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Identification of personal antecedents of green consumer behaviour

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Abstract

Consumer actions strongly affect the environment, it is worthwhile to find out which are the factors that influence consumers' behaviour towards green products or in other words to know how and why people purchase goods and services. This study mainly focuses on identifying the factors that affects the green consumer behaviour. Listing of items was done under the personal antecedents of green consumer behaviour like psycho-graphical, personality traits, cultural values, environmental knowledge, consumer awareness and other personal antecedents. This paper identifies and tries to understand the purchase behaviour of green products of urban consumers. Data was collected from the four directions of Udaipur city.

Keywords: Green Consumer, Personal Antecedents, Environment, Green Behavior.

Introduction

The environmental issues are bigger than the changes the gigantic human actions stir off to the basic physical and biological systems. Indian environment has deteriorated remarkably in the past few years. This indicates that the serious attention of policymakers, implementers, scientists and general public with a concerted effort can save the environment and humanity and everyone must behave in an environmental friendly way to provide generational equity (Chopra, 2016) [6]. Non-conforming purchase behavior has a big role in bringing change to the basic physical and biological systems.

Review of literature

Consumer behavior is unpredictable and the same goes with green behavior. Understanding consumer behavior completely is very difficult. However, forecasting how a human behaves in purchasing situations can be done on the basis of previous purchasing decisions and experiences. Consumers make purchasing decisions every day but may not know the factors that drive them to this decision. Every purchase decision is governed by psycho-graphical, cultural, social, personal or psychological factors. Many researchers have studied these variables that affect the green behavior of the consumer:

Number of researchers has pointed out certain additional factors responsible for green consumer behavior. The demographic factors such as age, gender, income and employment (D'Souza *et al.* 2007) [8], product packaging (Rokka and Uusitalo, 2008) [12], motivation (Young *et al.* 2010) [15], 'lack of specificity' in green advertisement and advertised products (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011) [11] and pricing (Joshi and Rahman, 2015) [9] influence the consumers green purchase behavior.

Psycho-Graphical Variables: Psycho-Graphical Variables: One of the psycho graphical variables that promotes a person's buying behavior towards green product is trust. The author emphasis that there is a correlation between trust level and confident level of the buyer towards purchasing green products (Baker and Ozaki, 2008) [1].

Consumer's value orientations (e.g., person's cultural values, ethical, and political values): several studies reveal that cognitive styles vary significantly across nations and cultures Cui *et al.* (2013) [7]. As it has been mentioned before, attitudes are linked to the way people think, their self-image, but also the importance they attach to the image others can have about them. Hence, the cognitive style of individuals that refers to the way someone thinks, perceives and remembers information is influenced by one's culture.

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Environmental Knowledge and Attitude: Polonsky stated that environmental knowledge can be general or specific. While a few studies (Barber *et al.* 2009; Brosdahl *et al.* 2010) [2, 3] examined the relationship between general environmental knowledge and specific environmental knowledge, and found that product specific environmental knowledge had significant impacts on green purchase intention, whereas general environmental knowledge had little impact.

Consumer awareness and knowledge: Consciousness and concern are rising among current consumers about their social responsibilities and their immediate influence on the environment by means of their purchasing behavior. As an Individual consumers are enlightening themselves on the perceived advantages of making environmentally responsible choices and practices. It is essential for individuals to practice green behavior in order to preserve the environment and its scarce resources (Smith, 2013) [14].

Willingness to pay: Bukhari (2011) [4] observes that customers who are concerned about ecological problems, are also willing to pay more to be eco-responsible but companies need to enhance the performance of their products and make them more environment friendly, even if they need to increase the price of their products. Thus green products quality and performance can also be considered as a factor which affects the of consumers intention to purchase a particular green product.

Sensitive to environmental concern: Mostafa observed that environmental concern positively influence the consumers' attitude towards green products which further influences their green purchase intention. Chen and Chang (2012) [5] recommended that companies need to develop products with both green features and high-value attributes to attract consumers.

Price and other economic considerations: A study conducted in India by Saini (2013) [13] found that price and quality of the products are more important for customers than environmental responsibility. The author recommends that companies should increase their communication with the customers about going green. Customer willingness to pay and price perceptions have been considered as two important factors when studying the construct of price in relation to attitude and behavior (Oliver *et al.* 2011) [10].

The review on personal factors affecting green consumer behavior indicates that a good number of researches to study on the green consumer behavior have been done; the review also indicates that the factors are varying widely due to region, time and other reasons. So in an effort to study all these factors jointly, the present work to develop a measure and to assess green or pro-environmental behavior was to continue the mission environment protection was taken up in every aspect. Knowing the factors that consciously or unconsciously affect the decision to purchase green products can have positive effects on the consumption with better products as well as protecting the environment.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in the urban areas of Udaipur district of Rajasthan. The sample of the study was selected randomly from the latest electoral role of Urban Udaipur. For this, an equal number of subjects, that is 50

respondents (25 males and 25 females) each from four direction of city: East, West, South and North were selected with the help of screening pro-forma consisting of basic minimal enquiries essential to screen the subjects such as name, age, education, income, involvement in purchase decision making and a willingness to be the subject of the present study for taking responses on 'Personal Antecedents of green consumer behavior'. This made the total sample of 100 males and 100 females to study the tool. The data on background information, green consumer behavior was put to suitable analysis, to be precise, frequency and percentages, t-test and correlation analysis to draw results.

Results and discussion

Total sample of 200 respondents 100 male and 100 female were taken for the present study. To analyze the consumer's perspective to be able to get a deeper understanding of the influence of different factors on the consumers purchase behavior. Background information was collected

The mixture of variables included in the background information is age, marital status type and size of family, education, occupation and annual income, caste of the respondents.

- **Age of the respondents:** Although the data on age of respondents fig 1, reveals that respondents were distributed in seven age ranges. Majority of female and male consumers were between the age group of 20-30 years with 42 percent of female and 40 percent of male.
- **Marital Status:** The data regarding marital status of consumers fig 2, points out that 70 percent of female and 56 percent of male consumers were married and rest of the consumers were unmarried.
- **Type of family:** A very good section of the sample and more or less equal number of female and male consumers fig 3, had nuclear family i.e., 80 percent of female consumers 82 percent of male consumers.
- **Size of family:** Data indicates that 63 percent of female consumers and 56 percent of male consumer's fig 4, had families of small size. Rest percentage of female consumers and male consumers belonged to joint families and extended families.
- **Education:** Majority of consumers were post graduates fig 5, That is 48 percent of female and 46 percent of male consumers. Remaining consumers were under graduates and from senior secondary level.
- **Income:** Data described that more than half that is 56 percent of female and 51 percent male belonged to upper middle class, followed by upper class, upper lower and lower middle income group's fig 6.
- **Occupation:** Highest proportion of the consumers was of job holder's fig 7, with 40 percent female consumers and with only a percent difference of male consumers. In the rest of the sample there were homemakers, business holders, students and retired persons.
- **Caste:** Data in the caste fig 8, indicated that the majority of the respondent's belonged to general category i.e., 46 percent female and 39 percent male consumers and remaining belonged to OBC, SC, ST and other categories.

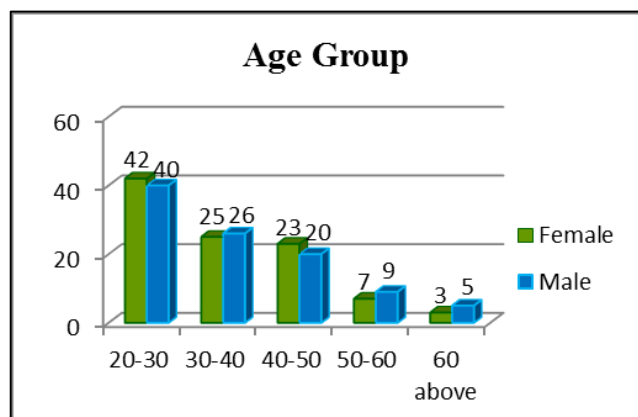


Fig 1: Age group

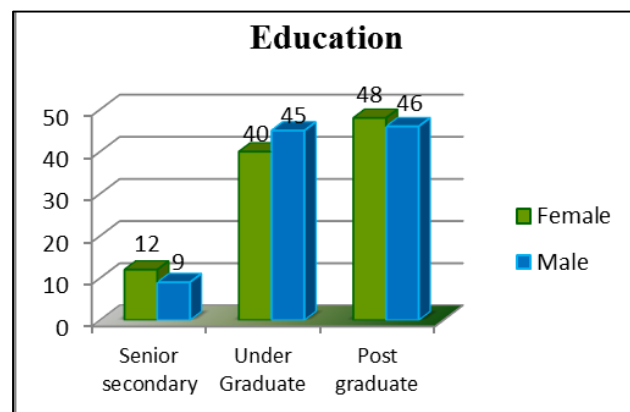


Fig 5: Education

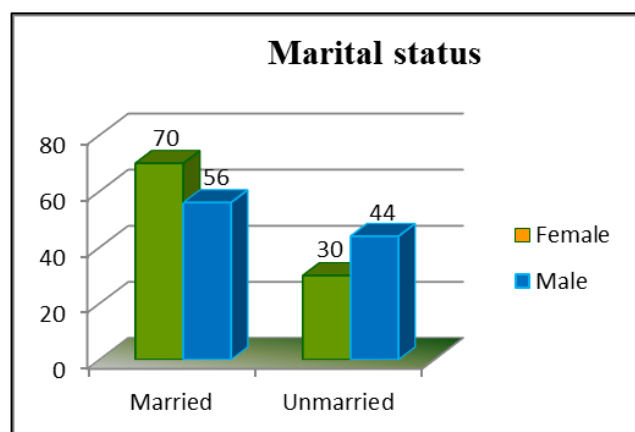


Fig 2: Marital status

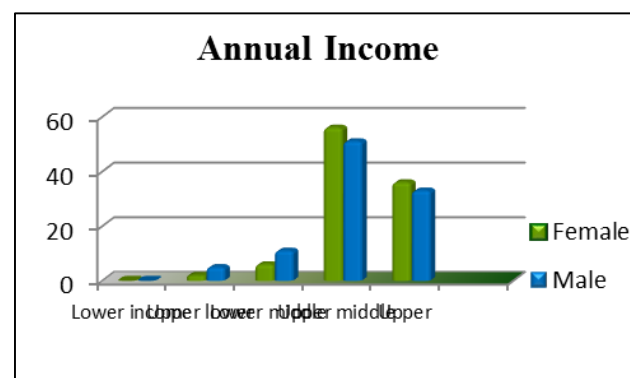


Fig 6: Annual Income

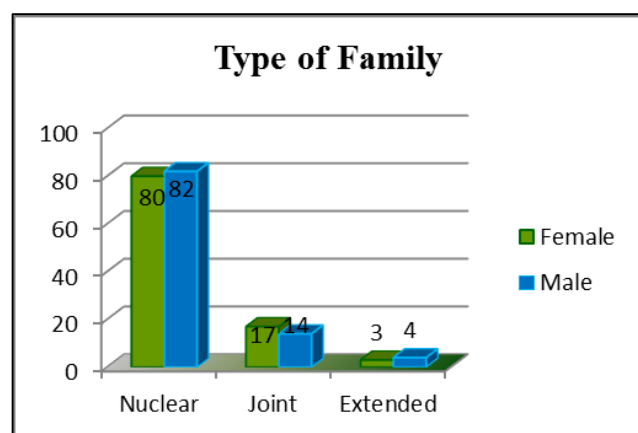


Fig 3: Type of Family

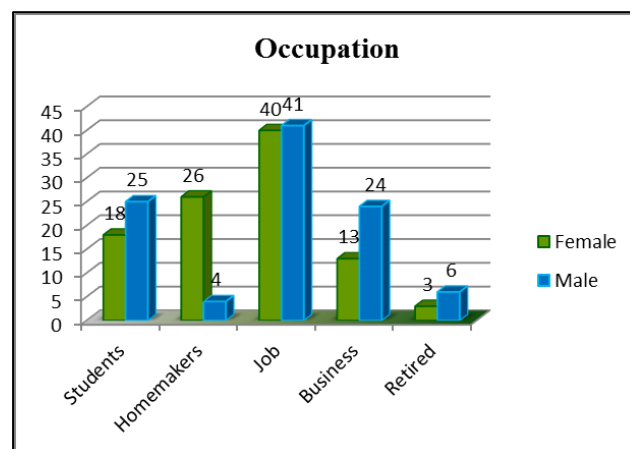


Fig 7: Occupation

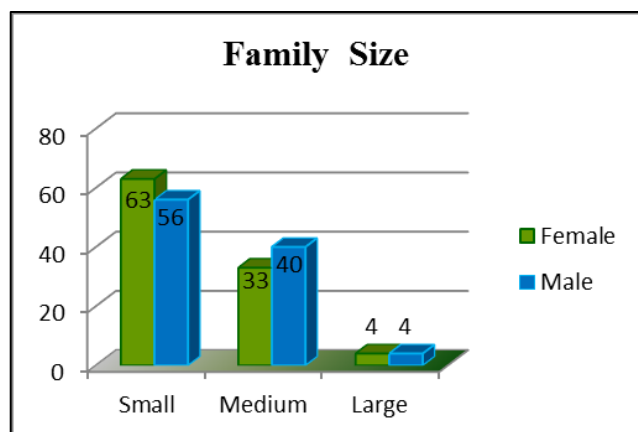


Fig 4: Family Size

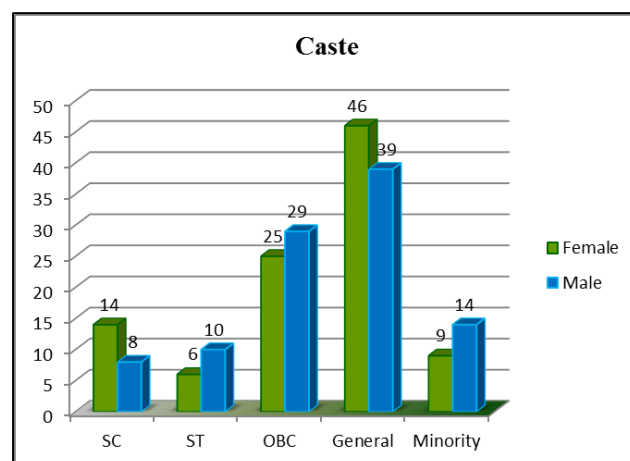


Fig 8: Caste

Table 1: Identification of Personal factors through item analysis

- Psycho-graphical variables
- Personality traits
- Consumer's value orientations
- Perceived behavioral controls
- Perceived environmental behaviour
- Environmental knowledge and attitude
- Consumer awareness and knowledge
- Willingness to pay
- Sensitive to environmental concern
- Price and other economic considerations

Following the basic principle of test design that is, more the items to measure a concept, the more reliable the measurement will be, table: 1 the personal antecedents of green consumer behavior scale (AGCB) had 30 varied items from all ten dimensions viz. psycho-graphical variables, personality traits, consumer's value orientations (e.g., person's cultural values, ethical, and political values), perceived behavioral controls, perceived environmental behavior, environmental knowledge and attitude, consumer awareness and knowledge, willingness to pay, sensitive to environmental concern, price and other economic considerations of personal factors.

For item analysis, the responses of 25% of high scorer judges (consumers) and 25% of low scorer judges (consumers) were exposed to Karl Pearson's 't' test for improving items so that the items can differentiate the level of 'greenness' in consumers' behavior. Further the objective of item analysis was also to identify items that can be used repeatedly and logically to isolate the lapse in the green behavior of the consumers, and to eliminate ambiguous or misleading items in test administration.

Some of the examples of the items from different dimensions that were thrown to item analysis were: I know the positive consequences of going green, I don't mind paying more for eco-friendly product, I am able to purchase green products, I can purchase non certified green products, I can successfully switch to green products, I feel proud when I buy green products. The list was exposed to 100 male and 100 female responses of each statement were demanded in five degrees - strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree on a 'Zero' to 'five' point scale. Based on these responses, for judging item difference the same responses to the items were used to compute the student's 't' values for each item between responses of the top quarter of the judges and the bottom quarter. Finally, only those 30 items with higher 't' values (more than 1.75) were retained and rest were dropped in personal factors.

Conclusion

From this study it can be concluded that the personal Antecedents of Green Consumer Behavior from psycho-graphical variables, personality traits, consumer's value

orientations (e.g., person's cultural values, ethical, and political values), perceived behavioral controls, perceived environmental behavior, environmental knowledge and attitude, consumer awareness and knowledge, willingness to pay, sensitive to environmental concern, price and other economic considerations does effect the behavior of the consumers.

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