

GREEN HORIZON: EXPLORING THE SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER CHOICES

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Abstract

The global economy places a higher value on environmentally friendly items; as a result, corporate organisations adjust their strategies and consumer behaviour is also studied. This study is focused on determining consumer shift to sustainable consumer choices in Mangalore City. The study also analyses the factors which influence their trust in sustainable consumption. A total of 209 respondents are selected for the study based on simple random sampling. The results demonstrate that Awareness of environmental impact of single-use plastic has high correlations with Awareness ($r=0.251$, $p<0.01$). The mean ratings of the factor which contributes towards sustainable consumption were in the range of 4.06 to 3.2 with S.D 1.209 to 0.921. The findings highlight the crucial role of awareness, freedom of choice, and effective communication in driving sustainable consumption practices. The key finding - a positive correlation between heightened awareness of plastic's environmental impact and its influence on product selection - reinforces the power of informed decision-making.

Keywords: Awareness, consumer behaviour, eco-friendly, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Being environmentally friendly involves a lot of work, a significant financial outlay, consumer acceptability, and above all, a willingness to pay. The drive for sustainability has made a significant contribution to product innovation. Consumer behaviour research is a merger of

different theories and methodologies which should be put in a proper way to understand the consumer behaviour towards sustainable products, (Gerrit Antonides, 2017). People's choices about how to use resources are shaped by their personal values and beliefs. (Thogerson and Olander, 2002). The expansion of the economy, societal inclusion, and environmental preservation are regarded as crucial components of sustainable development. In addition, leading an environmentally conscious life, utilising technology responsibly, conserving natural resources, making investments in renewable energy and recycling, and innovating in sustainable production, building, architecture, and consumption are all factors that contribute to sustainability. Sustainable development is a type of progress that satisfies the current requirements of people without hindering the capacity of future generations to meet their own (United Nations, 1987).

The global economy places a higher value on environmentally friendly items; as a result, corporate organisations adjust their strategies and consumer behaviour is also studied. Social media is essential for making eco-friendly products more widely known and for promoting sustainability and environmental preservation. The most crucial element is customer acceptance. While some consumers buy sustainable products for moral reasons, some take a variety of considerations into account, including price, brand, packaging, and many others, others do not.

It is rightly said that, 'unless consumers accept sustainable consumption, Nations sustainable development will be clogged', (Farr, 2018; Hess, 2013).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Koo, et.al., (2012) study indicates that sustainable consumer behaviour varies by age group and is also influenced by demographic factors. Younger people are more inclined to purchase eco-friendly goods and have higher spending power. Haws et.al., (2014), the process of expressing the importance of environmental protection through consumer behaviour and purchases is known as developing a scale of green consumption values. Consumer demand for environmental friendly products can be predicted using the green scale. Welshman (2015) noted that in order to retain original literary ideas for the future, it is crucial to comprehend how natural imagery

functions in the mind. Zalega (2015) argues that by making informed decisions when buying environmental friendly items, people may contribute to long-term economic development, which in turn encourages businesses to develop and promote such goods. In the economy, consumer behaviour is influenced by a wide range of variables, including social, economic, and cultural aspects. Buerke et.al., (2016) examines that, consumer-centric investigates the psychological underpinnings and dimensions of responsible consumption. Consumer knowledge and value orientation with an emphasis on sustainability, according to the study, directly and favourably affect consumer behaviour. Hafenstein (2016) study indicates that customers exhibits environmental views in their purchase behaviour and are worried about the environment. The primary determinants of consumers' green purchasing behaviour are noted, and recommendations are also provided to close the gap between attitudes and actions. Antonides (2017) consumer behaviour is the synthesis of theories and methods that provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour. The study demonstrates how customers engage in sustainable consumption, including their level of dedication, interest in recycling, energy-saving transportation, etc. Polianskaia (2018), determines the elements that contribute towards attitude-behavior gap in the consumption of eco-fashion goods. The study offers a comprehensive plan that fashion brands may implement to close the current gap between attitude and behaviour and achieve manufacturing sustainability. Gahlot Sarkar et.al., (2019) examining and analysing the impact of marketing appeals on consumer attitudes and inclinations to buy environmentally friendly items. If an advertisement for a green product evokes strong feelings in the consumer, they will buy it. Moser and A.K., (2020) Increasing consumer knowledge about sustainable product selection and use will boost the growth of the green goods industry. Building high levels of consumer trust and health literacy is the main goal. Sesini (2020) emphasis on the significance of sustainability by concentrating on the travel, retail, and apparel industries. Reviewing research on environmental sustainability from both social and environmental aspects was the objective. Sachs et.al., (2021) The study recommends that customers learn from their negative COVID-19 experiences. The knowledge gained should be put to use for proactive mitigation and sustainability in the future for all local and global stakeholders. Francis and Sarangi (2022) Indian millennials are more concerned with the environmental aspects of consumerism than the

social or economic ones, which has significant policy ramifications for raising public awareness and educating the public. People should be made aware of and made more sensitive to the environmental, social, and economic effects of sustainable consumption.

Harjadi, D. and Gunardi, A(2022) The study found that consumer attitudes and behaviours were significantly influenced by perceived consumer efficacy, altruism, and egoism. Study informs the creation of novel tactics for green marketing. Dipali Baviskar (2023) observed that high-level awareness efforts and a desire on the part of people and governments to address environmental protection behaviours are required. There is no difference between raising awareness and taking action against single-use plastics.

Promoting sustainable consumer behaviour will undoubtedly benefit from more research into the field of green marketing. Camilleri (2023) in their systematic review examines the variables influencing consumers' preferences for adopting environmentally friendly items. A balanced approach to financial, environmental, and social problems is another focus of the study. Study assists managers in determining and evaluating the worth of sustainable products in relation to sustainability dimensions and customer-influencing factors. Liu and Tobias (2024) Four components of the study used to evaluate residents' green consumption are: green products, material recycling, biodiversity conservation, and energy efficiency. Two major aspects that influence green consumption are environmental behaviour skills and environmental responsibility. The study recommends short-term policies such as offering incentives for adopting eco-friendly behaviours, implementing purchases of eco-friendly products, and including environmental literacy instruction into the curriculum of schools in order to encourage the consumption of green products.

Objectives of the Study:

The study is intended to assess consumer shift to sustainable consumer choices in Mangalore City. The study also analyses the factors which influence their trust in sustainable consumption.

HYPOTHESES:

Hypothesis is developed in order to analyse whether demographic variables have significant difference in frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label and factors which influence their trust in sustainable consumption. It is formulated as follows;

H1: There is significant association between demographic variables and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label

H2: There is a significant difference between various factors which contributes towards sustainable consumption.

METHODOLOGY

This study is focused on determining consumer shift to sustainable consumer choices in Mangalore City. The study also analyses the factors which influence their trust in sustainable consumption. Descriptive research design has been followed in this study. Both primary as well as secondary data is utilized. The primary information is gathered using a structured questionnaire. 209 respondents are selected for the study based on simple random sampling. The study is covered in Mangalore City. The measurement instruments were constructed and extracted a more comprehensive questionnaire based on the items of interest for this study cronbach's alpha value is 0.7 which is equal to the minimum value (0.70) which shows that test results are acceptable and study is considered to be reliable.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected was tabulated and analysis was carried out by using Simple percentage analysis, Descriptive analysis using mean and standard deviation and inferential analysis such as Friedman and chi-square. The present study considered respondents from Mangalore city as participants.

Out of 209 respondents, majority that is 66.5% of the respondents come under the age group of 40-60. Most of the respondents are female (50.2%). 65.6% are from urban area.

Table 1: Demographic variables and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label

Demographic profile		VF	F	NU	OC	NE	Total	Result
Age group	Below 20	2 (5.4%)	9 (24.3%)	22 (59.5%)	4 (10.8%)	0	37 (100%)	X ² = 19.489 df=12 P=0.077 NS
	20-40	4 (13.8%)	11 (37.9%)	6 (20.7%)	6 (20.7%)	2 (6.9%)	29 (100%)	
	40-60	11 (7.9%)	48 (34.5%)	51 (36.7%)	27 (19.4%)	2 (1.4%)	139 (100%)	
	Above 60	0	3 (75%)	0	1 (25%)	0	4 (100%)	
Area of domicile	Rural	5 (6.9%)	20 (27.8%)	26 (36.1%)	21 (29.2%)	0	72 (100%)	X ² = 10.906 df=4 P=0.028 HS
	Urban	12 (8.8%)	51 (37.2)	53 (38.7%)	17 (12.4%)	4 (1.3%)	137 (100%)	
Gender	Male	11 (10.6%)	30 (28.8%)	39 (37.5%)	21 (20.2%)	3 (2.9%)	104 (100%)	X ² = 4.604 df=4 P=0.330 NS
	Female	6 (5.7%)	41 (39%)	40 (38.1%)	17 (16.2)	1 (1%)	105 (100%)	

VF-Very frequently; F-Frequently; NU-Neutral; OC-Occasionally; NE-Never

Above table explains demographic variables and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label. There is no significant association between age and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label as $p > 0.05$. all age category respondents frequently choose product with an eco- friendly label product. There is highly significant association between place of domicile and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label as $p < 0.05$. the Urban area respondents frequently choose product with an eco- friendly label product. There is no significant association between gender and frequency of choosing products with an eco-friendly label as $p > 0.05$. both male and female respondents frequently choose product with an eco-friendly label product. Therefore, H1 is accepted. Higher Eco-friendliness Preference in Urban Areas may be due to Greater access, Environmental awareness, Lifestyle factors, Social pressure

and there is No Significant Differences in Preference by Age or Gender due to Societal shift: Environmental awareness and concern have become increasingly widespread, potentially leading to a general increase in eco-friendly product choices regardless of age or gender and Marketing efforts: Marketing campaigns for eco-friendly products may have become more inclusive, targeting a broader audience and appealing to different values than just environmentalism.

Table 4.2: Karl Pearson’s correlation coefficient between awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic and its practical relevance

Particulars		AoE	Eco-label	carbon footprint free	Eco-friendly
Eco-label	Pearson correlation	0.251**	-	-	-
	P	0.000	-	-	-
carbon footprint free product	Pearson correlation	.265**	0.415**	-	-
	P	.000	0.000	-	-
Eco-friendly product	Pearson correlation	0.445**	0.324**	0.223**	-
	P	0.000	0.000	0.001	-
RRC	Pearson correlation	0.226**	0.178**	0.172*	0.328**
	P	0.001	0.10	0.013	0.000

AoE-Awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic

Eco Label-Choose product with eco-friendly label or certification when shopping

Carbon-Consider the carbon footprint free product before making a purchase

Eco-friendly - Support sustainable and environmentally friendly product

RRC - Engage in behaviour like recycling and reducing energy consumption at home

Table 4.2 shows Karl Pearson’s correlation coefficient between awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic and its practical relevance indicators such as Awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic, choose product with eco-friendly label or certification when shopping, Consider the carbon footprint of product before making a purchase and Support business that actively promote sustainable and environmentally friendly product. The results demonstrate that Awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic has high correlations with Awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic (r=0.251, p<0.01).

Moreover, it also has significant association with considering the carbon footprint of product before making a purchase ($r=0.265, p<0.01$), Support business that actively promote sustainable and environmentally friendly product ($r=0.445, p<0.01$), Engage in behaviour like recycling and reducing energy consumption at home ($r=0.226, p<0.01$). The study reveal that any improvement in awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic influences its practical relevance indicators.

Table 4.3:Friedman test for significant difference among mean Ranks for the factors which contributes towards sustainable consumption

Factors affecting at the time shopping	Mean	S.D	Mean Rank	Rank	Chi-Square and Inference
Product with eco-label	3.2823	.92077	2.63	6	Chi-square= 147.399 P<0.01** High Significance difference H2 is Accepted
Awareness of environmental impact of single use plastic	3.9378	.70093	3.76	4	
Carbon footprint free product	3.2727	1.28125	2.82	5	
Eco-friendly and sustainable product	4.0287	.74623	3.94	2	
recycling and reducing energy consumption	4.0622	1.20932	4.05	1	
Eco-friendly consumer choices	3.9952	.73705	3.81	3	

The results showed that the mean ratings of the factor which contributes towards sustainable consumption were in the range of 4.06 to 3.2 with S.D 1.209 to 0.921. Table 4.3 reveals the 6 factors considered to know the important factors in contributes towards sustainable consumption. The highest mean value shows Engage in behaviour like recycling and reducing energy consumption at home (4.05) with first rank, followed by Support business that actively promote sustainable and environmentally friendly product with 3.94 mean value with second rank and the lowest mean value shows in the Choose product with eco-friendly label or certification when shopping with mean value of 2.63

The calculated Chi-square value is 147.399. The significant value which is less than 0.01. Hence, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference in the mean ranking between the variables. From the above table, it is inferred that compared with all the factors, there is a significant difference in mean rank between factors as far as factors which contributes towards sustainable consumption. Direct actions like recycling and conserving energy have a clear and immediate impact on resource use and emissions. This perceived benefit appeals to people, leading to a higher willingness to engage in these actions. Indirect support, such as patronizing sustainable businesses, does not require as much personal effort as specific behaviors. This may explain why it has a slightly lower appeal than recycling and energy conservation. Choosing products with eco-friendly labels may be perceived as requiring more effort because it involves doing research and making informed decisions.

CONCLUSION

The ever-evolving technological landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for fostering sustainable consumption habits. While navigating complex purchasing decisions, consumers increasingly recognize the environmental impact of their choices, seeking ways to contribute positive change. This research highlights the crucial role of awareness, freedom of choice, and effective communication in driving sustainable consumption practices. The study's key finding – a positive correlation between heightened awareness of single-use plastic's environmental impact and its influence on product selection – reinforces the power of informed decision-making. This trend, particularly evident in urban areas, demonstrates a growing shift towards eco-friendly alternatives. However, achieving sustainable consumption for a robust economy requires a collective effort. Consumers empowered by the belief in their impact are more likely to embrace sustainable practices. This research serves as a valuable tool for marketers, policymakers, and businesses to align their strategies with evolving consumer expectations and prioritize sustainability

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