



Consumer Perception towards Green Products

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the consumers' perception about green products from the three hundred seventy six (376) employees of the President Ramon Magsaysay State University, who were randomly selected during SY 2020-2021.

This study uses a quantitative and descriptive correlational method of research to determine the relationship between the profile of the consumers and their perceptions toward green products.

It is found out that majority with 189 or equivalent to 50.30% are from age group of 25-44 years old with mean of 37.64 years old; most of the respondents have attained bachelor's degree with 174 or equivalent to 46.30%; majority are from the rank and file with 273 or equivalent to 72.60%; while from supervisory position with 103 or 27.40%; most of the respondents are Permanent with 186 or equivalent to 49.50%; temporary, 108 or 28.70%; and contractual, 82 or 21.80%; mostly have monthly income ranges from Pphp10,001-Php20,000 with 151 or 40.20% and mean of Php 23,590.93 monthly.

Based on the summary of the investigations conducted, the following conclusions were derived: the respondent is a typical female in her early adulthood, rank and file permanent employee, attained Bachelor's degree and have adequate monthly income. The respondents were "Agreed" on dimensions of green product as to desire, trustworthiness, preference, ethical, awareness, initiative and social welfare. There is slight correlation between green product as to desire on age, educational attainment, position, employment status and monthly income; slight correlation on ethical as to age and position; and negligible correlation between trustworthiness, preference, awareness, initiative and social welfare to all profile variables of age, educational attainment, position, employment status and monthly income respectively.

The following recommendations are offered: that all products must be provided with complete labels specifically for check recycle label on the back of product; that the government is encouraged to provide polices for companies and manufacturers in providing reusable containers in order to adhere green products and may suffer long term losses if they market products that are not safe and have high environment risk; that the government is encouraged to help and support local producers and farmers to engage in organic products and to be competitive in the global market; that the government must frame stringent rules and regulations in support of green marketing and should assure proper implementation of the same; that the value and importance of "green products" must be included in the curriculum for values integration, high level of awareness and provide intensive mass media campaign is strongly recommended and lastly, to conduct a parallel or similar study with in-depth and wider in scope so as to validate the findings obtained in the study.

Keywords: *Green products, desire, trustworthiness, preference, ethics, awareness, initiative, social welfare.*

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental Sustainability has been a pressing issue in so many countries today. It has been perceived as a key driver for development by international leaders and businesses that stand alongside globalization and information technology. The growth of environmental protection has made global and local companies increased focus on green marketing and develop green products for consumers.

The growing interest of consumers in environmental protection has compelled many companies to be actively involved in making their products greener. This growing interest in climate change during the past couple of decades led to increased demand for green labeling, which allow the consumers to differentiate between more and less sustainable options [1]. It has also been shown that the interest in being green and the purchasing of eco-friendly products continues to grow [2]. All the different selections between products that consumers make on a daily basis have an impact on the environment. In some cases, the consumers have to make trade-offs when it comes to choices between green products and products that have other benefits which a customer prefers. This trade-off maybe among the environmental

performance, quality of the service characteristics or price of the product. In this case, a question arises regarding what a consumer prefers: an environmental cleaner product that may have low performance or a better product with more pollution [3]. It has also been found that some consumers do not want to sacrifice product function for ethics and price often matters to them. Consumers who shopped on truly ethical bases show far smaller purchase than what most observers believe which is they are quite liberal at the time of the survey, but economic conservative at check out points. There is a gap between what consumers say and what they do in reality [4].

As the awareness of environmental issues widespread throughout the globe and the rising knowledge of its environmental implications, consumers changed the way they go about their lives as well as their attitudes towards their lifestyle [5]. Consumers has shown significant interest on how they can help reduce environmental impact and be environmentally responsible. This change has led many companies to exert efforts to go eco-friendly and employ environmental responsibilities in their product offerings as consumers are willing to pay even at a premium price for green products.

In a recent study to examine consumer's perception towards green issues and factors that influence green purchase intention, it demonstrate that consumers displayed positive attitudes towards environmental protection issues and confirms a positive influence on their green purchase intention[6]. Though the abovementioned study delimits information about purchase decision, a positive correlation between perception and intention can prompt consumer's willingness to buy and eventually create an actual purchase. How consumers perceived a product will determine their intention to buy and consume the product and will lead to actual behavior of purchasing the product [7]. Purchase intention represent to what consumers think they will buy [8] and consumers with intention to buy certain product will exhibit a higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying [9]. With this, companies should be more persuasive in their marketing communications and should center their strategies on identifying and studying consumers' perception of green products.

This research aims to describe the dimensions of consumer's perception about green products. Specifically it will assess the perception of consumers on the following dimensions: Desire, Trustworthiness, Preference, Ethics, Awareness, Initiative, Social Welfare. Likewise, this research aims to determine whether there is significant difference and relationship on the profile variables and the dimensions of perception.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Consumer Behavior

According to Belch & Belch[10], Consumer Behaviour can be defined as the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires.

Consumer Behavior is also a basis of this research because it encompasses the study of what, when, why and where the consumers will buy their products. It also focuses on how often the consumers use the products. Furthermore, it also sheds light on how the consumers evaluate the products after the purchase and the effect of evaluations on their future purchases[11].

Consumer Desire

The AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) Model developed in 1898 by St Elmo Lewis in an attempt to explain how personal selling works. Desire as one of his key elements in the model states that if interest in the product is aroused, it is the task of the seller to persuade the customer that they want to own the product or to create a desire for the product. This means that consumer should develop a favorable disposition towards the brand or the product through the marketing efforts of the seller [12].

Trustworthiness

In general terminology, trust can be defined as a "confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity[13]. Trust distinguish trustworthiness and it can be described as the perceived probability that a particular trustee will maintain one's trust [14]. Perceived trustworthiness is one of the most important driving force for making a purchase decision. Every consumer attempts to evaluate the trustworthiness of a product and a firm before making a purchase.

Ethical

Over the last decade, consumer consumption of goods and services has increased tremendously across the world, leading to depletion of natural resources and severe damage to the environment [15]. Some of the serious repercussions of environmental damage are global warming, increased environmental pollution, and decline in flora and fauna [15]. Various countries across the globe are beginning to realize this threat and have started working towards minimizing the harmful impact of their business activities on the environment. This realization and concern towards the environment and

society has led to the emergence of 'sustainable development' which emphasizes the need to promote sustainability and advocates that form of development which minimizes negative impact on the environment and society. Sustainable development further encourages eco innovation and green consumption. Eco innovation focuses on incorporating environmental sustainability practices at every stage of creation of goods and services [16]. 'Green consumption' on the other hand, is normally related to environmentally responsible consumption where consumers consider the environmental impact of purchasing, using, and disposing of various products, or using various green services [17].

Environmentally responsible purchasing is vital as unplanned purchasing of goods can severely damage the environment. Grunert[18] reported that consumer household purchases were responsible for 40% of the environmental damage. Consumers possess the capability to prevent or decrease environmental damage by purchasing green products. Previous research indicates that consumers have a positive attitude towards environmental protection [19, 20, 21&22]. In fact, consumers have, in the past, expressed their demand for green products to companies [23, 24]. Although the number of individuals willing to purchase green products has increased in the last few years, there is little evidence to suggest that purchase of green products has increased; despite environmental concern and positive attitude of customers towards sustainability and green products, market share of green products remains confined to just 1-3% of the entire market [25]. This suggests that environmental considerations play a minor role in consumer purchasing decisions and people generally overlook environmental impacts of their purchases [26].

While exploring green purchase behaviour, many studies have reported a discrepancy or "gap" between consumers' expressed favourable attitudes and actual purchasing practices [27, 22&28]. Hughner[25] found that while many consumers showed a positive attitude towards purchases of organic food products (67%), only a small number of consumers (4%) actually purchased those products. Similarly, Defra [26] found that 30% of the consumers in UK have reported their concern towards the environment, but rarely translated their concern into a green purchase. It is thus clear that there exists a gap between consumers' thinking and actual actions [15, 31]. This discrepancy or gap between consumers' favourable attitude towards, and actual purchase behaviour of green products is referred to as 'green purchasing inconsistency' or 'green attitude-behaviour gap'. It signifies that consumer positive attitude towards green products does not always translate into action. It is essential to examine why environmental attitudes have a weaker influence on consumer green purchase behaviour; there might be possible factors such as price and availability of the product, and social influences among others that lead to the discrepancy between consumer attitude and purchase behaviour. Once these factors are determined through proper research, steps can be taken to address these issues and encourage consumers to actually purchase green products. Although significant research on environmental consciousness and awareness of the consumer exists [32] and studies have also concentrated on observing consumers' consumption patterns and non-consumption behaviour [33, 34], yet the knowledge of factors affecting consumer green purchase behaviour remains limited. Previous studies have clearly shown that even though individuals understand the seriousness of environmental issues, their environmental attitudes do not necessarily lead to green purchasing [35, 36&37]. Recently, Rokka and Uusitalo[38] claimed that even consumers with the highest level of environmental consciousness do not always purchase green products; their choice of products depends on both ecological perspectives as well as their evaluation of the various product attributes. Further, situational factors can also hamper environmentally responsible purchasing and lessen the influence of a positive environmental attitude.

It is thus clear that previous research has not been able to recognize why a positive consumer attitude fails to convert into a green purchase [39]. Further, there has been no comprehensive investigation of the wide-range of factors and their influence on environmentally responsible purchasing [40].

Awareness

Purohit[41] in his study on "Consumer buying behaviour on green products" analysed the consumer attitude, roll of marketing mix in buying intention and relationship between consumer attitude and buying intention towards green marketing. The study found that product, price, place and promotion had significant correlation with buying intention of eco friendly products. The study concluded that consumers were ready to pay high price for eco friendly which cause less pollution to the environment were consumer ready to compensate quality of the product for the benefit of the environment.

In the study of Maha Mourad [42], explained in his study on "Perception of green brand in an emerging innovative market", stated the factors affecting the green brand preference of an emerging innovative market and analyzed the four concepts of green brand preference. The author Norazah Mohd Suki [43], discussed his study on "Green awareness effects on consumers purchasing decision: Some insights from Malaysia", which attempts to examine the influence of consumers' environmental concerns, awareness of green product, green price and brand image on their purchasing decision of green products. M.Nagamani and B. Navaneetha [44], found out that respondents had the awareness about green products like paper bag, plates, cups, areca plates and eco bowls in green marketing. People who are concerns

about environmental safety, follow green buying behaviour and consume green product are considered as green consumer[45].

Population explosion and excess consumption of resources have led environment more polluted for which awareness among green consumers raise. So the industries face the pressure to follow environmental ethics in manufacturing process. The claim for green product and green concepts begin to rise when environmental awareness, governing pressure for eco-technology in manufacturing and public health and safety concerns start to increase among people[46].

Initiative

Recognizing the seriousness of environmental problems possibly caused by excessive use of energy and non-renewable natural resources, copious supplies of foods and products, environmentally unfriendly production processes, and environmental disasters, increasing numbers of individuals are aware of environmental issues and feel our natural resources are limited and the environment is more fragile than we once believed. Such environmental awareness instills in the public a positive attitude toward eco-friendly activities, and encourages people to more frequently engage in ecological behaviors in their everyday lives [47]. Attitudes are sets of beliefs about a certain object or an act, which may translate into intention to carry out the act. Intention on the other hand is a determination to act in a certain way [48]. Attitudes are the favorable or unfavorable evaluation an individual forms of a specified behavior. Attitudes impact the intentions held and the more favorable the attitude, the bigger the intention to perform the behavior will be. In addition, attitudes are predictors of purchase intentions and consequently purchase behavior. Moreover, attitudes are necessary, as consumers require an understanding of their attitudes and motivations in order to overcome the perceived purchase barriers they face [49].

2.7 Social Welfare

The green, ecological or known environmental friendly consumption, has become the major concern of humanity in today's world. In recent years, many food crises such as mad cow, foot and mouth disease, or the dioxin scandal in Belgium have attracted widespread concern that has spread among consumers not only on the quality of the food they eat, but also on all the products they purchase and consume[50]. Thus, increasing environmental awareness and more concerns about a more respectful use of the environment and the welfare of consumers led to a growing demand for green products, which are distinguished by their quality less harmful to the environment and more healthy for the consumer [51,52]. This demand of green products has resulted in buying these products and the purchase intention is the primary indicator of this buying behaviour. Positive attitudes towards green products are not always translated into a favorable attitude towards these products. Researches about green consumer behavior revealing the factors influencing the purchase intention of these products claim that the consumer attitude is a direct influence factor affecting their purchase intentions [53]. The attitude is then stated as a key factor in explaining consumer behavior. Therefore, the attitude towards green products generally reflects the assessment of these products by consumers. However, other studies have indicated that the attitude towards green products is influenced in turn by psychographic criteria (lifestyle, personality, ...) and other social (social status, social influence, ...) criteria [54,55,56& 57], these criteria inserted under the control of the concept of consumer orientation to green products on the basis of previous findings.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the respondent’s demographic variables and their perception towards green products.

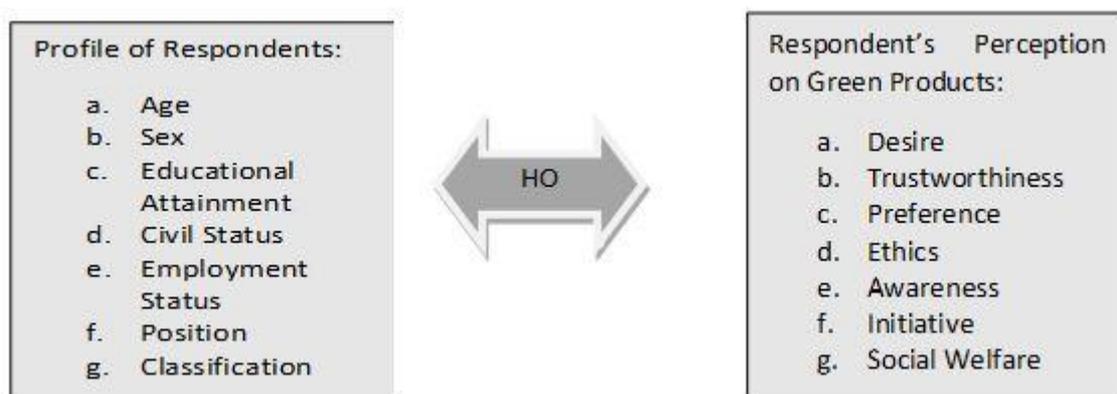


Figure 1: Paradigm of the Study

This study intends to explore the perceptions of consumers toward green products. The profile of the respondents includes their age, sex, educational attainment, civil status, employment status, position, classification, and monthly

income. Respondent’s perception on green products includes desire, trustworthiness, preference, ethics, awareness, initiative, and social welfare. This research intends to test if there is a significant relationship between the respondents’ profile and their perception on green products (Ho).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Quantitative and descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study to determine the relationship between the profile of the consumers and their perceptions toward green products. Descriptive-survey research is an appropriate approach. It describes the profile of the consumers, and their perceptions toward green products. Correlational research was used to measure two variables. This study correlated the respondents’ profile to the consumer’s perceptions toward green products.

Quantitative method was also employed by gathering quantifiable data through the use of survey questionnaire collected from the respondents. The target respondents are the teaching and non-teaching personnel of President Ramon Magsaysay State University.

The research study was conducted in President Ramon Magsaysay State University, Iba, Zambales covering all the seven (7) campuses in the municipalities of Iba, Botolan, San Marcelino, Castillejos, Masinloc, Candelaria and Sta. Cruz.

Stratified random sampling technique was used in the determination of the target respondents. Stratified random sampling is a type of design that divides first the population into two or more strata and for each stratum the sample items are drawn at random [58].

The required sample size of the teaching respondents is 194 and 187 for non-teaching. The margin of error is the amount or error tolerable and this is selected by the researcher depending on the precision needed to make the population estimates for the given sample and 5% margin of error is a common choice. The confidence level is the amount of uncertainty that can be tolerated, 90% to 100% is the typical choice (Raosoft.com).

The sample respondents of Three Hundred Eighty One (381) came from total population of Seven Hundred Fifty (750) Teaching and non-teaching personnel of President Ramon Magsaysay State University.

Survey questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data in this study. The survey questionnaire was adapted from the study done by Bikramjit Singh Hudal[59].

A dry run was conducted to twenty (20) respondents for this study and was found out that all the questions were understandable to all respondents. The group was excluded in the investigation.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested by using Cronbach’s Alpha. A minimal alpha coefficient of 0.70 is required to claim that the instrument and its subscale scores are internally consistent. Cronbach’s test of reliability was first performed in order to assess the reliability of the instrument. Using 20 questionnaires, the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.94643 which is more than 0.7, hence the instrument is considered to be reliable to carry on the present research. If the value of α is greater than or equal to 0.9, the internal consistency of the survey questionnaire is excellent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the respondents

Age

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondent’s Age profile Variables N=376

Age	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
18-24 years old	77	20.50
25-44 years old	189	50.30
45-64 years old	109	29.00
65 years old above	1	0.30
Total	376	100.00
Mean of Age=37.64 years old		

Out of three hundred seventy six (376) respondents, majority with 189 or equivalent to 50.30% are from age group of 25-44 years old followed by 109 or 29.00% from 45-64 years old and the least with only 1 or 0.30% from age group of 65 years old and above. The computed mean age of the respondents was 37.64 years old.

Educational Attainment

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondent's Educational Attainment profile Variables N=376

Educational Attainment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
High School Diploma	11	2.90
Vocational / Associate	46	12.20
Bachelors Degree	174	46.30
Masteral Degree	112	29.80
Doctoral Degree	33	8.80
Total	376	100.00

Most of the respondents have attained bachelor's degree with 174 or equivalent to 46.30%; masteral degree, 112 or 29.80%; vocational/associate degree, 46 or 12.20%; doctoral degree, 33 or 8.80% and 11 or 2.90% are high school graduate.

Position

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondent's Position profile Variables N=376

Position	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Supervisory	103	27.40
Rank and File	273	72.60
Total	376	100.00

Out of three hundred seventy six (376) respondents, majority are from the rank and file with 273 or equivalent to 72.60%; while from supervisory position with 103 or 27.40%

Employment Status

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondent's Employment Status profile Variables N=376

Employment Status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Permanent	186	49.50
Temporary	108	28.70
Contractual	82	21.80
Total	376	100.00

Most of the respondents are Permanent in their work status with 186 or equivalent to 49.50%; temporary, 108 or 28.70%; and for contractual, there were 82 or equivalent to 21.80%.

Monthly Income

Table 5: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondent's Monthly Income profile Variables N=376

Monthly Income	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Below P10,000	16	4.30
P10,001 – P20,000	151	40.20
P20,001 – P30,000	126	33.50
P30,001 – P40,000	46	12.20
P40,001 – P50,000	27	7.20
P50,001 above	10	2.70
Total	376	100.00
Mean=Php 23,590.93 monthly		

Out of three hundred seventy six (376) respondents, mostly have monthly income ranges from Pphp 10,001 – Php 20,000 with 151 or 40.20%; 126 or 33.50% with income of Php 20,001 - Php30,000; 46 or 12.20%, Php 30,001 – Php 40,000; 27 or 7.20%, Php 40,001 – Php 50,000; 16 or 4.3015, below Php 10,000 and 10 or 2.70% with income of Php 50,001 and above monthly. The computed mean of monthly income was Php 23,590.93 monthly.

Summary Table on the responses towards dimensions on Green Product

Dimensions on Green Product		OWM	QI	Rank
1	Desire	4.84	Agree	1

2	Trustworthiness	4.52	Agree	5.5
3	Preference	4.55	Agree	4
4	Ethical	4.56	Agree	3
5	Awareness	4.52	Agree	5.5
6	Initiative	4.64	Agree	2
7	Social Welfare	4.51	Agree	7
	Grand Mean	4.59	Agree	

The respondents were “Agreed” on Desire manifested on the overall weighted mean value of 4.84 and ranked 1st; Initiative (4.64) and ranked 2nd; Ethical, (4.56) and ranked 3rd; Preference, (4.55) and ranked 4th; Trustworthiness and Awareness (4.52) and ranked 5.5th respectively while Social Welfare, (4.51) and ranked 7th. The computed grand mean on the responses towards dimensions on green product was 4.59 with qualitative interpretation of “Agree”.

Test of Relationship on the perception between green product and the profile variables.

There is (+) slight correlation between green product as to desire on age, educational attainment, position, employment status and monthly income; slight correlation on ethical as to age and position; and negligible correlation between trustworthiness, preference, awareness, initiative and social welfare to all profile variables of age, educational attainment, position, employment status and monthly income respectively.

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