

## **GREEN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON CONSUMERS' BUYING PERCEPTIONS IN INDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The fast usage of natural resources, over past several decades is the root cause of environmental issues which is posing a threat to human. Hence, a "movement" for environmental protection has taken a grip. "Green Marketing" is an emerging area which refers to a form of marketing that focuses on bringing attention to environmental concerns. "Green marketing communication" (GMC) is extension of "Green Marketing" which refers to a activities that are conducted with the purpose of drawing the attention of customers to the qualities of green products and to the extensive number of eco-friendly practices that are carried out by businesses. The paper examines the effect of "level of attention paid by consumers to the GMC on consumers' "green purchasing behavior" and how gender, green attitudes, and education relate attentiveness of the consumers to GMC by survey collected from employees, students, business owners and homemakers.

**Keywords:** Green Marketing, Green Marketing Communication, Green Attitude, Consumers' buying perceptions, Sustainable Business, Sustainability

### **INTRODUCTION**

Earth started facing environmental issues in 21st century. The industrial revolution and exhaustive consumption of natural resources by mankind is the root cause of multitude of these issues (Steffen W., Crutzen P. J. and McNeill J. R. 2007). Our behavior as individual consumer is not environmentally friendly, and we are to some extent responsible for the gravity of all of these environmental issues. However, there is growing realization among people for environmental issues. This realization is one of the many factors for starting of a "movement" for environmental protection.

It is a better to purchase green items for daily use as it minimizes and/or removes many of the existing environmental dangers. Consumers are demanding that businesses take a more

sustainable and ecologically responsible attitude. While expecting from businesses, consumers are modifying their purchase patterns and being more environmentally conscious themselves. Also, importance of sustainability for industry has gradually grown, and a number of businesses have made major contributions to the promotion of consumption that is sustainable. In addition, businesses have become increasingly adept at adapting their activities to fit within a more sustainable strategy.

GMC, represents an essential tool for businesses who want a "greener" position. The importance of this tool cannot be overstated, particularly in situations in which customers demonstrate a lack of interest in particular items, including environmentally friendly ones (Chih-Cheng Chen, Chien-Wen Chen and Yi-Chun Tung 2018). GMC has the potential to boost consumer confidence in a brand's commitment to the environment and, as a result, favorably affect consumers' decisions to buy green products (Chih-Cheng Chen, Chien-Wen Chen and Yi-Chun Tung 2018). So, it is necessary that consumers are attentive towards GMC. Studies by different researchers indicate that there are many factors which affect Consumers' attentiveness towards such marketing communications like Age, Gender, Socioeconomic factors, Values and Attitude, Education, Personal Involvement, Culture. Out of these factors, the researchers have confined themselves of three factors gender, attitudes, and education.

Research suggests that gender can play a role in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards environmental issues, which, in turn, can impact attentiveness towards GMC. Research also indicates that women show higher levels of environmental concern than males do, notwithstanding individual variances. As a result, women may be more attentive to green marketing messages that promote sustainability and eco-friendly practices (Li, Z. n.d.) (Mohamed M. Mostafa 2006).

Individuals who hold positive attitudes towards sustainability and perceive it as important are more likely to pay attention to green marketing messages. Such consumers may actively seek out information about environmentally friendly products and practices and be more receptive to related communications (Zeinab Zaremohzzabieh, et al. 2021).

Education level can influence consumers' attentiveness towards GMC. Higher levels of education leads to more attentiveness and are often associated with greater awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Educated consumers may have a better grasp of the environmental impact of their choices and may actively seek information about sustainable options. They may also be more critical in evaluating green marketing claims, considering factors such as certifications and scientific evidence (Ida Ayu Debora Indriani, Mintarti Rahayu and Djumilah Hadiwidjojo 2019).

In this context, we propose to do research on the attention that Indian consumers pay to the GMC that companies engage in and checking whether Gender, Attitude and Education parameters affect the attentiveness of consumers towards GMC. To accomplish this, a survey was sent to the population in India across Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata that was over 18. This gave us the opportunity to collect a total of 320 replies, out of which 290 were deemed to be legitimate and were integrated into the analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Green Marketing Communications

At the moment, there is no single, all-encompassing definition of "green marketing." A comprehensive analysis of the published research in the relevant scientific field reveals the existence of a great number of studies that provide an explanation of the relevance of this idea (Christopher Groening, J. Sarkis and Qingyun Zhu 2018). The use of this phrase also affords a certain amount of leeway. It is possible to use several terminologies, such as "environmental", "ecological", or "eco-" marketing [2].

Green marketing, as defined by (Lahcene Makhoulfi, et al. 2021), is a form of marketing that focuses on bringing attention to environmental concerns. "Green marketing" refers to the practice of striving to build a variety of techniques in order to target customers who are more responsible for the environment (Jacopo Cerri, Francesco Testa and Francesco Rizzi 2018),.

Green marketing, is an aspect of "socially responsible communication which can positively influence consumers' purchase behaviors" (Lucy Atkinson and Sonny Rosenthal 2014). This is the most important factors that determines the fruitfulness of an environmentally competent business. Companies try to convey the environmentally friendly aspects of their products. These efforts of company has considerably increased the number of well-informed green customers. (Jacopo Cerri, Francesco Testa and Francesco Rizzi 2018). Communication is one of the most important tools that can assist organizational development (Booi Chen Tan and Teck-Chai Lau 2010).

According to the findings of the research (Chih-Cheng Chen, Chien-Wen Chen and Yi-Chun Tung 2018), the term "Green Marketing Communication" refers to "a wide variety of activities that are carried out with the intention of drawing the attention of customers not only to the qualities of green products but also to the extensive number of eco-friendly practices that are carried out by businesses."

There are many ways to execute GMC for businesses, including but not limited to corporate PRs, advertising, green labels and packaging, and sustainability reports, amongst other methods (Grace Dagher, Omar Itani and Abdul Nasser Kassar 2015).

Verbal and non-verbal communication are both utilised in the process of environmental communication. For instance, green labels, sometimes referred to as environmental or eco-labels, are used to convey environmental friendliness through words or images and provide consumers with details on environmentally friendly production, packaging, and waste management practices. (Wilson Kong, et al. 2014).

Customers knowing about the green labels have a positive effect on their likelihood to buy the product along with their knowledge of a product's environmental friendliness (Chen Yu-Shan and Ching-Hsun Chang 2013). D'Souza (Suman Kharbanda and Netra Pal Singh 2012) states that, in spite of awareness of Green Labels, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding this topic. The environmentally friendly qualities of a company's products, as well as the various actions and efforts undertaken by the company to demonstrate its dedication to the environment, have been communicated to consumers through a variety of additional channels by businesses. For instance, the field of advertising is deserving of some attention in the research literature, as evidenced by the fact that a number of studies have been conducted to investigate, among other features, the influence of advertising on consumers' green purchasing intentions and behaviors (Pepsico 2022). For instance, Sara et al. and Chih-Cheng et.al. (Sara B Algoe , Barbara L Fredrickson and Shelly L Gable 2013), (Chih-Cheng Chen, Chien-Wen

Chen and Yi-Chun Tung 2018) investigated how advertising influences consumers' propensity to make purchases; nevertheless, the findings of their investigation did not provide a definitive answer.

#### B. Green Consumers and Their Characters Considered in Study

Although there are various distinct definitions of "green consumers," Hailes provides one of the most frequently acknowledged definitions. (Denni Arli, et al. 2018). He defines "Green Consumer" as "someone who connects the act of purchasing or consuming products with the potential of acting in a manner that is consistent with environmental protection."

A "green consumer" is a "consumer who is environmentally friendly and who is trying to contribute to the solution of environmental problems through their green purchasing behavior" (Yu-Shan Chen and Ching-Hsun Chang 2012).

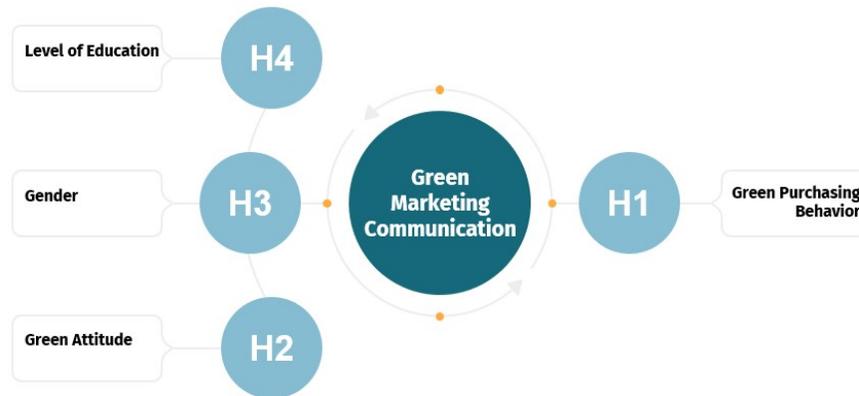
Janson investigates (Jason Yu 2018) the effects of gender on consumer responses to advertising in general, whereas Carmen et al. mention attitude as an influencing element for consumer sustainable consumption.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

These days, a number of businesses in India make, sell, and/or distribute environmentally friendly products. These businesses have developed marketing techniques to demonstrate to customers that they care about the environment. On the other hand, the following inquiry comes to mind: Are customers paying attention to the green marketing information that businesses are putting out? If this is the case, does this factor into the purchasing decisions of environmentally conscious consumers? This study sought to determine whether green messaging used by businesses to promote their products influences consumers' decisions to buy environmentally friendly goods. It also sought to determine how much attention consumers pay to these messages.

### **HYPOTHESES**

1. The level of attention paid by consumers to the GMC of businesses has an impact on the consumers' green purchasing behavior.
2. The gender of the customer is a factor that impacts how attentive they are to GMC from businesses.
3. The attention that consumers give to GMC from companies is influenced by the green attitudes of consumers.
4. The level of education of consumers determines their interest in GMCs from businesses.



**FIGURE 1 : RESEARCH MODEL**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

<b>Research Type</b>	Descriptive Research	
<b>Collection of required Data</b>	Primary Data	Secondary Data
<b>Data Source</b>	Online Survey	Websites Reports Articles E-News Research Papers
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Section 1- Demographic Information Section 2- Green Behavior Number of Questions- 18	
<b>Type of Questions</b>	Close – Ended Questions Multiple Choice Questions Likert Scale Checkbox Questions Rank Order Questions	
<b>Sampling Method</b>	Convenient Sampling	
<b>Sample Size</b>	290 (Survey was circulated to 320)	
<b>Data Analysis Tool</b>	IBM SPSS, version 25.	

**RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

A. Demographic Statistics

**Table 1: Demographic Statistics**

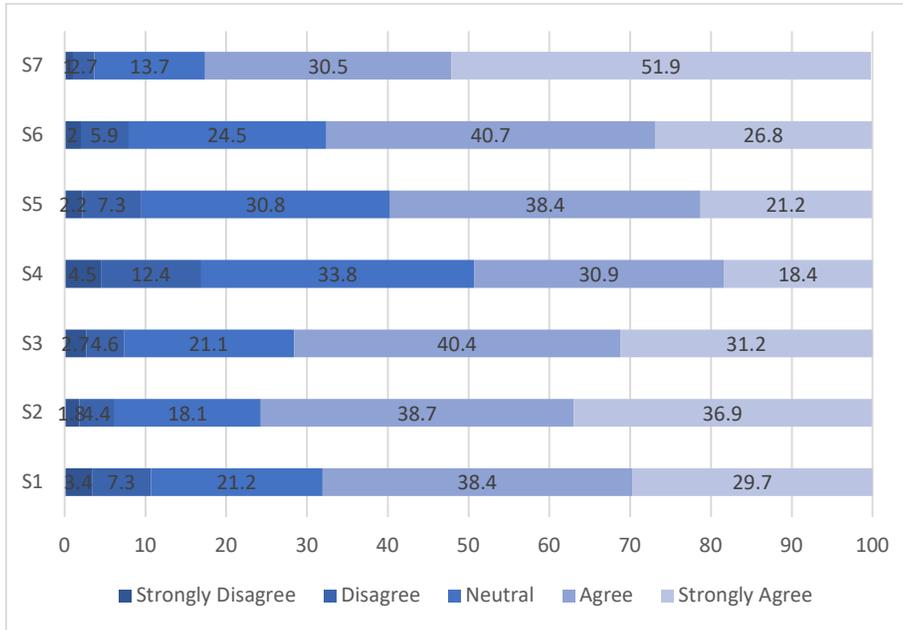
Sr. No.	Demographic Variable	Statistics				
1.	Age	18-21-42%	22-31-21%	32-51-26%	52-56-9%	Missing-2%

2.	Gender	Male- 33.2%	Female- 66.8%	
3.	Educational Level	Up to Secondary- 44.8%	Graduate Degree- 34.8%	
		Masters/Ph.D.- 20.68%		
4.	Geographical Area	Metro- 31%	Urban- 49%	Semi-Urban- 3-%
5.	Occupation	Student- 24%	Salaried Employee- 35%	Self Employed- 20%
		Home Maker- 9%	Other- 2%	

### B. Discussions

This study focuses on companies' attention to GMC (a latent variable having 7 components) and the correlation between the variable and green purchasing as well as the correlation between the variable and green purchasing behavior by consumers (a latent variable with 9 components), green attitudes held by consumers (a latent variable with 3 components), gender, and education level. For the purpose of determining the latent variables' degree of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was applied. Since the values that were obtained are 0.924 for attitude, 0.925 for behavior, and 0.915 for attention, it can be concluded that all of the variables exhibit an extremely high level of reliability.

Figure 2 illustrates the findings, which lead us to the conclusion that a sizeable proportion of respondents pay attention to advertising messages on protecting the environment; appreciates companies or brands who include messaging about environmental protection in their marketing communications. Such messages are well received by consumers who purchase products that have environmental certifications and labeling.



**FIGURE 2 : CONSUMERS’ ATTENTION TOWARDS BUSINESSES’ GMC**

A basic regression model was carried out to investigate the relationship between the attention paid by customers to the GMC of businesses and the customers' conduct regarding the purchase of products that are environmentally friendly.

**C. Summarizes the Findings**

**Table 2: Regression Result**

	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Unstandardized Coefficients	t-Statistics
Constant		10.10	10.16
Attention	0.670	0.820	22.89

In order to conduct an analysis on hypotheses H2, H3, and H4, a variety of statistical methods were utilized. To begin, a parametric test was used to investigate the extent to which customers' gender affected the amount of attention they paid to the GMCs promoted by businesses. The results of the tests that are presented in Table 3, i.e.  $t(661) = 5.010$  and the p-value that is equal to 0.000, suggest that there are significant differences in taking gender into consideration. According to the findings, we can conclude that women ( $SD = 5.43$ ) pay much greater attention to the GMC of businesses than men ( $SD = 5.61$ ). After that, the findings point to the confirmation of hypothesis H2.

**Table 3: t-Test Results for the mean difference in consumers’ attention to GMC, based on gender**

	t-Test for Equality of Means			
	T	df	p-Value	Mean Difference
<b>Equal Variance assumed</b>	5.010	661	0.000	2.262

<b>Equal Variance not assumed</b>	4.958	430.405	0.000	2.262
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Table 4 outlines the differences between the four different groups. Significant differences discovered in the attention that consumers paid to the GMC of companies between two groups, namely, those consumers who had completed secondary school or less and those customers who had completed a master's degree or Ph.D. We identified statistically significant differences, at a significance level of 10%, among consumers with secondary level school educations or less and consumers with graduate degrees.

**Table 4 : p-value for multiple comparisons w.r.t. different groups**

<b>Group to be Compared</b>	<b>Referred Group</b>	<b>p-Value</b>
<b>Secondary level</b>	Graduate	0.081
	Master's/Ph.D.	0.007
<b>Graduate</b>	Master's/Ph.D.	0.171

In order to investigate the significance of customers' traits such as gender, green attitudes, and educational level, in how they respond to the GMC of businesses, a multiple regression model was designed (Table 5). This was done in order to understand the relationship between these factors in a better way. A statistically significant regression was discovered, with an R2 value of 0.228. It was discovered that there is a positive and significant association between paying attention to GMC and factors such as green attitudes, gender and educational level and master's or Ph.D.

**Inferences:** Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that women pay more attention to the GMC by businesses than men do. This is true assuming that both genders have the same perspectives and are unaffected by the education level. Consumers with more education have a greater tendency to pay closer attention to the green marketing message that companies send out, presuming also that they have identical attitudes and ignoring gender differences. As a result, hypothesis 2, 3, and 4 have been proven correct.

**Table 5 : Results of Multiple Regression**

	Standardized Coeff.	Unstandardized Coeff.	t-Stats.	p-Value
Gender	0.092	0.197	2.641	0.00
Green Attitude	0.441	0.442	12.486	0.000
Graduates	0.068	0.144	1.890	0.059
Master's/Ph.D.	0.072	0.206	2.025	0.044

The results show that customers with higher pro-environmental attitudes are more receptive to businesses' communications regarding environmental issues. Since the probability that messages are directed at people who are already concerned about environmental issues is more, green marketing has been successful in times when customers are more concerned about the environment. Communication is important in raising consumers' environmental awareness even when they lack environmental concerns, companies must make more significant efforts to encourage their audience. Such communication may prove to a good tool for aiming consumers with a positive lookout for surroundings and more interested to it. Higher level of education leads consumers to more environmental thought and such consumers become

motivated for more responsibilities towards environment. There are also gender variations in GMC among businesses. According to the survey results and the studies shown (Jacopo Cerri, Francesco Testa and Francesco Rizzi 2018), as compared to men, women seem to be having more ecologically friendly habits and are more receptive to GMC. Companies' communication strategy must consequently account for this population segment.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Green purchasing represents an environmentally conscious habit typified by advocacy for nature and environmental protection. Green Purchasing has picked the attention of businesses. Researchers, Academicians and companies are demonstrating an interest in more understanding the role of marketing in reassuring a more composed ecosystem. Marketing aspects, such as product, price, Marketing Communication, and distribution, with consumers, can be planned and implemented in less environmentally destructive ways.

It was pointed out in the research that people respond differently to different GMC. The findings validated all of the research hypotheses presented: Customers' favorable green buying behavior is associated with their attention to companies' green marketing messages.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that consumers with green attitudes are more attentive to GMC. Similarly, those who are more educated are also pay more attention to companies' GMC. The female consumers show more attentiveness towards Green GMC.

By adding more variables, extending to other nations with varied levels of development and from different continents, and addressing attitudes of both companies and customers towards certain green products, this research can be deepened, enlarged, and enhanced in the future. For instance, it would be intriguing to determine if the research's conclusions apply to both long-lasting commodities (like home appliances) and short-lasting goods (like clothing) or services (like eco-hotels). Another thing to think about is whether consumer decisions to buy green products are influenced by market channels (online vs. offline).

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### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

**Prof. Dr Nilesh Kulkarni** - Ph.D. (Financial Management), MBA (Marketing), PGDBM (Marketing), B.E (Electronics)

Prof. Dr Nilesh Kulkarni has varied experiences to his credit from Industry as well as Academics. He is PhD in Financial Management from Pune University. He got industry experience of seven years in the areas of Manufacturing, Banking, and Insurance Industry. From the last twelve years he is in the field of academics and has taught various subjects in Marketing and General Specialization at Post Graduate level courses affiliated to Mumbai University. He is consistently being rated as good marketing faculty by students across Mumbai colleges.

He is also trained in Harvard Based case study method of teaching. His research areas include Insurance, Consumer Buying Behaviour, International Business, Marketing communications and Marketing Management.

He got several papers published in national as well as international research journals and conference proceedings.

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**Prof. Dr. Archana Ghatule**- Ph.D. (Management), MCA, MMS (Systems).

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She has two years of Industry Experience, and 22+ years of Teaching, 13+ years of Research and Administration experience. She has completed Leadership Excellence program from IIM, Ahmadabad. She has several papers published and presented in National and International Journals and Conferences.

**Ms. Lipilipsa Harichandan**- She is a consultant known for her solution-focused and collaborative approach. She has represented the Govt and Public Sector industries on a global

scale, as well as served as a PMO for a Fortune 100 healthcare client during a transition period. With a marketing MBA and prior experience at Deloitte, KPMG and GEP, she is currently overseeing senior finance and strategy practice hiring at Michael Page for the logistics, shipping, data centres, and construction materials industry space.