

ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEN PURCHASE: PAKISTAN IN CONTEXT

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to analyze consumers' attitudes towards the purchase of green products. The purpose of the study was to measure the level of ecological awareness which would hypothetically lead to a positive attitude towards green products. Sampling was done by approaching 300 people, out of which 280 responded to the measurement tool. The respondents were from semi government and multinational organizations across Rawalpindi and Islamabad, and were educated at a bachelors' degree level or higher. The measurement tool was adopted from some previous researches in the same field. Correlation Coefficient, Regression, Independent Sample t-test and ANOVA were employed for analysis, which revealed that ecological awareness did not contribute to affecting an attitude towards green purchase. With respect to the responses of the two groups i.e. male and female, Independent Sample t-test showed that there was no significant difference. One – way ANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences in attitude with respect to age and education among different groups. The study concluded that ecological awareness of the consumers was found to be at a lower level than expected thus bearing no significant impact on their attitude towards green purchase.

Key Words: Attitude, Ecological Knowledge, Green Products

Introduction

The level of consumers' ecological awareness is an issue gaining much attention around the globe because of ever increasing degradation of the environment. In countries like America, schools, colleges and universities have designed courses in environmental education to equip their new generation with higher ecological awareness. As a result of this approach, students who later become professionals in their respective organizations are embracing pro-environmental attitudes that contribute to rather healthier economies. Massive growth in population has led to innumerable environmental problems and the availability of resources has contracted alarmingly. All around the world, researchers have been paying increasing amount of attention to the ever growing problems of depleting resources because of excessive consumption, which is worsening the environment and endangering not just biodiversity, but universal human survival (Hsiao and Wan, 2001).

In the developed world, a gradual increase in people's awareness has made it possible to create a relatively cleaner environment in comparison to the developing world. Inhabitants of developed countries have adopted environment conscious behaviors in response to the spoiling of natural endowments. Most consumers in the United States and Europe have professed the usefulness of green products and they exhibit a relatively higher amount of readiness to pay more for such products (Oyewole, 2001).

They have realized that the excessive use of technology is not the only way for economical and technological development and use of such sophistication should be coupled with sound planning, having bare minimum adverse effects on the natural environment (Hsiao, 1986; Ng, 1991; Olofsson and Ohman 2006). One strategy which sounds to be workable among all the initiatives is the inclusion of environmental courses in academic curriculum, which raises ecological awareness. This is invariably developing positive attitudes towards green products. In countries like Malaysia, consumers have an inclination for pro environmentalism but even so, researches conducted there reveal that Malaysian consumers comprise believers and non believers in terms of actual green purchase (Wahid. A, Karwi and Abuston, 2000). On the contrary, in countries like Pakistan, there seems to exist a massive vacuum among the population regarding environmentalism which needs to be filled. This surmise formed the hypothesis of the present study: greater ecological awareness leads to a positive attitude towards green purchase, and conversely, a lesser degree of ecological knowledge leads to indifference or a negative attitude.

Methodology

Sampling Procedure

Convenience sampling was done as 300 people were selected from semi government and multinational organizations across two cities of Pakistan. Out of these, 280 people responded to the questionnaire. The sample comprised both male and female respondents in the age bracket of 21 to 70, having diverse levels of education ranging from undergraduate to PhD. The number of male and female respondents was 156 and 124 respectively. All the respondents were paid a personal visit where they were guided on how to fill the questionnaires and some of the relevant terminologies were explained to them.

Measurement Tool

Since the very nature of the study was attitude analysis, previous studies on green purchase and attitudes were consulted and the tool was adopted from them. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', was used to elicit the responses.

Statistical Analysis

Having collected the data, SPSS version 16 was used for analysis and interpretation. Various tests like Correlation Coefficient, Independent Sample *t-test*, and one-way ANOVA were employed. Correlation was applied to assess whether there was a significant relationship between Ecological Awareness and Attitude towards Green Purchase. Independent Sample *t-test* was employed to analyze differences in attitudes between male and female segments. ANOVA was used to analyze attitude with respect to age groups and levels of education.

Results

The results of the study indicated that there was no significant relationship between Ecological Knowledge and Attitude toward Green Purchase. The Pearson Correlation value was found to be 0.028 indicating no significant relationship between Ecological Knowledge and Attitude towards Green Purchase. The p value (0.639) was $> \alpha$ (0.05); this value shows that Ecological Awareness had no effect on Attitude towards Green Purchase. Therefore on the basis of this test, the proposed hypothesis was rejected. The regression coefficient R measured the overall fit of the model, which is very low. The value of R Square was 0.001 and adjusted R value was -0.003, showing that Ecological Knowledge in this model accounted for 0.3% variance in the dependant variable. Clearly in this case, Ecological Knowledge did not appear as a predictor of readiness for green purchase.

Independent Sample *t-test* was applied to know the difference in the levels of attitude between male and female employees at 0.05 significance level. The value obtained under this test was 0.801 indicating that there was also no significant difference among the responses of the two groups i.e. male and female. In terms of responses on the Likert scale, the average value of the male group (2.865) was almost equal to that of the female group (2.85) which reflected neutrality of responses to the query and implied that both groups failed to exhibit positive attitudes towards green purchase.

ANOVA was also applied to examine the difference in attitude across two demographic characteristics i.e. age and education. The mean values with respect to different age brackets were almost 3 and the same value was drawn when assessing people of different levels of education. F values (.889) and (1.511) for age and education respectively were also less than the critical value of F.

This indicated that there was no significant difference among the groups age-wise and education-wise, and no single group showed any inclination towards green purchase.

However, what is indeed noteworthy in the ANOVA test is the 0.1 improvement in the mean of Attitude towards Green Purchase as the education level increases - a vital finding, which supports our view that raising environmental awareness through education programs will play a pivotal role in formulating attitudes towards green products.

1. Correlation Matrix

Table 1 Correlation between Independent Variables and the Dependant Variables

VARIABLES		Attitude toward Green Purchase
Ecological Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.639
	N	280

Source: Field Data

2. Regression

Table 2 Regression: Ecological Knowledge and Attitude towards Green Purchase

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig	Standardized Coefficients Beta
1	.028 ^a	.001	-.003	.639	.028
a. Predictors: (Constant), EC					

Source: Field Data

3. Independent Sample t-test

Table 3 Analysis of Attitude between male and female employees (independent sample t-test)

	Group	Mean	Std Dev	P-Value
Attitude	Male	2.865	.5584	.801
	Female	2.848	.5590	

Source: Field Data

4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 13 Analysis of Variance of Attitude across demographics, i.e. Age and Education

Groups	Mean	F	Sig.
<i>Age</i>			
21-30	2.869	.889	.471
31-40	2.912		
41-50	2.784		
51-60	2.704		
61-70	2.950		
Total	2.858		
Groups			
<i>Education</i>			
Under Grad	2.930	1.511	.222
Masters'	2.853		
MS/PhD	2.754		
Total	2.858		

Source: Field Data

Discussion

The present study intended to analyze consumers' attitudes towards green purchase in context of the Pakistani market. In contrary to related studies conducted in other countries, where it was rightly presumed that if consumers had more ecological knowledge and were more aware about green products, they would purchase such products and would even be ready to pay some premium for the perceived benefits, this particular study did not produce results in agreement with those studies. This might be due to economic pressures, and a general lack of environmentalism.

D'Souza et al (2006) cited a study which was conducted in New Zealand to assess consumers' attitude towards green products having eco labeling. In spite of economic and cultural advancement, consumers did not show confidence in green products. This example principally contradicts the study of Dunlap (1994), who elucidated that since developed countries are enriched with information and are also equipped with the latest technology, their consumers have more tendencies to incline towards green practices as compared to the citizens of less developed countries where people are more constrained to fulfill their subsistence needs.

The present study is also reminiscent of a study conducted in China which observed weak but relatively better response about consumers' knowledge of green products. Although the Chinese study, in comparison with some western counterparts, showed that Chinese consumers did purchase green products, the purchases were numbered (Liu, 1994; Ye, 2000). Still the study suggested some corrective steps to be taken by the government and the regulatory authorities in China to further enhance this pro ecological attitude through education and training. Comparing the present study with the Chinese one, the former exhibited worse ecological awareness among consumers.

Conclusion

Consumers in the present study were found to be less ecologically knowledgeable and hence did not turn towards green purchase. This might be due to the country's transitional phase of political and economic instability, which imposes more stringent conditions on people to meet subsistence needs and leaves less time, energy and resources to concentrate on green products. In the absence of basic amenities to be provided by the state, their confidence level for green products has still not developed and they are indifferent to the advantages of green products over conventional ones. Devising academic curricula encompassing ecological knowledge, and educating the masses about the far reaching effects of green products could be remedial.

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