(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Impact of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products: An analytical study in Delhi/NCR

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Abstract

Social norms are the social behavior of the individual to observe things. It is a generally accepted principle of society. Social Norms can be changed according to the environment, situation, and culture in which they are found. Accordingly, people's behavior may also change. As we observed that there is a severe threat to our natural environment and its deteriorating condition may cause harmful impacts on human health. Although in the present times the societies have become more aware and concerned about the environment but still a long way to achieve the target of a healthy environment. Consumer perception is going towards the changes in the perspective of consumption of goods and services and it tries to move towards green products as compared to conventional products. In that way, green marketing promotes and supports green products. The core objectives of the study are to find out the impact of social norms that form consumer perception towards green consumer durable products, especially in Delhi/NCR. To prove the hypotheses of the study descriptive statistics has been used with the help of statistical packages for social sciences software version 26. A well-structured 5 point Likert scale questionnaire is formed to collect the data with the help of a simple random sampling method.

Keywords: Social norms; Consumer Perception; Green Consumer Durable Products; Green Purchase Behavior; Green Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

In recent decades, India has attained remarkable economic growth by systematizing improvement on financial market development and an open trade policy (Agrawal, 2015). This tremendous industrial growth has also brought many unwanted consequences to the environment. There has been increasing air and water pollution that affected society and human beings (Sanderson, et al., 2013). As a result, consumers understand the need to save the environment and there has been a change in the consumption pattern of the consumers.

Consumers are now more focused on the social and ethical norms of the society and seeking to maintain social norms towards the environment. 'Social norms are unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or a society' (Leod 2008). In the case of merging social norms in the personal values, generally people act more eco-friendly. Social norms effects personal norms to behave more environmentally friendly, and it performed mediating the role between social norms and environmentally friendly behavior (Thogersen, 2006).

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Social norms and environmental friendly behavior established that social environment influences people's behavior hence social norms is a major factor that drives people behavior and motivation (Reynolds, 2015). Therefore social norms have been considered as the major factor to predict green consumerism. There are two aspects associated with social norms that affect individual behavior in an interactive way i.e., descriptive norm and injunctive norm. Descriptive norm is the perception, that people generally do or do not behave in a specific action, affecting the way people behave in a given situation. However injunctive norm describes as a perception of what people should do in the context of the performance of an action and give informal rules for acceptance and rejection of certain cultures (Cialdini, 1998). In social norms, injunctive norms have a great influence in guiding people's behavior than descriptive norms (Jacobson, 2011).

Green products are considered environmentally friendly goods and services with less detrimental impact on the environment. Many consumers are reluctant to consume products that are relatively polluting to the environment or harmful to a human being in society. Although many consumers are not interested to consume green products due to their consumption pattern, resistance to use new technology, premium prices charge for the new products, that lead to the barrier in the sale of these products (Zhang, 2020). Therefore, it is of great need to understand the factors influencing consumers' perception towards purchasing green products. As per (Walters and Bergiel, 1989) Consumer Perception is a "Process during which an individual acquires knowledge about the environment and interprets the information according to his/her needs, requirements and attitudes." In general terms, consumer perception means to collect information about particular products and interpret the information to create a meaningful image of the product (*Mburu, 2009).*

This paper try to find out the impact of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products, here green consumer durable products means durable products with environmental safe attributes. The Indian consumer durable industry has witnessed a considerable change over the last few years. Consumer Durable involves a product purchase by consumers that is manufactured for long-term use.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Social Norms

Social norms are the informal rules of society and group that govern people behavior. In the other sense, a social norm is what people in some group believe to be normal in the group, that is, believed to be a typical action, an appropriate action, or both (Paluck and Ball, 2010). (Bicchieri and Muldoon, 2011) defines social norms in terms of one's beliefs about the actions and beliefs of others in the reference group. A social norm is constructed by one's beliefs about what others do, and by one's beliefs about what others think one should do (Mackie et al, 2015). Social norms are customary rules of behavior that coordinate our interactions with others (Young, 2007).

2.2. Consumer perception

Perception, according to Gregory (1995) "is a union of activity by which an individual becomes aware of and interpret information about the environment" (Agyekum et al, 2015). According to Markin (1995) perception is concerned with how we select and recognize sensory data presented by our environment. In other words perception may be defined as a complex process by which people select, organized and interpret sensory stimuli into meaningful picture of the world (Vraneševic and Stančec, 2003). Perception plays a very important role in the consumer's life (Agyekum et al, 2015). Kotler and Armstrong (2011) "Each individual receives and interprets the environmental stimulus in different ways, due to the high subjectivity that is inherent to each one's perception", being influenced by their perceptions consumers will buy from organizations that provide the highest consumer-perceived value for them (Cozer, 2018).

2.3. Green Product as a solution of Environmental Degradation

Green product can be defined as an activity of designing goods and services by minimizing environmental impact during the production cycle. Green products can lower the negative impact on the environment and ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations (Shami and Siddiqui, 2017). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has defined green products can be prevented, reduced environmental damage, such as ecosystems, waste, noise, water, air and soil (Zakharova et al, 2015). Song and Yu (2018) defined the green product as any product that is designed and produced according to many criteria for protecting the environment and minimizing the attrition of natural resources while preserving the original performance features .(AL-Ghaswyneh, 2019).

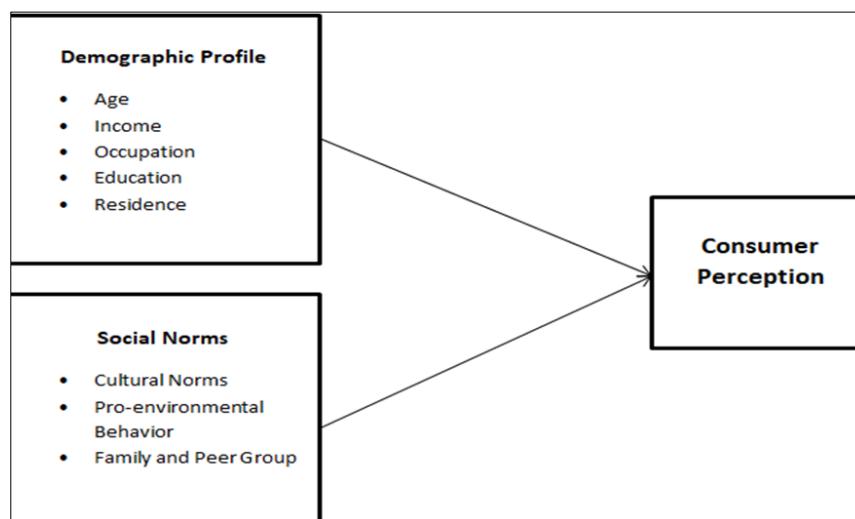**2.4. Relation between Social Norms and Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products**

Social norms are the major drivers of individual behavior and important in consumer decision making (Melnyk and et al, 2021). Social norms also influence personal norms to behave more environmentally responsible as personal norm play a mediating role between social norms and pro-environmental behavior (Ahn and et al, 2020). Social norms have great influence on purchase intention and mediate the relationship green identity and purchase intention (Kim and et al, 2012). Social norms have positive effect on consumer environmental attitude and purchase behavior pointing towards green products (Lin and et al, 2018). Environmental, Social and ethical values carry by consumers with their individualistic values have a positive influence on green purchase behavior (Joshi and et al, 2015). Social norms are significant predictor of pro-environmental behavior and encourage consumers to discuss more about green products to their friends or family (Culiberg and Gambier, 2016). The role of moral motivation in increasing the demand for consumer products and pro environmental behavior is very crucial and important (Nyborg and et al, 2006). Social norms originated from cultural norms of the people surroundings. Formulating marketing strategies to specific cultural segment may be important than focusing standardization (Saracevic, 2021). The social environment has great influence on green purchase behavior and has positive influence on green purchase intention (Choshaly, 2017). Many studies revealed that social group especially peers and other individual with close proximity to consumers have strong influence on green purchase decision-making process (Lee, 2010). Social influence has a significant impact on young consumer intention towards green products (Sharaf et al, 2017). Social norms are generally measured in view of peers, culture and organization. Consumer behavior inevitably involve with the people around them which determine the social behavior of individual (Zhang, 2020). Green product performs a role of effective marketing strategies that emphasize the social and environmental importance of green products in achieving customer satisfaction (AL-Ghaswyneh 2019).

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the different factors of Social Norms that influences Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.
- To find out the role of Social Norms on Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.
- To analyze the impact of Social Norms on Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

- H01: There is no impact of Demographic factors (Gender, Age, Marital Status, Income, education, occupation and residence) on consumer perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.
- H02: There is no relationship between Social Norms and Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.
- H03: There is no impact of Social Norms on Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.

Figure 1 Proposed Model of the Study for Social Norms and Consumer Perception by Author's Own Creation

4. Research Methodology

The study is empirical and descriptive in nature and its main objective is to find out the impact of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. The questions were asked related to the demographic profile of the respondents and social norms including consumer awareness, consumer knowledge, and consumer concern towards green consumer durable products.

4.1. Data Collection Technique

Both primary and secondary data were collected to attain the objectives of the study. The primary data was collected through a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The data collection was done online using Google form and also collected via face-to-face interviews and telephonic interviews were taken from people.

Secondary data was collected through published previous research papers including UGC Care listed and Scopus journals, newspapers, websites, and e-libraries.

4.2. Designing the questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that the hypotheses of the study may be tested. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions and five points Likert scale that is based on the following responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree ranging from 1 to 5.

4.3. The Sampling Design

A simple random sampling method was used to select the data. A simple random sampling method is the unbiased sampling method in which each member of the population has an equal opportunity of being chosen in the sample. The sample size is 209 respondents collected for the study from Delhi/NCR only.

4.4. Data Analysis Methods

The data collected from the primary source was subjected to various statistical tools for verification and interpretation. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for data analysis. Data Analysis was done with the help of descriptive and inferential analysis. For descriptive analysis percentage, cross tab and mean analysis was used to analysis the demographic information of the respondents. In the case of inferential statistics Chi-square, Regression, Correlation and ANOVA tests were used to analyze the hypotheses of the study. The correlation statistics method was also used to get the relationship among the variables.

4.5. Data Analyses

4.5.1. Data Analysis Methods

The Cronbach alpha for the four factors was computed, as presented in table 1 below:

Table 1 Reliability Analyses

Factors	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Demographic factors	5	0.756
Social factors (including cultural, personal and pro-environmental behavior)	4	0.908
	5	0.917
	4	0.772

The calculated Cronbach's Alpha value ranged between (0.756) and (0.917), which shows the good reliability for the factors. The value of Cronbach alpha ranges from r = 0 to 1, with r = 0.7 or greater considered as sufficient reliability among the variables [34] (Lavrakas, 2008).

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents, it is counted that 60% female and 40% male respondents were included in the study. In this study, age has been categorized into five groups and most of the respondents who participated in the study were in the age group from 14-25 years. According to data, the percentage of single

respondents was more than the married respondents. The level of education majority of the respondents was from undergraduate and graduate i.e., 59% and 55% respectively. The study covered the data of different occupations of the respondents including 60% respondents from self-employed and business person. The Monthly income of the respondents has been classified into four categories out of which the maximum numbers of respondents were from Rs.11,000 -Rs.50,000 and Delhi has covered the maximum number of respondents.

Table 2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	125.4	60
	Male	83.6	40
Age	14-25 Years	58.33	27.91
	26-35 Years	48.62	23.26
	36-45 Years	38.87	18.60
	46-55 Years	34.01	16.27
Marital Status	Single	135.85	65
	Married	73.15	35
Educational Qualification	No Formal Qualification	6.68	3.25
	Secondary	19.45	9.31
	Higher Secondary	27.21	13.02
	Undergraduate	57.34	27.44
	Graduate	53.46	25.58
	Post Graduate	31.09	14.88
	Doctorate	13.62	6.52
Occupation	Student	82.63	39.54
	Unemployed	11.68	5.59
	Govt. Employed	34.05	16.28
	Self Employed/ Business person	58.3	27.9
	Home Makers	22.34	10.69
Monthly Income	Up to Rs.10,000	19.43	9.30
	Rs.11,000- Rs.50,000	72.89	34.88
	Rs.11,000- Rs.50,000	87.36	41.86
	More than 1,00,000	29.05	13.9
Residence	Delhi	72.92	34.89
	Noida	38.87	18.60
	Ghaziabad	34.02	16.28
	Faridabad	38.87	18.60
	Gurgaon(Gurugram)	24.30	11.63
	Total	209	100

Table 3 ANOVA Test

Variables	Ranges	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P-value
Age of the Respondents	14-25 Years	85	3.85	1.018		
	26-35 Years	47	3.89	1.068		
	36-45 Years	37	3.84	1.214	2.179	0.073
	46-55 Years	27	3.67	1.240		
	55 Years and Above	13	2.92	1.441		
	Total	209	3.78	1.136		
Educational Qualification	No formal qualification	18	3.78	1.114		
	Secondary	21	3.90	1.179		
	Higher Secondary	32	3.72	1.023		
	Undergraduate	72	3.83	1.061	1.572	0.157
	Graduate	32	3.56	1.390		
	Post Graduate	28	4.07	0.900		
	Doctorate	6	2.67	1.633		
	Total	209	3.78	1.136		
Monthly Income	Up to Rs.10,000	32	3.97	0.897		
	Rs.11,000-Rs.50,000	76	3.80	1.143		
	Rs.51,000-Rs.1,00,000	66	3.76	1.110	1.879	0.116
	More than 1,00,000	34	3.65	1.300		
	Total	209	3.78	1.136		
Occupation	Student	84	3.87	0.967		
	Unemployed	41	3.93	1.010		
	Govt. Employed	31	3.32	1.351	1.687	0.154
	Self Employed/Business Person	41	3.83	1.283		
	Home maker	12	3.58	1.379		
	Total	209	3.78	1.136		
Residence	Delhi	77	3.81	1.113		
	Noida	42	4.00	0.855		
	Ghaziabad	33	3.61	0.998	1.713	0.148
	Faridabad	28	3.61	1.100		
	Gurgaon	29	4.14	0.875		
	Total	209	3.83	1.022		

To compare means of demographic factors with consumer perception the highest mean score of Age group of 26-35 Years i.e., 3.89 among the other age group. Educational Qualification of Post-Graduate students is 4.07 which is the highest mean value among the others. Mean value of monthly income of respondents Up to Rs. 10,000 is highest among the other income group i.e., 3.97. The mean score of unemployed respondents is 3.93 and the residence of Gurgaon is 4.14 highest among the other group. The highest mean indicates that all these factors are major demographic factors of

consumer perception. The highest standard deviation indicates that there is much variation in the performance of the respondents while the lowest standard deviation indicates the consistent performance of the respondents.

Table 3 also shows the result of the ANOVA test for demographic factors to know its impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. The (p) significance value for the age of the respondents was found to be 0.073 which is more than 0.05. Hence age does not have any significant impact on Consumer perception towards green consumer durable products.

The (p) significance value for educational qualification was found to be 0.157 which is more than 0.05. Hence education does not have any significant impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. The (p) significance value for the monthly income of the respondents was found to be .116 which is more than 0.05. Hence monthly income of the respondents does not have a significant impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. The calculated (p) significance value for occupation and residence of the respondents were found to be 0.154 and 0.148 respectively which are more than 0.05. Hence occupation and residence do not have a significant impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products.

5. Analyses of Social Norms and Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products

Table 4 Factor loading of factors of Social Norms

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
People who are important to me think that I should buy GCDP	1.000	0.746
My acquaintances would approve of my decision to buy GCDP	1.000	0.852
I feel social pressure to buy GCDP	1.000	0.751
I prefer to buy green products than conventional products (non- green products)	1.000	0.744
Green products are better option for future sustainability	1.000	0.828
Purchasing green products today will help to save the environment for future generation	1.000	0.833
I suggest my family members to go for GCDP	1.000	0.839
I know about Green (Eco-friendly) products	1.000	0.713
Human need to consume green products because they are environmentally friendly	1.000	0.689
I worried about the worsening of the quality of environment	1.000	0.992
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 4 show all the factors of social norms were analyzed by using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation statistical technique for factor loading. To find out the relationship among factors and to find out the principal factors to social norms, the principal component analysis was used to analyze the result. The result of the analysis showed 10 real factors with an eigenvalue greater than 0.7.

Table 5a Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.770a	0.592	0.578	0.418

a. Predictors: (Constant), I concern about environmental issues., My acquaintances would approve of my decision to buy GCDP, I know about environmental issues., I prefer to buy green products than conventional products (non- green products), People who are important to me think that I should buy GCDP, I feel social pressure to buy GCDP , I suggest my family members to go for GCDP.

Table 5b ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVA[a]						
1	Regression	50.972	7	7.282	41.739	0.000[b]
	Residual	35.066	201	0.174		
	Total	86.038	208			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products

b. Predictors: (Constant), I concern about environmental issues., My acquaintances would approve of my decision to buy GCDP, I know about environmental issues., I prefer to buy green products than conventional products (non- green products)?, People who are important to me think that I should buy GCDP, I feel social pressure to buy GCDP , I suggest my family members to go for GCDP

Table 5c Coefficients Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0-.627	0.281		-2.235	0.027
	SN_Var	0.020	0.025	0.033	0.811	0.418
	EA_Var	0.043	0.043	0.055	0.979	0.329
	EK_Var	-0.091	0.051	-0.097	-1.799	0.073
	EC_Var	1.172	0.053	0.851	22.011	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: CP (Consumer Perception)

Table 6 Correlation Matrix

		CP	SN_Var	EA_Var	EK_Var	EC_Var
CP	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000				
SN_Var	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.060 0.385	1.000			
EA_Var	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.089 0.199	0.380** 0.000	1.000		
EK_Var	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.013 0.846	0.263** 0.000	0.699** 0.000	1.000	
EC_Var	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.838** 0.000	-0.105 0.131	-0.105 0.131	0.042 0.543	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is given in Table 5 Regression coefficient 'R' = 0.770 or 77% indicates a correlation between dependent and independent variables is positive. The 'R2'= 0.592 coefficient of determination shows that 59.2% of the variation in dependent variables is explained by independent variables. The value of the F test = 41.739 shows significance as the significance level is 0.000, less than 0.05. This shows that the correlation between dependent and independent variables is statistically significant hence the regression model is valid.

The Standardize coefficient indicates the various factors of social norms impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. hence the study accept the null hypotheses as the p value greater than 0.05 level of significance, that there is no impact of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products.

The result of the correlation matrix (table 6) that shows the relationship between social norms and consumer perception towards green consumer durable products is positive which means there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

6. Result and Discussion

The purpose of this research paper is to study the impact of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. As per the study demographic factors of the consumers have been discussed and also showed the impact of all these factors on social norms. Table 3 demonstrates the result of the ANOVA test for demographic factors that mentioned the (p) significance value for age, educational qualification, monthly income, occupation, and residence of the consumers. The (p) significance value of age was found to be 0.073, 0.157 for educational qualification, 0.116 for monthly income, 0.154 and 0.148 for occupation and residence of the consumers. The result of all the (p) significance value of demographic factors is more than 0.05 which indicates that all the demographic factors including age, monthly income, occupation, educational qualification, occupation, and residence do not have a direct impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. Hence it is accepting the null hypothesis that there is no impact of Demographic factors (Income, education, occupation, and residence) on consumer perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products.

The factor loading method showed (Table 4) the eigen value of the 10 factors in which all the 9 factors are real factors of social norms except only one factor. The regression model (Table 5) showed the Analyses of Social Norms and Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products. The regression model demonstrates that the F- value =0.000 which is less than 0.05, shows that the correlation between dependent and independent variables is statistically significant. The result of the standard coefficient indicates that the p-value of all the variables of social norms is greater than 0.05, therefore, it does not support the alternative hypotheses although supports the null hypotheses. The correlation matrix (Table 6) showed that there is a positive relationship between dependent and independent variables of social norms that impact consumers' perception towards green consumer durable products.

7. Conclusion

The study was concluded to investigate the impact and relationship of social norms on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products. The study examined the different factors of social norms like cultural, personal and pro-environmental behavioral factors as well as also focused on the demographic profile of the consumers. The study explored the result that consumers have high concern and awareness towards the environment but their perception could be not formed properly. The other factors of social norms impact more on to established final consumer perception that is the reason there is no impact of Social Norms on Consumer Perception towards Green Consumer Durable Products. Somehow the correlation test favored the relationship between the social norms and consumer perception that means somehow it may reflect the decision to buy green consumer durable products. On the other side, demographic variables of the consumers do not have a significant impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products.

Overall, this study identified a positive relationship between social norms and consumer perception with the help of a correlation test but does not show its impact on consumer perception with the help of a regression test. The demographic factors of the consumers also do not show their major impact on consumer perception towards green consumer durable products.

The present study creates opportunities for marketers for developing green marketing strategies. Marketers can understand and identify the main problems of the consumers towards purchasing green consumer durable products so that they can design their marketing strategies accordingly. The research also provides knowledge and awareness to the society regarding the green consumer durable products but there are further and advanced understanding required for the consumers. The main limitation of the study is that area of research is limited only to Delhi/NCR respondents and the majority of the respondents are from the 14-25 years of age group and study mainly focused only on green consumer durable products.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest regarding this manuscript.

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