

IMPACT OF GENDER ON ADOLESCENT CONSUMERS' TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS (A STUDY CONDUCTED IN INDORE CITY)

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Abstract:

There is a growing environmental-consciousness amongst all the denizens of Indian society. The Indians are not only conscious about their environment but also health conscious as well. This paradigm shift in attitude has made Indian consumers attractive to green marketers. India is beleaguered with hazardous problems such as air and water pollution. It has made the population more responsive and aware towards green marketing appeals. However, marketers are sluggish to develop effective segmentation strategies in India. There are lots of hindrances in the selection and application of a need based strategy. It is very imperative to boost the morale of younger consumers to adopt a positive attitude towards the purchase of eco-friendly products. It could witness marketers rewarded with long-term relationship with this segment. The previous research conducted on young consumers in the West has unfolded gender differences in attitude and action towards environmental issues. On contrary to this no such research study has been undertaken in Indian context. Thus, the present study is an attempt to study Impact of Gender on Adolescent Consumers' towards Green Products with reference to Indore city.

Key Words: Green products, male, female, adolescent, behaviour, consumers.

JEL Classification: M31, Q59.

INTRODUCTION

Green products are manufactured with the thought that the procedure of producing as well as distributing of such products will not be having any kind of negative impacts or harm to the environment. In today's world, people are becoming more concerned with global warming and the declining health of ecosystems, it's only natural to come across people interested in buying green products. The importance of caring for our environment is being acknowledged across the globe today. Going green brings many long term and necessary advantages. It also offers an unexpected chance to save money. This is the right time to ensure that our bodies are not poisoned with toxic substances that may become reason for severe health problems, and even leads to untimely death. Green products are readily available nowadays. These comprise of small articles from handmade papers bags, jute bags, and recycled papers to environment friendly fuels so on. It is very striking to note that the most harmful products do not advertise themselves as hazardous to health, so consumers are required to get smart and aware what to look for and what they simply want to avoid.

True green products don't contain chemicals or dangerous fumes, so they will be good for the consumers. Shopping for environmentally friendly products is the one of the best options to maintain the well-being of the planet and inhale fresh and clean air. Increasing demand for 'green' products, services and the adoption of green purchasing policies are very helpful in exploring new market opportunities. Improving the environmental performance of the products allows any organization to provide added value products to consumers. Marketing for green products can be both profitable and socially responsible. Markets for green products and services are increasing by leaps and bounds. For marketing of green products, the modern organizations have to focus on more traditional attributes such as price, quality or service.

At the same time, the marketers are challenged by low familiarity with green products. It hampers consumers from making purchase decisions. Generally, traditional products are well

known to consumers, and a relative comparison can be made using previously established preferences whereas green products are often unfamiliar and will be judged individually upon every purchase. Hence, it is felt that there is a great need to make people aware about the advantages of purchasing green products.

The awareness towards Green Products is quite visible in fast developing countries like India. Not only in metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai but also in Mini Metro cities like Indore consumers are more careful in making a buying decision. Indore, popularly known as the business capital of Madhya Pradesh (a state in central India), is facing the problems like air pollution, poor quality of potable water, high levels of exposure to severe traffic noise, high levels of garbage disposal are few to name them. All these deplorable conditions make the consumers of Indore to think and act seriously to come forward in unison to get rid of these problems. We can understand this fact that Indore is just at the stage of green awakening.

The government and citizens of Indore have started to realize the gravity of the environmental threats. The society as a whole is very sharp in responding than before appeals based on "green" issues. Emerging markets for environmental products and services in Indore is full of promises, opportunities and challenges too.

It is really a daunting task to define environmentally sustainable products. There is no such thing as a truly sustainable or green product, as all products we buy, own, use and discard in our everyday lives will have negative environmental impacts at some stage in their lifecycles. However, products can be classified according to the scale of these impacts, and a quality threshold can be drawn (Cooper, 2000). If a product has a low environmental impact, it is regarded as an environmentally sustainable product/green product.

Undoubtedly, market of Indore is having abundant potentials for green products. But at the same time, very little is known about consumers' green buying behaviors in this region. Green marketers have expressed their serious concern towards unavailability of market information. This often becomes a major hindrance to the success of expansion of green products. Without sufficient market information, many green marketers fail to practice effective market segmentation in their marketing strategies. Under such circumstances it is very interesting to study young consumers' Green buying behaviors and factors that affect their buying decisions. Adolescents constitute a large citizen group with the potential for constructing a powerful collective force in society for environmental protection.

Past research studies have revealed that young people are more prompt and positive than older generations to accept new and innovative ideas. Supporters of environmental protection tend to be younger in age. The objective of this study is to fill this void by studying impact of gender on Adolescent Consumers' towards Green Products of Indore City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bord and O 'Connor (1997) conducted a study on perception of environmental risks; they suggested that women reported higher perceived vulnerability to risks from global warming and hazardous wastes than men did. Lascu and Zinkhan (1999) have revealed that in making a purchase decision, adolescent consumers' choice is often made in accordance with peer group opinions Kotchen and Reiling (2000) have found a positive correlation between environmental attitude and environmental behavior Tikka et al (2000) have evidenced in his Western sample that female express more positive attitudes towards the environment than males do. Agarwal (2000) has highlighted that females' social networking should constitute an important basis for environmental collective force.

Moser and Uzzell (2003) unfolds that the media's interpretation of pollution levels has an effect on audience's perception of the seriousness of the pollution problems. Socialization theory postulates that because women are socialized to be more interdependent, compassionate, nurturing, cooperative, and helpful in care giving roles than men, women should have a stronger ethic of care

for others, including the environment, when compared to men (Zelezny and Bailey, 2006). Xiao and McCright (2007) examine the predictability of demographic variables to environmental concern. Age, educational attainment, political ideology, ethnicity, gender and value orientation have been found to have robust, consistent effects on environmental concern over time across different surveys and samples. Mostafa (2007) states that green purchasing behavior refers to the consumption of products that are: benevolent/ beneficial to the environment; recyclable/ conservable; or sensitive/responsive to ecological concerns.

HYPOTHESIS

Female adolescent consumers would show higher environmental concern than their male counterparts in Indore.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A study designed to provide insight about male and female adolescent behavior towards green products in Indore.

DATA COLLECTION

SAMPLE- METHOD

For reasons of convenience, Indore M.P. (India) is selected, being representative of the Madhya Pradesh socio-demographic profile. Sample Data has been collected from randomly selected adolescent buyers from markets / retail outlet of the green products.

SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 212 (98 males and 114 females) adolescents of Indore city covered in the present study. They are familiar with the purchase of these products and also responsible for the purchase decisions.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The age of the sample was 15 to 19 years. Education of the respondent was also one of the most important criterions for analysis. The questionnaire administered individually to all the respondents and doubts regarding the statements dually clarified by the researcher.

DATA ANALYSIS

Likert 5 point scales were used in all measures. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the statistical tool has been used to analyze the data.

LIMITATION

A major limitation lies in the self-reported nature of survey used in the study. Survey has also been conducted in specific locality only.

FINDINGS

Female adolescents scored significantly higher in environmental attitude, concern, perceived seriousness of environmental problems, perceived environmental responsibility, peer influence and green product purchase behavior than male adolescents in Indore. The study has revealed that most of the household purchase is much more often done by females than by males, green purchasing may be a concept more relevant to females than males. The top three predictors of green purchasing behavior among Indore female adolescent consumers were: peer influence, environmental concern and perceived environmental responsibility. The top three predictors of green purchasing behavior among Indore male adolescent consumers were: peer influence, environmental concern and self identity in environmental protection.

DISCUSSION

- Peer influence was found to be the top predictor of green purchase behavior in both male and female adolescent consumers. It suggests that green purchasing recommendations may be most effectively delivered through interpersonal communication/interaction among adolescent consumers.
- Environmental concern was found to be the second top predictor of both male and female adolescent consumers. It indicates that adolescent consumers green purchasing behavior is more easily triggered by an emotional appeal than by a rational statement.

- The features of the adolescent stage also help to explain why emotional concern is one of the most important predictors of green purchasing behavior.
- Perceived environmental responsibility was the third top predictor of green purchasing behavior among female adolescent consumers. Gender difference in perceived environmental responsibility to the strong egocentric and relational orientations that have been socialized in females since their childhood.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings imply that the common approach of rational appeals is not sufficient to motivate adolescents to make an environmental purchase. It is observed that adolescent consumers of Indore city are against harmful chemicals and are encouraging the use and production of green products. It's high time to bring out the conscious of the public about using only Eco friendly products. Green friendly products will offer a better tomorrow and a safe working environment for the generation next. Organizations with established eco-product development and environmental management programmes are better prepared to meet the challenges of the globalized world. Industries will have to plant more trees, overhaul and use power wisely without wasting to save energy, must use organic stuffs for the production, packing, selling and distribution of their finished products. By raising the environmental awareness the organizations can accomplish cost reductions. Purchasing power holds two powerful acts for the consumer. First, purchasing green allows the adolescent consumer to feel better about their choices and for personal care products, food and household items there are encouraging health-oriented reasons to make such purchases. There is an urgent need to educate, establish standards and make sure products do not lack in quality, style or cost too much. If the adolescent consumers will realize that they do not have to compromise on quality, taste or price, then it can be hoped that purchasing green would be on the top in the shopping list of the consumers. Purchasing of green products will also enable to eradicate the epidemic of corruption from the society. Undoubtedly, purchasing green holds the organizations more accountable for creating green options and having greener practices internally. The present study shows that the key to successful green marketing among adolescents lies in the effective use of emotional appeals in the marketing messages, peer networking to create mass/mouth publicity and gender -based market segmentation.

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