

Examine Consumer Understanding And Behavior In Promoting Sustainability And Green Practices In India

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Abstract

Eco-marketing and other environmentally friendly techniques are becoming more mainstream as governments throughout the globe work to mitigate the adverse effects of human activities on the natural environment. This change has opened up new possibilities and presented new obstacles for businesses that want to show they care about the environment. When compared to developed countries, emerging economies like India have a greater propensity toward eco-friendly policies. Energy efficiency, waste management, pollution avoidance, indoor air quality, and recycling are just a few of the many environmental issues that fall within the purview of "green marketing." However, there needs to be more information in India on how environmentally friendly actions affect shoppers' purchasing decisions. Green marketing can only be successful if companies really do what they preach. The purpose of this research was to assess Indian consumers' awareness of environmental issues, green product preferences, and the factors that influence green product marketing. A total of 150 people were randomly selected to provide data, and the process was statistically sound. Government agencies, lawmakers, manufacturers, and marketers may all benefit from the study's findings by gaining a more complete picture

of the green product market's potential. Diverse teaching initiatives emphasizing the security, health, and personal advantages of eco-friendly items and behaviours are crucial for promoting their widespread adoption. Budgetary resources need to be made available so that government agencies may educate the public on matters of product safety and regulatory compliance as they pertain to environmentally friendly goods. There must be a thorough structure in place that allows for official declarations of conformity with safety requirements by marketers, and authorities at all levels must ensure that all enterprises have appropriate environmental certifications.

Keywords: Green Practices, Environment, Sustainability, Green Products, Awareness.

Introduction

Governments throughout the globe are increasingly motivated to lessen the environmental damage caused by human activities. Businesses are changing their ways and incorporating ecological concerns into their operations in response to rising public and governmental concerns for the natural environment (Vani, 2022). Environmental marketing, sometimes known as eco-marketing, is another famous phrase (Nath, 2012). Green practices promote goods and services that are either ecologically benign in and of themselves or are manufactured and packaged in a manner that reduces their environmental impact. A product's "greenness" is expected to be a selling point so that shoppers may make an informed selection based on that factor alone. However, it is a plausible conclusion that customers would be willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly goods. Green practices are on the rise as more people embrace eco-friendliness, but it comes with potential risks. Using green practices strategies may increase a company's visibility and income. However, "greenwashing," or falsely advertising a product or service as environmentally friendly when it is not, is a severe issue. Companies need to demonstrate that they are environmentally responsible in

order to attract and retain consumers. The greenest nations, according to a recent poll by the National Geographic Society and Globescan (2010), include emerging economies like India, Brazil, and China, whereas the most industrialized countries have the least green attitudes.

Howe et al. (2010) found that the most notable increases in ecologically sustainable behaviour occurred in India, Russia, and the United States. Businesses need to be honest, inform consumers of their environmental initiatives, and give them a chance to become involved if they want to see real change. To be genuine, a company's green practices efforts must be backed up by actual action, and the company's policies must be consistent with environmental best practices. Communicating the company's environmental initiatives is just part of the education puzzle. The success of a green practices effort depends on the level of ecological awareness among the target audience.

Last but not least, including consumers in good environmental action typically entails offering them the chance to participate, which implies individualizing the rewards of their ecologically beneficial acts. This has a beneficial effect on consumers and, by extension, the company's reputation. (Bukhari, 2011)

Green marketing emphasizes a wide range of environmental concerns, including energy efficiency, waste management, pollution prevention, indoor air quality, and recycling. Consumers are more inclined to purchase a product or service that makes environmental claims if it is reasonably priced in comparison to alternatives. Although green practices are essential to long-term business viability, there needs to be more knowledge in India on how they affect consumers' decisions. This article seeks to solve this problem by analyzing its effects on Indian consumers to call attention to the need for further investigation on this subject.

Definition

The term "green practices" is used to describe the practice of

promoting items that are less harmful to the environment than others. However, a precise definition of "green practices" is elusive owing to the term's many connotations and overlaps. Green marketing is advertising that stresses the importance of treating consumers, suppliers, dealers, and staff with respect and protecting the environment. State and local governments are also making environmental concerns, such as global warming and pollution, a top priority. To be successful in green marketing, businesses must adhere to ecologically responsible practices.(Bhatia & Jain, 2014)

Green Marketing Evolution

"Ecological" green marketing emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with a focus on resolving environmental problems; "Environmental" green marketing emerged in the mid-1990s and early 2000, with an emphasis on clean technology and novel products to combat pollution and waste; and "Sustainable" green marketing emerged in the late-1990s and early 2000. Environmental, clean technology and sustainable development are at the centre of many modern marketing campaigns because they are central to the goal of sustainable development: meeting the demands of the present without sacrificing the capacity of future generations to do the same (Vani, 2022).

Sustainability, environmental consciousness, and "green" companies are on the rise in both developed and developing countries, according to research (Khare, 2014). Awareness, confidence in eco-labels and brands, customer concern for environmental deterioration, and altruistic ideals are all affecting consumption and giving green marketing a boost in emerging nations. Customers are more open-minded and global in their outlook on eco-friendly goods. There has been less focus on India than there has been on other developing countries when it comes to studies of green marketing (Mosafa, 2009; Rahbar & Wahid, 2011; Juwaheer et al., 2012). This shows how vital green marketing is becoming in both industrialized and developing nations.

Green Consumer

Green customers are those who make ecologically responsible choices and choose green goods over conventional ones. Individuals, not governments, companies, environmentalists, or scientists, should be responsible for protecting the environment, in their view. Since they are less rigid in their beliefs, they are more likely to embrace eco-friendly goods and practices. Because of their flexibility, they are able to aid in environmental safeguarding efforts.

Literature Review

Producing, distributing, and using "green" goods have less of an effect on the environment than conventional alternatives (Tomasin et al., 2013). Options like recycling and biodegradable materials are among them. To have a less negative impact on the environment, "green" goods should be recyclable, user-friendly, resource-efficient, biodegradable, long-lasting, and energy-effective (Yu & Wang, 2011). In addition, they pose no danger to human health. Due to their superior performance on ecological metrics, green goods are seen to be more eco-friendly than their non-green counterparts. According to studies (Schneider et al., 2012), the primary distinction between "green" and "non-green" goods is their performance on ecological metrics.

Green Buying Behaviour

The intention and actual purchasing behaviour of green items are essential in gaining insight into customer purchase habits. The term "environmental behaviour" is used to describe acts that affect the environment. Recycling, reducing paper and power use, staying away from aerosols, promoting biodegradable goods, and eating organic food are all on the rise (Gill et al., 2005). Demand for environmentally friendly goods is on the rise as a result of customers' growing awareness of the consequences of their activities on the environment (Han et al., 2010). One of the most significant influences on consumer choice is education and information on

environmentally friendly options. Consumers' trust in the efficacy of green goods has been demonstrated to correlate with their environmental views. Carlson et al. (1993) found no direct correlation between environmental attitudes and actions.

Predicting green consumer sentiments is a contentious topic of study. Tracy and Oskamp (1984) and Spruyt et al. (2007) claimed that the prediction of an individual consumer's behaviour is based on their attitude, whereas Mainieri et al. (1997) showed a poor association between customers' green behaviour and their attitude. In order to accurately forecast consumer behaviour, it is essential to measure attitudes toward specific categories, such as the purchase of ecologically friendly items. According to Young et al. (2010), customers may not be motivated only by a desire to reduce their environmental impact when making environmentally friendly purchases.

Key elements influencing eco-friendly consumer behaviour

Core variables in social and environmental psychology theories have been shown to be important through research. These variables include but are not limited to attitude toward behaviour, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, anticipated emotions, desire toward behaviour, past behaviour, awareness of consequences, ascription of responsibility, personal norm, value orientations, and ecological worldview.

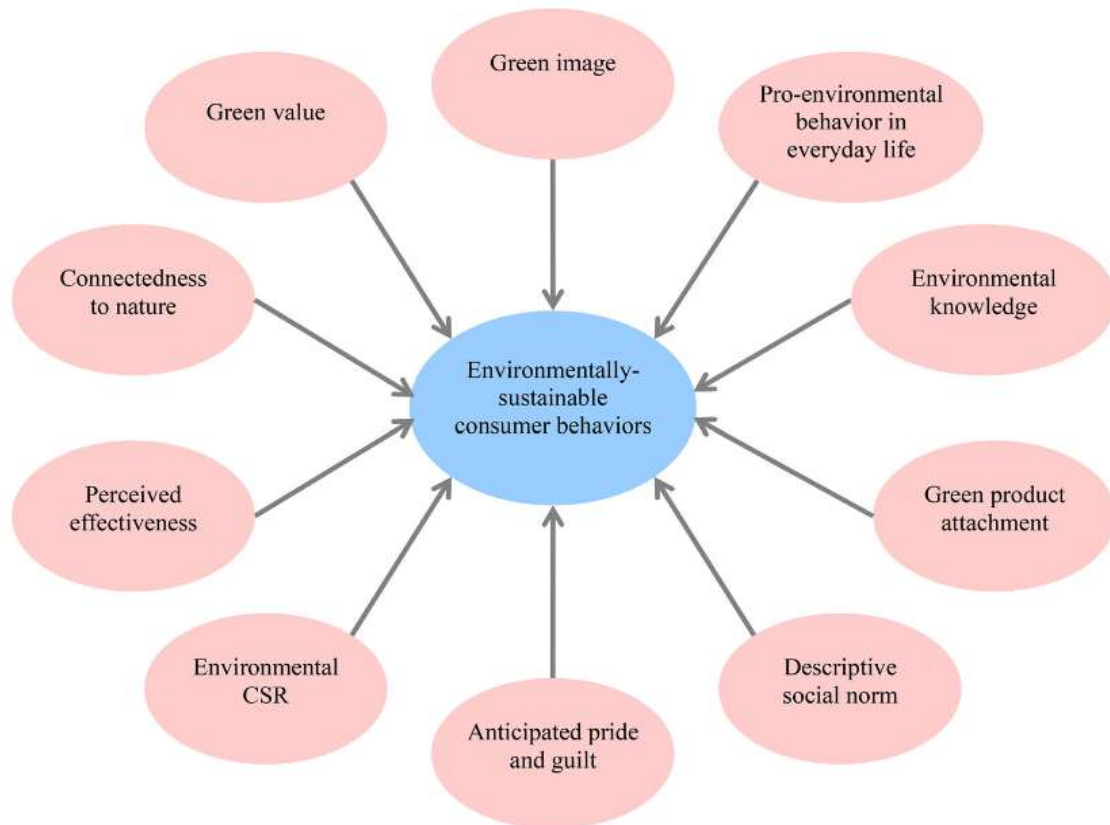


Figure 1: Influential factors in encouraging greener consumption practices. (Han, 2021)

Several empirical research (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Han, 2015; Ramkissoon et al., 2020) attest to the usefulness of these factors in encouraging environmentally responsible consumer behaviour.

Green image, pro-environmental behaviours in daily life, knowledge about the environment, connection, descriptive norm in society, expected pride or guilt, environmental, social accountability, perceived effectiveness, connectedness to nature, and green value are all important in understanding environmentally sustainable decisions and behaviour among consumers (Paiano et al., 2020), as are other factors such as green value. These factors are fundamental to eco-friendly habits and have been widely embraced and used in the literature on environmental consumption (Halder et al., 2020).

Table 1: Key ideas influencing ecologically sustainable consumer behaviour are defined. (Han, 2021)

Variable	Definition Paraphrased
Green Image	The green image represents a consumer's overall impressions and ideas about a green product or service, including its features.
Pro-Environmental Behavior	Pro-environmental behaviours in everyday life are actions taken by a consumer in their daily routine to protect the environment. These behaviours become habitual with frequent practice.
Environmental Knowledge	Environmental knowledge is a consumer's capacity to comprehend environmental concepts, issues, and problems and apply them in their activities.
Green Product Attachment	Green product attachment is when a consumer feels a strong connection or a sense of belonging to a specific green product.
Descriptive Social Norm	A descriptive social norm is the extent to which an action is commonly observed in a specific consumption context or situation.
Anticipated Pride and Guilt	Anticipated pride and guilt refer to the feelings that a consumer expects to experience - either a sense of pride or guilt - as a result of practising a particular pro-environmental behaviour in the future.
Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility	Environmental corporate social responsibility is when a company conducts its business activities in a manner that aligns with environmental protection, local regulations, and government policies.
Perceived Effectiveness	Perceived effectiveness reflects a consumer's beliefs about the impact of their environmental preservation efforts on reducing harm to nature.
Connectedness to Nature	Connectedness to nature is the extent to which a consumer feels they are an integral part of the natural world.
Green Value	Green value represents a consumer's cognitive assessment of the effectiveness of an eco-friendly product or service, based on their perception of what they gain and what they give up.

Critical elements of ecologically sustainable behaviour include

the cognitive/perceptual process, the emotional process, the conative process, the normative process, and the habitual process. These ideas are foundational for comprehending how customers may make ecologically responsible choices. Figure 1 and Table 1 show the variables and their definitions.

Indian Scenario

India is experiencing environmental problems as a result of its rapid urbanization and industrialization, and the promotion of environmentally friendly products is still in its infancy there (Mohanasundaram, 2012). Singh and Pandey (2012), however, assert that green goods and the companies that deal with them are the wave of the future. The corporate climate in India is changing, though, and a growing number of companies are placing a premium on eco-friendly options. (Anand, 2020)

There is a knowledge vacuum about the connection between variables and awareness since previous studies have concentrated on factors affecting customer behaviour in green marketing. The purpose of this research is to examine the demographic factors (gender, education, monthly income, age group) that influence consumers' exposure to green marketing.

Objectives

- The goal of this study is to assess the sustainability and environmental consciousness of Indian customers.
- To determine Indian customers' affinity to green goods and their causes.
- The goal is to determine what aspects of green product marketing really influence buyers to make purchases.

Methodology

A study using descriptive research is now being undertaken. The objective of this study is to assess the degree of environmental awareness among consumers in India and to determine the factors influencing their attitudes and likelihood of purchasing environmentally friendly products. The significant population under research consisted of customers

in India. A sample size of 150 residents was used in the study. The sample was selected using a random sampling technique in order to mitigate the presence of any possible biases in the data. The development of a questionnaire was informed by prior research, with the aim of evaluating customers' level of knowledge and attitude towards environmentally friendly products and their components. The data was obtained by the administration of a survey, where participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, with one representing "strongly agree" and five representing "strongly disagree."

Furthermore, to assess the extent of customers' friendly behaviour, a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (almost often) was used. Factor analysis and ecological frequency analysis were used to interpret the data that was gathered. The data was analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the demographics and viewpoints of the participants. The dependability of the statistic across all elements was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. In measuring a familiar construct, Cronbach's alpha is used to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the constituent parts of a measurement instrument. This enables quantification of the reliability of many elements. Coefficients equal to or higher than 0.7 are often regarded as excellent and serve as a reliable measure of construct reliability. Construct dependability indicators are generally acceptable when their coefficients are greater than or equal to 0.7. The reliability metric employed for this study was Cronbach's alpha, estimated to be 0.861. Hence, the information above has credibility and may be used effectively for further research.

Demographic profile of respondents

Table 2 Profile of Respondents

S. No.	Respondent's Characteristics	% of Respondents
1	Gender	
	Male	68
	Female	32
2	Age Group	
	Below 20	17.4
	20-26	48.2
	26-30	30.4
	Above 30	4
3	Occupation	
	Service/Professional	29
	Students	9.8
	Housewife	43.7
	Retired	17.5
4	Annual Income	
	Less than four lakhs	58.1
	4-10 lakhs	23.7
	10-15 lakhs	9.2
	More than 15 lakhs	9

According to the data shown in Table 2, the proportion of male respondents was 68 per cent, while the proportion of female respondents was 32 per cent. In the sample of respondents aged 20 and above, the proportions of individuals within the age groups of 26 years and 26-30 years were found to be 48.2% and 30.4% respectively. According to the demographic statistics, it is observed that 58.1 per cent of the customers had an annual income of less than four lacks. According to the statistics, 29% of those surveyed were working, while 43.7% identified themselves as housewives.

Analysis of Consumers' Awareness towards sustainability and environmental consciousness

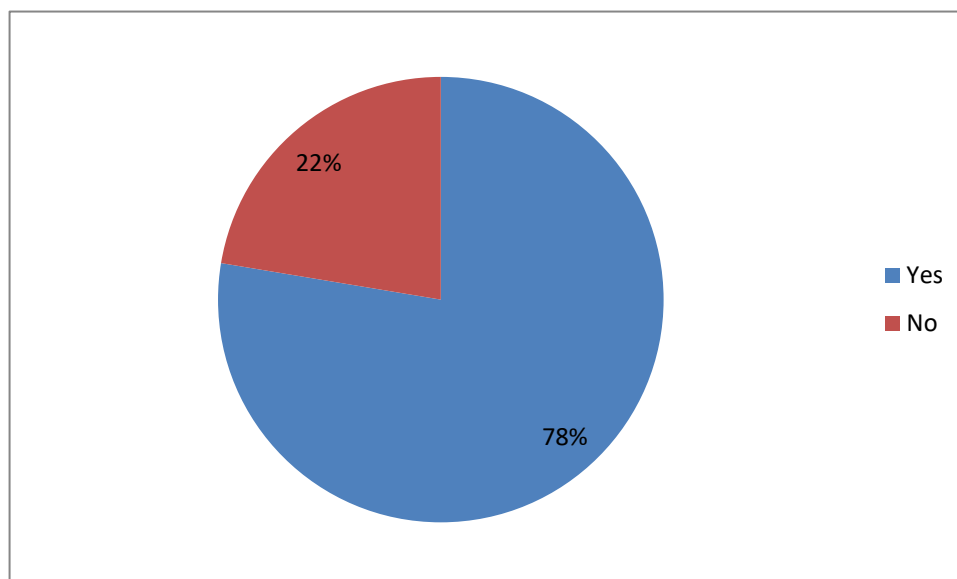
The analysis of consumer awareness towards green goods has been conducted using frequency distribution. The results indicate that 78.4% of respondents had a high level of knowledge about green products and their underlying ideas. In

contrast, a majority of 51.7% of the respondents expressed the belief that Indian corporations had neither given due consideration to this notion nor made any significant efforts towards its implementation. In regards to the comprehension of customers about the true essence of green goods, it was discovered that 73% of respondents needed clarification, while only 22% of consumers accurately associated with it. Fifty-three per cent of the respondents associate it with waste management and the preservation of resources.

Consumers' awareness towards companies promoting the concept of Green

Table 2

Yes	78.4
No	22.6

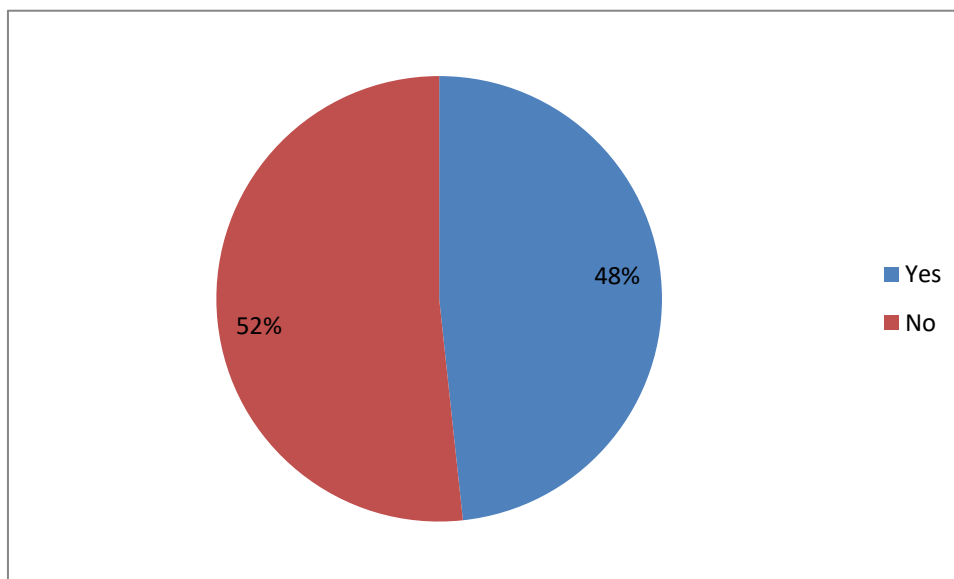


Companies' commitment to Green initiatives in India

Table 3

Yes	48.3
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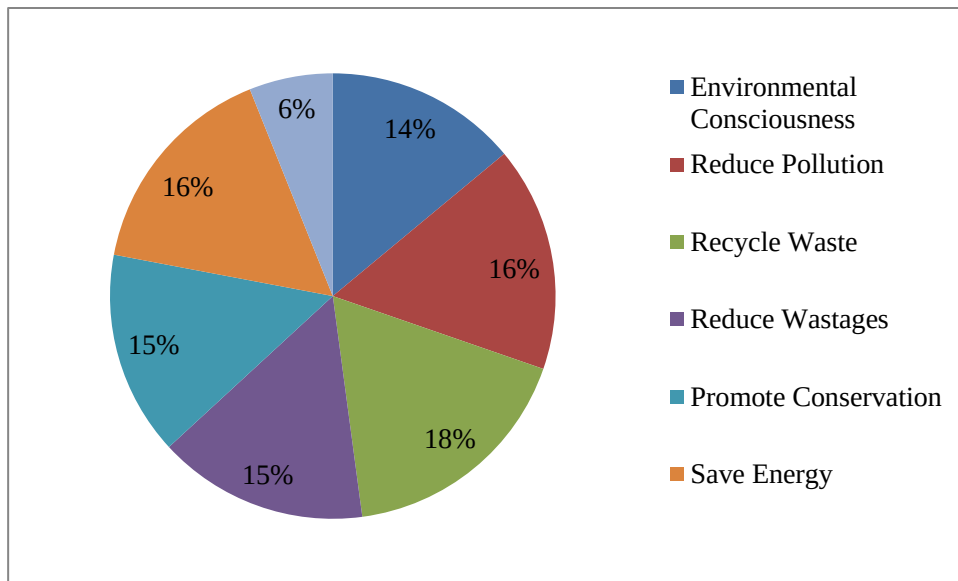
No	51.7
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Consumers' opinion about the concept of Green

Table 4

Environmental Concerns	Percentage
Environmental Consciousness	67.0%
Reduce Pollution	78.3%
Recycle Waste	84.3%
Reduce Wastages	73.2%
Promote Conservation	71.1%
Save Energy	76.5%
Corporate Social Responsibility	29.1%



Analysis of Consumers' Perception Towards Green Products

Consumers' opinions and experiences with a particular brand or product have a significant role in their purchasing decisions. Consumers' impressions reveal much about the businesses' successful psychological positioning. Making judgments about anything takes time, and it is impacted by many other things, including one's socioeconomic status, one's culture and religion, one's legal situation, and so on.

Their personal histories determine the way consumers feel about a product or brand. It is transient and subject to change as a result of changing internal and external circumstances. Therefore, factor analysis is used to determine the possible components that have a significant influence on consumers' attitudes regarding the notion of "green products." It is the collinearity among numerous metric parameters that is identified by the interdependency system. In this analysis, a component was deemed to be a significant contributor to a dimension if it had a loading of 0.50 or higher.

Five variables were identified using factor analysis, and they explain 60.45% of the total variation. Certain elements were found to have Eigenvalues larger than 1. Table 3 shows all factors, their items, and their factor loadings. The adequacy of

the sample is determined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity (see Table 2). offers Bartlett's test of sphericity to determine whether or not the variables in the factor analysis are correlated. Bartlett's test is shown to be statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000 in our research. In this research, we employed the KMO measure of sample adequacy to check whether Factor analysis was the right choice. With a KMO of 0.826, factor analysis may be performed in this investigation.

Factor 1 is concerned with the environment, Factor 2 is concerned with safety, Factor 3 is concerned with health, Factor 4 is concerned with availability, and Factor 5 is concerned with price.

Table 5 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure		0.826
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi-Square	1124.532
	Df	152
	Sig.	0.000

Factor Analyses

Table 6

Factors	Items	Factor Loadings
Environmental Concern	My involvement in environmental activities contributes to a better future.	0.764
	Using green products can reduce environmental pollution.	0.635
	Consumers should pay attention to the environmental impact of their purchases.	0.702
	I am willing to pay slightly higher taxes to support pollution	0.680

	control efforts.	
	I suggest switching to more eco-friendly brands.	0.594
Safety	Green products are known to be safe for use.	0.713
	Earth's resources should be used wisely to enhance our standard of living.	0.623
	The raw materials used in making green products are of high quality.	0.805
	Green products pose no health risks.	0.926
	Green products are certified for authenticity.	0.861
Concern for Health	Using green products can contribute to a longer and healthier life.	0.806
	Green products support overall well-being.	0.718
	Many consumers choose green products due to health concerns.	0.601
Availability	Green products are accessible in various locations.	0.678
	The availability of green products is widespread.	0.796
	Many people are aware of the ease of finding green products.	0.831
Price	Green products are competitively priced.	0.914
	Choosing green products is cost-effective and saves money.	0.725

The study results demonstrate the significance of using environmental awareness strategies to influence consumer behaviour, as seen by the strong influence of environmental concerns on consumers' willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. The absence of dangerous ingredients in green products also impacts the perceptions of value held by consumers. The use of environmentally friendly products contributes to an extended lifespan and promotes

stability in the future, hence emphasizing the significance of health. The presence of environmentally friendly products has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes, but these goods are often priced more than their traditional counterparts. Retailers should prioritize stocking a wide range of green merchandise. Indian consumers have shown a willingness to incur additional costs for environmentally friendly products, especially those that enhance their well-being and overall standard of living. Nevertheless, it has been shown that consumers need more willingness to provide a budget above 10-15% for the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

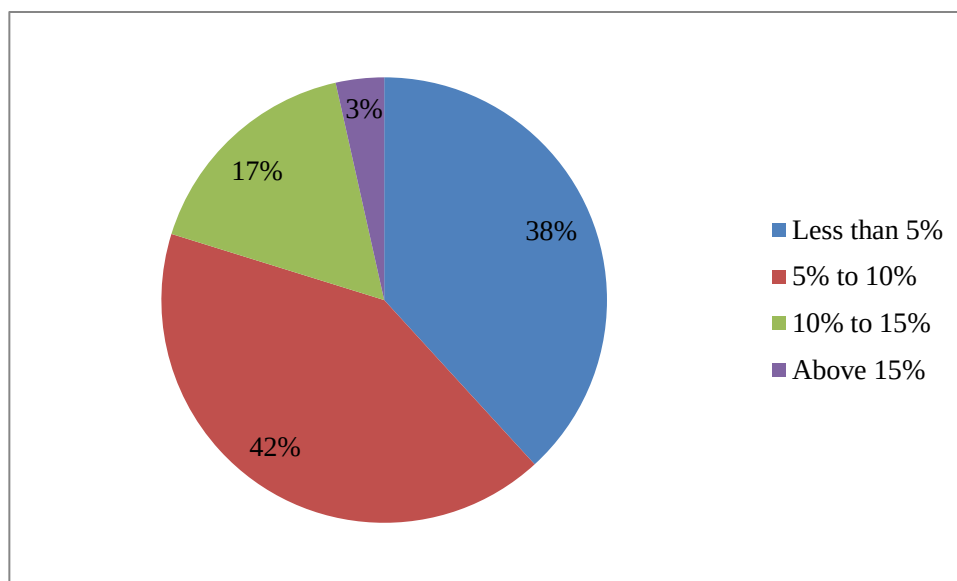
Analysis Of Consumers' Propensity to Spend on Eco-Friendly Goods

A pie chart demonstrating customer demand for green items and their associated pricing. If the total cost of ownership is lower than the actual cost, 41.6% of the participants indicated their willingness to allocate an additional 5-10% of their budget towards environmentally friendly products. A significant majority of consumers, namely 72%, expressed a willingness to incur more costs in exchange for ecologically sustainable products, including a range of commodities, including toiletries, food, electronics, and home goods.

Consumer is Paying Willingness

Table 7

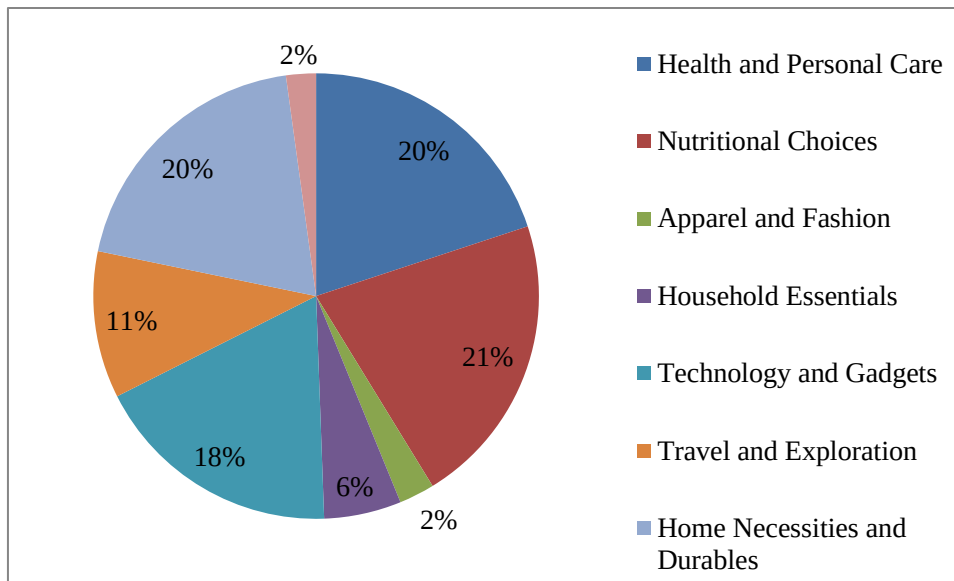
Income Range	Percentage
Less than 5%	38.2%
5% to 10%	41.6%
10% to 15%	16.7%
Above 15%	3.5%



Product Category

Table 8

Lifestyle Categories	Consumer Preferences (%)
Health and Personal Care	88.2
Nutritional Choices	94.3
Apparel and Fashion	11.4
Household Essentials	24.8
Technology and Gadgets	80.3
Travel and Exploration	47.2
Home Necessities and Durables	86.7
Stylish Accessories	9.6



Discussion

According to De Carlo and Barone (2005), the strategic positioning of corporations based on environmental concerns has led to an increased consumer interest in purchasing high-end items. Marks & Spencer and Tesco, prominent retailers in the industry, have both embraced carbon labelling initiatives, while ITC has initiated the integration of environmentally friendly strategies. According to Singh (2007), enterprises that adopt energy-conservation strategies gain a competitive edge within the market, thus prompting their competitors to follow suit. It is incumbent upon businesses to undertake the task of educating clients of the advantages associated with environmentally friendly products while also fostering the cultivation of positive attitudes towards such items. Business enterprises have the opportunity to tap into the potential of the environmentally-conscious market by facilitating consumers in modifying their behaviour, therefore removing obstacles that hinder the alignment of their ambitions with their actual actions.

Limitations and Future Studies

Only a tiny number of people participated in the research. To learn more about how Indian consumers feel about eco-

friendly goods, future studies might use a broader sample drawn from around the country. Consumer decision-making may be better understood if factors including attitude, environmental concern, altruism, and previous buying patterns are studied. Quantitative pilot testing may provide light on qualitative concerns, allowing for the creation of scales to measure customer behaviour in relation to green product attributes. This will aid in the development of more thorough and efficient research plans.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to get insight into customer attitudes and preferences about environmentally friendly products. Significant problems were discovered, including factors such as environmental concerns, pricing, safety, welfare, and accessibility. The characteristics above, in conjunction with item categorization, have a substantial impact on the monetary value that customers are inclined to allocate towards the purchase of environmentally friendly items. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for governmental bodies, legislators, producers, and marketers, enabling them to get a comprehensive understanding of the market opportunities associated with green product categories. The majority of participants demonstrated familiarity with the notion of "green"; however, there were little variations in their comprehension of the idea. In order to promote the adoption of environmentally friendly goods and behaviours, it is necessary to design diverse educational programs that prioritize the aspects of safety, health, and personal advantages. It is recommended that government authorities allocate resources towards the implementation of public education initiatives pertaining to safety concerns and regulations associated with environmentally friendly goods. It is essential to build a comprehensive structure that enables marketers to formally declare the extent to which their goods adhere to safety standards. Local politicians need to enforce compulsory environmental certifications across all businesses.

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