

## **IDENTIFICATION OF THE FACTORS BUILDING CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION ON GREEN DURABLE PRODUCTS: A SHORT COMMUNICATION**

**\*Ghose A. and Chandra B.**

<sup>1</sup>*Globsyn Business School, Kolkata*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Management Studies, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad*

*\*Author for Correspondence*

### **ABSTRACT**

For about last three decades, environment, problem has become one of the serious challenges before the world and for the sustenance of human civilization. Global warming due to greenhouse gas emissions and ecological imbalances is the main cause of environmental problems led by consumption driven society. This study aimed to explore the factors constituting the perception towards green durable products. We used inductive content analysis for exploring the factors building the Indian consumers' perception on green durable products. As a result, factors that constitute perception on sustainable consumption behaviour on green durable products are nature linkage, better product, ecological concern, sustainable environment, safe to use, product longevity, energy issues, and good manufacturing practices. This study infers an iota of associations between the perception and variables configuring it.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, Green Consumer Behaviour, Green Marketing*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The voices of sustainable consumerism are receiving a fresh potency in Indian subcontinent due to its voluntary and unbinding commitment towards the environment. The notion is further endorsed by the fact that each purchase has tacit implication on resources, wastage, community and environment at large. These durable products mainly comprise of electronic and electrical home appliances that consume electricity, emits greenhouse gases, and has a disposal hazard. Today, manufacturers are challenged with three cardinal issues which include electricity consumption efficiency, curbing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing disposal hazards. Consequently, the marketers of consumer durable products are exploring market opportunities for their products complying sustainability norms. To gain confidence for marketability of these products, it is important to discern the consumption pattern of Indian consumers and their future likelihood to use sustainable consumer durable products. Demand in urban markets is likely to increase for non-essential products e.g., LED TVs, Laptop, Split ACs etc. Whereas, in rural markets, durable products like Refrigerators, electronic products are likely to witness a growing demand in the coming years as the government plans to invest heavily in rural electrification (IBEF, 2014). The consumption is increasing due to greater reach of companies' in rural markets and customized products for the rural market; lower penetration in the past generating demand for first time buyers; and increasing rural income with higher non-farm income. A rash of studies evidences research on sustainable consumption behaviour pertaining to food products, organic food products and packaged products, but less attention has been given to consumer durable products in Indian market. Against this backdrop, this study attempts to explore the factors leading to sustainable, durable product consumption and their relationships for designing a network view on sustainable consumption behaviour of Indian consumers towards consumer durable products. The study chiefly resorted to qualitative research methods involving inductive content analysis for developing a network view to understand the perception of consumers towards green durable products.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In this study, data were collected conveniently through field survey on self-administered questionnaires that contained items about demographic characteristics as shown in table 1, question on, how do you

## Research Article

associate the word green in respect to consumer durable products. Total 60 respondent's responses have been collected during 17 September to 28 November 2014. The responses collected were open ended in nature. In order to operationalize the analysis, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package called Atlas.ti 7 was used to perform content analysis, to find out the how they perceived green consumer durable products.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Age	25 to +/- 50 years (n= 60)		
Gender	Male	45	76.3%
	Female	14	23.7%
Education	Undergraduate	1	1.7%
	Graduate	10	16.9%
	Postgraduate & above	48	81.4%
Income	Upto 20000	10	16.9%
	21000 – 40000	18	30.5%
	41000 – 60000	9	15.3%
	60000 & above	22	37.3%
Occupation	Service	51	86.4%
	Business	1	1.7%
	Professional	7	11.9%
	Entrepreneur	0	0%

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By using Atlas.ti 7, we were able to administer the content analysis effectively in figure 1, and as a result, we emanated with numerous open codes with their corresponding axial codes in table 2 (Wright, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

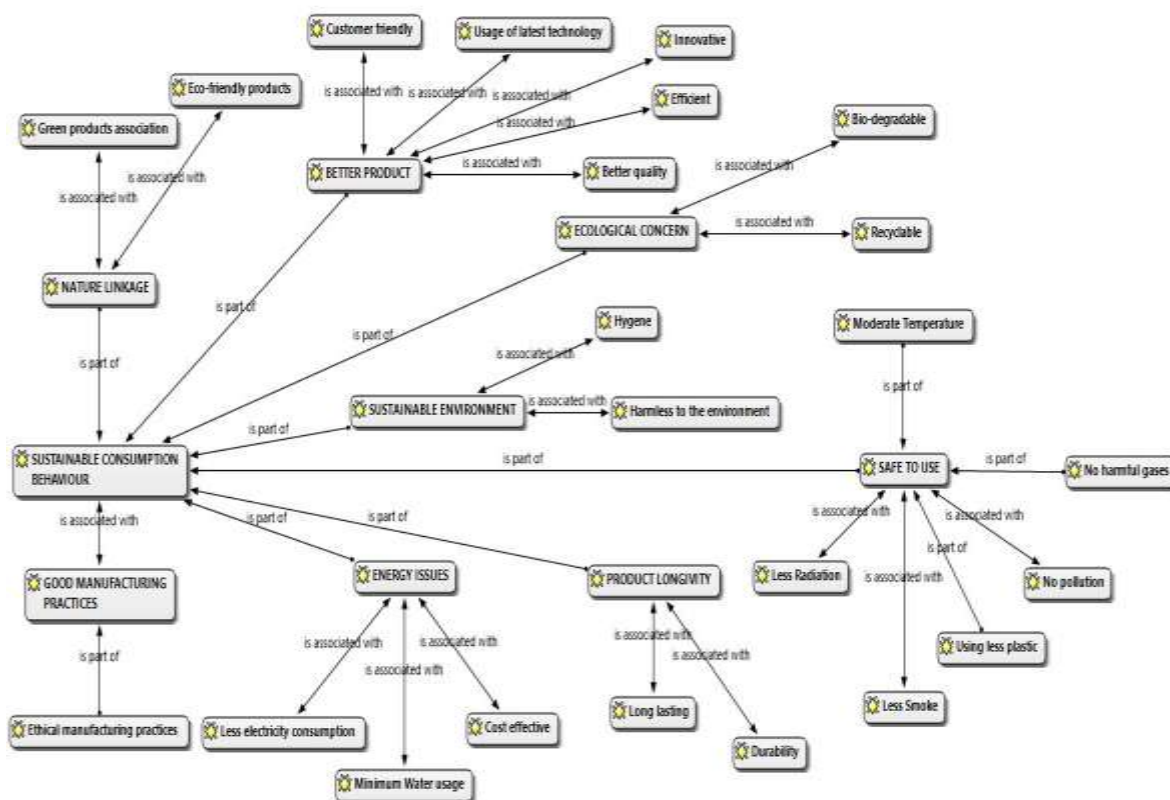
These open codes helped the study in establishing relationship between the perception on sustainable consumption behaviour and demographic characteristics (Saha & Chandra, 2015). In table 2, we described the comments of respondents in verbatim obtained from Atlas.ti7, however, these verbatim shows the significant relationship with the factors.

**Table 2: Perception about green durable products in verbatim**

Axial code (Factors)	No of Responses	Responses in Verbatim
Sustainable Environment	19	Hygiene and harmless to the environment is what they perceive about green durable products
Ecological Concern	12	Biodegradable and recyclable features of the product is considered as green durable product
Nature Linkage	10	Green products association and eco-friendly products are perceived as green durable product
Better Product	16	Customer friendly, usage of latest technology, innovative, efficient and better quality are perceived as green durable products
Safe to use	14	Moderate temperature, no harmful gases, no pollution, using less plastic, less smoke and less radiation products are perceived as green durable products
Product Longevity	12	Long lasting and durability is perceived as green durable products
Energy Issues	38	Less electricity consumption, cost effective and minimum water usage are considered as green durable products
Good Manufacturing Practices	9	Ethical manufacturing practices is considered as a part of green durable products

## Research Article

While experimenting with the responses, some respondents signify **better products** are the part of sustainable consumption and this product associated with customer friendly, usage of latest technology, innovative, efficient and better quality (Sarigollu, 2009). Many customers are also aware of **sustainable environmental** issues and consequently choose products that are hygiene, harmless to the environment and do not damage the environment over less environmentally friendly products, even if they cost more. Consumers with positive environmental attitudes are normally willing to pay a higher price for green products (Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Peattie, 2001). This is creating an opportunity for the firms that are using ‘eco-friendly’ as a component of their value proposition. Companies offering products with an environmental marketing - mix enjoys a long term competitive advantage. A better understanding of **nature linkage** buying behaviour will enable firms to adopt a more market friendly approach to sustain in the competitive market (Dantas *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, green, durable product quality is also an important factor for most consumers. Green consumers generally rely on those brands that are not ready to compromise on the environmental safety as well as on the **product longevity** (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2003; Gan *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, many respondents have indicated that they are not willing to forgo essential product benefits. Hence, green products must also perform competitively not only according to **ecological concern** (Phau and Ong, 2007), but also on the basis of other important product features, for example, convenience or durability (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2003).



**Figure 1: Network view on perception of respondents for green durable products**

Moreover, most of the respondents signified their view on **the energy issue** pertaining to green products and they said that they prefer to buy the product that consumed less electricity, minimum water usage and are cost effective (Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Peattie, 2001). Respondents also highlighted their perception on safe to use (Mahenc, 2008) and good manufacturing practices (D'Souza *et al.*, 2006) as important factors of green products. Therefore, it is evident that these factors are likely to influence green consumer durable product purchase behaviour of Indian consumers.

## Research Article

### Conclusion

This study primarily focused on to identify the building blocks of consumer perception towards green durable products. The study was chiefly explorative and used inductive content analysis for grouping of variables to form factors representing the perception on green durable products. This study unfolds factors that constitute perception on sustainable consumption behaviour on green durable products include nature linkage, better product, ecological concern, sustainable environment, safe to use, product longevity, energy issues, and good manufacturing practices. The findings of the research study, though, support a generally prevailing notion that consumers hold positive attitudes towards green durable products and hence, warrant a comprehensive study proposed to be conducted on a randomly selected representative sample using quantitative research techniques to corroborate the findings of the qualitative research.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to accord sincere thanks to Shri. Shantanu Saha (SRF, ISM Dhanbad) for providing necessary inputs relevant to the study.

### REFERENCES

- Dantas MI, MinimVP, Deliza R and Puschmann R (2004).** The effect of packaging on the perception of minimally processed products. *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing* **16**(2) 71-83.
- D'Souza C, Taghian M, Lamb P and Peretiatkos R (2006).** Green products and corporate strategy: an empirical investigation. *Society and Business Review* **1**(2) 144-157.
- Diamantopoulos A, Bohlen GM and Schlegelmilch BB (1994).** Predicting green purchasing decisions from measures of environmental consciousness: a two sample comparison. In: *Proceedings of the 1994 Marketing Educators Group Conference, Coleraine* 252-61.
- Gan C, Wee HY, Ozanne L and Kao TH (2008).** Consumers' purchasing behaviour towards green products in New Zealand. *Innovative Marketing* **4**(1) 93-102.
- Glaser B and Strauss A (1967).** *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Weidenfield and Nicolson) London.
- IBEF (2014).** *Consumer Durables*. Available: [http://www.ibef.org/download/Consumer\\_Durables\\_10708.pdf](http://www.ibef.org/download/Consumer_Durables_10708.pdf) and the Data Source was (Accessed on [02/01/2015]).
- Laroche M, Bergeron J and Barbaro-Forleo G (2001).** Targeting consumers who are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* **18**(6) 503-520.
- Mahenc P (2008).** Signalling the environmental performance of polluting products to green consumers. *International Journal of Industrial Organization* **26**(1) 59-68.
- Phau I and Ong D (2007).** An investigation of the effects of environmental claims in promotional messages for clothing brands. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* **25**(7) 772-788.
- Peattie K (2001).** Towards sustainability: the third age of green marketing. *The Marketing Review* **2**(2) 129-146.
- Saha S and Chandra B (2015).** Study on identification of the factors impacting blood donation in Jharkhand, India. *Indian Journal of Fundamental Applied Life Sciences* **5**(S3) 1-4.
- Sarigöllü E (2009).** A cross-country exploration of environmental attitudes. *Environment and Behavior* **41**(3) 365-386.
- Wright LT (2008).** Qualitative Research. In: *The Marketing Textbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by Baker M (Elsevier) Oxford, chapter 9.