experiment with the brands of latest products	

For the case of Innovativeness, the variables v1, v2 and v3 can be combined to form a component 1 named as New Product Initiative. The variable 4 alone will be forming component 2 named as Experimental Attitude.

INVOLVEMENT

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component	
	1	2
v1	.868	
v4	.803	
v2	.399	.435
v3		.935

Variable	Description	Components
v1	I select the green products very carefully	Satisfaction from Branded Green products (v1 and v4) Branded green products reveal personality(v2 and v3)
v2	Using branded green products helps me express my personality	
v3	You can tell a lot about a person from whether he/she buys green products	
v4	I believe different brands of green products would give different amounts of satisfaction	

From the above table, the variables v1 and v4 can be combined to form a part of Component 1 , named as Satisfaction from Branded Green products . Likewise, the variables v2 and v3 are combined to form component 2, named as Branded green products reveal personality.

HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
v2	.793			
v5	-.686			
v7		.758		
v1		.629		
v4			.837	
v6		.785		
v8	-.313		.378	.487
v3		.375	-.436	.447

Variable	Description	Components
v1	I worry that there are chemicals in my food.	Health Sensitivity(v2 and v5)
v2	I worry that there are chemicals in my cosmetic products	
v3	I'm concerned about my drinking water quality.	Health Concern(v1, v6 and v7)
v4	I avoid foods containing preservatives.	
v5	I read more health-related articles than I did 3 years ago.	Avoid preservative food(v4)
v6	I'm interested in information about my health.	Food pollution(v3 and v8)
v7	I'm concerned about my health all the time.	
v8	Pollution in food and cosmetic products does not bother me.	

In case of health consciousness of the respondents, the variables 2 and 5 can be combined to form component 1 , named as Health Sensitivity . The variables v1, v6 and v7 can be combined to form component 2 named as Health Concern. Likewise the variable v4 alone will form component 3 named as Avoid Preservative Food. Lastly, the variables v3 and v8 are combined to form a part of component 4 named as Food Pollution.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEN COSMETIC PRODUCTS

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
v6	.890			
v5	.859			
v4		.757		
v3		-.683		
v1			.745	-.337
v2			.612	.437
v7			.434	
v8				-.432

Variable	Description	Components
v1	Green cosmetic products are safer to use than non-green cosmetic products	Green Product Knowledge(v5 and v6)
v2	Green cosmetic products are of better quality than non-green cosmetic products	
v3	Green cosmetic products are more effective than non-green cosmetic products	Branded Green Cosmetic Products(v4 and v3)
v4	Branded green cosmetic products are better than non-branded green cosmetic products	Reliability of Green Cosmetic Product (v7 , v1 and v2)
v5	Less knowledge about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them	Green Products expensive(v8)
v6	Less information about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them	
v7	Less availability about green cosmetic products prevent people from buying them	
v8	Green cosmetic products are expensive than non-green cosmetic products	

In case of the Green Cosmetic products, the variables v5 and v6 can be combined to form component 1 which is named as Green Product Knowledge. The variables v3 and v4 are combined to form component 2, which is named as Branded Green Cosmetic Products. The third component 3, component 3 is formed by combining the variables v1, v2 and v7 and named as Reliability of Green Cosmetic Product. The remaining variable v8 forms the 4th component, named as Green Products Expensive.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEN FOOD PRODUCTS

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX^A

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
v3	.712				
v4	.696				
v2		.696			
v5		-.575	.309		
v6			.749		
v9	.306	.320	.527		
v1				-.770	
v10				.699	
v7					-.764
v8					.727

Variable	Description	Components
v1	Green food products are safer than non- green food products	Green Food Products Nutritional Taste(v3 and v4) Green Food Products are Healthier(v2) Lack of information and availability of green Food Products(v5, v6 and v9)
v2	Green food products are healthier than non-green food products	
v3	Green food products have more nutritional value than non-green food products	
v4	Green food products are tastier than non-green food products	
v5	Less knowledge about green food products prevent people from buying them	

v6	Less information about green food products prevent people from buying them	Green Food Products are safe and expensive(v1 and v10) Branded Green Food Products' Look and quality(v7 and v8)
v7	Branded green products are better than non-branded green food products	
v8	Green food products do not look good in appearance	
v9	Less availability about green food products prevent people from buying them	
v10	Green food products are expensive	

In case of the Green Food products, the variables v3 and v4 are combined to form component 1, named as Green Food Products Nutritional Taste. The variable v2 forms component 2, which is named as Green Food Products are Healthier. The variables v5, v6 and v9 are combined to form component 3 which is named as Lack of information and availability of green Food Products. Likewise the variables v1 and v10 are combined to form component 4 named as Green Food Products are safe and expensive. Lastly the variables v7 and v8 are combined to form component 5, which is named as Branded Green Food Products' Look and quality

5. CONCLUSION

In order to meet the purpose of the study as envisaged in the introduction part of the paper, factor analysis is used to know important factors which insist buyers to go for green products and also find out the impact of psychographic variables on the popularity of green products.

On the basis of analysis done using Exploratory Factor Analysis, huge number of variables used in the study, to be specific forty five variables, had been scaled down to twenty variables. Concerning the facet - impact of Environmental consciousness towards popularity of Green products, factors such as; Environmental Sense and Environmental Callousness are the most important. Relating to relevance of price towards popularity of green products, factors such as; Higher Price, Price Sensitivity and Price Barrier plays the most important role. In the pretext of studying the innovation of the respondents' about buying green products, it has been found that New Product Initiative and Experimental Attitude are two important factors. Regarding involvement in buying process while buying green products, factors such as; Satisfaction from Branded Green products and Branded green products reveal personality are the key contributors. About health consciousness of the respondents in buying green products, factors such as; Health Sensitivity, Health Concern, Avoid preservative food and Food pollution play the most important role.

Regarding general factors contributing for the popularity of green cosmetic products, important factors are; Green Product Knowledge, Branded Green Cosmetic Products, Reliability of Green Cosmetic Product and Green Products expensive.

Pertaining to general factors impacting green food products, factors such as; Green Food Products' Nutritional Taste, Green Food Products are Healthier, Lack of information and availability of Green Food Products, Green Food Products are safe and expensive and Branded Green Food Products' Look and Quality impact the respondents' decision for buying green food products.

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