

# Analyzing the Influence of Ethical Marketing Practices on Consumer Purchase Behaviour: A Study on Consumer Durables in India

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## Abstract

Major brands and organizations across the globe are resorting to the use of societal and ethical marketing practices, to differentiate themselves from their rivals. The challenges involved in demonstrating their contributions to society are multitudinous, given that consumers consciously seek to evaluate this contribution. Advertisements are deemed as misleading or deceptive when the audience exposed to it hold false beliefs and ideas consequently. Unfair pricing mechanisms adopted by companies are also fervent issues in micro-consumerism, which is highly sensitive to consumers. Environmental consumerism is another growing trend in assessing the pro-ethical and pro-environmental purchase considerations of consumers. The current study seeks to establish the impact of Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC), Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL), Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN) and Enterprising Customer Care (ECC) on the purchase behaviour of consumers with reference to washing machines and televisions. To this end, a sample of 307 respondents dwelling across India has been considered. The study indicates that Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC) have a significant impact on the purchase behaviour of consumers for both washing machines and televisions. Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) in case of televisions but an insignificant impact on washing machine purchases. The claim that Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN) has a significant impact on the consumer purchase behaviour is only supported for washing machines but unsupported for televisions. Enterprising Customer Care (ECC) has a significant impact on the purchase

behaviour of consumers for both washing machines and televisions. It has been observed that the ethical practices of organizations have a direct relationship with the evaluations and appraisals made by their consumers, which is ultimately mirrored in their modelled purchase behaviour. It is therefore imperative for companies to spend more time on ethico-moral marketing practices and create a futuristic orientation for a better marketplace.

**Keywords:** Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns, Genuine Packaging and Labelling, Ecological Conscientiousness, Enterprising Customer Care, Consumer Purchase Behaviour

## Introductory Reflections

Major brands and organizations across the globe are resorting to the use of societal and ethical marketing practices, to differentiate themselves from their rivals. The challenges involved in demonstrating their contributions to society are multitudinous, given that consumers consciously seek to evaluate this contribution. The real question is whether customers base their purchase decisions on such perceived demonstrations by organizations. The onus is also on consumers who need to make responsible purchase decisions in response to unethical marketing practices such as deceptive advertisements, disingenuous packaging and labelling, ecological imperviousness and unresponsive customer care. In order to conceptualize

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these constructs, a well-defined understanding of ethics must be made to understand how consumers and marketers are both guided by their dynamics. Ethics is very much entrenched in the marketing practices of businesses, through versatile social marketing activities. Without discounting the fundamental objective of profit making for a business entity, marketing ethics, through social marketing rudiments, infuses the principal idea of justice in a society and among its consumers. As Piacentini et al. (2000) opine, social marketing relates to ideal practices in terms of societal consequences when marketing emphasizes achieving balance among business profit, consumer needs and desires, and society's long-term concerns. Özbek (2012) affirmed that an array of individual, circumstantial, and incidental factors such as personal experiences, opportunities available, the organizational milieu as well as the cultural environment significantly influence the ethical decision-making process of a consumer. Given that the evaluation of the ethical behaviour is based on the judgement and prudence of the beholder, it is often arduous to distinguish between morally acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Lawrence and Chonko (1995) however, pointed out previously that it is a rather brutal but inexorable dilemma for multiple companies to ethically negotiate the trade-off between making responsible marketing decisions and an increasingly complex economic environment. Truth be told, companies often adopt the shorthand avenue to success in simply aiming for a satisfactory profit volume as opposed to pursuing a responsible profit maximization approach.

This study is thus, an endeavour to probe into the versatile factors associated with ethical issues in marketing applications and practices and thereby assess the possible catalytic influence of the said factors on the act of responsible decision-making by consumers.

The point of reference for such decision-making is consumer durables or white goods, such as washing machines, air-conditioners, and refrigerators. Consumers dedicate moderate to high levels of involvement when opting for such white goods and hence ethical marketing considerations play a critical role in their overall purchase decisions and consumption behaviour.

Similar studies have been undertaken in the past to assess the impact of misleading advertisements or

environmentally detrimental products on the purchase preferences of consumers (Attas, 1999; Landler, 1991; Nwachukwu et al., 1997). However, such studies have approached ethical considerations from a corporate standpoint (Schlegelmilch and Oberserder, 2010). The individuality of this paper lies in fathoming the responsible purchase decisions made by consumers after their tryst with unethical marketing practices by organizations.

## Review of Background Literature

Traditionally, the confluence of marketing ethics and consumer welfare is popularly labelled as corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, in this undertaking, attention shall be focussed not on the CSR perspective, which is again from a corporate standpoint, but on the dimension of purchase behaviour by consumers, in light of their response mechanisms.

Research in the domain started long back, with researchers such as Phillips (1939) focusing on issues such as fair trade, anti-trust laws as well as advertising and pricing ethics. Quazi (2002) has supported this claim suggesting that some of the micro-issues of consumerism such as deceptive advertisements, product adulteration or black marketing also feature under the broad purview of fairness in trade practices. Several studies have predicted the domain of fair trade in relation to buying behaviour of consumers by probing into versatile consumer psychographics (Doran, 2009; Ma et al., 2012) and consumer demographics (Bondy et al., 2011; Eastman and Liu, 2012).

Advertisements are deemed as misleading or deceptive when the audience exposed to it hold false beliefs and ideas as a consequence (Attas, 1999; Ismail and Panni, 2008). Other researchers have alleged that deceptive claims nowadays are implicitly manipulative rather than outright false (Shanahan and Hopkins, 2007; Hastak and Mazis, 2011). Posner (1973) had initially stated that the precise impact of deceptive advertising on consumption behaviour was rather unclear, especially because firms could counter-advertise to reveal deceptive claims by their rivals and consumers may be sufficiently well informed to disregard exaggerated claims. Bagwell (2007) elaborates on this by noting that deceptive advertising, in particular, can be cooperative, thereby increasing aggregate consumption, or predatory competition, increasing market share at the

expense of rivals, or a combination of them. Dave (2013) in this regard, discussed the role of consumer-directed and physician-directed promotion in the pharmaceutical market, based on the classic conceptual framework of whether such promotion is persuasive and/or informative.

Unfair pricing mechanisms adopted by companies are also fervent issues in micro-consumerism, which is highly sensitive to consumers. Several studies have focussed on the unfair and overpricing practices in relation to the pro-ethical and pro-consumerist purchase trends of consumers (French et al., 1982; Bolton et al., 2003; Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). McEachern et al. (2010) observed that consumers are unwilling to pay a premium in order to integrate their ethical beliefs into their actual purchase actions. Pepper et al. (2009) commented on the fact that this unwillingness does not necessarily stem from an inability to pay a price premium, given that ethical consumer behaviour is unrelated to demographic variables such as income and work status. Sudbury and Böltner (2010) sought to analyse a couple of contemporary trends in the fashion industry of the US, in terms of ethical issues and throwaway fashion and the relative importance of price by investigating the attitude-behaviour gap between the constructs.

Environmental consumerism is another growing trend in assessing the pro-ethical and pro-environmental purchase considerations of consumers. Over the past decade, organizations have been exhibiting growing concerns towards environmental consumerism (Moisander, 2001; Mingquan, 2003). Studies in contemporary concepts such as green marketing have become popular, therefore. Dobson (2007) opined that behavioural transformations with regard to sustainable development that is driven by environmental citizenship considerations are more likely to persist than financially driven behaviour. He observed that attitudes work at a level deeper than behaviour, although such a behaviour change is what most governmental environment-centric policies are directed. Hunt and Dorfman (2009) have identified that the increased concern and feeling of responsibility towards the society has led to remarkable growth in the global market for environment-friendly products. In fact, a host of studies address a broad range of versatile environmentally relevant issues and behaviour (Kim and Choi, 2005; Abdul-Muhmin, 2007). There has been quite some focus on recycling issues in particular (Sudbury-Riley, 2014; Roy, 2016), especially

since recycling of household waste, as well as e-waste, is becoming a conventional everyday practice for several people.

French et al. (1982) defined customer care as the engagement of companies with reference to complaint handling mechanisms and after sales service rendered to the customers. In fact, companies should endeavour to provide any value-added service through polite and courteous service, offering confidentiality and an open-door policy, proactive problem solving and guidance coupled with handling requests in a timely and rational manner. Cant (2010) classifies customer care services into pre-purchase, post-purchase and ancillary care. Singh (2011) advocated that a customised approach is necessary to address customers' grievances since every customer is valuable and plays a substantial role in determining the retailer's success. This was contrasted against a standardised approach, which ensures that there is a similar experience pertaining to quality, taste and feels despite location. Levy and Weitz (2012) further explain that customers make conscious evaluations of how their complaints were resolved based on distributive and procedural fairness. Karu-Salo (2013) proposed that empathy on the part of the service staff would help recognise customers' emotional requirements far better, thus comprehending the cause of such conditions and taking appropriate action by offering customised services or even recognising a customer by name.

Ethical dilemmas are triggered when the responsibilities and loyalties of marketing professionals reach a point of conflict and a decision concerning the appropriate course of action must be decided in advance. From such a standpoint, an ethical decision-making process aids in guiding the decision makers to address significant issues that should be considered before taking relevant action.

## Hypothesis Formulation and Conceptual Framework

Based on the erstwhile literature, the following hypotheses have been proposed for the present undertaking. This study seeks to associate consumer perceptions and ethical practices undertaken by several companies with the purchase behaviour of consumers. The study seeks to test if the exogenous variables depicted in the study,

such as trustworthy advertising campaigns, genuine packaging and labelling, ecological conscientiousness and enterprising customer care, influence the purchase behaviour of consumers or not. They have been outlined in Table 1.

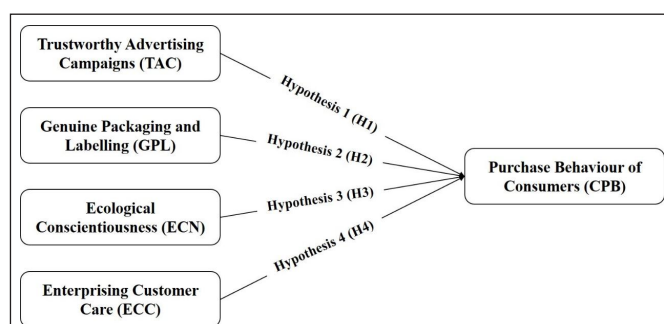
**Hypothesis 1:** Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) with reference to consumer durable brands (washing machines and televisions).

**Hypothesis 2:** Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) with reference to consumer durable brands (washing machines and televisions).

**Hypothesis 3:** Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN) has a significant influence on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) with reference to consumer durable brands (washing machines and televisions).

**Hypothesis 4:** Enterprising Customer Care (ECC) has a significant influence on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) with reference to consumer durable brands (washing machines and televisions).

The aforementioned hypotheses have been summarized in the conceptual model as shown in Fig. 1:



(Source: Prepared by the Authors)

**Fig. 1: Conceptual Model Summarizing the Proposed Hypotheses in the Study**

## Research Methodology

This study primarily seeks to reveal the perception of consumers towards ethical standpoints of companies. The study assumes and considers those respondents who have adequate information about ethical marketing issues

or ethical marketing practices of companies, such as practices for trustworthy advertising, packaging among other issues.

## Data Collection and Sample

To this end, a sample of 307 respondents dwelling across India has been considered. The study considers only the respondents above the age group of 20, since they are typically income-earners and hence play a more active and involved role when it comes to making informed purchase decisions of consumer durables. The sample of respondents shall be selected out of the population using convenience sampling. These respondents are primarily selected from metro cities in India, specifically, Kolkata, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Pune. The largest chunk of respondents selected was employed ( $n=217$ ; 0.70). They mostly comprised of faculty members from various colleges and universities. The remaining respondents were either self-employed or engaged in the corporate sector as well as in various governmental positions. All of these respondents have had an active experience in the purchase of consumer durables.

## Instrument Reliability

It has been stated previously that the established validated scales used for measuring trustworthy advertisements, ecological conscientiousness, genuine packaging and labelling and enterprising customer care, have been adopted from the extant literature, albeit being subject to several modifications. Two sets of semi-structured questionnaires comprising of 30 close-ended questions each have been designed, which have been categorized into five divisions, as indicated in the conceptual model in Fig. 1. Additionally, both the questionnaires comprised of few open-ended questions, which sought to probe into specific purchase and consumption experiences, with reference to washing machines and television sets. Although such questions have not been discussed at length in the current study, the objective was to capture personalized experiences and insights of respondents with regard to the purchase of washing machines and televisions. This was studied, keeping in mind the four major variables used in the study, namely, trustworthy advertising campaigns, the genuineness of packaging, and



labelling, ecological conscientiousness and enterprising customer care. All constructs in the model were measured with multiple-item scales and each of the variables was measured using a Five-point Likert scale, ranging from '1' (Strongly Agree) to '5' (Strongly Disagree). The higher the score, the more important the item (relating to the ethical practices of companies) is for the respondent in focus. Before understanding what the two questionnaire sets represent, the term 'consumer durables' need to be fathomed. Kulkarni (2015) defines consumer durables in three categories, namely white goods, brown goods and consumer electronics. The current study considers those product categories, which have shown the highest market size as of 2015-16. However, for the sake of simplicity, the authors have clubbed white and brown goods like Consumer Appliances. Accordingly, based on

the data obtained from Sheth et al. (2015), they have been represented by washing machines (INR 140 billion), and consumer electronics has been represented by televisions (INR 735 billion). Thus, two questionnaires have been doled out to respondents, one for washing machines and the other for televisions. The items in the dimensions of the questionnaire were largely influenced by studies undertaken by Ismail and Panni (2008), Sudbury-Riley, and Kohlbacher (2015). However, major modifications were made to items keeping in mind the regional context addressed by the study. Additionally, in order to test for internal consistency between the variables mentioned in the study, Cronbach's Alpha has been used. This measure shall help us in examining the scale reliability of the constructs used in the study. The scale items along with their corresponding reliability score have been explained briefly in Table 1.

**Table 1: Explanation of Dimensions/ Scale Item**

| <i>Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC)</i>                     |                                                                                                              |                         |                                       |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Items</i>                                                       | <i>Illustration of Dimensions</i>                                                                            | <i>Source</i>           | <i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i> |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                              |                         | <i>Washing Machines</i>               | <i>TVs</i>   |
| TAC1                                                               | The consumer durables give a true reflection of the displayed advertisement.                                 | Ismail and Panni (2008) | 0.879                                 | 0.838        |
| TAC2                                                               | Correct information about the characteristics of the consumer durables is demonstrated in the advertisement. | Ismail and Panni (2008) | 0.909                                 | 0.860        |
| TAC3                                                               | The claims made by the consumer durables in the advertisement are true.                                      | Iftekhar et al. (2013)  | 0.848                                 | 0.875        |
| TAC4                                                               | The consumer durable advertised has an actual presence in the advertisement.                                 | Iftekhar et al. (2013)  | 0.896                                 | 0.911        |
| <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math> for 4 items (N of items = 4)</b> |                                                                                                              |                         | <b>0.913</b>                          | <b>0.923</b> |
| <i>Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL)</i>                       |                                                                                                              |                         |                                       |              |
| <i>Items</i>                                                       | <i>Illustration of Dimensions</i>                                                                            | <i>Source</i>           | <i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i> |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                              |                         | <i>Washing Machines</i>               | <i>TVs</i>   |
| GPL1                                                               | Accurate and appropriate information is reflected in the package or label.                                   | Ismail and Panni (2008) | 0.920                                 | 0.806        |
| GPL2                                                               | Proper certification and seals are mentioned on the packaging.                                               | Ismail and Panni (2008) | 0.928                                 | 0.811        |
| GPL3                                                               | The date of manufacturing is clearly mentioned on the label or the package.                                  | Ismail and Panni (2008) | 0.932                                 | 0.806        |
| GPL4                                                               | Fair price (valid MRP) is displayed clearly on the package.                                                  | Self-Developed          | 0.940                                 | 0.821        |
| GPL5                                                               | The product is kept safe by the packaging done by the marketer.                                              | Self-Developed          | 0.920                                 | 0.791        |
| <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math> for 4 items (N of items=5)</b>   |                                                                                                              |                         | <b>0.941</b>                          | <b>0.856</b> |

| <i>Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN)</i>                          |                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                       |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Items</i>                                                       | <i>Illustration of Dimensions</i>                                                                                            | <i>Source</i>                       | <i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i> |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                                              |                                     | <i>Washing Machines</i>               | <i>TVs</i>   |
| ECN1                                                               | The consumer durables cause less pollution.                                                                                  | Ismail and Panni (2008)             | 0.886                                 | 0.666        |
| ECN2                                                               | The consumer durables are low on pollutants and contaminants.                                                                | Ismail and Panni (2008)             | 0.870                                 | 0.643        |
| ECN3                                                               | Between two consumer durables, the less harmful option is purchased.                                                         | Iftekhhar et al. (2013)             | 0.883                                 | 0.663        |
| ECN4                                                               | The consumer durables can be recycled and do not result in e-waste.                                                          | Self-Developed                      | 0.875                                 | 0.652        |
| ECN5                                                               | Consumer's family members have been convinced to purchase consumer durables, which are not harmful to the environment.       | Iftekhhar et al. (2013)             | 0.865                                 | 0.655        |
| ECN6                                                               | Consumer durables are environmentally certified according to prescribed industrial standards.                                | Self-Developed                      | 0.856                                 | 0.689        |
| <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math> for 4 items (N of items = 6)</b> |                                                                                                                              |                                     | <b>0.906</b>                          | <b>0.763</b> |
| <i>Enterprising Customer Care (ECC)</i>                            |                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                       |              |
| <i>Items</i>                                                       | <i>Illustration of Dimensions</i>                                                                                            | <i>Source</i>                       | <i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i> |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                                              |                                     | <i>Washing Machines</i>               | <i>TVs</i>   |
| ECC1                                                               | The consumer durable company cares about the complaints regarding the purchase.                                              | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.994                                 | 0.944        |
| ECC2                                                               | The consumer durable company makes an earnest effort to settle consumers' purchase-related grievances.                       | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.993                                 | 0.950        |
| ECC3                                                               | The consumer durable company does not make its consumers wait too long to solve their grievances                             | Iftekhhar et al. (2013)             | 0.994                                 | 0.940        |
| ECC4                                                               | The consumer durable company cares for its consumers even after the completion of a purchase.                                | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.993                                 | 0.942        |
| ECC5                                                               | The consumer durable company seeks to ensure that its customers are eventually satisfied.                                    | Iftekhhar et al. (2013)             | 0.993                                 | 0.953        |
| ECC6                                                               | The complaint redressal mechanism of the consumer durable company is simple and easy to follow.                              | Self-Developed                      | 0.992                                 | 0.954        |
| <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math> for 4 items (N of items = 6)</b> |                                                                                                                              |                                     | <b>0.995</b>                          | <b>0.959</b> |
| <i>Consumer Purchasing Behaviour (CPB)</i>                         |                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                       |              |
| <i>Items</i>                                                       | <i>Illustration of Dimensions</i>                                                                                            | <i>Source</i>                       | <i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i> |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                                              |                                     | <i>Washing Machines</i>               | <i>TVs</i>   |
| CPB1                                                               | The consumer considers purchasing consumer durables from socially responsible companies                                      | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.850                                 | 0.856        |
| CPB2                                                               | The consumer purchases consumer durables from companies, which do not discriminate between customer segments and minorities. | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.871                                 | 0.852        |
| CPB3                                                               | The consumer purchases consumer durables from companies, which project women in a favourable manner.                         | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.828                                 | 0.852        |
| CPB4                                                               | The consumer purchases consumer durables from philanthropic and charitable companies.                                        | Self-Developed                      | 0.860                                 | 0.847        |

| Consumer Purchasing Behaviour (CPB)                                |                                                                                                                                 |                                     |                     |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Items                                                              | Illustration of Dimensions                                                                                                      | Source                              | Cronbach's $\alpha$ |              |
|                                                                    |                                                                                                                                 |                                     | Washing Machines    | TVs          |
| CPB7                                                               | The consumer chooses the environmentally sustainable alternative for consumer durables regardless of their price.               | Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2015) | 0.828               | 0.854        |
| CPB8                                                               | The consumer shies away from exaggerated claims and information provided by the advertisements regarding the consumer durables. | Self-Developed                      | 0.847               | 0.849        |
| CPB9                                                               | The consumer tries to buy consumer durables, which use advertising to endorse a socio-ecological cause.                         | Self-Developed                      | 0.851               | 0.834        |
| <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math> for 4 items (N of items = 9)</b> |                                                                                                                                 |                                     | <b>0.874</b>        | <b>0.878</b> |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

The above table uses the term 'consumer durables' as a representation of washing machines and televisions, as mentioned previously. Accordingly, two sets of questionnaires have been doled out to respondents and the subsequent responses have been tabulated and analysed using IBM SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 23.0 software. Overall, the items display a very high reliability score of 0.982 for washing machines (N of items=30) and 0.974 for televisions (N of items=30). All the individual and overall reliability scores are above the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010) thus signifying a robust instrument construction.

## Findings and Analysis of Data

The number of responses was initially obtained from 320 respondents, but 13 of these questionnaires had to be discarded due to incomplete and erroneous responses. Thus, 307 completed responses were finally accepted, corresponding to a valid response rate of 95.9 percent.

## Demographic Profiling of Respondents

Table 2 represents the demographic profile and sample descriptive statistics.

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

| Demographic Construct                       | Classification        | Population Statistics (N) | Percentage  |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Gender Classification of Respondents</b> | Male                  | 149                       | 0.49        |
|                                             | Female                | 158                       | 0.51        |
|                                             | <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>307</b>                | <b>1.00</b> |
| <b>Age Group of Respondents</b>             | 20-25                 | 41                        | 0.13        |
|                                             | 26-35                 | 70                        | 0.23        |
|                                             | 36-45                 | 71                        | 0.23        |
|                                             | 46-60                 | 68                        | 0.22        |
|                                             | Above 60              | 57                        | 0.19        |
|                                             | <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>307</b>                | <b>1.00</b> |
| <b>Occupation of Respondents</b>            | Working               | 83                        | 0.70        |
|                                             | Home-maker/Unemployed | 41                        | 0.13        |
|                                             | Retired               | 70                        | 0.17        |
|                                             | <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>307</b>                | <b>1.00</b> |

| <i>Demographic Construct</i>         | <i>Classification</i>     | <i>Population Statistics (N)</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Monthly Income of Respondents</b> | Below INR 10,000          | 53                               | 0.17              |
|                                      | INR 10,001 – INR 25,000   | 69                               | 0.22              |
|                                      | INR 25,001 – INR 50,000   | 119                              | 0.39              |
|                                      | INR 50,001 – INR 1,00,000 | 47                               | 0.15              |
|                                      | Above INR 1,00,000        | 19                               | 0.06              |
|                                      | <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>307</b>                       | <b>1.00</b>       |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

To summarize the contents of Table 2, respondents are mostly female (n=158; 51 percent) belonging to the age bracket of 36-45 (n=71; 23 percent) and being engaged as working professionals (n=83; 70 percent) mostly having a monthly earning of INR 25001-INR 50000 (N=119; 39 percent). Briefly, it is more a young working populace being represented in the study.

### Test for Construct Validity

There are two measures to probe into the validity of the constructs, namely, convergent validity and divergent validity. Both the measures go hand in hand with each other and the validity of both the construct must be established. Preliminarily, the patterns of inter-correlations among the measures used in the study have been observed and it has been observed that the correlations between the theoretically similar measures, such as the four exogenous variables, are seen to be on the higher side while correlations between theoretically dissimilar measures are seen to be rather low. To establish convergent validity, it must be shown that the measures, which should be related, are in reality related to each other. The convergent validity of scale items has been estimated by the respective factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It is evident from Table 3 and Table 4 that the standardized CFA loadings for all scale items have exceeded the minimum loading criterion of 0.7, and the composite reliabilities of all factors have exceeded the recommended 0.7 level. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were all above the threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al, 2010). Hence, all three conditions for convergent validity were successfully met by the above measurement models. The correlations and variances have been displayed in Table 3 (representing Washing Machines) and Table 4 (Televisions) respectively.

The diagonal elements in each of the following tables represent the square root of AVE and the other elements represent the inter-construct correlation coefficients of the row construct and the column construct of the data. They are all observed to be less than the square root of AVE values in the diagonals.

**Table 3: Correlation, Variance and Square Root of AVE (Washing Machines)**

| <i>Construct</i> | <i>TAC</i> | <i>GPL</i> | <i>ECN</i> | <i>ECC</i> | <i>CPB</i> |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>TAC</b>       | 0.789      |            |            |            |            |
| <b>GPL</b>       | 0.671      | 0.881      |            |            |            |
| <b>ECN</b>       | 0.593      | 0.643      | 0.771      |            |            |
| <b>ECC</b>       | 0.654      | 0.648      | 0.723      | 0.619      |            |
| <b>CPB</b>       | 0.667      | 0.397      | 0.701      | 0.548      | 0.813      |
| <b>Mean</b>      | 2.102      | 1.861      | 2.148      | 2.082      | 2.240      |
| <b>Variance</b>  | 1.252      | 0.852      | 1.469      | 1.654      | 1.659      |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

**Table 4: Correlation, Variance and Square Root of AVE (Televisions)**

| <i>Construct</i> | <i>TAC</i> | <i>GPL</i> | <i>ECN</i> | <i>ECC</i> | <i>CPB</i> |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>TAC</b>       | 0.724      |            |            |            |            |
| <b>GPL</b>       | 0.710      | 0.874      |            |            |            |
| <b>ECN</b>       | 0.673      | 0.818      | 0.892      |            |            |
| <b>ECC</b>       | 0.670      | 0.764      | 0.817      | 0.731      |            |
| <b>CPB</b>       | 0.659      | 0.753      | 0.393      | 0.695      | 0.825      |
| <b>Mean</b>      | 2.397      | 1.984      | 1.953      | 2.115      | 2.106      |
| <b>Variance</b>  | 1.421      | 1.004      | 1.378      | 1.680      | 1.563      |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

To establish discriminant validity, it must be shown that the measures, which should not be related, are in reality not related. All the path covariance between the factors



were considered. Discriminant validity was obtained by comparing the shared variance between factors with the AVE from the individual factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This analysis showed that the MSV and ASV between factors were less than the AVE for the

individual factors. The square root of AVE greater than inter-construct correlations as shown in Table 3 and Table 4. Hence, discriminant validity was assured. The factor loadings, AVE, and the Composite Reliability (CR) scores have been summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5: Factor Loadings, AVE, Square Root of AVE and C.R of Washing Machines and Televisions**

| Constructs                              | Items | Factor Loading |       | AVE   |       | Sqrt of AVE |       | C.R.  |       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                         |       | WM             | TV    | WM    | TV    | WM          | TV    | WM    | TV    |
| Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC) | TAC1  | 0.986          | 0.935 | 0.623 | 0.524 | 0.789       | 0.724 | 0.861 | 0.809 |
|                                         | TAC2  | 0.931          | 0.722 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | TAC3  | 0.617          | 0.645 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | TAC4  | 0.520          | 0.534 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
| Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL)   | GPL1  | 0.997          | 0.952 | 0.777 | 0.764 | 0.881       | 0.874 | 0.945 | 0.941 |
|                                         | GPL2  | 0.954          | 0.934 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | GPL3  | 0.936          | 0.912 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | GPL4  | 0.846          | 0.884 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | GPL5  | 0.625          | 0.655 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
| Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN)      | ECN1  | 0.887          | 0.972 | 0.594 | 0.795 | 0.771       | 0.892 | 0.897 | 0.958 |
|                                         | ECN2  | 0.815          | 0.944 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECN3  | 0.799          | 0.938 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECN4  | 0.731          | 0.934 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECN5  | 0.701          | 0.901 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECN6  | 0.671          | 0.607 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
| Enterprising Customer Care (ECC)        | ECC1  | 0.690          | 0.938 | 0.383 | 0.535 | 0.619       | 0.731 | 0.787 | 0.866 |
|                                         | ECC2  | 0.667          | 0.907 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECC3  | 0.647          | 0.824 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECC4  | 0.579          | 0.578 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECC5  | 0.701          | 0.560 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | ECC6  | 0.671          | 0.534 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
| Consumer Purchase Behaviour (CPB)       | CPB1  | 0.991          | 0.972 | 0.661 | 0.681 | 0.813       | 0.825 | 0.945 | 0.949 |
|                                         | CPB2  | 0.935          | 0.952 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB3  | 0.911          | 0.903 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB4  | 0.885          | 0.901 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB5  | 0.824          | 0.884 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB6  | 0.787          | 0.849 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB7  | 0.638          | 0.673 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB8  | 0.625          | 0.617 |       |       |             |       |       |       |
|                                         | CPB9  | 0.618          | 0.560 |       |       |             |       |       |       |

WM = Washing Machines; TV = Televisions

Source: Prepared by the Authors

The degree to which the construct's items indicate the latent construct is represented by the measure of composite

reliability. Based on the findings obtained from Table 5, the value of composite reliability of the constructs in this

study ranges from 0.787 to 0.945 for washing machines and from 0.809 to 0.958 in case of televisions. All of these values are greater than the recommended value of 0.7 as proposed by Gefen et al. (2000). Average variance extracted (AVE) is a measure of the amount of variance captured by a construct through its items as compared to the amount of variance captured due to the measurement error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

### Test for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

According to Kline (2010), the rationale of constructing a measurement model relates to its aptness as a measurement instrument of the observed indicators, representing a latent variable. The same was reaffirmed by Hair et al. (2010), where it was observed that in measurement theory, the purpose is to estimate the liaison between the observed and the underlying latent variables. Bentler (1988) had noted that SEM represents causal processes that generate observations on multiple variables.

According to Table 6, the goodness-of-fit results for the SEM models are acceptable for both washing machines and television. Accordingly, Table 6 reflects valid and reliable results for the structural equation modelling estimates. The SEM estimation results clearly reveal that there are clear similarities and divergences between the two models, namely washing machines and televisions. A visualized comparison between the estimation results of two models has already been demonstrated in Table 4 and Table 5 previously.

The estimation of the structural model was done using IBM AMOS version 23.0 software using maximum likelihood estimate (MLE). For the first model representing washing machines, the test of overall fit of the model produced a chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 381.715 with 395 degrees of freedom and the model had a p-value less than 0.001. For the second model representing televisions, the chi-square value was 368.383 with 395 degrees of freedom. All the fit indices were shown to be within the acceptable range. The value of Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was 0.913 for washing machines and 0.944 for televisions, which exceeded the recommended cut-off score of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2010). The value of the Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) was 0.972 for washing machines and 0.993

for televisions which were noticeably higher than the recommended cut-off value of 0.90 (Chau & Hu, 2001). The value of Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.921 for washing machines and 0.982 for televisions and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.933 for washing machines and 0.960 for televisions. CFI has been regarded by Anderson and Gerbing (1992) as a category of stable fit indices, which exhibit a fair degree of robustness as well. Both of these indices were within the acceptable limit of 0.9 (Hair et al., 2010) and can be regarded as good indicators. The value of the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which is an absolute measure of the parameter of fit, was equal to 0.031 for washing machines and 0.043 for televisions. Thus, it was within the acceptable cut off level of 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010). The ratio of chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) and degree of freedom were obtained to be 2.43 for washing machines and 1.95 for televisions which were significantly below the recommended upper cut-off value of 3.00 (Kline, 1998).

After analyzing the values of different fit indices and comparing the obtained values with recommended acceptable limits described in the extant literature, it can be concluded that there exists an overall good degree of fit between the hypothesized research framework and the obtained data.

**Table 6: Model Fit Indices for Goodness-of-Fit Measures**

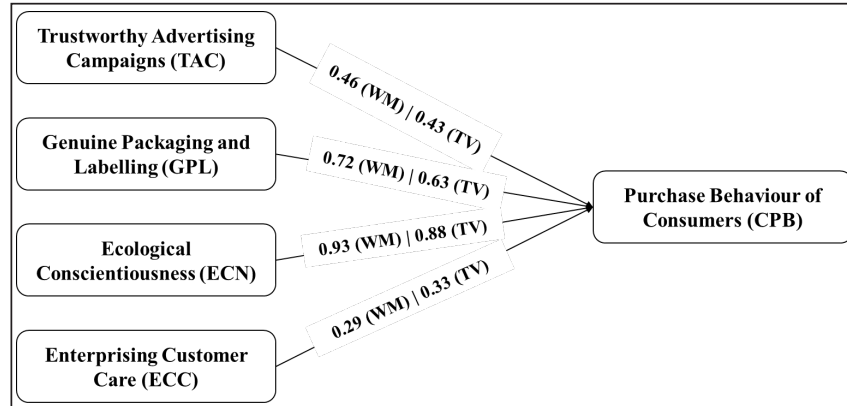
| Goodness of Fit Measure | Recommended Value | Actual Value of Measures |      | Result of Model Fit |        |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------|---------------------|--------|
|                         |                   | WM                       | TV   | WM                  | TV     |
| CMIN/DF                 | $\leq 3.00$       | 2.43                     | 1.95 | Good                | Good   |
| GFI                     | $\geq 0.90$       | 0.91                     | 0.94 | Good                | Good   |
| AGFI                    | $\geq 0.90$       | 0.97                     | 0.99 | Strong              | Strong |
| NFI                     | $\geq 0.90$       | 0.92                     | 0.94 | Good                | Good   |
| CFI                     | $\geq 0.90$       | 0.92                     | 0.98 | Good                | Strong |
| TLI                     | $\geq 0.95$       | 0.93                     | 0.96 | Weak                | Good   |
| RMSEA                   | $\leq 0.05$       | 0.03                     | 0.04 | Good                | Good   |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

Theory suggests that if the model fits the data well enough, the feasibility of each path in the model should be reviewed by examining whether the weights are

statistically significant and practically significant, which is evaluated on the basis of whether the effect size estimation (the  $R^2$ ) concerning a given path in the models are large enough. The significance and strength of the hypothesized

relationships in the research model have been analysed and the structural model analysis results, as well as path coefficients, path significances, and variance, explained for each dependent variable have been summarized in Fig. 2.



Source: Prepared by the Authors

**Fig. 2: Summarized Path Diagram**

As displayed in table 7, trustworthy advertising campaigns are positively and significantly related to the purchase behaviour of consumers in case of both washing machines and televisions ( $\beta = 0.462$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = 0.431$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), genuine packaging and labelling was positively and significantly related to consumer purchase behaviour only in case of televisions ( $\beta = 0.633$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, in case of washing machines, there is no significant relationship and impact observed between the two constructs, i.e. genuine packaging and

labelling and consumer purchase behaviour ( $\beta = 0.721$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ). Ecological conscientiousness is shown to be positively linked to consumer purchase behaviour in case of televisions but is not statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.875$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) as  $p > 0.05$ . However, there is a positive impact on consumer behaviour in case of washing machines ( $\beta = 0.953$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Enterprising customer care is positively and significantly related to consumer purchase behaviour in case of washing machines ( $\beta = 0.289$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as televisions ( $\beta = 0.328$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings have been summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7: Summary of Structural Model Results**

| Hypothesis | Path Description      | Coefficient (S.E.) |       | Test Results for Hypothesis |             |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------------|
|            |                       | WM                 | TV    | WM                          | TV          |
| H1         | TAC $\rightarrow$ CPB | 0.462              | 0.431 | Supported                   | Supported   |
| H2         | GPL $\rightarrow$ CPB | 0.721              | 0.633 | Unsupported                 | Supported   |
| H3         | ECN $\rightarrow$ CPB | 0.933              | 0.875 | Supported                   | Unsupported |
| H4         | ECC $\rightarrow$ CPB | 0.289              | 0.328 | Supported                   | Supported   |

Source: Prepared by the Authors

In summary, it is hence observed observe that Hypothesis 1 is fully supported, suggesting that Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) for both washing machines and televisions. It is true for Hypothesis 4, which is fully supported, suggesting that Enterprising

Customer Care (ECC) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) for both washing machines and televisions. However, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 have been partially supported. Hypothesis 2 that states that Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of

Consumers (CPB). This is true for televisions but the same cannot be said for washing machines, implying that there is no favourable association between genuine packaging and labelling and consumer purchase behaviour towards washing machines. Hypothesis 3 hypothesizes that Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB). This is true for washing machines but not supported in case of televisions, implying that there is no favourable association between ecological conscientiousness and consumer purchase behaviour towards televisions.

## Deliberation on Research Findings

The current study has brought to light some interesting insights into the ethical and responsible purchase trajectories of consumers in India. The results arising out of Hypothesis 1 indicate that Trustworthy Advertising Campaigns (TAC) have a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) for both washing machines and televisions ( $p < 0.01$ ). It implies that consumers are highly sensitive towards the content and validity of claims put forward by an advertisement. When consumers come across a washing machine advertisement either on television or in print or in an outdoor format, they subconsciously assess whether the advertisement claim is validated by the actual product. They usually abstain from exaggerated claims made by the advertisers and look for correct and truthful information more than anything else does. For instance, one of the respondents in the study came across a certain prominent national washing machine brand with instant stain removal in a television advertisement and intended to buy that specific product itself. However, on the purchase of the actual product, the respondent felt that the actual washing machine did not remove stains instantly but actually went through a series of complicated steps before actually following the actions mentioned in the advertisement. Due to this misleading and partially revealing advertisement, the respondent chose not to go for the specific brand. The same is validated for television purchases as well, where consumers not only look at the appeals of the advertisement but also the clarity. It is important that the television brand being advertised be present in the advertisement. For instance, respondents feel that advertisements endorsing smart televisions are clearly communicated to the target groups along with the features and technical specifications. For

both washing machines and televisions, the respondents seek gratification by verifying the claims in a brick-and-mortar or virtual retail store or during the various trade promotion events organized in shopping malls, residential complexes or on-street campaigns. Respondents seek to ascertain if the displayed specifications are congruent with the actual product. This is also evident from Table 3 and Table 4 representing the bivariate statistics. Trustworthy advertising campaigns are strongly correlated with consumer purchase behaviour of the respondents ( $r=0.659$  for washing machines and  $0.667$  for televisions). Careful evaluation of advertisements by the respondents implies that they make responsible and informed purchase decisions for consumer durables.

The second hypothesis is partially supported in that Genuine Packaging and Labelling (GPL) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB) in case of televisions ( $p < 0.01$ ) but an insignificant impact on washing machine purchases ( $p > 0.01$ ). The reasons for the same are rather interesting. Upon investigation, it was observed that respondents opine that television brands are advertised much more than washing machines. The advertisements involve much more clarity than washing machines, which are slightly complex as well. This also has to do with the fact that 49 percent of the respondents in the study are males and would not elicit much involvement towards the purchase of washing machines, as compared to their female counterparts. Since the study does not mediate the role of gender in determining the impact on purchase behaviour, it cannot be conclusively stated that female respondents have a greater say in consumer durable purchases. However, respondents have overall observed that washing machines do not have a favourable impact on their ethical purchase behaviour. They feel that accurate information is not reflected in the package and different companies offer different prices which makes it difficult for the respondents to evaluate and gauge the fair price of the brand. The constructs although are strongly correlated with each other in case of televisions ( $r=0.753$ ) but there is a weak-moderate relationship between genuine packaging and labelling and consumer purchase behaviour for washing machines ( $r=0.397$ ). It simply implies that in addition to seeking clarity and rational appeal in the advertisements endorsing washing machines, the packaging component should be bettered and aligned in congruence with the displayed advertisement. This



would help them to purchase more responsibly and carefully since they are moderate-involvement purchases.

The third hypothesis is probably the most pertinent of all the constructs in the present context. Like the second hypothesis, this hypothesis is also partially supported. It states that Ecological Conscientiousness (ECN) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour of Consumers (CPB). However, this hypothesis is only supported for washing machines ( $p < 0.01$ ) but unsupported for televisions ( $p > 0.01$ ). It implies that the respondents are environmentally conscientious when purchasing washing machines but not in case of televisions. Respondents when purchasing washing machines, evaluate electricity consumption and assess whether the brand can be recycled eventually and do not cause any e-waste or adverse impact on the environment. They also motivate their family members to switch to eco-friendly washing machine brands, which are certified according to prescribed standards. This is, however not true for television sets. When purchasing televisions, respondents seek immediate gratification and are more concerned about the product quality and technical specifications, rather than their environmental quotient. This is congruent with previous studies (Sadiku et al, 2016; Agarwalla and Ghose, 2016; Namias, 2013) which affirm that television sets contribute to the greatest volume of e-waste. According to a Rajya Sabha Research Unit Research entitled 'E-Waste in India' undertaken in 2011, it was revealed that out of the total volume of e-waste in India, televisions comprise 68 percent of its total volume. Washing Machines, on the other hand, are meant for a niche cluster of consumers and hence, they are purchased more responsibly with meticulous attention towards environmental concerns. Based on the correlation results obtained from Table 3 and Table 4, we can draw similar inferences as well. For washing machines, environmental conscientiousness construct is strongly correlated to consumer purchase behaviour ( $r=0.701$ ), but there exists a moderate correlation between the constructs in case of televisions ( $r=0.393$ ). This is indicative of the fact that the responsible purchase behaviour of consumers is not very robust in case of purchase of televisions, in case of their ecological considerations.

The fourth hypothesis is fully supported by the model. It proposes that Enterprising Customer Care (ECC) has a significant impact on the Purchase Behaviour

of Consumers (CPB) for both washing machines ( $p < 0.01$ ) and televisions ( $p < 0.01$ ). Customer care, unlike the other constructs, has an after-sales connotation. Yet the reliability statistics are reflective of the internal consistency with the other constructs as evident from Table 1 (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for washing machines is 0.995 and for television is 0.959). Responsiveness towards customer complaints and grievances are growing in importance in a service-driven economy (Soni, 2013). Consumer durable companies are responsive towards the grievances of their customers, especially due to the intense competition operating in this rising oligopolistic market. These complaints are handled quite briskly without making the respondent waiting too long and eventually endeavour towards the overall satisfaction of the consumer. These customer redressal mechanisms are very simple and easy to follow and are provided to consumers in their regional languages as far as possible. Table 3 and Table 4 reflect the correlation coefficients of enterprising customer care with responsible purchase behaviour of consumers ( $r=0.548$  for washing machines and  $r=0.695$  for televisions). The data indicate that the constructs are strongly correlated with each other, although television companies are shown to have greater customer complaint redressal mechanisms than washing machine companies.

In an increasingly hypercompetitive market milieu, consumers are becoming more and more conscientious and aware of the brands they purchase. They evaluate it responsibly based on a meticulous perusal of factors such as false and misleading advertising claims and campaigns, faulty packaging and labelling in conjunction with the claims made during the advertisement campaigns, environmental responsiveness in terms of contribution to e-waste or emission of hazardous pollutants and responsiveness of customer care services by the consumer durable brands. This is reflective of an empowered and highly conscientious group of Indian consumers who are more focussed on making informed and responsible purchase decisions, rather than making blind procurements.

## Managerial Implications

Customers have become more empowered and informed than before (Lindstrom, 2008). Hence, it is imperative that companies operate ethically to make a better impact



on customers. They have to continually practice and exhibit marketing activities, which are ethical in nature. This would help them survive in a red ocean market space (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005). According to an erstwhile study by Strong (1996), it was evidenced that businesses, which exhibited socio-environmental sensitivity, were considered to have a competitive advantage. Almost concurrently, consumers are shown to exhibit strong preferences towards ethico-moral consumption behaviour (Aarason, 2002).

Based on the descriptive statistics computed in Table 3 and Table 4, it may be asserted that consumers consider ethical issues highly pertinent and relevant. This is also furthered by the hypothesis results that indicate that consumers are more likely to associate this relevance to their individual purchase behaviours. The study has many key insights for marketers and researchers. This study reveals that the practices of packaging washing machines should be focussed more by companies. Since they cater to a niche segment of customers, they must address and clearly mention relevant data such as proper certification and seals, standardized prices by the company and not variable prices by different retailers. More importantly, the labelling should not be too complex or inconspicuous for the consumer to comprehend. Further, television brands should focus on strengthening their ecological footprint by informing customers about their treatment procedures with discarded television sets. Instead of focussing on producing and manufacturing use-and-throw televisions with limited lifespans, which adversely affects the environment, companies must highlight the eco-friendly quotient in their advertisements and back it up with the delivery of their promise in the actual television. All advertising campaigns should be explained clearly with a strong focus on the environmental aspect as well. This would help build a robust brand image in consumer's mind as is evidenced by the present study where consumers are shown to exhibit strong ethical purchase behaviour in response to ecological conscientiousness. Given that consumers intend to believe in fair pricing and have become more informed and aware of the real value of their purchases, they can see right through misleading advertisements, which only prove that the emotional value of the product by a customer is much more than its real value. These unethical issues severely discourage consumers to purchase such products and brands.

The study also reveals that consumers are sensitive to evaluate the ethical practices of companies and their evaluations reflect highly on their purchase behavioural upshots. Hence, the fact that companies should adopt ethical marketing practices is no longer a normative evangelization, but a fundamental component of business success. Sometimes, however, companies fail to comprehend the impact of certain factors, such as packaging and environmental variables, as observed in this study. For instance, ecological conscientiousness is the generally talked about issue among marketers and is backed adequately in the extant literature study. This encompasses a host of considerations such as manufacturing unhazardous products, practising green marketing campaigns, following pro-environmental industrial purchasing and a host of other factors, which have not been captured in the present study. However, each variable has a definite impact and all have become pivotal evaluation criterion for consumers. Programs and strategies should be designed to embrace multiple variables by companies. It should strongly recognize consumer behaviour, which is gradually being shaped ethically. Companies should also more often than not, declare their ethical practices and take the responsibility of making their consumers more aware of versatile ethical concerns.

## Conclusive Statements

It is evident that ethical consumption may have the potential to become a mass-market phenomenon in the years to come. If a propensity towards ethics oriented consumer behaviour is to be considered a major asset for marketing and indeed, for a society, it becomes necessary to have a valid measure for it. The development of a customized scale makes it easier for researchers and practitioners to identify the areas of ethical deficit in marketing and address them systematically and scientifically. Having said so, no study can be perfect, and accordingly, the present study is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the selection of only a few metro cities as a holistic base for research is a major limitation in itself. Since the samples were selected using convenience and judgement of the authors, the study does not proffer a holistic and truly accurate picture of Indian respondents. It would be biased and unfair to associate the results of the study to the entire Indian population since only selected metro cities have

been considered for the study. Second, the study could have considered the demographic impact with regard to whether male and female respondents elicit divergent ethical quotients and purchase behaviour. This is because products like washing machines are theoretically seen to have more female involvement than male involvement. Third, the study could also have looked into the ethical purchase behaviour across the various age dimensions, since a respondent below 30 years of age would not exhibit similar purchase dynamics as compared to a respondent above 60 years of age.

Notwithstanding, the study shall prove its relevance by serving as a reference point for expansive researches in future, including our own. Beyond the theoretical contributions, this study also makes practical contributions to organizations and further studies as explicated previously. It has been observed that the ethical practices of organizations have a direct relationship with the evaluations and appraisals made by their consumers, which is ultimately mirrored in their modelled purchase behaviour. It is therefore imperative for companies to spend more time on ethico-moral marketing practices and create a futuristic orientation for a better marketplace.

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