Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences **ISSN 2347-5374 (Online)**
Sch. J. Arts Humanit. Soc. Sci. 2016; 4(11):1432-1435 **ISSN 2347-9493 (Print)**

(An International Publisher for Academic and Scientific Resources) DOI: 10.36347/sjahss.2016.v04i11.011

An Exploration of Green Consumer Behaviour of Secondary School Students

Deepthi R[1], Dr. KP Meera[2]
[1]Junior Research Fellow, Department of Education, Calicut University, Korachankandy, Thenhipalam, Kerala
[2]Professor, Department of Education, Calicut University, Korachankandy, Thenhipalam, Kerala

***Corresponding Author:**
Deepthi R
Email: deepti.deepti9@gmail.com

Abstract: Today's consumers are showing an increased concern regarding the ecological features of products more than ever before. The ecological consciousness of consumer is reflected in the green products and services he chooses from a wide range of commodities available in the market. Thus green consumerism has become a key movement in the journey towards Sustainable Development. It is the need of the hour that the Green Consumer Behaviour of adolescents should be studied, since they form the vital agents of green procurement of the future. The present paper explores the Green Consumer Behaviour of Higher Secondary Students of Malappuram District of Kerala. The paper will also throw light upon certain barriers which challenge the green purchasing habits of consumers.
Keywords: Green Consumer Behaviour, Green Purchasing, Green Products, Secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

The intensity of ecological issues that we experience today is much severe that not only global biodiversity is affected, but also a healthy human survival is being questioned [1]. The consumers in this globalized era are becoming more and more ecologically responsible due to the innumerable issues of planetary crisis. Several studies proved that consumers who are more aware about ecological issues are more actively involved in the efforts for green procuring [2]. The green movement initiated by the consumers all over the world also resulted in the introduction of a wide range of novel green products in the global market.

Green Consumerism

A green consumer is the one who "actively seeks and supports those products satisfy their needs that are having less impact on the environment" [3].

Green consumerism deals with choosing products and services that helps in waste reduction, recycling, resource management and minimal ecological impacts. In true sense, the overall environmental impacts created by the products at various stages of lifecycle like manufacturing, transportation, storage and disposal should be considered. Hammer B [4] defined green purchasing as integrating environmental management in to purchasing function of an organization.

Green products were defined by different researchers in different manner. Ottman [5] defined green products as typically durable, non-toxic, made of recycled materials or minimally packaged. These are the products that are ecologically safe, superior and environmentally friendly. Such products incorporate certain features like recyclable contents, minimal packaging, less toxic contents and minimal resource consumption. Green consumerism is a form of symbolic consumption in which not only individual, but also social values and ideologies are given a suitable space [6].

There are a lot of studies which revealed that environmental knowledge and ecological consciousness of consumers is favorably influencing their attitude towards green purchasing [7-9]. It is an emerging trend that consumers are willing to pay little more for organic food products [10]. Despite the drastic shift to green consumerism, there are a lot of consumers who are weakly influenced by green values while deciding a product. Wheale & Hinton [11] identified that this may be due to the existence of factors like financial barriers, lack of awareness, influence of respective cultures, nature of personality and habits.

Objectives

1. To study the green consumer behaviour of the total sample and the relevant subsamples based on
a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
b) Locale (Urban/Rural)
c) Stream of course (Science/Commerce)

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the research objectives, the primary data was collected by survey method.

Sample for the study

The study was focused on a sample of 322 higher secondary school students conveniently selected from 3 schools of from Malappuram District of Kerala. Representation was given to gender, locale and stream of course of students. Out of the total sample selected, 10 incomplete response sheets were discarded and the final selected sample is 312.

Tool for the study

The data collecting instrument for the survey is a 'Scale for Green Consumer Behaviour' (SGCB). In the beginning session of the tool data regarding gender, locale and stream of course chosen by the respondents were collected.

In order to construct the tool the researcher conducted a detailed review to identify all the possible features of 'Green Consumer Behaviour'. The part A of the scale comprised of 40 items in the form of statements. There were 3 possible responses for each item such or Always, Sometimes and Never. The positive statements were scored as 2,1,0 and the negative statements as 0,1,2. In the part B session, an independent item was given to identify the percentage of respondents who experience specific barriers for green purchasing such as High cost, Lack of awareness, Poor access and Conventional purchasing habits.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Part A of research tool is given in table 1

Table 1: Exploratory analysis of Scale for 'Green Consumer Behaviour'

Sl. No	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1.	I purchase for the need than for the mere entertainment	1.74	0.46
2.	I used to prepare a priority list of those items to be procured	1.32	0.69
3.	I try to avoid products which are harmful to the environment	1.50	0.58
4.	I try to avoid products with toxic contents	1.64	0.55
5.	I prefer eco-labeled (green certified products	1.11	0.68
6.	I used to choose electronic items which are easy to repair	1.26	0.63
7.	I prefer purchasing from nearby shops than travelling for purchases	1.57	0.59
8.	I give priority to products from recycled items	1.00	0.66
9.	I would bother if the product which I purchased is excessively packed	0.95	0.66
10.	I think about the green alternative of every product purchased	0.87	0.64
11.	I consider durability of every product during purchasing	1.37	0.62
12.	I give priority to energy efficient electronic devices	1.40	0.67
13.	I prefer buying products in recyclable packages	1.00	0.71
14.	I prefer purchasing LED bulbs or lamps whenever necessary	1.32	0.66
15.	I am interested in purchasing star labeled electronic items	1.18	0.70
16.	I prefer purchasing online if that option is available	1.09	0.73
17.	I used to print bills after each purchases	0.84	0.69
18.	I used to take away my unfinished food items to home, that I ordered at hotel	1.12	0.69
19.	I used to read the labels of each item purchased to check whether the contents are ecologically safe	1.00	0.70
20.	I used to avoid disposable items while purchasing	1.10	0.62
21.	I prefer purchasing packaged food items, instead of local food items	1.47	0.69
22.	I try to avoid purchasing food items containing endangered plant or animal parts	1.29	0.64
23.	I prefer purchasing chemical sprays than ant/cockroach/rat traps	0.97	0.68
24.	I won't choose electronic items with disposable batteries	0.95	0.68
25.	I prefer organic insecticides/fertilizers than that of chemical	1.59	0.59

	origin		
26.	I prefer handkerchiefs instead of tissue papers while eating from hotels	0.89	0.68
27.	I prefer organic fruits and vegetables whenever going for purchasing	1.54	0.62
28.	I prefer purchasing electronic items with warranties to ensure long life	1.05	0.70
29.	I used to give feed back to the manufacturer to upgrade the product as eco friendly	0.85	0.78
30.	I try to avoid new purchases, if the needed object is available by rent or second hand	1.25	0.67
31.	I like to purchase weekly than purchasing daily	1.04	0.77
32.	I am willing to pay more for organic products	0.99	0.72
33.	I used to carry a big shopper/cloth bag whenever going out for purchasing	1.59	0.57
34.	I give preference to manufacturer which promotes take back system	1.06	0.62
35.	I used to do unplanned purchases	0.92	0.68
36.	I prefer procuring items which can be recycled	0.96	0.62
37.	I used to compare ecological impacts of various products, available in markets	1.06	0.67
38.	I prefer purchasing seasonal fruits and vegetables	1.60	0.59
39.	I won't prefer individual packing of each item using separate wrappings/covers during shopping	1.21	0.67
40.	I used to avoid excess purchasing of those food items with short life span	1.52	0.62

The survey result revealed that the Green consumer Behaviour which rated highest (i.e mean value 1.74) was purchasing for the need than for mere entertainment (itemNo.1). The behaviour which rated next highest mean (1.64) was 'avoiding products with toxic contents' (Item No.4). This is followed by consumer behaviour of 'purchasing seasonal fruits and vegetables (Item No.38, Mean value 1.60).

The 'Green Consumer Behaviour' which scored the lowest mean value (0.84) was 'avoiding printing of bills after purchases' (Item No.17). The least practised behaviours after this are giving feed back to upgrade the product as eco-friendly (mean value 0.85, Item No.29) followed by 'thinking about green alternative of every product purchased' (mean value 0.87, Item No.10).

Table 2: Analysis of Green Consumer Behaviour of total sample and subsamples

Sl. No	Category		N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	't' ratio
1.	Gender	Boys	157	50.81	6.64	6.66
		Girls	155	45.81	6.63	
2.	Locale	Urban	129	48.53	6.94	0.74
		Rural	183	47.93	7.08	
3.	Stream of course	Science	172	46.11	7.48	6.29
		Commerce	140	50.72	5.43	
Total			**312**	**48.18**	**7.02**	

The mean of 'Green Consumer Behaviour' for the total sample is 48.18 and standard deviation is 7.02. The mean of 'Green Consumer Behaviour' in Boys is 50.81 which is higher than that of Girls (ie., 45.81). Since the 't' ratio is 6.66, this difference is significant at 0.01 level. The mean of 'Green Consumer Behaviour' of Urban students is 48.53 which is slightly greater than that of Rural students (ie., 47.93). But since the 't' ratio for this is 0.74 there is no significant difference between the means of Urban and Rural students. The mean of 'Green Consumer Behaviour' of Science students is 46.11 which is lower that of Commerce students (ie., 50.72). The 't' ratio for this is 6.29 which indicates that there is significant difference between the means of Science and Commerce students at 0.01 level.

The summary of result of Part B of the research tool is given in table 3

Table 3: Percentage analysis of Barriers for Green Purchasing

Sl. No.	Barriers for green purchasing	(%) of respondents
1.	High cost	48
2.	Lack of access to green products	68
3.	Poor awareness	33
4.	Conventional purchasing habits	42

The barrier which was identified by highest proportion of the respondents was 'Lack of access to green products'. Around 68% of the respondents considered it as barrier in green purchasing. 48% of the respondents considered 'High cost' as a barrier in green purchasing. 42% of the respondents revealed that 'Conventional purchasing habits' is a hindrance in green purchasing. 33% of the respondents considered 'Poor awareness' as a challenge in green purchasing.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study can be summarized that the shift of adolescent consumer behaviour to the track of green consumerism is not complete and still a half way. Focused efforts should be there in order to make the young consumers fully aware of the advantages of green products over conventional ones. Since the lack of access to green products is one of the major challenges in green procurement practices, there should be genuine efforts from the part of government, manufactures, corporate, local bodies and NGOs for the easy and economic access of such products to the consumers of diverse choices. Schools as important social agencies should take leading role in equipping learners to integrate the lessons of 'Green consumerism in individual lifestyles and habits.

REFERENCES

1. Hsiao HH, Wan PS. Environmental consciousness in Taiwan and Hongkong. In Jau SK, Wan PS, Lee M K, Wong S L (Eds.) Social Transformation and cultural change in Chinese societies Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies: The Chinese University of Hong Kong. 2001;335-372.
2. Kim Y. Understanding green purchase: The influence of collectivism, personal values and environmental attitudes and the moderating effect of perceived consumer effectiveness. Seoul Journal of Business. 2011;17(1):65-92.
3. Ottman JA. Green Marketing: Challenges & Opportunities for the New Marketing age. Chicago. NTC Publishing Group, 1993.
4. Hammer B. Green purchasing strategies. Greening of the supply chain, Green leaf, 2006.
5. Ottoman JA. Green Marketing: Opportunity for Innovation. Second Edition, Book surge, 1998.
6. Uusitalo O, Oksanen R. Ethical Consumerism: a view from Finland, International Journal of consumer Studies. 2004;28(3):214-221.
7. Laroch, M, Bergeron J, Barbaro-Forleo G. Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. Journal of consumer marketing. 2001;18(6):503-520.
8. Saphores JM, Nixon H, Ogunseitan OA, Shapiro AA. California households willingness to pay for green electronics. Journal of Environmental planning and management. 2007;50(1):113-133.
9. Tanner C, Sybille WK. Promoting sustainable consumption: Determinants of green purchase by Swiss consumers. Psychology and Marketing. 2003;20(10):883-902.
10. Aryal KP, Chaudhary P, Pandit S, Sharma G. Consumers Willingness to pay for organic products. A case from Kathmandu Valley. The Journal of Agriculture and Environment. 2009;10:15-26.
11. Wheals P, Hinton D. Ethical Consumers in search of Markets. Business Strategy and the Environment. 2007;16:301-315.