

Consumer Buying Behavior Towards Recycled Products And Sustainable Environment

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Abstract

The circular economy is the key to protect the environment, but there is a need to make the people aware about the new changes and the need to save the natural resources by using recycled products. The use of plastics and non useable goods has hampered the health of the economy in tremendous ways which needs to be stopped. With the help of the current research, the efforts have been made to diagnose the level of awareness amongst people of different age groups, qualifications and professional background about the recycled products and what is the perception they have in their minds for the same. An interview cum discussion method was used to collect data from people in Chandigarh followed by certain similar set of questions to get a clear view of their perception about such products.

Keywords:- *Circular economy, recycled products, plastic goods, environment protection*

INTRODUCTION:- The marketing trends have been showing tremendous change in their buying behavior and their inclination towards more sustainable environment has increased manifolds. The consumers are no more inclined towards unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The circular economy supports the transformation of economy which is promoting wastage towards the reuse and more value is created in all the processes of production including distribution and consumption process. Circular economy basically allows to keep the products, components and materials in continuous circulation which further ensures the usage and maintenance of these over a long period of time and has been able to bring drastic changes in the traditional business models. The environmental issues and the sustainability such as production and recycling of waste and depletion of natural resources has been attracting attention of various researchers and has increased the need of using recycled goods. the CE can be defined as: “a regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized by slowing, closing, and narrowing material and energy loops”. The process of re manufacturing or recycling involves restoring obsolete components of the original products or adding up the updated ones which further elevates the standard of quality of the newly formed product, this further reduces the consumption of energy and materials and thus the cost of product is also reduced. This is the new sustainable environment we all are heading to, but there are consumers who perceive such products as negative and second hand products which carries risk if used. Some consumers even believe that the quality of such products is very low. The present research has highlighted the need to consider the role of various marketing policies and the consumer behavioural patterns.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:- (Su et al. 2013) suggested a “consume–use–waste” model where natural resources and raw materials are extracted, processed into finished goods and then are converted into finished goods and then become waste after consumption. Sustainable consumption behavior is a complex phenomenon which defines that the use of goods and services which respond to the basic needs and in order to bring a better quality of life which will minimize the use of natural resources, toxic materials and reuse of waste material in order to jeopardize the needs of future generation (Ofstad 1994). Few authors indicated that the sustainable consumption which helps in satisfying the consumer needs and in reduction of negative impacts which are caused due to extraction and production and consumption of goods (Cooper 2013). (Cronin et al. 2011) suggested that mainly consumers are willing to use the environmentally sustainable products but there was very less evidence which showed that there is a regular purchase being made for these products. It was found that the consumers perceive that the quality expectations from the product is decreased when a recycled product is used (Lin and Chang 2012; Wang et al. 2013). The purchase intention of the consumer is defined as the willingness of an individual in order to purchase a specific service and the perceived quality also was found to influence the consumer buying behavior (Dodds et.al. 1991).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-The study consisted of a research which deals with the intention to investigate the consumer buying behavior towards recycled products. The main objective of the study was to examine framework which consists of relationship between the consumer buying behavior and recycled products and the perception of consumers towards these products.

An extensive research was done after a thorough review of previous literature in this regard, in order to collect the data, the responses were gathered through the interview cum discussion method. The respondents were first explained about the topic and then they were asked to give their point of views and the reasons behind refusal to use such recycled products was gathered. They were asked similar open ended questions. Efforts were made by the researcher to gather the data from respondents from various categories as far as their educational background, qualification and professional front is concerned.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

(i) To analyse the level of awareness amongst consumers about recycled products.

(ii) To examine the consumer perception and image of the recycled products.

(iii) To suggest few measures in case so required.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:- Data was collected from respondents from various age groups, qualification and professional background. The respondents so covered were from Chandigarh. The researcher collected data from the respondents available in different market areas and malls in Chandigarh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:- The technique of Judgmental sampling was used while interviewing respondents and open ended questions were asked through interview method and similar set of questions were asked from all sets of respondents, followed by discussion to make them more comfortable.

SAMPLE SIZE: - Data was collected from 250 respondents from various educational, professional background and different age group category to ensure heterogeneous data which can make the data more authentic and reliable.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH:

Image of the recycled products:- It was found that the recycled products were perceived to be of a low quality and they even believed that the product made out of recycled or waste products will not have a long tenure to be used. They had an image about such recycled products that these are used or second hand goods and they believed that their zeal for new product never arises or gets satisfied using such products. Very few respondents were found to be of the view that these products are of any importance or they can fulfill their responsibility towards the environment. There were few respondents who were found to be totally unaware of such products or the usage of such products but a need was found to make

them aware of the existence and benefits of using such products. **Quality issues:-** It was further found that the respondents believed that the products which were used in manufacturing such products must of low quality and must be in the stage of wearing it off and at the disposal stage. Some of the respondents believed that the products can be recycled only once, so the products so made out of recycled goods will further deteriorate the quality of the goods so manufactured. The inferior quality of the goods is their main myth they were found to be having.

It's a sham:- Some respondents were of the view that the recycling of the goods is a sham, the companies or the manufacturing units are deriving multiple profits by selling their inferior quality goods in the name of recycled goods. While few very respondents were found to be having faith on these recycled goods that these are originally recycled goods and are genuinely been recycled to reduce wastages and save the environment.

Everything is lumped together in recycling:- To the surprise of the researcher, the consumers were found to be of the view almost 40% that while recycling all the products are lumped at one time and no segregation of material is done which means that such recycled products might have glass pieces or garbage or any harmful material in it. Few respondents from educated background and very few from the business background were aware about the fact that the goods are first segregated before recycling.

Government's job/ duty:- Some respondents 5% were of the view that it is the duty of the government to ensure that the goods are segregated and recycled but they are putting an extra burden on the consumers to do so. They were of the view that such segregation is of no use as, all the dump is combined together at one place and they said we should be made more aware about the whole process of segregation and the manufacturing of recycling of goods in order to ensure that the confidence of consumers is built while using such products.

Old wine in new bottle:- Some respondents were of the view that the sellers and manufacturers are making a fool out of them by saying that they are selling recycled products and are over charging from them in the name of protecting the environment. They believed that it becomes difficult for them to bifurcate the normal products with the recycled products as the sellers are just charging extra for their old stock or inferior quality goods.

Plastic bag is as much recyclable as any other good:- Lack of knowledge of respondents was quite visible when almost 70% respondents argued that the plastic cans, bottles and bags are equally safe and reuseable and recyclable as any other good. They were aware that this is true only if it is of a certain level of microns in it but they were completely not sure of how much level of microns is allowed to be used and which grade plastic is allowed to be used. The belief of recycling of plastic made the impression about the quality of the recycled goods in their minds of even low quality.

Recycled plastic is weak and less durable:

Almost 90% respondents were found to have an opinion that the recycled plastic is supposed to be weak and of less durability and thus they did not prefer buying it as they find themselves cheated over this and a complete wastage of money while using such goods.

Recycling is not supporting the local economy:

The respondents specially the youths were found to have an opinion that the recycling plants neither does generate new employment as the existing or previous staffers only are involved in this process or much of the work is done by machines which ensures no futuristic scope of employment and growth in the economy. The other respondents which constituted almost 50% of the total respondents believed that it is not even helping in the increase in GDP of our country.

Recycling generates more pollution:- There were few respondents who believed that the process of recycling generated more and more of pollution and thus causes more of harm to the environment than the benefits which can be derived by reusing the old recycled goods. They believed that the process of recycling is lengthy and cumbersome which involves re processing of the materials thus adding to the level of pollution in the environment.

STEPS/ METHODS TO ENCOURAGE USE OF RECYCLED PRODUCTS:-After collecting data and analyzing the results, it was found that there is a need to take few steps in order to create awareness amongst the population. Few suggestions of such steps are here as under

- a) **Government role:-** There is a need of the hour to make the people more aware about the role of recycled products rather than just making it mandatory for them to segregate the waste in different dustbins.
- b) **Awareness media:-** The consumers of every age group need to be aware of the use of such recycled goods and the use of such product to the environment as a whole. This can be done through advertisement on television, radio, in newspaper or even door to door campaigning in rural areas.
- c) **Subsidies and tax concession:-**To encourage people to use such products, government must give a tax concession or waiver of tax on such recycled goods so that the consumers get lured up to buy such products at a large scale.
- d) **Employment generation:-** With the drastic increase in population and the unemployment in the youth, the rate of unemployment has increased manifolds so there is a need of increasing employment to ensure that their level of confidence is generated and they feel motivated to buy more of such products.
- e) **Make them more aware of benefits:-** The most important step to be taken now by the manufacturers, sellers, producers and government is to make the people aware of the real situation so that they can also analyse the facts and can see the difference they all can make individually and collectively by contributing towards this initiative to change the environment.

CONCLUSION:- With the increase in the dangers to the environment like ozone depletion, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunami and landslides and many more, now the environmentalists have started stressing upon the need to protect our Earth and for that reason there is a high need that everyone should start investing their time and money to work towards it. It is indeed very well said that little knowledge is a disguise which is making the situation even more worse. Together all the people can work together to build a better world to make sure that the future generation must have atleast a better and clean environment to live in.

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