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A STUDY ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND BUYER BEHAVIOR DIMENSIONS TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS

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Abstract

The widespread environmental problems in India are choking air effluence, water pollution in the vast majority of rivers, water shortages throughout the country, heaps of solid and toxic waste, acid deposition spoiling land and water, near-total deforestation, rampant over fishing, exhaustion of agricultural land and evident consumption of even highly endangered species for food and traditional medicine has endangered the ecological balance of our country. Since society becomes more anxious with the natural environment, businesses have started to adjust their behaviour in an attempt to address society's "new" concerns. Some businesses have been quick to accept concepts like environmental management systems and waste minimization, and have integrated environmental issues into all organizational activities. People are conscious about the less environment friendly products due to their own welfare, which is why this issue is a very modern topic in India..

Keywords: Buyer behaviour, Environmental factors, Green products, FMCG.

Introduction

There is a growing concern for environmental degradation and the resultant pollution all over the world. Right from 1992, Rio de Janerio Earth Summit conference, world leaders and top environmental officials have been expressing global concern over environmental issues. The widespread environmental problems in India are choking air effluence, water pollution in the vast majority of rivers, water shortages throughout the country, heaps of solid and toxic waste, acid deposition spoiling land and water, near-total deforestation, rampant over fishing, exhaustion of agricultural land and evident consumption of even highly endangered species for food and

traditional medicine has endangered the ecological balance of our country. Since society becomes more anxious with the natural environment, businesses have started to adjust their behavior in an attempt to address society's "new" concerns. Some businesses have been quick to accept concepts like environmental management systems and waste minimization, and have integrated environmental issues into all organizational activities. People are conscious about the less environment friendly products due to their own welfare, which is why this issue is a very modern topic in India.

Review of Literature

Mostafa (2007) has done a study to investigate the influence of three (3) cognitive

and attitudinal factors on gender differences in green purchasing behavior. His respondents consisted of universities students across Egypt. The environmental knowledge was one of its variables and the environmental knowledge used in his study was a uni-dimension. Environmental Knowledge is defines as the knowledge on what people know about the environment, key relationships leading to environmental impacts, an appreciation of the „whole systems“, and collective responsibilities necessary for sustainable development (Mostafa, 2007).

Conraud-Koellner and Rivas-Tovar (2009) defines environmental knowledge as the sets of ecological knowledge that an individuals have of environmental topics. Both of these researchers belief that environmental knowledge is influences by ecological ethnocentrism, degree of information, past behavior and perceptions about green products. On the other hand, **Chan and Lau (2000)** define environmental knowledge as the amount of knowledge a person has regarding environmental issues. Similar to **Mostafa (2007)** study, **Chan and Lau (2000)** also measures environmental concern as a uni-dimension variable.

Chan and Lau (2000) measure environmental concern as a uni-dimension as they adopted from a previous study by Maloney et. al (1975). The definition of environmental concern in **Chan and Lau (2000)** also adopted from Maloney et. al (1975), which environmental concern was refers to the degree of emotionality a person is attached to environmental issues.

Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics and Bohlen (2003) refer environmental concerns as a major factor in consumer decision making process. Three (3) dimensions of environmental concern were used to profiling green consumer among British consumers in **Diamantopoulos et. al (2003)** study which were: (1) knowledge about green issues; (2) attitudes towards environmental quality; and (3) environmental sensitive behaviour.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the level of environmental knowledge and concern of respondents
2. To know the relationship between environmental factors and buyer behaviour.

Methodology

Sample Area

The study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Chennai has the maximum number of green stores. The green stores in Chennai have extended their business in all sectors namely food products, fruits and vegetables, FMCG products...etc. So the researcher finds Chennai as the right place to conduct this research.

Sampling Technique

In this study the researcher adopted the convenient sampling technique for selecting the sample. Convenient sampling procedure was used to obtain those respondents conveniently available in infinite population.

Statistical Tools

Simple Correlation and descriptive was used for this study.

Analysis

Table-1 Level of Environmental Factors

Level	Dimensions of Environmental factors			
	Environmental Concern		Environmental knowledge	
	N	%	N	%
Low	73	14.3	92	18.1
Medium	356	69.9	285	56.0
High	80	15.7	132	25.9
TOTAL	509	100.0	509	100.0

Table 1 shows the level of environmental factors among the respondents. The level of environmental concern reveals that 69.9 percent of respondents have medium level of environmental concern, 15.7 percent of respondents have high level of environmental concern and 14.3 percent of respondents have low level of environmental concern .It indicate that more number of respondents feels moderate environmental concern.

The above results cohere with the findings of the study by **Chan and Lau (2000)** which demonstrated that there is a significant relationship exists between ecological concern and green buyer behavior amongst their respondents. Another study by **Fraj and Martinez (2006)** also showed a significant coefficient between ecological patterns and environmental behavior, which means that those individual involved and concerned for environment show a higher ecological buyer behaviour.

The level of environmental knowledge of the respondents' demonstrate that 18.1 percent of respondents have low level of environmental knowledge and 56.0 percent of respondents have medium level of environmental knowledge and 25.9 percent of them have high level of environmental knowledge. This indicates that more number of respondents have moderate level of environmental knowledge.

The above result is cohering with findings of the past studies by **Raposo (2009) and Mostafa (2009)** also showed that there was a significant relationship between environmental knowledge and consumer behaviour.

Table 2 Relationship between Environmental Factors and Buyer Behaviour Dimensions

Variables	Buyer Behavior Dimensions					
	Decision Making		Green Customer Satisfaction		Perception	
	R-value	P-value	R-value	P-value	R-value	P-value
Environmental Concern	0.119**	0.007	0.201**	0.000	0.243**	0.000
Environmental Knowledge	0.153**	0.001	0.186**	0.000	0.204**	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table-2 Correlation between environmental concern and buyer behavior dimensions of the respondents the r value found that 0.119 for decision making and 0.201 and 0.243 for customer satisfaction and perception respectively. All the buyer behavior dimensions have positive relationship with environmental concern.

H₀-1: There is no significant relationship between environmental concern and buyer behavior dimensions.

In order to verify the above hypothesis Correlation test was applied. The r-value is found to be 0.119 for decision making and 0.201 and 0.243 for customer satisfaction and perception respectively and all P-value is 0.007,0.000ans 0.000 from this all the P-values are significant. So the above hypothesis gets rejected. The result reveals that environmental concern correlated with buyer behavior dimensions. From table-2 Correlation between environmental knowledge and buyer behavior dimensions of the respondents the r value found that 0.153 for decision making and 0.186 and 0.204 for customer satisfaction and perception respectively. All the buyer behavior dimensions have positive relationship with environmental knowledge.

H₀-2: There is no significant relationship between environmental knowledge and

buyer behavior dimensions.

In order to verify the above hypothesis Correlation test was applied. The r-value is found to be 0.153 for decision making and 0.186 and 0.204 for customer satisfaction and perception respectively and all P-value is 0.001,0.000ans 0.000 from this all the P-values are significant. So the above hypothesis gets rejected. The result reveals that environmental knowledge correlated with buyer behavior dimensions.

Findings of the Study

1. Respondents have moderate level of environmental concern and knowledge
2. Environmental concern has significant relation with buyer behavior.
3. Environmental knowledge has significant relation with buyer behavior.

Conclusion

This research concludes that environmental concern and environmental knowledge is the predictor of buyer behavior dimensions.If the environmental factors increase among the respondents means it will increase the buyer behavior of the respondents towards green products. So markets should create more environmental awareness among the respondents it will leads to increase the respondent's environmental factors and also buyer behavior of the respondents towards green products.

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