

**A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF CONSUMER TOWARDS ECO-
FRIENDLY HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS**

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Abstract

This study investigates consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products in the Delhi NCR region, focusing on the factors influencing their purchasing decisions. With growing concerns about environmental sustainability, understanding consumer behavior toward eco-friendly alternatives has become crucial. A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 respondents, gathering primary data on various aspects such as environmental awareness, willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products, trust in eco-certifications, and perceptions of product effectiveness. Descriptive statistics reveal that while consumers exhibit strong awareness of the environmental impact of household products, their willingness to pay more for eco-friendly alternatives is relatively low. Price sensitivity and skepticism regarding the performance of eco-friendly products emerge as significant barriers to adoption. Additionally, a chi-square analysis indicates no significant association between consumer awareness and willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products, suggesting that other factors, such as product quality and availability, play a more prominent role. The study highlights the importance of addressing issues like product efficacy, affordability, and trust in certifications to increase the uptake of eco-friendly household products. Marketers and manufacturers are encouraged to focus on improving product accessibility, transparency in marketing, and consumer education to overcome these barriers. This research contributes valuable insights into the growing eco-friendly market and offers recommendations for businesses and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumer behavior.

Keywords: Consumer perceptions, eco-friendly household products, environmental awareness, price sensitivity, product effectiveness, eco-certifications, Delhi NCR, chi-square analysis, sustainability, green marketing.

Introduction

The growing concerns about environmental sustainability have led to a significant shift in consumer behavior, with an increasing preference for eco-friendly products across various sectors, including household goods. As environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion become more pressing, individuals are becoming increasingly aware of the need to make conscious choices that reduce their ecological footprint. This has catalyzed the demand for eco-friendly household products, ranging from cleaning supplies to biodegradable packaging, which are marketed as environmentally responsible alternatives to traditional goods. The perception of consumers towards these products, however, is not homogeneous. It is shaped by various factors such as awareness, environmental concerns, personal values, and even socio-economic status. Understanding how consumers perceive eco-friendly household products is critical for manufacturers and marketers, as it enables them to align their products and marketing strategies with the values and preferences of their target audience. Research by Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) highlights that consumers' willingness to purchase green products is influenced by a combination of intrinsic values, such as environmental concern, and extrinsic factors, including product performance and price. However, despite the rising popularity of eco-friendly products, consumer adoption is still inconsistent, with some individuals remaining skeptical about the effectiveness or authenticity of eco-friendly claims (Leonidou et al., 2013). These attitudes are often influenced by misconceptions about product efficacy, higher costs, or a lack of trust in eco-certifications (Peattie, 2010). Moreover, consumer perceptions are influenced by social, cultural, and psychological factors, including media portrayal and peer influence (Moser, 2015). Therefore, exploring how consumers perceive eco-friendly household products is essential for understanding the barriers and motivators that influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it offers insights into how businesses can enhance the appeal of such products through targeted marketing and innovation. This study, therefore, aims to explore consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products, identifying the key drivers and challenges that influence purchasing behavior in today's environmentally conscious market. By analyzing the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs surrounding these products, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how environmental concerns shape consumer choices in the household product market.

Literature Review

Consumer perception of eco-friendly household products has become a significant area of research in recent years, as environmental concerns continue to grow globally. Scholars have emphasized the importance of understanding how consumers perceive green products, as this perception directly influences purchasing behaviors and shapes market trends. Numerous studies suggest that consumers' awareness of environmental issues has a direct impact on their preferences for sustainable products, but there are varying levels of adoption based on factors such as price sensitivity, product efficacy, and trust in eco-friendly claims. According to Peattie (2010), eco-friendly products are often seen as premium alternatives, leading to a general perception of higher costs compared to traditional products. This price premium, however, can act as both a barrier and a motivator, depending on the consumer's environmental commitment and perceived product value. For instance, Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) argue that while some consumers are willing to pay a premium for green products, others remain skeptical about their effectiveness, which diminishes the likelihood of purchase.

A significant body of literature underscores the role of environmental concern in shaping consumer preferences for eco-friendly products. Research by Alvarado et al. (2020) suggests that consumers who are more environmentally conscious are more likely to seek out sustainable alternatives, viewing their purchases as part of a broader effort to combat environmental degradation. These individuals tend to exhibit pro-environmental behaviors beyond the marketplace, such as recycling and conserving resources, thus influencing their decision-making when it comes to household products. However, as Leonidou et al. (2013) point out, environmental concern alone does not guarantee the adoption of eco-friendly products. Other psychological and contextual factors, including product performance and convenience, play a significant role in shaping perceptions. For example, some consumers are concerned that eco-friendly products may not be as effective as their traditional counterparts, especially in areas such as cleaning and personal care (Barber, 2010). These concerns are often exacerbated by misinformation or perceived shortcomings in the eco-friendly product category, leading to hesitation or reluctance to make a switch.

The issue of consumer skepticism has been extensively explored in the literature. According to Moser (2015), despite growing environmental awareness, many consumers remain dubious about the authenticity of eco-friendly claims. This skepticism is compounded by greenwashing, a practice in which companies make misleading or exaggerated claims about the environmental

benefits of their products (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). Greenwashing not only erodes trust in eco-friendly products but also reinforces the notion that companies are using sustainability as a marketing tool rather than committing to genuine environmental change. As a result, consumers may hesitate to purchase eco-friendly household products if they feel unsure about the credibility of eco-certifications or the true environmental impact of a product.

Several studies also focus on the role of social influence in shaping consumer perceptions of eco-friendly products. According to Luchs et al. (2010), social norms and peer influence play a significant role in the adoption of green products. Consumers are often influenced by the behaviors and preferences of those within their social circles, including family, friends, and colleagues. Social media and other platforms that promote environmentally conscious lifestyles also serve as catalysts for encouraging the purchase of eco-friendly products, especially when influencers or prominent figures endorse such products. The impact of social influence, however, is not always positive, as it can also create social pressure or skepticism about the "authenticity" of eco-friendly choices, particularly if consumers believe that these products are viewed as elitist or impractical (White et al., 2019).

In addition to social influence, marketing and communication strategies have been shown to affect how consumers perceive and engage with eco-friendly household products. Effective marketing, according to Peattie and Crane (2005), involves clearly communicating the environmental benefits of the product while also addressing consumer concerns regarding cost and performance. Brands that align their eco-friendly messaging with the values of their target audience tend to be more successful in building trust and loyalty. Moreover, the presence of eco-certifications, such as Energy Star or Fair Trade, can act as an assurance for consumers, signaling that the product meets specific environmental standards. However, it is important to note that the presence of such certifications alone may not be enough to sway consumers if they lack trust in the organization issuing the certification or if they are not well-informed about its significance (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000).

In exploring consumer behavior, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of socio-economic factors, such as income and education, in shaping perceptions of eco-friendly products. Research by Biswas and Roy (2015) suggests that higher income groups and those with greater educational attainment are more likely to adopt eco-friendly products, as they tend to have higher levels of environmental awareness and are more willing to invest in sustainability. Conversely, lower-income consumers may perceive green products as out of reach due to the

higher price points typically associated with these items (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). This socioeconomic divide is an important consideration for companies aiming to make eco-friendly products more accessible to a broader audience.

Overall, the literature reveals that while environmental concern is a significant motivator for consumer interest in eco-friendly household products, multiple factors—including price, product performance, skepticism, social influence, and trust—contribute to shaping consumer perceptions. Marketers and companies must, therefore, address these factors when developing strategies for promoting green products. In doing so, they can better align with the evolving consumer values, thus fostering both increased adoption and long-term success in the market for eco-friendly household products.

Research Gap

The research on consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products has made significant strides, but there are notable gaps that still need exploration. While existing studies primarily focus on the general awareness and attitudes toward sustainability, few delve deeply into the nuanced factors that influence consumer behavior at a granular level, such as socio-economic status, cultural differences, and local market dynamics, particularly in emerging economies like India. Additionally, while the price sensitivity of consumers has been examined, there is limited research on how varying levels of income affect the willingness to purchase eco-friendly products. Another critical gap is the lack of longitudinal studies that track changes in consumer behavior over time, especially in response to evolving marketing strategies, new eco-certifications, and emerging environmental concerns. Furthermore, despite the increasing popularity of eco-friendly products, research on the perceived effectiveness and quality of these products remains underexplored. The skepticism around the performance of eco-friendly alternatives compared to traditional products has not been sufficiently addressed in previous literature. Lastly, the role of social influence, including peer pressure, social media, and community engagement, in shaping eco-friendly purchasing decisions has not been fully investigated. Addressing these gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers and barriers to the adoption of eco-friendly products.

Objective of the study

The key objective of this study is to explore consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products.

Research Methodology

This study explores consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products in the Haryana districts of Faridabad and Gurgaon. The research follows a quantitative approach, utilizing primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire. The target sample consists of 250 respondents, representing a diverse demographic in terms of age, gender, income, and education. These participants are selected using a convenience sampling method, ensuring a wide variety of individuals who can provide comprehensive insights into consumer behavior towards eco-friendly household products.

The primary data collection is done through an online and offline questionnaire, allowing the study to reach a broad audience, including those with limited access to technology. The questionnaire is designed to assess several key factors influencing consumer perceptions, including environmental awareness, attitudes towards green products, willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly goods, trust in eco-certifications, and concerns about product efficacy. The survey includes closed-ended questions and Likert scale items to quantify responses and facilitate statistical analysis. These structured questions are chosen to elicit specific information about consumer attitudes and behaviors in a clear, measurable way.

The questionnaire focuses on understanding how consumers in Faridabad and Gurgaon perceive the benefits and limitations of eco-friendly household products compared to conventional alternatives. It also investigates the level of awareness and trust in certifications that label products as environmentally friendly. Moreover, the study examines the influence of price sensitivity on purchasing decisions, considering that eco-friendly products are often perceived to be more expensive than traditional household goods. Another aspect of the questionnaire explores the perceived effectiveness of these products, as some consumers may be hesitant to switch from conventional options due to concerns about product performance.

Once the responses are collected, the data is analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics will provide an overview of the respondents' demographic profiles and key attitudes towards eco-friendly products. Correlation analysis will be used to identify potential relationships between different factors, such as the influence of environmental awareness on purchasing behavior, or the role of trust in eco-certifications in shaping consumer decisions. The analysis will also help to uncover patterns in the data, providing insights into which factors are most influential in driving the adoption of eco-friendly household products.

The research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer perceptions and behaviors within the Faridabad and Gurgaon districts of Haryana, offering valuable information for marketers, manufacturers, and policymakers. By examining the attitudes, concerns, and motivations that influence consumer decision-making, this study provides practical insights into how businesses can improve their strategies for promoting eco-friendly products. Ultimately, the research helps identify the barriers and opportunities that exist in the market for green household products and provides recommendations for overcoming challenges related to consumer adoption and market growth in these regions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study employs both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to explore consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions, are used to summarize respondents' attitudes and behaviors toward eco-friendly products. The mean scores provide an overview of overall consumer sentiments, while the standard deviation highlights the variability in responses, revealing areas of consensus or disagreement. To further explore relationships between variables, a chi-square test is conducted to assess the association between categorical variables, such as consumer awareness and willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products. This test helps determine whether consumer perceptions are influenced by demographic factors or other key variables, such as environmental concern or trust in eco-certifications. The chi-square results are interpreted to identify significant patterns or lack thereof, providing insights into the factors that drive or hinder the adoption of eco-friendly products. The data is analyzed using SPSS software to ensure accuracy and reliability of the results. Overall, this analysis offers a comprehensive understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviors, revealing key factors such as price sensitivity, perceived effectiveness, and environmental consciousness that shape purchasing decisions related to eco-friendly household products.

Descriptive Statistics

| Statement | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| 1. I am aware of the environmental impact of household products. | 4.2 | 0.85 |
| 2. I prefer eco-friendly products over conventional ones. | 3.9 | 1.05 |
| 3. I am willing to pay more for eco-friendly household products. | 3.5 | 1.10 |

| Statement | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| 4. Eco-friendly products are more effective than traditional products. | 3.1 | 1.00 |
| 5. I trust eco-certifications on household products. | 3.8 | 0.95 |
| 6. I believe that eco-friendly products perform as well as regular products. | 3.6 | 1.10 |
| 7. The higher price of eco-friendly products discourages me from purchasing them. | 3.2 | 1.15 |
| 8. I think eco-friendly household products are of better quality. | 3.7 | 0.90 |
| 9. I would buy more eco-friendly products if they were more affordable. | 4.0 | 1.05 |
| 10. I feel that using eco-friendly products contributes to environmental conservation. | 4.5 | 0.80 |
| 11. I believe that the government should encourage the use of eco-friendly products. | 4.3 | 0.75 |
| 12. Eco-friendly products are widely available in the market. | 3.8 | 1.00 |
| 13. I consider the sustainability of products before making a purchase. | 3.9 | 0.85 |
| 14. I am influenced by advertising when choosing eco-friendly products. | 3.4 | 1.05 |
| 15. I trust the claims made by brands about the eco-friendliness of their products. | 3.7 | 0.95 |
| 16. I believe eco-friendly products are generally safe for use. | 4.2 | 0.85 |
| 17. I regularly seek information about eco-friendly household products. | 3.6 | 1.00 |
| 18. I feel proud when using eco-friendly household products. | 4.1 | 0.90 |
| 19. I would recommend eco-friendly products to others. | 4.4 | 0.80 |
| 20. I believe that buying eco-friendly products makes a difference. | 4.5 | 0.75 |

Interpretation:

From the descriptive statistics, we can observe that the mean values of most statements are generally above 3.0, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement among respondents on the importance of eco-friendly household products. For instance, the statement "I feel that using eco-friendly products contributes to environmental conservation" has the highest mean of 4.5, suggesting strong agreement among consumers regarding the environmental benefits of using such products. Additionally, statements regarding the effectiveness and affordability of eco-

friendly products, such as "Eco-friendly products are more effective than traditional products" (mean of 3.1), show relatively lower agreement, indicating that consumers may still have doubts about the performance of eco-friendly alternatives. The standard deviations range from 0.75 to 1.15, indicating varying levels of consensus on different statements. Lower SD values (e.g., 0.75 for "I believe that buying eco-friendly products makes a difference") suggest a strong agreement, whereas higher SD values (e.g., 1.15 for "The higher price of eco-friendly products discourages me from purchasing them") reflect more diverse opinions, particularly regarding the cost of eco-friendly products.

Chi-Square Test:

| Variables | Chi-Square Value | df (Degrees of Freedom) | p-value |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Awareness vs. Willingness | 8.23 | 4 | 0.084 |

Interpretation:

The chi-square test result shows a chi-square value of 8.23 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.084. At a 0.05 significance level, the p-value is greater than the critical value, indicating that we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is no significant association between consumers' awareness of eco-friendly products and their willingness to pay more for these products. While the observed chi-square value indicates a trend towards a potential relationship, the p-value exceeds the threshold, meaning the results are not statistically significant.

This result could imply that, in this study, consumer awareness about eco-friendly products does not strongly influence their willingness to pay a premium for these products. Various other factors, such as price sensitivity, product effectiveness, or social influence, may play a more significant role in shaping consumers' willingness to pay for eco-friendly products, as suggested by the descriptive statistics. Further research with a larger sample size and deeper insights into the socio-economic factors influencing consumer choices could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving the adoption of eco-friendly products.

In conclusion, while there is some indication that awareness and willingness to pay may be related, the lack of statistical significance suggests that other variables may be more influential in shaping consumers' decisions to purchase eco-friendly household products.

Major Findings of the Study

The study reveals several key insights into consumer perceptions and behaviors towards eco-friendly household products. First, it is clear that there is a moderate to high level of awareness about the environmental impact of household products, with a significant number of respondents expressing strong agreement that using eco-friendly products contributes to environmental conservation. This is evidenced by a high mean score for the statement "I feel that using eco-friendly products contributes to environmental conservation" (mean = 4.5). This suggests that many consumers are aware of the environmental benefits associated with these products and recognize their role in promoting sustainability. However, despite this awareness, the willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products remains a barrier for many consumers, as reflected in the relatively lower mean scores for statements related to price sensitivity. The statement "I am willing to pay more for eco-friendly household products" garnered a mean of 3.5, indicating that price remains a significant concern for a large portion of the population. Furthermore, the chi-square analysis reveals no significant association between consumer awareness and their willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products, suggesting that awareness alone is not enough to influence purchasing decisions. This finding implies that other factors, such as product performance, availability, and perceived value, may be more decisive in shaping consumer behavior. Additionally, consumer skepticism about the effectiveness of eco-friendly products remains a notable challenge. The mean score for the statement "Eco-friendly products are more effective than traditional products" (mean = 3.1) suggests that while there is some level of agreement, many consumers still question the efficacy of eco-friendly alternatives compared to traditional household products. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of trust in eco-certifications, with respondents expressing moderate trust in labels and certifications, as indicated by a mean of 3.8. Despite this, concerns about greenwashing continue to influence consumer perceptions, indicating the need for greater transparency in marketing eco-friendly products. Overall, while there is considerable awareness and interest in eco-friendly household products, issues such as price, perceived effectiveness, and trust in certifications remain significant barriers to widespread adoption. The findings suggest that companies should focus on improving the accessibility, affordability, and performance of eco-friendly products to encourage greater consumer uptake.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into consumer perceptions of eco-friendly household products in the Delhi NCR region. The findings indicate that while there is a high level of awareness regarding the environmental benefits of these products, factors such as price sensitivity, skepticism about product effectiveness, and concerns about greenwashing act as significant barriers to widespread adoption. Although many consumers acknowledge the positive environmental impact of eco-friendly products, a substantial portion remains hesitant to pay a premium for them, primarily due to concerns about cost and perceived performance issues. The chi-square analysis further reveals that awareness alone does not significantly influence consumers' willingness to pay more, suggesting that other factors, such as product quality and affordability, are more influential in driving purchasing decisions. To increase the adoption of eco-friendly household products, businesses must focus on addressing these barriers by improving product accessibility, offering competitive pricing, and ensuring transparency in eco-certifications. Additionally, efforts to educate consumers about the efficacy and long-term benefits of eco-friendly alternatives can help overcome skepticism. Ultimately, a more concerted effort from both businesses and policymakers is needed to create an environment that fosters greater consumer confidence and encourages sustainable purchasing behaviors.

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