

Consumer Buying Behavior and Sustainable Development for Green Product

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Abstract

Studies on consumer behavior for green products in India are not so popular and neither conducted carefully, especially in the case of empirical studies. With the aim of contributing to this field, this paper accepts a new approach to find out consumers perception and behaviors towards green consumption by constructing a survey tool. Consumer buying behavior and consumption pattern and decisions have now changed towards products that are greener, more suitable and more environmentally friendly due to the rise in consumers' awareness of current environmental matters. There are number of definitions that green products have and number of factors that affects the purchasing behavior. The paper focuses on the changing consumer behavior towards the usage of green products from traditional products to Green products.

Key Words : Consumerism, Consumer Behavior, Green Products etc.

1. Introduction

People are now a day gets more concerned with ways to protect the environment. For example, now consuming green or eco-friendly product is one of the main ideas that can be carried out by consumers. The consumer buying behavior is affected by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Now the word "Green" has become a main issue that drive millions of the consumers to find out how they can live a more eco-friendly existence. This paper focuses on the changing consumer behavior towards the usage of green products from traditional products to Green products. As per the results of the analysis, environmental awareness, green product features, green promotion activities and green price affect more and more green purchasing behaviors of the consumers in positive way.

While the process of globalization continues in its full speed across the world and this process also brought some problems with it. One of the main problems is environmental problems that affect all living beings negatively. The environmental problems have started to come to the agenda more and more in the recent years and people have started to talk these negativities. Consumers now have doubts and fear about the future of the world and as results of this mostly prefer environment friendly products. Consumer buying behavior and consumption pattern and decisions have now changed towards products that are greener, more suitable and more environmentally friendly due to the rise in consumers' awareness of current environmental matters. In developed countries like America, the green consumption

society has existed for a long time and now it has become increasingly popular in developing countries as higher incomes and consumption awareness, green consumption has been improved. Green buying behavior and consumption pattern is an important part for sustainable consumption and development that is a pillar of green growth, which is a development strategy that many of the developing countries are pursuing now a day.

2. Review of Literature

The survey tool is built on the basis of green consumption concepts as well as the results from previous research on factors affecting green consumption behavior. The concepts relating to green consumption are relatively new and defined with various approaches. Green consumption emphasizes environmental factors, contributing to sustainable development. Alfredson (2004) explained that green consumption is related to the index of energy use and CO₂ emissions.

According to Carrigan et al (2004), “people who buy environmentally friendly products are called green consumers. Green consumption is related not only to consuming goods without damage to the natural environment, but also to buying environmentally friendly products and to recycling”^[4]. Sisira (2011), Mansvelt & Robbins (2011) also have a comprehensive definition of green consumption from the perspective which considers it “a process through social behaviors including purchase of bio-foods, recycling, reuse and limits to excessive use and using an environmentally friendly transport system”^[2]. In the framework of this study, the authors approach the concept of green consumption as a series of activities: (1) green product purchase, (2) green usage (such as saving, reusing, recycling, green packaging usage, and green waste treatment) and (3) encouraging the community to purchase green products and use things in a green way. In understanding green consumption, the concept of green products also needs clarifying. Green products (eco-products or environmentally friendly products) are considered as products that do not pollute the earth or damage natural resources and can be recycled or conserved (Shamdasani et al, 1993)^[3]. “A product that has packaging materials that reduce any negative environmental impact is a green product” (Wasik, 1996)^[13]. These products are usually recognized by authorities and organizations with green labels – which “identify environmental criteria that green products meet that conventional products cannot”^[7].

One vital aspect of the green consumption theory is the factors that influence the decision to buy green products. Many studies have been conducted to evaluate factors affecting green consumption and have made important experimental findings about the positive relationship between the intention to buy green products and age, income and education (Roberts, 1996; Barr et al, 2003; Tikka et al, 2000). Schwepker & Cornwell (1991), Davis (1993) and Synodinos (1990) have the same viewpoint that “consumers’ attitudes towards an eco-label must show their concern for eco labels”^[12]. However, Pickett-Baker & Ozaki (2008) argue that a person with an interest in the environment does not necessarily have to buy environmentally friendly products. The influential group has significant impact on the formation of the intention and the purchasing habits of consumers with conventional products in general, and green products in particular. Buying decisions are also influenced by family factors (Grønhøj, 2006); society (Chan, 2001); government (Chyong et al, 2006; Haron et al., 2005, Fraj & Martinez, 2006); media (Stefania Valentini, 2011; Kang & James, 2007). The process from intention to actual behavior is driven by product attributes. Researchers have identified several factors including price and product quality (D’Souza et al, 2007), the

company's environmental reputation (Cornwell, 1991), and the reliability of environmental advertising (Thøgersen, 2000). According to Tang et al (2004), consumers choose a product because of the nature of environmentally friendly products; Diamantopoulos et al (2003) and Ganetai (2008) suggested that the characteristics of traditional products such as brand name, price and quality are still the most important factors that consumers consider when making a purchase decision.

3. Objectives

The purpose of conducting this research is –

- To identify the factors that influence the consumer to make them to purchase green products and
- To encourage people to buy green product.

4. Research Methodology

The word '*Method*' derives from the *Greek* word '*Meta*' and '*Hodos*' means '*a way*'. The methods include the several process or technique in which various stages or steps of collecting data are explained and the analytical techniques are defined. The Dictionary of *Social Sciences* observes, '*methodology*' is the systematic and logical study of the principles guiding scientific investigation' (Gould and Kolb, 1964). In simple 'a method is the way of doing something'.

4.1. Research Design

The research paper is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Data are represented through table and graph, so it is quantitative, because of theoretical analysis it is qualitative.

4.2. Sample Size

200 questionnaires were distributed to a conveniently generated sample of a high standard and highly educated segment of general population. 169 total questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 86.4 percent. After examination only 155 questionnaires were found usable of which 61 per cent of the respondents were males and 39 percent females with mean age ranging from 21 years to 40 years. The questionnaire was structured as follows. The first part contained questions with Yes, No and Neutral as possible responses. The questionnaire considered and try to measure general consumers' knowledge about environmental issues, awareness of green products, trust in performance of green products and their willingness to pay more for such products.

4.3. Data Collection

Most of the data were used in this research are primary data, collected from the sources and some secondary data were collected from websites and others sources. Primary data are collected by the questionnaire and the personal interviewing system of survey method is used. Secondary data are collected from many journals, books, web sites etc.

5. Limitations of Study

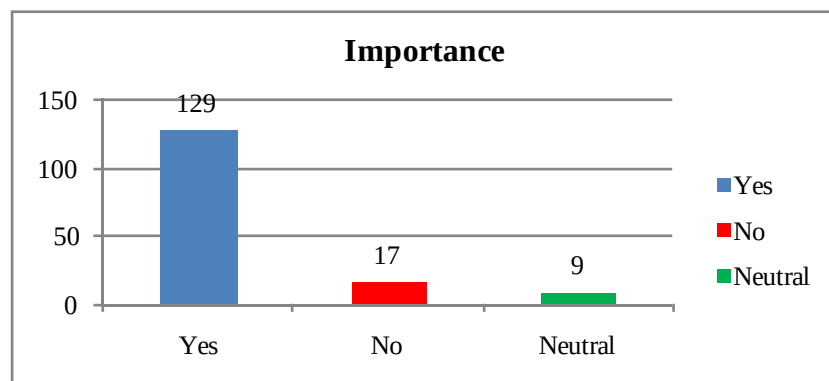
The research was conducted by creating a non-random sample so the results may not be generalized beyond the sample frame. The result, support a generally existing concept that more educated people tend to be green buyers and hence justify a larger study conducted on a randomly selected sample. Also, this present research was conducted using a self-reporting questionnaire and hence biasness from respondents may affect the study, especially in the case of the willingness to pay premium or extra for green products. It is required primary data to make any paper successful and meaningful. The primary data have been recorded about 200 numbers of respondents. It was very hard to get responses from householders due to time limits that ultimately create the limitations in the paper. Collecting data was very rough and tough, because most of the respondents were not agree to communicate frequently rather they were hesitating while making the survey and it was found that the responses vary from person to person, so decision making about the report was so difficult. This research work required a large number of days than I got to present as report. I can summaries our limitation of the study as follows

1. Respondents were sometimes reluctant to fill the questionnaire.
2. Lack of work experience.
3. Lack of enough research papers on the topic.
4. Limited financial support.
5. Limited time.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Q1. Importance of Environment Friendly product

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	129	84
No	17	10
Neutral	9	6
Total	155	100

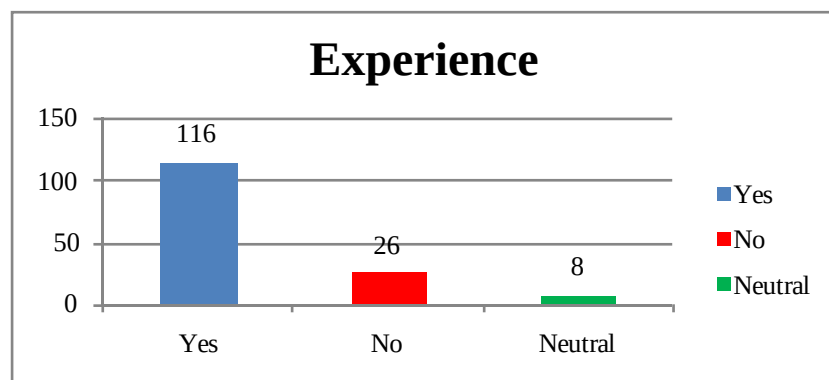


Interpretation

When asked people if they knew about environmental friendly product then 84% of respondents say yes and 10% of them say no while only 9 respondents were Neutral.

Q2. Experience on purchasing green product.

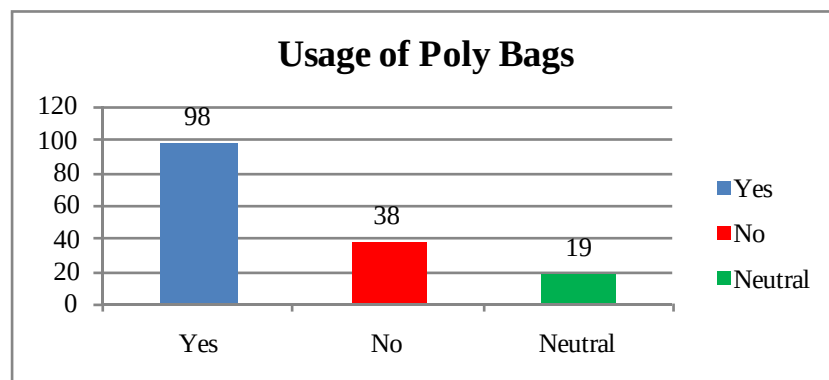
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	116	73
No	26	19
Neutral	8	8
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked the respondents about the experience on buying environmental friendly product then 73% of respondents say yes and 19% of them say no while only 8 respondents were Neutral.

Q3. Usage of poly bags in shopping

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	63
No	38	24
Neutral	19	13
Total	155	100

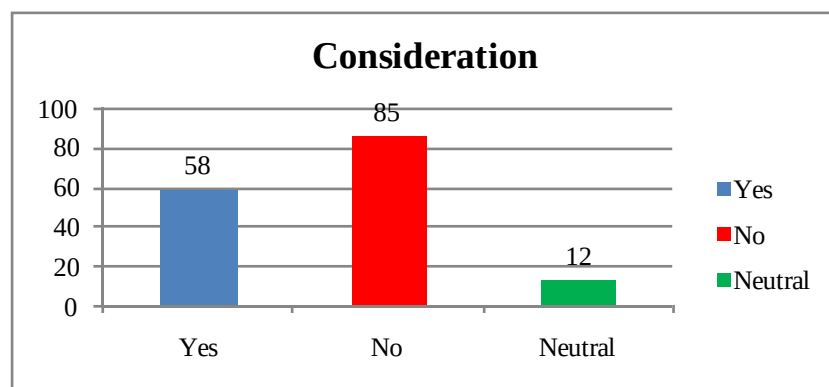


Interpretation

When asked people about using of poly bags when they go shopping then 63% of them said yes they use poly bags when they go shopping, and 24% of them said they don't use it when they go shopping while only 13% were neutral.

Q4. The consideration of purchasing green product

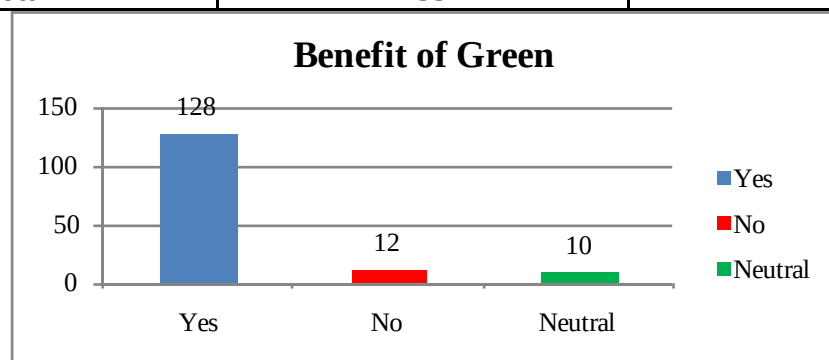
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	38
No	85	55
Neutral	12	7
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked people before purchasing product are the considered the green product. Then 38% of them say yes and 55% of them say no while only 12% were neutral.

Q5. Knowledge about benefits of green product

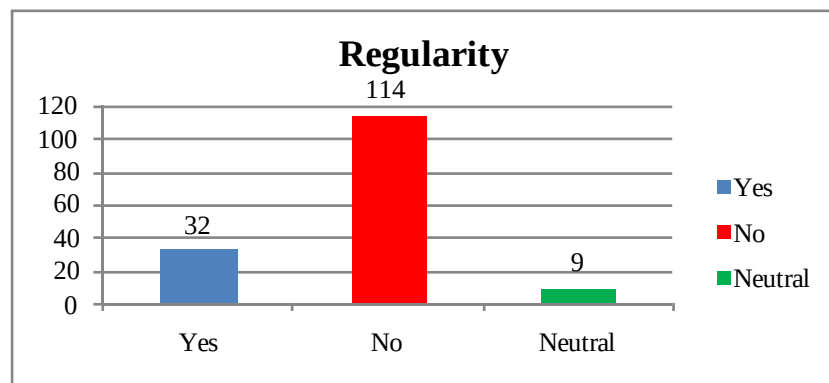
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	128	83
No	12	9
Neutral	10	8
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked people that are they know the benefits of the benefits of green product. Then 83% said that yes they know the benefits of green product and the other 12% said that they don't know the benefits of green product while 10% were neutral.

Q6. Regularity of purchasing green product

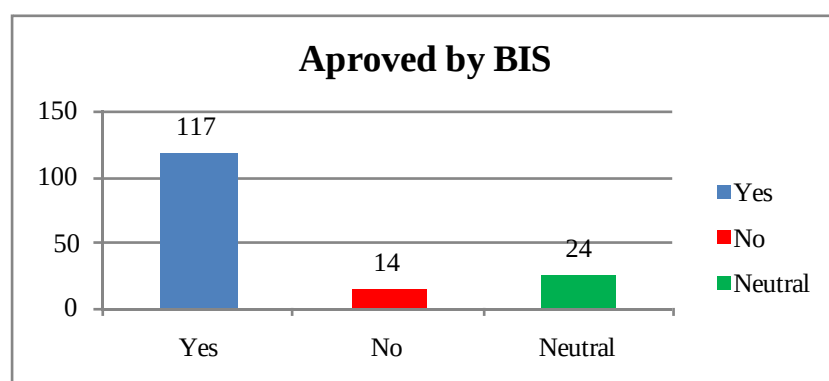
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	20
No	114	74
Neutral	9	6
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked people that did they buy green product regularly then only 32 people out of 155 said that they buy green product regularly, and 114 out of 155 said that they don't buy green product regularly while only 09 people were neutral.

Q7. Purchasing product approved by BIS

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	117	76
No	14	9
Neutral	24	15
Total	155	100

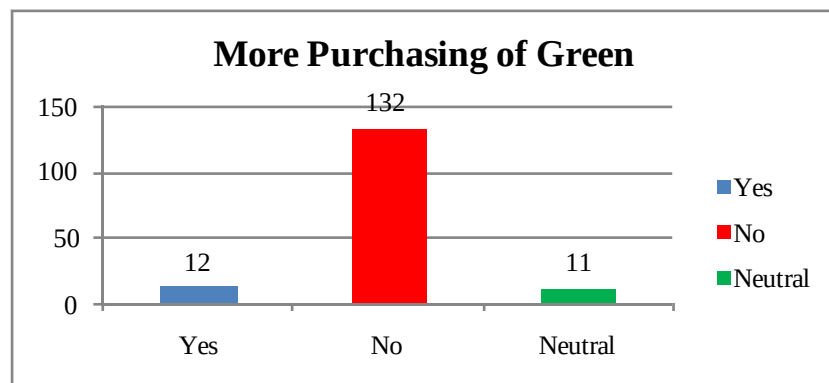


Interpretation

When asked people Do they buy product which approved by BIS, then 117 people out of 155 said that they do, and 14 people out of 155 said that they don't do, while 24 people were neutral.

Q8. Purchasing of green product more than common product

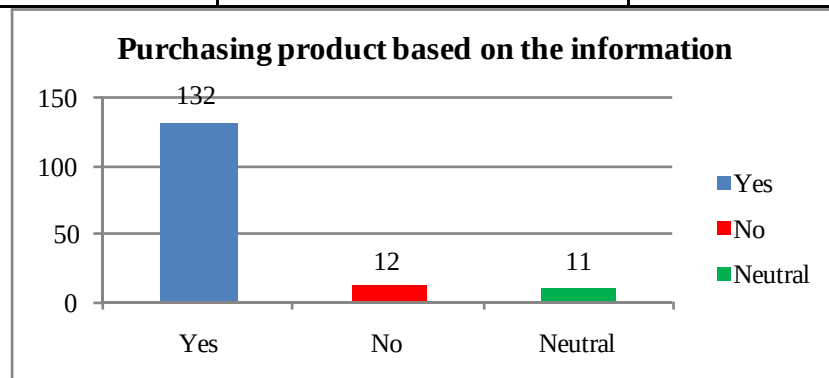
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	8
No	132	85
Neutral	11	7
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked people do they buy green product more or common product than 12 people out of 155 said that they do and 132 people out of 155 said that they don't do while 11 people were neutral.

Q9. Purchasing product based on the information given on its package.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	132	85
No	12	8
Neutral	11	7
Total	155	100

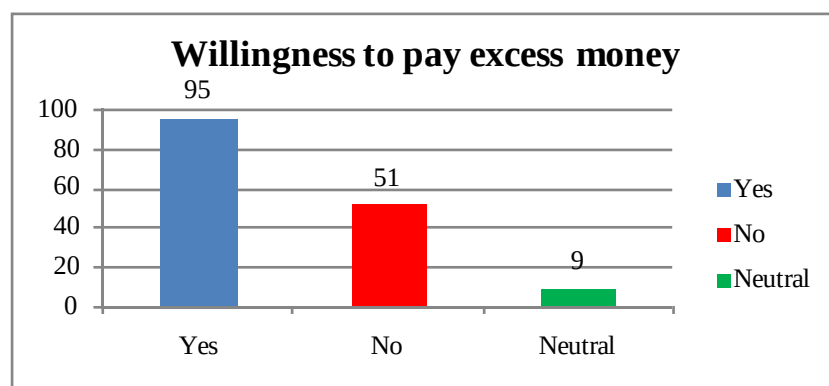


Interpretation

For asking people about their buying behavior 132 people out of 155 said that they Purchase product based on the information given on its package and 12 people out of 155 said that they don't Purchase product based on the information given on its package while 11 were neutral.

Q10. Willingness to pay excess money for green product

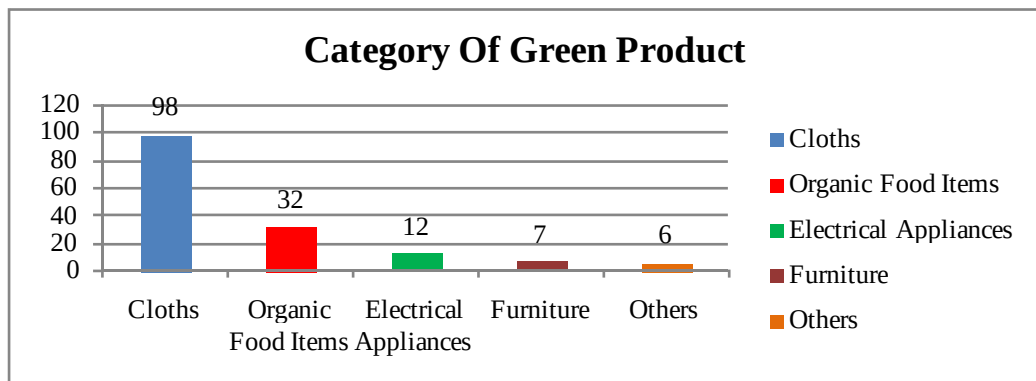
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	61
No	51	32
Neutral	9	7
Total	155	100

**Interpretation**

When asked people are they willing to pay excess money for that then we find that 95 people out of 155 said that yes they are willing to pay excess money and 51 are not willing to pay excess money while 9 people were neutral.

Q11. The category of green product bought

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Cloths	98	63
Organic Food Item	32	21
Electrical Appliances	12	7
Furniture	7	5
Others	6	4
Total	155	100

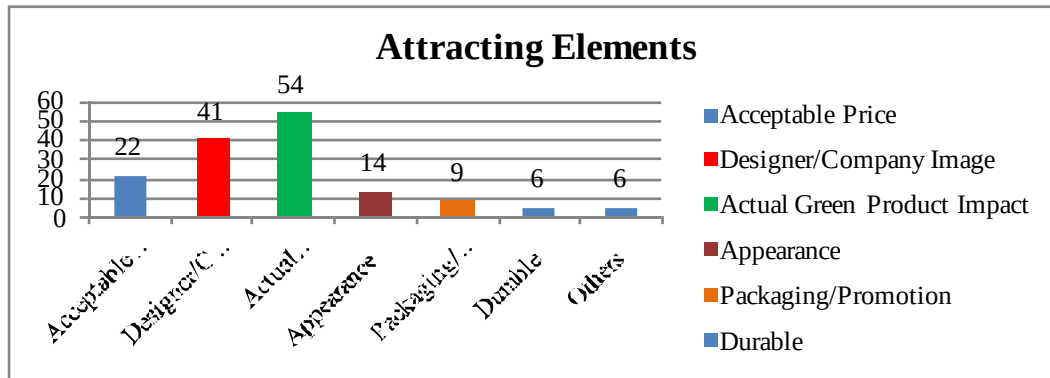


Interpretation

After questioning about the green products they purchased, respondents said that most of it is about 63% Cloths and wears 21% people bought Organic food, 7% of them purchased electrical appliances and 5% purchased furniture while only 4% of them bought other Products.

Q12. The attracting elements to buy green product

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable Price	22	14
Designer/Company Image	41	26
Actual Green Product Impact	54	35
Appearance	14	9
Packaging/Promotion	9	6
Durable	6	4
Others	9	6
Total	155	100

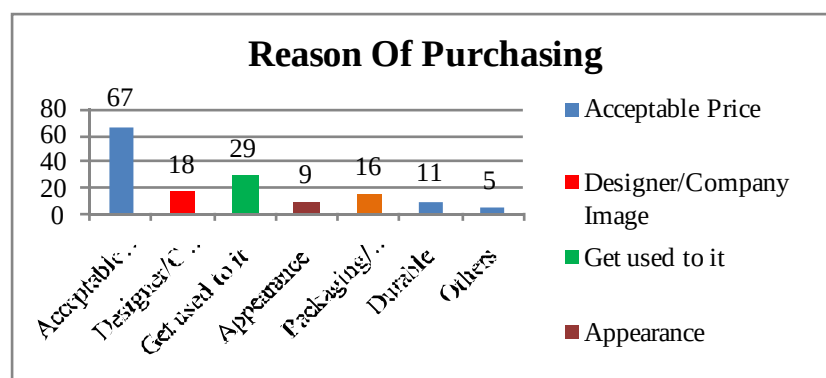


Interpretation

When I asked about the attracting elements that what the most attracting factor is when they buy green products. 35% of them argued that it is Actual Green Product Impact, 26% of them said that it is the company or designers impact acting on their purchasing behavior. 14% of them said if the products are reasonably priced, they would buy that product. 9% and 6% of the consumers buy products for Appearance and Packaging/Promotion accordingly. Only 4% of people were attracted by durability. 6% of the samples buying behavior depend on other attracting factors.

Q13. Reason of purchasing common product

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable Price	67	44
Designer/Company Image	18	12
Get used to it	29	19
Appearance	9	6
Packaging/Promotion	16	10
Durable	11	7
Others	5	2
Total	155	100

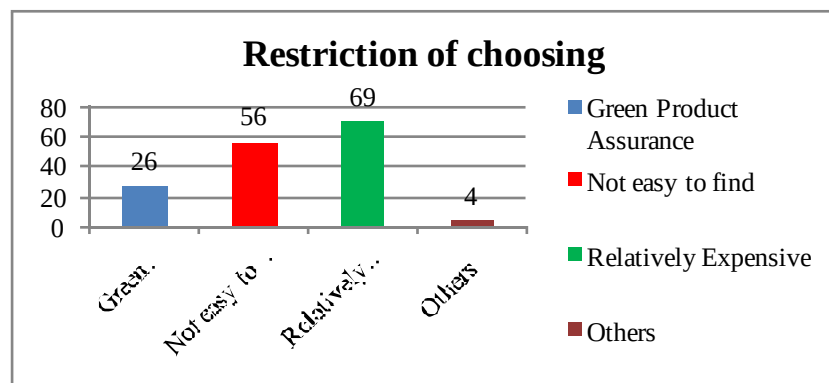


Interpretation

Though they knew green products are healthy way to live, they still buys common products because, 44% of them think that they are priced lower than the green products. 19% of the consumers got used to the common products. 12% of the people think designer impact is essential in buying the common products. 10% people thinks common products has a great advantage over green products in terms of packaging and promotion as they buy common products because of it. 7% of people think, common product is more durable than green products and 2% of people think of other factors that allure them to buy common products.

Q14. Restriction of choosing green product

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Green Product Assurance	26	17
Not easy to find	56	36
Relatively Expensive	69	44
Others	4	3
Total	155	100

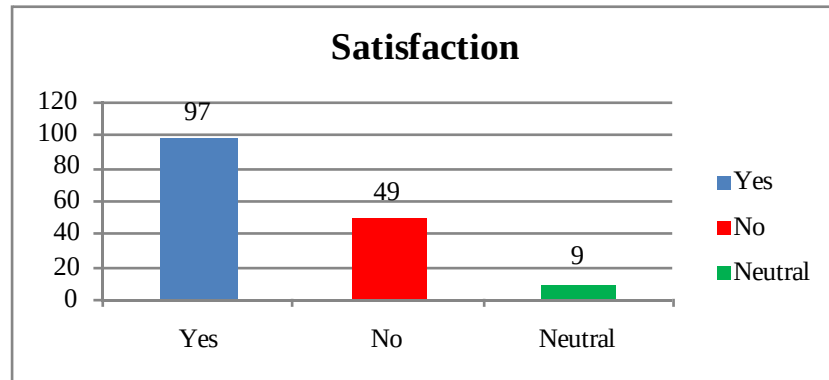


Interpretation

The main resistance of buying a green product is its expensiveness. 44% of people marks it as the main restriction of buying a green product, 36% of people thinks that, green product is very hard to find in this area. Some people are thinking about green product assurance as 15% only 3% of people thinks there are some other factors that restricts the green products.

Q15. Satisfaction after using green product

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	97	63
No	49	31
Neutral	9	6
Total	155	100

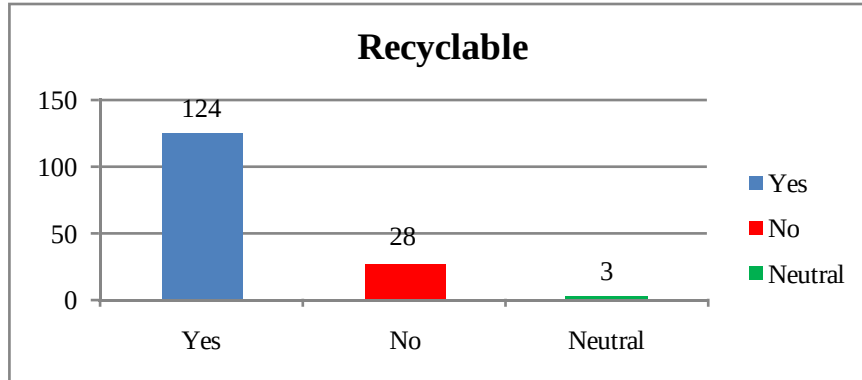


Interpretation

When asked people about their satisfaction about green product then I find that 63% are satisfied and 31% are not while 6% were unsure (neutral).

Q16. The product is recyclable

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	124	80
No	28	18
Neutral	3	2
Total	155	100



Interpretation

When asked people that do they think the green product is recyclable or not then 124 people out of 155 said that yes they think and the other 28 people said that out of 155 they don't believe in its recyclability only 3 people were unsure (neutral).

Findings

- The consumption percentage of Green products is relatively low.
- The people are not enough aware about Green Products.
- People are not so much concern about environmental issue when they purchase/consume goods.

- Polythene bag is now prohibited in Lucknow (India) but the users of polythene bag have the good position while they are aware that Polythene bag seriously affect the environment
- Green Products are not easily available in every location in Lucknow
- Most of the Green Products are not last long means durable.
- Green Products are recyclable, its find most of the time.
- Consumers do not want to buy Green Product on its excess price.

Conclusion

As the research shows that, some factors have a great effect among all of the factors that show that marketing managers should focus on with the greater value of the eco-friendly products. Consumers have strong importance on the end-value of the products in order to repeat purchases and to create loyalty. The results of the satisfaction level of the consumers would lead to increase in sales, market shares and brand loyalty. Many other scholars also agreed that consumers are concerned on the satisfaction of the products and activities of the companies not harm to the environment.

However, the quality of the product should not be ignored since consumers relate the price of product with quality when purchasing decisions are made, and research of consumers with green products not only claiming environmental values but also products with high quality, because consumers are not ready to make a compromise on quality just for the benefits green attributes and for the time being the green products still have less quality than conventional products as our findings shows.

Acknowledgement

The study entitled “Consumer Buying Behavior for Green Products and Sustainable Development” been undertaken as the PhD research scholar of the Department of Management of 2015-16 batch. This is an effort to assess the present situation of consumer’s buying behavior towards green product. As a research scholar I got spontaneous help and guidance which encouraged me to carry out my task effectively. Really I have no words to convey my gratitude to my honorable guide and supervisor, *Dr Sandhya Sinha*, Assistant Professor from Department of Management of Maharishi University of Information Technology, Lucknow who influenced, motivated, directed and advised me enthusiastically. I am also grateful to those people who participated in the survey to make this report.

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