



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS PURCHASING OF ECO LABELLED PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

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Abstract

Eco labelling has become a trend in recent years in an attempt to help customers to recognise environment friendly products from others. However there is still a lack of understanding about the effectiveness of eco labelling on the purchasing behaviour of consumers. The present study aims at analysing consumer perception towards purchasing of eco labelled personal care products in Kalamassery municipal area, Ernakulam district. The methodology adopted is normative survey method. The sample consists of fifty five customers of middle income group in Kalamassery municipal area, Ernakulam. It is found that the purchases of the eco labelled products are influenced by the eco-motivation, eco-knowledge and the peer influence of the customers and the availability of the eco-labeled products in the retail stores. But the price of these products and the demographic factors such as age, gender and occupation of the customers do not influence their purchasing behaviour.

Key Words: *Eco Labelling, Consumer Behaviour, Personal Care Products.*

1. Introduction

Over the past decades the environmental concerns has increased a lot. Therefore environmental issues are very important and very much discussed now days. There are a lot of discussions on different levels about green house effect, environment pollution and its effect on human health. Companies started to produce environment friendly products, which are supposed to be good for humans and nature. And it also helps companies to build a reputation in the market. Sales of organic goods are rising despite the fact that these types of products have only small share in the market. In order to distinguish ecological products from ordinary ones companies put special eco-labels on them. An eco label is a label or logo to certify that a product meets high environmental and performance standards and has less impact on the environment than non labelled products. Beyond this environmental aspect, it also shows that a company is socially responsible. These labels are also carriers of essential product information to the customers.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the consumers' perception towards purchasing of eco labelled personal care products, which has been identified through a research study conducted among middle income group customers in Kalamassery municipal area, Ernakulam District. In addition to this, it also explores the factors influencing the consumers towards purchasing of eco labelled personal care products which can be of an input for the customers, retailers and the manufacturers in strategising their needs. This paper also intends to create awareness among people to protect environment and to encourage the protection of the eco system.

2. Objective of the Study

- The main objective of this paper is to identify and analyse how eco-label can influence consumer buying behaviour by focusing on personal care products.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopted Normative Survey Method.

3.1 Sample for the study

The sample for the present study consists of fifty five customers of middle income group in Kalamassery municipal area, Ernakulam district.

3.2 Tools used

A Structured questionnaire is used to collect the primary data and the respondents are asked to fill up the open end and close end questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from various journals, magazines and internet.

4. Eco labelling in India

Eco mark

A government operated seal of approval program for environmentally preferable consumer products. To increase consumer awareness, the Government of India launched the eco-labelling scheme known as 'Eco mark' in 1991 for an easy identification of environment-friendly products. The criterion follows a cradle-to-grave approach, i.e. from raw material

extraction to manufacturing and to disposal. The Eco mark label is awarded to consumer goods that meet the specified environmental criteria and the quality requirements of Indian Standards.

4.1 Personal care products

Personal care or toiletries is the industry which manufactures consumer products used in personal hygiene and for beautification. Personal care includes products as diverse as lip balm, cleansing pads, cotton swabs, cotton pads, deodorant, eye liner, facial tissue, hair clippers, lip gloss, lipstick, lotion, makeup, nail files, perfumes, razors, talcum powder, shaving cream, skin cream, toilet paper, and wet wipes, Tooth Paste, Skin Powder, after shave lotion, nail polish, hair cream, and hair oil.

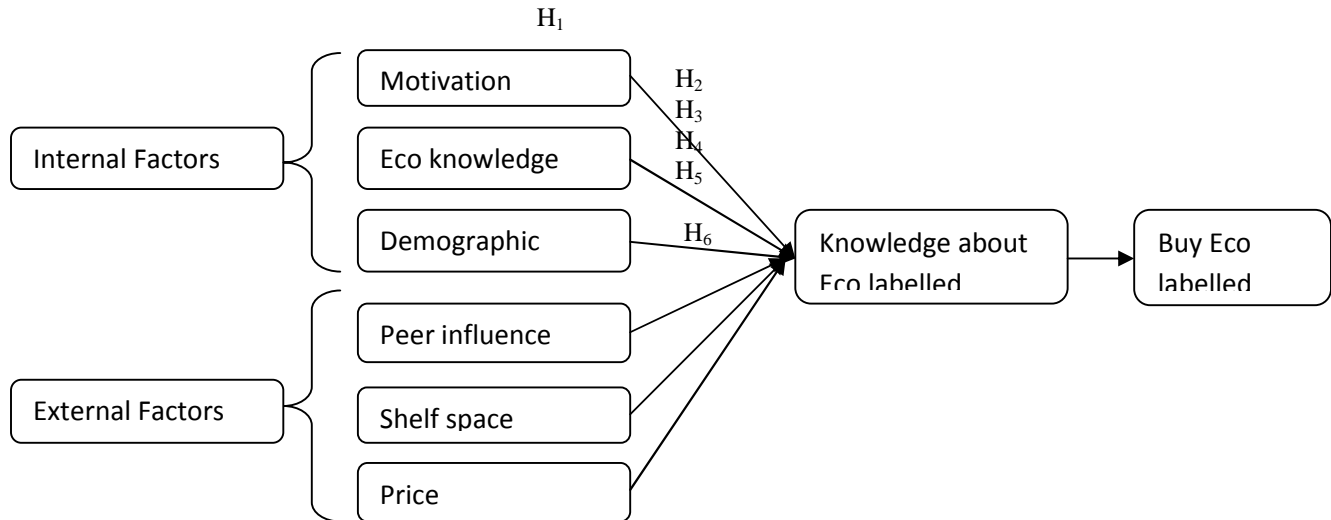


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..1** Causal path model -Adopted from Thøgersen 2000

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between consumers' eco motivation and purchase intention towards eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between consumers' eco knowledge and purchase intention of eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between demographic factors and consumers purchase intention of eco-labelled products.

Hypothesis 4: There is no association between peer influence and interest to buy eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 5: There is no relation between shelf space (availability) and interest to buy eco labelled products from retail store.

Hypothesis 6: Price is not an important factor to buy the eco labelled products.

5. Findings and Analysis

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between consumers' eco motivation and purchase intention towards eco labelled products.

Table 4.1 Chi-Square value of consumers' eco motivation and purchase intention of eco labelled products.

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 27.80 at $\alpha = 10\%$ level of significance. The significance level is 0.033 (two-side) is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. That is, there is no relationship between consumers' eco motivation and purchase intention of eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between consumers' eco knowledge and purchase intention of eco labelled products.

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 5% level of Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	27.80	16	0.033
Likelihood Ratio	33.78	16	0.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.77	1	0.005
N of Valid Cases	55		

Table 4.2 Chi Square value of consumers' eco knowledge and purchase intention of eco labelled products.

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.09	16	0.088
Likelihood Ratio	26.72	16	0.045
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.00	1	0.977
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 24.09 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.088 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. The respondents believe that the available information about eco labelled products does not affect the purchase intention of eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between demographic factors and consumers purchase the eco labelled products.

Table 4.3 Chi Square value of Purchase of Eco labelled products and Gender

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.16	4	0.038
Likelihood Ratio	10.86	4	0.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.52	1	0.033
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 10.16 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.038 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no discriminate between genders to purchase the eco labelled products.

Table 4.4 Chi Square value of Purchase Eco labelled products and Age group

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.11	12	0.020
Likelihood Ratio	22.98	12	0.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.17	1	0.041
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 24.11 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.020 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. It shows that Irrespective of age group respondents buy eco label products.

Table 4.5 Chi Square value of Purchase Eco labelled products and Current Activity

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.09	8	0.000038
Likelihood Ratio	34.12	8	0.00038
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.14	1	0.7125
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 40.09 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.000038 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. That means Irrespective of respondents' profession, they buy eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 4: There is no association between peer influence and interest to buy eco labelled products.

Table 4.6 Chi Square value of Purchase of Eco labelled products and Peer influence

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.40	16	0.0283
Likelihood Ratio	22.95	16	0.115119
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.37	1	0.543152
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 28.40 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.0283 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. It shows that respondents are not influenced by their family and friends to buy eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 5: There is no relation between shelf space (availability) and interest to buy eco-labelled products from retail store.

Table 4.7 Chi Square value of Purchase Eco labelled products and available shelf space

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.92	16	0.00215
Likelihood Ratio	39.03714	16	0.001074
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.09019	1	0.148248
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 36.92 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.00215 is fall on below 0.10. So the hypothesis is accepted. Researcher concludes that the availability (Shelf space) is not an important factor to purchase eco labelled products.

Hypothesis 6: Price is not an important factor to buy the eco labelled products.

Table 4.8 Chi Square value of price of eco labelled products and interest to buy the eco labelled products.

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.79	16	0.00007
Likelihood Ratio	28.90684	16	0.024572
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.16132	1	0.687944
N of Valid Cases	55		

Interpretation: The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 46.79 at =10% level of significance. The significance level is 0.00007 is fall on below 0.10. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. It shows that the price is not an important factor to buy eco labelled products.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is mainly to understand the most important factors affecting the purchase of eco labelled personal care products. For this purpose six elements were taken to know the role of these elements towards purchase behaviour of eco labelled products such as eco motivation, eco knowledge, demographic factors (gender, age and current activity), peer influence, price and shelf space. The relationship between these six factors and purchase intention towards the eco labelled products were tested in the first phase of statistical analysis. This study shows that consumers' eco motivation, demographic profiles, peer influences, available shelf space and green product prices have only a very minimal influence over the purchase of green products. This is an indication that human interest and obligation to stay healthy and to save and preserve mother nature for future generation keeps increasing. Let us also apply this model to further sharpen and refine other related studies.

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