

A Study Of Eco-Friendly Behaviour Among Customers Of Durg With Respect To The Plastic Bags Usages

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Abstract: Environmental degradation in India happened due to unplanned urbanisation, extensive industrialisation and other economic development activities (Azim, 2009). More and more developed countries because of their unsustainable industrial practices are responsible for emission of various harmful gases into the environment. But with the intervention of various government agencies and corporate, stakeholders of companies around the globe become conscious about such sensitive issue and thus advocated the usage of transparent eco-friendliness in various operations. Present paper is an attempt to reveal the importance of eco-friendly carry bags usage among the customers who visit markets in order to purchase any stuff with respect to the non-eco-friendly carry bags. Following are the primary objectives of the study:

- ✓ *To examine various factors that influence eco-friendly behaviour of customers; and*
- ✓ *To segment the customers on the basis of their identical characteristics.*

Keeping in mind the above objectives, a structured questionnaire comprises of 13 closed ended questions was developed and used to collect data from the sample of 68 persons selected randomly from Durg city, and analysed with the help of SPSS 22. On analysis, customers were segmented into three categories namely Introvert Green Customers; Neutral Green Customers; and Extrovert Green Customers.

Keywords: *Environmental Degradation, Environment, Eco-friendly Carry Bags, & Customers*

I. INTRODUCTION

Technologies played a vital role in the development of the human civilisation. Today industries all over the globe introduced new and latest technologies for the production of superior goods that possess unique attributes then their market competitors thus result in capturing maximum market shares in terms of the customers. According to Kotler et al (2013), ideas are floating which shrinks the gap between the development and execution. It reflected the dynamic nature of the market and thus companies paying more attention toward research and development in order to upgrade their products or services. On the other side, customers directly or indirectly forcing them to introduce such changes thus reflected change in their behaviour. Unfortunately, the word “materialism” is no more unknown to us, and is a theory that promotes the physical goods among individuals more, ignoring the

consequences of technological development i.e. environmental degradation.

Environmental degradation is the result of unsustainable human practices, and occurred due to ruining of natural environment by depletion of natural resources such as air, water, soil, and land. Environmental degradation in our country happened due to unplanned urbanisation, extensive industrialisation and other economic development activities (Azim, 2009). Today “capitalistic” industries and “materialistic” customers are the major highlighters of environmental depletion. Unsustainable human practices lead human civilisation toward the era of crisis. Crisis in terms of natural resources availability, which was abundance in quantity few decades back. And rise to a new problem called as “global warming”. Global warming is described as the gradual increase in the temperature of the earth surface and the ocean. More and more developed nations because of their

extensive and unsustainable industrial practices are responsible for emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere. At microscopic level, the situation is very worst. According to a research conducted by Gallup in United Nation, the threat of global warming increased from 25 percent in 1998 to 40 percent in 2008 (Kotler et al. 2013).

But with the intervention of various agencies working in conservation, and protection of natural environment, stakeholders of companies round the globe are conscious about such critical and sensitive issue. In 2007 a research conducted by Stanford University revealed that 94 percent of Americans were willing to change their actions in order to improve the environment (Kotler et al. 2013). Thus the attitude of consumers are changing with respect to the usefulness of eco-friendly products (Straughan, & Roberts 2001; Kilbourne, & Polonsky 2005; Yaacob, & Zakaria 2011; Meng 2011and; Zakersalehi et al. 2012). Not only this, but the companies are also transforming their whole production processes to eco-friendly. They concentrate on green innovation (Lin, & Ho 2008) in order to manufacture eco-friendly products (Gokan, & Vaidya 1993; Van Oss, & Padovani 2003) and also take utter most care in green forward and backward integration (Min, & Galle 1997; Chein, & Shih 2007; Kumar et al. 2012). This in turn reflected that intense pressure on firms to practice green in their operations are diverted toward eco-friendly technologies.

Present paper is an attempt to reveal the importance of eco-friendly carry bags usage among the customers who visit markets in order to purchase any stuff with respect to non-eco-friendly carry bags. Though eco-friendly carry bags comprises of both plastic and non-plastic carry bags which can be easily recycle, but large chunk of customers consider plastic carry bags harmful for their health, and environment which indicate lack of awareness among them.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gender of the customers played an important role in determining the usage of eco-friendly products by them (Bjork 1998; Straughan & Roberts 1999; Juwaheer 2005; D'Souza et al. 2007; Bhuian et al. 2007; Banyle 2010; Awan & Raza 2010; Shaammot 2011; Zakersalehi et al. 2012; Subhani et al. 2012; Aman et al. 2012; Goswami 2008; Dutta et al. 2008; Saxena & Khandelwal 2010; Maheshwari & Malhotra 2011; Ahamed & Ravi 2012; Vashisht, Wadhwa, & Uppal 2012; Padiya & Vala 2012). Diamantopoulous et al. (2003) conducted a research and found that male respondents (mean value= 34.94) were more knowledgeable regarding environmental related issues when compared to their female counterpart (mean value= 34.30). In case of environmental attitude among gender, females (mean value= 74.06) had positive attitude as compared to the male (mean value= 71.76). Interestingly, female respondents (mean value= 23.92) preferred to purchase eco-friendly products more than male (mean value= 22.64). Drozdenko et al. (2011)examined consumer perception related to green products pricing and found that male homemakers were willing to spend \$ 506.12 which was more than their female counter \$ 422.5, in case of water heater with tax credit.

Dutta et al. (2008) studied the comparison of consumer's green practices adopted in India, and America. Positive media promotion (Thogersen, 2006) transformed the attitude of the consumers toward usage of eco-friendly products, and thus provide information to the customers. Researchers found that television as the main source of information (Xia, & Zeng 2008) and thus modified the green behaviour of the customers (Gan et al. 2008; Ahmad et al. 2010; Zakersalehi et al. 2012; Subhani et al. 2012; Aman et al. 2012; Iravani et al. 2012; Saxena & Khandelwal 2010; Goyal et al. 2011; Padiya & Vala 2012). In case, the customers were provided with sufficient knowledge regarding green products, they were more likely to purchase such products (Maheshwari & Malhotra 2011). Hindol (2012) conducted a study in order to determine the gap in green consumer's behaviour, and marketer's environmental advertising in India and concluded that majority of the student respondents (mean value= 3.98) considered to purchase eco-friendly products.

Moreover, consumers were willing to pay more than the premium price (Bjork 1998; Xia & Zeng 2008; Awan, & Raza 2010; Banyle 2010; Awan & Raza 2010; Yaacob & Zakaria 2011; Drozdenko et al. 2011; Junaedi 2012; Dutta et al. 2008; Maheshwari & Malhotra 2011; Vernekar & Wadhwa 2011; Padiya, & Vala 2012) which could varied from 5 percent to 10 percent or some time even more, depending upon the nature of the eco-friendly products, and other demographical variables of the customers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the major objectives of the study:

- ✓ To examine factors that influence the eco-friendly behaviour of customers; and
- ✓ To segment customers based to their identical characteristics.

III. METHODOLOGY

- ✓ Scope of the Study: With total population of Chhattisgarh more than 2.5 crores, only the population of urban areas are considered for the study. Total 68 respondents were randomly selected constituted the study. Due to moderate literacy level among urban population as compared their rural counterpart thus only urban population was considered for the survey. Also the propagation of information regarding the eco-friendly products is more in urban areas of Chhattisgarh.
- ✓ Data Collection: Keeping in mind the above objectives, a structured questionnaire with 13 close ended questions were developed and used to collect data.
- ✓ Software Package Used: In order to analysis the data, SPSS 22 was used. Cluster Analysis was the technique used for segmentation on customers based on the data.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
68	100.0%	0	0.0%	68	100.0%

a. Squared Euclidean Distance used

Table 1: Case Processing Summary

Interpretation: Table 1 provided that all data are valid with no repetitions. Thus reflected that the data have been collected from primary survey method with no proxy.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.739	13

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Interpretation: Table 2, stated that internal reliability of the questionnaire is 0.739 which is considered to be reliable, as the value exceed from 0.70

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.400 ^a	.160	-.043	.481

Table 3: Model Summary with respect to Gender

Model	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.164	.582		3.717	.000
	Hesitate to purchase plastic carry bags	.017	.061	.044	.284	.777
	Preference to Store	-.048	.060	-.130	-.787	.435
	Health & Environmental Conscious	.030	.092	.059	.323	.748
	Availability of Plastic Carry Bags	-.141	.112	-.204	-1.264	.212
	Oppose of Plastic Carry Bags	.018	.074	.039	.239	.812
	Think Before Purchase of Plastic Carry Bags	-.030	.070	-.069	-.428	.670
	Availability of Eco-friendly Carry Bags	.036	.064	.080	.560	.578
	Promotion through Newspaper	-.040	.063	-.092	-.633	.529
	Promotion through Television	-.044	.077	-.083	-.570	.571

State the Usefulness of Eco-friendly Carry Bags by the Store owners	.055	.052	.155	1.057	.295
Willingness to pay more	-.028	.057	-.085	-.489	.627
Satisfied by using eco-friendly carry bags	.058	.067	.144	.858	.394
Inspire others	-.104	.066	-.281	-1.577	.121

a. Dependent Variable: Gender

Table 4: Coefficients with respect to Gender

Interpretation: R square value is 0.160 which stated that all independent variables in the model account for 16% variance in the Gender (Dependent Variable) without no significant difference (as per as table 3 & table 4)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.453 ^a	.206	.014	2.288

Table 5: Model Summary with respect to Age

Model	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.930	2.769		1.419	.162
	Hesitate to purchase plastic carry bags	-.109	.288	-.057	-.379	.706
	Preference to Store	.266	.287	.149	.927	.358
	Health & Environmental Conscious	.013	.439	.005	.029	.977
	Availability of Plastic Carry Bags	-.137	.532	-.040	-.258	.798
	Oppose of Plastic Carry Bags	.389	.350	.178	1.114	.270
	Think Before Purchase of Plastic Carry Bags	-.223	.333	-.105	-.670	.506
	Availability of Eco-friendly Carry Bags	.630	.304	.288	2.070	.043
	Promotion through Newspaper	.001	.301	.001	.004	.997
	Promotion through Television	-.397	.367	-.153	-1.081	.284

State the Usefulness of Eco-friendly Carry Bags by the Store owners	.000	.249	.000	.000	1.000
Willingness to pay more	.185	.269	.116	.688	.494
Satisfied by using eco-friendly carry bags	-.226	.320	-.115	-.707	.482
Inspire others	-.513	.314	-.283	-1.635	.108

a. Dependent Variable: Age

Table 6: Coefficients with respect to Age

Interpretation: R square value is 0.206 which stated that all independent variables in the model account for 20.6% variance in the Age (Dependent Variable) with significant difference on Availability of Eco-friendly carry bags (p=0.043 at 5% significant level) (as per as table 5 & table 6).

CLUSTER ANALYSIS

From the cluster analysis, number of clusters for the study determined to be 3. Therefore, study sample will be segmented into 3 groups.

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Hesitate to purchase plastic carry bags	2	2	3
Preference to Store Health & Environmental Conscious	3	3	4
Availability of Plastic Carry Bags	3	4	5
Oppose of Plastic Carry Bags	4	4	5
Think Before Purchase of Plastic Carry Bags	3	3	4
Availability of Eco-friendly Carry Bags	4	2	3
Promotion through Newspaper	4	4	4
Promotion through Television	4	2	3
State the Usefulness of Eco-friendly Carry Bags by the Store owners	5	4	4
Willingness to pay more	4	2	3
Satisfied by using eco-friendly carry bags	4	2	4
Inspire others	2	3	4
	3	2	4

Table 7: Final Cluster Centers

Cluster	1	5.000
	2	36.000
	3	27.000
Valid		68.000
Missing		.000

Table 18: Number of Cases in each Cluster

Interpretation of Cluster 1: Total number of members in the cluster is 5. This category of customers are greatly influenced by television (mean value=5) & newspapers (mean value= 4) and thus they are aware of availability of both plastic carry bags (mean value= 4); and eco-friendly carry bags (mean value= 4) in the market. These customers are also motivated by the store owners to use eco-friendly carry bags (mean value= 4) for which they can pay more (mean value= 4). Therefore, this category of customers is termed as Introvert Green Customers.

Interpretation for Cluster 2: Total number of members in the cluster is 36. This category of customers are only influenced by the television (mean value= 4) which act as a source of information for the various health and environment issues (mean value= 4) related to plastic and eco-friendly carry bags. And thus they are aware of the availability of plastic carry bags (mean value= 4); and eco-friendly carry bags (mean value= 4). Therefore, this category of customers is termed as Neutral Green Customers.

Interpretation for Cluster 3: With 27 numbers of members, the customers in this category are highly aware of availability of plastic carry bags (mean value= 5); and eco-friendly carry bags (mean value= 4) in the market along with their consequences on health and environment (mean value= 5). Interestingly, they felt television as the major source of information (mean value= 4) as thus oppose the use of plastic carry bags (mean value= 4). Thus these customers are satisfied on using eco-friendly carry bags (mean value= 4) which reflected by the fact that post purchase behaviour driven them toward satisfaction (mean value= 4) on using eco-friendly carry bags, and thus motivate others (means value= 4). Therefore, this category of customers is termed as Extrovert Green Customers.

IV. DISCUSSION

When consider Gender of the respondents, it was found that age of the respondents (r= 0.276, p= 0.022 at 5% significant level). Meanwhile, age of the respondents related to availability of eco-friendly carry bags in markets (p= 0.043 at 5% significant level) supported the finding of Maheshwari & Malhotra (2011), also was positive correlated to gender (r= 0.276, p= 0.022 at 5% significant level); income (r= 0.316, p= 0.009 at 1% significant level) stated the fact that customers with different age group had different perception toward eco-friendly products or services, lacking the segmentation of age group of customers and their respective perception toward eco-friendly products or services.

Interestingly, it was found that customers hesitate to purchase non-eco-friendly carry bags because they were aware of the health and environmental related issues (r= 0.384, p= 0.001 at 1% significant level), and therefore oppose using such carry bags (r= 0.354, p= 0.003 at 1% significant level). Television was the main source of information as compared to the Newspapers supported previous studies on media and eco-friendly products (Xia, & Zeng 2008) and thus, educated customers (r=0.254, p= 0.037 at 5% significant level) were willing-to-pay more for the eco-friendly carry bags (Bjork 1998; Xia & Zeng 2008; Awan, & Raza 2010; Banyle 2010;

Awan & Raza 2010; Yaacob & Zakaria 2011; Drozdenko et al. 2011; Junaedi 2012; Dutta et al. 2008; Maheshwari & Malhotra 2011; Vernekar & Wadhwa 2011; Padiya, & Vala 2012). Interestingly, it was found that whenever the store-keepers promoted the using of eco-friendly carry bags ($r=0.403$, $p=0.001$ at 1% significant level) then also customers were ready to pay more, which lead satisfaction for the customers ($r=0.435$, $p=0.00$ at 1% significant level) and ultimately motivated others ($r=0.374$, $p=0.002$ at 1% significant level) for using eco-friendly carry bags.

V. CONCLUSION

As the study suggested that non-eco-friendly carry bags are available in huge numbers because shop keepers preferred them in place of eco-friendly carry bags made up of papers or cloths. Due to high cost associated with the usage of eco-friendly bags, marketers and customers both are ignoring the health and environmental consciousness issues and also most of the store keepers are not willing to introduce eco-friendly bags in their respective stores because of high price of the product or services that they might charge from the customers in return of eco-friendly carry bags might hammer their sales. This does not reflected that both of them have no knowledge regarding the usefulness of paper bags in place of plastic bags, but need some strong influencer that force them to practice green. Thus it has been found that customers have different opinion regarding the usefulness of eco-friendly carry bags in place of non-eco-friendly carry bags, due to different demographical variables associated with them.

This paper thus presents a framework for the various companies those who actually practicing eco-friendliness in their business activities in order to segment different customers according their similarities. But worse side for the companies, customers are not completely aware of different aspects of eco-friendly carry bags. Thus companies with strong sources of mass & electronic medias, have to educate, and inform their prospective customers regarding usefulness of eco-friendly products. This will in turn transform the introvert customers toward a good green citizen, which can be act as a change agent to other segment of customers. If so happened, then only companies can be said be a actual green practicing company, which firstly aimed for the betterment of the society and then to the profit. Moreover, it is found that neither the customers nor the shopkeepers are associated with any of the green campaign or association, thus it become urgent need of time for the companies to form various eco-friendly groups at grass hood level and encourage their customers and their distributors to become active member of such group or campaign. This in turn will not only help the companies to receive new and innovative ideas from the customers and distributors at grass hood level but also develop the sense of belongingness among the members of such eco-friendly groups, make the customers and distributors including retailers aware of eco-friendly products and their benefits for long run.

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