

**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF GREEN
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
MARKETING INFORMATION ON ATTITUDINAL
BEHAVIOUR**

BY

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DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

The work described in this PhD thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Professor Swarnalatha Perera and Professor Tenyson Perea, of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. I certified that this thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part to any University or any other institution or any other Degree or Diploma. Also, I declare that all the corrections, amendments, and additions recommended by the examiners have been incorporated.

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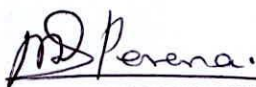
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ABSTRACT

Green consumer behaviour is gaining increasing importance as propensity to take actions with pro-environmental intent. People's attitudes regarding green values, beliefs and norms of different aspects of the full cycle of environmentally friendly purchasing, using and disposing behaviour have become an important consideration in human decision making. Green marketing information has become the key messenger for consumers to make choice of green consumption related decisions. It is widely cited in social psychological research, the existence of attitude-behaviour gap in behavioural choices, but it is not yet empirically investigated how green information can be used to overcome this gap. Therefore, the objective of this study is to elucidate the impact of green information on the antecedents of green attitudes (Values-Beliefs-Norms) towards actual green consumer behaviour. The research initially undertakes a comprehensive literature review on socio-psychological theoretical models of green consumer attitudinal behaviour to develop the necessary theoretical study model of identifying the role of green marketing information as the empirical research gap. The theory of Value-Belief-Norm (VBN Theory) served as the theoretical framework for this study.

Research Philosophy of the study is based on neo-positivistic research tradition which facilitated the research task to acquire and gain knowledge for understanding the emergence of green consumer behaviour in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the present study used '*explanatory mixed-method*' research process in order to strategically achieve the broader research objective. The descriptive findings of this research demonstrate that Sri Lankan consumers have moderate level of green values, beliefs and norms, but the moral obligation towards actual green behaviour

is rather low. This explains that green attitude-behavior gap is common to the Sri Lankan context as in the other developed world.

Green information seems to be more complicated aspect that needs to be properly managed in green consumption attitude formation and changing process as better predictor to minimize the gap between attitude-behaviour. Especially, Sri Lankan consumers do not have much trust in available green information. This seems to lead 'green washing'. Therefore marketers and policy makers need to provide accurate, clear, meaningful and understandable green information to consumers as it is a powerful strategy for activating and changing green attitudes to green consumption behaviour to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Consequently, truthful green information can offer ample opportunities for activating green values, beliefs and norms for application in green behavioural change in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, the consumer should consider available information about the green products while referring to information at the point of purchase and other available green promotional activities to become more environmentally friendly consumers.

Multivariate statistical analysis in Structural Equation Method shows that green beliefs seem to be a more powerful predictor for green behaviour in Sri Lanka. Green beliefs play a dual role between green norms and green behaviour, i.e. Sri Lankans' green beliefs are mediated between green values and green norms confirming the antecedents of value, belief and norm in VBN theory while consumers' green beliefs directly and positively impact on green behaviour somewhat deviating from the theoretical argument. Qualitative analysis supported that attachment of the Sri Lankans with their religious (i.e. KARMA) and cultural beliefs are higher

than the moral responsibility towards green behaviour. This finding is a novelty in Sri Lankan context.

In addition, the empirical verification of the moderating role of green marketing information between green attitude and behaviour relationships are some of the main contributions to the theory. The influence of moderating role of green information in Sri Lankan context seems to be more controversial and questionable. Therefore, proposed integration of social psychological theory in green consumer behaviour model leads to interesting social and managerial implications for policy makers, researchers, marketers and information providers involved in green production and the marketing process.

This research has contributed to the area of green consumption behaviour. To the author's knowledge, this is the first research providing a comprehensive overview and linking the social psychological literature on green consumer behaviour to the VBN Theory, including the green marketing information. The study contributes to the body of knowledge and it provides validated measurement constructs for green behaviour in the Sri Lankan context.