

Factors Influencing Consumer Perceptions of Green Products: Empirical Findings from Nagaland, India

Shamim Ahmed, Research Scholar, Department of Management, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, India. Email: shamim_rs2018@nagalanduniversity.ac.in

Manoj E. Prabhakar, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, India. Email: manojp @nagalanduniversity.ac.in

Abstract: The global awareness and concern surrounding environmental issues have witnessed a significant surge, with individuals and governments displaying a growing interest in these matters. Green marketing has arisen as a strategic approach corporations employ to generate profits and safeguard the environment simultaneously. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a gradual increase in the adoption and implementation of green marketing strategies. There is currently a significant emphasis on green eco-friendly products among customers and manufacturers, which has resulted in a notable surge in product innovation to address environmental issues. Green consumers, also known as eco-conscious or sustainable consumers, prefer sustainable goods and services that are not harmful to the environment. The media and social movements play a crucial role in augmenting consumer consciousness regarding the potential environmental impacts associated with unchecked consumerism. Marketers have adopted the concept of green marketing to flourish in the face of these societal shifts. This study aims to examine the impact of green marketing on customers' perceptions and purchasing behaviour. The research was conducted in Nagaland, employing a structured questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The collected data was subsequently analysed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The CFA examined the influence of customers' views towards green marketing and eco-friendly products using five factors, namely "concern for the environment", "perception of green products", "advertising", "pricing", and "convenience and availability". The survey findings indicate that customers in Nagaland hold a favourable perspective towards green eco-friendly products.

Keywords — Green marketing, green consumers, theory of planned behaviour

I. INTRODUCTION

The practice of promoting and selling products and services by emphasising their favourable environmental attributes is sometimes referred to as green marketing. These goods and services must be environmentally friendly or exhibit ecologically friendly characteristics in their production process. The concept of green marketing has experienced a surge in prominence in recent times, as discussions surrounding sustainable and equitable methods of production and consumption have gained attention on a global scale, and there is a shift in public sentiment towards addressing green concerns (Van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Green marketing and sustainability are being discussed in numerous national and international forums. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is an annual international climate summit that takes place under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change to address

global climate challenges. The vast majority of nations across the globe have embraced the Paris Agreement, alternatively referred to as the Paris Climate Accords, which is aimed at tackling climate change, limiting the release of greenhouse gases and controlling the increase in global temperature. In 1975, the American Marketing Association (AMA) organised the inaugural ecological marketing workshop to examine the impacts of marketing activities on the environment. On a global scale, there has been a growing trend among large corporations and governmental entities to prioritise and pursue sustainability as a paramount objective. Several studies have speculated that the prevailing consumption pattern is not sustainable and could potentially result in catastrophic consequences if it continues without intervention (Enkvist & Vanthournout, 2008). Unsustainable consumption patterns contribute to numerous environmental issues. For sustainable development, it is of utmost importance that meeting the

current needs does not prevent future generations from satisfying their needs (Brundtland, 1987). Fisk (1974) was of the opinion that green marketing links the profit-making objectives of private enterprises with the long-term economic sustainability of society.

A. Green Marketing

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), "green marketing" refers to promoting products with environmentally friendly attributes. This encompasses many activities such as product modification, alterations to the production process, adjustments to packaging, and adaptations of advertising messages. The term "green marketing" was initially coined by McDaniel and Rylander (1993) to denote the endeavours undertaken by marketers in formulating strategies targeted towards environmentally conscious consumers. The concept of green marketing, often called sustainable marketing or environmental marketing, was introduced by Coddington (1993). It involves the efforts of a company to develop, promote, price, and distribute products that have minimal or no adverse effects on the natural environment (Pride & Ferrell, 1993). According to Polonsky (1994), green marketing refers to the activities undertaken to fulfil human needs or aspirations while minimising adverse environmental effects. According to Peattie (2001), three distinct stages may be identified in the evolution of green marketing. During the original phase, referred to as "Ecological Green Marketing," the primary focus of marketing efforts revolved around identifying environmental concerns and providing corresponding solutions. The subsequent stage, known as "Environmental Green Marketing," placed a greater focus on clean technology, which included creating novel products to mitigate waste and pollution issues. The current period we find ourselves in is called "Sustainable Green Marketing," characterised by a shift in focus towards sustainability by governments and major enterprises.

B. Green Consumer

According to Elkington (1994), the term "green consumer" refers to individuals who actively avoid purchasing products that pose risks to their health or the health of others or have significant detrimental effects on the environment during their production, usage, or disposal. This includes products that consume excessive energy, generate toxic waste, utilise raw materials derived from endangered species, involve unnecessary animal use or cruelty, and negatively impact other nations, among other factors. Conventional marketing presents products and services to consumers at an affordable cost that aligns with their specific requirements. One of the fundamental assumptions in green marketing is that consumers are willing to incur additional costs in exchange for ecologically beneficial products (Veluri, 2012). As a

result, marketers encounter two distinct challenges. Firstly, they must develop and promote goods and services that align with customer preferences and generate demand. Secondly, they are tasked with educating their customers about the correlation between the usage of environmentally irresponsible products and the subsequent emergence of ecological issues. Hence, the present study investigates consumer consciousness regarding green marketing practices and their inclination to purchase environmentally friendly products.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The origins of "green marketing" may be traced back to the 1970s, a period characterised by heightened consumer and marketers' awareness of environmental concerns. In contemporary times, there is widespread concern about the deterioration of the natural environment and climate change, as many individuals have come to acknowledge their significant role in safeguarding the environment. This indicates that individuals are inclined to modify their consumption patterns in response to the increasing environmental consciousness within society. Business enterprises likewise try to respond to this emerging concern by actively participating in green marketing endeavours.

Environmental marketing, often known as green marketing, represents a contemporary approach within societal marketing encompassing a comprehensive range of activities that incorporate environmental considerations across the entire product lifecycle, including product creation, packaging, advertising, distribution, usage, and recycling. Green marketing is a holistic marketing concept that involves the production, consumption, and disposal of products and services in a manner that aims to minimise negative impacts on the environment (Menon & Menon, 1997). Companies rebrand their products by creating distinct product lines emphasising their environmental benefits and effectively remarketing their existing product line while adhering to environmental safety laws.

The emergence of heightened customer demand for ecologically sustainable products has prompted the adoption of this novel marketing approach, wherein corporations incorporate environmental considerations into their marketing mix (Coddington, 1993). The transition from conventional to green products may initially appear costly, but it is undeniably a prudent and financially viable decision in the long term. In the realm of conventional marketing, the production of goods is undertaken with the objective of meeting consumer demands in a cost-effective manner, while effectively conveying the primary benefits of the items to their target market. Green marketing is a multifaceted endeavour that entails the creation of products that meet customer needs at a reasonable cost while maintaining the product's

essential benefits and minimising negative environmental effects. This includes considering various stages of the product's lifecycle, such as manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, consumption, usage, and disposal.

The study conducted by Correia et al. (2023) examined the influence of green marketing communications on respondents' gender, educational qualification, and environmental attitudes. Additionally, the researchers investigated if consumers' attentiveness to these messages affected their likelihood of engaging in green purchasing behaviour. In their study, Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020) sought to investigate the factors influencing Bangladeshi consumers' purchasing intention regarding green products. The researcher employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework to fill the existing study gap regarding green purchasing choices. This was achieved by integrating constructs such as perceived green quality, environmental concerns, and future green estimates. The study by Mahmoud (2018) aimed to examine the impact of implementing a green marketing mix on the consumer behaviour of Sudanese individuals. The statistical analysis disclosed a robust association between customers' purchase inclination and the green marketing mix.

Sharma and Trivedi (2016) examined the determinants influencing customers' purchasing decisions about environmentally friendly items. Their findings revealed that eight factors significantly shaped these decisions: demography, eco-labels, eco-brands, environmental advertising, environmental awareness, green products, prices, and promotions. According to their assertion, price is the primary obstacle impeding the widespread acceptance of environmentally friendly products. In a study conducted by Kong et al. (2014), a factor analysis was employed to examine the factors that influence individuals' intentions to engage in environmentally friendly purchasing behaviour. The results indicated that eco-labels, the perceived value of green products, and the view of corporations as environmentally conscious positively impacted individuals' intentions to make green purchases. In contrast, using green packaging or promotion does not significantly impact individuals' intentions to get environmentally friendly products.

A. Research Objectives

This study aims to assess customer behaviour concerning environmentally friendly products promoted by green marketing. A limited study regarding consumer perceptions towards green marketing in Nagaland was found. Moreover, a lack of empirical studies has been observed employing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to measure customer attitudes in this specific region of India. Given the aforementioned circumstances, this study's objective is to identify the various elements that have an impact on

the attitudes of consumers who prioritise environmentally friendly products and practices.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Universe and Sample for the Study

The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilising a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The survey questionnaire encompassed investigations on customer awareness, knowledge, perceived benefits, perceived hurdles, and purchasing intentions concerning environmentally friendly products. The researchers employed convenience sampling to select the sample from a diverse population of customers of different goods and services. The researchers conducted data collection activities in the bustling market regions of Kohima and Dimapur during operational hours. Individuals from various social circles, including friends, family members, and students from diverse educational institutions, actively engaged in the completion of online surveys facilitated by the utilisation of Google Forms.

Based on the data provided in the Nagaland Statistical Handbook (2020), the population of Dimapur district was recorded as 378,811 individuals during the 2011 census. Among this population, there were 197,394 males and 181,417 females. Similarly, the Kohima district had a population of 267,988 individuals, consisting of 138,966 males and 129,022 females. Therefore, the study's population consisted of 646,799 individuals. The study's primary data was obtained from a sample of 581 consumers residing in the districts of Kohima and Dimapur. Out of the total sample size of 581 respondents, a subset of 15 questionnaires were identified as incomplete and thus excluded from the study. As a result, the study's sample size consisted of 566 individuals. Comrey and Lee (1992) urged researchers to obtain samples of 500 or more observations whenever possible for factor analysis. The data-gathering period spanned from September 2021 to July 2022. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to evaluate the correlations between variables and find key factors that influence consumers' perceptions.

B. Questionnaire Development

After conducting a comprehensive study of relevant literature, the authors identified many characteristics that might be utilised to assess customer attitudes towards environmentally friendly products. The study's components were identified and adopted based on the theoretical framework provided by Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a widely recognised theory in the field of social psychology, elucidates how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence individuals' intentions and subsequent actions. According to the TPB, individuals' decision to engage in a particular behaviour is influenced

by their attitudes, perceptions of social norms related to the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control. The TPB provides a valuable conceptual framework for understanding the interplay of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control in predicting customers' intentions and subsequent behaviours related to purchasing environmentally friendly products.

The constructs of "concern for the environment", "perception of green products", "advertising", and "convenience and availability" are believed to have an impact on individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control when it comes to purchasing eco-friendly products. Environmental concerns can potentially influence individuals' purchasing intentions regarding eco-friendly products. In contrast, the impact of advertising and green marketing on individuals' perceptions of the societal norms associated with product use is noteworthy. The factors of pricing, ease, and accessibility have the potential to exert an influence on individuals' perceived level of control when making purchasing decisions about environmentally friendly products.

The first step in the data analysis process involves assessing the reliability of the data utilised in the study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the data was calculated with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Nunnally (1978) suggested that a reliability coefficient of 0.7 is appropriate. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.836 was computed, suggesting that the data collected for this study is highly reliable.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents is displayed in Table 1, indicating that the sample chosen for the study exhibits heterogeneity. Particular attention was given to ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the population.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Categories	Count	%
Gender	Male	250	44.17
	Female	316	55.83
Marital Status	Single	383	67.67
	Married	183	32.33
Age Group (in years)	Below 18	61	10.78
	18 - 30	335	59.19
	31 - 50	158	27.92
	Above 50	12	2.12
Education	Undergraduate	95	16.78
	Graduate	190	33.57
	Postgraduate	264	46.64
	Doctoral Degree	17	3.00
Occupation	Public sector employee	73	12.90
	Private sector employee	140	24.73
	Businessman	57	10.07
	Housewife	45	7.95
	Students	178	31.45
	Others	73	12.90
Monthly Income	Below ₹ 30000	221	39.05
	₹ 30000 - ₹ 60000	260	45.94
	Above ₹ 60000	85	15.02

Source: Original data

B. Measurement of Consumer Attitude towards Green Marketing Products

The measurement scale utilised in this study consisted of a five-point scale for the 37 statements. Thus, the upper limit of the maximum attainable score was 185, while the lower limit of the minimum score was 37. The score shown represents the comprehensive measure of consumer attitude. Consequently, higher scores indicate a positive or favourable attitude. The overall consumer attitude level calculated, therefore, can be interpreted as follows:

Table 2: Interpretation of Overall Score of Consumer Attitude

Highly unfavourable attitude	Unfavourable attitude	Moderately favourable attitude	Favourable attitude	Highly Favourable attitude
37–66.6	66.6–96.2	96.2–125.8	125.8–155.4	155.4–185

Source: Original data

The mean value of the consumer attitude score was calculated to be 140.96, which falls under the favourable category. Hence, it may be inferred that the consumers in Nagaland have a favourable attitude and preference for green marketing strategies and environmentally friendly products.

C. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a statistical technique utilised in social sciences to confirm the final structure of components or factors. The CFA confirms the final model to test whether there is a relationship between the number of observed variables and latent constructs. This statistical technique based on the commonalities within the data helps to diminish the observed variable into latent constructs and is called a measurement model. This measurement model indicates the association between the variables and constructs with covariances.

In order to conduct CFA, it is imperative to establish the reliability and validity of the resulting reduction and ensure that the sample size is sufficient. The researchers employed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity as statistical tools in their study (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011). The KMO statistic value obtained was 0.770, above the threshold of 0.5, indicating an acceptable level of sampling adequacy. Additionally, the p-value obtained from Bartlett's Test was 0.000, lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05, suggesting that the data exhibited significant intercorrelations. Therefore, it can be inferred that the sample data included in the study was appropriate for doing CFA.

This study involved categorising 37 statements into five primary components and applying the TPB theory to examine the connections among these claims. To examine the impact of green marketing and eco-friendly products on consumer behaviour in Nagaland, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed using the following components:

- Concern for the environment
- Perception of green products

- Advertising
- Pricing
- Convenient and availability

D. The Measurement Model

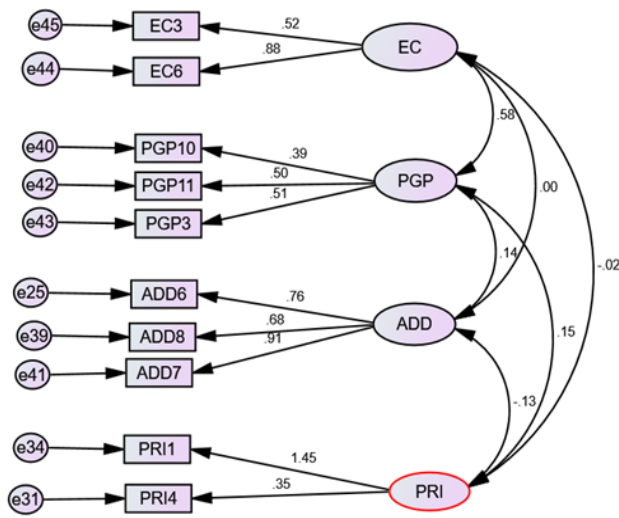


Figure 1: The Measurement Model

The above constructs and respective latent variables explain the factors influencing consumer behaviour towards green marketing and eco-friendly products concerning Nagaland's Kohima and Dimapur districts. Among the five constructs, "convenience and availability" have been dropped due to poor factor loadings in CFA. "The concern for the environment", "perception of green products", "advertising", and "pricing" have been explained by its conformed latent variable, as shown in Figure 1.

In the "perception of green products", "I look for and buy products made from or packaged in recycled material", "I have a positive attitude towards green products and prefer brands which are associated with green marketing", and "the quality of most eco-friendly products conforms to my expectations". "Advertisement", as perception is explained by "sufficient information, is being provided on eco-label", "information on eco-labels are accurate", and "advertising claims for green products are trustworthy". Finally, "pricing" as perceived behaviour control is explained by the fact that "most of the eco-friendly products I buy are overpriced" and "companies use green advertising to charge higher prices" in the two districts of Nagaland.

E. Fitness of Model

The fit of the measurement model is explained through the CFA estimations. The obtained p-value, critical value of CMIN/DF, goodness of fit index, adjusted goodness of fit index, normed fit index, comparative fit index, root mean square error of approximation and P-Close justifies the model fitness in Amos.

Table 3 exhibits the values of the above parameters, which substantiates the robustness of the measurement model in the study.

Table 3: Model Fitness

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	85.908	--	--
DF	29	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.962	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.952	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.047	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.059	<0.06	Excellent
P-Close	0.143	>0.05	Excellent

Source: Original data

The above table states that the chi-square lies between the threshold limit of 2.962, emphasising the measurement model's fitness. The respective measures that assert the model fitness are excellent according to the threshold values in the above table. Thus, it can be concluded that the derived measurement model is an excellent fit to explain the factors influencing consumer behaviour towards green marketing and eco-friendly products in the Kohima and Dimapur districts of Nagaland.

F. The Results of the Hypothesis for CFA

H₁: There is a perfect positive correlation between concern for the environment and my participation in environmental protection would influence my family and friends to participate too.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between environmental concern and the belief that one's participation in environmental protection would influence one's family and friends to do the same.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between concern for the environment and environmental activities undertaken by me today will help save the environment for future generations.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between environmental concern and the belief that today's environmental activities will help save the environment for future generations.

H₃: There is a positive relationship between the perception of green products and it is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between the perception of green products and the importance of using products that do not harm the environment.

H₄: There is a positive relationship between the perception of green products and I look for and buy products made from or packaged in recycled material.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between the perception of green products and the behaviour of looking for and buying products made from or packaged in recycled material.

H₅: There is a perfect positive correlation between the perception of green products and I have a positive

attitude towards green products and prefer brands which are associated with green marketing.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a perfect positive correlation between the perception of green products and having a positive attitude towards them and preferring brands associated with green marketing.

H₆: There is a positive relationship between advertising and sufficient information is being provided on eco-labels.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between advertising and the belief that sufficient information is being provided on eco-labels.

H₇: There is a positive relationship between advertising and information on eco-labels are accurate.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between advertising and the belief that information on eco-labels is accurate.

H₈: There is a perfect positive correlation between advertising and advertising claims that green products are trustworthy.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between advertising and the belief that advertising claims for green products are trustworthy.

H₉: There is a perfect positive correlation between pricing and companies use green advertising to charge a higher price.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between pricing and the belief that companies use green advertising to charge a higher price.

H₁₀: There is a positive relationship between pricing and I feel most of the eco-friendly products I buy are overpriced.

Result: The data supports the hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between pricing and the belief that most eco-friendly products are overpriced.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Findings of The Study

In the twenty-first century, global warming and climate change have caught the attention of every nation as these issues have become a universal concern due to their far-reaching consequences for the environment, economy and society. Environmental protection from further deterioration has become the top priority of governments worldwide, including India. However, environmental protection is achievable with the active support of the population, and the current state of people's attitudes toward environmentally friendly green products in Nagaland is presented in this study. Consumers in Nagaland feel positively about products that are promoted

through green marketing.

B. Contributions of the Study

This study analytically measures consumer attitudes toward environmentally friendly green products. The people of Nagaland feel positively about environmentally friendly products, which is a very positive indication for the nation's policymakers to create appropriate and workable environmental protection guidelines. A few government administration officials with whom the authors spoke expressed their opinion that eco-friendly products are more expensive and less readily available than the traditional alternatives in the market. This makes it more difficult for the government to implement many environmental protection directives effectively. This study will assist officials in identifying areas of concern and offering solutions. This study will also encourage other academicians and students to learn more about environmental protection and the public's attitudes.

C. Limitations of the Study, Scope for Further Research and Conclusions

This study was carried out based on the factors identified by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to empirically analyse the factors affecting consumer behaviour towards green marketing and eco-friendly products in the Nagaland districts of Dimapur and Kohima. Extending the study's geographical scope beyond Kohima and Dimapur to include the state's other districts and rural areas is possible. Additionally, comparative cross-sectional and longitudinal studies can be carried out to gain an additional understanding of consumer attitudes toward environmentally friendly green products. Since a non-probabilistic convenience sampling strategy was used in this study, errors in estimating different statistical results cannot be completely ruled out. Other random sampling methods can be used to carry out comparable investigations. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) can be used to confirm the factors or constructs found in this study further. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach can also be applied to developing and confirming a theoretical model.

We are increasingly concerned about environmental issues and their detrimental effects, leading to a rise in global concern and call for coordinated efforts to protect nature and planet Earth in recent years. Issues like deforestation, holes in the ozone layer, excessive greenhouse gas emissions, fast depletion of natural resources and shrinking biodiversity, pollution, and global warming are still unsolved for the average citizen of our country and the world today. However, environmental protection objectives can be met if the public actively participates in environmental protection initiatives.

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