

“Consumer Purchasing Behaviour Towards Green Product”

Go Green, Live Green

Author

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Abstract

This is an attempt to assess the present situation of consumer's buying behaviour towards green product. Studies on green consumption behaviour in Uttar Pradesh (India) is neither popular nor conducted carefully, especially empirical studies. With the aim of contributing to this research field, this paper adopts a new approach to find out consumers perception and behaviours towards green consumption by constructing a survey tool. People are now more concerned with ways to protect the environment. For instance, consuming green product is one of the key initiatives that can be carried out by consumers. A consumer buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Green has become a mainstream issue driving millions of consumers to find out how they can live a more eco-friendly existence. This paper focuses on the changing consumer behaviour towards the usage of green products. According to the results of the analysis, environmental awareness, green product features, green promotion activities and green price affect green purchasing behaviours of the consumers in positive way.

Key Words : *Green Marketing, Green Products, Consumer Behaviour*

1. Introduction

While globalization process continues in its full speed across the world, this process has also brought some problems with it. Leading one of these problems is environmental problems that affect all living beings negatively. These aforementioned environmental problems have started to come to the agenda more and more in the recent years and people have started to talk these negativities. Consumers now have worries about the future of the world and as results of this mostly prefer environment friendly products.

Consumption decisions have changed towards products that are greener, more suitable and more environmentally friendly due to the rise in consumers' awareness of current environmental matters. In developed countries, the green consumption movement has existed for a long time and now has become increasingly popular. With higher incomes and consumption awareness, green consumption has been improved in developing economies. Green consumption is an important part of sustainable consumption - a pillar of green growth, which is a development strategy that many countries are pursuing.

However, green consumption practice in India in many aspects - from consumers to enterprises to government - is in its early stages. Research activities in this field are still not adequately addressed by experts. There is a lack of in-depth and empirical studies, especially on green consumption behaviour. Meanwhile, green consumption is a part of the supply-demand relationship; therefore understanding the intrinsic nature of green consumer behaviour will help Governments and businesses grasp and meet the needs of consumers in the direction of “green”, as well as the development of consumption trends in India.

2. Literature Review

The survey tool is built on the basis of green consumption concepts as well as the results from previous research on factors affecting green consumption behaviour. The concepts relating to green consumption are relatively new and defined with various approaches. Green consumption emphasizes environmental factors, contributing to sustainable development. Alfredson (2004) explained that green consumption is related to the index of energy use and CO₂ emissions.

According to Carrigan et al (2004), people who buy environmentally friendly products are called green consumers. Green consumption is related not only to consuming goods without damage to the natural environment, but also to buying environmentally friendly products and to recycling.

Sisira (2011), Mansvelt & Robbins (2011) also have a comprehensive definition of green consumption from the perspective which considers it a process through social behaviors including purchase of bio-foods, recycling, reuse and limits to excessive use and using an environmentally friendly transport system.

In the framework of this study, the authors approach the concept of green consumption as a series of activities:

1. Green Product Purchase,
2. Green Usage (such as saving, reusing, recycling, green packaging usage, and green waste treatment) and
3. Encouraging the community to purchase green products and use things in a green way.

In understanding green consumption, the concept of green products also needs clarifying. Green products (eco-products or environmentally friendly products) are considered as products that do not pollute the earth or damage natural resources and can be recycled or conserved (Shamdasani et al, 1993).

A product that has packaging materials that reduce any negative environmental impact is a green product (Wasik, 1996). These products are usually recognized by authorities and organizations with green labels – which identify environmental criteria that green products meet that conventional products cannot.

3. Objectives

- The purpose of conducting the research is to identify the factors that influence the consumer to make them to purchase green products.
- Another purpose of the research is to encourage people to buy green product

3.1. Structure of Paper

The paper is both qualitative and quantitative. Data are presented through table and graph, so it is quantitative, because of theoretical analysis it is qualitative.

3.2. Population of the Paper

All the people of Lucknow City are taken as ‘population’.

4. Understanding Consumer and Green Buying Behaviour

4.1. Consumer

An individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. A consumer is someone who can make the decision whether or not to purchase an item at the

store, and someone who can be influenced by marketing and advertisements. Any time someone goes to a store and purchases a toy, shirt, beverage, or anything else, they are making that decision as a consumer.

The consumer is the one who pays to consume the goods and services produced. As such, consumers play a vital role in the economic system of a nation. In the absence of effective consumer demand, producers would lack one of the key motivations to produce: to sell to consumers. The consumer also forms part of the chain of distribution.

4.2. Consumer Buying Behaviour

Possibly the most challenging concept in marketing deals with understanding why buyers do what they do (or don't do). But such knowledge is critical for marketers since having a strong understanding of buyer behaviour will help shed light on what is important to the customer and also suggest the important influences on customer decision-making. Using this information, marketers can create marketing programs that they believe will be of interest to customers.

As you might guess, factors affecting how customers make decisions are extremely complex. Buyer behaviour is deeply rooted in psychology with dashes of sociology thrown in just to make things more interesting. Since every person in the world is different, it is impossible to have simple rules that explain how buying decisions are made. So, Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. How consumers buy: This process is presented in a sequence of 5 steps as shown in the figure.



4.3. Green Consumers

The green consumer is generally defined as one who adopts environmentally friendly behaviours and/or who purchases green products over the standard alternatives. Green consumers are more internally-controlled as they believe that an individual consumer can be effective in environmental protection. Thus, they feel that the job of environmental protection should not be left to the government, business, environmentalists and scientists only; they as consumers can also play a part. They are also less rigid and more open-minded or tolerant toward new products and ideas. Their open-mindedness helps them to accept green products and behaviors, more readily (Shamdasani et al. 1993:491).

Some defines green consumer as 'those actively seek and support those products satisfy their needs that are having less impact on environment'. All consumers are potentially green consumers. When a consumer has choice to buy from two identical products, the consumer will prefer to buy environmentally friendly product.

4.4. Types of Green Consumers

The study divided consumers into four groups based on their level of eco-consciousness. By observing consumer buying behaviours, the study identified key buying motivations for each group, as well as major purchasing drivers.

According to the study, each group is distinctive, both in its interest in green and its key values.

4.4.1. True Blue Greens: This group is characterized by business consumers who are-

- Highly committed to environmental products
- Buying environmental products whether it leads high cost
- Avoid products that are not made on environmental concern
- Highly involved in pro-environmental activities
- Make monetary contributions to environmental issues

4.4.2. Greenback Greens: This group is similar to the True blues. However, greenbacks are-

- Willing to pay premium for environmentally sound products
- Sometimes they switch to another products if the environmental products are not available or cope with the lifestyle

4.4.3. Sprouts: This group doesn't usually purchase green products but-

- Capable of doing so, if they are marketed to them in an appropriate way
- Tend to believe in environmental causes only in theory, not in practice
- They rank well above companies overall on when it comes to environmental requirements and standards. This makes the group a key swing group

4.4.4. Grouzers: Grouzers are-

- Not committed to environmental products
- Not believe that they are capable of effecting change
- Tend to claim that they have many reasons for not doing more for the environment

4.4.5. Basic Browns: These business consumers-

- Do not think about the environmental issues
- Expose that it is not necessary to do many things for the environment
- Emphasize the profit only
- May harm the environment

4.5. Green Washing

The term “green washing” refers to using green marketing to eye wash the customers. The primary objective of green washing is to provide consumers with the feeling that the organization is taking the necessary steps to responsibly manage its ecological footprint but in reality such things are absent. The main purpose is to increase profits. The term green washing was first used by environmentalist Jay Westerveld when objecting to hotelier's practice of placing notices in hotel rooms which asked their guests to reuse towels to “save the environment”.

4.6. Seven Claims of Green Washing

- **DON'T - make factual claims like “carbon neutral” or “wholly recyclable” unless you can substantiate them.**

By testing the product and keeping a record of tests, an advertiser should be able to demonstrate that claims about the product are honest and truthful.

- **DON'T - use vague terms.**

The use of terms such as sustainable, green, non-polluting, environmentally- friendly, earth-friendly, earth-smart, eco-safe, essentially non-toxic & ozone- friendly have been found to be misleading. Using qualified or comparative claims such as “greener” and “friendlier” have been acceptable if clear and substantiated.

- **DON'T - use of the hidden trade-off**

A claim suggesting that a product is ‘green’ based on a narrow set of attributes without attention to other important environmental issues-such as greenhouse gas emissions, or chlorine use in bleaching may be equally important.

- **DON'T - use of irrelevance information.**

An environmental claim that may be truthful but is unimportant or unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products. ‘CFC-free’ is a common example, since it is a frequent claim despite the fact that CFCs are banned by law.

- **DO - Avoid using worship.**

A product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of third- party endorsement where no such endorsement exists; fake labels, in other words.

- **DO - make the basis of any comparisons clear.**

If, for example, an advertisement for a car claims that it is “better for the environment” or “has lower emissions,” it should be clear which cars are being compared.

- **DO - make it clear if there is a significant division of scientific opinion.**

Also state that evidence is inconclusive about a particular environmental issue that is relevant to your advertisement.

5. Selection of Sampling Design

200 questionnaires were distributed to a conveniently generated sample of a highly educated segment of general population. 167 total questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 83.7%. After examination only 140 questionnaires were found usable of which 59% of the respondents were males and 41% females with mean age ranging from 21years to 30 years.

The questionnaire was structured as follows. The first part contained questions with Yes and No as two possible responses. These questions measured general consumers’ knowledge about environmental issues, awareness of green products, trust in performance of green products and their willingness to pay more for such products.

The questionnaire contains questions to measure general consumers' environmental concern, awareness of green products, trust in performance of green products and green buying behaviour.

6. Collection of Information

- Some of the data were used in this research are primary data, collected from the sources and some secondary data were collected from websites and others sources.
- Primary data are collected by the questionnaire and the personal interviewing system of survey method is used.
- Secondary data are collected from many journals, books, web sites etc.

7. Limitations

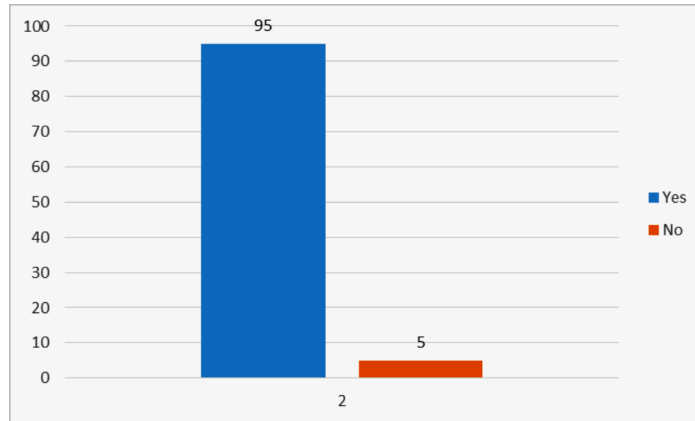
This research was conducted by generating a non-random sample and hence the results may not be generalized beyond the sample frame. These results, however, support a generally prevailing notion that more educated people tend to be green buyers and hence warrant a larger study conducted on a randomly selected sample. Also, the present research was conducted using a self-reporting questionnaire and hence respondents' bias may be a concern, especially in regard to the willingness to pay premium.

- Our primary data have been recorded about few numbers of people. It was hard to talk with householders due to time limitations that eventually limit the paper in the relation of the world.
- Collecting data was very rough and tough, because most of the householders was not agree to talk frequently rather they were hesitating while making the survey and it was found that the responses vary from person to person, so decision making about the report was so tough.
- This research work required a large number of days than we got to present the huge information. We can summaries our limitation of the study as follows-
- Respondents were sometimes reluctant to fill the questionnaire.
- Lack of work experience.
- Lack of enough research papers on the topic.
- Limited financial support.
- Limited time.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Importance of Environment Friendly product

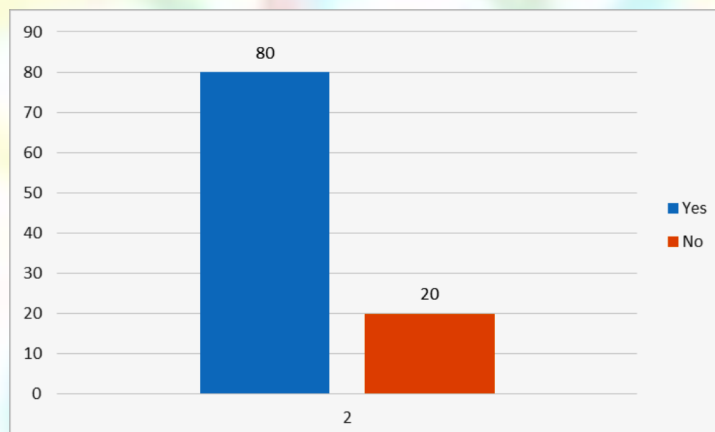
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	133	95
No	7	5
Total	140	100



When we asked people if they knew about environmental friendly product then 95% of them say yes and 5% of them say no.

2. Experience on purchasing green product

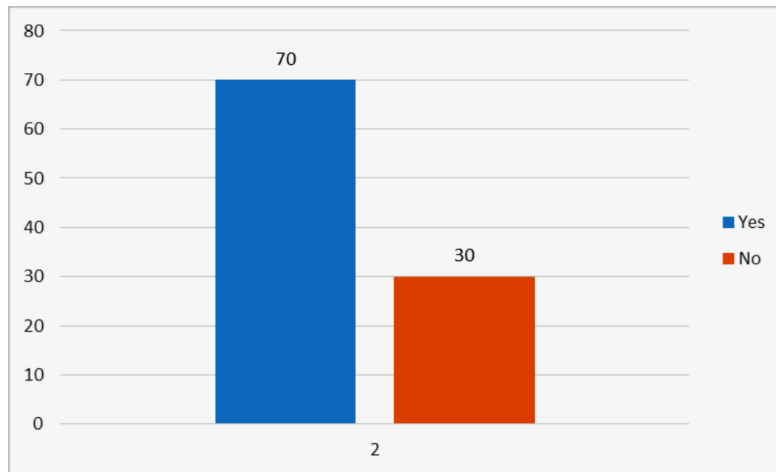
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	112	80
No	28	20
Total	140	100



When we asked people about the experience on buying green products then 80% of them say yes and 20 % Says that they don't have any.

3. Usage of poly bags in shopping

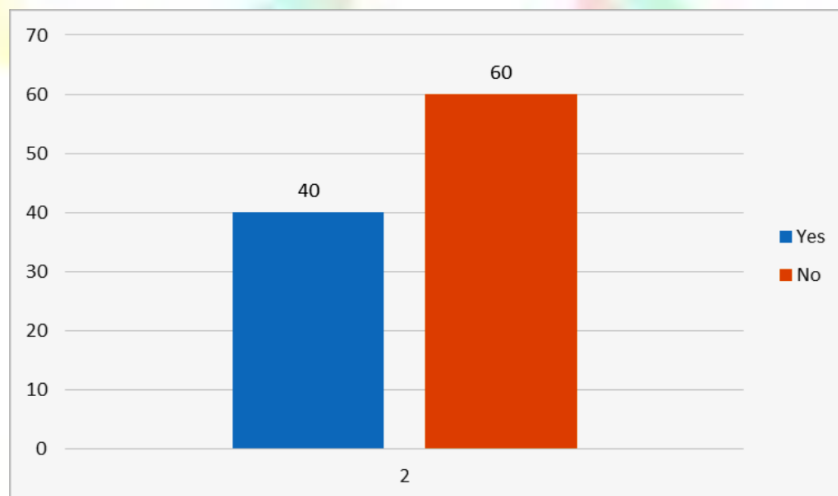
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	70
No	42	30
Total	140	100



When we asked people about using of poly bags when they go shopping then 70% of them said yes they use poly bags when they go shopping, and 30% of them said they don't use it when they go shopping.

4. The consideration of purchasing green product

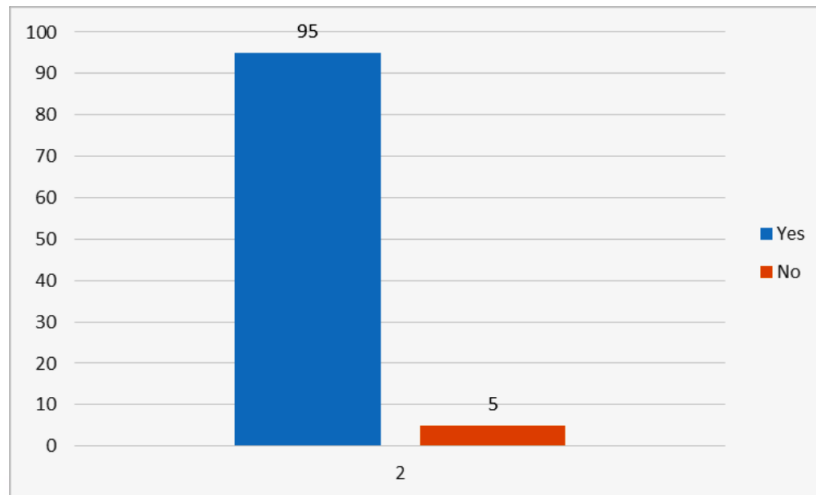
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	40
No	84	60
Total	140	100



When we asked people before purchasing product are the considered the green product. Then 40% of them say yes and 60% of them say no.

5. Knowledge about benefits of green product

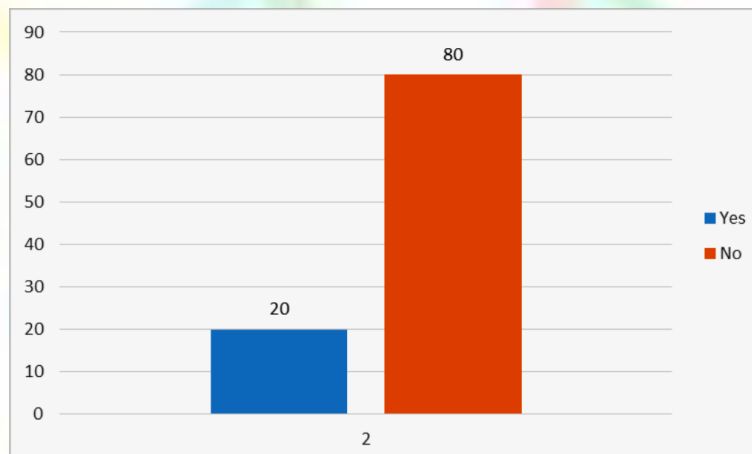
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	133	95
No	7	5
Total	140	100



When we asked people that are they know the benefits of the benefits of green product. Then they said that yes they know the benefits of green product and the other 5% said that they don't know the benefits of green product.

6. Regularity of purchasing green product

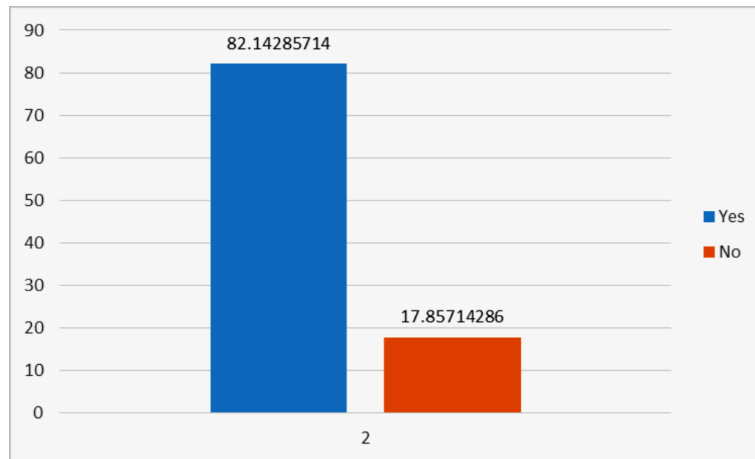
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	20
No	112	80
Total	140	100



We asked people that did they buy green product regularly then 28 people out of 140 said that they buy green product regularly, and 112 out of 140 said that they don't buy green product regularly.

7. Purchasing product approved by ISI or ISO or Agmark?

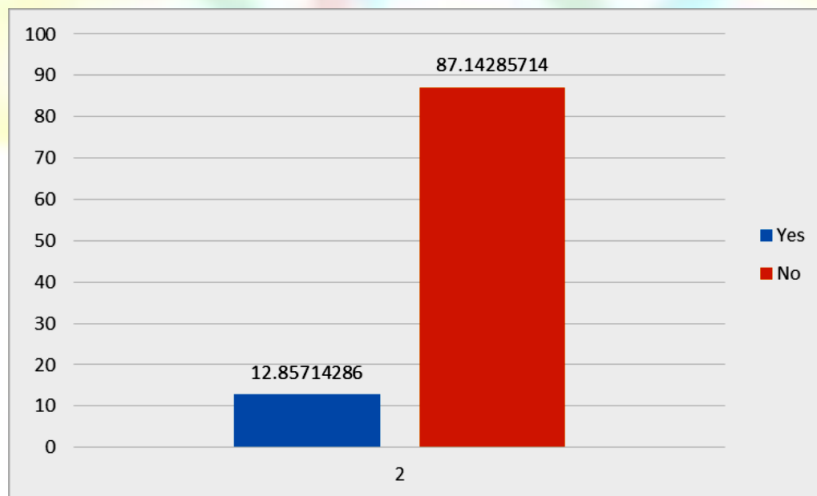
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	115	82.14286
No	25	17.85714
Total	140	100



We asked people Do they buy product which approved by BSTI, then 115 people out of 140 said that they do, and 25 people out of 140 said that they don't do.

8. Purchasing of green product more than common product

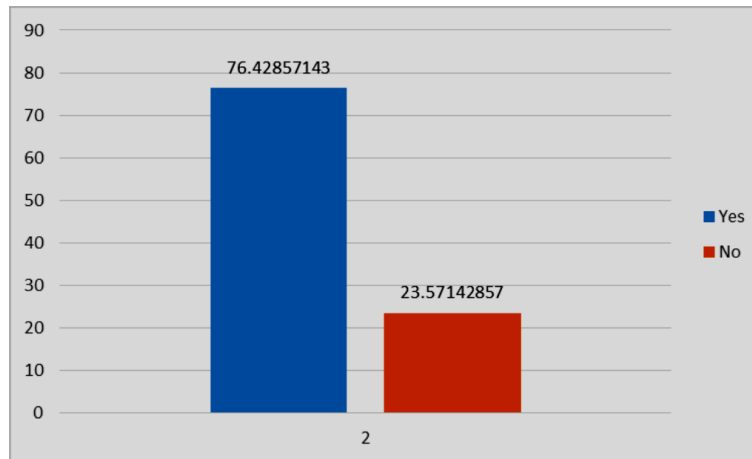
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	12.85714
No	122	87.14286
Total	140	100



We asked people do they buy green product more or common product than 18 people out of 140 said that they do and 122 people out of 140 said that they don't do.

9. Purchasing product based on the information given on its package

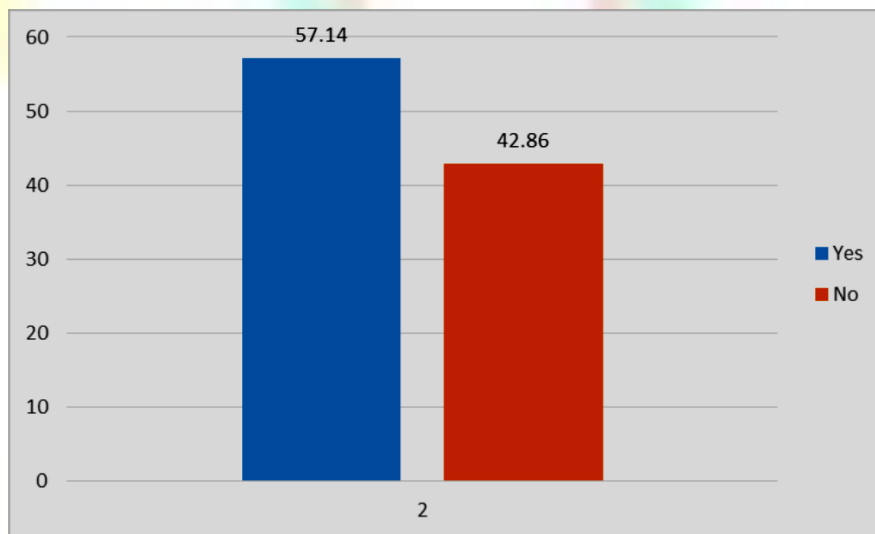
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	107	76.42857
No	33	23.57143
Total	140	100



After asking people about their buying behavior then we know that 107 people out of 140 said that they Purchase product based on the information given on its package and 33 people out of 140 said that they don't Purchase product based on the information given on its package.

10. Willingness to pay excess money for green product

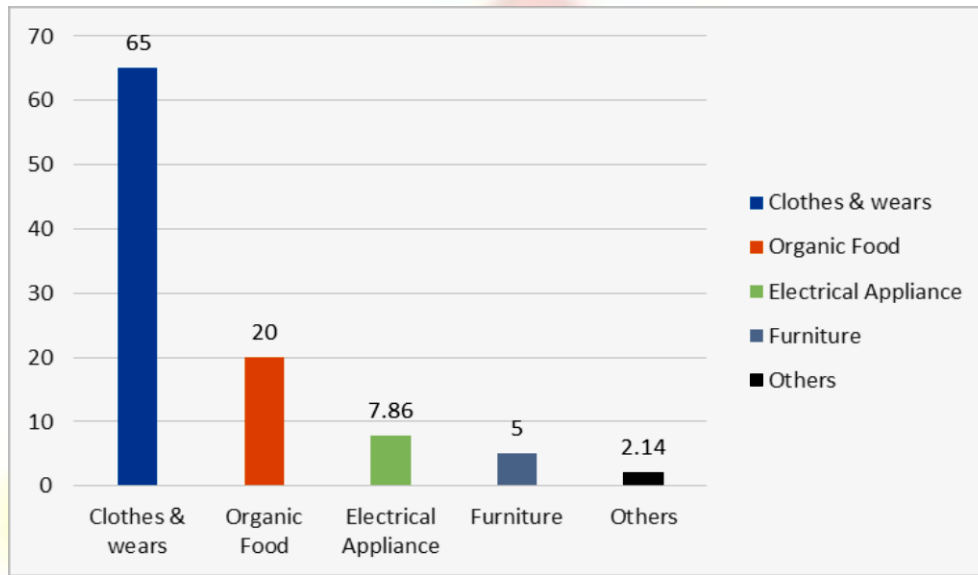
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	57.14
No	60	42.86
Total	140	100



Then we asked people are they willing to pay excess money for that then we find that 80 people out of 140 said that yes they are willing to pay excess money and the other 60 are not willing to pay excess money.

11. The kinds of green product bought

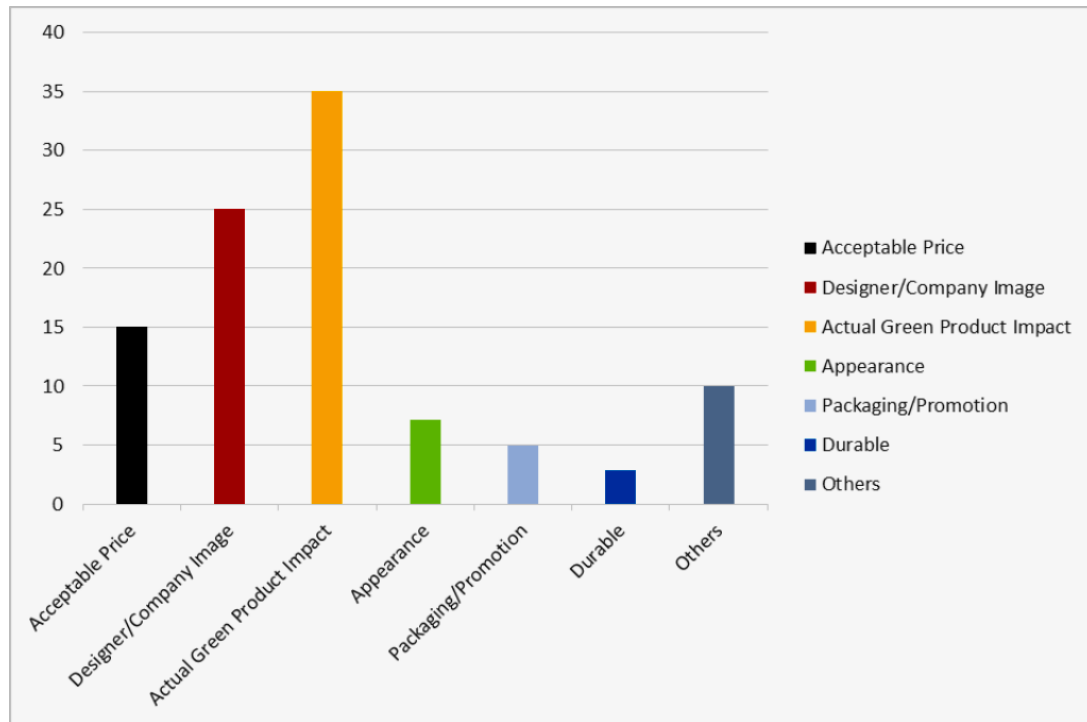
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Clothes & wears	91	65
Organic Food	28	20
Electrical Appliance	11	7.86
Furniture	7	5
Others	3	2.14
total	140	100



After querying about the green products they purchased, they said that most of it is (65%) Cloths and wears. 20% people bought Organic food and 5% of them furniture. Only 2.14% of them bought other Products.

12. The attracting elements to buy green product

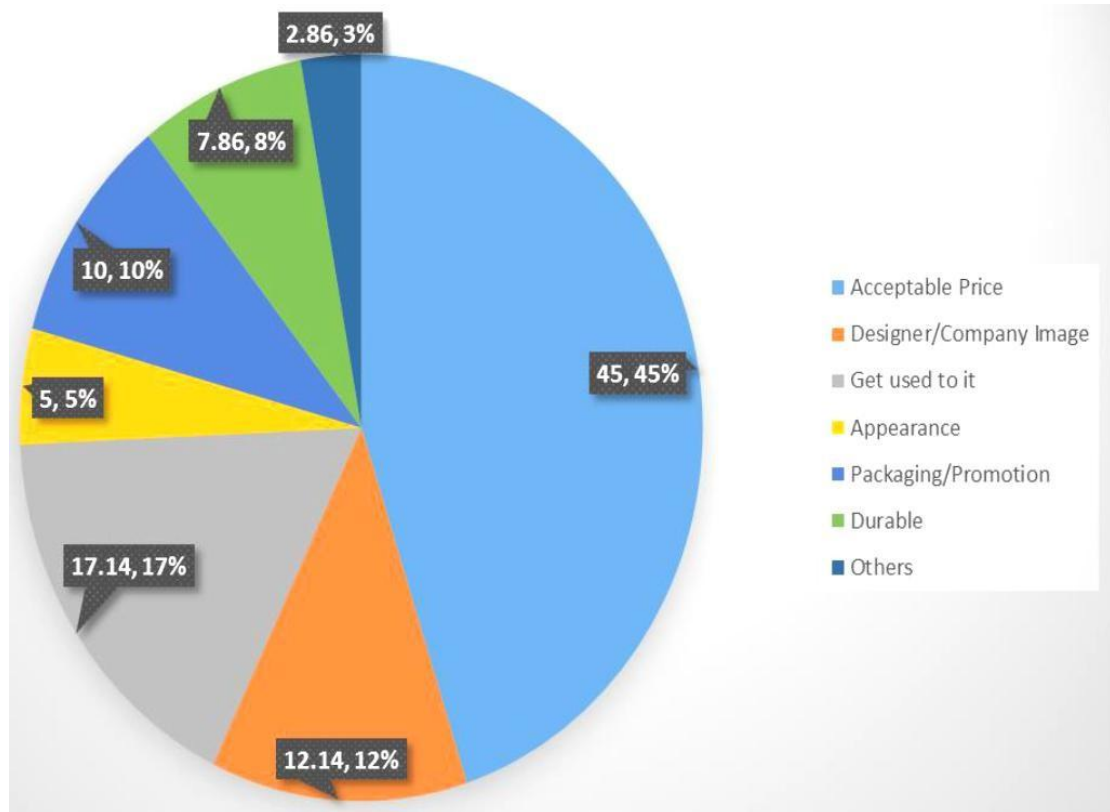
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable Price	21	15
Designer/Company Image	35	25
Actual Green Product Impact	49	35
Appearance	10	7
Packaging/Promotion	7	5
Durable	4	3
Others	14	10
Total	140	100



When we asked people what they find most attracting when they buy green products. 35% of them argued that it is Actual Green Product Impact, 25% of them said that it is the company or designers impact acting on their purchasing behavior. 15% of them said if the products are reasonably priced, they would buy that product. 7% and 5% of the consumers buy products for Appearance and Packaging/Promotion accordingly. Only 3% of people vouch for durability. 10% of the samples buying behavior depend on other attracting factors.

13. Reason of purchasing common product

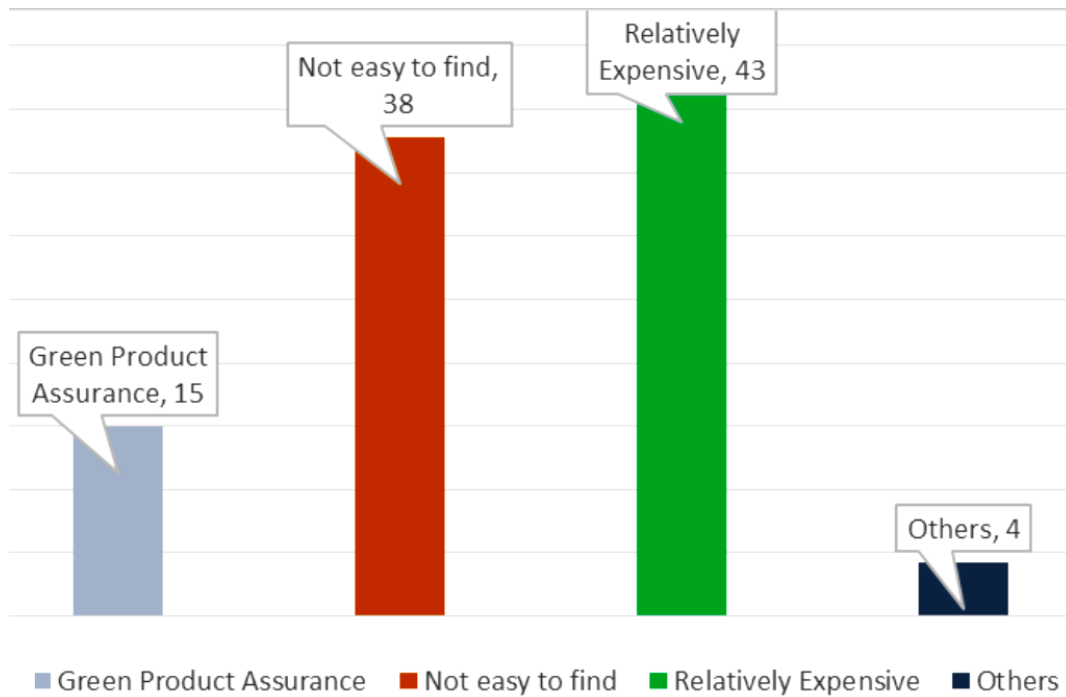
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable Price	63	45
Designer/Company Image	17	12.14
Get used to it	24	17.14
Appearance	7	5
Packaging/Promotion	14	10
Durable	11	7.86
Others	4	2.86
Total	140	100



Though they knew green products are healthy way to live, they still buys common products because, 45% of them thinks they are priced lower than the green products. 17% of the consumers got used to the common products. 12% of the people thinks designer impact is essential in buying the common products. 10% people thinks common products has a great advantage over green products in terms of packaging and promotion as they buy common products because of it. 8% of people thinks, common product is more durable than green products and 3% of people think of other factors that allure them to buy common products.

14. Restriction of choosing green product

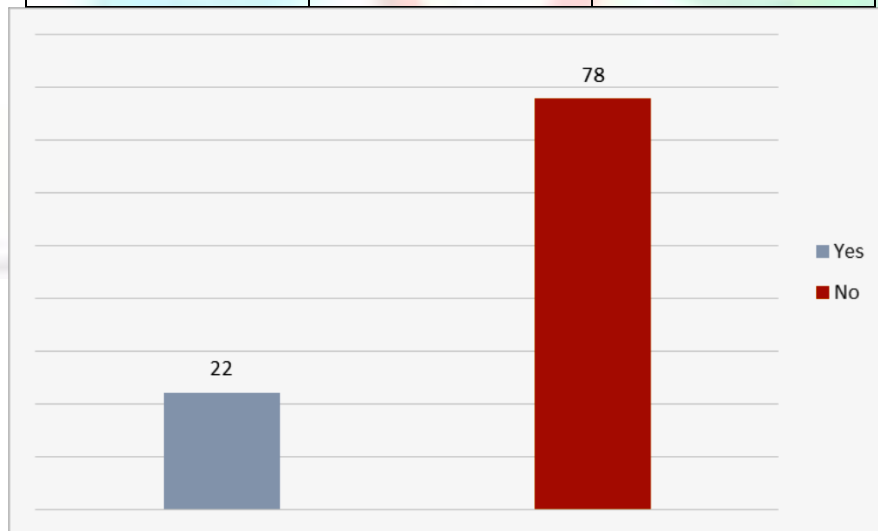
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Green Product Assurance	21	15
Not easy to find	53	38
Relatively Expensive	60	43
Others	6	4
Total	140	100



The main resistance of buying a green product is its expensiveness. 43% of people marks it as the main restriction of buying a green product. And in local context of Lucknow, 38% of people thinks that, green product is very hard to find in this area. Some people are afraid of being green washed though the percentage is relatively low, only 15%. 4% of people thinks there are some other factors that restricts the green products.

15. Product lasted more time

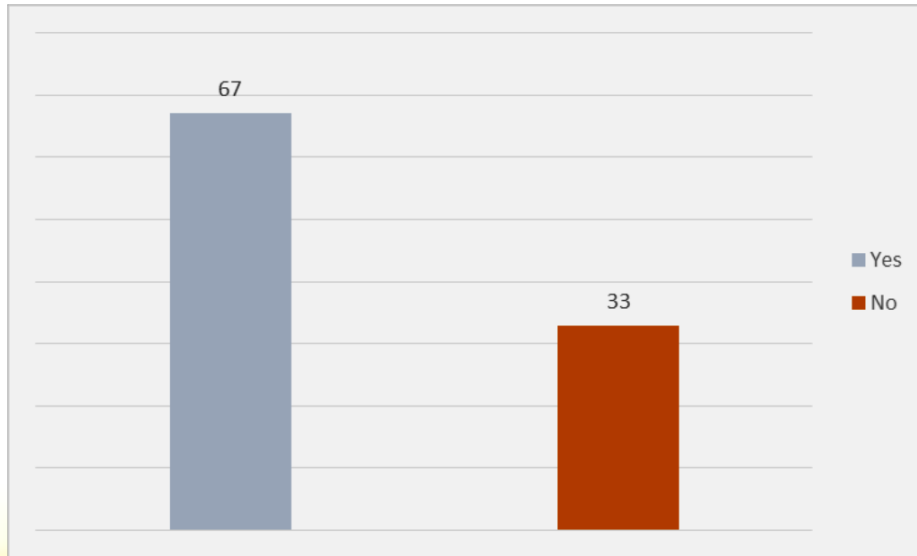
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	22
No	109	78
Total	140	100



We asked people that are the green product lasted more times? Then we find that 22% think that yes it lasted more times and 78% think that no it not lasted more times.

16. Satisfaction after using green product

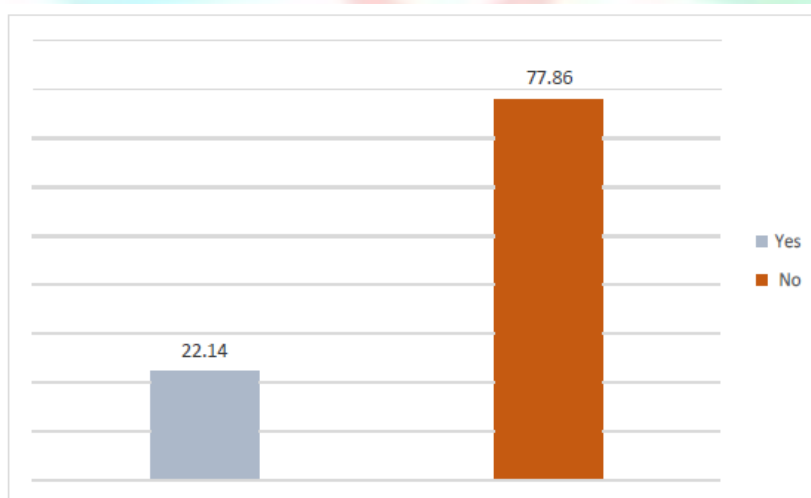
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	67
No	46	33
Total	140	100



We asked people about their satisfaction about green product then we find that 67% are satisfied and 33% are not.

17. The product is recyclable

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	87.86
No	17	12.14
Total	140	100



We asked people that do they think the green product is recyclable or not then 123 people out of 140 said that yes they think and the other 17 people said that out of 140 they don't believe in its recyclability.

9. Findings

- The consuming percentage of Green products in Lucknow is low
- There are not enough knowledge about Green Products in local peoples
- Manufacturer of Green Products in Lucknow is not significantly present.
- People are not so much concern about environment when they purchase/consume goods
- Polythene bag is prohibited in Lucknow but the users of polythene bag hold the top position. Polythene bag seriously affect the environment
- Green Products are not fully available in Lucknow.
- Most of the Green Products do not last long.
- Green Products are recyclable.
- Consumers do not want to buy Green Product for its excess price.
- Green Product is not easy to found.

10. Conclusion

Our research shows that, some factors have a great influence among all of the factors that indicated that marketing managers should concern with the superior value of the eco-friendly products. Consumers have strong emphasis on the end-value of the products in order to repeat purchases. The results of the satisfaction of the consumers would lead to increase in sales, market shares and brand loyalty. Many scholar agreed consumers are concerned on the satisfaction of the products and activities of the companies not harm to the environment. However, the product quality should not be overlooked since consumers relate price with quality when making purchasing decision, and consumers research not only green products claiming environmental values but also products with high quality, because consumers are not ready to make a compromise on quality just for the benefits green attributes and for the moment green products seem still have less quality than conventional ones as our findings.

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