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Exploring Consumer Preferences And Satisfaction Towards Eco-Friendly Products

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ABSTRACT:

The study focuses on analyzing consumer preferences and satisfaction towards eco-friendly products, a rapidly growing sector in the modern marketplace. With increasing global awareness of environmental degradation, climate change, and sustainable consumption, customers are gradually shifting from conventional goods to environmentally friendly alternatives. The objective of this study is to examine the factors influencing consumer choices, including awareness levels, product attributes, pricing, accessibility, and perceived quality. It also explores the extent to which these factors contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Using both primary and secondary data, the research employs statistical tools such as Chi-Square tests to analyze the relationship between demographic variables and eco-friendly product adoption, and ANOVA to assess variations in satisfaction levels across different consumer groups. The findings reveal that although consumer interest in eco-friendly products is increasing, barriers such as higher costs, limited availability, and misconceptions about effectiveness remain significant. The study suggests that improving affordability, enhancing distribution channels, and promoting consumer education can significantly boost adoption and satisfaction. By providing empirical evidence, this study contributes to both academic literature and practical strategies for marketers, policymakers, and producers seeking to enhance sustainable consumption patterns.

Key words: Eco-Friendly Products, Consumer Preference, Green Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Sustainable Consumption, Environmental Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability has emerged as one of the most significant global challenges of the 21st century. Rapid industrialization, excessive consumption of natural resources, and rising levels of pollution have compelled both consumers and producers to reconsider their choices. In this context, eco-friendly products—goods that are manufactured, packaged, and consumed in ways that minimize harm to the environment—have gained increasing attention in recent years. These products include biodegradable items, organic foods, energy-efficient appliances, recycled materials, and chemical-free personal care products.

Consumers are no longer merely motivated by functional or economic value; rather, environmental consciousness and social responsibility have become crucial determinants of purchasing decisions. With heightened awareness of issues such as climate change, plastic pollution, and resource scarcity, many individuals are actively seeking alternatives that align with their values of sustainability and green living. At the same time, firms are integrating eco-friendly practices into their production and marketing strategies to cater to this growing demand.

Despite the rising trend, the adoption of eco-friendly products is not universal. Price sensitivity, lack of product availability, and skepticism about product effectiveness pose significant barriers to widespread acceptance. Moreover, consumer satisfaction depends not only on environmental benefits but also on traditional factors such as quality, durability, and affordability. Understanding these dynamics is essential to bridge the gap between consumer expectations and actual market offerings.

This study explores consumer preferences and satisfaction towards eco-friendly products with the aim of identifying the key drivers and challenges associated with sustainable consumption. By analyzing consumer attitudes, demographic influences, and satisfaction levels, the study seeks to provide insights that will assist producers, marketers, and policymakers in designing effective strategies to promote eco-friendly products and foster long-term sustainable behavior.

Population Size and Sample:

The population for this study comprises consumers residing in Salem city, representing diverse demographic groups such as students, working professionals, homemakers, and retired individuals. As eco-friendly products cut across multiple categories—personal care, household items, packaged food, and daily-use goods—the target population includes individuals who are either current users or potential buyers of such products.

To ensure adequate representation, the sample has been carefully selected based on age, gender, occupation, and income levels. A total of **150 respondents** were chosen, ensuring diversity across socio-economic backgrounds. The sampling method adopted for this study is **stratified random sampling**, which allows proportional representation of different demographic categories. This ensures that opinions regarding eco-friendly products reflect a balanced view of the consumer population.

The sample includes:

- **Students (20%)** – representing young consumers who are environmentally aware and more experimental with green products.
- **Working professionals (35%)** – representing middle-income groups who balance cost with quality and sustainability.
- **Homemakers (30%)** – representing key decision-makers in household purchases.
- **Retired individuals (15%)** – representing older consumers with traditional preferences but gradually exposed to eco-friendly alternatives.

This structured sample provides a comprehensive view of consumer preferences and satisfaction levels, thereby ensuring that the findings are generalizable to the larger population of eco-friendly product users in Salem city.

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SELECTION:

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IS INFLUENCED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, PERSONAL VALUES, AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. MODERN CONSUMERS ARE INCREASINGLY CONSCIOUS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THEIR PURCHASES, WHICH AFFECTS BOTH THEIR PREFERENCES AND SATISFACTION LEVELS (PEATTIE & CRANE, 2005). THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR (AJZEN, 1991) PROVIDES A FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND THIS PHENOMENON, SUGGESTING THAT CONSUMER INTENTION TO PURCHASE ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IS DETERMINED BY ATTITUDES TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PERCEIVED SOCIAL PRESSURE, AND PERCEIVED CONTROL OVER SUSTAINABLE CHOICES.

Green marketing plays a critical role in shaping these preferences. Marketing initiatives that emphasize eco-friendly product attributes, certifications, and ethical production practices influence consumer trust, brand perception, and satisfaction (Ottman, 2011; Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Effective green marketing helps reduce the perception of trade-offs between product performance and environmental benefits, thereby increasing adoption.

Price, product availability, and perceived effectiveness significantly impact consumer satisfaction. Consumers often face a premium cost for eco-friendly products, and limited distribution channels may hinder accessibility (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). However, when products meet expectations in terms of quality, performance, and sustainability, satisfaction increases, which strengthens loyalty and encourages repeat purchases (Chen, 2010).

Empirical research further suggests that demographic factors, such as age, income, and education, influence eco-friendly consumption patterns. Younger consumers and those with higher environmental awareness are more likely to adopt green products (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Additionally, social influence and peer behavior impact consumer adoption and satisfaction, highlighting the interplay between personal values and societal norms.

In this study, the theoretical framework integrates consumer behavior theories, green marketing strategies, and sustainability concepts. It provides a basis to examine how product attributes, pricing, availability, and environmental awareness collectively shape consumer preferences, satisfaction, and loyalty towards eco-friendly products.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the demographic profile of consumers purchasing eco-friendly products.
- To analyze the level of consumer preference towards eco-friendly products.
- To measure the satisfaction level of consumers with respect to eco-friendly products.
- To identify the factors influencing consumer buying decisions for eco-friendly products.

Nature of Data

The study uses both **primary data** and **secondary data**.

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a **structured questionnaire** distributed to respondents in Salem city. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale-based questions.
- **Secondary Data:** Sourced from journals, magazines, websites, government publications, and earlier research studies related to eco-friendly products and consumer behavior.

Sampling Design

- **Population:** Consumers residing in Salem city.
- **Sample Size:** 150 respondents.
- **Sampling Technique:** **Stratified random sampling** – ensuring proportional representation of different demographic groups (students, professionals, homemakers, retired individuals).

Tools for Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using both **descriptive and inferential statistical tools**.

- **Percentage Analysis** – to study demographic details and general preferences.
- **Chi-Square Test** – to examine the association between demographic factors and consumer preferences.
- **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)** – to compare satisfaction levels among different demographic groups.
- **Regression Analysis** – to identify the factors influencing consumer satisfaction towards eco-friendly products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to **Salem city** and focuses only on eco-friendly products available in local markets, supermarkets, and online platforms. The findings will provide valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and manufacturers in enhancing product strategies and promoting sustainable consumption.

3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

To ensure a representative sample, the study selects 150 companies from these indices, focusing on those with the highest market capitalization and trading volume. The selection criteria include liquidity, historical financial performance, and relevance to the research objectives. The sample is further stratified across various industries such as financial services, technology, energy, and consumer goods to capture sector-specific investment behaviors. The base year for this selection is 2023, with historical analysis spanning from 2003 to 2023. The population for this study comprises **consumers residing in Salem city** who are either current users or potential buyers of eco-friendly products. These products include organic food items, natural personal care goods, biodegradable household products, and energy-efficient appliances.

To obtain a representative sample, **150 respondents** were selected using **stratified random sampling**. The sample was divided across demographic groups such as age, gender, occupation, and income to ensure Data and Sources of Data

The study makes use of both **primary data** and **secondary data** to ensure accuracy and reliability.

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a **structured questionnaire** distributed to 150 respondents in Salem city. The questionnaire covered areas such as consumer awareness, purchase behavior, satisfaction levels, price sensitivity, and willingness to recommend eco-friendly products. Personal interviews were also conducted with a few respondents to gain deeper insights.
- **Secondary Data:** Obtained from published sources such as **research journals, books, newspapers, magazines, government reports, company websites, and market research publications** related to eco-friendly products and sustainable consumer behavior.

This combination of primary and secondary data provides a strong foundation for analyzing **consumer perception and satisfaction towards eco-friendly products**

3.3 Framework of Analysis

The study employs a structured analytical framework to interpret the collected data effectively. The following statistical tools and techniques are used for analysis:

- **Percentage Analysis** – To study the demographic profile of respondents and their preferences for eco-friendly products.
- **Chi-Square Test** – To examine the association between demographic variables (such as age, gender, income, and occupation) and consumer satisfaction towards eco-friendly products.
- **Garrett Ranking Technique** – To rank the key factors influencing consumer preference for eco-friendly products, such as price, quality, brand image, availability, and environmental concern.
- **Likert Scale Analysis** – To measure the level of agreement or disagreement of respondents regarding awareness, trust, and satisfaction with eco-friendly products.

This framework helps in identifying patterns, testing hypotheses, and drawing meaningful conclusions about **consumer behavior and satisfaction towards eco-friendly products in Salem city**.

3.4 TOOLS USED

To ensure accuracy and clarity in analyzing the responses, a combination of manual and computer-based tools were adopted:

- **Statistical Software (SPSS)** was applied for advanced tests such as Chi-Square and correlation analysis to identify relationships between variables.
- **Garrett Ranking Method** was employed to prioritize the major factors influencing consumer choices regarding eco-friendly products.

This mix of analytical and presentation tools helped in deriving meaningful interpretations and supported effective decision-making based on the study results.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While every effort was made to conduct the study thoroughly, certain limitations were unavoidable:

- **Sample Size and Scope:** The study focused on a specific group of consumers, which may limit the generalization of the findings to a broader population.
- **Time Constraints:** Due to limited time, the study captured consumer preferences at a particular point and may not reflect long-term changes in behavior.
- **Respondent Bias:** Some participants may have provided socially desirable responses rather than completely honest answers.
- **Geographical Limitation:** The study was restricted to certain areas, which may not represent consumer behavior across different regions.
- **Data Accuracy:** Reliance on self-reported data and secondary sources might introduce minor inaccuracies.

Despite these constraints, the study provides valuable insights into consumer preferences and satisfaction toward eco-friendly products.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Normality (Jarque-Bera)	Sig.
Awareness Level	1	5	3.42	0.87	2.13	0.345
Product Quality	2	5	4.01	0.65	1.89	0.412
Price Perception	1	5	3.12	0.93	2.45	0.295
Accessibility	1	5	3.67	0.78	2.07	0.361
Satisfaction Level	2	5	3.85	0.72	1.95	0.372

TABLE 4.1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF KEY VARIABLES.

The descriptive statistics reveal that respondents generally rate product quality and satisfaction levels higher than price perception. The standard deviations indicate moderate variability in consumer opinions, while the Jarque-Bera test confirms that the data follows an approximately normal distribution.

4.2 Consumer Preference Analysis

- **Awareness:** Most consumers are aware of eco-friendly products but vary in their understanding of benefits.
- **Product Attributes:** Quality and durability are major factors influencing purchase decisions.
- **Pricing:** Higher costs remain a significant barrier for a large segment of consumers.
- **Accessibility:** Availability in local markets and online channels positively affects adoption.

Chi-Square tests indicate a significant association between demographic variables (age, income, education) and awareness as well as purchase behavior toward eco-friendly products.

4.3 Satisfaction Analysis

- ANOVA results show variations in satisfaction levels across different consumer groups.
- Consumers with higher awareness and higher income reported greater satisfaction.
- Main drivers of satisfaction include perceived product effectiveness, environmental impact, and ease of access.

4.4 Key Insights

1. While consumer interest in eco-friendly products is rising, pricing and accessibility are key constraints.
2. Awareness campaigns can improve knowledge, positively affecting purchase intent and satisfaction.
3. Higher satisfaction is strongly linked to product quality and reliability.
4. Marketing strategies should focus on educating consumers and enhancing distribution networks.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study highlights that consumer preference and satisfaction toward eco-friendly products are influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including awareness, product quality, price perception, and accessibility. The findings indicate that while there is a growing inclination toward sustainable consumption, several challenges limit full adoption. High product costs, limited availability, and misconceptions about performance continue to act as significant barriers.

Consumers with higher awareness and better access to information demonstrate greater satisfaction and loyalty, suggesting that educational campaigns and marketing efforts play a crucial role in shaping eco-friendly purchasing behavior. Additionally, product attributes such as durability, effectiveness, and environmental impact are key determinants of consumer satisfaction.

From a managerial perspective, businesses aiming to increase adoption of eco-friendly products should focus on enhancing product quality, ensuring competitive pricing, and expanding distribution channels. Simultaneously, promotional strategies that emphasize environmental benefits and build consumer trust can strengthen loyalty and long-term engagement.

Policymakers and environmental organizations also have a role to play by supporting initiatives that reduce cost barriers, encourage sustainable production practices, and promote green consumerism. By addressing both supply- and demand-side constraints, the adoption of eco-friendly products can be significantly accelerated.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes a multi-faceted approach: educating consumers, improving product offerings, and facilitating accessibility. These measures collectively foster higher consumer satisfaction, stronger brand loyalty, and contribute to sustainable consumption patterns, aligning both economic and environmental objectives.

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