



CONSUMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON CONSUMER DURABLES

I. W. Rathnayaka

Department of Economics, University of Colombo. E-mail: wasana@econ.cmb.ac.lk

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Abstract: Promoting sustainable and eco-friendly consumption and production has been recognized as an important aspect of sustainable development, which depends on achieving long-term economic growth that is consistent with environmental and social needs in a country. Eco-friendly consumption and green production have become a priority sector for governments as the world transitions to more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable patterns of development. The main purpose of the study was to identify information from consumers' aspects. Meanwhile, examine the factors influencing on buying behaviors of green consumer durables in Sri Lanka during the past decade. The necessary data for the study was collected via a structured questionnaire provided to obtain the views of the employees who are working in both private and public sectors in the western province and examine how they are influenced by the purchasing green consumer durable products and their satisfaction and concern of green attitudes and purchase intention of eco-friendly product. A quantitative approach was adopted for the study by using a questionnaire and Samples were selected through a systematic sampling method.

Keywords: Green Product, Durable Goods, Consumer Perception, Environmental

INTRODUCTION

The trend of the 'green' consumption concept refers to an effort to reduce the impact of the manufacturing goods on the environment or produce or import eco-friendly products to the country to establish green consumer culture. In an environmentally mindful society, consumers and businesses are looking for ways to promote 'green' business practices. A green consumer is a consumer who prefers, chooses, selected eco-friendly products and decided to buy that products or services. Consumers are desired to spend an extra premium for a good if it has a low impact on society as well as the environment. (Ullah, 2018).

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As a result of the improved importance of environmental concerns and the successful efforts of international and local institutional environmentalists to raise awareness of consumer consumption's impact on the environment. Therefore, environmentalism has become an important global phenomenon in the current world.

Over the last few decades, environmentalism has emerged to be a very important issue due to increases in air pollution, poor management of waste, growing water scarcity, falling groundwater scarcity, falling groundwater tables, water pollution, preservation and quality of forests, biodiversity loss, land/soil degradation, acid rains, depletion of the ozone layer from Chloro Fluoro Carbons (CFC), and many more critical environmental issues. (Nagaraju & Thejaswini, 2016)

Thus, there is a growing awareness from customers towards environmental protection and eco-friendly consumption which helps to build up sustainable development. Consumers have been decided to consume eco-friendly goods which are environmentally safe and healthy. On the other hand, in today's world, there is considerable awareness among people regarding the environment and there is an increasing number of consumers are becoming not only environmentally conscious but environmentally responsible. Meanwhile, many customers are waking up to the features of green products. But it is still a new concept for the majority of people who are living in many countries. Because this concept is not a universal sentiment still. While many people are going green and considering the environmental impact of their purchases, some people do not see it as a pressing matter. Hence the uses of new eco-friendly activities need to reach the consumer and that will take a lot of time and effort. Several factors can direct consumers towards more environmentally friendly behavior. To accomplish this, consumer needs clear and direct attitudes to guide consumption decisions in an environmentally friendly manner to establish strong demand. Many companies pretend to be green to charge higher prices; the industry has a long way to go in helping consumers feel confident when making green choices.

Due to the challenging macroeconomic conditions, the prices of consumer durables, particularly some imported to the country are set to rise. As well as the greater taxes and higher interest rates likely to weaken the disposable incomes of the people during the past two years. (CBSL, 2016). When customer income decreases, the demand for consumer durables is well below that of the general market demand. At the same time when consumer income upsurges the demand for consumer durables is way above that of general market demand.

The increase in the rate of environmental awareness spreading worldwide resulted in the expansion of the environment-friendly products' market at a remarkable rate (Prothero, 2010). In the lower-middle-income country like Sri Lanka, one of the major concerns with green products are that there has been little attempt to academically explore and examine the green or environmental demand.

Many kinds of literature and surveys which study the dynamic patterns of consumer behavior cover different aspects and disciplines and determine the factors influencing the green consumption approaches towards the purchase of goods and services. This research is focused on the purchase of eco-friendly consumer durables which are normally more valued, high-priced products and not frequently purchased products. Rational consumers' behavior has a greater degree of similarity behavioral issues relating to consumer durables. The study has been selected to recognize and determine, what attitudes that affecting consumer buying behaviors on green consumer durables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relatively much, other than the increasing number of empirical studies investigating on green consumption. The evidence so far is not conclusive. Therefore a few of the most recent studies were taken into consideration for this study.

Among the more specific analyses on changing consumer behavior concerning green marketing and the study by Sharma (2011) concluded that green consumer behaviors were linked empirically to other activities. A conventional definition refers to the behaviors that are most regularly referred to as being examples of green consumption. These focused on Purchasing products, such as detergents, that have a reduced environmental impact and avoiding products with aerosols, purchasing recycled paper products, buying organic produce, etc.

Another study, (Morel & Kwakye, 2012), focuses on the process of consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly products contains that, consumers seem influenced by previous satisfaction, advertising, and word of mouth communication. Hence business entities should maintain eco-friendly promotion campaigns but also develop more green displays in supermarkets to create intention because rich people buy more products on unplanned decisions than people who earn less income.

Asha and Rathiha (2016) stated that consumers are more influenced to purchase green products by the awareness created by friends and relatives

and the attractive packaging. This study is to reveal that the female respondents are more conscious about the purchase of green products. The price of the products, packaging labeling and influence by friends and relatives are significantly influencing factors. According to Chen and Chai (2010) mentioned in their study, there is no difference between gender in their environmental attitudes and their attitudes on green products.

The perception of the green concept was slightly elevated and beyond the average level. Randiwala (2015), observed that demonstrates that the group of customers considers the green concept as a vital notion for a country while a very few numbers of respondents considered that green marketing is merely an idea where it has no true consideration about environment protection. However, in a Malaysian study, Chen and Chai (2010) indicated that, no significant relationship between consumers' attitude on environmental protection and their attitude on green products. This means that consumers' attitudes toward green products are not facilitated by the positive attitudes of consumers toward environmental protection. Further, Saha (2017) concluded that the environmental concern of consumers had shown no direct relation to awareness of green products. As well as Shikh and Rahman (2011) were of the view that, there is evidence from the analysis that consumers do not have a significant positive attitude towards green products.

According to Ullha (2018), consumers have indirectly influenced the company to produce hygiene products and services. Consumers want to indicate them with organizations that are green compliant means offering hygiene products and them willing to offer an extra amount of money for eco-friendly commodities to lead a fresh and healthy lifestyle.

Saha (2017) study the Consumer intention towards green consumerism and identified that social values are identified as one of the strong determining factors for consumer awareness of green products in India. There, is an interesting result between the two age groups, that shows the awareness might vary or maybe equal between the younger and the older age groups. So, it justifies that younger generations are quite familiar with the awareness of green products.

METHODOLOGY

The required data for the study was collected from primary sources through a systematic sampling method by a structured questionnaire. Meanwhile, key informants were interviewed necessarily as a supplemental source of information. The research includes the consumer's perceptions towards using eco-friendly durable products in the western province. Respondents

were selected randomly from the area of Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara districts which includes 30, 25, and 10 responses respectively based on the population in each district. Responses were collected from 60 households. A mixed-method was used to analyze the collected data. This study was qualitative research and while data gathered were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Among the respondents 78% were people age below 40 years, 17% were people age 40-60 years, 5% were people age above 60 years. Meanwhile, 64.3% of people have a bachelor's degree, and 21.4% of people have a master's degree. Among the respondents 10.7% of people are undergraduates, 96.4% of people are service holders, and 3.7% of people are a businessman. A study revealed that the majority of the respondents of the study were male and 26% of them are female. More than half of them were married and the remaining 42.9% of them were single. Based on monthly family income of the respondent, 4.5% are having a monthly family income of Rs. 25001 below. 17.9% of consumers are between the income Rs. 25001 – Rs.50000, 26.6% of them are having an income of Rs. 50001-75000, 14.3% of them are having a monthly family income from Rs.75001-100000 and 28.6% of them are above the income of Rs.100001.

Consumers are the desire to give priority for high-quality products that will work a long time and won't go out of style. Durable products are quite more cost, but people do not need to be replaced as regularly. Introducing many eco-friendly durable product designs, can encourage consumers to behave more responsibly to the whole environment. Moreover, the brand, price, store, design, features, and advertisement were vital factors to determine the quality of the product. The majority (59%) of the respondents purchase eco-friendly durable products for health and well-being lifestyle reasons. One-fifth of consumers were purchased eco-friendly products for serving and protecting the environmental well-being. Moreover, 12% of them buy green durable goods for the appreciation of other people and society. 4% of them purchase it for pressure from a third party.

The study found that the consumers also had average knowledge and awareness of eco-friendly products. The most noticeable limitation among the majority of consumers was that they are either unaware or had no idea about the clues given in the product package. Further, 100% of respondents are known about the eco-friendly durable products up to some extent while 25% of respondents are highly aware & 60.8% people are average, and 14.3% respondents had a low level of awareness.

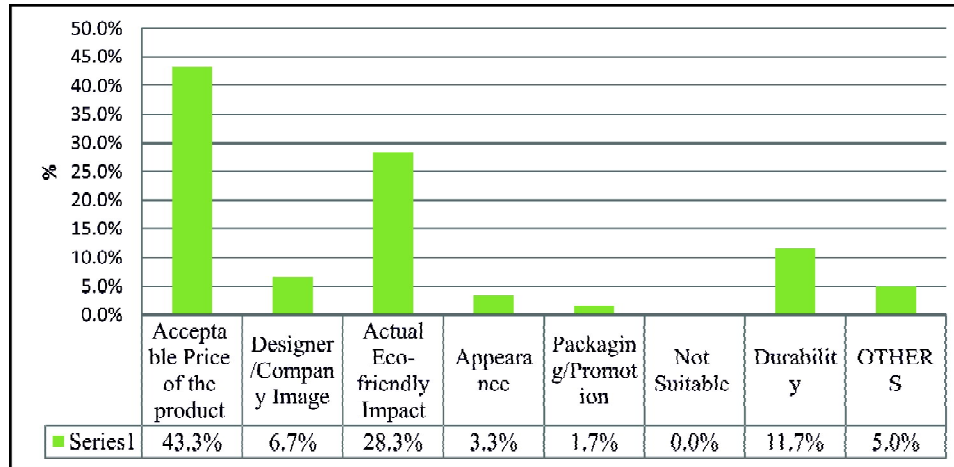


Figure 1: The attracting elements to buy green consumer durables

Source: Sample Survey, 2019

According to the study above elements affect for taking the decision to purchase green consumer durables differently. In the case of purchasing eco-friendly durable goods, 43.3% of Consumers were given priority for the acceptable price of the product. The actual eco-friendly impact of the product was considered by 28.3% of the consumers. 11.7% of respondents were taken decisions on price and physical appearance. Under the other criteria, consumers pay attention to including Modern technology, Value, well mechanism, etc.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics and customers perception towards eco-friendly products

Socio-Economic Character	Chi-Square Value	P-value	Result
Age	0.532	.000	Significant
Gender	1.854	.000	Significant
Education	2.339	.000	Significant
Employment	2.988	.000	Significant
Monthly Family Income	3.125	.001	Significant
Marital Status	0.658	.000	Significant
Nature of the Family	0.521	.000	Significant

Source: Sample Survey, 2019

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly durable products.

H_A : there is a significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly durable products.

The chi-square test has been applied to study the relationship between socio-economic character and customers' perception towards ecological durable products. It is concluded from the analysis $p < 0.1$ and the null hypothesis was rejected at a one percent level of significance. This shows that there is a close association between socio-economic character and customers' perception towards eco-friendly durable products. Many people are willing to do their bit for the environment, but they do not always have the opportunity to consume in environmentally friendly ways, because sustainable low-carbon choices are more expensive and harder to find. They should be affordable and broadly accessible for everybody and non-sustainable products should be phased out gradually. Research has shown that many consumers believe that environmentally non-friendly products should not even be on sale. The consumer is telling us that she is ready for drastic change. It is time for legislators and companies to respond decisively. Lots of customers have understood the significance of environment-friendly consumer durables over the years. Such ecologically conscious consumers are even willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study directed that social economic and demographical aspects of customers who consume eco-friendly durable products have a significant relation to their awareness of purchasing green products. The majority of consumers know about green marketing and well-known consumers try to spread the information to unaware people in society. The maximum number of respondents are satisfied to use a green product and they will try to stimulate other consumers for using green products and services. The level of environmental awareness among Sri Lankan consumers is appreciable and consumers are also aware of eco-friendly products available in the markets. Most of the consumers are aware of the importance of green consumption and knowledgeable consumers try to spread the available information before-mentioned as eco-friendly products are good for the environment and are also healthy for people to unaware people in society as a third party. To improve the purchasing behaviors on sustainable consumption in the consumer society, the business sector needs to provide consumers with guidance, and, ultimately, to establish a practical lifestyle model that consumers can emulate. This cannot be brought about by regulations alone, but by smart, well-placed, and targeted initiatives by

the business community that would create a loyal group of “sustainable consumers”.

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