

Young Consumers' Behavior towards Buying Green Products in a Developing Nation: A Study on Emerging Economics of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The study gives emphasis to the younger generation and their intention to purchase green products. Bangladesh Population Census under UN Population Projection (2018) Bangladeshi population comprises about 30% of youth where the total population is 158.5 million. In these above aspect the present research attempts to understand the young consumers' behavior towards buying green products in a developing nation like Bangladesh. The objective of this paper is to amplify the understanding of young consumer behavior reflected in consumption of green products in relation to consumption values. As this research is to test specific hypotheses and examine relationships of consumption values and the findings will be input into decision making which was done by correlation analysis, hypotheses testing and reliability analysis for questionnaire. The findings of the study have significant implication that may help the marketers to develop strategies for green products. The marketers are suggested to emphasize on the information providing to the consumers so that, consumers have knowledge about eco-friendly products. The environmental concern is one of the strongest influences on purchase intention. Effective communication of environmental related benefits of the products among consumer is crucial for marketers as environmental concern influence. A remarkable pricing and promotional offer related to green products that also maintains standard in quality is the issue on what marketer can work best.

Keywords: young consumer behavior, green consumption, consumption values, developing nation, environmental concern.

INTRODUCTION

The way people choose goods for consumption are affecting their lifestyle in a significant way (Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014). Consumption nature of people really does have a lot of impact on way of life. Consumption patterns which are unsustainable leading the world to adverse environmental concerns, people's unoriginal lifestyles are affected by climate change and global warming. Non-toxic, recyclable and bio degradable products are considered as environment friendly products (OECD, 2009). Products those are helpful to keeping a sustainable environment is what we need now in the current period. Products with lower harmful environmental effect at its life-cycle stages are good for human society. Consumers' perception about green products, its price and quality relationship (functional value), concern about self-image and importance of peer review (social value), stimulus of promotional activities (conditional value), knowledge seeking behavior (knowledge value), protecting nature towards environment (environmental value) may have robust influence on consumption behavior (Laroche et al., 2001; Sharma and Bagoria, 2012). It indicates five consumption values have a severe impact on environment in a nut shell. In response to that, consumers are willing to pay the premium price and react in a manner that is concern to environment and reach green consumerism (Polonsky & Rosenberger, 2001). Green consumerism is the ultimate practice to make the world better for our surrounded livelihood. Promotion of healthy lifestyle is what people are more connected with. Along with this sustainable lifestyle and protected natural resources is what we expect in life. Promotion of green marketing along with sustainable marketing is now- a- days prominent in business sector. The youths are more prepared for involving in newfangled and groundbreaking ideas (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006). Leading-edge youthful behavior can be most prominent breakthrough in the green product consumption substance. Youths are more involved into consumption of any innovative products so it could be

environmental friendly green products.

Scope of the study

The report consists of consumption values that relates to the behavior of the young consumers of the country. In the analysis part, detail information about the demographic analysis is provided. The scope of this report is to identify the young consumers' behavior towards buying green products in a developing nation which is a study on emerging economics of Bangladesh to gather knowledge about their consumption nature and practice.

1. The geographic scope of this report is limited to Dhaka city. Zones have been divided into two parts these are north zone & south zone. Basically for survey purpose I worked on both zone.
2. Samples from population located in Uttara, Savar, Gazipur, Dhanmondi, Badda, Gulshan, Banani, Old Dhaka, Gabtoli, Mirpur, Khilkhet, Nikunjo, Basundhara R/A, Khilgaon, Shamyoli, Mohammadpur, Motijil area and youth ranged 18- 35 in 2024 were covered under the study.

Significance of the study

The insights from this report will be helpful for the green product producing companies to obtain understanding about consumer preference towards product quality in relation to price, promotional offers required by consumers, product related expectation and social predominates to enforce consumption, perception towards company communication and environmental concern & an overall understanding on green product consumption behavior in our country. Findings gathered from the study will be supportive for the marketer to design future communication program, repositioning products, introducing newfangled green products, establishing thoughts on environment friendliness & to plan proper direction to follow-up green product consumption behavior of the youth generation in the marketplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green marketing is the summation of activities that are intended to facilitate the exchange of environment friendly goods and services which can satisfy human needs and wants (Polonsky, 2011). The very basic idea underneath green marketing is natural environment protection. Promotion of green marketing largely varies in manufacturing processes, product functions, packaging, advertising and the supply chain (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Polonsky, 2011). Green marketing promotes green labeling and advertising of goods and services for the purpose of excluding any harmful effects from the environment. Companies that exercise green marketing strategies pays excessive attention to designing, promotion, pricing, and distribution of the products that talks about environmental protection (Polonsky, 2011). Green marketing shape up consumers' attitudes and perceptions related to the environmental problems. By escalating consciousness about eco-friendly products among consumers along with appropriate green brand management and effective marketing strategies are helpful to predict attitude of consumers' (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Public consciousness can minimizes the damages to the environment while production of products. So, green marketing practice area is the gap where our country can work to circulate sustainable development.

In accordance to Lai (2000), peoples of Hong Kong are more cultured about environmental complications. So that, marketing strategies of firms can enhance consumers' perceived value on the environmental issues. It's implied now, that awareness level can possess environmental problems and make consumers more accountable towards the environment. The efforts companies' gives in green marketing activities that are intended to endorse eco-friendly products can make an impact on consumers' attitudes, perception in relation to green products purchasing behavior (Cherian& Jacob, 2012). That means consumers' perceptions about green marketing practices positively affect their attitudes toward the environment. So it's time to work on the consumer perception to bring out a positive change from the perspective of green consumption.

Environmental promotion and protection is consumers' attitudes towards the environment that is turned by

cognitive judgment (Lee, 2009; Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Theory of reasoned action says, “People consider their actions before they engaged or not engaged in a given behavior” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 5). People’s intention to execute a certain behavior comes from their attitudes and perceptions are what that means. Therefore (Cherian and Jacob 2012) put up with the idea that companies those are involved in effective green marketing activities are capable of encouraging consumers and deliberate the thinking of live with a green lifestyle. So, the gap arises here, where business can influence consumer’s lifestyle in accordance to environment if consumers are concerned more about the environment, they would be more willing to purchase green products.

Companies have tried to analyze consumers’ environmental concerns and their reactions so that green products or services can be formed as an alternative for consumers (Lee 2008, 2009). Green products are a helpful alternative for environment protection. Some activities are used to make customers care about environment by delivering environmentally sound goods or services to satisfy society’s needs and encourage them to green purchasing behavior to solve those issues (Chen & Chai, Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Once the awareness of environmental damages and protection has been built up, consumers will be more willing to participate in green purchasing activities. When a reliable accreditation body approves green labeling that indicates a product causes relatively less damage to the environment in comparison to other similar products and can enhance consumers’ favorable attitude towards the product (Steinhart, Ayalon, & Puterman, 2013). Environmental responsibility is commonly used concept for promoting sustainable consumer behaviors so; this could be the new dimension to give effort on.

Former research has scrutinized by (Lai, 2000; Cherian & Jacob, 2012), on Hong Kong people and findings there indicates that these people’s individual responsibility toward environmental protection is significantly weak. They tend to expect the government to take actions against environmental concerns by implementation of proper policies as they are not supposed to ready for to make individual sacrifices to concur the government’s movements. Though, Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro- Forle (2001) and Chan (2000) note that when consumers expect companies to take actions in an environmentally responsible manner, they tend to express their support for sustainability. In the context of product purchasing consumers may consume green products if companies can promote the products in an effective way.

According to (Bagozzi, Yi, and Baumgartner 1990), green product purchase willingness refers to the conscious plan to involve in a certain level of effort which is needed to perform the purchasing behavior in relation to capturing consumers’ mind. Green purchasing willingness is the will to consumption of products that are beneficial to the environment. Even though the interest in green marketing is high from the side of organizations, the demand for green products do not matches the expectation (Bhatia & Jain, 2013). A significant gap between consumers’ concern and actual green purchasing behavior is suggested by researchers. Nevertheless, a positive relationship exists between environmental concern and green purchase decision of consumers’ from the perspective of purchasing behavior in general (Angelovska, Sotiroska, and Angelovska 2012). Working on this aspect can be beneficial for the manufacturers.

In accordance of Ho (2002) the probable causes of waste reprocessing behavior of Singaporean households was reflected in the study. Increasing convenience of recycling facilities is one way for Singapore to promote recycling behavior and this was found with the help of comparative study between Singapore and Sweden. A finding of the study suggests that social pressure to recycling of household waste increased when Singaporeans moved to Sweden. What we can pull out as findings from the literature on consumers’ at this segment is, green products adoption along with the literature on young consumers’ involvement in environmental matters to discuss the green purchase behavior among the young generation. Regardless of these facts, still there consists a research gap in relevance of the young generation’s knowledge and their purpose to involve in environmental concerns. For each and every industry young people will be a dominant target group and a sustainable competitive advantage for every organization.

An ultimate challenge for business is now to use the greater disposable income of youth consumers in consideration of spending on a variety of products (Jang et al., 2011). Having complex behavioral intentions and outstanding lifestyles along with extraordinary practices for disposable purchases younger generation is now considerate as a great influential target customer group because this generation is usually educated and

well-versed in a viable approach. Perhaps, there exists a strong connotation between the young generation and their intention to purchase green products.

Recent studies have examined young consumers' behavior towards green products in Bangladesh. Environmental consciousness, responsibility, and knowledge are significant factors influencing green purchase behavior (Uddin, 2020). Availability of products and information also have a high impact on actual purchase behavior (Adrita, 2020). Young consumers' green purchase intention is largely determined by their attitude, environmental concern, and willingness to pay (Chowdhury & Alamgir, 2021). Marketers could inspire young urban consumers by applying self-directed appeal to induce green consumer behavior, especially in a country facing severe environmental challenges like Bangladesh (Taufique & Islam, 2021).

Theoretical Aspect of the Study and Hypothesis Development

According to theoretical aspect of consumer choice concerning green products, some hypotheses concerning green product purchase decisions are anticipated here. The hypotheses are drawn from the theory of consumer values that pinpoints importance of consumption values in green product purchasing decision (Long and Schiffman, Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Laroche et al, 2001). Consumer choice depends on five magnitudes of consumption values those are functional value, social value, conditional value, knowledge value and environmental value. In this study to develop a perceived value scale to measuring green product consumption behavior of youth consumer segments five values are constructed.

The effort to understanding the green product consumption behavior has become a global tendency among the academic groups in the recent years (Wang et.al, 2013). Numerous models have been established to explain green consumption behavior (Wang et.al, 2013; Zhao et.al, 2013). In various financial prudence green products consumption behavior has been considered to access pro-environmental facts and green consumption activities (Wang et.al, 2013; Zhao et.al, 2013).

Functional value is the prime driver of consumer choice behavior in green product purchase decision (Sheth et. al, 1991; Bei and Simpson, 1995). Measurement of functional value is done by analyzing consumers' perception about the product performance as durability, longevity, conformity, reliability, quality and monetary value. If the product is high priced then consumers tend to pick other criteria rather than price as a selection criterion. However upper incomer Taiwanese consumers are willing to pay higher price as they perceives green products are superior quality (Tsay, 2010). German consumer demonstrates eco-friendly behavior but is not willing to compromise price and taste for environmentally compatible packaging (Van et.al. 2009). Eventually there has been escalation in number of consumers' extreme price sensitivity for green purchase doesn't exhibit much environmental responsibility (Malhotra and Maheshwari, 2011). It indicates green purchasing behaviors of price sensitive consumers are not that into environmental issues. From all the above arguments the following hypotheses can be shaped,

H0; Functional value doesn't create a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

H1; Functional value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

Societal norms are the focal reason behind consumer choice (Sheth at al., 1991; Bei and Simpson, 1995). Social responsibilities are stimulated by environmental behaviors and consumers' decisions are influenced immensely by personal factors like attitude and personality rather than social norms (Shamdasani et al., 1993). At this point personality reflects more prominent role in green consumption behavior rather than social pressure. Based on this understanding from literature, the hypothesis below may be drawn.

H0; Social value doesn't create a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

H1; Social value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

In accordance to consumer research, the changes in consumer situations may possibly influence adoption of green product (Ottaman, 1998; Saxena and Khandelwal, 2010; Niemeyer, 2010; Gadenne et al., 2011). That means conditional value is usefulness that we can get from a product which take place in a specific

situation. Thus hypothesis 3 below may be proposed.

H0; Conditional value doesn't create a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

H1; Conditional value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

The concerns of the knowledge value is to satisfy the want of knowledge (Laroche et al., 2001). Consumer preferences to satisfy their variety seeking behavior by gathering knowledge about the product attributes have promising impact on green products buying behavior. An attitude behavior gap arises when gap exist between consumer environmental concern and actual buying behavior due to absence of information about green products (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004). So, the gap can be diminished by increasing the information availability. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H0; Knowledge value doesn't create a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

H1; Knowledge value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

Environmental value concerns about the issues like limit of the population growth in the earth and relationship between environment and development towards the environment (Choi and Kim, 2005; Kilbourne and Pickett, 2008). Green purchase decisions are triggered by person's emotions towards environmental protection and consumers' consumption pattern and motive to go green. Based on this understanding from literature, the hypothesis below may be drawn.

H0; Environmental value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

H1; Environmental value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

Research Question

How does the consumption value create an impact on young consumer behavior on the subject of consumption of green products?

Objectives of the Study

1. The objective of this paper is to amplify the understanding of young consumer behavior reflected in consumption of green products in relation to consumption values.
2. Therefore develop an appropriate strategy that will ensure enduring marketing success by stimulating the demand for green products.

Types of Research Design

A framework for conducting the marketing research project is defined as research design (Naresh k. Malhotra 2010). As this research is to test specific hypotheses and examine relationships of consumption values and the findings will be input into decision making so it's a conclusive research design. The study is based on descriptive research method reflects consumer behavior in relation to their buying behavior and perceptions as a mean to reconstruct the essence of topic and helps to depict the participants in the survey in an accurate way.

Types of Research Information

As this research is to quantify the data and generalize the results from the sample to the population of interest this supposed to be quantitative research.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data source have been used (Agarwal and Selen, 2009). Primary data is known as raw data which consist of information that is collected from the market initially. Practical

overview and face to face survey of sample has been used as primary data source. This source of data contains all the information and that are already exists somewhere. Websites, journals and other articles have used as secondary data source.

Method of Data Collection

Survey was done for structured data collection so that a formal questionnaire was designed. As survey method structured questionnaire has been used for a given sample of a population to find out specific information from the respondents.

Scaling Technique and Questionnaire Design

An itemized rating scale, 5 point likert Scale which is a non-comparative scaling technique has been used as scaling technique that was developed by Rensis Likert in 1932 to measure attitude. Here interviewee needs to level the agreement degree from 1 to 5 scales as following:

Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree.

Questionnaire is a set of questions that are used to get the expected result of any study. The questionnaire for this study has been formulated on the basis of the previous study and research by other authors. The pattern of the questionnaire is structured and well organized. It's a combination of both open ended and close ended questions.

Sampling Design

Target Population

The focus has been given for especially collecting responses from who knows about green products and falls under the age range of 18- 35 years (according to Bangladesh Youth Development Policy 2024 age range of youth is 18 to 35) as our main target is to reach out youth consumer behavior towards green products.

Sampling Unit

Element: Youth falls under age range of 18 – 35 years who is responsible for the youth consumption of green products.

Extent: Dhaka metropolitan area was chosen as per the convenience of the researcher.

Time: 2024 (July to October)

Sampling Technique and Size

Due to time and funding constraints convenience sampling under the non-probability sampling technique has been used for the sampling purpose to choose the respondents to be surveyed through the questionnaire. In total 300 questionnaire was distributed and 256 responses was collected but due to faulty responses and improper filling of the answers researcher only picked 227 proper responses as sample size.

Method Used for Data Analysis

Reliability analysis has been done and one sample t test has been used for testing the hypothesis. Correlation between consumption values has been analyzed to produce quantitative result on relationship between consumer behavior and green products consumption. The software package used in this study is SPSS 23 and Excel. After the survey conducted, a database has been created using software and collected data has been entered in the database.

Demographic Profile Analysis

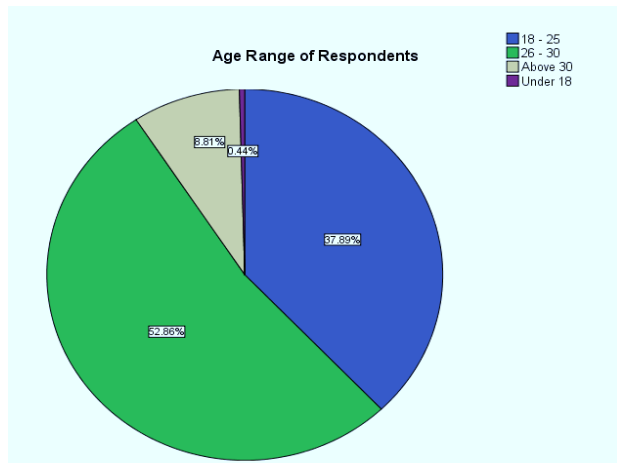


Figure 1: Age Range Statistics of Respondents

In accordance to field survey two age groups are significantly participated in the survey those are people between 18-25 and 26-30. Another group above 30 also responded in a good number. 18-25 group response was 37.89% and 26-30 group response was 52.86%. As 26-30 peoples are more insightful and progressive believer in development of our ecological balance they seem to respond more.

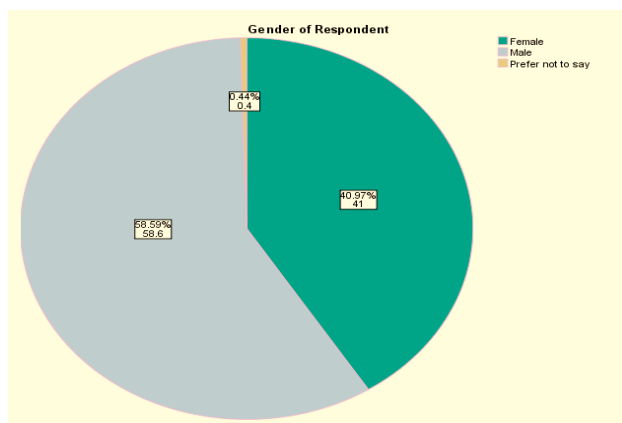


Figure 2: Gender Statistics of Respondents

Within 227 sample size 41 respondents was female with a percentage of 40.97%. Male respondent was 58.59% which indicates males were more enthusiastic to respond. A strong assumption is, females are more connected with environmental sensitivity than male parts which appear reverse at this point.

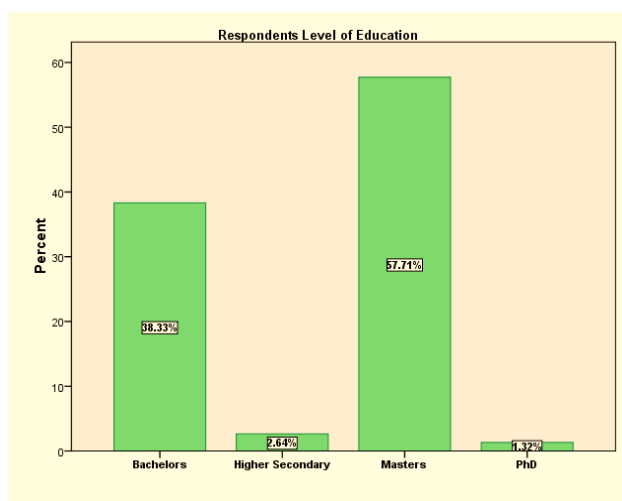


Figure 3: Level of Education Statistics of Respondents

Contained by the sample size of 227 there was four educational levels among respondents. Respondents were 1.32% from PhD, 2.64% from higher secondary. Mostly respondents were from master’s level with 57.71%. Along with this an upright number of responses were from bachelors 38.33%.

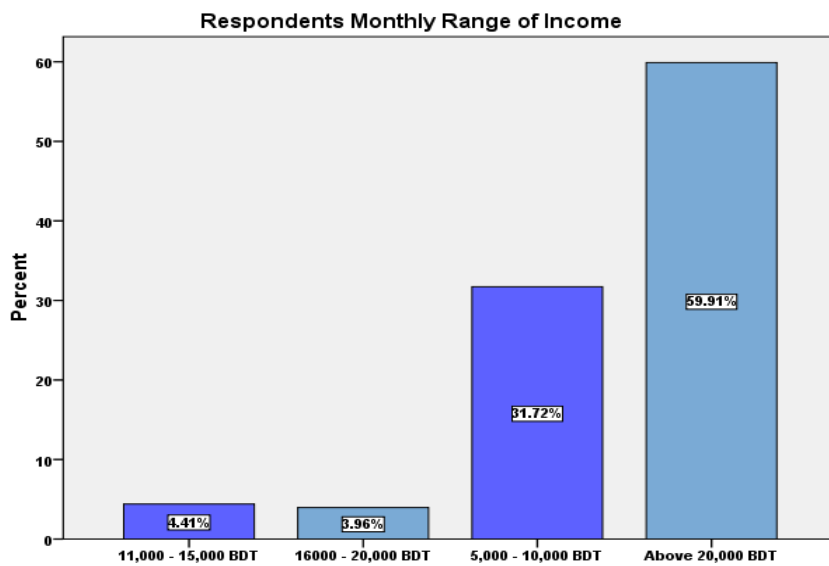


Figure 4: Monthly Range of Income Statistics of Respondents

In accordance to this graphical representation a significant number of responses were from income group of above 20,000BDT. This youth section is a bit more sensible with own scale of to spend in their consumption area. A handful number was from 5,000- 10,000BDT. This section of youths are more connected because maybe they aren’t financially stable but started to earn their one and give emphasis to environment.

Reliability Analysis

Here, statistical tests are conducted to prove the reliability of the items measured. Cronbach’s alpha test was performed on all the constructs to assess the reliability of the collected data. Items are mainly considered to be valid if their alpha factor exceeds a level of 0.70 (Yoon, 2009). Thus, an item that increases alpha value is more relevant and items testing the same concept should be added to the next step of the analysis (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Most of the items measured in this research meet the guidelines except social value (0.63). But a matter of consideration is according to (Ramayah, 2011) Cronbach’s alpha coefficient values more than 0.7 is considered good but values of more than 0.5 are acceptable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Consumption values	Cronbach’s alpha
Functional Value	.78
Social Value	.63
Conditional Value	.80
Knowledge Value	.71
Environmental Value	.82

Before testing the hypotheses, reliability tests were conducted for each consumption value. Results show the reliability statistics vary from 0.63 to 0.82 and reliability of the questionnaire has been substantiated (Landis

and Koch, 1977). That indicates reliability statistics are authenticated in this study.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a procedure based on sample evidence and probability theory used to determine whether hypothesis is reasonable and should be accepted or unreasonable and should be rejected. One sample t test has been used with consideration of test value 3 to know whether null hypothesis(s) are rejected or not, it is important to know the significance level and t value. If the value of significance level is less than .05, then it can be said that there is strong evidence that null hypothesis will be rejected.

Table 2: Test result of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Null Hypothesis (H0)	“t” value	Sig. level (P value)	Remarks
1	Functional value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior	15.505	.000	Rejected
2	Social value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior	17.661	.000	Rejected
3	Conditional value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior	24.865	.000	Rejected
4	Knowledge value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior	16.959	.000	Rejected
5	Environmental value doesn't creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior	28.688	.000	Rejected

In case of hypothesis 1 to 5, significance value is .00 which means no error occurred and it is statistically significant. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. And it can be said that all the consumption values creates a positive effect. Thus the entire alternative hypothesis has been established.

1. Functional value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.
2. Social value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.
3. Conditional value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.
4. Knowledge value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.
5. Environmental value creates a positive consequence on green product consumption behavior.

Correlation of Consumption Values

Table 3: Correlation Statistics

Variables	Functional	Social	Conditional	Knowledge	Environmental
Functional	1	0.27	0.88**	0.79**	0.21

Social		1	0.13	0.31	0.58
Conditional			1	0.70**	0.74**
Knowledge				1	0.34
Environmental					1

**P<=0.01

All the five consumption value scales (Functional, Social, Conditional, Environmental and Knowledge) are positively correlated with each other ($p < 0.01$). The observed highest coefficient is 0.88 and exists between functional value and conditional value. Individual epistemic value is positively correlated with functional value (0.79). Further positive correlation exists between conditional and knowledge value (0.70). Another significant relationship exists in environmental and conditional value (0.74).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Consumers those who are from educated background with moderate income level are more interested in green product consumption. This youth section is a bit more sensible with own scale of money to spend in their consumption area and another section of youths are more connected because maybe they aren't financially stable but started to earn their own so they are into practicing more socially favorable behavior.

1. Male respondents are more opt to green product consumption than female participants. A current acceptance is females are more connected with environmental issues than male segments but in this study males are more concern here.
2. In accordance to the study findings from the analysis, eco-friendly products are worthy in accordance to their price and products maintains a standard in quality issue and prepared from harmless elements that's the thing consumers truly believes.
3. Consumers do have sufficient knowledge on green products but they want those at their convenient places, discounted promotional price and if also provided at a lower price range.
4. Consumers believe that, environmental protection starts with choosing green products so it seems they have knowledge regarding this issue but their consumption is also related to products quality and price.
5. It seems an entire process if consumer gets eco-friendly products matches in quality standard, reasonable price, convenient place and also at promotional discount they will be highly delighted. All the respondents want environmental balance so they appreciate the eco-friendly product consumption.

RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study have significant implication that may help the marketers to develop strategies for green products. This new concept demands further development and promotion to draw consumers' awareness.

Promotion through Knowledge Sharing, in accordance to Cheng, Stimpson, and Wong (2004, p. 28) promoting positive messages and ideas education is one of the most effective strategies. Businesses may consider educating their consumers to promote eco-friendly products and to increase their awareness of the environmental issues. Consumer needs effective communication related to environmental benefits so it is crucial for marketers to influence.

Reasonable Pricing, a remarkable pricing of green products that also maintains standard in quality is the issue

on what marketer can work best cause consumers always prefers better quality with reasonable price.

New Segment to Attract, a new target group can be set as female are considerate more sensitive to social and environment related issue they can be captured by continuous promotion.

Scope for the Future Research

A comprehensive eco-friendly product consumption behavior is examined against consumption values here in this study. A particular product category of green products could not be easily generalize to the findings of this study. An extension of this study could be far more than generalization of the green product consumption behavior with an added focus to non-product segments.

CONCLUSION

In case of environmental issues young generation appears to be more active than other groups. Their ability to use border-less technology to communicate and exchange information is key reason for this. Businesses adopting environmental practices is imperative now-a-days. Businesses need to focus on delivering satisfaction to maintain the consumer society. As long as the environmentally friendly philosophy is dominant, the green market will be prosperous with a greater number of consumers. For sustainable consumer demands and continued business success green marketing is the next door to open. Relevant individual consumers admit and accept environmental responsibility to most of the population in the current study. Being an environmentally-responsible business means enriching actual expressions of environmental concern. Having learn and understood consumers' behavior and perceptions, a sustainable strategy can be developed to take advantage of some useful insights into improving the effectiveness of long-run green appeal.

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