

## Role of Socio-Demographics in Profiling Environment Conscious Consumer of 21st Century- A Review

– Naveen Gupta\*

Adjunct Professor, School of Business Studies, Sharda University, Greater Noida, India, [dr\\_naveengupta@yahoo.com](mailto:dr_naveengupta@yahoo.com)

– Riju A. Singh

Research Scholar, School of Business Studies, Sharda University, Greater Noida, India, [riju.agarwal@sgei.org](mailto:riju.agarwal@sgei.org)

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**EDITORIAL BOARD EXCERPT** Initially at the Time of Submission (ToS) submitted paper had a 20% plagiarism and after rectification it was reduced to 10%, which is an accepted percentage for publication. The editorial board is of an observation that paper had been rectified and amended by the authors based on the reviewer's remarks and revisions at various stages. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeable related to **Profile of Environment Conscious Consumer** both subject-wise and research-wise. Considering the increasing levels of consumerism leading to deterioration of environment and global warming, the choice of the title is the need of the hour and the authors have crafted the paper in a structured manner. The introduction gives a clear perspective on the need for the research. Empirical investigation could have been added to authenticate the secondary literature. Overall the paper promises to provide a strong base for future studies. All the comments had been shared at different dates by the authors' in due course of time and same had been integrated by the author in calculation. By and large all the editorial and reviewer's comments had been incorporated in paper and the manuscript had been earmarked and decided under "**Case Based Study**" category as it presents the empirical research findings of sixty five papers with relation to Socio-demographic profile of Environment Conscious Consumer in 21st century. The results are interesting and noteworthy.

**ABSTRACT Purpose:** This study is an attempt to understand the profile of environment conscious consumer of the twenty-first century, with due focus to Asian consumers as well, to be able to help marketers understand them and serve them better. A review of sixty five empirical articles related to relationship between selected socio-demographic variables and environment conscious consumers' attitude and behavior has been done

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Review based Approach

**Findings:** The findings show that the environment conscious consumer of twenty-first century is more likely to be educated, and is more likely a woman.

**Proposed Implications:** The study will help marketers in formulating marketing strategies for environment conscious consumers

**Originality/Value:** The study is basically on the attitude and behavior of environment conscious consumers who are more concerned about environmental issues.

**KEYWORDS** Environment Conscious Consumer | Consumers' Attitude towards Environment | Environment Conscious Consumer Behavior | Socio-demographic | Green Consumer

### \*Corresponding Author

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## Introduction

Environmentalism is becoming a salient concern in the twenty-first century as consumers across the world are becoming increasingly environment conscious and are considering the environmental impact of their actions. Many researches indicate the growing interest of consumers in environment friendly products (Menon, Menon, Chowdhury, & Jankovich, 1999; Charter & Polonsky, 1999; Prakash, 2000; Moisaner, 2007).

This trend is serving as a new market opportunity for marketers (Charter & Polonsky, 1999; Straughan & Roberts, 1999; Prakash, 2000). However, not all the consumers are equally environment conscious (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003; Jain & Kaur, 2006). To be able to effectively target environment conscious consumers, companies need an effective basis of segmenting these consumers.

In the past, the socio-demographics characteristics of environment conscious consumers had been widely studied as the basis for segmentation, but, the results are mostly equivocal (Kilbourne & Beckmann, 1998; Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). Though, recently the researchers have started focusing on alternate ways of profiling environment conscious consumer, businesses still depend primarily on demographics, as a lot of published information including their media usage is more readily available, is more easily applicable as segmentation basis compared to other variables, and hence, is the most practical way of segmenting environment conscious consumer (Myers, 1996; McDonald & Dunbar, 1998; Wedel & Kamakura, 2000). Hence, the role of socio-demographic profile of environment conscious consumer in twenty-first century is a matter to be explored further.

India followed by China, the largest growing Asian economies, ranked the highest among the most environment conscious consumers, and the environment conscious behavior among Indian consumers has increased since 2012 according to a world-wide survey of eighteen countries conducted by National Geographic and Globescan (Greendex, 2014). Surely, marketers can benefit by understanding the profile of environment conscious consumer of Asian countries. But, majority research on environment conscious consumer is done in western context, with little focus on Asian countries (Chan, 2000; Jain & Kaur, 2006; Bhattacharya, 2011; Asrul & Aisyah, 2016).

These observations necessitates a study that explores the socio-demographic characteristics of

environment conscious consumers of western as well as Asian countries, in the twenty-first century through relevant review of literature.

## Methodology

This study aims to review empirical articles on the relationship between environment conscious consumers' attitude and behavior in twenty-first century and the various socio-demographic variables, published in reputed academic journals.

The methodology adopted for this study involved identification of relevant research articles through a systematic search procedure. Relevant articles in English language were searched electronically in social science and business journals from databases such as, Google Scholar, Emerald, JSTOR, DOAJ, SSRN, Research Gate, EBSCO host, Oxford, CORE. The key words used (in different combinations) were: "socio-demographic characteristics/ profile", "environment conscious consumer", "green consumer", "consumer's attitude towards environment", and "environment conscious consumer behavior".

The searched articles were reviewed and the content analysis of the abstracts was done, to confirm whether the articles were relevant for the study. The article was considered relevant for the study if, firstly, it dealt with the role of socio-demographic variables in influencing environment conscious consumers' attitude and purchase behavior; secondly, was published during 2000-2017; and lastly, was empirical in nature. The empirical articles were selected as they provide a truer picture and are less prone to bias. The socio-demographic variables selected were age, gender, education & family income and the environment consciousness variables selected were consumers' attitude and their purchase behavior with respect to environment, these being the most frequently studied ones. As a result sixty five articles were selected, thirty four from Asia, twenty five from western countries (Europe, America, and Australia), five from Africa, and one global.

## Results

A taxonomic summary of the results of the review of selected articles from 2000 to 2017, on the relationship between various socio-demographic variables on environment consciousness of consumer are presented in Table 1. The selected articles are arranged chronologically, and the name of author(s); location- city, country, continent; sample size and type are also included in the summary.

Table 1: Studies on the relationship between various socio-demographics and consumers' attitude and behavior towards environment

S No	Pub. Yr	Name of Researcher	Location			Sample		Age		Gender		Education		Income	
			City, Country	Continent	Size	Type	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	
1	2000	Chan	Hong Kong, China	Asia	704	Public		Insig.							
2	2001	Laroche et al.	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	America	907	Public			F						
3	2003	Diamentopoulos et al.	UK	Europe	1697	Public		-ve	F		Insig.		Insig.		
4	2003	Tindall et al.	British Columbia, Canada	America	381	Forest conservation organizations				F					
5	2005	Budak et al.	Turkey	Europe	240	University Students		Insig.	F		Insig.				
6	2005	Tilikidou & Delistavrou	Thessaloniki, Greece	Europe	419	Public		Inv U		F					
7	2006	Jain & Kaur	Delhi, India	Asia	206	Professors, students & their parents, spouses & friends		-ve		F					Insig.
8	2007	D'Souza et al.	Victoria, Australia	Australia	155	Public-Residential directory		+ve							
9	2007	Mostafa	Egypt	Africa	1093	University Students				M					
10	2008	Gan et al.	New Zealand	Australia	600	Public		-ve			Insig.				Insig.
11	2008	Lec	Hong Kong, China	Asia	6010	High School Students					F				Insig.
12	2008	Luo & Deng	Hunan, China	Asia	438	Public- National forestry park visitors		+ve		F					+ve
13	2008	Shen & Saijo	Shanghai, China	Asia	1200	Public		+ve		M					+ve
14	2009	Alibeli	Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, & S. Arabia	Asia	1282	University Students		-ve		M					+ve



S No	Pub. Yr	Name of Researcher	Location			Sample			Age			Gender			Education			Income		
			City, Country	Continent	Size	Type	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior
15	2009	Han et al.	Hong Kong, China	Asia	-	Public- hotel	+ve													
16	2009	Lee	Hong Kong, China	Asia	6010	High school students														
17	2009	Oikonomou et al.	Macedonia & Thrace, Greece	Europe	800	Public	+ve													
18	2009	Paco & Raposo	Portugal	Europe	887	Public	Inv U	Inv U												
19	2009	Singh	Haryana, India	Asia	-	Public														
20	2010	Banyte et al	Lithuania	Europe	105	Public- Mall Intercept														
21	2010	Chen & Chai	Malaysia	Asia	200	University Students														
22	2010	Hirsh	Germany	Europe	2690	German Socio-Economic Panel Study (long. household poll)	+ve													
23	2010	Xiao & Hong	China	Asia	5073	Chinese General Social Survey, 2003	+ve													
24	2011	Awad	Bahrain, S. Arabia	Asia	241	University Students														
25	2011	Plombon	US	America	-	5th wave data	+ve													
26	2011	Plombon	Uruguay	America	-	of World Values Survey (2005-08)-	Insig.													
27	2011	Plombon	Sweden	Europe	-	77000 responses	Insig.													
28	2011	Plombon	Morocco	Africa	-	from 54 countries	Insig.													
29	2011	Shammot	Jordon, Arab	Asia	-	-														
30	2011	Sinnappan & Rahman	Malaysia	Asia	-	Public														
31	2011	Wahid et al.	Penang Valley, Malaysia	Asia	-	Public														
32	2011	Wells et al.	Cardiff, Wales, UK	Europe	1513	Public														

S No	Pub. Yr	Name of Researcher	Location		Sample		Age		Gender		Education		Income	
			City, Country	Continent	Size	Type	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior
33	2012	Ali & Ahmad	Rawalpindi & Islamabad, Pak	Asia	377	University Students	+ve		M		-ve			
34	2012	Arttachariya	Bangkok, Thailand	Asia	399	University Students	Insig.		Insig.					Insig.
35	2012	Irawan & Darmayanti	Jakarta, Indonesia	Asia	200	University Students			Insig.					
36	2012	Rajput & Bajaj	Pune, India	Asia	244	University Professors, Admin. & Students			M	M				
37	2012	Ramly et al.	Malaysia	Asia	319	Public		+ve		F				Insig.
38	2012	Shahnaei	Malaysia	Asia	-	-		Insig.		Insig.				+ve
39	2013	Beer	28 countries	Europe	26500	Flash Euro-barometer survey (no. 256) data, Gallup Org.	Inv U							
40	2013	Gul	Turkey	Europe	97	University Students				F				
41	2013	Gupta	Delhi, India	Asia	-	-	Inv U		Insig.		+ve			
42	2013	Gupta & Abbas	Delhi, NCR & Gorakhpur, UP, India	Asia	126	Public	-ve		Insig.		Insig.			-ve
43	2013	Masouleh et al.	Iran	Asia	428	University Students				F			Insig.	+ve
44	2013	Melgar et al.	29 countries	Global	38000	Int. Social Survey Prog, 2010 Env III survey				F				+ve
45	2013	Meyer-Hofer et al	Germany	Europe	300	Public- tea			Insig.				Insig.	Insig.
46	2013	Modi & Patel	Gujrat, India	Asia	152	Public			Insig.				Insig.	
47	2013	Pillai	Salem, India	Asia	325	Public				Insig.				
48	2013	Sankar	Kerala, India	Asia	150	Public	-ve		F			+ve		
49	2014	Anvar & Venter	Johannesburg	Africa	200	University Students			F	F				
50	2014	Ibok & Etuk	Nigeria	Africa	102	Green brigade- a voluntary association		+ve		M			+ve	Inv U



S No	Pub. Yr	Name of Researcher	Location		Sample		Age		Gender		Education		Income			
			City, Country	Continent	Size	Type	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior	Attitude	Behavior		
51	2014	McCrigh & Xiao	National	America		General Social Surveys- Gallup Poll (2000- 10)			F							
52	2015	Dagher et al.	Lebanon	Asia	326	Public			F	F						
53	2015	Das	Tripura, India	Asia	224	-		+ve	Insig.	Insig.	+ve		Inv U	Inv U		
54	2015	Gikonyo & Berndt	Kenya	Africa	203	University Students		+ve	Insig.				Insig.			
55	2015	Roman et al.	Romania	Europe	150	Public		+ve		F				+ve		
56	2015	Verma	Mumbai, India	Asia	150	University Students		+ve		Insig.				+ve		
57	2016	Achuthan & Thirunavukkarasu	11 State Universities	Asia	1325	University Students			F				+ve			
58	2016	Omar et al.	Klang Valley, Malaysia	Asia	150	Public- Mall Intercept		+ve	F		+ve		Insig.			
59	2016	Pillai & Jumare	Ahmedabad	Asia	105	Public-white goods				F		+ve		-ve		
60	2016	Stoimenova	Bulgaria	Europe	2018	Public		-ve			+ve					
61	2016	Tejpal	Punjab & Chandigarh, India	Asia	100	Public		-ve		Insig.				-ve		
62	2017	Apaydin & Szczepaniak	Poland, Turkey	Europe	250	Public		+ve	F		Insig.		Insig.			
63	2017	Preko	Ghana	Africa	1589	Public- sachet drinking water						+ve		Insig.		
64	2017	Morrison & Beer	28 countries	Europe	26500	Flash Euro-barometer survey no. 256, Gallup Org.		Inv U								
65	2017	Seyrek & Gül	Gaziantep, Turkey	Europe	410	Public		+ve		Insig.				+ve		
Articles studying the effect of a particular demographic on consumers' attitude & behavior towards env.													50	59	39	32

*Key: Pub. - Publication; Insig. - Insignificant; +ve - positive; -ve - negative; Inv - Inverse; F - female; M - male; long. - longitudinal; Admin. - administration; Org. - organization; Int. - International; Prog. - Program; Env. - environment.*

## Findings and Discussion

A review of sixty five empirical articles on environment consciousness of consumers in terms of attitude and behavior revealed that the demographic profile of environment conscious consumer is relatively more consistent with respect to certain characteristics, but equivocal with respect to others. The greatest consistency is found in relationship with education, followed by gender and income. Findings with respect to different demographic variables are discussed as follows:

### Age

Out of a total of fifty one studies on age and environment consciousness measures, twenty eight were on consumers' attitude towards environment, and twenty nine were on environment conscious consumer behavior as shown in Table 1. Out of twenty eight studies on age and consumers' attitude towards environment, thirteen studies found a positive relationship, i.e., older consumers tend to have relatively favorable attitude towards the environment; seven studies found a negative relationship; four studies found an inverse 'U' relationship, i.e., the middle aged consumers tend to have relatively favorable attitude towards the environment as compared to younger and older consumers. The rest four studies found an insignificant relationship between the two.

Out of twenty nine studies on age and environment conscious consumer behavior, nine studies found a positive relationship, i.e., older consumers tend to display more environment conscious behavior; an equal number of studies found an insignificant relationship; eight studies found a negative relationship; and the rest three found an inverse 'U' relationship.

The results show that though the attitude of older consumers tends to be more favorable towards the environment, as indicated by most of the studies with few exceptions, the results related to age and

environment conscious consumer behavior tend to be equivocal.

### Gender

Out of a total of fifty nine studies on gender and environment consciousness measures, thirty two were on consumers' attitude towards environment, and thirty five were on environment conscious consumer behavior. Out of thirty two studies on gender and consumers' attitude towards environment, eighteen studies found a negative relationship, i.e., females tend to have relatively favorable attitude towards the environment, and eleven studies found an insignificant relationship between the two. Only three studies found the relationship to be positive.

Twenty studies, on gender and environment conscious consumer behavior, out of thirty five, found a negative relationship between the two, i.e., females tend to have relatively environment conscious behavior. Thirteen studies found an insignificant relationship and two found the relationship to be positive.

The results show that females tend to have more favorable attitude and behavior towards environment, as indicated by most of the studies with few exceptions. This may be because females, are socialized to take up the "caregiver" role, as a result of which, they consider the health of family as their topmost priority, resulting in greater level of concern for environment, as compared to men, who are expected to be the "bread-winners" (Zelezny et al., 2000).

### Education

Out of a total of forty studies on education and environment consciousness measures, twenty two were on consumers' attitude towards environment, and twenty eight were on environment conscious consumer behavior. Out of twenty two studies on education and consumers' attitude towards environment, thirteen studies found the relationship



to be positive and seven found it to be insignificant. Only two studies found the relationship to be negative.

Out of twenty eight studies on education and environment conscious consumer behavior, sixteen studies found the relationship to be positive and ten found it to be insignificant. Only two studies found a negative relationship between the two.

The results show that educated consumers tend to have more favorable attitude and behavior towards environment, as indicated by most of the studies with few exceptions, as they may be considered more capable of processing environment related information and understanding the adverse effects of being insensitive to the environment.

## Income

Out of a total of thirty three studies on income and environment consciousness measures, sixteen were on consumers' attitude towards environment, and twenty two were on environment conscious consumer behavior. Out of sixteen studies on income and consumers' attitude towards environment, seven studies found a positive relationship, i.e., consumers with high income tend to have relatively favorable attitude towards the environment; five studies found an insignificant relationship; one study found an inverse 'U' relationship, i.e., consumers with moderate income tend to have relatively favorable attitude towards the environment; and the rest three studies found a negative relationship between the two.

Out of twenty two studies on income and environment conscious consumer behavior, nine studies found a positive relationship, i.e., consumers with high income tend to display more environment conscious behavior. Almost an equal number of studies found an insignificant relationship; three found an inverse 'U' relationship, and the rest two found the relationship between the two positive.

The results show that consumers having higher income tend to have more favorable attitude and behavior towards environment. This may be because consumers with higher income level can afford to bear the incremental costs involved in displaying environment conscious behavior.

## Conclusion

The relationship of selected socio-demographics and environmental conscious attitude and behavior of consumers appears to be mixed. The greatest consistency in the results, with few exceptions, is found in the relationship with education, followed by gender. Based on the findings, the environment conscious consumer of twenty-first century can be considered to be more educated, and more likely a woman. The review also indicates that older consumers and consumers with higher income have a more positive attitude towards environment, but the results in relation with behavior are rather equivocal. Marketers seeking competitive advantage in terms of environment consciousness may benefit by targeting the educated, the affluent and women as their prime focus.

However, the research studies selected and included in the review, were not free from limitations. Many studies were based on a very narrow sample, both in terms of size and type, and were selected on the basis of convenience. Most of the research studies failed to investigate the relationship of socio-demographic variables with both environment conscious attitude and environment conscious behavior. Also, very few researches included all of the selected socio-demographic variables in their study. Future studies on profile of environment conscious consumer may benefit by addressing these limitations.

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10%	7%	4%	6%
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