



**Full Length Research Article**

**ROLE OF SOCIO DEMOGRAPHICS IN PROFILING GREEN CONSUMERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Environmental concern is a major factor in consumer decision making. With green product markets expanding at a remarkable rate companies pursue market opportunities in the production and promotion of environmentally sensitive goods and services. By adopting resource conserving and environmentally-friendly strategies in all the stages of the value chain the firms can satisfy the growing environmental concerns of humanity. Socio demographic characteristics and their impact on attitude is an area where much research has not been conducted. This paper attempts to analyze the role of socio demographic variables. For this purpose 150 consumers of Thrissur are purposively selected and ANOVA is used for data analysis. Results from analysis revealed that the socio-demographics factors and attitude towards environment quality are related.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Now a day's environmental consciousness has increased as well as profiling green consumers have gained tremendous attention. Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or service may be environmentally friendly in it or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way. The term Green Marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The American Marketing Association (AMA) held the first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975. A various characteristics have been adopted to profile green consumer segments in the literature of green marketing. The characteristics include geographic, cultural, personality, and socio-demographic. Among the characteristics socio-demographic characteristics have gained a lot of attention as the key profiling variables because socio-demographic variables, compared to other segmentation measures, are more readily available and can be applied to segmentation problems with relative ease. Hence the paper attempts to analyze the following:

**Objectives**

- To understand the utility of socio-demographics for profiling green consumers.

- To investigate the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and attitude towards environment quality.

**Theoretical Background**

**Green Marketing**

The term "green marketing" has been widely used in popular and professional presses in the past, especially in western world. According to (Pride *et al.*, 1993), the term "green marketing" describes an organization's efforts at designing, promoting, pricing and distributing products that will not harm the environment. The number of companies which have produced green products in the world has been increased (Carson and Fyfe, 1992).

**Green Products**

Although no consumer product has a zero impact on the environment, in business, the terms "green product" and "environmental product" are used commonly to describe those that strive to protect or enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and/or resources and reducing or eliminating use of toxic agents, pollution, and waste.

**Green Consumer**

A green consumer is someone who is very concerned about the environment and, therefore, only purchases products that are environmentally-friendly or eco-friendly. Products with little or no packaging, products made from natural ingredients and products that are made without causing pollution are all examples of eco-friendly products. The green consumer would

be the type to drive a hybrid vehicle, buy products made with hemp or those made from recycled materials.

**WHY IS GREEN MARKETING IMPORTANT?**



**METHODS**

A structured questionnaire containing questions pertaining to environmental consciousness and a number of socio-demographic characteristics was distributed among a sample of 150 consumers of Thrissur. Purposive sampling is used for collecting data. The socio-demographic characteristics that are used in the study include gender, age, education level, income, household size and social class. To test the hypotheses previously developed measure of environmental consciousness, capturing the entire environmental domain were taken from Bohlen *et al.* (1993). An Environmental Attitudes Scale consisting of 18 five-point Likert statements aimed at capturing concern about environmental quality (the attitudinal measure of Bohlen *et al.*, 1993 originally contained 19 items. However, following scale purification and validation procedures, one of the Likert statements was removed due to poor inter-item and item-total correlations, resulting in an 18-item summated scale). One way ANOVA is conducted to test the hypotheses.

**Hypotheses**

- Females are more concerned about environmental quality
- Younger people are more concerned about environmental quality
- The better-educated are more concerned about environmental quality.

**Table 2. Environmental Attitude and Socio Demographic Characteristics**

	Age		Gender		Income		Education		Social Class		Household Size	
	F Ratio	F Prob	F Ratio	F Prob	F Ratio	F Prob	F Ratio	F Prob	F Ratio	F Prob	F Ratio	F Prob
Environmental attitude	6.595	.000	8.470	.004	4.444	.002	5.185	.000	4.958	.000	5.442	.000

- Larger the household size the stronger the concern about environmental quality.
- The higher the income level the stronger the concern about environmental quality.
- The higher the social class, the stronger the concern about environmental quality.

**RESULTS**

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that are addressed in the study are outlined in Table 1. The sample also contains a much higher proportion of female respondents as it tend to show that shopping of the household is still done more by women than by men. 54 percent of the 150 respondents are female. 36 percent of respondents belong to 18 - 25 years of age. Concerning the occupation out of 150 respondents 46 are professionals. 54 percent of the respondents are post graduates and 31 percent are graduates. 46 of the respondents are professionals. 53 percent belong to the household size of 1 to 3. 41 percent of the respondents belong to an income group of less than Rs.15000.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	46
	Female	81	54
	Total	150	100
Age	18-25	54	36
	26-35	34	23
	36-45	28	19
	46-50	25	17
	50 and above	9	6
	Total	150	100
	Level of income	> 15000	62
15000 - 20000		26	17
20000- 25000		25	17
25000 - 30000		22	15
30000 - 40000		11	7
< 40000		4	3
Total		150	100
Level of education	SSLC	5	3
	Pre degree	17	11
	Degree	47	31
	PG	81	54
	Total	150	100
Social Class	Salaried	36	24
	Professional	46	31
	Housewife	27	18
	Entrepreneur	26	17
	student	15	10
	Total	150	100
Household size	1 to 3	79	53
	3 to 5	49	33
	5 and above	22	15
	Total	150	100

Source: Survey Data

**Environmental Attitude and Socio Demographic Characteristics**

Table below exhibits the relationship between concern about the environment quality and socio demographic characteristics. With regard to all demographic variables the

ANOVA performed is significant thereby accepting the hypotheses. This indicates that concern about the environment quality and socio demographic characteristics are related.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Socio-demographic variables can, to some degree, be used to profile consumers in terms of environmental attitudes. But

they are of limited use where behavioral aspects of the environmental consciousness components are concerned. Regarding the Environmental Attitudes Scale, consistent with hypothesis that females are found to hold stronger attitudes towards environmental quality than males. The relation between age and the Environmental Attitudes Scale is significant thus providing support for Hypotheses that younger people are more concerned about environmental quality. Regarding educational level and social class the F ratio for the concern about the environment quality is significant at  $P < .001$ , indicating that the variation between educational level and social class is significantly higher than the within-group variation. Although the hypotheses on environmental attitudes socio demographic characteristics are all supported accurate profile of the green consumer cannot be constructed without attention to all aspects of the environmental consciousness. It seems sensible for companies to position their products not only according to environmental aspects, but also on the basis of other important product characteristics, where a combination of psychographic and socio-demographic variables can be applied more readily.

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